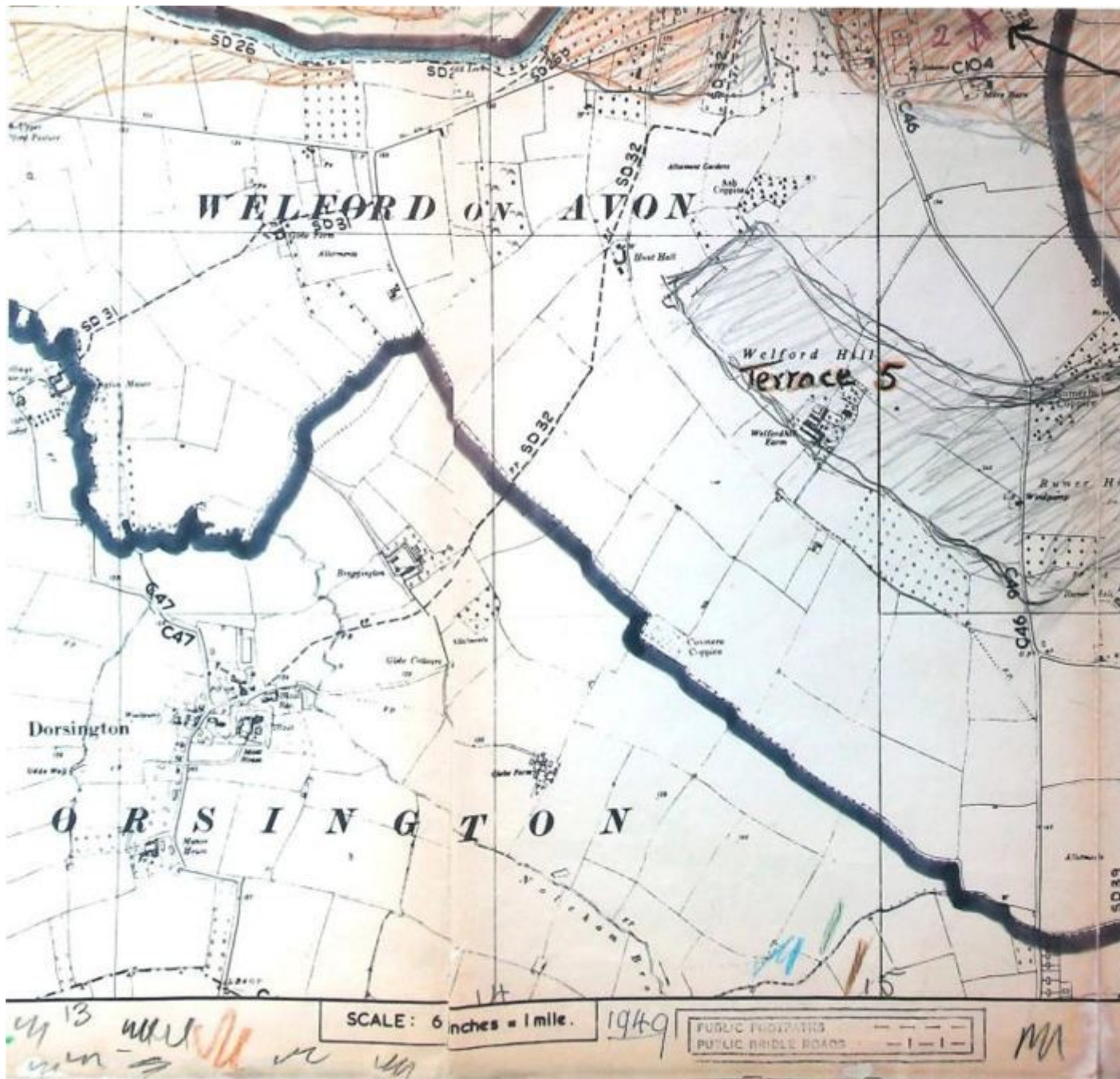


Welford Hill Farm

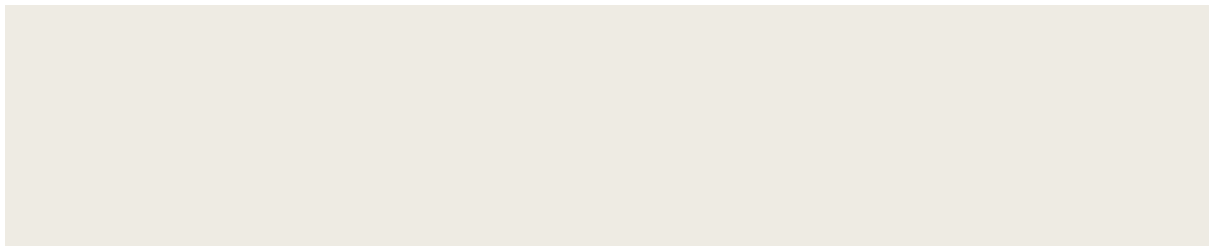
An outlying farm on the gravel hill south of the village: Sackville land for three centuries, home to a naturalist, a ruined gentleman and a farming dynasty from Herefordshire, bought by its tenant when the Milcote estate broke up in 1916, and then, in the archive at least, very nearly silent.

Drawn from the Welford and Weston Local History Society archive (folder references in grey). Where the archive is silent or the sources disagree, the essay says so rather than filling the gap; a full list of gaps is at the end. A companion to the essays on Welford's fields, orchards, rights of way and Cress Hill.

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Welford Hill, "Terrace 5". The south-eastern section of the 1949 Definitive Map extract that a Society member later turned into a "Work Map. Geographical setting". Welfordhill Farm sits just below the pencilled label, with Rumerhill Coppice and Rumer Hill to the east and Coxmere Coppice to the south-west, all inside the thick parish boundary. 03/26

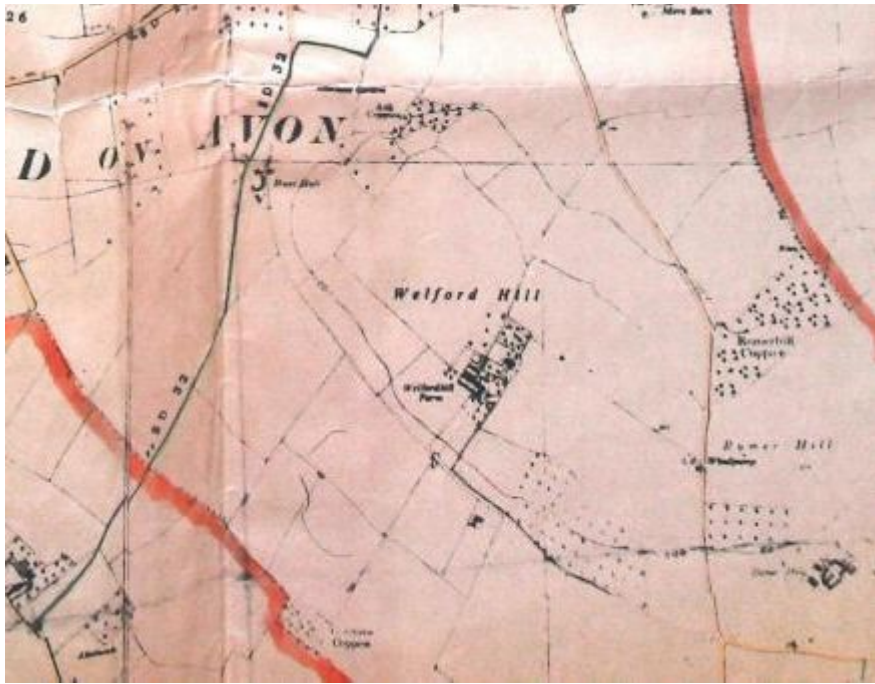


The farm on the hill

Leave Welford by the Long Marston road and the land rises gently for the best part of a mile. A 1934 motoring correspondent, previewing a Women's Guild coach trip for the *Birmingham Weekly Post*, described the road "having climbed Welford Hill – a very modest height isolated in the middle of a wide plain" before it ran on through Long Marston to Mickleton 13/22. The Conservation Area study of 1992 describes the same road from the other direction: it "gently drops into the village from Welford Hill through mixed agricultural land", between grass verges, tall hedges and ash trees 15/08. Near the top of that modest height, off to the west of the road, stand the buildings of Welford Hill Farm.

It is the farm that people in Welford have looked up at for two centuries without, on the whole, writing very much about it. The village itself sits low in a bend of the Avon, among its orchards and market gardens. Welford Hill Farm belongs to a different landscape: big arable fields, a rookery in the hilltop trees, a few cottages for the men, and long views south towards Meon Hill. In 1949 the county surveyor's rights-of-way map marked it simply as "Welfordhill Farm", with footpath SD 32 running south over the hill towards Dorsington 12/04. The Society's barn surveyor in 1985 gave its grid reference as Sheet 151, 149 519 14/10.

This essay gathers what the Welford and Weston Local History Society archive holds about the farm. The material comes in an uneven spread. For the nineteenth century it is surprisingly good: census returns from 1851 to 1911, a sale schedule that lists every field, a naturalist farmer remembered by a boy who knew him, and a ruined gentleman farmer whose story was told and retold in the village into the 1930s. For the centuries before 1800 there are only field names and inferences, and for the years after 1920 the trail goes almost cold. The farm's accounts, its deeds and any photograph of the farmhouse are not in the archive at all. Where the evidence runs out, the essay stops and says so.



“Welfordhill Farm”,

1949. A detail from the photographed copy of the Warwickshire County Council Definitive Map. The farmstead is the cluster of buildings below “Welford Hill”; the red line is the parish boundary with Dorsington and the dotted green line footpath SD 32. 12/04, photograph

1

Terrace 5 The ground itself

Before it was a farm, Welford Hill was a heap of gravel. The archive’s geology comes mostly from Gilbert Gray, who prepared talks on the prehistory of the Avon valley for the Society’s “Origins Group” 10/28, and from an unnamed member who annotated the 1949 map shown above 03/26. Both describe the river terraces: the steps of sand and gravel that the Avon laid down and then cut through as the climate swung between glacial and warmer periods. In one draft of his talk Gray sketched a river cutting through its terraces and wrote beside it, “e.g. Welford Hill (No. 5); Welford — (No. 2). (Where best seen?)” 10/29. The annotated map shades Welford Hill and Rumer Hill in pencil and labels them “Terrace 5”, the highest and oldest of the terraces marked, while the lower terraces by the river are hatched in orange.

Gray’s list of material he cut from one talk is revealing in itself: “Terrace No. 5 and Welford Hill; ‘open terraces versus dense forests’; photographs with a map; and a display of flints” 10/28. The point he wanted to make, and the annotator of the map made too, was that soil follows geology and farms follow soil. The annotator noted the “correspondence betw. edge of terrace & field boundaries (& garden soils?)” and pointed to farm names such as Weston Sands and Sandfield Farm. Welford Hill’s light, free-

draining gravel suited the plough. When the farm was sold in 1916, about 233 of its 289 acres were arable 13/45.

A paper on Roman and Romano-British Welford written for the Society around 1971 goes further. It argues that the old tracks across the marshy ground south of the village, now the Binton road, the High Street and Bird Lane to Long Marston, led to the hill fort on Meon Hill “and certainly to a settlement on Welford Hill with its extensive view over the Worcestershire plain” 10/26. The same claim appears in working notes in an exercise book bearing the name of Wm. R. A. Gray 34/01–04. Neither source gives any evidence for a settlement on the hill itself, and the eight archaeological sites the map annotator plotted from air photographs are all elsewhere in the parish 03/26. The “settlement on Welford Hill” is best read as a reasonable guess about a good vantage point, not a finding.

Later observers noticed the hill for its trees and birds. J. H. Garrett, boating up the Avon in 1906, wrote that “there are owls in the wood on Welford Hill. At night, when everybody is a-bed, they come down and flutter round the village”, and he described walking “up Welford Hill and down Rumer Hill and you are in Marston” 11/33, 15/04. In 1989 D. W. Hildred, surveying the parish’s wildlife for the Society, singled out “the trees on Welford Hill which bear the rookery” as among the few mature specimens left, alongside the managed oak wood on Rumer Hill 05/13.

Strawbrook and the open fields Before about 1800

The archive has nothing that names Welford Hill Farm before the end of the eighteenth century, and probably nothing could. Until enclosure, much of Welford’s land lay in great open fields divided into strips, and a farm in the modern sense, a compact block of fields worked from a single farmstead, was a later creation. What the archive does have is a guess, from a careful local writer, about what the hill was before.

In a set of answers to questions about old field names, a correspondent who signs as A.B. placed a large piece of land called Stawbrooke, “sometimes spelt Strawbroke and sometimes Slawbrooke”, in the Middlebrough field, and described it as “all Sackville land”. It lay, A.B. thought, “on the west side of what is now Hunt Hall farm ... and a part of what is now Welford Hill farm, and part of the same farm on the south west where it meets what is

now called Dorsington Glebe farm, and possibly the part of Welford Hill farm on the south where it meets Long Marston." It must have been large, because "in the very heavy levy of 1628 it yielded £12/0-12-0" 18/37. A.B. does not say where the 1628 figure came from, and the archive does not hold the levy itself.

Two things in that note matter for the later story. The first is the name Sackville. Woodward's outline of the manorial history of Welford takes the manor from St Denis of Paris at Domesday to Tewkesbury Abbey, then to the Grevilles, then to Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, around 1608, "and so to the Sackvilles" 19/30. The Sackvilles, Earls and later Dukes of Dorset, held the land at Welford, Weston and Milcote as one estate, the Milcote estate, for roughly three hundred years. In 1682 Charles, Earl of Dorset, appointed Sir John Clopton overseer and keeper of game in the manor of Welford 06/20. The second is that Strawbrook survived as a name: the 1916 schedule of the neighbouring Rumer Hall Farm still listed Little, West, Middle and East Strawbrook 13/43, and a mid-twentieth-century field-name map has "Straw Brook" and "Little Straw Brook" east of the hill 08/13 map, filed with 08/20-29.

A Sackville farm About 1800 to 1840

The first document that seems to name the farm is one the Society knew about but never held. A list of Welford material at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust records Duke of Dorset estate papers from 1589 to 1845, including, as item PR 59/45, "c.1800: survey of Rumer Hall and Hill Farm". The same bundle contains papers on building a barn at Rumer Hall Farm in 1808 and a house there in 1812, and an agreement of 1812 "for breaking up a piece of ground" 06/20, 13/31, 19/37. "Hill Farm" beside Rumer Hall can hardly be anything but Welford Hill Farm. The survey itself has not been copied into the archive.

What the archive does hold is a later and fuller survey, at one remove. Folder 08/13 is a printout of a transcription, made with the help of an AI service from an OCR of a microfilm, of the *Survey of Farms in Milcote, Weston and Welford (1811) belonging to Her Grace the Duchess of Dorset*, whose original is in the Sackville of Knole papers 08/13. In 1811 the estate was being managed for the young fourth Duke by his mother. The transcription lists about 260 parcels, farm by farm, each farm beginning with "The Homestead", and it does not give the farms' names. But one run of fields near the start of the list reads, in part:

Little Cow Ground · The Lane · The Park · The Great Hanging · Great Mill Way · ... Great Old Field · Old Field · Ten Acres · Barn and Yard · Hither Millway · Little Hanging · Sandpit Hill · Granary Hill · Back Furlong · Greenhill · Flax Hill

Survey of Farms in Milcote, Weston and Welford, 1811 (use.ai transcription) · 08/13

Set that beside the schedule of Welford Hill Farm drawn up for its sale in 1916: Little Cow Ground, the Park, Great and Little Hangings, Great Millway, Old Field, Barn and Yard, Hither Millway, Little and Great Sandpit Hill, Back Furlong and Granary Hill, Green Hill, Flax Hill 13/45. Just before that run, the 1811 list also has “Little Cooks Ground · Great Cooks Ground · Long Ground”, which look very like the Little and Great Cocks Ground and Long Ground of 1916. The match is too close to be chance. It is a fair inference, though not something either document states, that Welford Hill Farm already existed in 1811 as a Dorset estate farm with much the same fields it had a century later.

That raises the question of when it was made. Michael Woods, a member who lectured on farming history, told the Society in January 1982 that in Felden villages such as Welford, as enclosure proceeded, “new farmsteads began to appear well away from the village centre (‘green field farms’), often with names suggesting this, e.g. Welford Hill Farm, Weston Sands”, helped by high wheat prices during the Napoleonic Wars 37/01–04. The inclosure award for Welford, dated in pencil 1801 and catalogued elsewhere as 1802, may support part of that picture. The Duke of Dorset received only three modest allotments in it, of about 17, 6½ and 17½ acres, while several of his boundaries are described as “ancient inclosures belonging to the said Duke of Dorset” 47/98. If the Duke’s land on the hill was already enclosed by 1801, the farm may be somewhat older than the award. The archive cannot settle it.

The award adds one more puzzle. It set out the Long Marston road as a public carriage road “leading out of Welford at Birds Lane, thence in straight line to entrance to Meere Farm at Marston Old Gate”, and elsewhere it names an “ancient inclosure called Meer Hill Farm” as a boundary 47/98, 01/70, 22/12. The Long Marston road is the road over Welford Hill, and Welford Hill Farm’s land ran south to the Long Marston boundary. Whether “Meere Farm” or “Meer Hill Farm” was an earlier name for Welford Hill Farm, or for the separate farm at Meer (Mere) Barn nearer the village, is not

something the archive answers. It is recorded here as an open question, not a finding.



The farm's fields, mid-twentieth century. A detail, turned upright, from the County Surveyor's six-inch map on which a member wrote Welford's field names. Around "Welford Hill" and the farmstead are Granary Hill, Flax Hill, Hunt Hall Hanging, The Malins, Big Cow Ground, Little Low Ground, Twenty Acres and Big Barn Ground, with Millway and Eight Acres to the south-east; several are names already in the 1811 survey. The map is undated and carries the sticker "08/13". 08/20-29, p. 12

"Husbandry has allways been your profession" A Tomes of Welford in the eighteenth century

The family most closely tied to Welford Hill in the nineteenth century was the Tomes family, and the archive offers a tantalising glimpse of a Tomes farming at Welford a hundred years earlier. A Weston resident answering the Society's questions about the farms of Weston listed the tenants of Far Sands, or Salt Spring House, a lost farmhouse "on the Long Marston side of Weston Hill on the east of Rumer Coppice". Among them was the Rev. Joseph Greene, at Weston from 1735 to 1772, the Stratford schoolmaster and antiquary. The correspondent then quoted a letter from Greene:

For advice on farming this farm he wrote to Mr Tomes of Welford (Welford Hill?) — "Amongst all our discourse last night, I dont recollect that any mention was made what part of my farm was to be allotted to tillage and what was to continue greensward as I have never been used to such matters but as husbandry has allways

been your profession and practice, I wonder you did not remind me of what course was proper"

Letter answering local-history questions · 19/19

The bracketed "Welford Hill?" is the correspondent's own guess, and nothing in the quotation places Mr Tomes on the hill. Greene's letters were published by the Dugdale Society, which is probably where the quotation came from, but the archive does not hold the volume. What the passage does show is a Tomes recognised as a practised farmer at Welford in the middle of the eighteenth century, which makes the family's later presence on Welford Hill less of a coincidence. Gravestones in Long Marston church record a John Tomes who died at Stratford, and the Society's correspondent wondered whether he was an ancestor of the naturalist 19/17. The family links are not worked out in the archive.

Robert Fisher Tomes Farmer and naturalist, about 1850 to the late 1860s

The farm's first tenant whom we can see clearly is also its most remarkable. Robert Fisher, son of John and Sarah Tomes, farmer of Weston upon Avon, was baptised at Weston on 18 February 1824 19/17. His middle name probably came from a marriage of 1765, when Robert Fisher of Kinwarton married Susanna Edkins of Weston 19/41. A note on Welford Rectory paper says simply that John Tomes was born at Weston Sands, where his father farmed, "His brother Fisher Tomes, the well known Warwickshire naturalist farmed at Welford Hill - Welford-on-Avon" 19/43.

The census confirms it. On the night of 30 March 1851 the enumerator found "Robert F. Tomes", unmarried, aged 27, born at Weston on Avon, at Welford Hill: "Farmer of 340 acres employing 10 labourers". He lived with a housekeeper, Esther Timbs, aged 40, from Marston Sicca, and a 21-year-old farm servant, George Hathaway, from Ilmington 48/03, 14/14. The household was small, a young bachelor farmer with one woman to keep his house and one man living in. The labourers lived elsewhere. Welford Hill was one of the outlying farms that the enumerator, Matthew Mills of the Four Alls at Binton Bridges, grouped together in a separate book: Bickmarsh, Little Dorsington, Welford Pasture, Grass Hill, Welford Hill, Rumer Hall and Meer Barn, "large farms" of 420, 545, 530, 340, 210, 150 and 91 acres 48/03, 14/14. The 1856 Post Office directory lists "Tomes Robert, farmer" at Welford 48/13.

Ten years later the farm had grown. In April 1861 Robert F. Tomes, still unmarried, now 38, was “farmer of 420 acres employing 16 men and 4 boys”. His housekeeper was Mary Stanley (the surname is not certain), aged 57, and there was a housemaid, Jane Gardner, aged 22 48/04. The summary of that census lists Welford Hill, at 420 acres, among the big farms of the parish, behind Rumer Hall’s 600 48/04. Twenty working men and boys on one farm made Welford Hill one of the larger employers in a village where, twenty years earlier, about 105 people were agricultural labourers 48/01.

Where those extra eighty acres came from is suggested by a document the Society found in Birmingham. A list of holdings at Birmingham Central Library’s Local Studies department, made by a member, includes item 464978: “Survey of Welford Hill Farm, the property of Countess de la Warr in the occupation of R.F. Tomes. ... plans, manuscript and estate detail, plus additional later survey of land to the Weston boundary taken in by R.F. Tomes, in 1875 [?]” 10/25. The question mark is the member’s. Read one way, Tomes enlarged the farm by taking in land towards the Weston boundary; read with the date, the later survey might belong to 1875. The original would settle the date and very likely show the farm’s fields and buildings in the mid-nineteenth century. It is the most important document about the farm that the archive does not hold.



"A Littleton Antiquary: R. F. Tomes." The *Evesham Journal* cutting of 18 September 1943, pasted by H. M. Woodward into his notebook of village memories, quoting Fred Barratt: "I knew R. F. Tomes intimately in the years 1860–67 when he was living and farming at Welford Hill." 20/01, p. 32

The best portrait of Tomes at Welford Hill comes from Fred Barratt of Tanworth-in-Arden, born in Welford in about 1850, the son of the village plumber and painter, who was one of H. M. Woodward's favourite informants in the 1930s 20/01. In 1943 a columnist in the *Evesham Journal* printed a note from Barratt, then in his nineties, and Woodward pasted it into his notebook:

I knew R. F. Tomes intimately in the years 1860-67 when he was living and farming at Welford Hill. My father was a plumber and painter, and during that time I was working with my father. Mr. Tomes was continually coming to the painter's shop for bits of wood, glass, etc., which he required for some of his 'hobbies' as his neighbours used to call them. He used to buy old oak furniture and repair it with new wood, which he soaked in lime to make it the same colour as the old. When he had a hedge laid where there was a blackthorn growing, he used to cut an armful for walking-sticks, which when he had made he would bring to us to varnish, before giving them to his friends. He was also a very good taxidermist.

When the village may-pole was being re-erected we had a table put out in the village street, on which he placed a compass in order to get the weather-vane correctly set in position. I learned many things listening to him. He was a very learned geologist, and could tell you the composition of the soil, the depth of the rock underneath, and where to look for springs of water ...

Evesham Journal, 18 September 1943, in Woodward's notebook · 20/01, p. 32

The columnist added that Tomes "lived for many years at South Littleton", that his collection of Worcestershire birds had been bequeathed to Worcester Public Library, and that he wrote the chapters on the birds, reptiles and batrachians of Worcestershire in the first volume of the *Victoria County History* of Worcestershire, published in 1901. Barratt believed "he was the last of his generation, and that he wrote a book concerning the family, which originally came from Cleeve Prior" 20/01.

Barratt's description of a farmer who could tell "the depth of the rock underneath, and where to look for springs of water" is worth setting beside the geology of the hill. A tenant farming a gravel terrace with no river at hand would have needed to know where water lay. The weathervane story, too, places the farmer of Welford Hill at the centre of village life rather than apart from it; another note dates that re-erection of the maypole to the 1860s 20/16.

Tomes did not stay on the hill. Barratt's dates end in 1867. In the 1871 census the brothers William and Robert Tomes were farming at Weston on Avon, with 400 and 300 acres 48/05, and the Weston correspondent lists "Robert Fisher Tomes (there in 1870's)" among the tenants of Weston Farm 19/19. If the Birmingham survey's "1875" is right, he may have kept an interest in the Welford Hill land after he left the house, but that cannot be checked from the archive.

One small oddity belongs here. On the facing page of Woodward's notebook, beside the Tomes cutting, is a pasted certificate of registry of death for a Mary Stanley, registered at Old Stratford on 22 February 1852 20/01, p. 33. Mary Stanley is the name the transcriber read, with a query, for Tomes's housekeeper in 1861. If the 1861 reading is right, the certificate must belong to another woman of the same name, since this one died nine years earlier. Woodward does not say why he put it there.

The Countess's estate The landlord in the background

Throughout the nineteenth century Welford Hill was a tenanted farm, and its landlord was the owner of the Milcote estate. From the 1840s to the 1860s that meant Elizabeth Sackville-West, Countess De La Warr, who was made Baroness Buckhurst in her own right in 1864; several local writers speak of "the Countess de la Warr and her sister the Baroness Buckhurst", but the Society's own notes conclude that these were very likely one woman 40/01. Birmingham's catalogue calls Welford Hill Farm "the property of Countess de la Warr" 10/25.

The Countess left a strong mark on the village. She was patron of the living, gave the land for the National School that the Rev. James Davenport struggled to build between 1847 and 1852, paid for the alterations to the Rectory around 1847-50, and met the cost of the restoration of St Peter's church under Sir George Gilbert Scott 17/07, 19/02, 11/14. A history of the school adds, in brackets, that the Countess and her sister "built new farmhouses and cottages for Milcote estate's tenants and their workers" 17/07. The archive does not say which farmhouses. Whether the house on Welford Hill was one of them, or older, cannot be told from anything the Society holds: there is no description of the farmhouse, no date for it and no photograph of it.

After the Countess the estate passed down the Sackville line. By 1897 Kelly's Directory named Lord Sackville as lord of the manor and, with Mrs George C. Cheape of Bentley Manor, one of the principal landowners 46/98. When the Parish Council asked him for a plot of land for a burial ground in 1911, Lord Sackville refused to give one but offered to subscribe towards buying it 18/14. His agents in the estate's last years were the London surveyors Glasier & Sons, who would conduct its sale.

Ben Chambers A gentleman farmer, probably 1860s–1870s

The Chambers family were the great farmers of Milcote. In 1861 Betty Chambers, a widow of 48, farmed 533 acres at Milcote Farm, employing 16 men and 8 boys. Living with her were her daughter Anne, 20, and son Clifford, 17. Anne's birthplace was given as "Welford Hill" 48/04. That one entry suggests that the Chambers family had been at Welford Hill around 1840–41, a decade before Tomes. The 1841 census in the archive does not show them there: the only household it records at Welford Hill is that of Thomas Hewett, an agricultural labourer, and his wife Mary 48/01. The Society's copy of 1841 is incomplete in places and some of its readings are uncertain, so the gap may be in the record rather than on the hill.

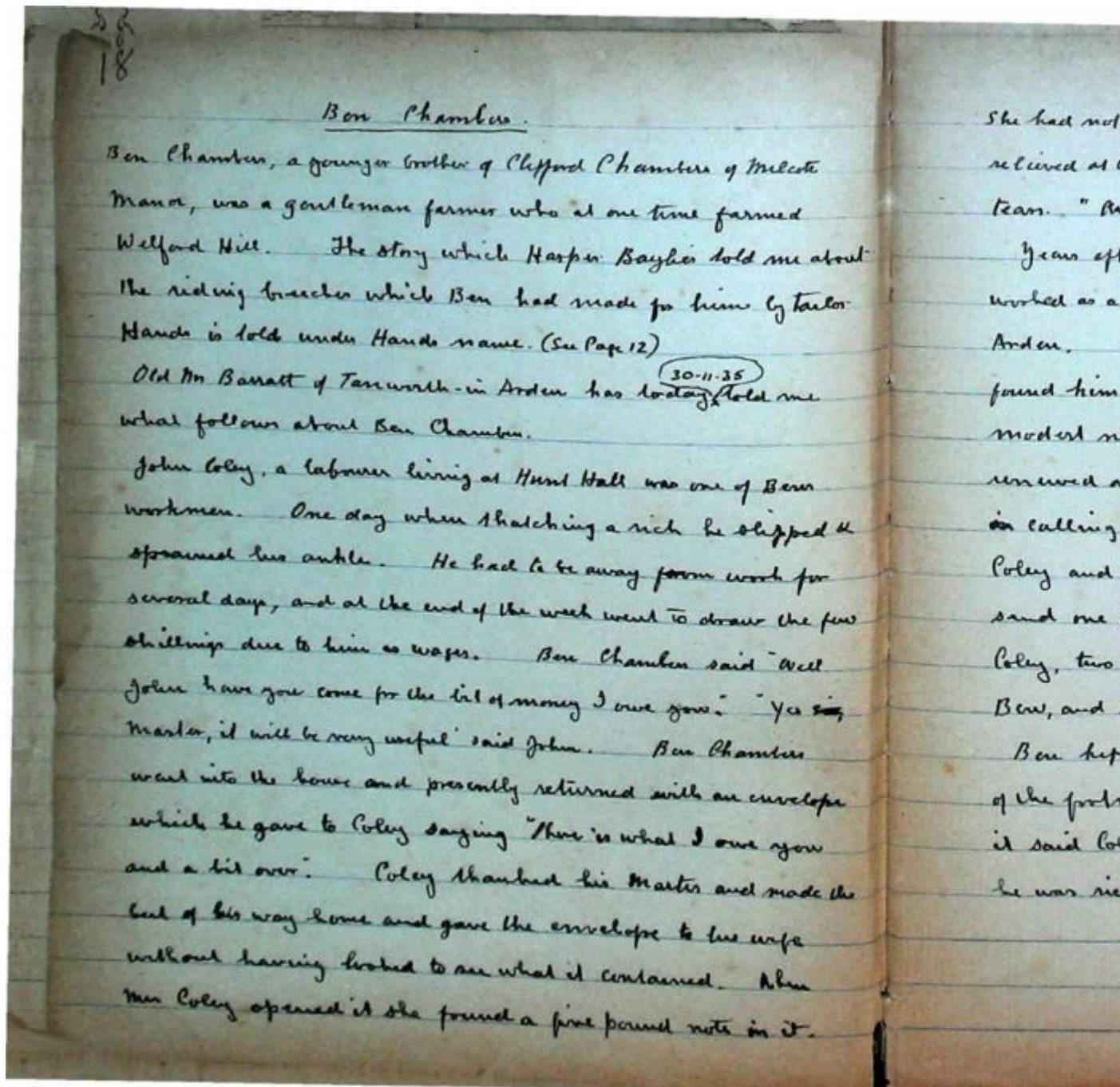
The Chambers who lived on in Welford memory was Ben. H. M. Woodward, writing down village stories in the 1930s, devoted a page of his notebook to him:

Ben Chambers, a younger brother of Clifford Chambers of Milcote Manor, was a gentleman farmer who at one time farmed Welford Hill.

H. M. Woodward's notebook · 20/01, p. 18

Woodward did not give dates. The archive offers one strong hint. The summary of the 1871 census for Welford lists three farmers with large acreages: "Benjamin Chamberlain with 432 acres", John Tysoe of Rumer Hall with 600, and John Adkins of Welford Pastures with 186 48/05. No Chamberlain appears anywhere else in the Welford records. A farmer named Benjamin, with an acreage close to the 420 that Tomes had farmed in 1861, in the census year after Tomes left, is very probably Benjamin Chambers misread. The

Society's 1871 file is a transcription with several pages missing and many uncertain readings; checking the original return (RG 10/3207) would settle it. Ben was certainly a man of standing in 1875, when "Benjamin Clifford Chambers" was appointed a trustee of the Fletcher will that governed several cottages in the village 13/37, 05/03-09.



"Ben Chambers." Woodward's notebook, pages 18-19, written up after Fred Barratt's visit on 30 November 1935. 20/01, PDF p. 21

Woodward recorded two stories about him. The first, told by Harper Baylies, concerned the tailor Thomas Hands, who lived in the old thatched cottage next to Welford House:

Hands made a pair of riding breeches for Ben Chambers of Welford Hill, a gentleman farmer, who liked such garments to fit closely. When Chambers was asked if he was satisfied with them he said they were the best fit he ever had in his life. "They fitted like a glove, I couldn't get them off the first night." "How did you get [them] off in the end Ben," said his friends. "I got Will Hastings and the two wenches to help", said Ben.

Woodward's notebook · 20/01, p. 12

The second came from Fred Barratt, the same informant who remembered Tomes, on 30 November 1935. John Coley, a labourer living at Hunt Hall, was one of Ben's workmen. Thatching a rick, he slipped and sprained his ankle and was off work for several days. At the end of the week he went to draw the few shillings due to him:

Ben Chambers said "Well John, have you come for the bit of money I owe you." "Yes Master, it will be very useful" said John. Ben Chambers went into the house and presently returned with an envelope which he gave to Coley saying "There is what I owe you and a bit over". ... When Mrs Coley opened it she found a five pound note in it. She had not expected to draw more than a few shillings, and was so relieved at the unexpected gift that she sat down and burst into tears. "And I sat down opposite to her and did the same" said John.

Woodward's notebook · 20/01, pp. 18-19

The story then turns. "Years after the Chambers family became poor, and Ben worked as a day labourer in the neighbourhood of Tanworth-in-Arden." The Coleys had prospered and settled at Tanworth too, and John insisted on calling his old employer "Master" to the end. One day Ben came to ask for the loan of two pounds to help send one of his boys to Canada. "Certainly Master," said Coley, "two or two hundred if you want it." Ben repaid it at the end of the fortnight, as he had promised. "I should never have asked him for it," said Coley, "for I can never forget his kindness to me when he was rich and I was poor" 20/01.

The story is a moral tale as Woodward tells it, and he heard it at second hand some sixty years after the events. But its outline fits what the archive shows of agriculture in those decades: a family

farming hundreds of acres in the 1860s, and by the 1880s gone from the estate. In 1881 a W. C. Chambers was still farming 420 acres at Weston 48/06, but at Welford Hill there was a new tenant.

The Parishes arrive About 1880

On census night in April 1881 the household at “Welford on Avon Hill” was headed by Francis Parish, aged 36, “Farmer of 250 acres employing 8 men, 1 boy, 2 women”. His wife Julia, 32, was from Bromyard in Herefordshire. Their eldest child, Ellen M., 11, had been born at Ebrington; the next four, Frank C., 9, Ethel M., 7, John G., 6, and Maude, 3, at Upper Sapey in Herefordshire. A 23-year-old private governess, Catherine Handley, from Kenilworth, and a general servant, Lilie Edkins, 17, from Alcester, completed the household 48/06.

Those birthplaces date the family’s arrival quite closely. Maude was born at Upper Sapey around 1878, so the Parishes came to Welford Hill between about 1878 and 1881. They also hint at the kind of family they were: a farmer moving between counties, keeping a governess for five children. Francis Parish’s own birthplace is the one awkward detail. In 1881 the transcription reads Ebrington, which is in Gloucestershire, though the entry puts it in Worcestershire; in 1891 and 1901 it is Eckington, Worcestershire 48/06, 48/07, 48/08. Eckington is the likelier, since it appears twice and matches the county, but the original returns would decide it.

The size of the farm also changes between the records. Tomes had 340 acres in 1851 and 420 in 1861; the probable Ben Chambers had 432 in 1871; Parish had 250 in 1881; and the farm Parish bought in 1916 measured just under 289 acres 48/03, 48/04, 48/05, 48/06, 13/45. Census acreages were given by the farmers themselves and could include land rented elsewhere, so the figures need not describe the same block of land. The likeliest reading, and it is only a reading, is that the farm was enlarged in Tomes’s time by taking in land towards Weston, and cut back again when the

tenancy changed, perhaps with the extra land going to a neighbouring farm.

Francis Parish soon became one of the village's public men. When the first Welford Parish Council met at the Board School on 20 December 1894, the five present were John Izod, Francis Parish, Arthur Harris, Frederick Brookes and John Wilson 18/13. Woodward, copying the minutes in 1940, added frank sketches of each. Of Parish he wrote:

Francis Parish was a gentleman farmer who farmed Welford Hill. He was a tall rather slender man who looked rather like an army officer. When I knew him he was evidently a drinker. His face showed it.

Woodward's notes from the first Parish Council minute book · 18/13

It is not a kind portrait, but Woodward was not kind about any of the founders: Izod "not ... a successful man of business", Wilson killed falling from his trap, Harris's body "gnawed by rats". Parish served the parish for a long time. From at least 1909 to 1919 the Council appointed him, year after year, one of the Overseers of the Poor, the officers who assessed and collected the poor rate 18/14. Kelly's Directory listed "Parish Francis, farmer, Welford hill" in 1897 and "Parish Francis & Son, farmers, Welford hill" in 1914 46/98, 48/21.

A farm household, 1881-1911 The census on the hill

The censuses of 1891, 1901 and 1911 let us see not only the farmer's family but the cluster of cottages around the farm, and the men who worked it. They are the closest the archive comes to a picture of daily life on Welford Hill.

In 1891 the enumerator recorded four households at Welford Hill, the last entries in the civil parish 48/07. George Harwood, a single agricultural labourer of 38, lived with his widowed mother Elizabeth, 70, and his brother John. Henry Paddock, 60, an agricultural labourer from Long Marston, lived with his wife Mary, two grown sons and a lodger, James Paddock. In the farmhouse were Francis Parish, 46, Julia, 42, Ellen, 21, Frank C., 19, "farmer's assistant", and John G., 16, with two servants, Rose A. Johnson and Mary Bryan. On census night they also had five visitors: Frank Clemence, 30, a secretary from London, his wife Jessie, and three

young women born at Chatteris, Banbridge in Ireland and Glasgow. The fourth household was that of John Butler, 49, horse carter, from Honeybourne, his wife Elizabeth, his son William, 25, a shepherd, and Albert, 13, a plough boy 48/07.

Those four entries hold a whole working farm in miniature: carter, shepherd, plough boy and labourers, and a farmer's son learning the business. The Paddocks were already there in 1881, when the 1881 return shows a Paddock family of labourers next door to the Parishes, including George, 18, and Henry, 15, both agricultural labourers, and Gertrude, 12, and Eli, 8, at school 48/06. The Harwoods had a longer link with the area still: in 1841 a John Harwood, labourer, lived on Weston Hill 48/01.

By 1901 Julia Parish had died; Francis was a widower of 56. His son Frank C., 29, and John G., 26, both "farmer's son, worker", and his daughter Ethel M., 24, lived with him, together with a visitor, Charles H. Pratt, a miller from Stratford, and a general servant, Ellen Dance, from Tirley 48/08. In the cottages were Henry Jones, 65, groom on the farm, and his son Henry, 34, "horseman on farm"; Thomas Bradley, 72, "living on own means", with his much younger wife Diana; and Henry Paddock, now a 70-year-old widower, with his son Henry 48/08. A Society talk on the 1901 census picked out the Jones household: the son was recorded in the infirmity column with the word the enumerators of the time used for a person with a learning disability 46/37-95. He was nonetheless working on the farm as a horseman.

The 1911 census is the richest of all, because the Society holds the householders' own schedules, each filled in and signed by the head of the household 48/09, 48/12. Francis Parish, now 66, wrote "Farmer, employer"; there were five people in the house and twelve rooms. He signed, and gave his address as "Welford Hill, Stratford on Avon". Edward Boulton, 36, carter on the farm, lived at Welford Hill Cottage, six people in four rooms. Henry Jones, the groom of 1901, was now 75 and a cattleman on the farm, living with one other person in three rooms at Welford Hill Cottages. Harry Burbidge, 46, was a gamekeeper, three people in four rooms at Welford Hill Cottage 48/12. The enumerator's summary book adds the house types: Boulton's and Burbidge's are "Cottage", Parish's is "Farm House" 48/09.

YEA R	HEAD AT THE FARMHOUSE	SIZE AND WORKFORCE AS GIVEN	OTHERS AT WELFORD HILL	REF.
1841	Not recorded	—	Thomas Hewett, ag. lab.	48/01

YEA R	HEAD AT THE FARMHOUSE	SIZE AND WORKFORCE AS GIVEN	OTHERS AT WELFORD HILL	REF.
1851	Robert F. Tomes, 27	340 a., 10 labourers	Housekeeper and one farm servant in the house	48/03
1861	Robert F. Tomes, 38	420 a., 16 men, 4 boys	Housekeeper, housemaid	48/04
1871	“Benjamin Chamberlain” (probably Chambers)	432 a.	Detail not transcribed	48/05
1881	Francis Parish, 36	250 a., 8 men, 1 boy, 2 women	Paddock family; Charles Smith, carter, at Welford Hill Cottage	48/06
1891	Francis Parish, 46	“Employer”	Harwood, Paddock, Butler (carter, shepherd, plough boy)	48/07
1901	Francis Parish, 56	“Employer”	Jones (groom, horseman), Bradley, Paddock	48/08
1911	Francis Parish, 66	“Employer”; 12 rooms	Boulton (carter), Jones (cattleman), Burbidge (gamekeeper)	48/09, 48/12

Over sixty years the pattern is steady. The farmhouse held the farmer’s family and one or two living-in servants; two to four cottages held the men who handled the horses, sheep and cattle. The great majority of the labour, the ten to twenty men Tomes employed, must have walked up from the village each day, since there were never more than a handful of households on the hill. Two changes stand out. The gamekeeper of 1911 is new, a sign of the shooting that mattered to landowners and gentleman farmers alike by then. And the women field workers whom Parish counted in 1881, “2 women”, disappear from the later returns. The censuses are a snapshot one night in ten years, and they cannot show who came for harvest or for weeding.

Two of the Parish sons stayed with the farm. John Gerald Parish appears in 1913 as “farmer and road surveyor” at the inquest on William Johnson, a Welford man who drowned in Whiteladies’ pool beside the Long Marston road while, it seems, leaning over to gather watercress. The first witness saw “Mr. John Parish coming from the direction of Welford Hill”, who helped him get the body out and tried to revive him 13/42. Frank Cecil Parish followed his father onto the Parish Council, attending from April 1919 and serving as an Overseer in 1920 and 1921 18/14, 19/25.

The sale of 1916 The tenant becomes the owner

In 1916, in the middle of the First World War, Lord Sackville sold the Milcote estate. The date is fixed by a single sheet in Folder 13: a plan of Weston on Avon drawn by E. B. Glasier, surveyor, of Grafton Street, Piccadilly, dated February 1916 and corrected by hand to July 1916, and with it a list of all 38 estate cottages, grouped by the farm each went with, stamped by Glasier & Sons on 21 July 1916 13/39. Beside each farm the list names its buyer or tenant: Mr Izod at Rumer Hall, Mr Pearce at Milcote Manor, Mr Buttler at Weston Sands, Mr Bluck at Weston Farm, Mr Hawkins at Hunt Hall, Mr Turvey at Cherry Orchard Farm, and:

FARM (OCCUPIER)	LOCATION	NO.	COTTAGES
Welford Hill (Mr Parish)	At Home Rickyard	60	2
"	On Rumer Hill	61	2

Cottage list, Milcote Estate, July 1916 · 13/39

The sale schedules that go with that list are undated, but the names match, and the Society's catalogue dates them all to the 1916 break-up 13/39. The schedule for Welford Hill Farm is two pages: a typed sheet headed "MILCOTE ESTATE", to which someone added in ink "Welford Hill Farm" and "SALE TO FRANCIS PARISH ESQ., and J. C.? Parish Esq.", and a handwritten fair copy headed "Milcote Estate, Welford Hill Farm, Sale to Francis Parish", with every plan number ticked 13/45. After perhaps thirty-five years as tenants, the Parishes bought the farm.

The second name in ink is read as "J. C." with a query. No J. C. Parish appears elsewhere in the archive. The family had a John G. (John Gerald) and a Frank C. (Frank Cecil), and either initial could have been misformed or misread in a hurried ink note; the transcriber noted the doubt. It is most likely that the farm was bought by Francis Parish and one of his sons, the "Son" of Kelly's 1914 entry, but the archive does not show which.

The price is not given, and nor is the conveyance. The schedule shows only what was sold. That the tenant bought, rather than an outsider, fits the pattern of the whole Milcote sale, in which the cottage list names the occupiers of every farm and the sale schedules name the same men as buyers. Whether the Parishes bought by private treaty before an auction, or at one, is not recorded.

Thirty parcels of land The farm in 1916

The 1916 schedule is the only complete description of Welford Hill Farm in the archive, and it is worth reading closely. It lists thirty entries, all in Welford parish, with an ink total of 288 acres 3 roods 18 poles 13/45. The Society's transcriber found that the entries actually add up to 289 acres 3 roods 18 poles, one acre more, and suspected the overwritten figure for Hither Millway.

PLAN NO.	DESCRIPTION	USE	A. R. P.
60	Farmhouse & Garden		1 0 6
66	Shrubbery		0 3 36
55, 56, 59	Farm Buildings & Yards		2 2 18
58	2 Cottages & Gardens		0 0 34
57	Orchard	Grass	0 1 27
53	Park	Grass	1 3 34
52	Cow Ground & Carthouse Close	Grass	23 1 18
54	Plantation		0 0 32
67	Far Hangings	Arable	10 2 14
87	Flax Hill	Arable	13 1 29
79	Green Hill	Arable	19 2 34
65	Back Furlong & Granary Hill	Arable	22 0 9
64	Little Sandpit Hill	Arable	10 0 8
41	2 Cottages & Gardens		0 1 3
43	Great Sandpit Hill	Arable	17 0 8
42	Cherry Hill	Arable	6 1 36
17	Eight Acres	Arable	9 1 31
16	Hither Millway	Arable	22 1 31
12	Old Field	Arable	27 1 33
15	Great Millway	Arable	20 2 30
44	Great & Little Hangings	Arable	19 1 26
47	Paddock	Grass	3 0 14
46	Barn & Yard		0 1 28
45	Road		0 1 33
48	Little Cow Ground	Grass	7 1 3
14	Long Ground	Arable	20 1 11
49	Great Cocks Ground	Grass	13 1 10
13	Coxmere Coppice	Wood	2 0 7
50	Little Cocks Ground	Grass	7 1 38
173	Churchfield Close	Grass	5 2 17

Milcote Estate, Welford Hill Farm, sale schedule (figures as transcribed; a few typed figures are faint or overtyped and the handwritten copy's readings are used) · 13/45

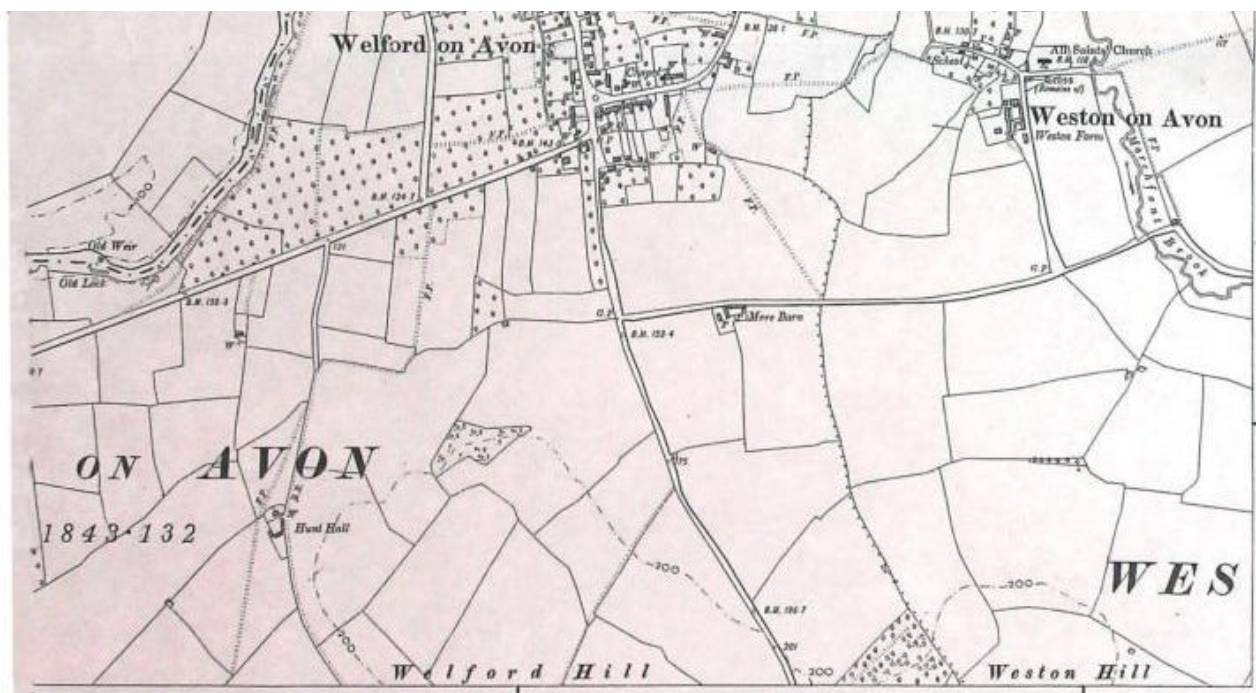
Several things stand out. First, this is an arable farm: about 233 acres under the plough against 44 of grass, roughly five acres of arable to one of grass. The grass lies close to the farmstead, in the Park, the Orchard, the Paddock, the Cow Ground and Carthouse Close, and in the Cocks Grounds and Little Cow Ground, where cattle and horses could be kept near the yards. The big arable fields, Old Field, the two Millways, Back Furlong and Granary Hill, Long Ground, Green Hill and the Hangings, run out across the hill.

Second, the farmhouse had pretensions. It stood in an acre of garden, with three-quarters of an acre of shrubbery and a small park of nearly two acres. That is the setting of a gentleman farmer's house, which is how Woodward described both Ben Chambers and Francis Parish, and it fits the twelve rooms Parish recorded in 1911 and the governess of 1881.

Third, the farm had four cottages, two by the farmhouse (No. 58, the "Home Rickyard" pair of the cottage list) and two more (No. 41, which the cottage list places "On Rumer Hill"). A separate "Barn & Yard" (No. 46) stood away from the main buildings, beside the road (No. 45). Seventy years later the Society's barn surveyor found an isolated brick barn "some 500 yds from farmhouse" on Welford Hill Farm 14/10, and it is tempting to identify the two. Nothing in either document proves it.

Fourth, the names are old. As shown above, a large share of them appear in the 1811 Dorset survey, and many survived into the mid-twentieth-century field-name map: Flax Hill, Granary Hill, Big Cow Ground, Long Ground, Oldfield, Millway and Eight Acres 08/13 map. Coxmere Coppice is printed on the 1949 map south-west of the farm, a small wood that kept its name and its place for at least a century and a half 03/26. Hither and Great Millway take their name from the old way to Welford mill; the inclosure award of 1801 laid out "Wont Hall Road" southward "along Millway" to the gate of Wont Hall, which the Society's notes identify with Hunt Hall, the farm on the hill's northern slope 47/98, 18/37.

Finally, the schedule says nothing about crops, stock, buildings beyond their names, or the state of the house. The farm's arable acreage tells us it grew corn and probably beans and roots, which Kelly's 1897 directory gave as the chief crops of the parish, alongside its market gardening 46/98. Beyond that the archive is silent on how the farm was worked.



The approach from the village, 1903. The southern part of the Ordnance Survey six-inch sheet (Gloucestershire I S.E.), second edition 1903. The road south from the village passes Mere Barn; Hunt Hall stands to the west, and “Welford Hill” is printed along the bottom edge of the sheet. The farmstead itself lies just beyond the edge, on the next sheet, which the archive does not hold. 46/14

Between the wars 1916 to 1939: a thin record

After 1916 the farm almost disappears from the archive. Francis Parish was 71 at the time of the purchase; he last appears as an Overseer in April 1919, and Frank Cecil Parish’s appearances on the Council end in 1921 18/14. The archive does not record Francis Parish’s death, the end of the family’s time at Welford Hill, or the next owner. The Parish Council minutes that Woodward summarised do not mention the farm again. There are no farm sale particulars for Welford Hill among the twentieth-century sales in Folder 11, which include smaller farms such as Bunkers Hill 11/30.

Two scraps survive from around 1930. A woman whose parents came to Welford in 1929 remembered renting the Owl Pen in Boat Lane “from Mrs Lyon Smith, the wife of the local doctor who lived at Welford Hill”; in a later email she added that the Lyon Smiths “lived at Welford Hill but went back to their other house in Bromsgrove during the winter” 49/01, 49/20. A doctor spending his summers on the hill suggests that by then at least one house there was a country retreat rather than a working farmhouse. Whether that house was the old farmhouse, or the “Welford Hill House” that appears in a survey of about 1960, cannot be told.

The hill also had a public role. When Welford planned its celebrations for King George V's Silver Jubilee in 1935, the public meeting agreed on "a bonfire on Welford Hill", and the Scouts offered to help collect the material 60/09. A high, open field visible for miles was the obvious place for a beacon.

Of the farm itself in these years, its crops, its stock, the effect of the agricultural depression of the 1920s and 1930s, the archive holds nothing. Nor does it hold any return from the National Farm Survey of 1941-43, which recorded every farm in England and would almost certainly include Welford Hill. These would be the obvious places to look next.

Dudley Rowe and the Coronation 1950 to 1953

In 1950 the Society compiled a house-by-house notebook, "People in Welford 1950". Along the Long Marston road, after the Women's Land Army hostel and a string of houses, it lists "Mr & Mrs Rowe - Welford Hill", then "Mr & Mrs Edkins - cottages", the Hicks and George families at Rumer Hill Cottages, and "Mr Edkins sen. - Welford Hill" 01/56. This is the first sight of the farm's occupiers for thirty years, and the archive does not say whether the Rows owned or rented it.

Dudley Rowe and his wife were active in the village. At the river carnival of 1952, Welford's second, "Mr and Mrs Dudley Rowe ran the sports", with a new clay-pigeon shoot 52/22. Mr and Mrs D. Rowe ran the tombola at a fête, and a Miss D. Rowe the Christmas fare stall at a youth club bazaar 01/15-25, 50/102.

The fullest episode is the Coronation of 1953. On 5 December 1952 R. E. Wright, secretary of the Coronation Committee, wrote to "Mr. Dudley Rowe, Welford Hill" to say that "the unanimous desire was expressed at the recent Coronation Committee meeting" that he should join it 55/06. At the first public meeting Mrs Ethel Roberts proposed "that in the evening of Coronation Day a mass picnic should take place on Welford Hill", with the village canvassed for food, drink, tents and chairs, buses hired, and choirs, competitions, fireworks and a bonfire. The committee adopted the idea, and minuted that "Mr. D. Rowe, of Welford Hill, had kindly offered his co-operation" 55/01 & 03. He then offered tractor transport to carry people up the hill. The draft programme printed for the village announced, for 7 p.m., a "Grand Supper Picnic, Bonfire, Beast Roast and Firework Display on Welford Hill (by kind permission of

Mr. Dudley Rowe), with dancing, singing and other entertainment” 03/09, 55/09.

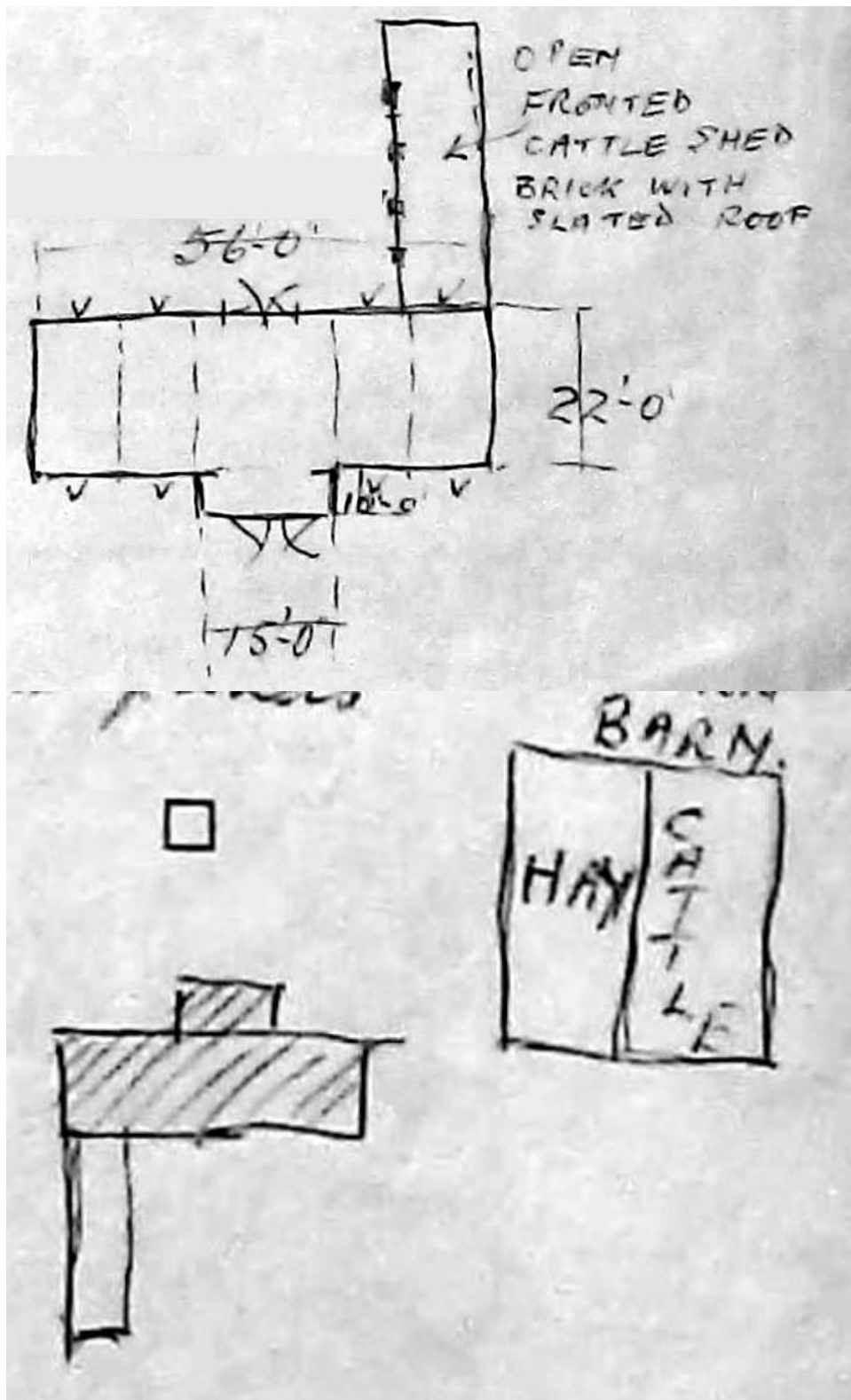
It did not happen there. At a public meeting on 17 March 1953 the view was expressed that “Long Marston, Quinton and Pebworth would benefit more than Welford and Weston if the Bonfire and Firework were organised on Welford Hill”. The hill was too good a vantage point: the display would be better seen by the neighbouring villages than by Welford itself. Mr Fred Bluck offered his field on Naas (or Haas) Hill instead, and it was agreed unanimously 55/01 & 03. On 19 March the secretary wrote again to Mr Rowe: “The Coronation Committee wishes me to convey to you their best thanks for kindly offering your field on Welford Hill for the celebrations and hope that the change of site has nor [sic] inconvenienced you in any way” 55/06.

The episode is a small one, but it shows the hill as the village saw it in the mid-twentieth century: a commanding open space on private farmland, the natural place for a beacon, and a farmer there willing to lend it and his tractor to the village.

Houses, caravans and a cattle shed About 1960 to 1989

A notebook titled “Houses in Welford about 1960”, compiled street by street, has a page for Welford Hill. It lists a cottage, “Mr Brown, 2 cottage” (a conversion), “Mr Pettifer, Welford Hill House” and “Badgers Green”, another conversion with two caravans 20/06. The farmhouse is not named as such, and no farmer is listed. The notebook was compiled partly to oppose another caravan site in the parish, and the caravans and conversions it records were part of a wider change, as Welford’s cottages and outlying buildings filled with newcomers and the old tied cottages were sold or let.

The farm reappears in October 1985, when the Society joined the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings’ national “Domesday Survey of Barns”. Felix Pilling surveyed two barns on 23 October: the Littleton and Badsey Growers’ barn in the High Street, and a barn on Welford Hill Farm, whose owner was “Mr. Worsley, Welford Hill Farm” 14/10. His form is the only description of any building on the farm in the whole archive:



The barn on Welford Hill Farm, 23 October 1985. Felix Pilling's sketches on the SPAB survey form: the barn, 56 ft by 22 ft with a projecting entrance 15 ft wide and an open-fronted cattle shed of brick with a slated roof; and the farm group, with a modern barn divided into "Hay" and "Cattle". 14/10, pp. 8-9

The barn stood partly in a farm group and partly isolated, "some 500 yds from farmhouse". It was 56 feet by 22, of five bays with two cart entrances, built of solid brick under a slate roof, gabled at both ends, with common rafters and a queen-strut roof. Pilling noted "2 sets of ventilation holes to each bay (1 either side) in semi circular headed panels". It was in good condition and in use for cattle, with an open-fronted cattle shed of brick and slate built against it and a modern barn nearby for hay and cattle. It was not listed. He left the date blank 14/10.

Brick walls, a slate roof, queen struts and ventilation panels with round heads point to a nineteenth-century building rather than an earlier one, and slate came into the Midlands in quantity only with the railways. A barn of that kind on an estate farm would fit the Countess De La Warr's building of farmhouses and cottages for the Milcote tenants, but that is a guess built on a guess, and the archive contains no building accounts for the estate after 1812. The dating is left open here.

The Society's committee minutes record the survey from the other side: "Mr Pelling reported that he had been able to complete the information on the Barn that the L.B.G. use and a barn at Welford Hill Farm. Mr Pelling also said that Mrs Worsly was very interested in the History Society and suggested that we send her a notice of General Meetings" 37/01-04. The spelling of the name varies, and the minutes call the surveyor Pelling where the form gives Pilling. An A. Worsley appears on the Parish Magazine's rota of church readers in June 1977 03/141, which suggests the family had been in Welford for some years.

The electoral register for 1987-88 lists the electors at Welford Hill: John R. and Pamela A. Henderson at no. 1; Brian and Jennifer J. Carter at no. 2; Susan G. and Gladys M. Benton at Badgers Green; Timothy J., Joan and Ingrid G. Laughton at Hill House; and John W., Veronica A. and Kelley A. Hudson at Welford Hill Farm 30/05. Between October 1985 and October 1986, then, the people at the farm changed, or the Worsleys and the Hudsons were connected in a way the archive does not explain. Either way, by the late 1980s Welford Hill had become a small hamlet of five households, only one of them at the farm.

The last mention in the archive is a naturalist's. D. W. Hildred's wildlife report of 1989 regretted the loss of mature trees across the parish and noted that, apart from the oak wood on Rumer Hill and "the trees on Welford Hill which bear the rookery", most of what remained was scrub or old hedge growth 05/13. The 1992

Conservation Area study, mapping the views out of the village, marked an arrow “to Welford Hill” across a patchwork of paddocks and hedgerows 15/08.

What the farm was

Taken together, the archive allows a fairly confident outline of Welford Hill Farm’s history, with long blank stretches.

The hill is a cap of old river gravel, the highest of the Avon’s terraces in the parish, and its light soil made it plough land. Some at least of its fields were Sackville land in the open-field era. By about 1800 it was an enclosed estate farm of the Dukes of Dorset, surveyed with Rumer Hall around then and again in 1811, when most of the field names it would carry until the twentieth century were already in place. It was always an outlying farm, a farmstead in its own fields well away from the village, with a few cottages for its horsemen and stockmen and most of its labour walking up from Welford.

For most of the nineteenth century it was let to substantial tenants on the Milcote estate: probably the Chambers family around 1840; Robert Fisher Tomes, the farmer-naturalist, from before 1851 until about 1867, when it reached its largest recorded size of 420 acres or more; probably Ben Chambers in the late 1860s and 1870s; and from about 1880 Francis Parish and his family. Its farmers were called gentlemen farmers by the village, kept governesses and housekeepers, sat on the Parish Council and served as overseers, and were remembered for their learning, their generosity, their tight breeches and their drinking. In July 1916, when Lord Sackville sold the Milcote estate, the Parishes bought the farm they had rented for some thirty-five years: just under 289 acres, five-sixths of it arable, with a gentleman’s farmhouse in a shrubbery and park, four cottages and an outlying barn.

After that the archive records only glimpses: a doctor’s family on the hill in summer around 1930, a bonfire for the 1935 Jubilee, Dudley Rowe offering his field and his tractor for the Coronation in 1953, conversions and caravans around 1960, a brick cattle barn surveyed in 1985 under Mr Worsley, the Hudsons at the farm in 1987, and the rookery still in the hilltop trees in 1989.

Those gaps are not a sign that nothing happened. They mark where the Society's collecting stopped. The farm's own story in the twentieth century, through two world wars, mechanisation and the change from a tied workforce to a family business, is almost certainly still in living memory and in documents elsewhere. The notes below list where to look.

Gaps and conflicting sources

WHAT THE ARCHIVE DOES NOT HOLD

- **No photograph of the farm.** There is no photograph of the farmhouse, the cottages or the barns anywhere in the archive. The pictures in this essay are maps, notebook pages and a survey sketch.
- **No date or description of the farmhouse.** Its age, materials and plan are not recorded. Only its twelve rooms (1911) and its garden, shrubbery and park (1916) are known.
- **The two estate surveys.** The “c.1800 survey of Rumer Hall and Hill Farm” (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, PR 59/45) and the “Survey of Welford Hill Farm ... in the occupation of R.F. Tomes” (Birmingham Central Library, 464978, with a later survey of land “taken in”, perhaps 1875) are known only from catalogue lists 06/20, 10/25. Either would add more than anything in the archive.
- **The 1811 survey is a transcription of a transcription.** Folder 08/13 is an AI-assisted reading of an OCR of a microfilm, and does not name the farms. The identification of the Welford Hill fields rests on matching names. The original is in the Sackville papers (U269), presumably at the Kent History and Library Centre.
- **No farm accounts, leases, deeds or conveyance.** The 1916 price and the terms of the Parishes' purchase are unknown.
- **1871 detail.** The Society's 1871 file gives only a summary for the farm, with several pages missing 48/05.
- **1916 to 1950.** No record of when the Parishes left, who followed them, or how the farm was run between the wars. No National Farm Survey (1941–43) return is in the archive.
- **1953 to 1985.** Whether Dudley Rowe owned or rented the farm, when he left, and when the Worsleys came are not recorded.
- **No tithe map.** The 1838 tithe notes copied at Gloucester do not mention Welford Hill 08/15.
- **Prehistory.** The claim of an ancient “settlement on Welford Hill” 10/26, 34/01–04 is unsupported by any find recorded in the archive.

WHERE THE SOURCES DISAGREE OR ARE UNCERTAIN

- **Acreage.** 340 acres (1851), 420 (1861), 432 (1871), 250 (1881), 288a 3r 18p by the ink total or 289a 3r 18p by the sum of the entries (1916). Census acreages may include land held elsewhere.
- **“Benjamin Chamberlain”, 1871.** Almost certainly Benjamin Chambers, but this is an inference from the summary of a transcription 48/05.

- **When Chambers farmed Welford Hill.** Woodward says only “at one time”. Anne Chambers’s birthplace (about 1841) and the 1871 entry suggest two periods, or two members of the family.
- **Francis Parish’s birthplace.** Ebrington (1881) or Eckington, Worcestershire (1891, 1901).
- **“J. C.? Parish”.** The second buyer’s initials in the 1916 schedule are uncertain; the known sons were John G. and Frank C.
- **“Mr Tomes of Welford (Welford Hill?)”.** The link between Joseph Greene’s eighteenth-century correspondent and the farm is the Weston correspondent’s guess 19/19.
- **Mary Stanley.** The 1852 death certificate in Woodward’s notebook cannot belong to the Mary Stanley (reading uncertain) who was Tomes’s housekeeper in 1861 20/01, 48/04.
- **“Meere Farm” and “Meer Hill Farm”.** Names in the 1801 inclosure award that may or may not refer to Welford Hill Farm 47/98.
- **The 1985 barn.** Possibly the “Barn & Yard” of the 1916 schedule; not proved. Worsley or Worsly; Pilling or Pelling.
- **Welford Hill House.** Its relationship to the farmhouse is not recorded 20/06, 30/05.

SOURCES IN THE ARCHIVE

- Geology and prehistory: 03/26 (annotated 1949 map), 10/26, 10/28, 10/29, 34/01–04.
- Manor and estate: 19/30, 06/20 and 13/31 (Birthplace Trust list), 19/37, 08/13 (1811 survey), 18/37 (Strawbrook), 47/98, 01/70 and 22/12 (inclosure award), 17/07, 11/14, 40/01 (Countess De La Warr), 46/98 (Kelly 1897), 37/01–04 (Woods talk, 1982; barn survey minutes).
- Tomes: 19/17, 19/19, 19/41, 19/43, 10/25, 20/01 (pp. 32–33), 20/16, 48/03, 14/14, 48/04, 48/05, 48/13 (1856 directory).
- Chambers: 20/01 (pp. 12, 18–19), 48/04, 48/05, 48/06, 13/37, 05/03–09.
- Parish: 48/06, 48/07, 48/08, 48/09, 48/12, 18/13, 18/14, 19/25, 13/42, 46/37–95, 46/98, 48/21.
- 1916 sale: 13/39, 13/43–47 (Welford Hill Farm is 13/45).
- Twentieth century: 13/22, 49/01, 49/20, 60/09, 01/56, 52/22, 01/15–25, 50/102, 55/01 & 03, 55/06, 55/09, 03/09, 20/06, 14/10, 03/141, 30/05, 05/13, 15/08, 11/30.
- Maps: 12/04 (1949 Definitive Map photographs), 46/14 (OS six-inch, 1903), 08/20–29 p. 12 (field-name map).
- Descriptions: 11/33 and 15/04 (Garrett, *The Idyllic Avon*, 1906).

WHERE TO LOOK NEXT

- Birmingham Central Library (now the Library of Birmingham), Local Studies, item 464978: the Tomes-era survey.
- Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, PR 59/45: the survey of about 1800.
- Kent History and Library Centre, Sackville papers U269 E211: the 1811 survey in the original, and probably estate rentals naming the tenants.

- The National Archives: the 1871 census (RG 10/3207) for the Chambers entry, and the National Farm Survey (MAF 32 and MAF 73) for Welford Hill in 1941–43.
- The Dugdale Society’s edition of Joseph Greene’s correspondence, for the letter to “Mr Tomes of Welford”.
- Oral history: the people who farmed or lived on Welford Hill after 1950.