

Grange Farm & The Grange, Bourton

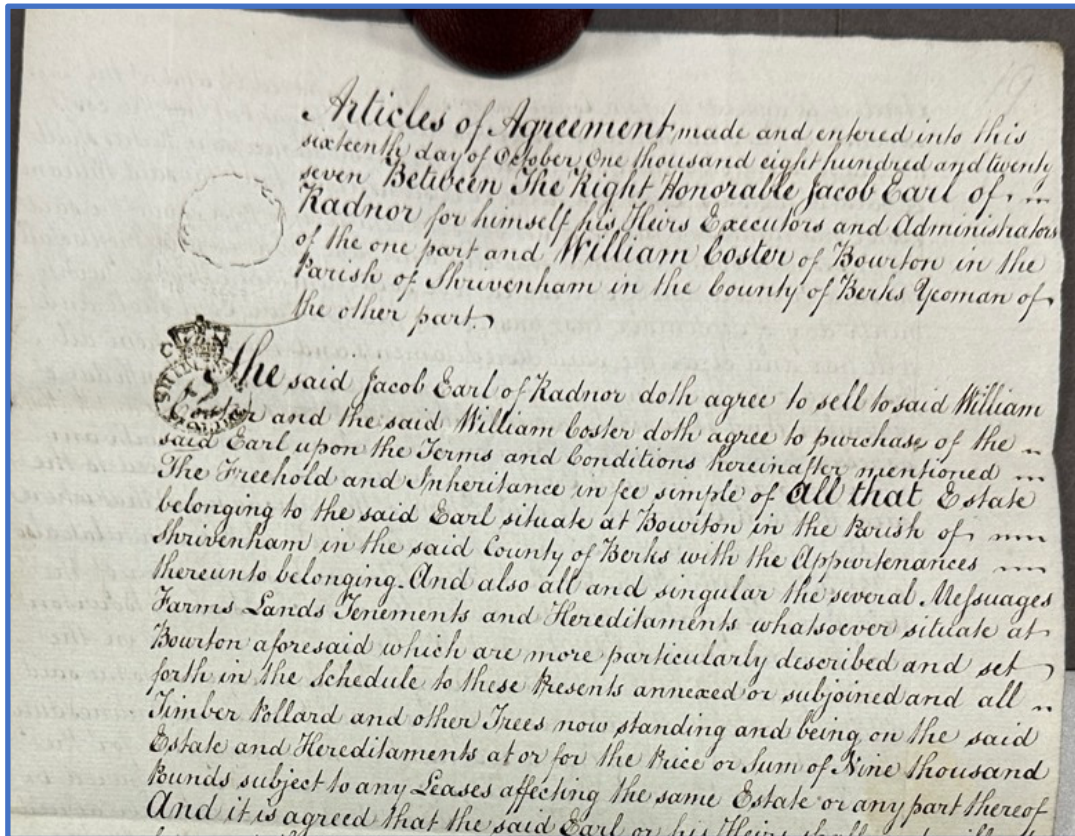
By Neil B. Maw

The land at Lower Bourton has historically been utilised for farming. Although we have little documentary or archaeological evidence, it's highly likely that there have been farm buildings located there for many centuries. The description of Over Burton and Nether Burton can be found in documents as early as the 16th century. As well as barns and stables there would have been dwelling houses built of timber, timber-framed, rubble stone and brick. But in the middle of the 19th century there appeared a large mansion type house with nine Dutch gables.



Some of the lands to the west and north of Shrivenham were owned by the Pleydell family of Coleshill. (To become the Radnor Estate) These lands all formed part of the holdings of the Shrivenham Rectory Manor. At the Dissolution when Henry VIII seized the Monasteries, the Victoria County History recorded that William Pleydell of Coleshill had leased the lands of the Rectory Manor by grant of the Abbot of Cirencester Abbey. This was renewed by the Crown at the latter part of the 16th century. Recent information discovered at the Berkshire County Archives, confirmed that the

principal location or site of the Rectory Manor was at Sandhill Farm, less than a mile to the northeast of Lower Bourton. (See SHS Listing N995). It would explain therefore, how in 1827, the Earl of Radnor agreed to sell a farm with lands attached, the centre of which was located at the site of the Grange.



Documentation surviving from the Pleydell papers described, 'All that Estate belonging to the Earl situate at Bourton.' (See extract above & map below BCA D/EPB/E50). In the Article of Agreement shown above, it mentions only William Coster. However, in the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre Archives, there is a copy of an Indenture that is a Conveyance dated 30th October 1828 between five parties, the fourth being William Coster of Bourton and the fifth, Joseph Coster of Shellingford. (WSHC 1461/2368)

At this time, the Costers were already in Bourton as farmers. In 1811 a Mr Coster of Bourton Farm was organising a sale of Timber that came from his farm. (Salisbury & Winchester Journal 30th December 1811). There were also earlier Costers, for in St Andrew's

Churchyard at Shrivenham, there lies John Coster who died on 23rd April 1771, aged 73, and another John who died in 1816, aged 80, both described as from Bourton.

The purchase sum agreed for the estate was £9000, a deposit of £4500 to be paid by 25th March 1828 (Lady Day), and the remainder to be paid with interest as soon as possible. The lands extended to the north and west of the farm centre with a large gap in between belonging to others. The marks in pen and pencil appear to have been made after the purchase and possibly represent the selling off of some of the land and buildings. The plot numbered 18 on the map extract below is the site of the Grange today and it shows that there were several buildings. The schedule on the conveyance gives more information than that on the agreement. They both call the farm '*The Lower Field Farm*' but this refers to the fact that the lands were in the lower part of the layout. The house that we see at today's Lower Field Farm was not built until 1911, (although there is a barn there today that could be the one shown on the map.) The conveyance of 1828 described at the Grange location, '*A Dwellinghouse, Homestead, two barns, stable and coach house, Cowhouse, site of Cottage Gardens and Orchard etc.*' It also provided the information that William Coster was already the occupier. It's likely then that this is the '*Bourton Farm*' referred to in the newspaper advertisement of 1811, and very likely the Coster family farm. Their time had come to purchase the family farm that had been leased from the Pleydell Estate at Coleshill for perhaps a century.

PLAN
of an ESTATE belonging to
THE EARL OF RADNOR
situate in the Parish of
SHREVEHAM
COUNTY OF BERKS

By H. Wakeman, at Upper Baker Street

REFERENCE

A.R.P.	A.R.P.
1. Brook Meadow	20. 2. 11
2. The Common Field	2. 2. 1
3. Part of the Lower Field	1. 1. 1
4. Ditto	1. 1. 1
5. Road adjoining Ditto	2. 2. 11
6. Part of the Lower Field	2. 2. 1
7. Remainder of Ditto	2. 2. 11
8. Road adjoining Ditto	2. 2. 11
9. The Beale Ground	2. 2. 11
10. Home Ground	2. 2. 11
11. Barn and Yard on Ditto	2. 2. 11
12. Long Ground Plot	2. 2. 11
13. The Great Pasture	2. 2. 11
14. White Baking Ground	2. 2. 11
15. The Little Pasture	2. 2. 11
16. Collage close	2. 2. 11
17. Homestead	2. 2. 11
18. The Orchard, Collage, and Garden	2. 2. 11
19. Marsh	2. 2. 11
20. Mr. John Perry	2. 2. 11
21. Brought forward	100. 1. 11
22. Home Ground	2. 2. 11
23. The Home close	2. 2. 11
24. Radnor's Parlong	2. 2. 11
25. Lanes and Parlong	2. 2. 11
26. The Parks	2. 2. 11
27. Radnor's Parlong	2. 2. 11
28. Acre Pasture	2. 2. 11
29. Acre Ground	2. 2. 11
30. The Lot Meadow	2. 2. 11
31. Barn Yard &c	2. 2. 11
32. Pasty of Ground	2. 2. 11
33. Home close	2. 2. 11
34. Holy Ground	2. 2. 11
35. The Meadow	2. 2. 11
36. High Ground	2. 2. 11
37. The Pasture	2. 2. 11
38. Ditto	2. 2. 11
39. High Garden and close (Kest byhold)	2. 2. 11
40. Griffin's close	2. 2. 11
41. High w. (in the occupation of S. Merditham)	2. 2. 11
Total	100. 1. 11

$$\begin{array}{r} 100 \text{ : } 1 \text{ : } 11 \\ \times 22 \text{ : } 1 \text{ : } 11 \\ \hline 2200 \text{ : } 22 \text{ : } 22 \\ \text{---} \\ 100 \text{ : } 1 \text{ : } 11 \\ \hline 2200 \text{ : } 22 \text{ : } 22 \end{array}$$

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William Coster died in 1833 and he too was buried in St Andrew's, Shrivenham, aged 54. Joseph, his younger brother by two years, took over the farm and upon his death on the 8th July 1840, a subsequent advertisement in 1842 was placed in a local newspaper offering the farm for sale. (Berks Chronicle 28th May 1842). His gravestone in St Andrew's churchyard described him as aged 60 from Bourton.

BERKSHIRE,
*Within half a mile of Shrivenham Station on the Great
 Western Railway.*

MR. W. W. SIMPSON has received instructions, pursuant to the will of the late Joseph Coster, Esq., to **SELL BY AUCTION**, at the Auction Mart, on Tuesday, 28th June, at 12 o'clock, in three Lots, the following desirable **PROPERTY** :—

Lot 1.—A valuable **FREEHOLD** and **TITHE-FREE ESTATE**, called Lower Field Farm, eligibly situate in the parish of Bourton, four miles from Highworth, six from Swindon, and seven from Faringdon, all excellent market towns. It comprises a brick-built farm-house, with garden and orchard, granary, stabling, bullock-shed, and other buildings, together with 116 acres of land, whereof 72 acres are pasture (a large proportion of which is very powerful bullock-feeding land, including 17 acres of water meadow, which may be irrigated at pleasure, and the remainder deep stapled arable land.—Lot 2. A desirable **ESTATE**, called Acorn Farm, situated near Lot 1, comprising a cottage, with garden, barn, stabling, and other buildings, together with 100 acres of land, of which 70 acres are meadow and pasture (including seven acres of most productive water meadow), and the remainder very fertile arable land.—Lot 3. A **COTTAGE** and **GARDEN**, with about an acre of pasture land, situate near Lot 2, and held under leases for two lives, aged sixty five and sixty-six years, at a quit rent of one shilling per annum. About an acre of freehold pasture land adjoining, and two cottages and gardens contiguous, held under a lease for three lives aged 65, 66, and 68 years, at a quit rent of 10s. per annum.

The Estates may be viewed. Particulars, with plans annexed, may be obtained of Messrs. Tilson, Squance, and Tilson, solicitors, 28, Coleman-street; at the Auction Mart; and of Mr. W. W. Simpson, 18, Bucklersbury.

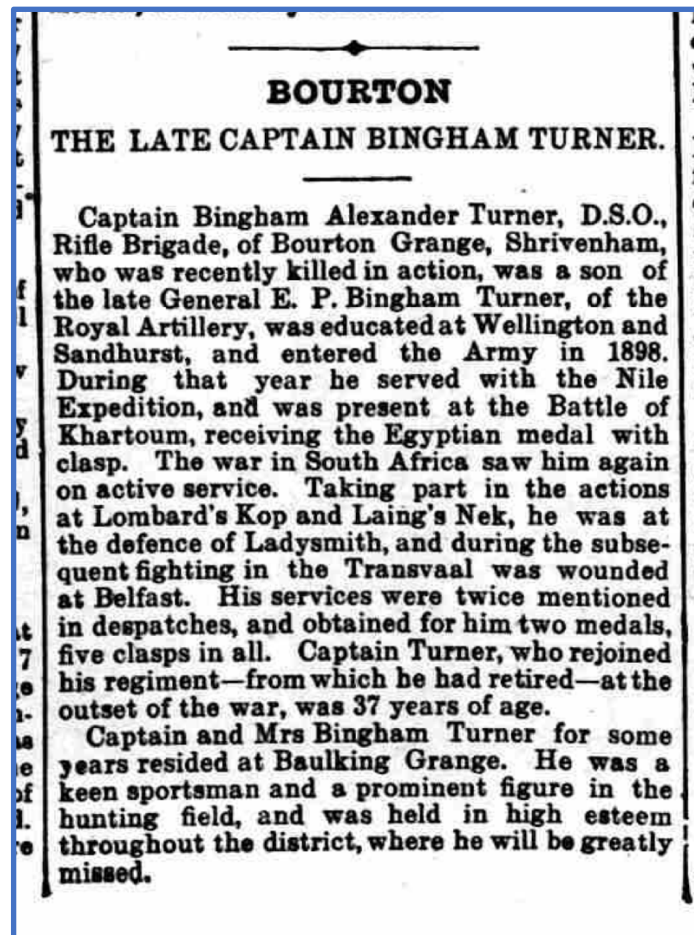
Whereas we don't have the documentary evidence, it is known that John Tucker of that well known Bourton family, must have purchased the whole estate from the Costers. John was one of the brothers who had made their fortunes in the silk business. (See SHS Listing N147). His side of the business was as a silk printer, and he had a large factory at West Ham, Essex. (Then a village - now Greater London). Although his business interests and a large farm were at West Ham, his personal interests were still at his native Bourton and it seems especially Highworth, for in May 1851 he married Sarah Smith of Parsonage Farm. At 26 she was half his age, and we can only speculate that after purchasing the Coster estate, he had the idea in the latter part of the 1840s to build a lavish new house for his intended young bride. It is known that he had connections in both farming and silk in Holland that may have influenced him to build the Grange House that still stands today. Two of the finials at the front of the house on top of the Dutch gables are initialled and dated J.T. & 1849. (See below). But after its completion and his marriage two years later, John's health was in serious decline,

largely in part to his being hugely overweight, reported to be 32 stones at his death on 5th August 1856, aged 49. (Essex Standard 8th August 1856).



In his Will he left his Bourton estate to Sarah as well as a large sum of money. Sarah went on to marry William Farrow Lawrence in September 1858. He was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons aged 37 and they moved to Bath where William was a successful surgeon, and they had four children. She left the running of her Bourton estate by leasing it to John Allaway who seems to have been a close family friend. When Sarah died on 25th July 1887, the estate was put up for sale and purchased by John Allaway for £6400. A subsequent newspaper article stated that during the 50 years that he had occupied the farm, the rent was never altered; perhaps confirmation that he was a close friend. After he died in 1893 the estate was again put up for auction on 21st August of that year and was purchased by Henry Arkell for £7300. The Arkell family are successful brewers and still operate a large brewery at Kingsdown near Swindon. (Swindon Advertiser 26th August 1893).

At the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the Electoral Register showed that the Grange was still in the hands of the Arkell family with the name Albert Victor. But a war casualty appeared in the newspaper as living at the Grange, Captain Bingham Alexander Turner. (Below - Faringdon Advertiser 12th December 1914). It's not clear if the late Captain's family rented the Grange from the Arkell family or had purchased it. The same can be said for the next recorded tenants, that of the Walker family who are listed as eligible to vote there in the 1930 Electoral Register.



Francis Southby Walker appeared on the register until 1952 when the name James Fitzgerald-Smith is listed along with his wife Jean. But they were not there for long as by 1956 the name Elizabeth Simmons is recorded and continued until 1965, but only because the registers changed format and the SHS archive stopped at that point.

That is as far as we can go with the Grange site at the moment. If anyone can add to this please get in touch.

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