

Manors and Estates

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Cirencester Abbey

The site of the former abbey of Cirencester was leased to Roger Basing, first in 1540 and for a further 21 years in 1546, at a yearly rent of £25 13s. 10½d. Basing was to have sufficient firebote, ploughbote and cartbote, and 20 cartloads of hedgebote yearly, for repairs to the premises.¹ Ownership passed to Thomas Seymour in 1547 and on his attainder, to Sir Anthony Kingston in 1552.² Basing rented the site to Thomas Marshall, presumably the curate of Cirencester, in 1559 for £80 a year for the remainder of the 21 years. After his daughter married William Chadderton, Basing rented some of the estate to his son-in-law. Elizabeth I granted her physician Richard Master the reversion of the site in 1568 for £590 and he bought out tenancies from Basing, Marshall and Chadderton, and Thomas Parry's interest in the estate for £400.³ Master died in 1588 and his Cirencester estate passed to his son George and thence to George's eldest son Sir William.⁴ According to Parsons, it was George Master that settled the family at the abbey,⁵ in a square five-bay house of stone with a three-storey porch.⁶

During the civil war, Princes Rupert and Maurice quartered with Sir William Master at the Abbey House in 1643 before the sack of Cirencester, and the king stayed there for a night in 1644. Sir William was also on several royalist administrative committees.⁷ The abbey estates were sequestered and by 1648 had fallen in value from £600 to £200.⁸ Sir William compounded for his estates for £1,200 in 1650, paying an extra £282 for undervaluations in 1652.⁹

The estate passed to Sir William's eldest son Thomas (d.1680) and then another two generations of Thomas Masters (d.1710 and 1769).¹⁰ The fourth Thomas Master married Elizabeth Chester in 1742, but having died in 1749 was outlived by his father. Following the death of Thomas Master III in 1769, the Abbey estate passed to his grandson, also Thomas Master.¹¹ He immediately began replacing the old house. The new house was designed by architect William Donn who was paid £40 for drawing up plans.¹² A painting from around 1775 shows a three-storey house, five bays across and a semi-circular bow entrance.¹³ A ground plan of 1772 shows a D-shaped hall leading to a square staircase, and flanked by a dining room and drawing room, with a library and dressing room

¹ Hockaday Abs. CLV, 11 Feb. 1546.

² Hockaday Abs. CLV; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Edw. VI*, IV, 411–12.

³ GA, D674b/E73.

⁴ TNA, PROB 11/72/428; *ODNB*, Master, Richard (d. 1587/8); TNA, PROB 11/104/611.

⁵ J. Fendley ed., *Notes on the Diocese of Gloucester by Chancellor Richard Parsons* (BGAS R.S. 19, 2005), 61.

⁶ Atkyns, *Glos.*, plate following 346.

⁷ *ODNB*, Master, William (bap. 1627, d. 1684).

⁸ *Cal. Cttee For Compounding*, I, 85.

⁹ *ODNB*, Master, William (bap. 1627, d. 1684).

¹⁰ TNA, PROB 11/310/262; GA, D674b/T27; TNA, PROB 11/364/396; PROB 11/519/215.

¹¹ TNA, PROB 11/955/118; GA, D674b/E73.

¹² GA, D1571/E356.

¹³ N. Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire 2* (Chichester, 1992), 45.

for Thomas Master behind. An L-shaped passage from the back of the house led to servants' quarters and a kitchen.¹⁴ A plan of Thomas Master's estate in Cirencester and the surrounding area from 1774 shows the new Abbey House and grounds laid out in the style of Capability Brown.¹⁵

Between 1817 and 1825 the bow entrance was extended on the ground floor, enlarging the D-shaped hall.¹⁶ Jane Master was Thomas Master's eldest daughter and inherited his estates, including the Abbey House, when he died in 1823.¹⁷

Archibalds

Archibalds manor house was situated on Dyer Street. Robert Osmunde let Archibalds to Robert Strange in 1538.¹⁸ William and John Child bought the mansion house and lands from Richard Smyth of Hanford and his wife Mary in 1563, then let the estate to Christopher George. Richard Master purchased the estate in 1566.¹⁹ Archibalds was passed down by the Master family along with the rest of the Abbey Estate.²⁰

Sir William Master continued to let Archibalds in 1622 when it had recently been inhabited by Robert George.²¹ Archibalds remained in the Master family in 1685 along with 420 a. of pasture in Cirencester belonging to the manor.²² The building itself had been demolished by 1712, when Thomas Master leased the site to Bridgett Small, who agreed to build one large messuage or tenement there.²³

A new tenement or messuage had been erected in part of the site of Archibalds in 1768, which Thomas Master leased to John Brown.²⁴ In 1809 Thomas Master leased Ann Gegg a plot of land on the site with a 20ft. frontage on Dyer Street and extending back 180ft.²⁵

Chesterton

John Strange owned land in Upper and Lower Turkdean as well as the manor of Chesterton, all of which passed to his son and heir Anthony, upon his death in 1536.²⁶ Anthony died in 1542 and Chesterton was inherited by his son John, then a minor, and rented by Thomas Arundell. At this time Chesterton included 13 messuages and gardens, 800 a. of land, 200 a. of meadow, 300 a. of pasture and 2 a. of wood.²⁷ John Strange II died in 1559 and Chesterton passed to his brother

¹⁴ GA, D674b/P21; Kingsley, *Country Houses of Gloucestershire* 2, 44.

¹⁵ GA, D674b/P44.

¹⁶ GA, D674b/P22; Historic England Archive, CC57/00095.

¹⁷ TNA, PROB 11/1676/281.

¹⁸ GA, D674b/T19.

¹⁹ GA, D674b/T21.

²⁰ GA, D674b/E73.

²¹ GA, D674b/T21.

²² GA, D674b/T27.

²³ GA, D674b/E6.

²⁴ GA, D1388/III/113.

²⁵ GA, D674b/T34.

²⁶ VCH Glos. IX, 217–33.

²⁷ GA, D2525/E143; D2525/T213.

Thomas Strange (d.1594) and then Anthony Strange (d.1596).²⁸ William Arundell relinquished any right in the estate in 1579, when Thomas Strange rented it to Edward Cressy and Anthony West.²⁹ In 1599 Thomas Strange sold Chesterton to Michael Strange for £1000, including three messuages and gardens and 400 a. of land, with various smaller parcels of meadow, wood etc. When Michael Strange died in 1613, he was succeeded by his son Robert Strange. Robert died in 1655 and his lands were partitioned. Chesterton was inherited by Sir Robert Jocelyn who was husband to Jane, one of Strange's four sisters. Sir Robert died in 1712 and Chesterton passed to Sir Strange Jocelyn. Chesterton was described as a 'reputed' manor in 1714, when Sir Strange sold it to Allen Lord Bathurst in for £4,351 (payable to several heirs of Robert Jocelyn who still had an interest in Chesterton) and still including a farm, the Antelope (also known as the Boothhall) and the King's Head.³⁰ By 1800 Earl Bathurst was impropiator of the tithing of Chesterton, having purchased it from Sir John Nelthrop and the largest estates in the tithing were owned by Earl Bathurst, Thomas Master and Robert Sandford.³¹

Oakley Wood [by Jan Broadway]

Oakley Wood was part of the estate in Cirencester granted to Thomas Seymour in 1547 and after his attainder it was granted to John, duke of Northumberland. Elizabeth I granted it to Sir Thomas Parry (d. 1560), whose son sold it to Sir John Danvers (d. 1594).³² It was among the manors that Sir Henry Poole (d. 1616) bought from the Danvers family shortly before his death.³³ Oakley Wood passed to Sir Henry's son, also Sir Henry (d. 1645) and grandson, Sir William Poole (d. 1651), an ardent Royalist. As a result of the fines paid by Sir William before his death, the estate was heavily mortgaged.³⁴ In 1661 Oakley Wood passed from Sir William's son Sir Henry to the mortgagee Sir Walter Walker of Doctor's Commons. This led to a Chancery suit, which reserved £120 p.a. from Oakley Wood to his step-grandmother, Lady Anne Poole (d. 1682). In 1676 Sir Walter's son George sold Oakley Wood to Sir Robert Atkyns.³⁵ Following Sir Robert's death the wood was sold with other lands to Allen, lord Bathurst.³⁶

Wiggold

John Whittington of Pauntley sold his rights in the manor of Wiggold, with the manor and advowson of Coates, in 1488 to Richard Pole, and it descended in his family to William Pole of Noveton [perhaps Nuneaton] (Warws.) until 1549, when William or his son John sold it to George Prater of Latton (Wilts).³⁷ Richard Prater (possibly George's son) of Easton Hastings (Berks.), sold it in 1577 to William Kemble of Widhill (in Purton, Wilts).³⁸ Kemble died in 1600 and in his will left

²⁸ TNA, PROB 11/83/415; PROB 11/88/3.

²⁹ GA, D2525/E143; D2525/T213.

³⁰ GA, D2525/E143; D2525/T213.

³¹ S. Rudder, *The History of the Town of Cirencester* 2nd edn. (Cirencester, 1800), 234.

³² Sir ThomSir Atkyns, *Glos.*, 348-9.

³³ *Hist. Parl. Commons*, Poole, Sir Henry (c. 1541-1616).

³⁴ VCH Glos., XI, 91.

³⁵ GA, D2525/T192/1.

³⁶ See Chesterton.

³⁷ Lancs. R.O., DDT0 P5; DDT0 O (5)/3, /5, /6, /7 and /8.

³⁸ Lancs. R.O., DDT0 P5.

the manor of Wiggold in moieties to his sons John and Michael.³⁹ Michael Kemble's moiety was sold in 1638 by his son George and George's son Richard (both of Pembridge, Herefs.) to John, Henry and Charles Milborne of Wonastow (Mons.), although Richard must have retained an interest in the property.⁴⁰ In 1666-7, by two transactions, this moiety was sold by its residual owners to Thomas Talbott (d. 1686) of Longford (Salop), younger son of the earl of Shrewsbury.⁴¹ It descended to his son, John Talbott, who was the owner in 1717. The lessees at this period were Richard Molder and his family.⁴²

As part of the marriage settlement between John Talbot and Katherine Belasyse in 1692, the moiety of Wiggold was granted as dower for the support of various of her relatives.⁴³ They having died without issue by 1739, John Talbot conferred the moiety of Wiggold on his kinsman Peregrine Widdrington. Following a case in Chancery, Widdrington granted interests in a farm and around 250 a. of land in Wiggold to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and Sir Walter Wagstaff Baggot as trustees in 1744. His will of 1747 granted his share of Wiggold to firstly his nephew William Tempest Widdrington and heirs, then to another nephew, John Towneley (b.1731 of Towneley near Accrington, Lancs.). William Tempest Widdrington died in 1753 without any sons and so Wiggold passed to Towneley. Lord William Baggot was the surviving trustee of the farm at Wiggold and he was bought out by Towneley and his son Peregrine Edward in 1784.⁴⁴ The Towneleys mortgaged it for £1000.⁴⁵ This was presumably in preparation for the sale of the moiety of Wiggold to Hester Cripps (widow of Joseph Cripps) and William Hall for payments of the £1000 and a further £1900 in 1785. It had previously been rented to Joseph Cripps, deceased. The purchase was made for the benefit of Joseph Cripps II following his 21st birthday and was part of his marriage settlement with Elizabeth Harrison later that year. When Joseph Cripps II died in 1847 he divided the moiety of Wiggold between his five children by his first wife, Elizabeth Harrison (Joseph, Henry, Charles, Elizabeth and Charlotte). The shares were then consolidated amongst the family and bought by Frederick Cripps.⁴⁶ Deeds were drafted to partition Wiggold by arbitrators, giving four-fifths to Frederick and one fifth to Charles, but they were not used. These contain schedules listing the 189 a. to go to Frederick and 73 a. to go to Charles.⁴⁷

It seems that John Kemble's moiety was at some point purchased by the Talbots as Sir Charles Henry Talbot owned fields to the north and east of Wiggold totalling just over 257 a. shown on a plan of c.1780.⁴⁸ Sir Charles Henry Talbot (1720-1798) was succeeded by his son Sir Charles Talbot (1751-1812), who was succeeded by his brother Sir George Talbot (1761-1850).

³⁹ Lancs. R.O., DDTO O (5)/9.

⁴⁰ Lancs. R.O., DDTO P5.

⁴¹ Lancs. R.O., DDTO P5; 6 Geo. I c. 29.

⁴² Lancs. R.O., DDTO P5.

⁴³ Staffs. R. O., D5378/1/2-3.

⁴⁴ GA, D1388/box9348/1 part.

⁴⁵ LA, DDTO P5.

⁴⁶ GA, D1388/box9398/11.

⁴⁷ GA, D1388/box9348/1 part.

⁴⁸ GA, D646/1.