

THE COTSWOLD YEOMAN

by *Anthea Jones*

Stanton is a village created by Cotswold yeomen. About 1700, it could be described as 'one of ye neatest villages in ye kingdom' (1) and might now be described as one of the most attractive, yet while Winchcombe abbey was lord of the manor, Stanton had been 'in ill-condition owing to delapidations and neglect of repairs'. (2) The transformation which had occurred was the result of the break-up of the manor about 1571; the villagers were able to buy their freeholds together with a share of the manor's own farmland or 'demesne'. A similar historical development accounts for the appearance of other Cotswold villages, with their substantial, stone-built farmhouses.

When the parish constables made their returns of men able to serve in the Gloucestershire militia in 1608, they entered an occupational description against most names. (3) They used the word 'yeoman' very sparingly but 'husbandman' much more generally. 'Farmer' still had the connotation of a man paying rent and had not yet come to apply to all cultivators of the land. This was indicative of the fact that although husbandmen did pay a small amount of rent, their land in the Cotswolds was mostly copyhold. Copy holders were the successors to the medieval villeins. Holdings comprised 'yardlands', about 30 acres of arable with proportionate grazing rights, and were transferred in the manor court to heirs or purchasers according to rules customary in that manor, usually for life. Payments to the lord of the manor were also customary. A yeoman, on the other hand, was a substantial farmer owning at least some of his land.

Stanton provides a good illustration of these social distinctions. The former Winchcombe abbey manor was brought by Thomas Dolman, a clothier of Newbury in Berkshire, in 1558; in his will, made in 1571, he left his 'lordship and manor of Stanton' to a son, Mathias, who was a haberdasher and citizen of the City of London. (4) Another son inherited the advowson of Stanton and Snowhill. (5) Soon after, Mathias Dolman sold off the manor in



Manor Farm has date stones which record 1615 and 1618; the initials may relate to the Jackson alias Booth family. Photo: Glyn Jones

parcels; each copyholder bought a share of the manor's lands in proportion to his existing copyhold, and also the manorial jurisdiction over both parcels, so creating mini-manors. No lord of the manor could therefore be named at the head of the village muster list in 1608. Dr. Parsons, chancellor of the diocese of Gloucester from 1677 to 1711, noted "No court or manor since Mathias Dolman sold his Right to the tenants, who having leases for lives were made freeholders by him in Queen Elizabeth's reign". (6)

SOME CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

Documents exist relating to the purchase of a modest holding in Stanton in 1584 by Richard Wright. He bought three small lots:

the house in which his father lived, with a close, a quarter of a yardland, and meadow and pasture for one horse and 20 sheep; a second quarter yardland and pasture rights for two oxen; and a cottage, three more arable ridges and pasture for a horse, in all amounting to eight acres. He paid £9 on the sealing of the indenture, and then had to pay a further £40 in four instalments, over two years; the money was paid at Mathias Dolman's house in St. Andrew's Undershaft in the City of London and two of the receipts still exist. (7) Richard Wright had doubled his holding and now had a whole yardland. The smallness of his holding led to him being described as a husbandman. In 1631, Richard Wright let eight acres of land, said to be half his holding, a chamber and shop, and "part of his barn and backside", to a Stanton shoemaker. Four years later he put his son John in possession of his house and two cottages, where they both lived, half his demesne land and half his customary land, and a further six acres which he had purchased. It is interesting that the former demesne was carefully distinguished from the copyhold land. In this document he was called Richard Wright alias Spooner. (8) The two surnames make identification awkward; Richard Wright, husbandman and Richard Spooner, tailor, were both living in Stanton in 1608 and both surnames continued in use at least until the end of the century. A Spooner appears amongst Stanton's landowners in 1674 (9) and Humphrey Spooner made a will in 1690. The men who listed his possessions after his death called him Humphrey Spooner alias Wright; (10) he lived in a small house of two chambers, a hall and a shop. Richard Wright's history illustrates that a modest smallholder could find money to buy land; perhaps the sale of wool could have provided such cash.

Rudder named five men involved in the partition of the manor: William Jackson alias Booth, Nicholas Izod, Thomas Warren, Nicholas Kirkham and Humphrey Wright, and said there were also others (11); as eight estates at enclosure in 1774 had shares in the "waste", the odd, unclaimed pieces of land in the manor, there had probably been at least eight purchasers of the manorial rights. (12) The 1608 militia list included several of the purchasers mentioned by Rudder. Nicholas Izod and Thomas Warren were described as yeoman and Nicholas Kirkham as a husbandman. At least five men, called either Jackson or Booth, some described as yeoman and some as husbandman, could have been related to one William Jackson alias Booth who died in 1608. Three more yeoman were named in 1608 and three husbandman, making a total of 15 farmers. A smith, a weaver, three masons and three labourers were also listed.

REBUILDING

Stone-masons were busy about the turn of the seventeenth century; the new status of freeholder gave confidence to the former copyholders and stimulated the rebuilding of their farmhouses along the village street. Some have date stones. Warren House or Manor is the earliest; over the doorway are carved the initials of Thomas Warne or Warren and the date 1577, and inside a ceiling incorporates the family coat of arms. It was built very soon after Dolman's sale of shares of the manor. One house is dated 1604. Manor house has two date stones recording the years 1615 and 1618 and initials which seem to refer to the Jackson alias Booth family. The prosperity of the village at this time can be gauged from the rector's list of households in 1623; 17 out of the total of 37 had female servants living in, and 12 households also had men servants, who probably worked on the farms. The rector, Henry Izod, and his wife, had three female servants; Thomas Warren and Thomas Booth shared a house, and had three men and two women servants; Richard Jackson, father and son, lived together with two adult sons and four daughters. This extended family was probably large enough to work the holding. (13)

Thomas Jackson alias Booth sold his two yardland holding in 1658 to Richard Ingles of Dumbleton, gentleman. (14) It consisted of 120 ridges or selions of arable land, with common grazing rights for six oxen and eight horses, a messuage and dovehouse, and "pews, seats and kneeling places in the parish church now used

by the said Thomas Jackson alias Booth, Elizabeth his wife or any of their servants". Richard Ingles came to live in Stanton. His house was large compared with Richard Wright's: a hall, a parlour with some mahogany tables and chairs, a dairy and buttery, pantry, brewhouse and kitchen; upstairs there was a bed-chamber with garret above, servants' chamber and chambers over the brewhouse and pantry. The inventory, made in 1684 following his death, shows him actively concerned in husbandry, with corn and malt in the house, carts and ploughs, harrows and harness, seven horses, four pigs, 18 cows and 104 sheep. Significantly he had an income of £120 a year from rents, and this may have been the distinguishing mark of the gentleman. The value of his possessions amounted to £407, quite a lot compared with many husbandmen but not extremely wealthy. (15) The Ingles family continued in Stanton until the end of the eighteenth century, and on enclosure Mrs Ingles received an allotment of 70 acres of land; she was also given ten perches as compensation for the loss of her share in the "waste".

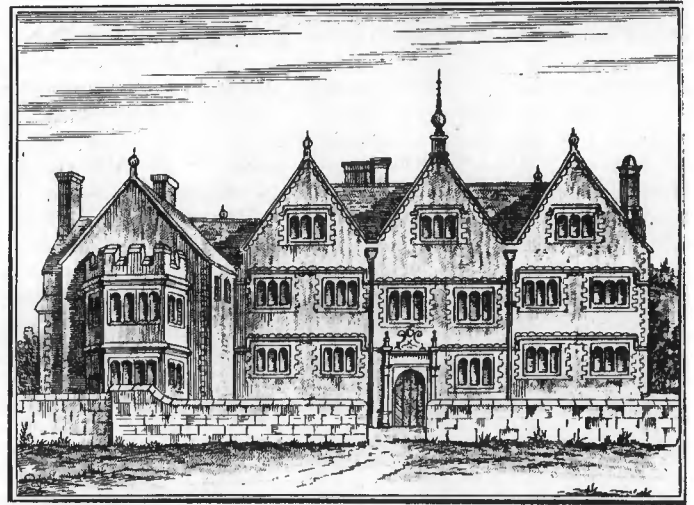
THE IZOD FAMILY

There were no less than five households headed by an Izod in the rector's list of 1623, all with resident maid-servants. The family had come from Ireland in the mid-fifteenth century and quickly established themselves in the area; they were connected with Stanton from at least the mid-sixteenth century, when John Izod was Winchcombe Abbey's bailiff. (16) No doubt the bailiff lived in Stanton Court, which was the manor house. It has been suggested that Warren House was the original manor-house (17), but this misinterprets the history of the village; landholders could call their houses "the manor" after Dolman's sales. Maurice Izod, the husbandman, who died in 1585, was a significant landholder; he left the main part of his estate to his son, Nicholas, whom Rudder named as a purchaser of part of the manor. Some land was left to two sons, William the elder and William the younger; William the elder lived at home and inherited a desk in the hall where it had to remain, and his land reverted to Nicholas after his death. William the younger shared a house with his brother, John, who had two yardlands; he was given ten sheep "taking them as they shall run out of the pen". If John would not share his house then he was to endow his brother with the tithes which his father owned (18). Winchcombe Abbey had appropriated to its own use three quarters of the great tithes of Stanton, leaving only one quarter to the Rector (19); the Izod family, as tithe owners, would be wealthier than any other in the village. Two Izods of Stanton, Francis and William, were taxed by Charles I in 1631 as able to sustain knighthood. (20)

The Izods also purchased the advowson of Stanton and Snowshill. As both rector and impropiator of the tithes, their house, Stanton Court, might have been called the "Rectory"; it seems to be the building illustrated in Samuel Lyson's *Antiquities of Gloucestershire*, before the front was modernised in the seventeenth century. Henry Izod presented himself to the living in 1623, remaining there until his death in 1650. He was a meticulous recorder of his public and private affairs; he listed the parish's householders as soon as he became rector, in order to collect the pennies due from each at Easter. The volume he kept was bound in with one kept by a later rector, the two together giving many insights into Stanton life in the seventeenth century. The chancellor of the diocese of Gloucester, Dr. Richard Parsons, married one Mary Izod, and so he was particularly well-informed about Stanton. He was called in on several occasions to give judgements in tithe disputes, and he gave a pulpit to the church. His notebook is now in the Bodleian Library and contains his collection of material for a history of the county, which he allowed Atkyns to use. Izods continued to live in Stanton for the rest of the seventeenth century, but at least some of the Izod property was left to Wenman Wynniatt, whose coat of arms is now displayed over the entrance to Stanton Court.

PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE

In the mid-eighteenth century, Reginald Wynniatt inherited all the Izod estate and his son, who became rector of Stanton in 1771, "purchased several others in the same place, so that he is now possessed of the greater part of the parish". (21) The rector acquired the advowson of his own living, exchanging one in Oxfordshire with a kinsman, he owned the tithes, and he had at least



'Stanton Rectory House' engraved by Samuel Lysons for *Antiquities of Gloucestershire* (1803). Courtesy of Gloucester City Library

seven former holdings in addition to his "patrimony". This enabled him to pursue the enclosure of Stanton, for which he paid nearly two thirds of the costs. An act of parliament was passed in 1774, dealing with under half the parish; some land had probably been enclosed at the time of the break-up of the manor and was no longer subject to common rights, and more had been enclosed by agreement in 1677. (22) In 1774, Reginald Wynniatt was allotted 290 acres for his common lands and pastures and a further 150 acres in lieu of the inappropriate tithes. He owned 149 acres of enclosed but tithable land, including Shenborough Hill, and part of his allotment was made to extinguish these tithes; it was no burden to him to give up land to end tithe payments. With the rectory lands of 123 acres, Wynniatt now owned two thirds of the former open fields. In addition to Mrs Ingles, there were ten other small landowners involved in the enclosure, with 152 acres between them, but only four actually lived in Stanton. (23) The character of the village had changed significantly since the early eighteenth century, when more than half of the 49 householders had also been freeholders. (24) By 1832 there were 60 families but only 11 freeholders; three small farms survived worked by family labour, while seven farmers employed on average six labourers each. Stanton's character is largely the result of the two centuries when it was truly the village of independent yeomen farmers.

There is an interesting group of Cotswold villages where copyholds were converted into freeholds around 1600; it includes Great Barrington, Bledington, Bourton-on-the-Water, Broadway, Broadwell, Donnington and Mangersbury, Lower Swell,



Manor Cottages, Little Rissington, is an example of an early seventeenth century farmhouse built after the copyholder bought the freehold. It was divided in the mid-nineteenth century. Photo: Glyn Jones

Mickleton, Naunton, Oddington, Stanton, and Great, Little and Wyck Rissington. In all these places, the lords of the manors gave up their rights to small payments from the copyholders of the area. (25) It is notable that these were nearly all former monastic estates. The monasteries had been conservative landlords; far from being rapacious, they probably maintained the bulk of their rural tenants on their small farms. Some of the new men, who bought manors from the crown after the dissolution of the monasteries, then made a quick financial return by dismembering the manors and selling the manorial rights. Where this happened, it encouraged the freeholders to build new houses. Some of the rebuilding of rural England is related to this change in property rights. As in Stanton, a few larger farmers and landholders became yeomen and gradually absorbed smaller estates; some freeholders' farmhouses became cottages. The farmhouses and yeomen's houses of the seventeenth century together create the typical Cotswold village.

NOTE

This article is based on part of Chapter 8: The Disappearance of the Cotswold Peasant, in *The Cotswolds*, to be published by Phillimore and Co. Ltd. later this year.

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Manor Farmhouse and Warren Farmhouse are typical early seventeenth century buildings in Stanton. The initials B and I M on the first house may refer to John and Mary Booth, inhabitants in 1623. Photo : Glyn Jones

[Image from front cover]