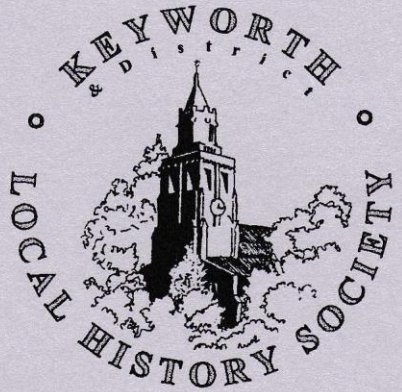
KEYWORTH MANOR

AND MANOR HOUSE FARM



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DRAWINGS BY KEITH BARTON

KEYWORTH MANOR AND MANOR HOUSE FARM

This article was sparked off by two photographs of Manor House Farm, taken in the early part of the 20th century, and two from a collection belonging to the County Council Heritage Team, taken in the late 1960s. They show only partial views of the house which was demolished in the early 1970s, but have prompted a number of questions: What was the house like? When was it built? How did it get its name? Was it ever a manor house? Who owned it and who lived there? Did Keyworth ever have a resident lord of the manor? What was the manorial system? Did anything precede it? Some attempt will be made to answer these questions in the reverse order, that is in chronological order.

THE VILLAGE MOOT - A precursor of manorial organisation

From earliest times, every village must have had a meeting place where its freemen would gather and discuss village matters. Usually this was a hill or sacred tree where agricultural arrangements would be agreed, disputes settled and laws made.

In Keyworth we still have the name 'Motley Close', which goes back many centuries. Sometimes it is spelt Mottlow or Mattlow. Potter tells us that "Motley associates a 'ley' or grass land with 'mot', and in Mottlow and Mattlow there is a 'low'. Here is a plain reference to the 'low' or little hill where the 'moot' or gathering of the freemen of the village was anciently held." In the case of Keyworth this probably dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when the first family settled in a clearing in the forest - Kai's home - later Kaiword or Keyworth. Today this hill overlooks the last house on the left down Lings Lane. There are very steep steps from the side of the house to the back garden and the hill rises still further to Motley Close. Potter also remarks that "Other villages in the neighbourhood have preserved the memory of their moots in field names, notably the 'Hill-mott' at East Leake, and 'Mooter Hill' at West Leake". (Potter p7.)

If this was a precursor of the manorial system, it was probably more democratic and egalitarian than the hierarchical autocratic arrangements that were to follow.

THE MANORIAL SYSTEM

Before the Norman Conquest something akin to the manorial system was well

established throughout England, and when William 1 conquered Britain he inherited a system of administration that required little immediate alteration. The major change he did introduce was in the area of land tenure. He claimed the land throughout the country as the property of the Crown, dividing it into 60,000 parcels of land or manors which were roughly equal in value, with an average area of about a square mile each.

He kept 1,422 of these manors for his own use, and distributed the others among his foreign favourites under the feudal system. (Chadwick 1920). Roger de Busli was a particular favourite of the king, for the Domesday Survey shows he was given 174 manors, among which was one in Keyworth. No man could hold any land by an ante-Norman title, and those dispossessed must become tenant farmers or villeins.

The classic period for the manorial system in England was the 13th century. At this time a manor consisted of the houses of the local people, usually clustered together and surrounded at any rate in the Midlands, by two or three open fields, together with meadows (supplying hay), woodland and wasteland. The lord of the manor was the head of this society and the manor house was his dwelling or that of his residential bailiff, and was also the administrative centre of the estate. The most conspicuous feature of this house was the great hall which was used for the manorial court and as a place of assembly for the tenants. The lord of the manor gave protection to the people, who in turn provided crops, labour and military duty. While some were free tenants, others were villeins or bondmen who could not lawfully quit the manor or pass on any land they held from the lord to their descendants. If the system worked well, the lord served his people in many useful ways, and they served him in return. There had to be regulations for managing the manor, and the manor court dealt with offences such as ploughing up grassland, grazing too many animals, or personal misbehaviour. Most importantly it recorded details of the tenancies and when they changed hands.

Gradually over the years, changes took place. There was considerable social mobility among the lords, and many were also able to amass their holdings in one county or one area, by purchase, exchange or marriage. Later, they found it more convenient to commute the labour and military services of their unfree-tenants into money rents, with which they paid hired labour and soldiers. Others leased out their land to tenant farmers, thus doing away with most of the administrative costs of running their lands. This in turn led to some holdings being regarded as hereditary and the lords' control was increasingly weakened.

KEYWORTH MANORS - before and after the Norman Conquest

Before the Conquest, Domesday tells us that there were five manors or separate properties in Keyworth. A man called Stori had a manor rated for tax as 3½ bovates. (A bovate varied between 10 - 18 acres, depending on the terrain, and was the amount of land an ox could plough in one year). (Bristow 1994). Three other manors belonged to Harold, Richard and Frane, and were rated as 6¾ bovates; and another man called Frane had a manor rated as 5 bovates. These manors or properties were the size of an average farm in Keyworth in the early 20th. century. Much of the parish would have been forest or scrub at this time. Potter calculates that there were about `80 souls' in Keyworth in 1086 (Potter p.42), and such a small population would not have been able to cultivate the whole of Keyworth parish with its 1500 acres.

The new administrative areas created by William did not coincide exactly with the pre-Norman manors, neither did they lie entirely within the parish boundaries as we know them today. Stori's land became the fee of R. Earl Moriton; Roger de Busli took over the land of Harold, Richard and Frane, which was held (sub-let in modern terms) by the family of Manvers, Lords of Holme; and the other Frane's manor was given to Raph Fitz-Hubert. These new manors overlapped the boundaries with Bunny, Normanton and Plumtree.

LORDS OF KEYWORTH MANOR

a) The Barry Family

Sometimes a manor held land in more than one village. This is the situation in which we find Keyworth only two centuries after the Conquest. Potter tells us that "The family of Barry, seated at Tollerton, had become the great people of Keyworth, holding the manor and the advowson of the benefice (that is, the right to appoint the rector). Anxious to hold still more of the lands, they made a bargain with the Prior and Canons of Lenton; and in 1262 Roger the Prior exchanged all their lands at Keyworth..... with John Barry, of Tollerton, for his lands at Bradmore," (Potter p.27) so the three manors of Domesday had amalgamated into one. This illustrates one way in which the old landed families acquired most of the manors in England.

Alternative ways were through marriage and through gifts of land from the Crown. However, just occasionally a yeoman farmer would become prosperous enough to be able to purchase a manor, while less ambitious men would be able to buy smaller pieces of land.

From the list of rectors and patrons hanging in Keyworth Parish Church, we see that the Barry family owned the advowson from at least 1270 until 1548. Thoroton tells us that after the death of Thomas Barry in 1527, there was an inquisition at Newark, where it was proved that he had been the legal owner of "The Manor of Keyworth and the Advowson of the Church and of two messuages (a messuage was a dwelling house with its outbuildings,) 19 Bovats of Land, 8 Bovats of meadow and 2 Bovats of pasture, and 9s. 4d. Rent, with appurtenances in Keyworth." (Thoroton Vol.1 p172-173). Totalling up this land, it would appear to be something in the region of one third of the total acreage of the parish, and perhaps between a half and two-thirds of the privately owned strips in the open fields (excluding the common pasture and waste). This implies that by the 16th. century a substantial proportion of the parish was owned by medium or small freeholders - yeomen.

b) The Parkyns Family

The last of the Barry family was Matilda. She married Richard Pendock, who thus became Lord of the Manors of both Tollerton and Keyworth. Thoroton tells us that Richard's son William and grandson John "sold their interest here (in Keyworth) to divers freeholders and the advowson of the church to Sir George Parkyns" (Thoroton p83). The fact that grandson John married Frances, daughter of Richard Parkyns of Bunny, may explain how the advowson and a substantial amount of land found their way into the hands of the Parkyns family. The first rector presented to Keyworth Church by "The Assigns of Sir George Parkyns, Bart", was in 1619, and the last was in 1801, just after the Inclosure of Keyworth.

Throsby, writing in the 1790s, says that Keyworth's "Lordship is divided amongst several freeholders. Sir Thomas Parkyns, Bart. (son of the famous wrestling baronet), is the reputed lord of the manor. It is open fields and contains 800 acres of land." (Throsby p84). The 800 acres of land would be the total arable land in Keyworth. Perhaps Throsby uses the term 'reputed lord of the manor', because although Parkyns owned the advowson of the church, he only owned about 78 acres of land in Keyworth. (At Inclosure in 1799, this would increase to 138 acres as compensation for loss of tithes). Nevertheless, like his forebears, he inherited some residual responsibilities for the organisation of the open field system, including presiding over the manorial court. The function of this court is illustrated by the document quoted below, relating to the outcome of court proceedings, presided over by the wrestling baronet himself.

There have survived three lists of fines imposed by the Court. 29 tenants were

fined in 1707; 23 in 1709 and 13 in 1710. A selected list of fines from 1707 is quoted, to give a flavour of the type of offences dealt with by the manor court. (Nottingham University Manuscripts Dept. PaM 21).

To the bayliff of ye mannor of Keyworth.

This is to charge and command you.... to collect, levy and gather ye several fines.....
At ye Court Baron of Thomas Parkyns Baronet for his Manor of Keyworth, held on Thursday ye 24th. day of April 1707.

	£	s.	d.
Robert Knight for (ploughing) two baulks on flatlands		1	0
Robert Knight for (ploughing) three baulks on little hill		1	6
Thomas Hemsley for (ploughing) one baulk on little hill			6
John Mee - no baulk between two lands			6
Robert Knight for default in quicksetting		2	6
Mary Knight for scoulding and disturbing the jury		1	0
Robert Barlow for ploughing up greensward			9
William Shepperson for ploughing up greensward - half a rood		1	3
Thomas Smith and his son for keeping their sheep in ye cornfield		1	0

Robert Knight seems to have broken the rules on several occasions. One can picture the uproar in court as an infuriated wife lets loose with her tongue in defence of her husband and in protest against his fines, only to receive a fine herself for 'scoulding and disturbing the jury'.

The last of the Parkyns family to reside at Bunny Hall and hold the by now purely honorary role of lord of the manor of Keyworth, was George Augustus Parkyns, the second Lord Rancliffe (1785-1850). When he died in 1850, he left his much reduced estate to Mrs. Burt his housekeeper. When she died in 1875 the estate passed to her niece Miss Hawksley. In directories of 1886, 1895 and 1898, Miss Hawksley is listed as one of the chief landowners in Keyworth and also as lady of the manor. In Kelly's directories of 1900 and 1904, Mrs. Wilkinson Smith is given as lady of the manor.

In 1910, the whole estate was sold to Alderman Albert Ball, Mayor of Nottingham 1935-36. He encouraged as many tenants as possible to buy the property they were occupying, but retained the position of Lord of Keyworth Manor until at least 1941. (Kelly's directories from 1916-1941). According to the Manorial Society of Great Britain, the title Lord of Bunny Manor has not

been sold at auction and in all probability remains in the family of Albert Ball. After Inclosure in 1799, the manor court, which had previously administered the open field system, ceased to have much of a role, and the Law of Property Acts of 1922 and 1924 severed all property links with the manor.

OWNERSHIP OF KEYWORTH HALL 13th-17th CENTURY

We have so far traced the lords of the manors in Keyworth from pre-Norman times to the second World War. But what can we find out about the Manor House? One thing for certain, is that neither the Barrys nor the Parkyns lived in Keyworth, and we have no way of finding out where the pre-Norman manor houses were situated. But Keyworth does seem to have had a substantial building associated with a particular site just across the road to the west of the church for many centuries. Sometimes it was called 'The Hall of Keyworth', sometimes 'The Mansion House', and in more recent times 'Manor House Farm'.

The juxtaposition of church and manor house in Keyworth is not unusual. It is to be found in many villages, for example in Bunny, Tollerton, Clifton, Gotham and Widmerpool. It suggests that the original church site was chosen by the lord of the manor who was often instrumental in having the first church built. It also suggests that Keyworth Hall may well have stood on the site of a pre-Norman manor house.

In our search for important landowners in Keyworth after those named in Domesday, the first of whom we know anything is Philip Marc, Sheriff of Nottingham from 1216 - 1225. Whether he was lord of the manor and lived in Keyworth Hall cannot be proved, but it is quite likely. He was one of the famous or infamous landowners in Keyworth. Thoroton tells us that "Philip Marc, and Ann his wife, purchased lands of several people here (in Keyworth)". He goes on to say that this couple gave 9 bovates of their Keyworth land to Lenton Priory on condition that Philip should be buried there, which he duly was in 1234 (Thoroton p83). Philip was among the most hated of men. Perhaps he wanted to be assured that his enemies wouldn't wreak their revenge after his death; thus he entrusted his body to the godly men of Lenton Priory. Ann, his widow still had lands in Keyworth after Philip's death. Maybe further research would show where these lands were.

After Philip Marc, we can in fact find brief references to the probable ownership of Keyworth Hall for the next four centuries. On the next page is a summary of the owners, and the following paragraphs explain the evidence available.

c.1274	Hugh de Somervill
mid 14th.-mid 16th. centuries.	Lenton Priory
1576	Anthony Rotsey and William Fisher
c.1581-1590	Archdeacon Lowth
1590-1610	John Lowth, son of the Archdeacon.

In order to establish the link between the Somervills and Keyworth Hall, we turn to Potter who quotes Torre writing about 1690: "The Somervills had lands here which they gave to the Priory of Lenton..... which (lands) are now in the occupation of the Sewells of this place". (Potter p27). Potter continues by saying: "it would enable us to identify these lands if we can trace the Sewell holding". Fortunately, we now have access to the deeds of Manor House Farm, which show John Sewell in occupation around 1690. A deed of 1660 describes the property as follows: "..... the Manor of Keyworth called Barry Manor and the said capital messuage or Chief Mansion House .... called the Hall of Keyworth". (Nottingham Records Office DD 1396/3). This then was the Somervills' house.

We first come across Hugh de Somervill when he is being sued for the property by Lenton Priory. So much land was given or exchanged or sold to monasteries in these early days, it is not surprising that disputes arose over ownership. Potter says that in the period 1274-1276 the Prior of Lenton "claimed against Hugh de Somervill, the messuage and the oxgang of land, except one and a half acres, in Keworth, as his right". (Potter p27).

Sometime during the mid 14th. century, this question of land ownership seems to have been resolved, for Thoroton says: "Hugh, son of Hugh de Somerville of Keword gave to God and the Church of Lenton one Bovat of land in Keword which Azor Held." (Thoroton p83). This was only a small portion of the land in Keyworth held by Lenton Priory, but as this dispute is almost certainly over Keyworth Hall and its lands, it is our starting-point for tracing its ownership.

Two centuries later, after the redistribution of monastery land, Rotsey and Fisher are given it by the Crown. To quote Thoroton again: "Queen Eliz. Feb 27. in the eighteenth of her Reign (1576), granted to Anthony Rotsey and William Fisher, one Messuage and seven Bovats, with another Messuage and Croft, and a Toft, and Half a Bovat, now (when Thoroton was writing, in 1677)) in the Occupation of John Sewell and lately belonging to the Monastery of Lenton, in Keyworth." (Thoroton p84). (A toft is an enclosure including a dwelling site. A croft is an enclosure without a dwelling site).

Rotsey and Fisher must have been very much in the Queen's favour, for they were granted the rents of the lands of former monasteries in Devon, Southampton, Wenlock, Plymouth, Keyworth and York, and also many manors and premises that went with these lands, including "The premises in Claworthe alias Keyworthe" (Calendar of Patent Rolls 27-2-1576 paragraph 674).

Potter tells us: "Archdeacon Lowth became the owner of house and lands about this time, (about 1580), (so) it is likely that he purchased these properties from Rotsey and Fisher". (Potter p27). We know that the Archdeacon lived and died in Keyworth, and in his will made in 1590 he says: "I do give to my son, John Lowth .... my Mansion House with all other houses and buildings thereunto belonging, ... in Keyworth wherein I now dwell .... And all other lands, pastures, meadows, feedings, commons, royalties, and commodities". This is the first definite reference to a named owner/occupier of the house, as distinct from owners who may not have been occupiers.

John Lowth the son died in Keyworth in 1610, and here unfortunately, we lose the trail of ownership for 46 years until the Sewell family, already mentioned, appear in 1656.

We know more about Archdeacon Lowth than many former inhabitants of Keyworth. Until recently it was mainly those of high status and education who left any record of their lives, and John Lowth was probably the only resident of Keyworth prior to 1800 of whom we have personal reminiscences. It was in 1579 that he wrote these down for John Foxe (better known for his book of Martyrs), whose work has been edited and published in the book "Narratives of the Reformation" (Nichols 1859). We will recount briefly some of the major events in the life of John Lowth, because these draw a vivid picture of what life was like at this time.

John Lowth, (1519-1590) who lived through the twists and turns of the reformation, had a varied and interesting life but with many shocking experiences. One of the family homes was Sawtrey Manor in Huntingdonshire, where John lived as a child and where he lost his father when he was only three years old. In his reminiscences he writes of "the shameful murderyng of one mr. Edmund Loude (Lowth) of Sawtrey by the monkes and preestes of Sawtrey Abbey". His father (the said Edmund) was a violent man and there were many battles with the monks and priests of Sawtrey. He once placed a cow-pat on the priest's head for kissing his daughter in the church-yard. When imprisoned in Cambridge castle because he had struck a priest, he then proceeded to knock out the teeth of the lawyer who had come to taunt him in prison.

The future Archdeacon, John, grew up in an anti-clerical and anti-catholic atmosphere and made friends with other protestant boys when he was at school at Winchester, then a catholic school. One of these, John Philpot, was burned at the stake in 1556, and others had to live incognito during Mary's reign to protect their lives. He gained his degree in Oxford and afterwards went to Cambridge. When he was at Lincoln's Inn he met a number of protestants from Nottinghamshire, and it could have been one of these, who helped him obtain the post, at a salary of £10 a year, of master at Southwell Grammar School in 1548, which building still stands today, close to the Minster.

The previous year, in 1547, John Lowth was present at the burning of Ann Askew. There is one lively description of her 'crime' : "She gad up and downe the countrey a ghospelling and ghossipinge". She was terribly tortured on the rack in Newgate prison for her beliefs, and had to be carried in a chair, being unable to walk, to Smithfield where she was burned at the stake at the age of 24 or 25.

During the Marian persecution (1553-1558), Lowth was probably in hiding, as were many of his protestant friends. After Elizabeth came to the throne he worked in Bristol and Gloucester until he became Archdeacon of Nottingham in 1565, to which he added the rectorship of Gotham in 1567.

In about 1580 he bought a substantial house in Keyworth that he described as his "mansion house", which had other houses and buildings attached to it and included strips in the open fields and grazing rights in the pastures, meadows and commons of Keyworth. He brought with him his second wife Mary and their baby son John who was born in 1580 when the Archdeacon was already 61 years old. He died in 1590.

Before leaving the Archdeacon, it is worth recounting a village tradition that Potter tells us about. It is said that Mary Queen of Scots passed a night at Keyworth. She was moved about from one place to another quite frequently during her long captivity. Although she was held mostly in Sheffield Castle between 1569 and 1585, there were intermissions at Tutbury Castle, Staffs.; and Wingfield Manor and Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. She also made visits to London that involved several days' journey, with overnight stops, and one of these might have brought her past Keyworth. Potter suspects that in Keyworth, she would have stayed with Archdeacon Lowth in his Mansion House, for he says: "The Archdeacon was of noble, and it was even claimed, of royal descent; and in high favour with the Crown". (Potter p15). (An ancestor, Roger Lowth, married Mary of Henawd, a descendent of Edward III (Nichols 1859).

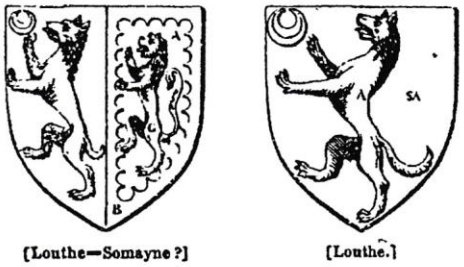


Fig.1. Two of the Lowth family coats of arms in Sawtrey Manor House

The coat of arms for Lowth = Henawd, together with subsequent Lowth coats of arms, was found in a window of the manor house of Sawtrey, Huntingdon, in 1613). If Mary did stop in Keyworth and was travelling with her usual retinue of 50 servants, the party would have had problems in finding anywhere suitable to stay. The Archdeacon's mansion house must have been bursting at the seams that night, although the visit illustrates another useful function for the medieval hall.

THE NEW MID-17th. CENTURY KEYWORTH HALL

Owners and occupiers from 1656 - gleaned from the deeds

Date	Owner	Occupier
1656	John Sewell & Bridget his wife	same
1660	John Sewell the younger & Grace his wife	same
1685	John Sewell son of above & Ann his wife	same
1692	Thomas Smith & Fortune his wife	Thomas Hemsley
1698	Samuel Smith (son of Thomas)	"
1698	Thomas Smith (son of Samuel)	"
1760	Dorothy Smith (wife of Thomas)	Thomas Hemsley
1793	Elizabeth Smith (only child and heir, now married to Sir Philip Hales)	"
1793	Thomas Hemsley	same
1883	John Staton	same
1899	Williams Staton	Samuel Eggleston
1919	E. Beswick	same
1940	Jim Hortor	same
1970	Property demolished	

Three generations of the Sewell family lived in Keyworth Hall for 36 years, from 1656 - 1692. Longevity was not a strong point in this family.

After the Sewells, the Smith family, landowners of Nottingham, bought the property, but it is unlikely they ever lived in Keyworth. Thomas Smith was the founder of Smith's Bank of Nottingham, now merged with the National Westminster Bank. Smith's Bank was the oldest provincial bank in England and there is a plaque to Thomas Smith on the National Westminster building in the Market Square, Nottingham, on the corner of Exchange Walk and South Parade. Thomas Smith lived from 1631 to 1699 and married Fortune, whose name is also to be found in the deeds of Keyworth Hall. The great grandson of Thomas Smith, Robert Smith, became the first Lord Carrington.

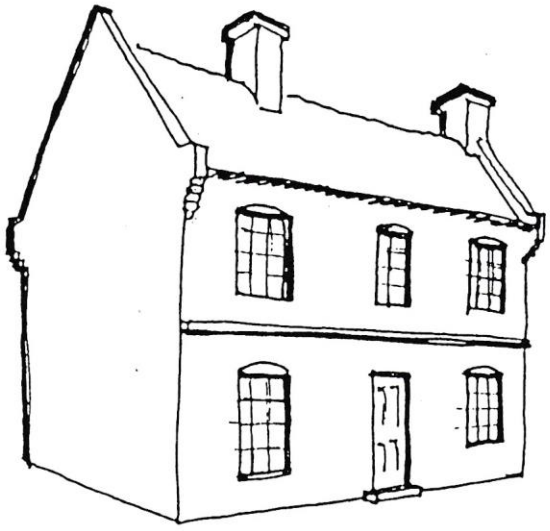


Fig.2. Keyworth Hall in the mid-17th.century

The tenants of Keyworth Hall during the Smith family's ownership were the Thomas Hemsleys for 101 years until 1793, one of whom then bought the property which was owned and occupied by him and his son for the following 90 years. The Hemsleys were stalwart members of the Independent (Congregational) church over several generations. Unlike the Sewells, the two Hemsley owners of Manor House Farm did live to a great age. In 1844 Thomas

Hemsley, the first Hemsley owner, died aged 88 years, and in 1881 his eldest son died aged 84 years, having remained a bachelor living with his five brothers and sisters who also never married. He outlived them all, and in the 1881 census he is shown aged 84 years and living with his relations Richard and William Staton and two female servants. Upon the death of this Thomas Hemsley, the farm passed to the Staton family, and John Staton is shown as the owner in the 1891 census, living with his unmarried sister as housekeeper.

For a glimpse of what life might have been like in the late 18th. century at Manor House Farm, we can turn to a description of the way of life of a moderately prosperous farmer by a contemporary writer, Arthur Young : "his large roomy, clean kitchen with a rousing wood fire on the hearth, and the ceiling well hung with smoked bacon and hams; a small room for the farmer and his family, opening into the kitchen, with glass in the door, or wall, to see that things 'go right'. When company is in the house a fire in the parlour. At table great plenty of plain things, with a bottle of good port after dinner, and at least a hogshead of it in his cellar .....Attendance, never anything but a maid, this I consider as one of the lines of separation between different classes of people; the farmer is to have every thing that yields comfort; .....In the stable a good nag, for his own riding, but not good enough for hunting, a recreation too common, as it is apt to lead into a dissipated, idle, drinking and expensive life". As for the farmer's wife, she was allowed "a one horse chaise" (Young p 152).

Before the Inclosure of Keyworth in 1799, farming was organised on the open field system with three large fields containing some 3,000 strips, the majority only a few yards wide. Manor House Farm consisted of about 200 of them scattered among the three fields. After Inclosure, the farm was allotted two tracts of land, one extending from where the car park and health centre stand today, along both sides of what is now Manor Road, to Debdale Lane; the other, a long piece down Lings Lane, stretching from Wolds Lane to the Widmerpool boundary - a total of 76 acres.

In 1793, when a Thomas Hemsley first purchased the property, he took out a mortgage of £1,700. This was a large sum of money, perhaps equivalent to £85,000 today*. The mortgage was obtained from Joseph Marriott of Cropwell Butler for: "Keyworth Hall with outhouses barns, gardens and paddock; also arable, ley, meadows and pastures, 21 cowgates in common pasture; (that is permission to graze 21 cows on the common) all in Keyworth. For term of 1,000 years."

In those days the law encouraged better terms for mortgages. Provided the

interest was paid regularly, a creditor could not insist on the sale of land, but he could pass on the loan to someone else seeking an investment. This led to much longer-term loans than is the case to-day. Loans were also carried over from one generation to the next, and many landed families took out mortgages to provide dowries for their daughters and capital for their younger sons who were not entitled to land. The law enforced strict entail on landed families, to prevent the head of the family from selling part of the eatate.

Although Thomas Hemsley purchased in 1793, he didn't gain the title to the property until 1814. The reason for this gap of 21 years is of some interest. In the late 18th. century the legal title to a property was often held by a trustee, in this case by William Hemsley, Yeoman of Thrumpton, so that on the purchaser's death, his widow would not be entitled to one third of the property for life (her common-law dower rights) .

Further mortgages totalling £1,300 were taken out by Thomas Hemsley over the next 37 years, giving him a total mortgage of £3,000. Very likely he used part of this to cover Inclosure costs in 1799 and the rest in buying properties and land in several parishes. Some of his acquisitions are revealed in a document dated 1814 (DD 1396/9) where his estate is listed: "The Manor of Keyworth with the appurtenances. And 6 Messuages, 6 gardens, 6 orchards 650 acres of land, 150 acres of meadow, 350 acres of pasture, 60 acres of Furze and Heath, ten shillings rent and Common of Pasture for all manner of cattle with the appurtenances in Keyworth, Stanton-on-the-Woulds, and Cropwell Butler otherwise Crophill Butler. And also of all manner of tithes whatsoever yearly arising, growing or renewing from and out of 500 acres of land in Stanton-on-the-Woulds in the County of Nottinghamshire. And of other premises in the County of Warwick." He seems to have enriched himself substantially from the high prices of grain and livestock products during the Napoleonic War.

The extent of the acreage listed is roughly equivalent to the total area of Keyworth Parish at the time. But it is worth remembering that ownership of the 'Manor House' and even of Manor Farm, (which was a unit of variable size as owners added to or reduced it by land purchases and sales), did not carry with it the Lordship of the Manor, which was then with the Parkyns family.

To complete the history of the ownership of Keyworth Hall, we find John Staton owned and occupied the premises from 1883 until 1899, when William Staton of Bunny inherited. Samuel Eggleston then became the occupier, and in a Survey of 1914 (Valuation Office Records) giving the area of the farm as 59 acres, 1 rood, 7 perches, the house is described thus : "Brick and slate house in

good repair, 5 bedrooms, kitchen, dairy, 2 sitting rooms, workroom and washroom". The gross value in February 1913 was £2,570, (house and farm), amended in June 1913 to £2,782.

The farm, together with the house, was sold to E. Beswick in 1919, who ran it as a dairy farm to start with, but in 1931 changed from dairying to horticulture which involved adding to and modifying the outbuildings associated with the house. While establishing the horticultural business, Mr P. M. Beswick set up a sawmill in the farm yard and he sold fencing posts and delivered bags of logs on a lorry round the village. They were cheaper than coal. Mr E. Beswick had Vine Farm in Bunny which was contiguous with Bunny Wood. He had the timber rights for this wood, and the brothers worked together on the sawmill.

In 1942 the Hortor family bought Manor House Farm and continued the horticultural business. Gill Hortor had a greengrocer shop in the grounds until 1970. During the Hortor's time, several Keyworth families working for the Hortors, lived in the farmhouse. These included the Butlers, the Perrins, the Cookes, the Morgans and the Oldhams. Shortly after the Horters left, the house and outbuildings were demolished to make way for shops. Fig.3 shows a rear view of the rather neglected farm, with greenhouses replacing the original farm out-buildings and the greenhouse heating system crossing the picture.

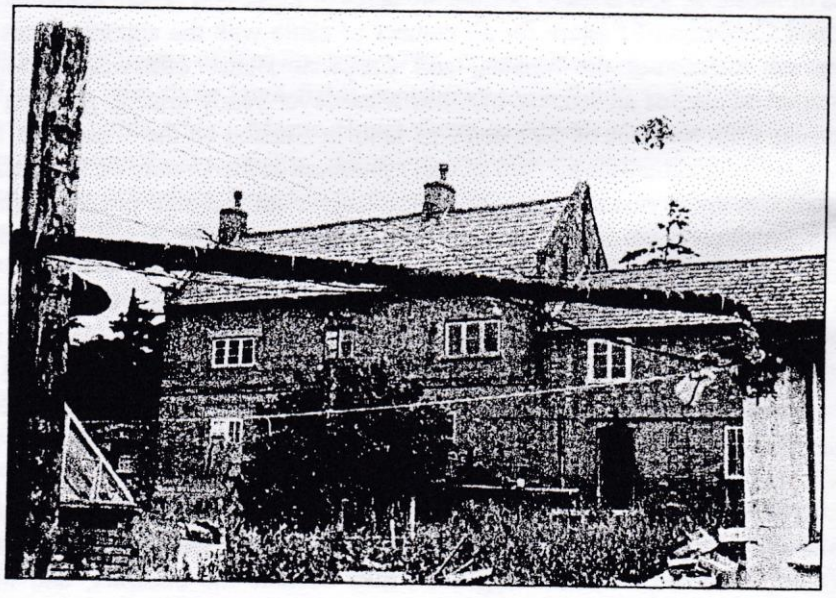


Fig.3. Rear view of Manor House Farm in 1968

ORIGIN OF THE NAME MANOR HOUSE FARM

Was this building ever a 'Manor House', in the true sense of the word? Having traced the probable ownership back to 1274, it would seem that the answer is no. But the question remains, why in 1660 did the deeds describe the property as 'The Manor of Keyworth called Barry Manor'? And in 1814 when Thomas Hemsley gained the title to the farm, why was it still called 'The Manor of Keyworth'? Perhaps further research into the family records of the Barrys will show whether that family ever owned the land on this site, and perhaps had a bailiff living there before 1274.

CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN

Names such as 'Chief Mansion House' and 'The Hall of Keyworth' used in the deeds, indicate that for many centuries a substantial house has stood on the same site. Archdeacon Lowth's 'Mansion House' is unlikely to have been the same building referred to in the extant deeds, where the first named owners and occupiers were John and Bridget Sewell in 1656.

Most of the larger houses in Keyworth prior to 1600 would have been timber framed. This frame was usually infilled with wattle (interwoven twigs) and a daub made of clay, cow hair and lime. Not until after c1600 were bricks used more generally. Around this time the Nottingham tilemakers started to make bricks, and local glass makers appeared after 1615 (Henstock 1997 pp113 & 114). Thus we can picture Archdeacon Lowth's house as a timber-framed building, infilled with wattle and daub, and perhaps rendered with a lime plaster coating. It almost certainly stood on the same stone foundations as the 1656 house, which gives us some idea of its dimensions. (Similar stone foundations can be seen at the base of many of the older buildings on Main Street, such as the timber-framed barn, built about the same time as the manor house, and also probably on the same site as an older building). The house was only one room deep, but a long rectangular building probably containing a large hall open to the roof, a parlour and a service room (buttery or kitchen) on the ground floor, with a chamber over the service room and the parlour. Between the stone footings and the walls above them was a layer of slate, which provided an excellent damp course. The roof was probably thatched and the windows, without glass, would have had sturdy wooden shutters on the inside, that could be securely fastened to keep out intruders or inclement weather (Fig.6).

With the few available photographs, the recollections of two former

residents, and the expertise of Keith Barton, we have managed to piece together quite a detailed description of the building that was demolished in 1970.

An early reference to the property is to be found in the Hearth Tax Returns for Keyworth for 1674. This was introduced in 1662 as a tax on the number of hearths or chimneys in each house. "John Seawell" of Keyworth Hall is shown to have 5 hearths. Only one other house in the village had as many as 5 hearths - that of William Smith. To put this into context, Plumtree Rectory had 10 hearths, Bunny Hall 15, Charles Hutchinson of Owthorpe 22, Lord Byron of Newstead Abbey 42, and the Marquis of Dorchester at Holme Pierrepont 62, but most of Keyworth's cottages had only one or two. (The present Plumtree Rectory and Bunny Hall were built after this date).

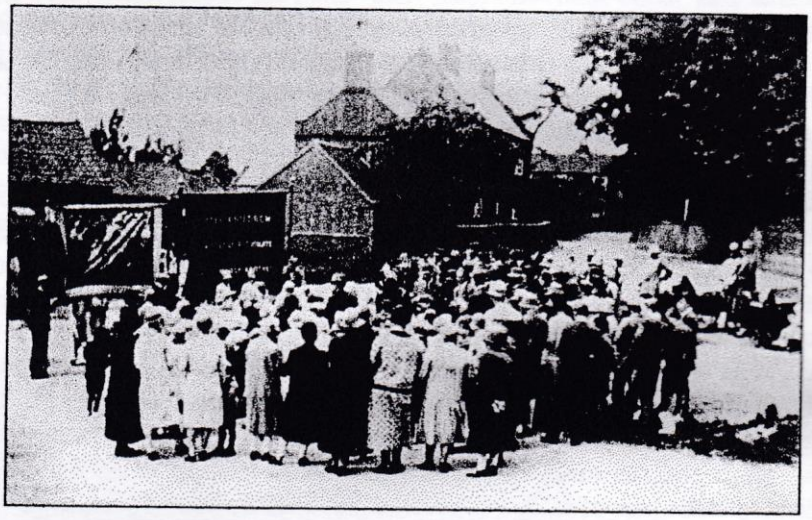


Fig.4. Manor House Farm c1928

The earliest part of Keyworth Hall - that part with the steeper pitched roof, could date from as early as 1656, which is the date of the first deed to have survived. Looking at the plans (Figs 9&10), we can see the five hearths - three on the ground floor and two on the first floor. This main block (Fig 3) shows a regular arrangement of windows on the east side : two windows and a door on the ground floor, and three windows on the first floor. Some of the small windows on the west side appear to be horizontal sash, and may not have undergone major alteration, but the window frames on the east side are deeply recessed. In the

1920s photo, the front window frames appear to be vertical sash, but the 1968 photo shows casement windows. Keith Barton suggests that both these front windows may be later replacements, possibly for wooden mullioned windows that had rotted (Fig.6). Evidence for such original windows can be seen in one photo (Fig.4) that shows a separate outbuilding on the far left, behind the banners, with a similar pitch of roof to that of the main block and possibly also 17th. century, which appears to have a wooden 3-light mullioned window (common at that time). This is supported by a statement by Adrian Henstock : "A typical Nottingham house of the 1650s or 1660s .....had mullion and transom casement windows .....rather than the more fashionable vertically sliding sashes" (Henstock 1997 p 116).

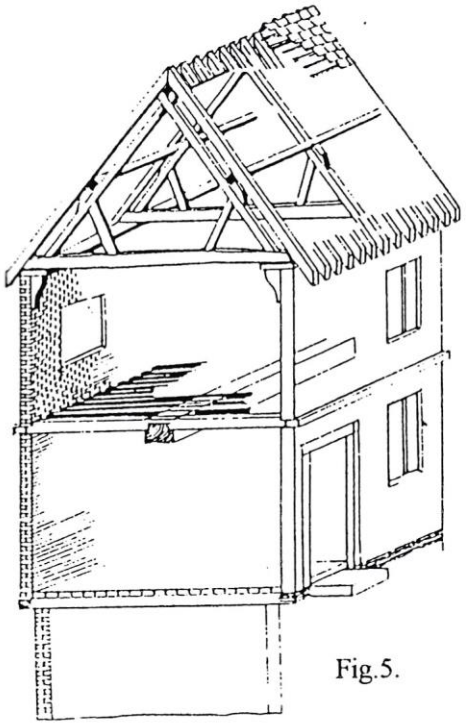


Fig.5.

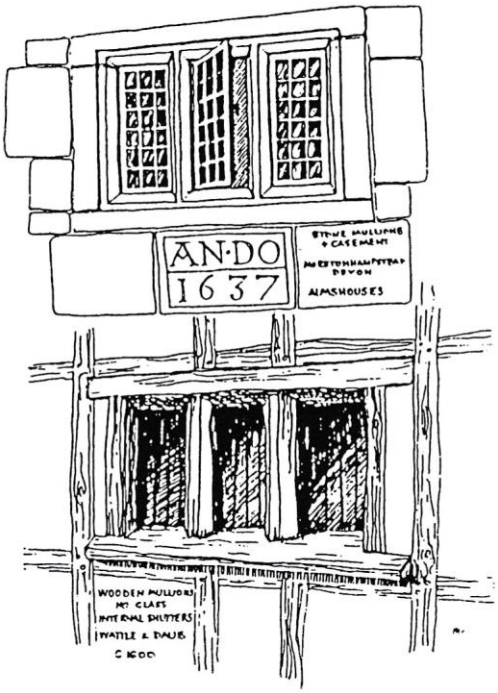


Fig.6.

Other 17th. or early 18th. century features visible in the photographs, are the brickwork of the gable rising above the level of the roof tiles; the offsets at the gable ends; and a brick string course between the ground and first floors (Fig2).

Inside the house there were massive north/south beams visible across the centre of the parlour and living room, which would have supported the first floor structure. An east/west beam divided the inglenook fireplace from the living

room, and this would have supported the cross wall on the first floor. Such internal timberwork was common throughout the 17th. and 18th. centuries. (Fig.5). Uneven brickwork on the downstairs floor also suggests an early date.

Common practice would have been to re-use timbers from an earlier building or buildings, as can be seen in the Salutation and elsewhere where the mortices from a previous use can be seen in large timbers spanning rooms. This practice saved much time and timber.

The upper floors were made of plaster laid on top of reeds. Similar floors have been found in the Salutation Inn and in other old houses in Keyworth. Adrian Henstock tells us : "Plaster obtained from the gypsum deposits in the Cropwell and Gotham areas south of the town (of Nottingham) was commonly used on the upper floors of houses" (Henstock 1997 p113). When burnt in a coal-fired kiln it made a very hard plaster. Long bullrushes were laid between the joists and plaster was spread on top. When dry, it made a very firm and smooth floor.

There was a beautiful dark oak staircase in the centre of the 1656 house. It was of turned wood with newel posts and wide enough for a lady to sweep down in her crinoline skirt. This staircase went right up to the attic floor. In contrast, the staircase in the southern extension was narrow, steep and painted green - typical of servants' quarters.

There were two extensions built on to the south of the main 17th. century house. They were built at a lower level because of the slope of the land. The roof was less steeply pitched and this suggests a later date, probably 18th. century. The front of this extension looked very bare, with no windows or doors. (The door and second gateway seen in Fig.7 were added sometime after the 1930s when the building was occupied by two and sometimes three families).

The single storey wash house, built on to the southern extension was probably also 18th. century. Fig. 4 shows it to be a good size, and in Fig. 7 the shape of the former wash house roof can be seen against the south wall. The low wall facing the street may be part of the original boundary of the 17th. century dwelling, as it does not extend to enclose the wash house.

Maps dated 1799, 1883 and 1964 show that, apart from the erection of glasshouses in this century, the external layout of the farmhouse and farm buildings changed very little over this period. Figs 9, 10 and 11 show plans of the ground floor and first floor, and a plan of the farm buildings as remembered by two residents from the 1920s and 1930s.

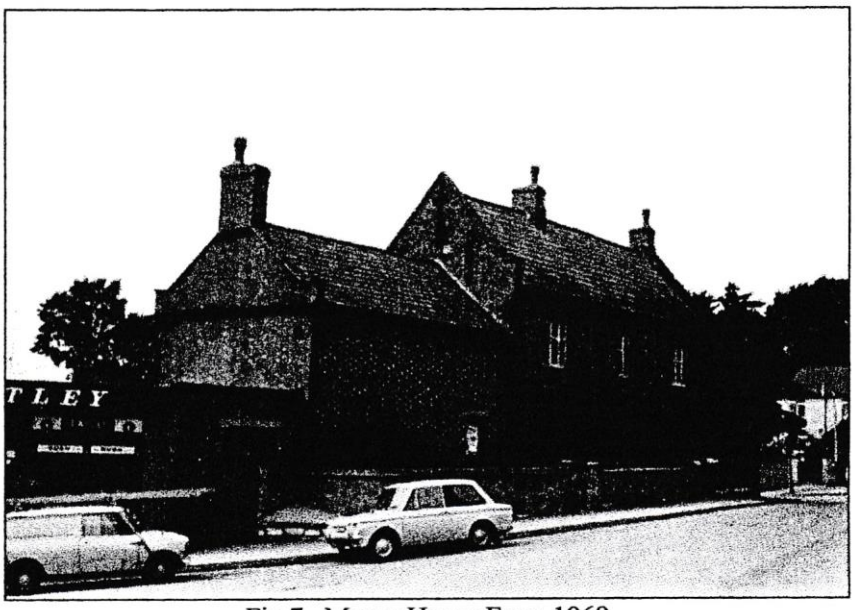


Fig.7. Manor House Farm 1968

LIFE IN THE FARMHOUSE IN THE 1920s AND 1930s

A few domestic details given by two former residents, add a personal touch to the story of this dwelling. The privy was outside the house and had twin seats, as was often the case in those days. The ground floor of the house was uneven brick which quickly wore holes in the floor mats. There were steps up or down to many of the rooms, as the site sloped down both to the south and west.

The wash-house attached to the side of the kitchen was brick-built, and the floor was covered with stone slabs. In the centre of the floor, one of the slabs could be lifted up to reveal a cistern. Rain water from the roof was channelled into this cistern, which was also fed by an underground spring. The owner would say that the water at the top was soft, but the spring water below was hard, and in times of drought it would all be hard. Other similar cisterns still in existence in the village are about six feet deep and widen out below the opening to a width of about six feet. A cistern built for a farm was likely to be considerably larger. This water was used for washing purposes and for watering the cattle. Drinking water had to be carried from the pump in the yard. Inside the wash house there was a copper for boiling linen and clothes, with a fire underneath for heating the water. The chimney from this fire joined the main kitchen chimney in the southern extension. Other wash house furniture included a mangle with large

wooden rollers - dry folded sheets would be put through to iron out the creases, as well as wet clothes to squeeze out most of the moisture; a 'dolly' tub for washing more delicate items; and a tin bath for rinsing clothes, that stood on a table under the window. Waste water was thrown through a hole in the wall of the courtyard into the crew yard to join the piles of manure.

The crew yard where the animals were kept, generated a constant smell. There has survived an attractive, specially designed glass globe used to catch the many flies coming into the house from the yard (Fig.8).

The flycatcher is designed with the base of the outer glass curled inwards and upwards, to make a gutter between the inner and outer glass. A sweet liquid is dribbled through the top into the gutter. The flies crawl inside the gutter from the gap at the base and then drown in the liquid.

The inglenook fireplace was large enough to take a chair - a cosy place to sit on winter nights, with huge logs blazing in the hearth. With no bathroom, personal washing was done in the kitchen, using either a bowl or a porcelain bath tub that was kept in the courtyard. Visitors would have a jug and bowl on a washstand in their bedroom.

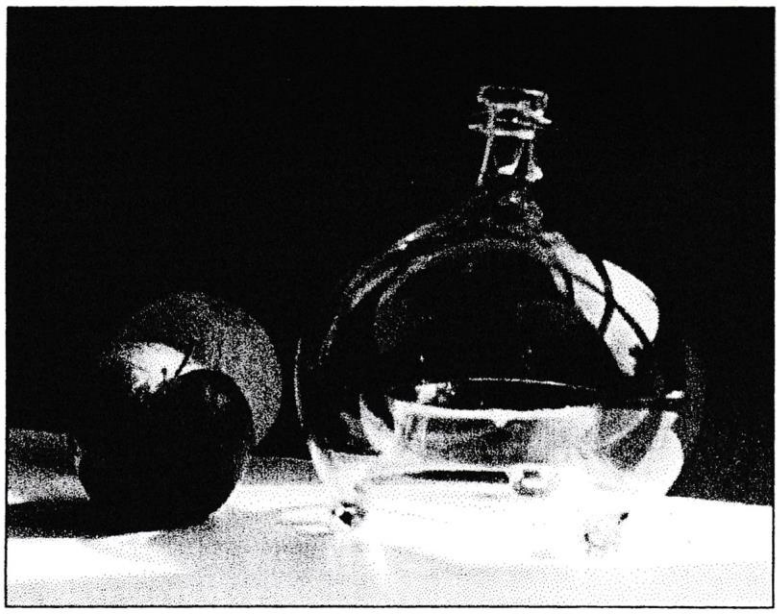


Fig.8. Glass flycatcher

Cooking was done on a large black-leaded range in the kitchen, which was raised about one foot above the floor. There was an open coal fire in the centre with an oven on one side and a water boiler on the other. Hot water was baled out whenever required. In the summer time, an oil stove was used. This was quite an elaborate affair although standard equipment in the early 20th. century before gas and electricity came to the villages. Made by Valor, there was the oil reservoir at the base, three 'chimneys' each with a wick, and these were topped by an oven (which cooked excellent sponge cakes). A kettle could be boiled on top. The stove stood about 18 inches off the floor on splayed-out iron legs.

The dairy had a brick thrall (shelf) all round the room on which stood earthenware pancheons filled with milk. These were large pots, narrow at the bottom and wide at the top to make for easy skimming of the cream, which would then be made into butter. The butler's pantry was really a small kitchen. There was a sink here and washing-up and food preparation was carried out. A corner fireplace shared the chimney leading from the inglenook hearth in the adjoining living room.

Oil lamps were the normal method of lighting until 1927-8 when Manor House Farm was the third house in Keyworth to be connected to mains electricity.

SUMMARY

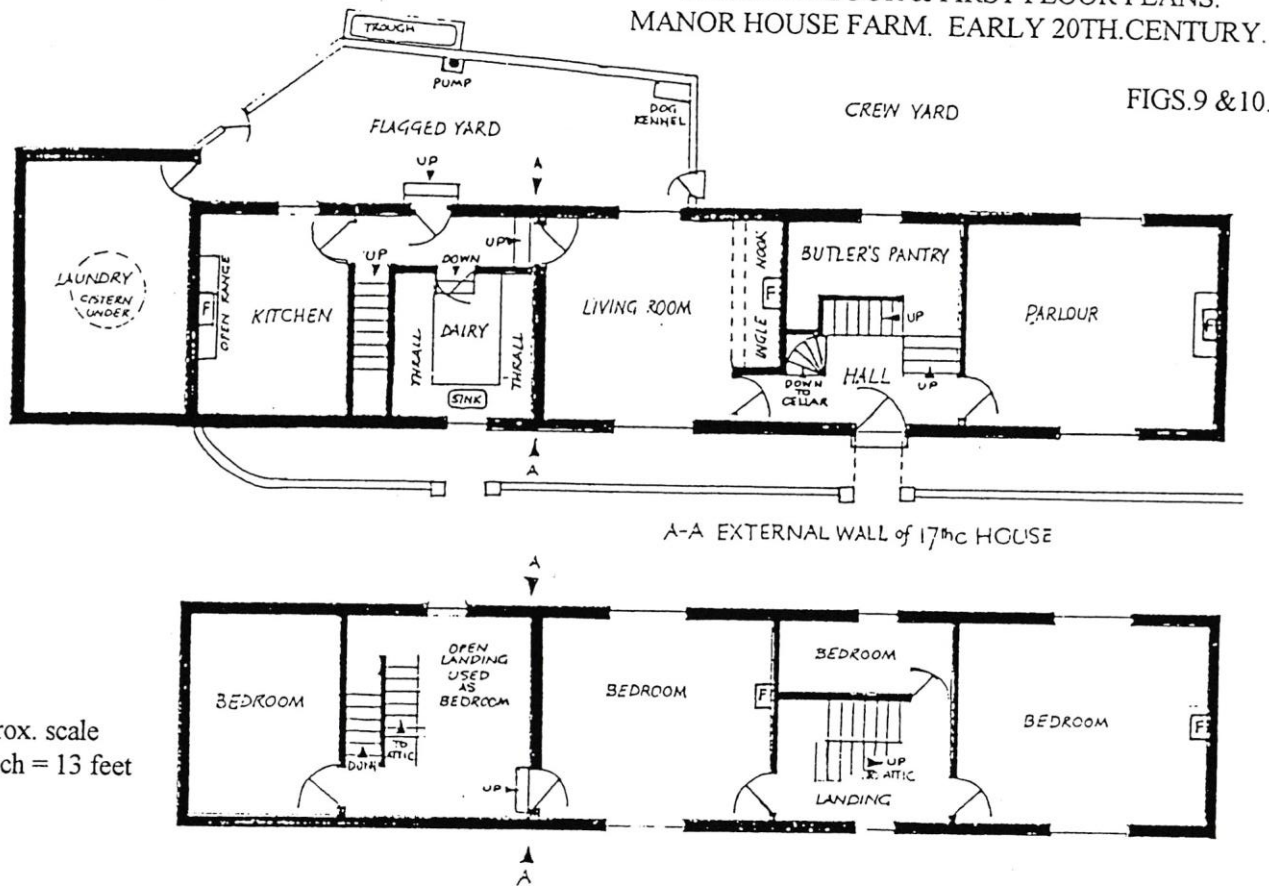
To sum up, we have seen that manors in Keyworth go right back to before Norman times, and before this the village meeting place was probably a low hill which today is called "Motley Close". There is no record of there ever being a resident lord of the manor in Keyworth, but there has been a Manor House or Mansion House or dwelling of some description on the same site, from at least the 13th. century.

The building that stood to the north of Keyworth Square until 1970 was probably mid-17th. century with later additions, standing on the foundations of an earlier building. That earlier dwelling, the Mansion House in which Archdeacon Lowth lived in the 16th. century, must also have been quite a grand residence for its time.

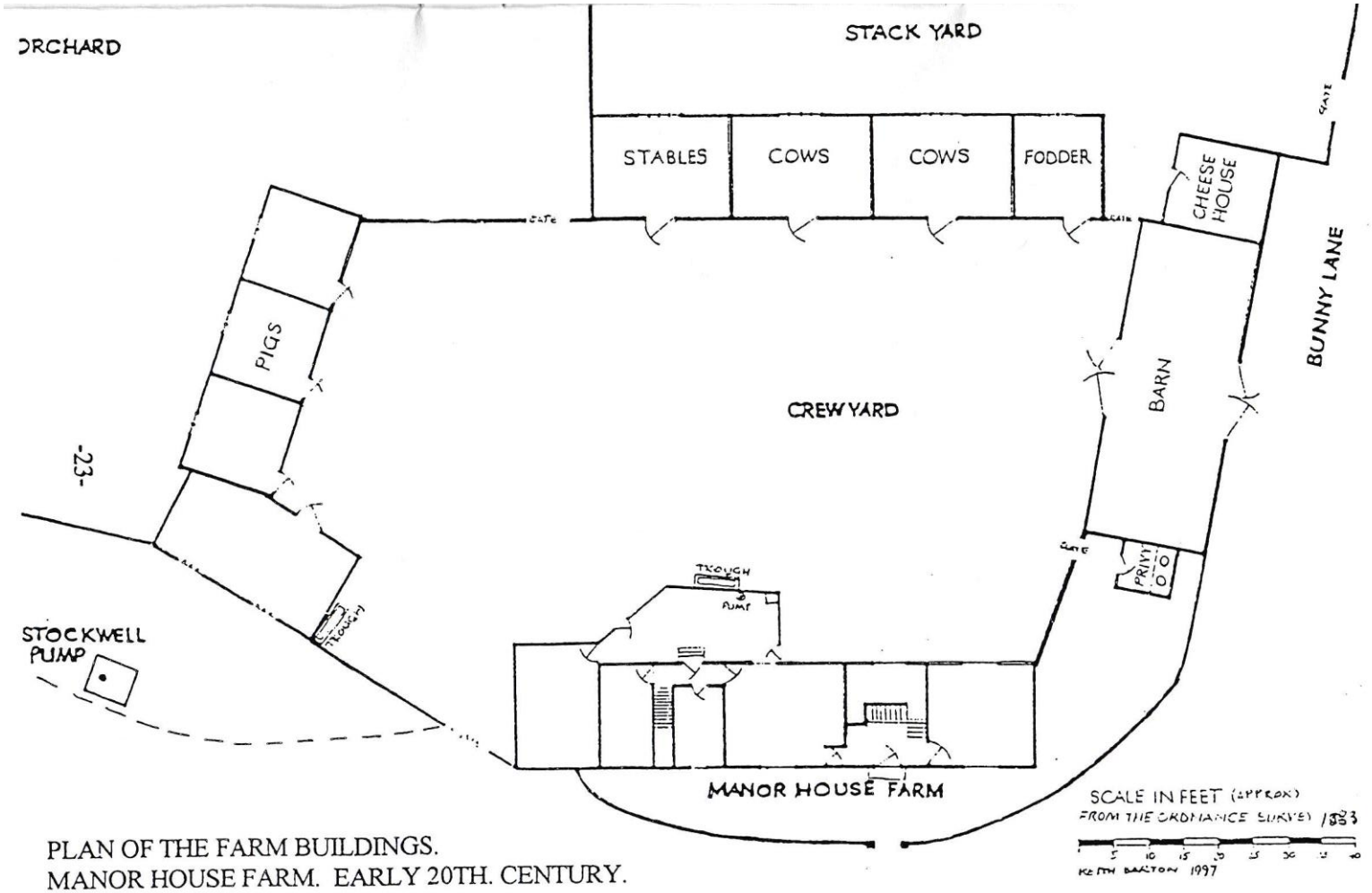
None of the known owners or occupiers of this house and land was lord of the manor, which title was held by the Barrys of Tollerton and later the Parkyns of Bunny. The lack of a resident lord of the manor to take a personal interest in the village, may well explain its relative poverty prior to the 20th. century.

GROUND FLOOR & FIRST FLOOR PLANS.
MANOR HOUSE FARM. EARLY 20TH.CENTURY.

FIGS.9 &10.



Approx. scale
One inch = 13 feet



PLAN OF THE FARM BUILDINGS.
MANOR HOUSE FARM. EARLY 20TH. CENTURY.

FIG.11.

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*Calculated from a combination of R.P.I. figures in:

1. The Abstract of historical Statistics (1962) giving figures for 1800-1913.
2. Whitaker's Almanack (1995) giving figures for 1914-1993.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO 4

PRICE £1.00

First published and printed in 1997. Reprinted 1998.
By Keyworth & District Local History Society

c/o Keyworth Library
Church Drive
Keyworth
Nottingham