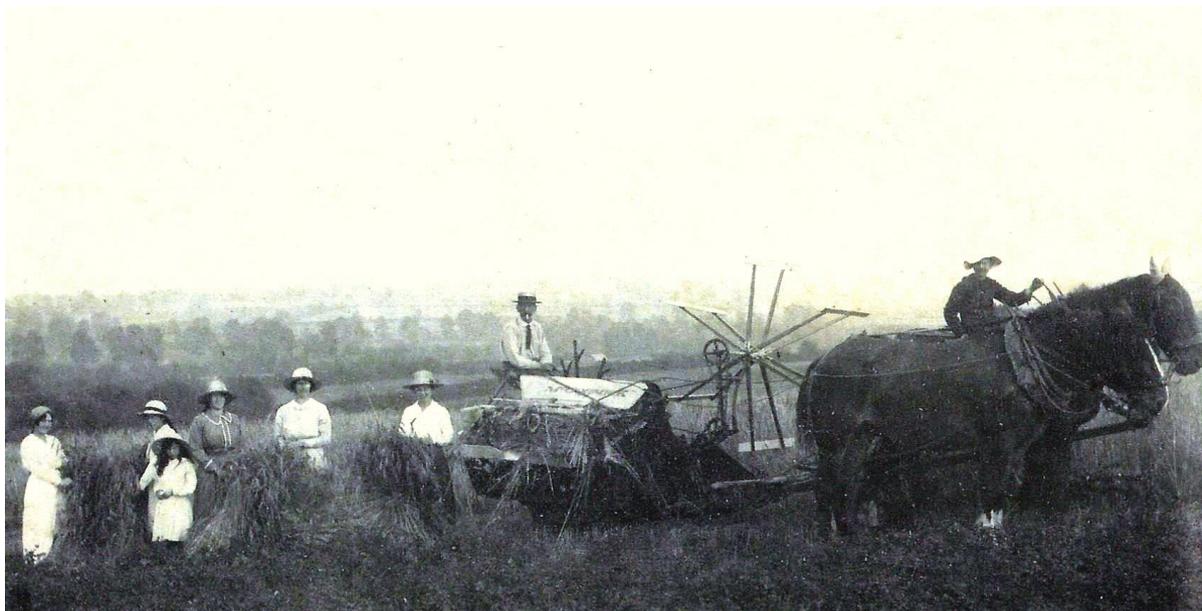


## Castle Hill Farm 2019

The farmhouse to this farm was originally Rectory Farm (now Rectory House) on Crown Road. Prior to the Second World War, some of the land was farmed by the Walker family as 'Bulldown Farm' with a variety of farm buildings no longer in existence.



The father of the current owner, Edmund Greaves, was previously farming at Upper Heyford but, early in the Second World War, their farm was compulsorily acquired for an air base. The previous tenant of Magdalen College, the freeholder, of what was then Rectory Farm was Andrew Bell, a Scot who apparently wanted to retire to his native land. It is believed that Rectory Farm, with much smaller acreage then, was very run down at the time and the tenancy was offered to the Greaves family in 1941.

In the late 1950s, Magdalen College decided to sell their holdings on Crown Road, which included Rectory Farm (now Rectory House). They built the new farmhouse up the hill and the Greaves moved into this in about 1962, and the farm was re-named Castle Hill Farm. The Greaves acquired the house and farmland from Magdalen College in 1986.

The farm is run by Edmund and Alison Greaves with their two sons and one other employed farmhand. Their third son is a policeman.

The family farm 500 acres in Wheatley, around the farm and towards Ladder Hill, mostly owned but some still rented. This is a beef, sheep and arable farm (no dairy). Apart from this they farm 900 acres elsewhere and also contract farm for others.

Apart from the arable acreage, there are 500 cattle for beef (being reduced to 400 as there is insufficient pasture) and a flock of 150 sheep (previously as high as 250) which is used to fertilise the arable fields after these have been cropped.

Limousin breed of cattle were introduced from France by the Greaves in c.2005 for the quality of their meat.



A calf which was abandoned by her mother and had to be fed by hand twice a day



The bull – one of 5 in 2019

The special feeder troughs designed by the Greaves in 2019 so as to prevent badgers (with TB) getting into these stalls and contaminating the straw etc



They produce all their own silage, straw and hay on site, and are now milling their own feed. But, the high cost of farm machinery, now almost exclusively made on the European continent, is a constant battle.

They are concerned about many of the farming policies which are endangering the natural farm landscape. One such is the proliferation of red kites which are decimating the population of natural fauna as they do not feed only on carrion. They encourage, as much as possible, bird species on the farm and recently recorded 41 different species, one of the highest in the country, when the farm was closed to the public using the footpath during a food and mouth outbreak. They have a constant battle against TB and feel that the protection of badgers is misguided.

Alison Greaves also breeds Labradors. In addition they have four cats and four terriers to keep any vermin under control so they have no need to use poison for the purpose.