The Malt House

New Website for Stinchcombe Local History
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Front view of the Malt House

Broadly speaking, the first part of the article is about the property itself. It draws on various resources, including legal documents, old maps and some on site investigation. The second part focuses on the people who have lived here over a period of more than 350 years.

The House/Dwelling

The property only became known as the Malt House, as far as I can tell, between the 1891 and 1901 Census. The earliest records so far found refer to it as “The Lower House”, which is where we start its story.

Roger Hollister and “The Lower House”

The oldest document viewed is a conveyance, dated 1664, by Roger Hollister, then resident in the “Lower House” of “Overhouse”, presumably ***Overend Cottage***, as explained below.

There is a very unusual addendum to the original conveyance document itself. It has been added after the conveyance had been completed. This granted the new owners of the “Overhouse” the right to cross the garden of the “Lower House” to draw as much water as they required from the well in the Lower House garden. Since the 1881 OS map shows a well at Overend House, which is still there now, it seems most likely that this “Overhouse” was today’s Overend Cottage. It is equally likely that R. Hollister did not then own Overend House or he could more easily have allowed the new owners of the cottage to use the well there.

The well at the Malt House exists today and is shown in the photos below. It is 65 ft (20 m) deep and has water running into it, as can just about be made out in the interior shot . We don’t know when it was last used. Amy Harper, who we will meet later, had a single cold water tap in the kitchen in the 1960s, as recalled by her grandson, Mike Troy.



The well at the Malt House



The interior of Malt House well (Mike Henton)

There will be earlier records but a significant bundle of Malt House documents is missing from the Archive in Gloucester (Bundle 13). However, we know for sure that the dwelling house and the well close to it existed in 1664. The house was then owned and occupied by an important person of considerable property: R Hollister subsequently owned Piers Court.

The description of the property, effectively its 17th century

“post code”, is important in providing evidence of how it evolved.

The Early Days of Malting

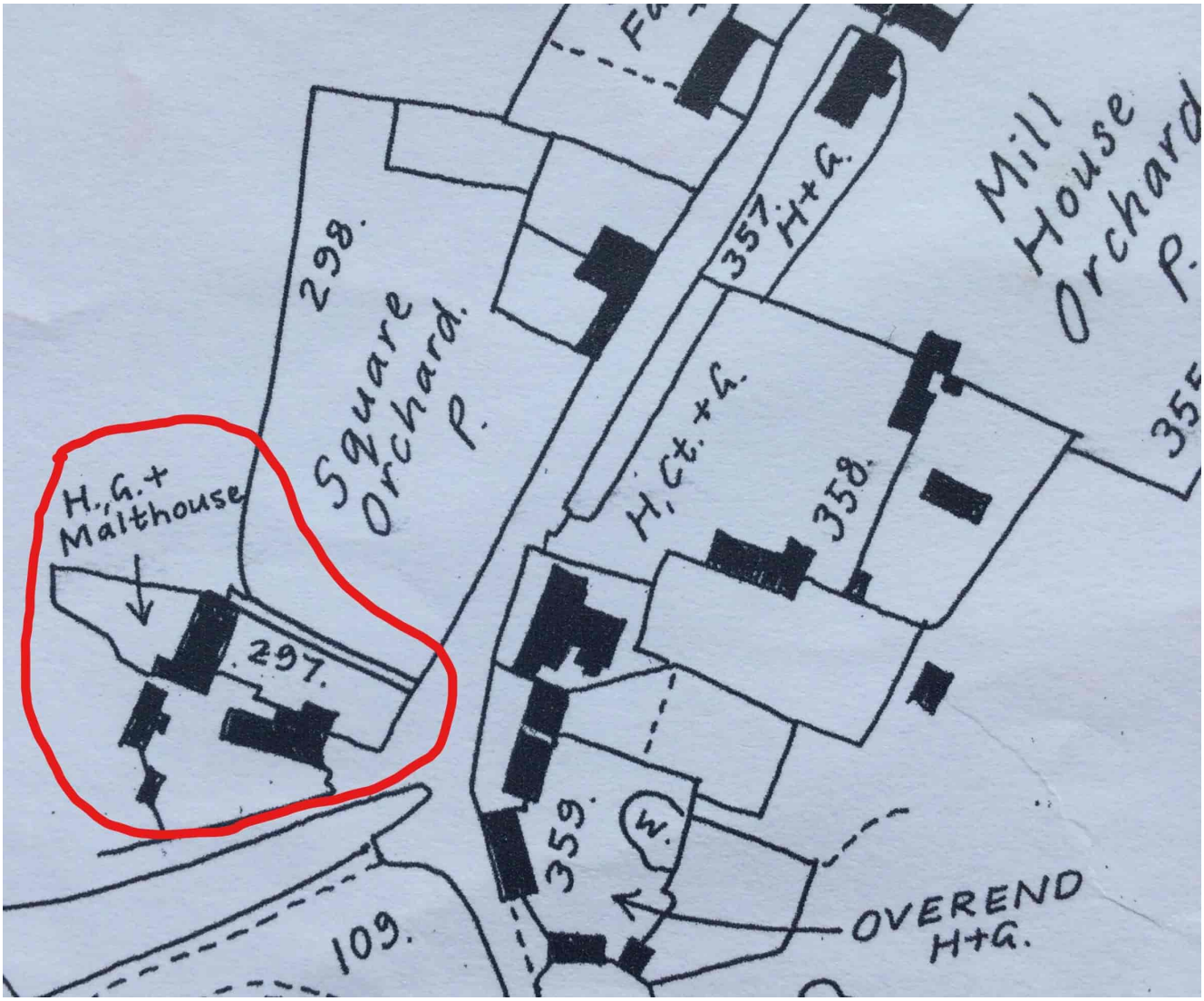
In 1698 Wm. Hicks of Stancombe buys “…property in Stinchcombe … commonly called or known by the name of the Lower House, garden, orchard, close pasture … north of lane leading to … church … containing by estimation in the whole 3 acres … for £140 from John Hollister (cooper) of London, heir of the late R. Hollister of Stinchcombe.

This exact description (much longer than summarised here) appears on all legal documents describing the property until 3/6/1769 when it is changed slightly to read “… the Lower House together with the malthouse, garden etc” on mortgage documents.

The “Pinfold Estate” map of 1766 shows no separate building on the site but the ***Gwatkin*** reproduction of the Tithe Map of 1839 clearly refers, on Plot 297, to H(ouse), G(arden) and Malthouse and shows a substantial separate building. The images below show Plot 297 in context and a more detailed drawing on which the buildings are clearer. We are grateful to Geoff Gwatkin for giving permission to use extracts of his Stinchcombe Tithe Map on this website.



Extract from the Gwatkin reproduction tithe map



Extract from detail inset on Gwatkin tithe map

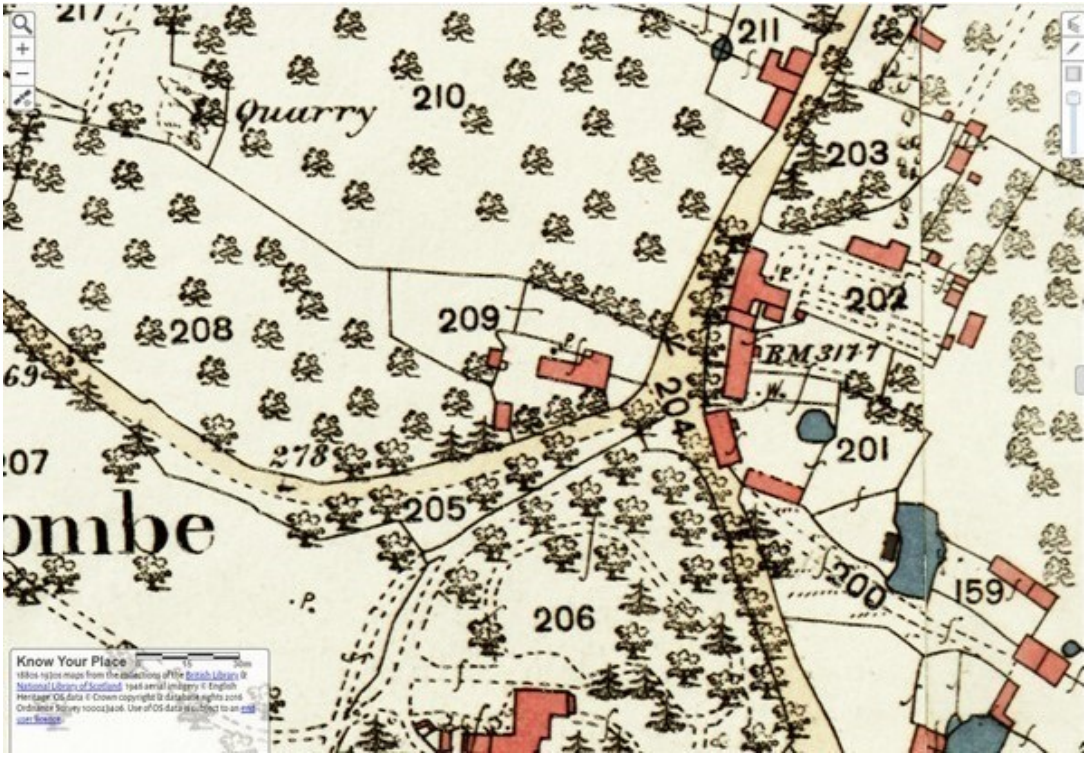
By using the Tithe Map it has been possible to find the building's foundations (under the existing lawn), lying north-south. It was enormous; 22ft 6ins (6.92 m) wide by 58-60ft(18m+) long i.e. larger than the dwelling so it is unlikely to have been just missed off the Pinfold Estate map. It is reasonable to surmise that a separate building for malting barley was constructed between 1766 and 1769 and still existed in 1839 as shown on the Tithe Map. A stone culvert coming from the direction of this building had previously been found. It is now presumed that its purpose was to drain wastewater from the malting process.

David Addy has written an interesting article about the ***processes of malting*** which gives a good indication of what our

malthouse might have been like.

The End of Malting

When it happened is not known, but this enormous building had gone by 1881 when the first edition of the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map (below) shows no trace of it. (The dwelling is approximately in the centre of the image in Plot 209.) It could be that the temperance-advocating Prevost family, following their acquisition of the property in 1819, did not wish to be associated with the production of any form of alcohol and had it demolished. Also, as mentioned by Addy, a longstanding tax on malt began to be rigorously enforced from 1827, possibly making the business less attractive.



Extract from 25″ OS Map 1st edition courtesy of Know Your Place (Gloucestershire)

What happened to the stonework and timber is unknown but possibly some was used to build the western extension to the dwelling house and/or to extend the boundary wall of the “approximately 3 acre field” in all the deeds. Certainly some of the stone in the boundary wall is of a quality one would not expect in a field wall, having been properly dressed and

being lighter in colour. The extension, which was clearly made from a different stone and was demolished in the 1970s, is shown in the photo below.



The Malt House c.1969 showing the extension (now demolished) in different stone

It is also notable that an apparent access into the malthouse, running from The Street alongside the northern boundary of Plot 297 on the tithe map, has completely disappeared from the 1881 OS Map. The garden wall there now comprises largely lighter coloured/white cut stone.

A Timely Collapse

As if to assist our research, in late December 2021 more than 7 metres of the existing (north) garden wall collapsed into the garden. During its rebuilding the original foundation stones for the junction of the east wall of the malting barn

were exposed and, as an absolute bonus, a junction with another wall jutting northwards from the northern gable of the barn. This leads to a so far undiscovered stone paved area in the adjacent field. These recent finds conclusively show that the barn was supplied at first floor level from the ramp/lane visible in the tithe map.

The collapse also revealed a considerable cache of broken pots, plates, dishes and very old wine bottles, dating back to at least the 18th century. Detailed identification is still ongoing.

The Prevost Years

Since the Prevost family held the property for the next 150 years, there are no legal documents or deeds that I can find to show what it was called.

The 1871 Census shows an entry for one unnamed property. The 1881 Census has two properties – Yew Tree Cottage and no name given. The yew tree still stands and has an estimated age of 370 years. In the 1891 Census both properties are listed with separate families and referred to as “top of Church Lane”. The 1901 Census has two properties “Yew Tree Cottage” and “Malt House”, as has the 1911 Census. It would seem that the “Yew Tree Cottage” was the front part and “Malt House” referred to the western leg and the extension.

The 1921 Census does not give property names, however, Electoral Registers from the 1920s refer to occupants of “Malt House” and “part of Malt House”. The name stuck although the actual malthouse was by now long gone. There is considerable evidence that there was a laundry business onsite during the second half of the 19th century, as will be discussed.

The People and Activities

It has been possible to obtain some information about many of the people who lived at the Malt House and their activities.

The Hicks

In 1664 we know that Roger Hollister owned and was stated to occupy “The Lower House”. In 1698 Wm. Hicks, who may not have been a maltster, purchased “… the property in Stinchcombe commonly known as the Lower House, garden, orchard and close pasture of approximately 3 acres” from John Hollister (Cooper) of London, heir to John Hollister, for £140.

William Hicks (Maltster)

There is no mention of a malthouse in 1727 when this Wm. Hicks dies. In his will he leaves “residence and land in Stinchcombe” to his nephew, Wm. Hicks (maltster). The younger Wm. Hicks, in turn, draws up a will on 27/1/1742 and dies soon thereafter leaving extensive lands and holdings (in Stinchcombe and elsewhere) to his wife, Deborah, and his seven daughters. His will makes provision for his brother-in-law and others to manage the lands and use the income to support said Deborah and daughters (Elizabeth, Deborah, Anne, Mary, Sarah, Hester and Jane). We have no direct evidence that Deborah moved to or lived in the Lower House.

Was there a Pub as well as a Malthouse?

A comprehensive listing for tax purposes of all the licensed premises in “the Hundred of Berkeley-Upper”, which included all of Bristol, has survived from 1755. It shows only two in Stinchcombe:

– “The Hare V.C.” Licensee – Mary Richards, cost £10 p.a., surety £20 (Wm. Clark & Jos. Humphreys)

– “White Hart” Licensee – Jo(?) Summers, cost £10 p.a., surety £10 (Wm. Summer)

As an aside, these were heavy taxes to say the least. It turns out that an Act of Parliament in 1753 had revived an old system obliging licence-holders to give securities “for the good order of their house”. They also had to obtain a certificate signed by the vicar and the majority of the churchwardens and overseers of the parish, or alternatively by several “reputable and substantial householders”. This was to establish that they were a “person of good fame and of sober life and conversation”. The license had to be renewed annually by the magistrates. This information comes from an article by Edward Porritt, entitled “*Five Centuries of Liquor Legislation in England*” published in Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 615-635.

Neither of the licensees or their sureties can be linked before or after to the Lower House. Mary Richards is the only one of them that we know anything about. She was the twice-married daughter of William Hood (Parish Clerk) and her widowed mother was the school teacher for many years. The family is likely to have lived in the now disappeared Clerk’s House, attached to the original schoolhouse, near the house now called the Old Parsonage. Given where she lived and her connections it is not impossible that Mary ran a pub at the Lower House.

Joseph Sims (Maltster)

The 1766 map of the Pinfold Estate already mentioned shows a single building where the “Lower House” is located. Both it and Overend are attributed to “Late Mr Hicks”.

In the meantime, Deborah daughter of Deborah and Wm. (deceased) had married Robert Stone who, on 3/6/1769 conveys “property in Stinchcombe … commonly known as Lower House together with the malthouse, gardens etc. etc. to Thomas

Holder for the use of Joseph Sims. Sims in turn let it to Samuel Morgan (victualler) of Dursley on 10/7/1769

The Mortgage

A mortgage of £200 at 4.25% was raised on the same date from Joseph Sims Jnr of Slimbridge (yeoman) to Samuel Morgan of Dursley, victualler. Now we have a licensed victualler involved and a huge building for malting barley in the garden. It is therefore reasonable to assume the house was an alehouse or pub by 1769.

The University of Nottingham say in their manuscripts research guidance “although the wording of some mortgage deeds might suggest that the mortgagee took possession of the property until the money was repaid, this was not usually the case in reality. In the seventeenth century it was established in law that the mortgagor would remain living in the property or administering the mortgaged estate”. Could this suggest that Joseph Sims not Morgan was the mortgagor, living in and owning the property?

Taxes and Transactions

Records for 1785 show that Joseph Sims paid £0-13-0d in tax for 10 windows in a property in Stinchcombe under the new Act of Parliament.

In 1974 a receipt dated 26/11/1787 was found in the upper half of the Malt House. It was made out to Mr Sims from John Brown, who we know to have been a wiredrawer by trade. It appears to be for 8lb 6oz associated with one item or name @ 9 pence per lb, making 6 shillings 3 ½ pence rounded up to the nearest ha’pence. A second item or name has a charge of 3 shillings 9 pence, making a total of 10 shillings and ha’pence.



Receipt dated 1787 found by Rex Wood in the upper half of the Malt House in 1974
Could Joseph Sims have been buying wire to use in hop cultivation or in the trays of his malt kiln?

Family Matters

The Gloucester Journal of 28th October 1805 contained the following sad item:

> *DIED. — On Monday, at Stinchcomb, near Dursley,*
>
> *Miss Sarah Sims, daughter of Mr. Joseph Sims, maltster.*

Based on the dates, Joseph Sims senior must have been her father and Joseph junior her brother. Sarah was only 22 years old and is buried at St Cyr's along with her mother, also Sarah, and various members of her mother's family, the Winds. Joseph and Sarah had eleven other siblings, one of whom (Daniel) was transported to Australia where he made his fortune.



Tomb of the Wind family, Mrs Sarah Sims and Miss Sarah Sims

In 1812, Joseph Sims senior married Miss Ester Cox having been a widower since his first wife died in 1794. In less than a year he was dead. His will describes him as “gentleman” perhaps implying that he has handed over the malting business. Ester inherits his bed, bedclothes and bedstead and nothing else. Joseph junior, the eldest son, receives nothing on the grounds that the settlement made on his father’s marriage to Sarah Wind made ample provision for him. Detailed provisions are made for all the other surviving children and their children. Although Joseph was a resident of Stinchcombe when he died he was buried at Slimbridge.

Release and Apportionment

On 24/6/1806 there is “a release and apportionment” – release of Jos Sims (Jnr), described as maltster, from his mortgage and the sale of the Lower House to Samuel White of Draycott Mills for a price of £1,050, including a pasture known as “Townsend Leaze (2 acres)”. It is hard to accept that the additional 2 acres would account for the price jump so

presumably Samuel White bought a thriving business, malting, making and selling beer.

Samuel White's Wills

Samuel White's will of 27/7/1809 states that the property was "occupied by Joseph Sims, so Sims clearly stayed on as the licensee or maltster with the new owners. A later will dated 4/4/1816 mentions the malthouse etc in Stinchcombe recently bought from and still in the occupation of Joseph Sims. It is left to White's son, also called Samuel.

Final Concord(e)

On 28/9/1819 and 29/9/1819 using a "Final Concorde" (as in all earlier sales) Samuel White the son (solicitor?) from Cam sold the Lower House together with the malthouse etc. etc. to John Wallington (Piers Court) for £1,100.

We know that the Prevost Estate bought the lot in 1819, but exactly when and for how much and what was there is unknown until "Bundle 13" is recovered. What happened to the pub or Joseph Sims is uncertain but we do know that the malthouse in the garden remained intact, working or not, until at least 1839, as referenced in the Gwatkin tithe map.

Final concord(e)s are quite a complicated legal manoeuvre explained by the University of Nottingham in its ***manuscript research guidance***. The final concord is a way that buyer and seller can collude to get around restrictions on the sale of real estate. It is based on a fictitious lawsuit in which the existing owner acknowledges that the land is the rightful property of the person who has already agreed to buy it. Soon afterwards, often on the same day, the parties seek leave of the court to compromise on terms which achieve the desired transfer of ownership. This might involve a nominal rent, for example a peppercorn in the Lower House deeds, which is the origin of the term "peppercorn rent".

Prevost Ownership

The transaction in 1819 takes the Prevost connection with Stinchcombe back further than was previously realised. As far as we are aware, no Prevost actually lived in the village until the 2nd Baronet (***Rev. Sir George Prevost***) became the Perpetual Curate of ***St Cyr's*** in 1834.

We know about the years of Prevost ownership mainly through information on their tenants.

The Avery Family and Henry Allen

William Avery and Henry Allen are named as the occupiers in the ***tithe apportionment*** of 1839. This mentions only the adult men and not all the occupants.

William Avery was a 55 year old agricultural labourer in 1841 living in Stinchcombe village with his wife, Ann and children David (13) and Ann (11). As this is only 2 years after the tithe map it seems likely that they are living at the Lower House, or whatever it was known as at the time. Henry Allen was baptised in 1821 so about 18 or 19 in 1839. He was possibly lodging with the Avery family, but was back living with his parents in the 1841 Census.

By 1851 William Avery is a widower of 64, living alone and still working as an agricultural labourer. The households either side of him in the census are interesting because of the women's occupations. On one side is John Avery, a 35 year old bailiff (William's son?) with his wife Helen (laundress), three children and his mother-in-law, Anne Pearce, also a laundress. On the other side are Richard Watts (gardener, 52), his wife Susan (55, washer) and their four children.

Arrival of the Woodwards

In 1869 Mr Alfred Woodward (farm labourer) and his wife, Ann,

took a 99 year lease, on exactly what we do not know. What we do know is that he and his family lived there for two clear generations until 1968.

The census of 1871 appears to show only one residence on the site with Alfred, Ann, three of her children from her previous marriage (Malpass) and two Woodward children; Henry (3) and Alfred (1).

Two Dwellings (Woodward and Attwood Families)

By 1881 there are two dwellings on the census:

1. Yew Tree Cottage (I assume to be the front part) occupied by Alfred, Ann, one Malpass child and six Woodward children;
2. No name registered but Samuel Attwood (shepherd), wife Caroline and three Attwood children, William (15), Caroline B (11) and Charles (9) are residing there.

As already mentioned, the first OS map of 1881 shows that the malthouse in the garden had gone. This begs the question of whether its stone was used to construct the extension to the west and create the (unnamed) dwelling for the Attwoods. Strangely, although many trees are shown on this large scale map, it does not show the yew tree that gave Yew Tree Cottage its name.

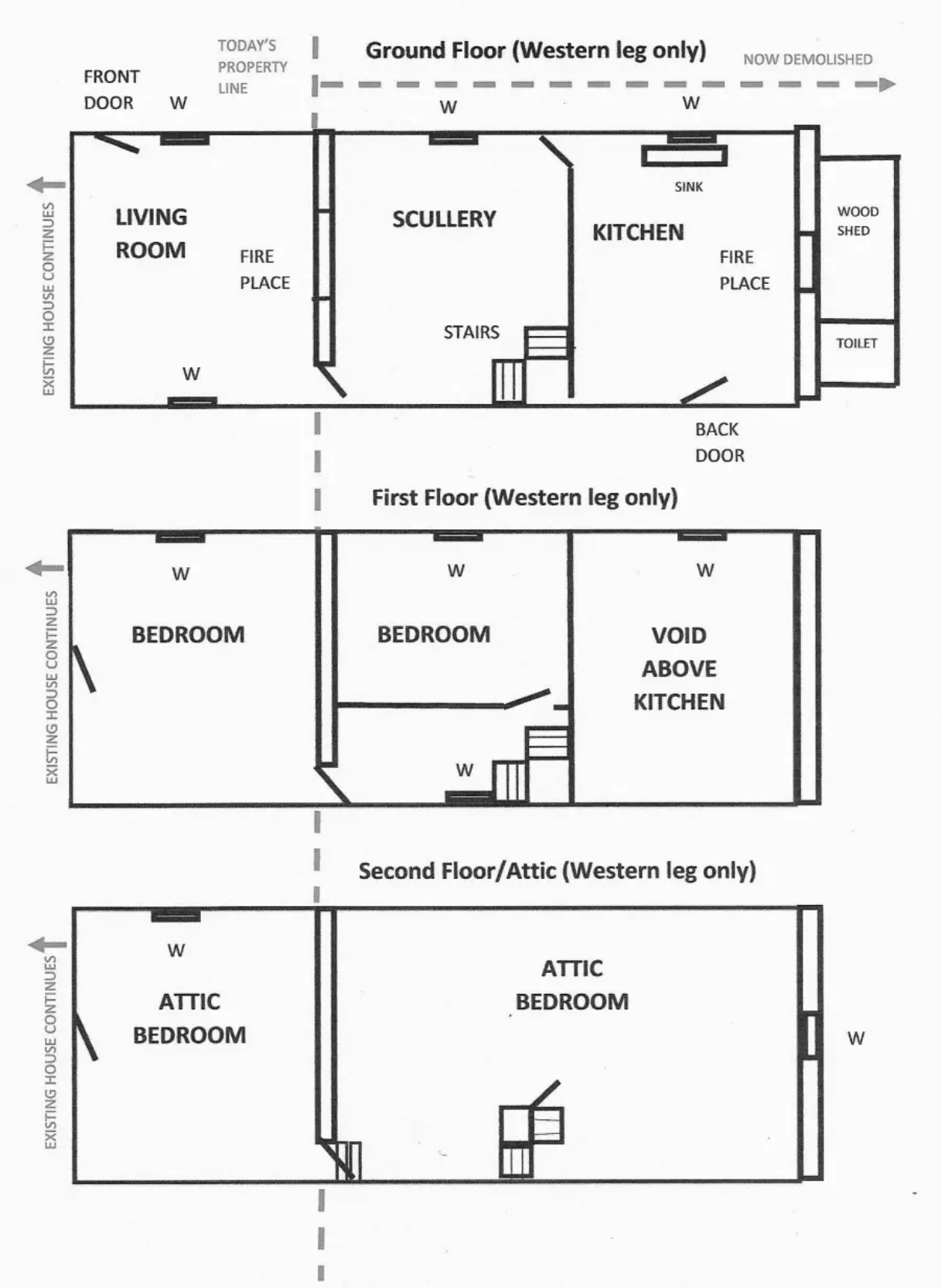
A Laundry Business?

As mentioned above, there were laundresses and washerwoman in the vicinity from at least 1851. Customers could have included the Prevosts, who by now had built Stinchcombe Manor as their new home, and the occupants of Piers Court and other large houses. The laundry cannot be definitely linked to this property but one can speculate that the water supply, tanks

and covered space from the redundant malting operation would have come in handy for a commercial-scale laundry.

From the evidence provided by Mike Troy whose grandmother, Mrs Harper, lived there for years, the extension may well have been custom-built to house an improved laundry. The most westerly room had no ceiling at first floor level and a sloping floor. There were no obvious signs that there had ever been a ceiling/floor at that level – no remains of joists or holes to hold them and no change of décor or type of wall covering.

The floor plan below of the Harper’s side of the Malt House is based on a sketch that Mike Troy made from memory.



The Layout of Malt House western leg

It is not clear exactly where in Stinchcombe the Attwood family was living in the 1861 and 1871 censuses. In 1861 Caroline is described as “washerwoman” and her 11 year old daughter, Ann, is described as “employed at home”. Although

in 1871 no occupation is given she is living “next door” to a 75 year old laundress, Susanna Watts. This Susanna is almost certainly the same as Susan Watts (laundress) who appears in the 1851 Census.

The 1891 census shows at least two dwellings described as “top of Church lane” which is taken to mean the Malt House. The occupants include Caroline Attwood (widow, laundress) with three other Attwoods; William (25), Caroline B (21), Martha (30, daughter on 1871 census) and a 10 year old boarding scholar. Son Charles, who would have been 19, was not living at home. Mrs Attwood is clearly running a laundry business from home with her daughter Caroline B and Martha is described as a dressmaker. Victorian laundry services included mending as well as stain removal, washing, drying and pressing so Martha may also be involved in the business. “Leominster1941” gives a fascinating ***account*** of the life of a 19th century Gloucestershire laundress.

Also shown at “top of Church Lane” are Ann Woodward (widow, charwoman) and her six children. These include Alfred and Herbert who are working as “cloth factory hands”.

Early 20th Century

Census records from 1901 and 1911 and military records from the First World War provide some information on the occupants of the two properties on site in this period.

1901 Census

The 1901 census shows Ann Woodward (Head) in Yew Tree Cottage with son Albert (24, gardener), Francis (17, blacksmith – striker) and a lodger. The other part of the house, now referred to as “Malt House”, has Caroline Attwood (69), Caroline B (31) and granddaughter Nora (19) living in it.

Caroline, who is recorded as having nine children in 21 years, died in 1902.

1911 Census

On 22/12/1909 Ann Woodward's son, Francis, married Bertha Taylor. The 1911 census shows that Francis has taken over as head of the family, living in Yew Tree Cottage with his wife of 2 years, Bertha, his mother Ann (73, widow and mother of 11 children, 10 living) plus a lodger.



Francis Woodward as a young man



Bertha Woodward as a young woman

The Malt House now has Henry Caudle (57, domestic gardener) and his wife Sarah (55) living in it. The Attwoods have moved following the death of Caroline.

Charles Attwood (son of Caroline)

In the 1914-18 War, Charles Attwood, by then resident in Winchcombe, was wounded in action as a driver with the Royal Field Artillery and died on 5/4/1916 in Winchester. The job

title “driver” does not refer to motor vehicles – Charles would have driven two horses (while riding one of them) in a team pulling a large gun or howitzer. There is some original film footage ***here***. Few of his military records have survived but it seems likely he died during training. The RFA had an artillery school at Winchester and the “theatre of war” where Charles met his end is given as “Home”. He is remembered on the Stinchcombe war memorial shown below. There are also other Attwoods and Woodwards on the memorial but I can find no direct link to the families who lived in Malt House or Yew Tree Cottage.



Plaque on Stinchcombe War Memorial

Jemima Ellen Workman

Although she doesn’t appear on the 1921 Census, the Electoral Register shows that from at least 1920 to 1924 part of the Malt House was occupied by Jemima Ellen Workman, a widow. She had moved to ***The Buildings*** by 1925.

Arrival of the Harper Family

The recently released 1921 Census reveals how the next occupants of the Malt House met. William J Harper, a young First World War veteran working as a labourer for the County

Council, appears as a boarder with an Attwood family who lived at Quarry House.

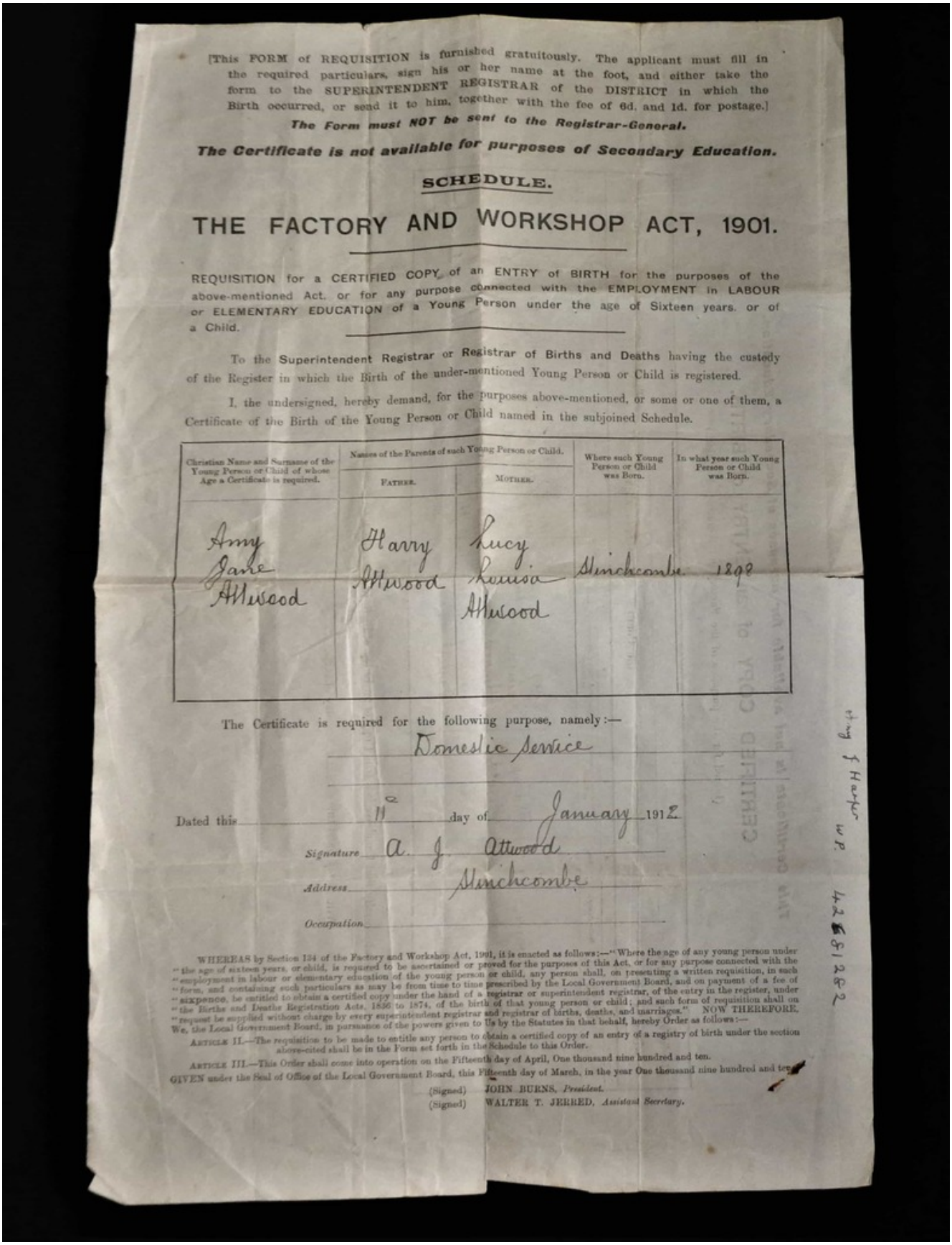
The family, apparently not closely related to the previous Attwoods at the Malt House, is headed by widow Lucy. (Incidentally, Lucy works at the Draycott Flour Mills that used to be owned by Samuel White, who we met in the early 1800s.) On 6/1/1923, 25 year old William married 24 year old Amy Jane, one of the daughters of the house. Their wedding took place at St Cyr's which is possibly where the photo below was taken.



Amy & William Harper's Wedding

Amy had been working since she was 13 years old. The document pictured below is an official certificate granting permission for her to enter domestic service, in accordance with the Factory & Workshop Act 1901, with a certified copy of her birth certificate on the reverse. The 1901 Act was one of a long series of ***Factory Acts*** that slowly improved working conditions for children in particular. It increased the

minimum working age to 12 and required children to be 13 before they could work full-time.



[This FORM of REQUISITION is furnished gratuitously. The applicant must fill in the required particulars, sign his or her name at the foot, and either take the form to the SUPERINTENDENT REGISTRAR of the DISTRICT in which the Birth occurred, or send it to him, together with the fee of 6d. and 1d. for postage.]

The Form must NOT be sent to the Registrar-General.

The Certificate is not available for purposes of Secondary Education.

SCHEDULE.

THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT, 1901.

REQUISITION for a CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY of BIRTH for the purposes of the above-mentioned Act, or for any purpose connected with the EMPLOYMENT in LABOUR or ELEMENTARY EDUCATION of a Young Person under the age of Sixteen years, or of a Child.

To the Superintendent Registrar or Registrar of Births and Deaths having the custody of the Register in which the Birth of the under-mentioned Young Person or Child is registered.

I, the undersigned, hereby demand, for the purposes above-mentioned, or some or one of them, a Certificate of the Birth of the Young Person or Child named in the subjoined Schedule.

Christian Name and Surname of the Young Person or Child of whose Age a Certificate is required.	Names of the Parents of such Young Person or Child.		Where such Young Person or Child was Born.	In what year such Young Person or Child was Born.
	Father.	Mother.		
Amy Jane Attwood	Harry Attwood	Lucy Louisa Attwood	Stinchcombe	1898

The Certificate is required for the following purpose, namely:—

Domestic Service

Dated this 11th day of January 1912

Signature A. J. Attwood

Address Stinchcombe

Occupation

WHEREAS by Section 134 of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, it is enacted as follows:—"Where the age of any young person under "the age of sixteen years, or child, is required to be ascertained or proved for the purposes of this Act, or for any purpose connected with the "employment in labour or elementary education of the young person or child, any person shall, on presenting a written requisition, in such "form, and containing such particulars as may be from time to time prescribed by the Local Government Board, and on payment of a fee of "sixpence, be entitled to obtain a certified copy under the hand of a registrar or superintendent registrar, of the entry in the register, under "the Births and Deaths Registration Acts, 1836 to 1874, of the birth of that young person or child; and such form of requisition shall on "request be supplied without charge by every superintendent registrar and registrar of births, deaths, and marriages." NOW THEREFORE, We, the Local Government Board, in pursuance of the powers given to Us by the Statutes in that behalf, hereby Order as follows:—

ARTICLE II.—The requisition to be made to entitle any person to obtain a certified copy of an entry of a registry of birth under the section above-cited shall be in the Form set forth in the Schedule to this Order.

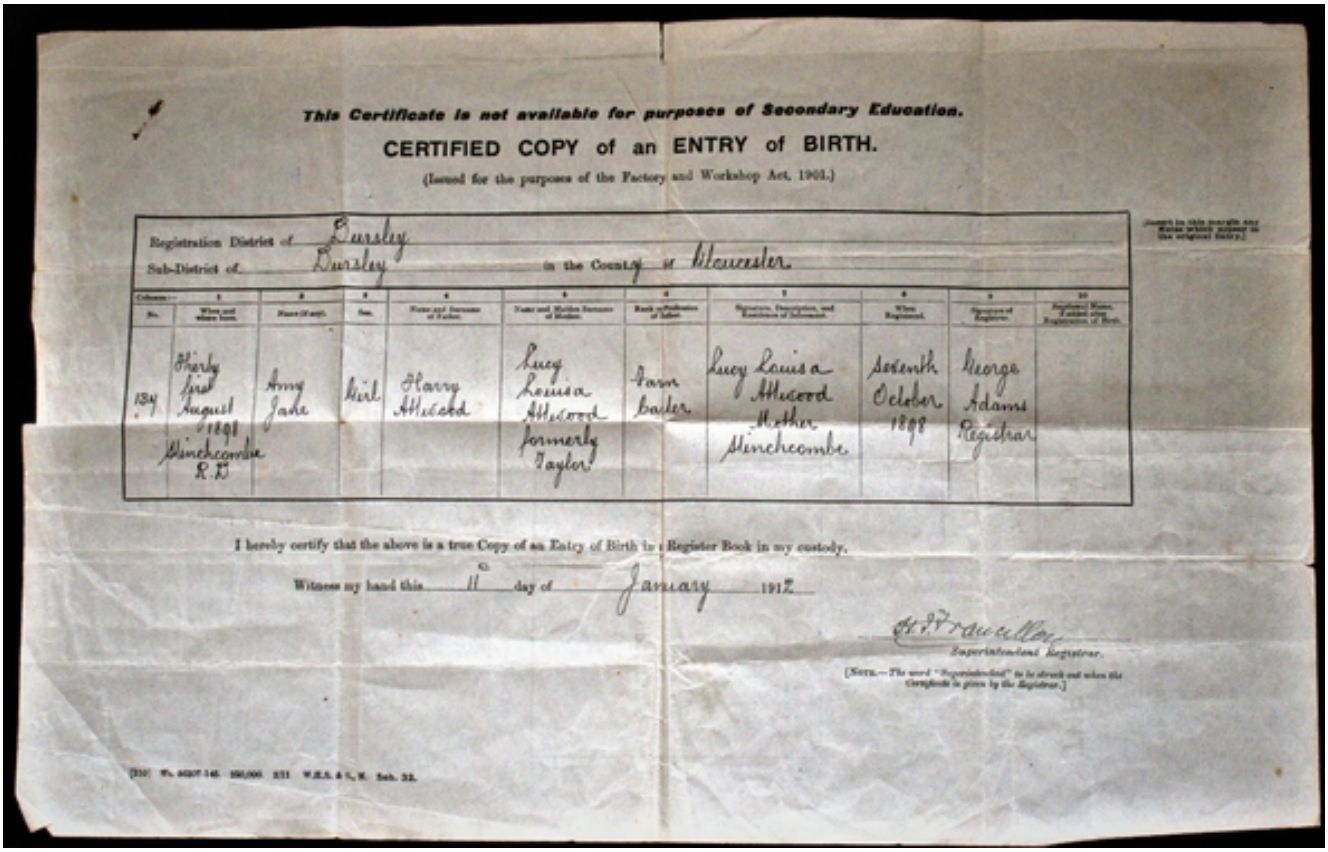
ARTICLE III.—This Order shall come into operation on the Fifteenth day of April, One thousand nine hundred and ten.

GIVEN under the Seal of Office of the Local Government Board, this Fifteenth day of March, in the year One thousand nine hundred and ten.

(Signed) JOHN BURNS, *President.*

(Signed) WALTER T. JERRED, *Assistant Secretary.*

Factory & Workshop Act certificate permitting Amy Attwood to enter domestic service aged 13



This Certificate is not available for purposes of Secondary Education.

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY of BIRTH.

(Issued for the purposes of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901.)

Registration District of Dursley
Sub-District of Dursley in the County of Gloucester.

No.	When and where born	Name (if any)	Sex	Name and Surname of Father	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother	Rank or Profession of Father	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Registrar	Registered Name, if altered after Registration of Birth
134	Thirty first August 1891 Dinchcombe R.D.	Amy Jane	Girl	Harry Attwood	Lucy Louisa Attwood formerly Taylor	Farm Bailiff	Lucy Louisa Attwood Mother Dinchcombe	Seventh October 1891	George Adams Registrar	

I hereby certify that the above is a true Copy of an Entry of Birth in a Register Book in my custody.

Witness my hand this 11 day of January 1917

Superintendent Registrar.

[Note.—The word "Superintendent" to be struck out when the Certificate is given by the Registrar.]

Certified copy of Amy Attwood's birth certificate on reverse

William had enlisted aged about 17 and served in France with various battalions of the Gloucestershire Regiment. His medals card says he was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, known as the ***Pip, Squeak & Wilfred*** after a popular cartoon of the time. His pension records state that he has a disability and give his rank as Staff Corporal.

Although the official records were lost in a fire, we know from Mike Troy that William also received the Military Medal. This was awarded to other ranks for "acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire". William received his for capturing a group of German soldiers. One of the Germans was so impressed by William that he gave him a photo of his comrades back in the trenches and a twenty mark note. These are displayed in a frame along with the four medals, regimental cap badge and William's own photo in uniform aged 17. The Military Medal is the one on the far right.



William Harper's WWI memorabilia

The young couple subsequently moved into the Malt House where they had two children, Gordon born in 1925 and June born in 1930. William Harper turns up on the Electoral Register in "part of Malt House" in 1925. Amy doesn't appear on the Electoral Register there until 1929 because women under 30 did not get the vote until 1928.

The 1939 Register

The 1939 Register was compiled as the basis for issuing wartime identity cards. It was released to the public in 2015, however, only the names of people known to be dead at the time of release are shown. Gordon, who died in 2008, therefore appears while June does not.

It shows that Francis and Bertha are living in the Malt House with:

- Mary (24) Electrical engineering insulation cutter
- Alfred (20) Engineer's turner
- Margaret (18) Woollen spinner
- Peter (16) Electrical engineer's junior clerk (invoices)
- Derek (13) At school
- Keith (11) At school
- Aimee Woodward (now Workman) (21) Domestic duties
- Arthur Workman (27) Internal combustion engine testing

The Woodwards four other children had already left home by this time. Aimee and her new husband lived with her parents whilst waiting for a house in Tilsdown. Their first child, Douglas, was born in the Malt House.

Also in the Malt House in 1939, in a separate dwelling, are William and Amy Harper with:

- Son William (14) capstan lathe operator with electrical engineering company (known to the family by his middle name, Gordon)
- Lodger Albert Cox (29) radial driller (heavy worker)



Capstan lathe shop in Dursley

William J Harper, as well as now being a sign painter/maker for Gloucestershire Council is an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Messenger. (The Senior ARP Warden was Phillip Sturdy, retired architect, living at ***Melksham Court***.)

The social change which has taken place since the turn of the century is clearly shown: gone are the labourers, shepherds, domestic gardeners, laundresses etc. and in come male and female engineers and related activities as the country gears up for war.

After World War II

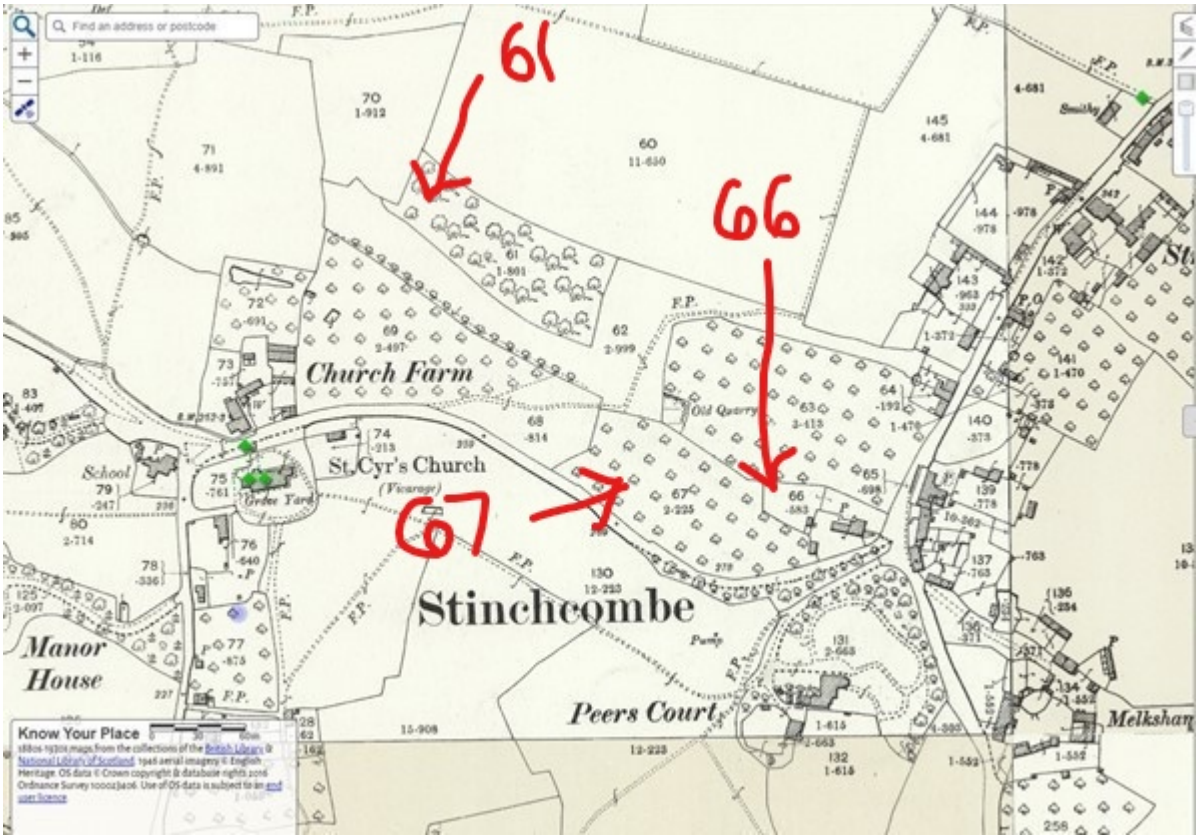
As well as legal documents there are other sources of information as we enter a period within living memory for many.

Abstract of Title: Land & Rents

On “an abstract of title” dated 25/4/1942 Mr Harper is shown in schedules, as renting “house and garden” (the Malt House – 0.260 acres of Plot 66 on 1903 map) for £10.18.0. These are assumed to be annual rents. By the second schedule (date not

given but after William died in 1944) “house and garden” are tenanted by Mrs A J Harper, along with Plot 61 “Common Hill Covert” 1.801 acres.

The same abstract of title already mentioned shows F Woodward renting “cottage, garden and shed” (0.323 acres of Plot 66) along with “Townsend Orchard” (2.225 acres, Plot 67) for a combined rent of £21.0.0. By the second schedule it is not clear if he still rents the land but he is in the house.



Extract from 2nd edition of 25 inch OS map courtesy of Know Your Place Gloucestershire

Amy Harper

William had been gassed during the First World War and eventually died of the resulting lung damage in 1944, aged 46. Amy continued to live at the Malt House into the 1960s. Her grandson, June’s son Mike Troy, lived with her from January 1967 until she left in late 1968/early 1969. His parents were living in Cork in Eire but he stayed in Stinchcombe because he was doing an apprenticeship at

Lister's. Mike has provided much background on the Harper's part of the house including the detailed layout of the three floors already shown and photos of the rooms and family.



The Fireplace in Harper's day



Amy Harper’s kitchen



June Troy, Stephen Troy, Amy Harper, Audrey Watkins, Gladys Attwood and at front Mark Troy and Mike Troy

The Evelyn Waugh Connection

Mike Troy recalls that Amy cooked for Evelyn Waugh, then resident in Piers Court. Mrs Waugh was Mike's godmother.

Auberon Waugh's autobiography ***"Will this do?"*** mentions Mrs Harper (Amy) as Evelyn Waugh's housekeeper and later cook and says that Amy's mother "Gran Attwood", brother Norman, sister-in-law Gladys and son Gordon all worked at Piers Court at various times and in various capacities. He relates that Mrs Harper was a kindly soul who suffered from bad feet and was somewhat shrill. Norman was "overwhelmingly genial after a few pints of cider" and used to tease Auberon about being always after the women.

In fact, Norman Attwood was a real village character and the stories about him are part of Stinchcombe folklore. Richard Cheetham gives him top billing in his article ***Villagers I have known***. One of the funniest stories relates to an escapade at Piers Court involving Norman, his wife and Amy Harper amongst others. As both Richard Cheetham and Mike Troy have noted, when being buried under his favourite yew tree was mentioned at Norman's funeral at St Cyr's nobody was sure whether he had really meant the Yew Tree pub.

Gran Attwood looks to be a formidable lady in the photo below. She is in the centre with daughter Amy on the left , granddaughter June Troy on the right and great grandsons, Mike and Mark Troy.



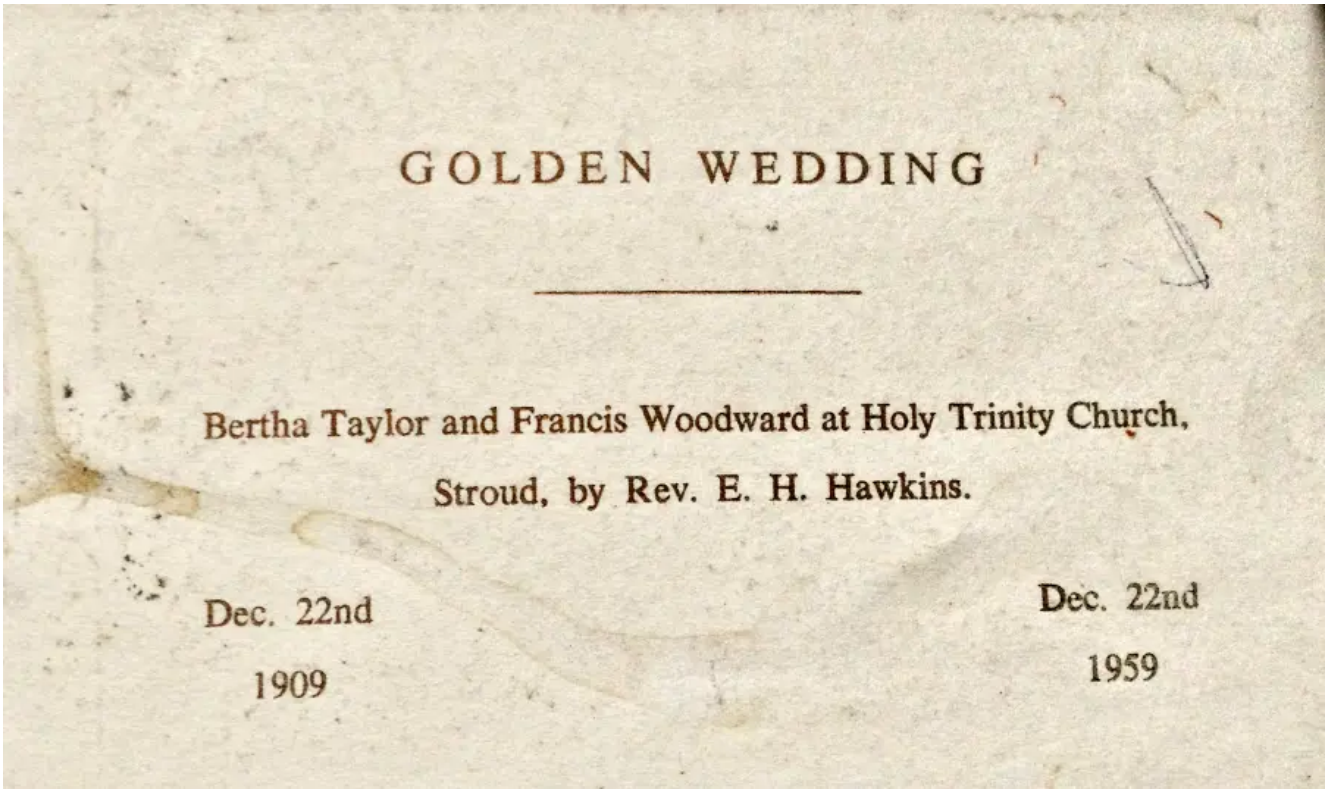
Four generations

Final Years of Francis & Bertha Woodward

Francis and Bertha celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary as commemorated in the photo below. Sadly, Bertha died 7 months later.



Bertha and Francis Woodward Golden Wedding



Bertha and Francis Woodward Golden Wedding card

Their son, Derek Francis Woodward, married Sylvia and in 1955 they moved into Overend Cottage where their daughter, Jayne

Blackton, was born. She remembers her granny, Bertha, baby-sitting her and her brother, Robert, and stealing over the road to the Malt House if she was troubled/worried and her Mum was out. They subsequently moved to Hounds Green in 1968, after Francis's death that summer.

Mike Troy remembers both Bertha and Francis in happy times and tragically it was in his arms at the Malt House that Francis died. He collapsed and no Woodwards were close so Amy Harper called her grandson, only 16 years old, to help try to pick Francis up. It was too late.

A Woodward Postscript

A Gazette notice of 4/11/1994, saved by Rex Wood, states that Mrs Maud Alice Webb née Woodward, born 1913 at the Malt House, died on 21/10/1994, aged 81. She was married in 1945. Her brothers K Woodward, K R Woodward, P Woodward and D Woodward and sisters M Reynolds, M Gale and Aimee Workman were at the funeral. Her uncle Mr A Taylor (Bertha's brother born in 1898) was unable to attend, hardly surprising given that he was 96!

The Woods

In 1969 John Reginald "Rex" Wood purchased both dwellings from the Prevost Estate. He was a trustee and his wife Margaret "Bobby" was a Prevost. He carried out extensive renovation of the property, including the demolition of most of the westward extension known originally as the Malt House. Rex and Bobby had three children who would have been young adults by 1969. One of the sons, John, certainly lived at the Malt House and as part of his business refurbished old doors. (Many of these doors were left on the property after its sale.) Following his wife's death in 1993 Rex decided to downsize and move to Eaves Cottage in 1994.

The McDonalds

At that stage things took a distinct turn for the worse and the McDonalds moved in with their baby daughter, Sophie. Two of their three children, Dougal and Lucy, were born in the Malt House in 1995 and 1999 respectively – there is a theme building here …

The main action by the McDonalds was, after a bit of a fight with Stroud Planning, to construct a kitchen suitable for a growing family. Rex Wood had obtained approval on 11/9/1969 for "demolition of part of listed property and the erection of a single storey lean to". That 'lean to' was the kitchen for Mr & Mrs Wood. It was relatively small and, although beautifully fitted, completely inadequate as a family kitchen.

Interestingly, one of the planning pre-conditions for our new kitchen was that the 'lean to' had to be removed completely because it "destroyed the integrity of the stair tower"! Why it was given permission in the first place and why the demolition of the westward end of the listed property was allowed we will never know: the correspondence surrounding the decision is apparently now missing from the council records.

Also of interest is the fact that unlike its counterpart at Overend Cottage, the stair tower appears only ever to have accessed the first floor. There must have been alternative access to the extensive second floor. The existing stair access there is, in my opinion, unlikely to be that alternative – it takes up far too much space.

Rex Wood believed that the, much grander, lower staircase accessing the first floor (see photo below) had come from Melksham Court during one of its reincarnations. Why he believed that I don't know but it certainly was not designed in when the house was built and is unlikely to have been put in by the Woodwards during their 99 year tenancy – they were farm labourers and gardeners. Perhaps the Prevosts installed

it between acquiring the building in 1819 and granting the 99 year lease in 1869. Who knows!



Staircase, possibly from Melksham Court, and contemporary dog gate

I end with photographs of some of the Malt House's other historic features; the fireplace in the sitting room with its adjacent bread oven and spice cupboard. (Compare with the black and white photograph with washing from the Harpers' time.) The bread oven door, manufactured by Dale & Co. of Coalbrookdale, has been dated to about 1870. Spice cupboards would have been used to provide nice dry storage for spices, salt and, I'm told, family bibles. The Historic England listing suggests that this one could be Jacobean i.e. 1603-1625, which predates any of the documentation for the house. Whether or not it is quite that old, it is likely to be an original feature. Interestingly, it had no door in the black and white photo c.1969. Since then a person unknown has made a new door in appropriate style, incorporating the initials LH. Although more has been found out about the Malt

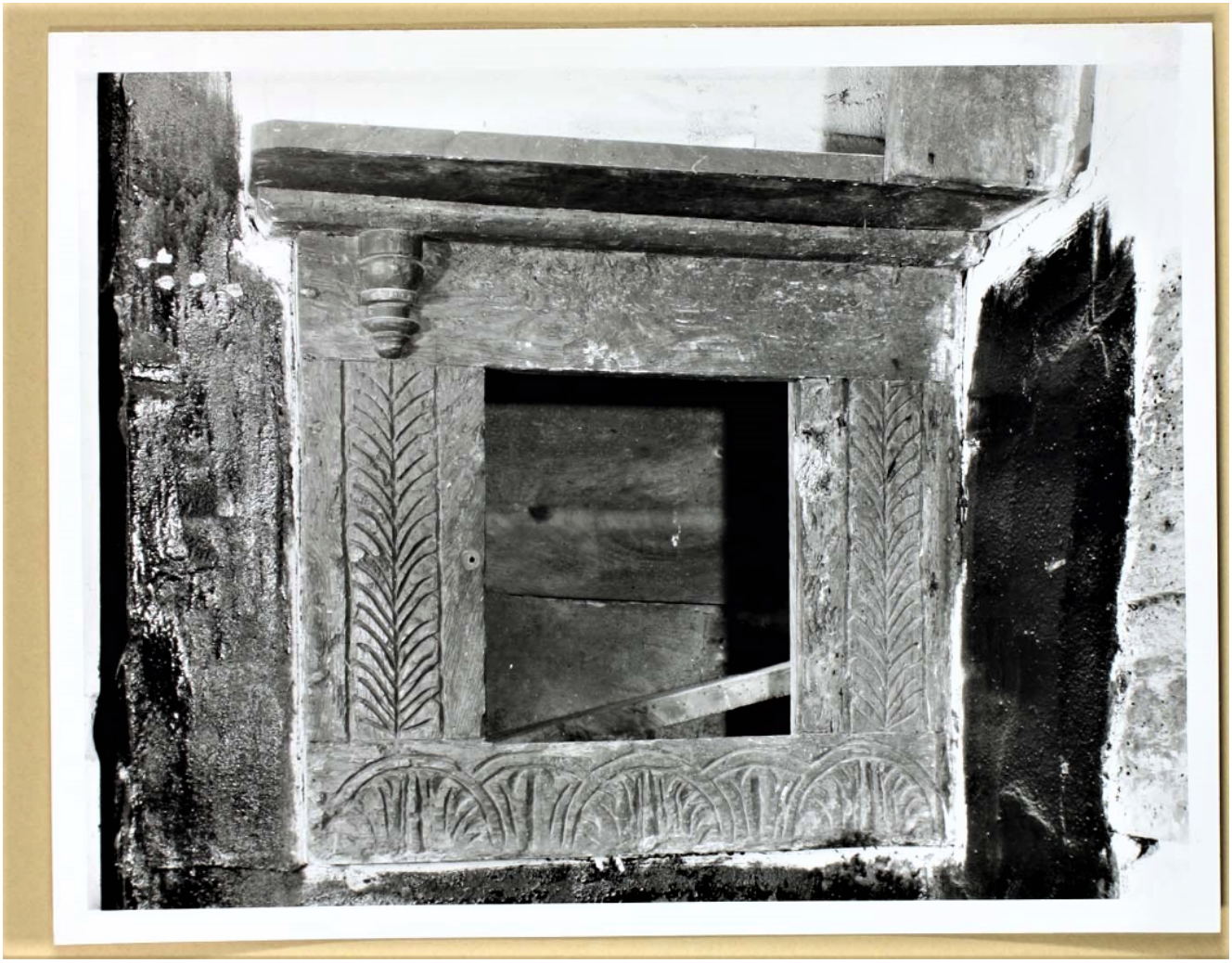
House than could have been imagined at the start of this project, it still has its mysteries.



Fireplace with bread oven and spice cupboard



Door of the bread oven



Spice cupboard minus door c.1969