

The Eatons of Manor Farm

1907 to 1967

and

Subsequent Changes

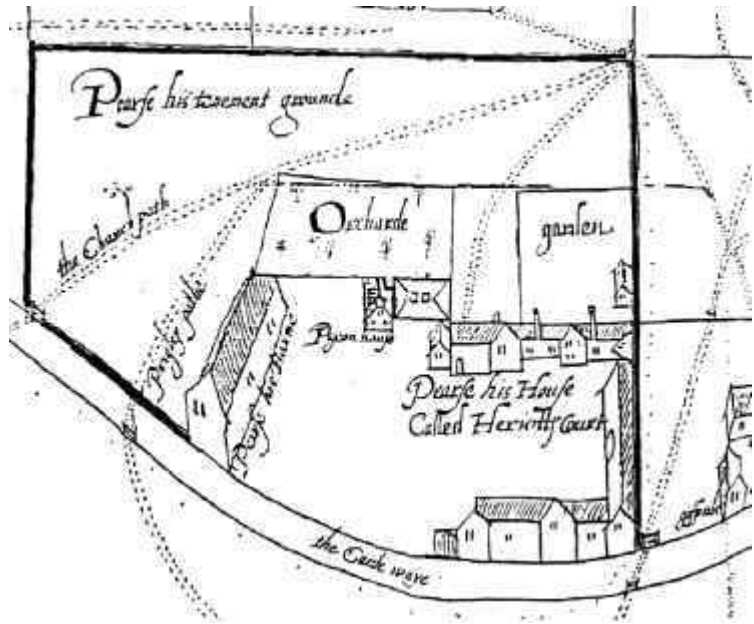
to the Farm

By Fae Hall
January 2005

Preface on the Earlier history of Manor Farm

The earliest reference available to us on Manor Farm is a map of 'Forde' dated 1604. This shows the two 'Carte Wayes' encircling the oldest part of the village. Nowadays these are called Church Street and Pump Lane. The full map is shown on the next page.

Manor Farm is prominently displayed in the correct position beside the drung. The building on the other side of the drung is now called Church Farm. In 1604, the group of buildings that eventually became Manor Farm was called Herriotts Court and owned by Mr Pearse. An enlarged section from this 1604 map showing Herriotts Court is shown here.

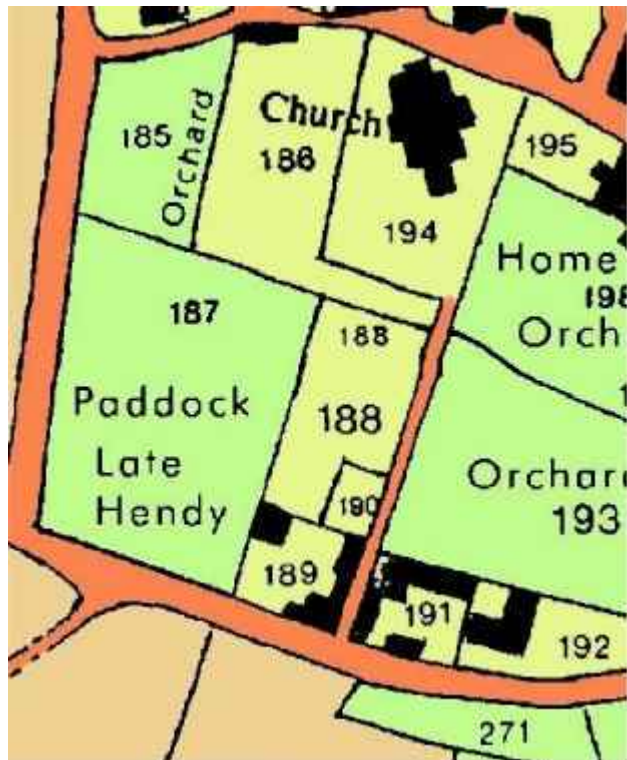


Enlargement of 1604 map around Herriotts Court [Manor Farm]

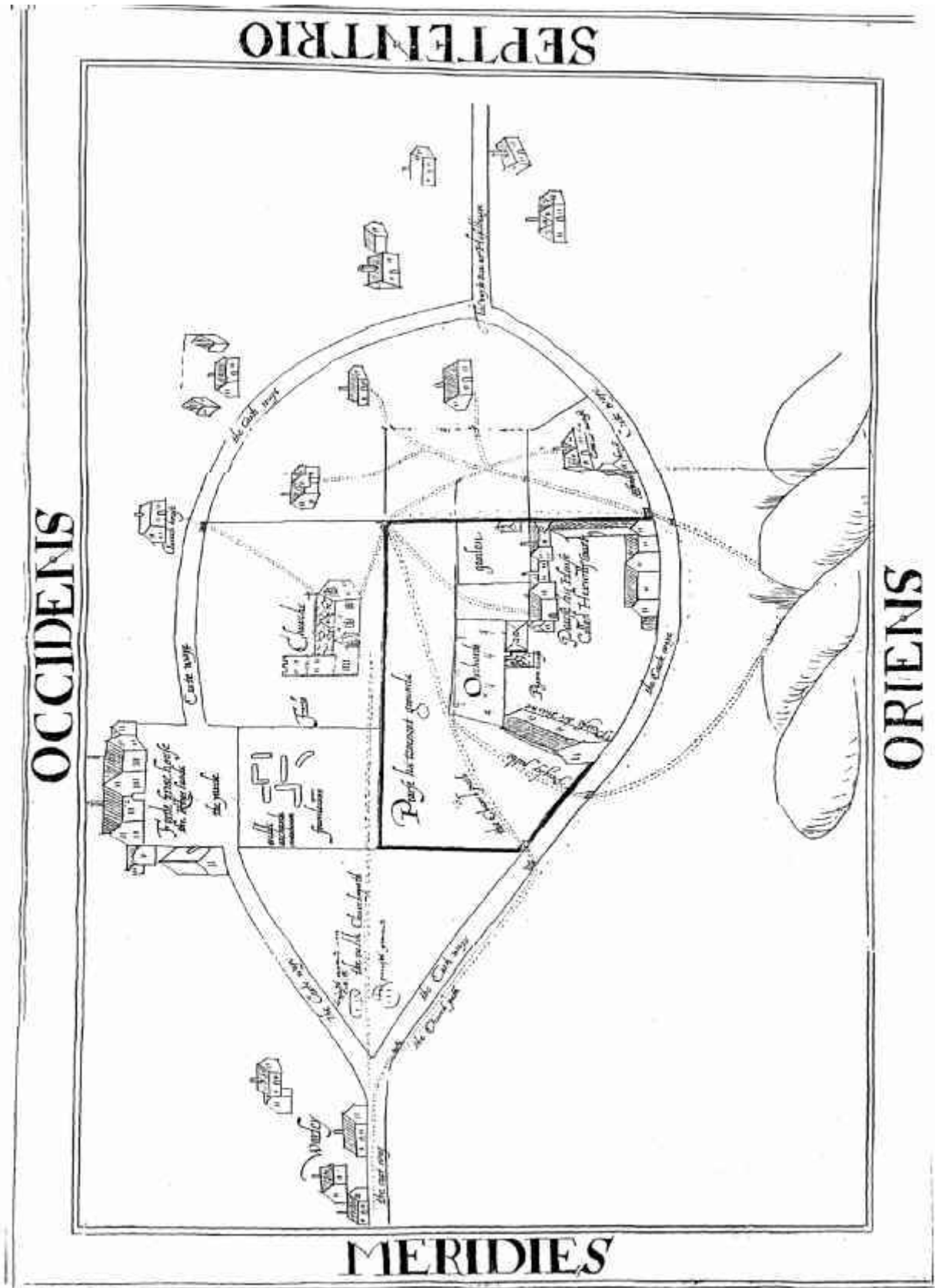
The next reference available to us is the map by John Thorpe, drawn in 1742, which shows a simple square indicating a building. However, the Tithe Map of 1839 shows buildings more accurately and described as 'Barn & Yard' where Herriotts Court stood. Mr William Eleazer Pickwick was given in the schedule as the Landowner and Occupier.

It would appear that the part described in 1604 as "Pearse his House called Herriotts Court" [the building nearest the church] has been demolished and what was originally perhaps a barn became Manor Farm House. The three gables in the 1604 sketch are similar to what we see today.

Reference to the Bathford Directories shows the occupancy of Manor Farm. They date from 1854 and show a succession of tenants or owners, none appeared to stay many years, unlike Lower House Farm, for example, where George Dike farmed there for many years. However, when the Eatons came they stayed from 1907(?) to 1967 when the Eaton sisters retired and the farm sold.



Extract from the 1839 Tithe Map showing Manor Farm in relation to the Church and the drung.



Copy of map at Taunton Record Office of the Manor of Forde, 1604 AD.

The EATONS at MANOR FARM 1907 to 1967

On November 18th, 1907, two sisters, whose last place of residence had been Birmingham, were admitted into Bathford National School. They were ELIZABETH ELEANOR EATON, born on Sept 19th, 1894, so then aged 13, and ALICE GRACE GERTRUDE EATON, born on December 12th, 1897, and then aged 10. Their address was given as Manor Farm, Bathford, and it was their destiny to live together at Manor Farm for the next sixty years until their retirement, and in due course to be buried together just below Manor Farm in St. Swithun's churchyard.

The history of the Eaton family before their arrival at Manor Farm in 1907 is not known, and as they do not feature in the 1901 Census it may be, as the girls' school record indicates, that they had previously lived in Birmingham. Their parents who had taken on the farm in 1907 were SAMUEL EATON (b. 1860, d. 1918) and his wife ELIZABETH (b. 1864, d. 1944). For one year, in 1910, the farmer is listed in the Bath Directory as JOSEPH EATON, so it may be that this was Samuel's second name, or that he perhaps had a brother also living at the farm. As we do not know Elizabeth's maiden name, we do not know whether it was a family connection on her side that brought the family to Bathford.

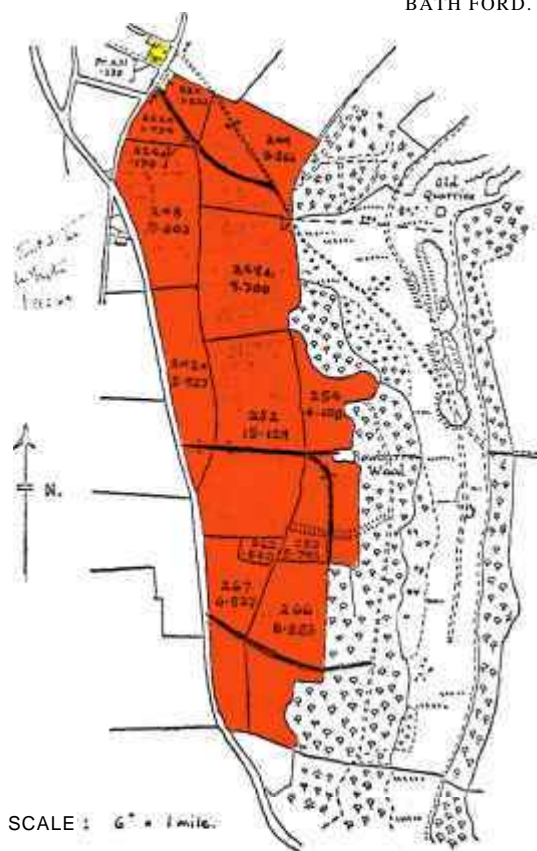
Elizabeth and Samuel had four children in all, and as their son SAMUEL WILLIAM (b. 1891) was already 16 in 1907, he presumably worked from the beginning with his father on the farm. Mysteriously, there was a third girl, MARTHA ELSIE born in 1894 - the same year as ELIZABETH ELEANOR. If these two were sisters, they must have been twins, but MARTHA ELSIE did not go to Bathford School, and there is no other record of her other than her death and burial in Bathford in 1940, aged 46.

In 1918, when he was 58, Samuel Eaton died, and for the next 22 years until only 4 years before her death at the age of 80 in 1944, Mrs. Elizabeth Eaton listed herself as the farmer at Manor Farm, helped presumably by her children.

During the parents' lifetime, the Eatons were merely tenants of the farm. Their arrival there in 1907 had coincided with a transfer of ownership of the land and buildings from Edwin Richard Fuller of Eaglehurst (Eagle House) Bathford, to Charles Edward Henry Hobhouse of

MANOR FARM, BATH FORD.

BATH FORD.



Map showing lands belonging to Manor Farm in 1946, when it was purchased by the Eatons.

Monkton Farleigh, for the price of £4,550? In 1941 Charles Hobhouse died, leaving his property to his son Charles Chisholm Hobhouse and A.N.Other, and in 1946, two years after Elizabeth's death, her three surviving children were able to buy for £3,500 freehold - "all that farmhouse, buildings and pieces of land coloured yellow in the plan, reserving full right and liberty from time to time and at all time thereafter to pass and repass with or without horses and carts carriages and other vehicles over and along the ways coloured red on the said plan for the purposes of clearing timber from the vendors adjoining lands". To do this, they took out two mortgages, one with a Bath Building Society whose then Secretary, Alan Chapple, later lived at Lower House Farm, Bathford.

Although the three children, Samuel William (Bill), Elizabeth Eleanor (Bella) and Alice Grace (Grace) were now all joint owners of the farm, Bill took little part in the work and descriptions of him as being "very withdrawn" or "ten-pence short of a shilling" suggest long-standing difficulties which culminated in 1953 in his being found drowned on Bathford Hill, by a lady - Mrs. Stead, who helped the Eatons with their milk deliveries.

Effectively, then, it was Grace and Bella who ran the farm, along with a small caravan site in their field across the road. Though they kept the usual flock of chickens, it was basically a dairy farm, but with only a few cows. The outdoor work was the province of Grace, with help when it came to calving from Terry Sully's father. Every day,



Grace (on left) and Bella Eaton

with Mrs. Rayne or Vic Lavington or some other friend to push the cart carrying a small churn, Grace would use large and small measures to ladle the milk into her customers' own containers, supplying the Church Street zone at a time during, and for some time after, the war when milk suppliers were each allocated their own zone. Probably the Eatons also supplied cream, since some of their milk was



Manor Farm, c. 1960. Grace & Bella can just be seen at the far door.



Bella, on left, stayed at home whilst Grace, on right, did the milk round.

skimmed. In 1952, however, a Government Act was enforced in Bath by which all milk must be supplied in bottles and either pasteurised, tuberculin tested or accredited milk from a single herd. As the photograph shows, the Eatons were able to achieve this, but whether the milk was bottled on or off the premises, no one can now remember.

After a long and hard working life, in 1967, exactly 60 years after their arrival at Manor Farm as young girls, Grace and Bella decided to retire, and the farm was sold. Grace and Bella themselves moved to St John's, Ostlings Lane, where their friend and helper Mrs. Rayne lived, and where Mrs. Rayne's nephew, Brian Hart, still lives in 2004.

End to housewives churn to urn milk delivery

THE old fashioned method of delivering milk, whereby the housewife would bring out her jug to fill up from a churn on the back of a tray will never be seen again at Bath after November 1, 1952.

Under a new Ministry of Food order, Bath become part of a specified area under the Food and Drugs (Milk, Dairies and Artificial Cream) Act of 1948, in which all milk must be supplied

in bottles and must be either pasteurised, tuberculin tested or accredited milk from a single herd.

The order which has just been signed by the Minister of Food, Major Lloyd George, will not affect Bath very much as the larger dairies have been conforming to the required standards for many years.

However, in the country districts, some small milk

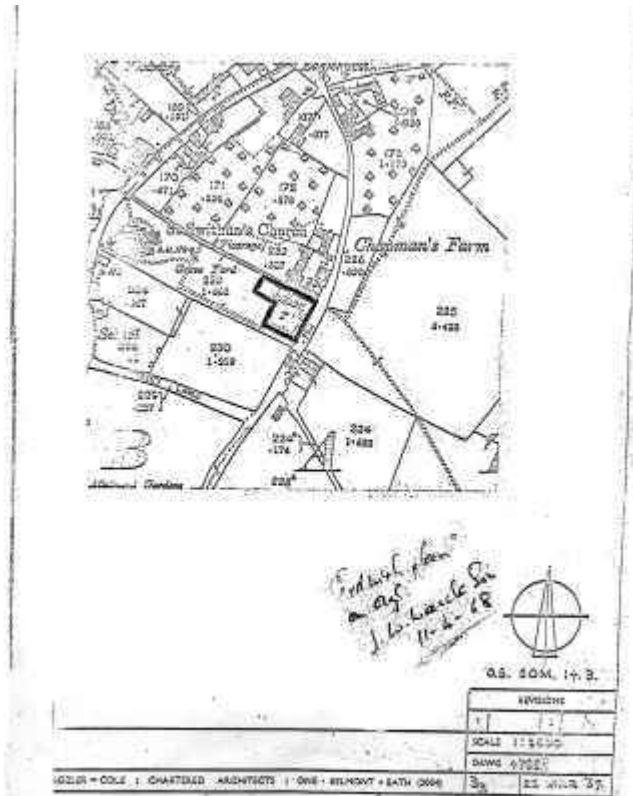
retailers will have to change their methods. Permission for retailers to bottle their own milk will be given if their premises are found to be adequate, and their supply of milk complies with the standards laid down by the order.

The specified area includes the urban districts of Keynsham, Kingswood and Mangotsfield, Warmley and Bathavon rural districts as well as the county borough of Bristol and Bath.

Both sisters enjoyed a well-earned and long retirement, until at a great age, they died and were buried in St Swithun's churchyard just below Manor Farm. Bella died in 1983, at the age of 87, and Grace in 1990, aged 93. The two Miss Eatons are fondly remembered in Bathford, but Bella particularly so. While Grace occupied herself with the animals and the milk delivery, Bella (who became rather deaf) stayed mainly at home, and "when you went to the door, she always held out her arms as if she wanted to give you a big hug".



The Eaton grave in St Swithun's Churchyard



Old map showing the site of Manor Farm in the village of Bathford, as purchased by Mortimer & Son, builders, in 1967.

in the buildings backing onto the drug.

Mortimer & Son were builders, and on purchasing the property they had plans drawn up to create three houses and associated garages on the site. The plans were the work of Crozier-Cole, architects of Bath, who also built the two 'Arts and Crafts' houses in Roland's Close, Mr Crozier-Cole being the son-in law of Mr Rowland George of Sycamore House.

The plans were duly passed, and the farmhouse was divided into two. No 1 Manor Farm



Aerial view of Manor Farm Cottage, Milkwood Cottage and Colton. The barns of Church farm are on the left.

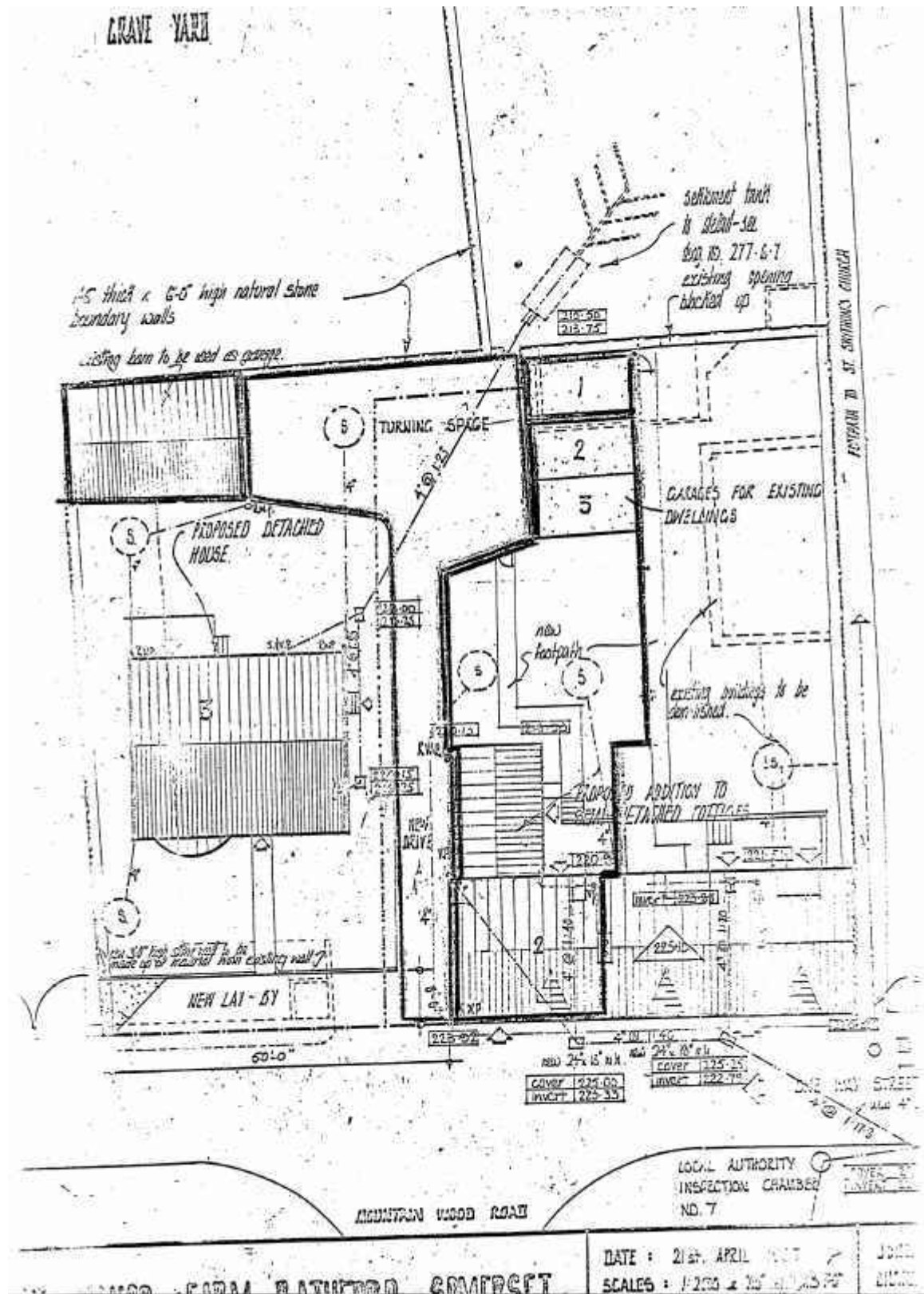
MANOR FARM AFTER THE EATONS - 1967 to 2004.

On the retirement of the two Miss Eatons in 1967, Manor Farm with its yard, buildings and garden (plot 231 on the Tithe Map) was sold for £5,000 to E. Mortimer and Son of Argyle Street, Bath. Who bought the land belonging to the farm has yet to be discovered, but it is likely that the purchaser was the present owner, Mr Keevil.

From photographs it appears that under the Miss Eatons, the surviving buildings of Heriotts Court remained much as they had always been, with the building fronting onto Pump Lane used as the farm house, with what is now the front sitting room of Milkwood Cottage kept for 'best', and the real business of the farm conducted at the north end of the house and

Cottage retained the larger part of the frontage on Pump Lane, and the greater part of the buildings backing onto the drug, except for a small section nearest the house which was demolished to make space for a window. It is presumed that No 1 was sold at the same time as No2, which now consisted of the 'best' room of the old farm house and the bedroom above, with a considerable new extension at the rear, and three garages at right angles to the garden wall at the bottom.

The new house, now called 'Calton' was



Drawing of proposed changes at Manor Farm

also built by Mortimers. The garage for the new house was adapted from one of the original farm buildings close to the churchyard.

From its deeds, we know that No 2. Manor Farm Cottage was sold, no longer free-hold but now leasehold in April 1968 to PETER JOHN and JILL YVONNE MADDOCK of 87 Dovers Park, Bathford, for £5,000. The lease was for 999 years at an annual rent of £9.9.0 p.a. with numerous maintenance clauses and conditions, among them “not to keep any ducks, pigeons, poultry, rabbits or other animals other than cats and dogs “ - a sad fate for what for more than 350 years had been a working farm.

In April 1973, the Maddocks sold No 2 Manor Farm Cottages to Commander and Mrs. Alan S. Craig for £15,250. They renamed the house Milkwood Cottage and in his little study upstairs, Cdr Craig put together the immense body of local history archive material which is his enduring legacy to Bathford.

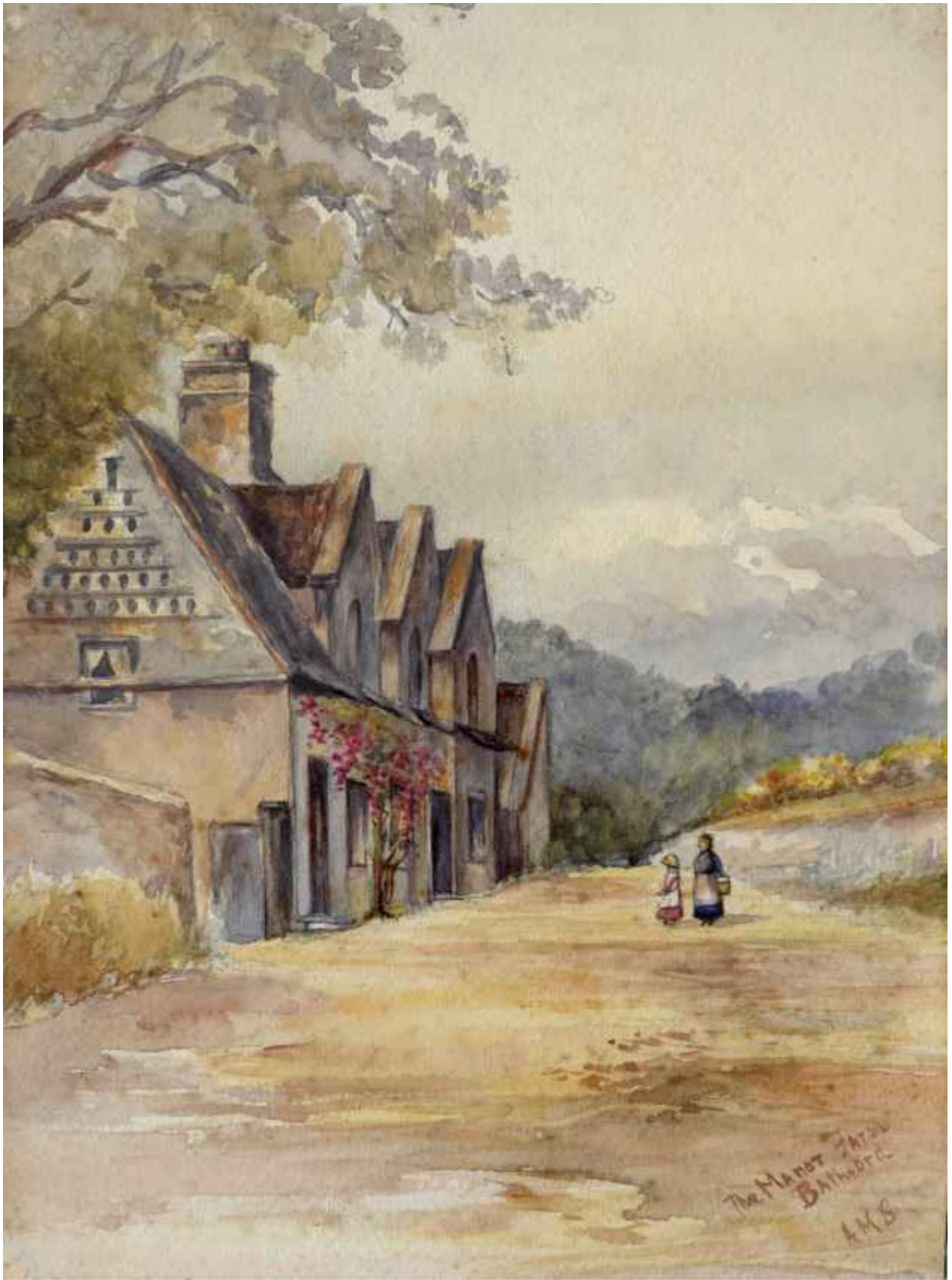
After Cdr Craig's death c. 1993, and that of his fondly remembered wife Mrs. Anne Craig, Milkwood Cottage was sold again in 2004 to Mrs. Christine Ducat. The price of £285,000 reflected the very high property values at this time, particularly in the village of Bathford which has become a sought-after location. Mrs. Ducat has been particularly welcomed in the village because until his retirement, in 1982, her husband had been a much loved local GP.

Sources: Deeds of Milkwood Cottage, Bathford Tithe Map, Bathford Directories, St Swithun's burial records, Bathford National School pupil register; and for personal memories, Mrs. Joyce Helps and Mrs. Jean Law.

Compiled by Fae Hall
December 2004



Cdr. Alan Craig keeping the church yard tidy.



A painting of Manor Farm believed to date from 1900.

SUPPLEMENT

Some recent views of the buildings and of the Drung.



Aerial View of Milkwood and Manor Farm Cottages. 2004



Milkwood and Manor Farm Cottages in 2001.



Godfrey Laurence with Anne Craig



One of the old farm buildings behind Manor Cottages



One of the old farm buildings behind 'Calton'



The Drung just below Manor Farm Cottage