

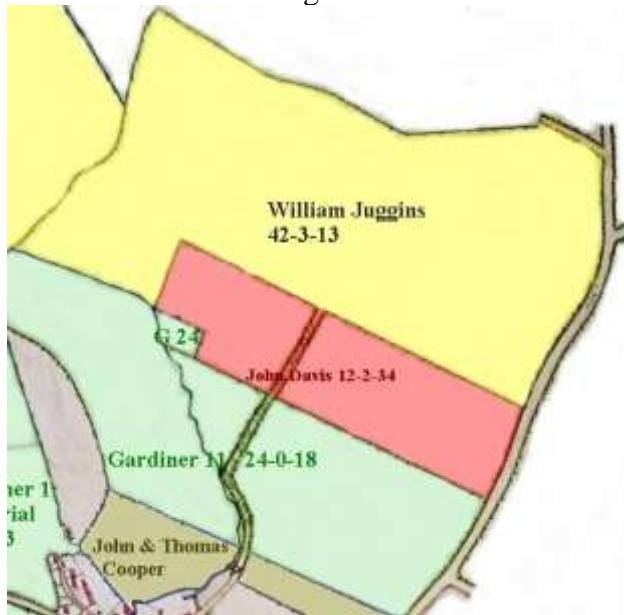
Chillingworth House

The deeds go back to 1612 when the Bell Inn was sold by Richard Pollins, yeoman, to Thomas Mead, of Newington. As it adjoins the site of the chapel-of-ease, the name may refer to the founding of one of the bells.

In 1757, the Bell Inn, a public house for more than 150 years, was for sale and the purchaser was probably Thomas Davis. He advertised for a tenant for this and the adjoining butcher's shop in 1763. In 1778 (or earlier) and 1779, the occupier of the Bell Inn had been James Taylor when the owner William Davies (or Davis) sought a new tenant. This may have been Richard White who stayed until 1781 when he left to take another inn. John Heritage was the licensee between 1785 and 1789.

In 1831 Elizabeth Davis sold the following, but to whom is not always known.

1. The Bell Inn, occupied by John Edmunds, to John Chillingworth.
2. Plough Close, 0-3-34 acres bounded by Plough Inn, Plough Road and the new turnpike. A building is shown on this on the 1813 Enclosure Award map and it is presumed that this was the Plough Inn which had been moved from the Roman Road after the coaching route was changed to the Old London Road.
3. Clayhill field 0-0-32 acres bounded by Plough Road
4. 12-2-34 acres in West Field being the 11th and 24th allotments of Sir James Whalley Smythe This was only part of Gardiner's holding of 24-0-18 acres in his 11th allotment and only part of Juggins's second allotment, but it clearly suggests that Davis had consolidated his holding in this area.



5. Leasehold messuage where William Stradling lived.

The following probably not in Wheatley, as Davis had three very small plots from the Enclosure Award, these too small to show on the map.

6. Little Orchard and plot 60x57ft.
7. Pasture of 16 acres, further side of Leyfield.
8. 28 acres part of Chilworth Eyot Furlong, near Wheatley Bridge.
9. Allotment of 12 acres known as Lower Itching.
10. Meadow of 3.5 acres called College Meadow
11. Homestall and Close called Daisy Green of 2 acres

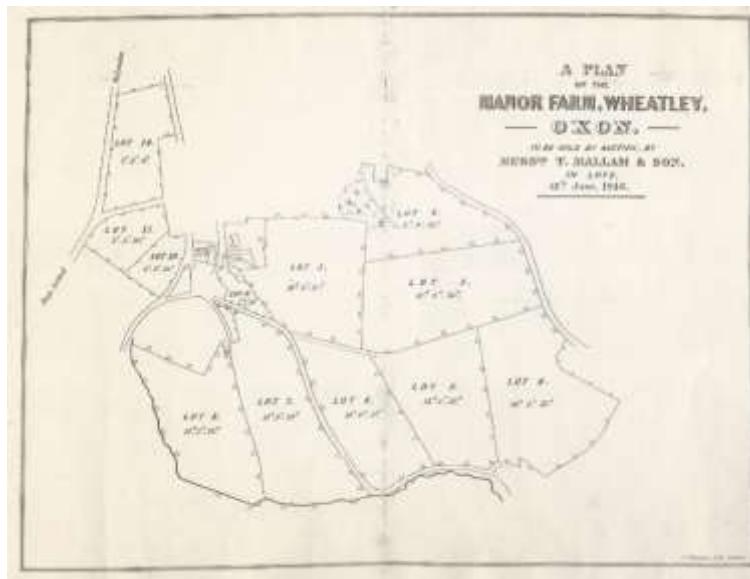
It was still an inn in 1847 and 1852 when Isaac Elderfield was licensee.¹ But, by 1854, the licensee and/or owner was John Ring who, according to notes, borrowed £250 from William Chillingworth.² The property was still an inn in 1861.

On 20 December 1862, John Ring, maltster, was unable to repay his £250 loan so instead sold the following properties to William Chillingworth in satisfaction of this loan.³

1. Land bounded by brickyard on the north, cottages on the east and west, and a footpath on the south but better known as three cottages at the west end of the village in the occupation of Henry Munt, Philip Cornish and James Cornish, and bounded on the south by a public roadway. This might be Kiln Lane?
2. Former Inn, occupied by John Sawyer, then John Edmunds, then Elderfield, lastly by James Munt, William Vernon and another.
3. The malthouse attached.

Chillingworth farming enterprise

William Chillingworth was heir to John Chillingworth, farmer of Cuddesdon Manor House.⁴ According to this source, John later moved to Chippinghurst, which became the centre of a group of his farms, which were organized on very economical lines, labour being switched from one to the other as needed. His successor, William Chillingworth, had a flock of some 500 sheep in 1870, when Oxfordshire rams and ewes from Cuddesdon were shown at the Royal Oxford Show. William had acquired 114 acres in 1846 from the Whalley-Smythe-Gardiner family at auction, all the Lots other than Lot 1 on the plan.⁵ William had no need for a Manor House.



¹ Directories of the time.

² OHC hold a number of recognizances for a William Chillingworth, farmer of Cuddesdon, dates in accordance with the numbers after the 'QS' reference, see QS1832/4/L2/4-6, QS1840/1/L2/101, QS1843/1/L2/48, QS1849/4/L2/22. In 1840, he was described as constable of Cuddesdon. In 1857, he was convicted of an assault see OHC, QS1857/1/L1/18.

³ Documents held by current owners as at June 2018. He may have been well-to-do and thus in a position to make such loans. Another John Chillingworth appears to have been a farmer of St Giles in Oxford in 1839, see QS1839/3/L2/53, QS1839/3/L2/54, QS1839/3/L2/56.

⁴ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol5/pp96-116>

⁵ Scan of documents kindly lent by Edward and Elizabeth Hess of the Manor House, Wheatley, 3 June 2018, also in E. Hess, Wheatley Manor, (Wheatley, 2015), p. 28.

The foregoing establishes the Chillingworth family as very substantial and successful farmers in Cuddesdon and Wheatley by the mid nineteenth century.

Returning to the Bell Lane properties, on 13 July 1872 William Chillingworth sold these three lots to John Chillingworth for £268.⁶ As this was a sale, perhaps these were cousins rather than father and son or brothers, and this may have been a consolidation of John Chillingworth's holdings in the area although whether he already owned Belcher's Farm in Little Milton (see below) is not known.

In the 1960s, when the building on the corner of High Street and Bell Lane, was a betting shop, this corner was faced in a light brick as shown below



The brick defines the ownership in the 1860s. Before modern times, brick was more expensive than stone, partly because of the brick tax introduced in 1784 and repealed in 1850. Because of this, it was typical to only have one elevation in the more-expensive brick. It seems very unlikely that the Bell Inn and its out-buildings in Bell Lane were originally built like this. So, it is probable that all the brick-faced buildings were re-facaded by Chillingworth at the time, with Chillingworth House having its original thick stone wall on the High Street frontage. It is not possible to tell whether this earlier brick on what is now Chillingworth House was Flemish bond which was very popular in the late 1700s and for the next 100 years. The Bell Lane cottages are in a lower quality brick than the principle house. (The Old House in Kiln Lane is another example of Flemish Bond brick on one elevation.)

However, the brickwork appears to have been replaced by the current colouring sometime between the 1960s and the early 1980s, as shown by a current (2018) photograph.

⁶ William Chillingworth died on 23 February 1875 according to a gravestone in Cuddesdon churchyard and a memorial tablet in the Church, see <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~malcolm/genuki/big/eng/OXF/Cuddesdon/mi.txt>, and E. Hess, *Wheatley Manor*, (Wheatley, 2015), p. 129 which has a photograph of the memorial tablet.



William Chillingworth, who bought 114 acres from JWS Gardiner in 1846, already owned Cuddesdon Manor House and the farm attached. John Chillingworth owned the 419 acre Belcher's farm at Little Milton, so he was very well-to-do.

In 1908 following the death of John Chillingworth on 4 October 1907, his trustees or executors (Mary Chillingworth, spinster daughter and two others) sold this property at auction on 3 May 1908, together with, it seems, all the other odd numbered properties in Bell Lane. The then occupier, Mr Bathard, acquired this for £307, and the premises became a shop for general groceries and meat – it seems he was also a butcher.⁷ In addition, Bathard was licensee of the White Hart, anyway in 1899.

The 1908 sale included Farm Close of 7-3-34 and other lots.⁸ Importantly, Lot 1 was the 419-acre Belcher's Farm of Little Milton, suggesting that Chillingworth was a wealthy man.

Later Percy Trinder lived at Chillingworth House. He farmed Wheatley Hill Farm from 1924 to 1953 and the farm, which straddle Ladder Hill, was 105 acres and was a dairy farm with some arable.⁹ A photograph from the era shows his cows crossing Ladder Hill from the east to the west where they were milked. The water from the dairy was pumped up from the stream and piped across the road.

Michael Heaton
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⁷ Information from 1910 Valuation Survey.

⁸ OHC, B142/D/1.

⁹ The 1910 map and supporting schedule shows that Wheatley Hill Farm was then let to William Dennis but owned by John Chapman.