

COMPTON CHAMBERLAYNE

By Alex Craven

Compton Chamberlayne lies *c.* 7 km. W of Wilton, to the south of the river Nadder.¹ The village which forms the main settlement lies in a small valley running south from the river, and lying until the later 18th century either side of an unnamed tributary of the main river, which may be the *Luing Lac* referred to in a Saxon charter of Baverstock.² The village is in the north of the parish, and there is some scattered settlement elsewhere. Compton House, at the northern end of the village and next to the parish church, is probably located on the ancient manorial site. To the east of Compton House, straddling the valley, lies Compton Park, a medieval deer park landscaped in the 18th century in Arcadian style, with two large lakes which still form the focus of the park.

The flat alluvial soils of the river valley in the north of the parish are given over to water meadows, to the south of which runs a thick strip of woodland and hilly pasture lying on Gault clay.³ The village's arable and pasture lies on greensand to the south of these, surrounding the main settlement on three sides and rising gently to the steep slopes of Compton Down, a crescent-shaped ridge of chalk which divides Compton Chamberlayne from Broad Chalke to the south. On the northern slope of the downs is the plantation of Compton Ivers. Stone was quarried on the southern edge of the main settlement, north of the A30 and near the present site of Manor Farm.

The presence of the Penruddocks at Compton House has drawn the village into national affairs, most famously in 1655, when Col. John Penruddock led a small group of royalists to capture the Sheriff of Wiltshire at Salisbury and to proclaim Charles II king of Great Britain. He was pursued and captured by the Cromwellian authorities, tried and executed at Exeter. It is notable that few of Penruddock's tenants from Compton Chamberlayne rose in support of him, neither being detained alongside him,⁴ nor appearing on a later list of suspected persons by Maj-Gen John Disbrowe.⁵ As a result of the uprising, the Penruddocks were briefly banished to Tisbury, following the confiscation of the estate, but they were soon restored to their former home.⁶

¹ This account was mainly written in 2010–11. Maps used include OS, 6", Wilts. LXV, LXX (1886); 1:25,000, Explorer, 130 (1997).

² Grundy, 'Saxon Land Charters of Wiltshire', *Archaeological Journal*, LXXVI (1919), 268–9.

³ This paragraph based on Geological Survey, Sheet 298 (Salisbury), 3rd ed., reprinted 1950.

⁴ W. W. Ravenhill, 'Records of the Rising in the West, A.D. 1655', *WAM*, XIII (1872), 119–88, 252–74; XIV (1873), 38–67; XV (1874), 1–42, at XIII, 139–42, 166–7.

⁵ List of suspected persons, 1655: BL, Add. MSS, 34012, f. 37. Microfilm copy: WSA, X 3/9.

⁶ Ravenhill, 'Rising in the West', 15 (1873), p. 16.

Several members of the family have served as MPs. Sir George (d. 1581) was MP for Salisbury in 1553, Downton in 1571, and Wiltshire in 1558 and 1572;⁷ he was sheriff in 1562–3.⁸ His eldest son, Sir Edward (d. 1614), represented Weymouth in 1584 and Wilton in 1586,⁹ and was sheriff in 1598–9;¹⁰ another son, Sir Robert (d. 1615), was MP for Wilton in 1589 and 1597, and for Ludgershall in 1601.¹¹ All three owed their position to the influence of their patrons, the earls of Pembroke,¹² a connection which still existed in the 1680s: Thomas Penruddock (d. 1698) represented the Pembroke borough of Wilton in 1679 and 1689,¹³ and was appointed a deputy lieutenant by the 8th Earl in 1683.¹⁴ Charles Penruddock (d. 1788), sheriff in 1750–1,¹⁵ was MP for Wiltshire 1770–88;¹⁶ and John Hungerford Penruddock (d. 1841), sheriff 1817–8,¹⁷ was MP for Wilton 1821–37.¹⁸ Charles Penruddock (d. 1899) was sheriff in 1861–2,¹⁹ and his son, also Charles (d. 1929) was sheriff 1913–4.²⁰

During the First World War, twelve military camps were built in the parish.²¹ The earthworks of one, in a field north of the A30 near Naishes Farm, can still be seen from the air.²² A military railway ran from Dinton station on the London & South Western Railway between Salisbury and Yeovil. This ran from the northern border of Compton Chamberlayne parish to a camp in Fovant.²³ Many of the soldiers based at the camps were part of the Australian Imperial Force,²⁴ and it was they who dug out the outline of Australia on Compton Down.²⁵ Restored in 1950 by the local community, and maintained with support from the Australian High Commission,²⁶

⁷ *Hist. Parl.*, 1509–1558, III, 82–3; 1558–1603, III, 198–200.

⁸ PRO, *Lists*, IX, 154.

⁹ *Hist. Parl.*, 1558–1603, III, 198.

¹⁰ PRO, *Lists*, IX, 154.

¹¹ *Hist. Parl.*, 1558–1603, III, 201. Another Robert Penruddock (d. 1583), elected twice for Cumberland in 1554, was the elder brother of Sir George (d. 1581), and so uncle to this Robert; HOP, *Commons 1509–1558*, III, 83. John Penruddock, nephew of Sir George, and his son Thomas, both of Hale (Hants), also served in the parliaments of Elizabeth and James I: *Hist. Parl.*, 1558–1603, III, 200–2.

¹² *Hist. Parl.*, 1558–1603, III, 199–200.

¹³ *Hist. Parl.*, 1660–1690, III, 223–24.

¹⁴ WSA, 589/48.

¹⁵ PRO, *Lists*, IX, 155.

¹⁶ *Hist. Parl.*, 1754–1790, III, 265.

¹⁷ PRO, *Lists*, IX, 156.

¹⁸ *Hist. Parl.*, 1820–1832, VI, 727–29.

¹⁹ WSA, A 1/785/1.

²⁰ WSA, A 1/785/1.

²¹ Rex Sawyer, *Nadder: Tales of a Wiltshire Valley* (2nd ed., East Knoyle, 2006), pp. 188–9. Henry Buckton, *Salisbury Plain – Home of Britain’s Military Training* (Chichester, 2008), p. 31.

²² Wiltshire Archaeology Service, HER, SU02NW638, Aerial Photograph, 1971, A15/221168,

²³ WSA, F 4/760/366.

²⁴ L. Combes, *Badges in the Chalk*, p. 10. *Compton Chamberlayne Burial Ground and Commonwealth War Graves*, <http://comptonchamberlayne.org/wargraves.html>, accessed 27 Apr. 2011.

²⁵ Wiltshire Archaeological Service, HER, SU02NW526.

²⁶ Combes, *Badges*, p. 12. Buckton, *Salisbury Plain*, p. 49.

it was scheduled in 2001 but has since been allowed to grow over.²⁷ The bodies of 28 Australian and six British soldiers who died between 1916 and 1918 are buried in the village cemetery.²⁸ During World War Two, plans were drawn up for a camp to the east of Naishes Farm, but it is not clear whether the plans were ever put into effect.²⁹

Boundaries

Anglo-Saxon charters for Fovant and Baverstock describe sections of the parish boundaries,³⁰ which were recorded in full in the 16th century.³¹

Beginning at an aqueduct 200 m. east of Horseshoe Bridge,³² the river Nadder forms a natural boundary to the north of the parish, with a small encroachment south of the river by Barford St Martin parish,³³ presumably to follow the ancient course of the river, and a second around a portion of water meadow to the east of Dinton Mill which belonged to Baverstock parish. This short diversion south along a tributary corresponds to a charter of 968, which describes Baverstock's boundary as following the *Luing Lac* ('slow-flowing stream') away from the Nadder before returning to it again at a ford that is presumably the modern site of Dinton Mill.³⁴ The name persists in the modern day Turnlake.³⁵

Compton Chamberlayne's boundary continues west along the Nadder, before turning south along a small valley that separates Fovant Wood and Compton Wood, at a point referred to as Littledore in the 16th century. Two 10th-century charters refer to a spring along the border with Fovant called Cock's Spring, a name which persists today as Woodcock Corner.³⁶ The boundary continues south, through the woods and then over the Wilton road, following field boundaries and ancient tracks until it reaches what in the 16th century was called Swevell Diche, the *Sigewine's Dyke* referred to in a charter of 901.³⁷ The boundary climbs the downs, making a circuit to the east of Chiselbury Camp, and then runs along the southern side of the old turnpike road for c. 3 km. to the former site of Compton Hut, from where it turns

²⁷ National Heritage List for England (<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/>), List No. 1020133, Chalk map of Australia, accessed 25 Nov. 2013.

²⁸ WSA, 2897/18. Combes, *Badges*, pp. 2–9. Compton Chamberlayne Burial Ground and Commonwealth War Graves, <http://comptonchamberlayne.org/wargraves.html> (accessed 27 Apr. 2011).

²⁹ WSA, F 4/500/6.

³⁰ Grundy, LXXVI, 191–7, 266–9.

³¹ Undated manorial survey, *temp.* George Penruddock (c. 1559–82): WSA, 549/3.

³² Marked on OS, 1:25,000, Explore 130 (1997).

³³ This was presumably the parcel of meadow in dispute between the parishioners of Compton Chamberlayne and Barford St Martin in 1597; Compton Chamberlayne Field Book, 1597, WSA, 332/252, f. 1v.

³⁴ Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex*, 96–7; Grundy, LXXVI, 268–9.

³⁵ WSA, TA/Compton Chamberlayne.

³⁶ Grundy, LXXVI, 192; *History of Fovant*, 8–10.

³⁷ Grundy, LXXVI, 192; *A History of Fovant* (East Knoyle, 2005), 9.

north to follow tracks and field boundaries back to the river. In the 16th century, a stone cross stood on the boundary with Barford St Martin to the south of the modern Salisbury–Shaftesbury road.

In 1886 the parish measured *c.* 760 ha. (*c.* 1878 a.),³⁸ and the boundaries of the parish remain unchanged. The modern civil parish is contiguous with the ancient parish.

Communications

The ancient main route through the parish was the ridgeway running east–west along the top of Compton Down, between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, known as the Herepath, and referred to in the 1597 field book as the London highway.³⁹ It was turnpiked in 1762, but attempts to renew the turnpike were refused in 1784 and 1787, and the Act was allowed to expire.⁴⁰ The Andrews and Dury *Map of Wiltshire* shows that trees were planted to mark out the miles along its length.⁴¹ It was replaced by the new Salisbury to Shaftesbury road from Barford St Martin to Shaftesbury, which passes through the parish to the south of the main settlement; turnpiked in 1787–8, it was disturnpiked in 1864.⁴² Now the A30, it remains the main route through the parish.

The parish road network was altered in the late 18th and 19th centuries to accommodate the expansion of the park. The present village street, known in 1597 as West Brook Lane, lies on a road which travels north from the A30, passing through the main settlement and then skirting the boundaries of Compton Park. It was diverted slightly in 1860.⁴³ North of the village, the road called the Portway in the 16th century⁴⁴ bends sharply to the east to follow the northern edge of Compton Park, before turning north again to cross the 18th-century Horseshoe Bridge and enter Barford St Martin parish. Parsonage Lane once travelled east through the park along the garden wall of Compton House, connecting West Brook Lane with East Brook Lane, but it was replaced by a lane further south, which travels east from Piggots Cottage to Priory Lodge and the Dower House.

Internal lanes and tracks across the parish include a lane running east from the main street along the southern edge of the churchyard to Priory Lodge, from where a track leads north across Compton Park and a holloway climbs south and east to Naishes Farm, before turning south to the A30. Another lane runs west from the main street opposite the churchyard to Home Farm, from where it runs south to

³⁸ OS Map, 6", Wilts. LXV (1886). The tithe map of 1848 recorded the village as measuring 1,872 a.

³⁹ VCH Wilts. IV, 262; WSA, 332/252, f. 23v.

⁴⁰ VCH Wilts. IV, 270.

⁴¹ Andrews' and Drury's Map 1773, plate 5.

⁴² VCH Wilts. IV, 270.

⁴³ WSA, 135/76.

⁴⁴ WSA, 549/3.

the A30; this may have been called Gay Lane in 1597.⁴⁵ Two tracks lead south from the A30 through the former open fields to the former turnpike road, one passing through the farmyard of Manor Farm, the other continuing the lane from Naishes Farm.

Population

Compton Chamberlayne was the focus of a considerable community at the time of Domesday, with 30 tenant families and two slaves.⁴⁶ Thirty-five households were wealthy enough to pay tax in 1332,⁴⁷ and there were 141 adult poll-tax payers in 1377.⁴⁸ In 1676, the adult population was 230.⁴⁹ The parish had a population of 283 in 1801, and it rose steadily to a peak of 352 in 1851. It had declined again to 298 by 1881, and to 213 by 1911; the population was just 130 in 1931, although it had risen again to 170 in 1951.⁵⁰ By 2001, the population had declined to 101 though it had risen slightly to 112 in 2011.⁵¹

SETTLEMENT

The village is strung along a street running north from the A30. It probably once passed through the ancient manorial site now occupied by Compton House and the parish church, and followed a still extant track past the former site of the mill, between two large lakes in Compton Park, towards the Horseshoe ford – now bridged – to the north-east. In 1597, the manorial site was the site of the home farmhouses of the two halves of the manor, and earlier buildings on the site were probably incorporated into Compton House.⁵²

The village was once much larger. A field book of 1597 reveals the shape of the late medieval settlement with two main streets, lined with tofts and crofts, lying on either side of the brook which then ran northwards into the Nadder, but which was dammed during the late 18th century landscaping to form two large lakes in the park. These streets were West Brook Lane, the present village street, and East Brook Lane. East Brook Lane ran parallel to West Brook Lane, from what is now the A30 through Compton Park to Horseshoe Bridge. An estate map of 1769⁵³ reveals a number of cottages lying along the street at that date, removed soon afterwards as

⁴⁵ WSA, 332/252, f. 9.

⁴⁶ *Domesday*, p. 163.

⁴⁷ Crowley (ed.), *Tax List 1332*, 12.

⁴⁸ *VCH Wilts. IV*, p. 308.

⁴⁹ *Compton Census*, ed. Whiteman, p. 123.

⁵⁰ *VCH Wilts. IV*, 345.

⁵¹ *Census, 2001, 2011*.

⁵² Below, manors.

⁵³ WSA, 332/284.

part of the landscaping of the park;⁵⁴ a holloway and house platforms can still be seen within the park.⁵⁵ The lane was made private in 1826,⁵⁶ and may have been used as the principal approach to Compton House, entered by a gatehouse on the road that is now the A30. The gatehouse, derelict in the later 20th century, has been rebuilt recently to a design by John Griffin of Newbury. A photo of the neighbouring lodge c. 1900 shows a pyramidal roof and a round chimney stack with a slender pot. A carriageway east of East Brook Lane, shown on the estate map of 1769, connected what is now the A30 with the lane to Horseshoe ford, via Naishes Farm. A number of outlying houses and farms were connected by lanes to the main village.

The farmstead of Compton farm, the home farm since at least 1597, originally lay on the manorial site but now lies to the south of the village, facing the main street on the opposite side of the A30. The present farm, built between 1773 and 1807–8,⁵⁷ and known as Manor Farm by 1911, is a tall 19th-century two-storey squared stone house, approached by a long drive, with deep hipped red tile roof and hipped dormers, and transomed and mullioned timber casements. There is a single-storey stone range of stables with monopitch slated roof of the 19th century, whilst the timber and metal portal+frame farm buildings and grain silos date mainly from the 20th century.

Naishes Farm, which may have been the New House built by John Martin, lies to the east of the village and had its origins in a lease to Richard Naish in 1698. The present farmhouse is of squared dressed limestone with shallow hipped slate roof, gabled porch and casement windows with brick and stone rear ranges and attached outbuildings. It is not shown on the 1848 tithe map, but appears on the 1884 edition of the Ordnance Survey. Among the modern concrete, asbestos and galvanised metal farm building group is a stone lincay (a two-storey building open on one side) with a queen post roof of c. 1860.⁵⁸ One farm building entitled 'New Barn' is shown near the site of the lincay on the 1769 estate map but has not survived, except perhaps as boundary walling. A much altered stone building, also shown on the tithe award map, survives, though with modern monopitch roof.

The third farm in the parish, called Copse Farm in 1850⁵⁹ and Copse Barn in 1886,⁶⁰ Home Farm was possibly built on the site of field barns. The present farmhouse was built as a model farm in the late 19th-century. The two-storey

⁵⁴ Timothy Mowl, *Historic Gardens of Wiltshire* (Stroud, 2004), 77–9.

⁵⁵ Wiltshire Archaeology Service, *Aerial Photographs*, 1981, 4281 248; 1991, 114 91 101.

⁵⁶ WSA, 332/250.

⁵⁷ It is not marked on Andrews' and Drury's *Map of Wiltshire*, but is shown on OS Drawing 64, surveyed in 1807–8. See also Margary et al, *The Old Series OS Maps of England and Wales*, III, Sheet XV, plate 38.

⁵⁸ Not shown on the tithe map of 1850.

⁵⁹ WSA, TA/Compton Chamberlayne.

⁶⁰ OS Map, 6" LXV (1890).

farmhouse is of whitened brick and stone, with casement windows under a slate roof.⁶¹

Built Character

The village has retained a number of older buildings dating from the 17th century onwards, with some pockets of new infill in gaps where houses have gone.⁶² The majority of buildings are on the main street, mostly on the flatter ground of the east side, although housing platforms indicate where cottages once stood on the steep bank of west side. Two sets of cottages are located on the A30.

The predominant materials found at all dates are the local limestone from the Portland beds, used for dressings, and the local greensand, used for coursed rubble walling. Dressed limestone is used for the main elevations of substantial two-storey buildings, such as at Piggotts and Camel Cottage, whilst greensand appears in rubble form, as seen at 1 & 2 Rookery Cottages and Van Cottage, and is used for the backs of houses with dressed stone fronts. The original roofing material throughout the village was thatch.⁶³ Post Office Cottage and Orchard Cottage date from the 17th century and have had their thatch replaced with tiles.⁶⁴ Of note is a remaining chamfered timber window frame of the 17th century at 1 & 2 Rookery Cottages. Reserved chamfered stone mullioned windows are typically found during the 17th and 18th centuries, here in the village and more widely throughout the central southern parishes of Wiltshire.

Nineteenth-century buildings tend also to be in dressed limestone but have shallower roofs covered in slate, such as the Willows and Rose Cottage. Later 19th-century and early 20th-century buildings are of brick, such as Manor Farm Cottages, on the A30, dating from the late 19th century,⁶⁵ or rendered, such as the Village Hall, and Naishes Farm cottages, on the A30.

⁶¹ Sale particular, 1974: WSA, 1844/45.

⁶² Forge Farm has several new detached houses built approximately 15 years ago in a mixture of materials that are in keeping with the general appearance of houses in the village.

⁶³ Where thatch has been retained the style is combed wheat reed.

⁶⁴ Combe House, also late 17th century, now has concrete tiles.

⁶⁵ Also Simms Cottage (1935) and King's Elm Cottages (early 20th century).