

- 1. My Limits.** I am not competent to comment on the architecture: others have done that professionally. I have not examined the original deeds from which the Abstracts of Title (OCC Archives) are photocopied into the commercially commissioned history of the house - the originals may not even exist. I am an Oxford-trained historian, also with an archaeological grounding here and abroad, and with some years of research and writing behind me, including 30 years of Wheatley history.
- 2. The Commercial History** Inevitably, some of this is founded, but much is mistaken and inaccurate. *Dictionary of National Biography* has been extensively used and paraphrased- viz: Whorwood, Gadbury, Adeane, Coppe, Cellier and others. There is much diversion and excursion - known colloquially as 'padding out'. The local libraries have also been visited and they have 'found' Wm Hassall's 1956 Wheatley Records. The late 19th century and early 20th century material is more accurate than the earlier.
- 3. Positive Finds.** The Commercial History interpretation of the Abstracts of Title misses much of interest and overreaches itself. The Abstracts speak of a 'Cott or Tenement' which means a house or building of some sort, 'cum pertinences' (land) Tate the land of John Gadbury the Elder', which by 1690 is in the possession of John Bird and Robt Barnes. It does *not* say that the *house* belonged to Gadbury, only the *land*. Local tradition seems to incline towards Rectory Farm being the Gadbury home, but the Gadburys are a confused and confusing subject.
- 4. Abbots Fee.** Much of Wheatley was owned by Abingdon Abbey, in feudal 'fee' to the abbot, until the Dissolution under H VIII. Its property passed through various hands and was dispersed among local gentry and corporate landowners such as All Souls and Magdalen. The Rectorship of Cuddesdon- and-Wheatley was also a corporate property, which was passed to colleges from the dissolved abbey rather than to individuals. The Gadburys may have farmed Rectory Farm, which meant literally they farmed or leased the tithes and profits from the Rectorship and paid the owner ('Rector' in the corporate sense, a property owner, not necessary a clergyman, as today) a flat fee for the year or twenty years. Hence the presence of a *si dit* tithe bam in the yard of Rectory Farm (RC chapel). It sounds as if the section of land called Abbots Fee was hived off the Rectory demesne property and given over. **If so it is the only land in Wheatley retaining a name which links it to Abingdon Abbey.** This is assuming that it does not refer to an owner called Abbott (George, master of University College and Arch of Cant c 1620.)
- 5. Gadburys.** So many Gadbury names crop up in the village in the 16th-17th centuries. They also feature in Oxford city registers and elsewhere in Oxon. I append a copy of my attempted breakdown of the family in Wheatley. *DNB* is inaccurate in its parentage of John Gadbury the astrologer and other writers perpetuate the error. JG 'The Elder' is certainly known from wills, but is itself a relative term !
- 6. Whorwoods.** The 18 century Adeanes all carried the name 'Whorwood' somewhere about their ID cards because childless bachelor Robert Whorwood, (d. 1688, St Ebbe's parish, monument) more sober cousin to the colourful Civil War Whorwoods of Holton, insisted that the Adeanes, his sister's family by marriage, perpetuate his family name as a condition of their inheriting his lands and properties. If they did not agree, then they forfeited any inheritance. The family evidently scrambled to add Whorwood to their surname! This branch of the family were based in Chalgrove; Robert himself, attorney in Oxford City Court, was a worthy of St Ebbe's parish. Whorwood Adeane, it seems, lived in Wheatley well before

Mulberry Court was purchased by his son Wm Whorwood Adeane. It passed out of WWA's hands at death in 1782 and he had no heirs, save four cousins Curtis. *Wills attached, of WA and WWA ex PRO Farringdon, London.*

7. **The Gadbury residence at Rectory Farm** is traditional and assumed. There are so many assumptions, based it seems to me on insufficient evidence, that I can only reiterate them without comment. The 1613 High Street/Crown Rd list of people living in Wheatley eligible for Easter Duties (Communion at Cuddesdon), has a 'Mr' Gadbury (Mr= gentry) living third from the end of the houses on the south side of High Street/Crown Rd. He is with his wife and one Joan Larum, presumably a servant. Hassall's footnote to this in Wheatley Records says 'presumably at Mulberry Court. It may or may not be correct but I do not see how it is arrived at, save by presuming that Mulberry, Rectory and Wayside numbered 3,2,1 in the 17th century as in the 20th. I suspect that a smaller 'cott' existed on Abbott's fee; that it was replaced in the late 17th early 18th century with the present house and that Tudor fireplaces / timbers were re-used. It can safely be said that the Gadburys were the only major landowners in the village besides the Archdales (up to 1631 and the death of the last resident Lord of the Manor, Abraham Archdale). However there were many Gadburys and they got around.
8. In 1690, when the house on Gadbury's land, whatever it was called, passed on long lease to the Hardings from the Barnes who owned it, it was described as being 'between the messuage or **Inn there called the Swan**, on the East part, and a messuage (house and lands belonging) or tenement then in the tenure of Wm Edwards on the West part...' This is, I believe, the only record of there having been an inn called *The Swan* which was in a position on the crest of Crown Rd to rival The Crown on the northern side (and to stay out of the floods below).
9. **Suggest a)** further trawling of related local wills, eg. Curtis, on microfilm at Cowley OCC Archive **b)** further trawling of Adeane & related wills from PRO/PCC Farringdon, London (internet) **c)** perusing of OCC (County Hall) aerial photographs of Wheatley from post war onwards (every 10 years) to examine 'Abbott's Fee' and Rectory for subsoil indications of changed boundaries or building lines.

Enough ! I feel distinctly amateurish.

John Fox
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