

Proposed destruction of Manor House

On 25 March 1850 the Bishop and his archdeacons bought the Manor House and Field. They intended to establish there an Oxford Diocesan Training school for teachers; but on 31 March 1851 the Diocesan Board agreed to move the project to Culham. They had paid £1200 for the property. The Diocesan Registrar, thought the board might change its mind. When it did he wrote at once to offer the property to 'Squire' J.W. Henley, M.P. of Waterperry for £1100. On 29 April the offer was reduced to £950. On May 9 Henley said he saw the woman in charge of the Manor House and wrote to remind Davenport that in his offer of March he had described the condition of the house saying "probably the best thing to do would be to take it down".

Neglect had ruined the house and garden in four years. On October 10 1851 the Rev. E. Elton "planted some large shrubs brought from the Old Manor House" at the new vicarage. The Manor pew was not required by the new non-resident tenant, William Chillingworth, and was allotted to Martha Cooper of the brick works whose namesake and daughter ran a private boarding school. One Brown, who happened to lodge in the Manor House tried to sit in the pew; and Davenport had to ask Henley as landlord to prevent trouble next Sunday. In 1851 George Brown, a married plumber from Marlborough was one of six lodgers in the lodging house of John Leaver, a cooper, born at Wheatley. The other lodgers were: an old Staffordshire weaver, a Scottish gardener, a Scottish vagrant, an old "wayfareing" woman and a bachelor from Hertfordshire.

In 1854/5 Dr T. Smith moved in. In July 1851 he had hoped to rent the Old Parsonage opposite. His elder brother John, also a doctor, lived with him. His wife was a daughter of Rear Admiral Gill. Elton regarded him, like Juggins, as one of his worst enemies and an upholder of bad old traditions. His greatgranddaughter, Margaret Smith, tells me that three of his four sons became doctors. On 28 May 1863 Elton felt that Dr Smith's departure to the asylum was "a great boon to the poor".

On 24 December 1864 Henley gave the Manor House to his younger son, the Rev, F. G. Henley, the vicar of Cumnor. It was forthwith divided into nine cottages, four in the Manor House proper, four in the Breach Cottages and a cottage called Duffield's.