

Townsend Road Cottages – AKA Pump Cottages

By Neil B. Maw



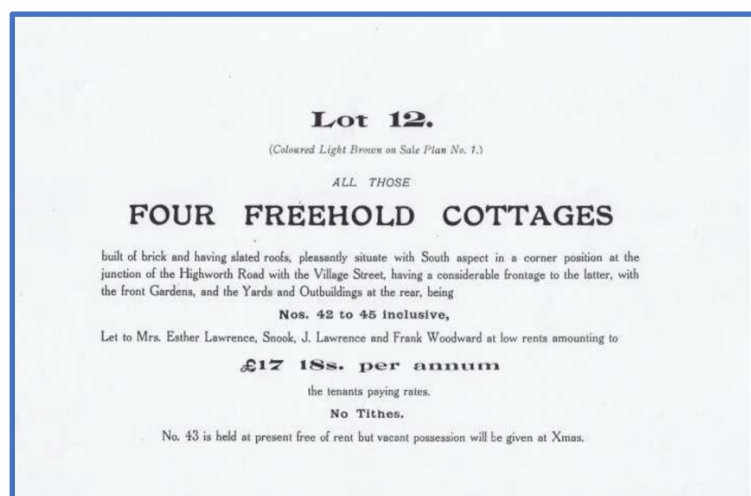
It is common for locale's and properties to have local rumour attached to them as to their names or when they were built. The row of little cottages on the corner of Townsend Road and High Street (by the Memorial Hall) in Shrivenham is a good example. It's obvious as to why they are called Pump Cottages being directly opposite the village pump. But another fact attributed to them is that they were built during the reign of Queen Ann (Below. Reign 1702 -1714). There was no documentary or archaeological evidence to substantiate the claim until recently.



If the idyllic notion of quaint country cottages that they are now, is put to one side, it's important to note that they were originally built as cheap, farm worker's hovels, from a period when a basic shelter from the elements was the only requirement. Accounts from tenants within living memory tell of just beaten earth floors, outside privy's, no internal running water. (2025 aerial photos above & below by Neil B. Maw).



If we research back in time, it's possible to get very close to the period in which they were likely originally erected. The Barrington Estate Sale of 1917 included them in the brochure. (Below. Extract from SHS N555).



The Tithe Map of 1865 listed all the properties with the intention of allocating them a rateable value. (Below. Extract from SHS N774). And we also learn from it that the occupiers were Elizabeth Carvey, George Reason, Edward Smith and Isaac Jefferies.

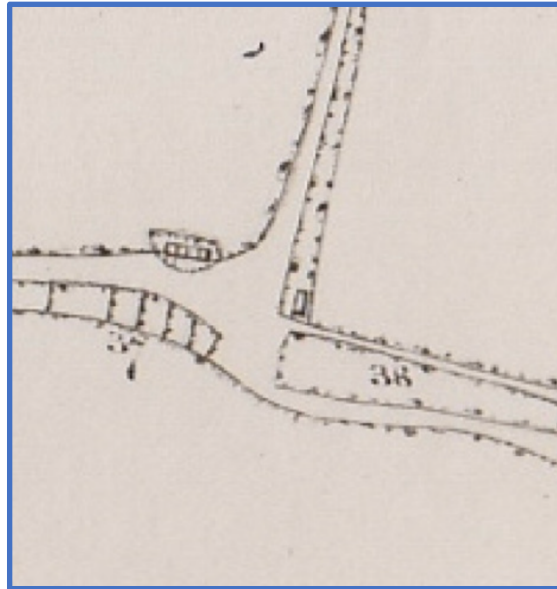


The Tithe Map of 1843/4 clearly shows the cottages as four tenements and we learn that the occupiers are Isaac Jefferies, T. Horn, W. Smith and J. Cavey. (Below. Extract from SHS N346)

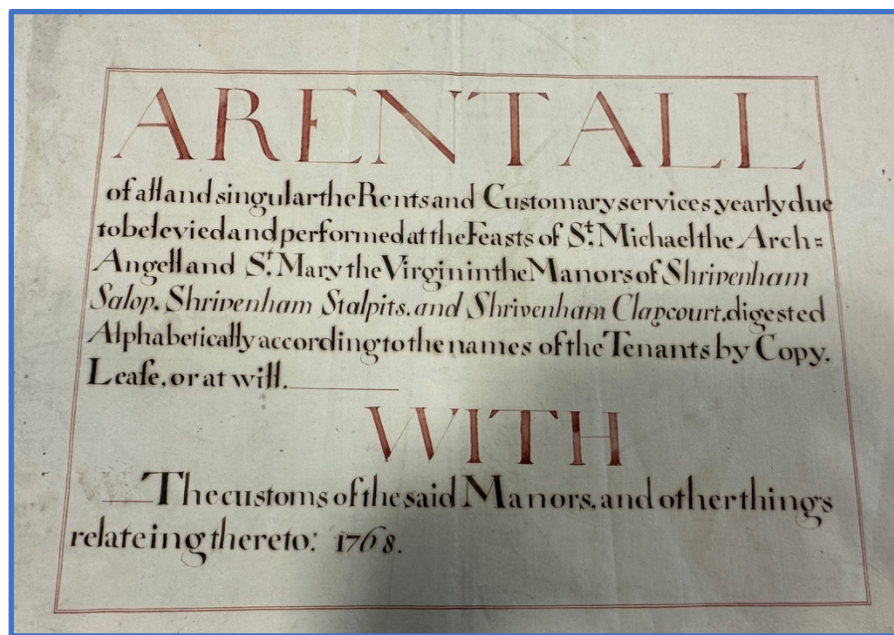


When George Merryweather became the Barrington Estate Steward in April 1815, he commissioned the drawing of a map in order to be able to refer to parts of the estate

with Lord Barrington (5th). His map clearly shows the four tenements but, in this instance, no names of occupiers. (Below: Extract from SHS Digital Vault Maps).



There was a large survey of the Manors of Shrivenham carried out in 1768. (Below. RBA D/EX52/M1). Although we have no confirmation, it's highly likely that the survey was prompted by the death of Sir Mark Stuart Pleydell of Coleshill who died in that year. He was the Lord of the Rectory Manor of Shrivenham and Coleshill and owned various pieces of land all around the entire parish. It was also likely that the survey was commissioned by William Wildman Lord Viscount Barrington (2nd) who was keen to know exactly what was his and to resolve any contentious issues that had been appearing over the last 30 years. Three years later he also commissioned a survey of all his farms (See SHS N474). The survey is a large document and consists of 13 large pages, and whereas it is very detailed in land sizes, amounts and dues, the old problem persists in knowing exactly where properties were located. However, with some knowledge of ownership gleaned from previous research it is possible to make progress.



<i>Names of the Places where they live</i>	<i>Tenants Names</i>	Denomination of their Lands.
<i>Not this Lease, 1721</i>	<i>W. Holyoake</i>	<i>Mottage and Garden Receipt Timber and Young Trees Covenant to Repair</i>
	<i>B. Smith</i>	<i>Buildings and Fences, W. Since my letting this there is a New Tenement Joind to it by his Son Which Likewise Purchased as Did the First</i>

In the Survey above is the information of 3 tenements under the lease of the Smith family. (Below. RBA D/EX52/M1) This is further endorsed by a list of leases in the Barrington Documents held at the British Library (Below. BL ADD MS73763). But in the notes of the listing above it explains of a new tenement being added. And this may explain the slight difference in the height of the premises on the right-hand end of the row when compared to the other three. (Below. Aerial photo by Neil B. Maw). When looking at the original date of the lease in the extract above, in the top left, it states the original date is 1721. This is but seven years from the end of Queen Anne's reign, so quite possible to have originally been built during it. So in this case, historical rumour could be true.

... joining of one part & Lord Barrington of the other part
Being a Conveyance of 3 Leashold Acres in Stricklandham -
10 October 1775 - Indenture between Lord Barrington of one part & Peter Smith of other part -
Being a Lease of 3 Tenements in Stricklandham for 1000.
... but ...

