

ECONOMIC HISTORY

There is little evidence about the parish economy before the late 16th century. The pattern of scattered farmsteads probably changed little from the pre-Conquest period utilising the wooded valleys of the Avill and its many tributaries with Croydon Hill on the east providing rough grazing. Agriculture was supplemented by small enterprises and shops until the late 20th century when unemployment and unaffordable housing became serious problems. Tourism provides an income for those with capital to invest in holiday accommodation or horses but for others it is necessary to commute to Minehead or further in search of work that is often seasonal, poorly paid and inaccessible to those dependent on public transport.¹

AGRICULTURE

In 1066 the three estates of Allercott, Bickham and Timberscombe had been taxed on a total of only two hides and yet claimed to have land for 13 ploughs. In 1086 only five plough teams were recorded, half in demesne and one shared, and there were no mills. Neither serfs nor livestock were recorded on Bickham demesne, four cattle were recorded at Allercott, 30 sheep and 10 goats at Timberscombe and totals of 14 a. of demesne meadow, 206 a. of pasture and 67 a. of wood. The value of Bickham and Allercott had increased but Timberscombe had been worth £5 in 1066 but only £2 in 1086. The eight villeins across the three estates probably farmed the scattered

¹ SHC, A/AGH 1/385; *ibid.* D/P/sel 1/7/4.

farmsteads along the valleys but most of the 18 bordars were at Timberscombe although there were six at Bickham.²

Farming before the 19th century

There is no evidence of open fields although there were landshares in some Bickham fields in 1581, presumably because of divided estate ownership, described as common fields in 1775.³ In the 13th century there were fields called Timberscombe and Pitt, wood called Maioc, largely cleared by the early 17th century when fields south of the village were called Majick, and a vineyard.⁴ Bickham and West Harwood farmsteads probably originated as medieval hamlets.⁵

Timberscombe tenants of Old Knowle manor owed between one and eight days work in 1526 and a tenant at Cowbridge owed two days harvest work at Knowle in 1627.⁶ That probably indicates a large acreage of crops; the former Cleeve abbey estate at Smallacombe with adjoining Oaktrow in Cutcombe was almost entirely arable in the 1550s⁷ and one woman in 1559 had a full team of eight oxen as well as young cattle.⁸ Claypits near Well suggests marl was used.⁹

Several tenants had parcels of woodland in 1568 for which they paid additional rents and common pasture and were required to hedge their parcels of wood,¹⁰ Parish and farm names indicate extensive woodland and much remains.

² VCH Som. I, 495, 502—3.

³ SHC, DD/FR 19; *ibid.* Q/RDd 32.

⁴ W. Hunt, Cartularies of Bath Priory (Som. Rec. Soc. 7), ii. 55; SHC, D/D/Rg 362/2; *ibid.* tithe award. There was a 'Winnards' on Bickham farm.

⁵ VCH Som. I, 502; SHC, DD/WO 49/2.

⁶ SHC, DD/WO 49/2; DD/FR 15.

⁷ SHC, DD/WY 47/1/3.

⁸ SHC, DD/WO 49/3.

⁹ SHC, tithe award.

¹⁰ SHC, DD/SAS PD 99/18; DD/FR 19.

There was rough grazing on Croydon Hill known as Blackball, Timberscombe Common or The Hill where encroachments made before the 19th century including a field called Newfoundland.¹¹ One man was accused of felling a walnut tree as a weed and others of removing hedges bordering the common in the 1580s. The Stetfold tenant allowed his livestock to trespass on Kitnor heath and Timberscombe tenants were required to view the bounds of Langdon and Kitnor Heath commons despite the distance. Small acreages of rye were grown on Timberscombe common in the 1590s and 1600s, presumably successfully as tenants paid 6d an acre to break the common. At the same period illegal turf digging and overcharging the common with cattle caused concern. Of 12 copyholds, some without dwellings, on Timberscombe manor in 1598, four were held by two tenants. Recorded acreages totalled 304 a. arable, 144 a. meadow, 5 a. pasture and 3½ a. of wood.¹² Excluding Bickham and the Home Living, 26 tenements were responsible for the churchyard wall in the late 17th century, presumably the number of farms when the wall was built.¹³

A shippon was recorded in 1601¹⁴ and prosecutions for theft in the late 17th century indicate that dairy cattle were kept.¹⁵ A hopyard was recorded in 1665¹⁶ and at some date waterleat meadows were created.¹⁷ The tenant of Cabsland at Stetfold in 1776 was required to dress the land with ten hogsheads of lime or 160 horseloads of dung before taking two crops of corn, turnips, pulses or vetches and with his last crop to sow 8lb clover and two pecks of everseed.¹⁸ The rectorial estate produced apples,

¹¹ SHC, DD/FR 19; D/D/Rg 362/2; *ibid.* tithe award.

¹² SHC, DD/FR 20; DD/SAS PD 99/19.

¹³ SHC, D/P/timb 2/1/1.

¹⁴ SHC, DD/SAS PD 99/19.

¹⁵ SHC, Q/SR 129/14, 130/19, 295/6, 257/3.

¹⁶ SHC, DD/FR 4.

¹⁷ SHC, tithe award.

¹⁸ SHC, DD/SF 1/3/33.

lams, fat sheep and chickens in the 1770s.¹⁹ In the late 18th century farms were small, the land was ‘tolerably good’ and oxen were used for ploughing but agriculture was ‘at a low ebb’²⁰ although land was being enclosed at Wheydown south of Well and Timberscombe Hill and orchards were recorded.²¹ In a dispute over turf Timberscombe people burnt turf taken from the common by Luttrell tenants.²²

Farming in the 19th century

Before James Taylor gave up Allercott and a second holding in 1804 he had 290 a. including 6 a. of young orchard and three cottages with the farmhouse. His stock included 255 sheep and 10 horses, four described as pack horses, which with his iron-axled waggon may indicate rough terrain. In 1808 John Needham gave up farming at Bickham and among his stock offered for sale were eight working oxen, 50 other cattle and 210 sheep. Like Taylor he kept four packhorses and well as 10 other horses. Although both farmers kept livestock the oxen at Bickham indicate arable cultivation and the parish not only supplied enough grain to keep two mills in business until 1900 but also for export to south Wales through Minehead.²³

In 1844 arable accounted for almost half the land in the parish at 856 a., followed by 300 a. each of meadow and pasture and 59 a. of orchard. Apart from Stetfold Rocks, which was grass, arable dominated even at East Lynch where a long finger of arable fields ran up the south-facing slope. However, the parish produced enough fat stock to supply its own slaughterhouse. Timberscombe common covered

¹⁹ SHC, D/D/Ppb 90.

²⁰ McDermott and Berry *Rack's Survey*, 90.

²¹ SHC, DD/FR 15, 17; DD/L 1/56/18.

²² SHC, DD/HC 43/13.

²³ SHC, DD/L 1/5/18.

182 a. despite encroachments and there was 98 a. of wood mostly along the valleys. Bickham (296 a.) and Allercott (220 a.) were the largest farms and there were three others over 100 a, five with between 50 and 100 a. and 11 under 50 a. of which most were under 20 a.²⁴

Some farmhouses like Burrow were occupied by labourers in 1851 when six farms employed 59 labourers including women. Many paupers were women who had been farm labourers.²⁵ Sheep farming was increasing in importance possibly contributing to the decline in female employment. In 1853 Nicholas Cowling, shepherd at Bickham, won a prize for raising 239 lambs from 180 ewes and three shepherds were recorded in 1861 and 1871 but in 1861 no farmers recorded female workers except four dairymaids although many labourers' wives were described as labourers until 1881 when three were employed at East Lynch.²⁶ In 1867 it was said that only 22 women still laboured and no young women worked on the land. Although one farmer was against employing women the farmer of Bickham expected his labourers' wives to work in the summer, although not near the steam engine, and said they did not work enough. Men earned up to 2s a 10-hour day for task work, up to 4s at harvest, and one and half day's pay for a 16-hour day at haymaking. A regular employed labourer cost his employer £30 a year at 1s. a day plus cider, a cottage and other perquisites. The women only received half rates but started work one hour later than the men. At haymaking labourers worked a 16-hour day for one and a half day's pay. Duddings farm, partly in Timberscombe, produced wheat, barley, oats, turnips and mangolds, clover and apples but Bickham was mainly grass although the 15-a.

²⁴ SHC, tithe award.

²⁵ TNA, HO 107/1920.

²⁶ SHC, DD/WDA 2; TNA RG 9/1602; RG 10/2351; RG 11/2354.

orchard had previously paid the farm rent.²⁷ Water power was used at Bickham, West Harwood and Burrow.²⁸

Farm size increased and East Lynch peaked at 400 a. and Allercott at 600 a. in 1871 when only three farms were under 100 a. including a 15-a. poultry farm. More than a third of regular farm labourers were boys a pattern that persisted in 1881 but employed labourers declined from 100 in 1861 to 52 in 1881 reflecting decreasing arable.²⁹ In 1876 c.500 a. of arable produced mainly wheat, turnips, oats and barley with small acreages of potatoes and fodder crops. By 1896, despite the enlargement of the parish, the amount of arable remained the same and over half was under oats and turnips with barley as the third crop and only 64 a. of wheat. Grassland had doubled covering over 1,500 a. of which only c. 160 a. was mown. Livestock numbers had more than trebled in the same 20 years, especially sheep of which there were over 3,000 in 1896.³⁰

Stetfold Rocks farm was rebuilt, probably in the 1870s by Thomas Ponsford for the Tuckers who doubled the land they farmed from 150 a. in 1871 to 300 a. in 1881.³¹ The new rectangular stone and slate water-powered farmyard, designed mainly to house cattle, had a machine floor over chaff and root houses, two bank barns with threshing floors at first floor level with rear access and a granary located over a dungpit. There was a new lambing shed.³² Farm size reduced before 1881 when

²⁷ Report of the Royal Commission on Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture (Parl. Papers 1868—9 (4202), xiii, 442.

²⁸ SCC, HER, 34124, 31426; SHC, DD/X/LRY 3.

²⁹ TNA, RG 10/2351.

³⁰ TNA, MAF 68/486, 1626.

³¹ TNA, RG 10/2351; RG 11/2354; above, landownership.

³² VCH office, Taunton, farm plans drawn for EPE southern Exmoor project.

apart from Stetfold there were five farms between 200 and 350 a. but the rest were under 100a. In 1891 and 1901 there were two poultry farms and six others.³³

20th century

In 1905 there were 805 a. of arable and 1,304 a. of grass and in 1906 statistics were returned from 16 farms, mostly between 50 a. and 100 a. Crops and livestock had hardly changed since 1896 but the number of labourers halved again between 1891 and 1901.³⁴

In 1910 most land was well-farmed but the arable was either too light or heavy. The farmer at Burrow (168 a.) had improved the house for letting as a country residence but the farm buildings were widely scattered including a barn used as a cider cellar although water power was still used in 1916. Bickham was a 305-a. sheep and corn farm in 1910 still with six cottages and with farm buildings arranged around a yard including a pillared granary, a large barn with four sets of doors, an overshot water wheel powering a mill, a threshing machine, a cider press and accommodation for 40 Devon cattle and new farm accommodation was built c.1924. The grass was very good and included water meadows but the arable was only fair although producing malting barley. Well farm's 240 a. included 146 a. of good ring-fenced land and plenty of accommodation for cattle. West Harwood was a healthy 212-a. sheep and corn farm with good land for oats but difficult to access. Its 'commodious'

³³ TNA, RG 11/2354; RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262.

³⁴ Statistics supplied by then Bd. of Agric. 1905; TNA, RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262; *ibid.* MAF 68/2196.

buildings included a horse-engine house and two of its four cottages had been amalgamated.³⁵

The sale of the Knowle estate in 1916 may have encouraged the break-up of large farms and only one of 20 was over 300 a.³⁶ In the parish as a whole arable had shrunk to a third of 1896 figures, mainly producing oats and turnips, and fewer horses were kept. Despite the increased grassland there were only the same number of cattle and far fewer sheep.³⁷ By 1926 recorded arable had shrunk to less than 300 a. and livestock apart from cattle had declined again.³⁸ Some land was offered for sale for building³⁹ but a new farmhouse was built at Bickham c.1924.⁴⁰ By 1936 oats covered 124 a. but only 4 a. of wheat and 34 a. of turnips were grown. Rough grazing was increasing but the grassland supported more livestock; there were 3,500 sheep, 455 cattle and 108 pigs.⁴¹

The war brought great changes and in 1943 of c. 600 a. of arable over 400 a. was under grain. Hay was made on 336 a. and 51 men and women were permanently employed. By 1946 the arable was mainly producing fodder but also 28 a. of potatoes and cattle numbers increased at the expense of sheep.⁴² The farmer at Allercott was evicted for neglecting his farm and threatened with compulsory purchase after the government had put it in order.⁴³ In 1948 Great House farm was a 97-a. dairy holding with modern concrete cowsheds and cooling house and also a stand of bat willow.⁴⁴

³⁵ TNA, IR 58/826591 SHC, DD/X/LRY 3; D/R/wil 24/1/51; *ibid.* A/AOA 1.

³⁶ SHC, DD/X/LRY 3.

³⁷ TNA, MAF 68/2766.

³⁸ TNA, MAF 68/3312.

³⁹ SHC, DD/TB 90/13.

⁴⁰ SHC, A/AOA 1; *ibid.* D/R/wil 24/1/51.

⁴¹ TNA, MAF 68/3809.

⁴² TNA, MAF 68/34066, 4177.

⁴³ TNA, MAF 142/39.

⁴⁴ SHC, DD/X/SRY 1.

By 1956 arable was declining although well above pre-war levels but livestock had increased greatly to 849 cattle, 4,633 sheep, 520 pigs and over 3,700 poultry. Ten horses still worked the land.⁴⁵ In 1966 barley was the major crop covering 166 a. out of 256 a. of arable. Orchards were in steep decline. Cattle numbers had increased to 1,359 and sheep to 6,058. Although three farms had more than 300 a. there were still six holdings with fewer than 50 a.⁴⁶

In 1976 apart from two dairy farms and a horticultural holding, the parish raised sheep and cattle. Eight holdings were worked part-time rising to 15 by 1986 although 66 people were employed; a rise from 55 in 1976. Arable had shrunk to just over 200 a. and sheep numbers had increased to over 7,000.⁴⁷ Farmers were already diversifying, trying fish and poultry rearing and by the 21st century problems such as tuberculosis and foot and mouth increased a move towards horses and tourism. Many farmbuildings and former labourers' cottages have been converted into holiday accommodation.⁴⁸

MILLS

In 1323 Timberscombe manor let two watermills known as Radford and Wythegene, presumably on the site of the later mills beside the village ford.⁴⁹ In 1568 they were said to be in one building and in 1582 and 1602 a tucking mill, in disrepair, was attached. Suit of mill was enforced on manor tenants.⁵⁰ The mill was repaired by John

⁴⁵ TNA, MAF 68/4647.

⁴⁶ TNA, MAF 68/4997.

⁴⁷ TNA, MAF 68/5497, 6024.

⁴⁸ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/2/6; *ibid.* C/ENPR 26/20.

⁴⁹ SHC, DD/CC/B 110025/35; *ibid.* tithe award.

⁵⁰ SHC, DD/FR 19—20; DD/SAS PD 99/9, 18.

Needham in 1799⁵¹ but by 1833 it had been sold to John Bellew, carpenter, and probably only operated part time.⁵² It was run by a butcher in the 1850s and 1860s.⁵³ In the 1880s it was taken over by the Morgan family from Cowbridge including Clara who married a butcher and ran the mill in the 1890s and 1900s. Milling appears to have ceased after Clara died in 1909.⁵⁴

Cowbridge grain mill near the Dunster road, belonged to Old Knowle manor in Carhampton in 1546 when it had with a fulling mill⁵⁵ and in 1561 and later was the customary grist mill for the Knowle tenants.⁵⁶ In 1809 there were separate stones for grinding flour and oats and a malthouse supplying malt and flour to south Wales through Minehead.⁵⁷ A Timberscombe miller was part owner of a Minehead ship between 1824 and 1829.⁵⁸ In the mid 19th century the Morgans kept Cowbridge mill before taking over the village mill. The Philips family succeeded but milling was given up before 1904.⁵⁹

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Timberscombe in the early modern period had several small industries as well the usual village crafts and some families combined trades with farming.⁶⁰ At least one mariner was recorded⁶¹ and gentlemen farmer Robert Siderfin of East Lynch was

⁵¹ SHC, DD/WY 296/1.

⁵² SHC, Q/REI 8/10; *ibid.* tithe award; TNA, HO 107/936.

⁵³ SHC, DD/CCH 5/2; *PO Dir. Som.* (1861—6); TNA, RG 9/1602.

⁵⁴ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—1906); TNA, RG 14/14128.

⁵⁵ TNA, C 142/75/75.

⁵⁶ SHC, DD/WO 4/1/9; DD/FR 15. Sir John Sydenham's claim to a mill at Cowbridge in 1557 implies a second mill otherwise unrecorded or is an error for the village mill: TNA, C 142/114/23.

⁵⁷ SHC, DD/L 1/5/18.

⁵⁸ SHC, DD/RSH 3.

⁵⁹ *PO Dir. Som.* (1859—75); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—1906); below, this section.

⁶⁰ e.g. the Mudons: SHC, DD/L 1/24/5/28, 1/27/19/33.

⁶¹ Devon RO, 1148M/add 2/74.

described as a merchant in 1718.⁶² In 1821 only 54 out of 81 families were engaged in agriculture.⁶³

Quarrying

Lime and rag stone were plentiful in the 1780s,⁶⁴ a limestone quarry had opened at Allercott before 1809 when it had a row of kilns⁶⁵ and there were several Quarry fields and a limekiln in 1844 including east of the village, by the lane to Well and at East Lynch the last two with kilns.⁶⁶ They were disused by 1889⁶⁷ but a roadstone quarry at Cowbridge was worked in 1919.⁶⁸ An iron miner in the parish in 1881 presumably worked in neighbouring Luxborough.⁶⁹

Cloth

In the 16th century Dunster cloth was apparently finished in Timberscombe. A tucker was the highest taxpayer in 1549 but was also a farmer⁷⁰ and in 1568 there was a rack on Rack Close.⁷¹ Tucking mills were recorded at Cowbridge between 1546 and 1602 a tucking mill when two needed repair.⁷² In 1581 a wringhouse near Bickham was said to have been known as the Dyehouse⁷³ A clothier was recorded in 1613⁷⁴ a

⁶² TNA, C 11/2205/55.

⁶³ Census.

⁶⁴ McDermott and Berry (eds) Edmund Rack's Survey, 90.

⁶⁵ OS Map 1:63360, sheet (1809 edn); J. Savage, Hist. Hund. Car. (1830), 308.

⁶⁶ SHC, tithe award.

⁶⁷ OS Map 1:10560, XXXIV. SE (1889 edn); XLVII. NW (1888 edn).

⁶⁸ SHC, D/R/wil 2/2/6.

⁶⁹ TNA, RG 11/2354.

⁷⁰ SHC, DD/HCK 9/1/13.

⁷¹ SHC, DD/SAS PD 99/18.

⁷² TNA, C 142/75/75; SHC, DD/FR 19—20; DD/SAS PD 99/9.

⁷³ SHC, DD/FR 16.

⁷⁴ SHC, DD/HCK 9/1/13.

prosperous dyer in 1625 leased weaver's houses in Tiverton,⁷⁵ and a man left racks, shears and shop tools in 1650.⁷⁶ The Spurrier family were feltmakers from 1687⁷⁷ to 1763 when they also had premises in Dunster.⁷⁸ A fuller called himself a clothier by 1687⁷⁹ and a Wootton Courtney clothier paid to stand his racks in Timberscombe in 1689.⁸⁰ A clothier was recorded in 1721⁸¹ and a woolcomber in the 1740s⁸² but there was no fulling mill in 1768 when the miller objected to a proposal to build another as there was not enough water.⁸³

Tanning

A tanhouse was in a bad state in the 1600s⁸⁴ but tanners were recorded in the 1650s⁸⁵ and a 'tawer' in 1789.⁸⁶ Tanning had ceased by the 19th century but leatherworkers included a saddler and a shoemaker in 1841⁸⁷ and two saddlers, a harnessmaker, and 13 shoemakers in 1861.⁸⁸ None was recorded in 1911⁸⁹ but a saddler was in business in the 1920s and 1930s.⁹⁰

Sawmill and woodworkers

⁷⁵ TNA, PROB 11/146/156.

⁷⁶ SHC, DD/HCK 9/1/13.

⁷⁷ SHC, DD/L 1/44/5/41.

⁷⁸ SHC, DD/L P15/52.

⁷⁹ SHC, D/P/timb 2/1/1; DD/L 1/34/3/9.

⁸⁰ SHC, DD/FR 13.

⁸¹ SHC, DD/BW 2/523.

⁸² SHC, DD/L 1/23/4.

⁸³ SHC, DD/L/1/59/6/31.

⁸⁴ SHC, DD/SAS PD 99/19.

⁸⁵ SHC, D/P/timb 2/1/1.

⁸⁶ SHC, Q/RLa 22/15.

⁸⁷ TNA, HO 107/936.

⁸⁸ TNA, RG 9/1602.

⁸⁹ TNA, RG 14/14128.

⁹⁰ SHC, D/CC/ta 7/3; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1939).

The number of carpenters probably reflects the wooded nature of the surrounding land. A collier recorded in 1713 was presumably a charcoal burner.⁹¹ There were nine carpenters in 1841⁹² and numbers declined only gradually.⁹³ Woodland still covered 142 a. when three Lancashire cloggers were in the parish in 1901.⁹⁴ Cowbridge mill was converted into a sawmill in 1904, equipment being obtained from the 19th-century estate sawmill at Knowle and in 1911 there were five carpenters and two timber hauliers in the parish. In 1916 the mill had a modern travelling plate saw bench with a circular saw. Until the 1930s it was run by the Philips family of agricultural engineers and blacksmiths who had a garage beside the main road and sawing was given up. In the early 21st century both sawmill and forge were restored.⁹⁵ A local cabinet maker made the lectern and belfry doors for the parish church in the 1930s⁹⁶ and there was a basketmaker in 1939.⁹⁷ Oak timber at Bickham was managed for luxury flooring in the 1990s.⁹⁸

Other crafts

A blacksmith recorded 1628.⁹⁹ In 1844 there were three smithies, two held by the same man,¹⁰⁰ providing work for six smiths in 1861 and 1871. Only two were at work thereafter. A woman kept a smithy in 1872.¹⁰¹ The last smithy in the village was

⁹¹ SHC, Q/SR 265/3.

⁹² TNA, HO 107/936.

⁹³ TNA, RG 10/2351; RG 11/2354; RG 12/1864.

⁹⁴ Statistics supplied by then Bd. of Agric. 1905; TNA, RG 13/2262.

⁹⁵ TNA, RG 14/14128; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923—39); SHC, DD/X/LRY 3; SCC, HER, 34114; inf. from Cowbridge sawmill.

⁹⁶ SHC, A/BJS 3/45.

⁹⁷ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1939). There were two withybeds in the parish in 1844: SHC, tithe award.

⁹⁸ Western Morning News, 27 Sep 1995.

⁹⁹ SHC, DD/S/GLY 22.

¹⁰⁰ SHC, tithe award.

¹⁰¹ TNA, RG 9/1602; RG 10/2351; Morris and Co. Dir. Som. 1872.

replaced by a pair of houses in the early 20th century and smithing moved to Cowbridge mill. A blacksmith and timber merchant produced fencing and gates in 1980.¹⁰² An agricultural machinery business established in an old quarry in the late 1940s sold and repaired garden machinery and chainsaws in the 2000s.¹⁰³

A culmyard established shortly before 1840 presumably provided culm for limeburning¹⁰⁴ and in 1844 John Merchant had a coalyard south of the church.¹⁰⁵

Building tradesmen were in the parish throughout the later 19th century¹⁰⁶ and a carpenter and wheelwright became a builder and contractor in 1918 but lacked capital and after building six cottages in Timberscombe in 1922 went bankrupt in 1923.¹⁰⁷ In 1947 a small assembly workshop employed four people and in 1980 there was a soft-toy maker.¹⁰⁸

Public Houses

Two alesellers were recorded in 1407, another at Bickham in 1410¹⁰⁹ and one in 1536.¹¹⁰ Up to two tipplers were in business between 1626 and 1657.¹¹¹ In 1686 there were beds and stabling for three guests,¹¹² three victuallers were licensed in 1687 and four in 1688 but from 1690 only the Spurrier family held licences.¹¹³ Their inn was

¹⁰² SHC, A/AGH 1/385.

¹⁰³ SHC, A/BJS 3/22; A/AGH 1/385.

¹⁰⁴ SHC, A/AKK 11.

¹⁰⁵ SHC, tithe award.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, RG 9/1602; RG 10/2351; RG 11/2354; RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262.

¹⁰⁷ SHC, D/CC/ta 7/3.

¹⁰⁸ SHC, A/AGH 1/385.

¹⁰⁹ SHC, DD/L P31/3.

¹¹⁰ SHC, DD/L P13/4.

¹¹¹ SHC, Q/RLa 2—4, 7.

¹¹² TNA, WO 30/48.

¹¹³ SHC, Q/RLa 22/1—3.

the Red Lion, named by 1724¹¹⁴ but by the early 19th century it was a private house opposite the present Lion.¹¹⁵

In the mid 18th century two licences were again issued for a short period¹¹⁶ but the Davis family of butchers were convicted of illegal ale-selling in 1756 and 1779.¹¹⁷ The statement that there was no public house in the 1780s was not correct.¹¹⁸ By 1820 the Boot was in business in the centre of the village. It was renamed the Lion by 1841, possibly after rebuilding, and remains open. By 1825 it had been joined by the Rose and Crown at the north end of the village on the Dunster road.¹¹⁹ In the early 20th century the Rose and Crown belonged to Hancocks' Brewery, Wiveliscombe,¹²⁰ but in 1915 renewal of its licence was refused.¹²¹ It remained open for a short time as refreshment rooms¹²² but is now a private house.

A cottage on the old Exford road at West Harwood was briefly a public house called the Travellers Rest in the late 19th century.¹²³

Retail services and tourism

There were at least three shops in the 1840s and in 1844 James Thomas became the first postmaster.¹²⁴ There was a letter carrier from 1871, the mail was taken to and from Dunster on foot until a mail cart was introduced in the 1890s,¹²⁵ and two

¹¹⁴ SHC, DD/FR 15.

¹¹⁵ SHC, Q/RE1 8/10; *ibid.* tithe award.

¹¹⁶ SHC, Q/RLa 22/6, 10; *ibid.* DD/X/PB 6.

¹¹⁷ SHC, Q/SR 324/2/37.

¹¹⁸ McDermott and Berry (eds) *Edmund Rack's Survey*, 90; SHC, Q/RLa 22/21.

¹¹⁹ SHC, Q/RLa 22/21; *ibid.* tithe award; TNA, HO 107/936.

¹²⁰ TNA, RG 9/1602; RG 12/1864; RG 14/14128; *ibid.* IR 58/82659.

¹²¹ SHC, D/PD/du 3/1.

¹²² OS Map, 1:2500 XXXIV.16 (1903 edn): SHC copy, annotated.

¹²³ OS Map, 1:10560, XLVI. NE (1890 edn).

¹²⁴ TNA, HO 107/936; SHC, tithe award; *ibid.* DD/X/HEN 1.

¹²⁵ TNA, RG 10/2351; RG 11/2354; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1875—94).

postmen in 1911.¹²⁶ A carrier passed through the village every week by 1872.¹²⁷ In 1901 there were two grocers' shops, the post office by the Rose and Crown, a fish and fruit dealer and a greengrocer.¹²⁸ A shoe shop and fancy repository was in business between 1911 and 1923.¹²⁹ Several hawkers living in the parish in 1891 and a marine store or second-hand dealer was recorded between the 1890s and 1920s¹³⁰ when her husband had a rag and bone business.¹³¹ In 1922 a petrol station opened and remained in business in 1939.¹³²

There were five shops in the 1930s and in 1947 there were three grocers, an ironmonger, a garage and an undertaker.¹³³ A butcher's shop and a watch repairing business closed in the 1970s and by 1980 the post office had a grocery and off licence and the Jubilee Stores had grocery, butchery, newsagent and gift departments.¹³⁴ The Stores closed before 1992 and a replacement shop closed in 2006.¹³⁵ Only the post office survived but no longer selling food. It was for sale in 2013.

By 1923 one house offered tourist accommodation and by 1939 there were three, refreshment rooms and a bus service provided by the Lion.¹³⁶ Caravan sites were established between 1978 and 1992 but the lack of facilities including public conveniences has limited the development of tourism.¹³⁷

¹²⁶ TNA, RG 14/14128.

¹²⁷ Morris & Co. Dir. Som. (1872).

¹²⁸ TNA, RG 13/2262; OS Map, 1:2500 XXXIV.16 (1903 edn).

¹²⁹ TNA, RG 14/14128; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923).

¹³⁰ TNA, RG 12/1864; RG 14/14128; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1894—9, 1923).

¹³¹ SHC, D/CC/ta 7/102.

¹³² SHC, D/CC/ta 7/3; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1939).

¹³³ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1939); SHC, D/R/wil 24/1/68; *ibid.* A/BJS 3/22; A/AGH 1/385.

¹³⁴ SHC, A/AGH 1/385.

¹³⁵ SHC, D/P/sel 1/7/4; SHC, D/PC/timb 1/2/6.

¹³⁶ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923, 1939).

¹³⁷ SHC, D/PC/timb 2/2/14; *ibid.* A/AGH 1/385.

DRAFT

SOCIAL HISTORY

Timberscombe was prosperous enough to have eight taxpayers in 1327 of whom six were assessed at 1s or more.¹³⁸ It was an agricultural community and the tucker who was the highest taxpayer in 1549 was also a husbandman.¹³⁹ With no important resident landowners Timberscombe was probably dominated by the tenants at Bickham like John Worth taxed on goods worth £12 in 1594 when the remaining seven taxpayers had assessments below £8. The prosperous Bryant family of tenant farmers prospered sometimes paid more tax than the Worths.¹⁴⁰ A wealthy farmer in 1605 had five servants and in 1614 his widow left £130 to the poor of six parishes. A widow with three servants in 1624 had the highest assessment in the 1627 subsidy. In 1641 most of the 32 taxpayers were taxed at 3s or less. No-one in Timberscombe could probably match Mary Haynes from Bristol who came to live at Bickham with her sister Margaret, wife of Peter Elsworth, and had sapphire and emerald jewellery and a Persian carpet in 1644.¹⁴¹ There are no prominent early tombs in the church or churchyard although there were chest tombs in the 1840s.¹⁴²

Timberscombe's position on the road from Minehead through Dunster to Bampton in Devon meant that wanderers were regularly given alms, baptised and buried in the late 17th century including Thankful Parish an abandoned baby. It was a popular parish for marriages under vicar George Robins (d. 1709) and until the 1750s,

¹³⁸ F. Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest* (Som. Rec. Soc. 3), 247.

¹³⁹ SHC, DD/HCK 9/1/13.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, PROB 11/89/115; PROB 11/201/333 A. Webb, *Two Tudor Subsidies* (Som. Rec. Soc. 88), 106; SHC, DD/HCK 9/1/13.

¹⁴¹ SHC, DD/HCK 9/1/13, 20; A. J. Howard and T. L. Stoate (ed.), *Somerset Protestation Returns* (1975), 33, 195.

¹⁴² SHC, SANHS colln drawings by J. Buckler and W. W. Wheatley.

possibly some were clandestine. In 1705 half the baptisms and burials and two of the three marriages were of non-parishioners.¹⁴³

Two thirds of the men of the parish were labourers, servants or farmers in 1796 and in the early 19th century there was difficulty finding people qualified for jury service as most men were labourers or carpenters¹⁴⁴ In 1821 there were seven more families than dwellings¹⁴⁵ and in 1841 several families took in lodgers.¹⁴⁶ One man worked in the South Wales coal mines in the 1840s but brought his child back for baptism in 1850.¹⁴⁷ In 1851 seven Timberscombe people were in South Wales and in 1901 37 including families and siblings.¹⁴⁸ In 1861 there were at least 12 lodgers but five houses were not lived in and two were being built.¹⁴⁹ In 1867 it was said that a quarter of cottages were poor although most had gardens.¹⁵⁰

Fewer lodgers were recorded in the late 19th century partly because houses had been permanently divided. In 1891 of 31 houses with fewer than five rooms, seven had only two and one four-roomed cottage was occupied by a couple with seven children aged up to 20.¹⁵¹ There had been no improvement in house size by 1901 and by 1911 there were 35 houses with fewer than five rooms. Even at Great House only one servant was employed.¹⁵²

Despite the attitude of some farmers regular labouring women accounted for 5 per cent of the population in 1867 and half the village women did casual work in the

¹⁴³ SHC, D/P/timb 2/1/1, 3; 4/1/1.

¹⁴⁴ SHC, DD/L/42/12; D/P/timb 2/1/2; *ibid.* Q/RJ1 8/13.

¹⁴⁵ Census (1821).

¹⁴⁶ TNA, HO 107/936.

¹⁴⁷ SHC, D/P/timb 2/1/2.

¹⁴⁸ Census schedules.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, RG 9/1602.

¹⁵⁰ Report of the Royal Commission on Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture (Parl. Papers 1868—9 (4202), xiii, 442).

¹⁵¹ TNA, RG 12/1864.

¹⁵² TNA, RG 13/2262; RG 14/14128.

fields.¹⁵³ Women were not only dressmakers, laundresses, shopkeepers and innkeepers but in 1861 women kept the post office, draper's and grocer's shops,¹⁵⁴ there was a female butcher in 1871,¹⁵⁵ blacksmith in 1872¹⁵⁶ and carrier in 1881.¹⁵⁷ Timberscombe had several postmistresses from 1871,¹⁵⁸ a young woman ran a grocery and drapery business single-handed in 1891, two shops were kept by wives in the late 1890s and in 1901 the miller was a woman. Possibly the lack of opportunities for domestic service encouraged women into other areas of work: only three village households had a maidservant in 1891 and only ten women were in domestic service in the parish in 1901 when only one servant was employed at Great House.¹⁵⁹ It was a woman who started selling petrol in the 1920s. A gipsy wife ran a second-hand business and bought a van in 1927.¹⁶⁰

By the mid 20th century the proportion of elderly people was increasing as the young left and only retired people moved in because there was little employment. Isolation was a problem as bus services declined from up to 12 buses each way in 1947 to six today and because of parked vehicles they bypass the village centre.¹⁶¹ By 1980s there were concerns about campsites and that demand for holiday accommodation pushed up house prices.¹⁶²

EDUCATION

¹⁵³ Children and Women in Agriculture, 442.

¹⁵⁴ TNA, RG 9/1602.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, RG 11/2354.

¹⁵⁶ Morris and Co. Dir. Som. 1872.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, RG 12/1864

¹⁵⁸ TNA, RG 10/2351; RG 11/2354.

¹⁵⁹ TNA, RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262; RG 14/14128; Kelly's Dir. Som. 1894—99.

¹⁶⁰ SHC, D/CC/ta 7/3, 102.

¹⁶¹ SHC, A/AGH 1/385.

¹⁶² SHC, D/PC/timb 2/2/14; *ibid.* A/AGH 1/385.

Richard Elsworthy or Ellsworth¹⁶³ of Bickham left £200 in 1714 to build a charity school and library at the Cross in Timberscombe, £10 a year for teaching poor children to read and write and recite the catechism and £10 a year for spelling and other books for poor children and adults. He wanted everyone to have the bible, book of common prayer and other books assuming they would all have learned to read. Unfortunately Ellsworth's wishes were not carried out and by 1770 large sums were held by several people and reputedly rent charges were 33 years in arrears. A deed apportioned the rent charges in 1775¹⁶⁴ and the matter was taken to Chancery in the 1790s and not settled until 1802 at a cost of £600. The recovered money was invested in annuities. The charity was to be plagued by litigation throughout the century as the trustees only controlled the investments and relied on local clergy to collect the rent charges. In 1804 the new trustees decided to build the school, the foundation stone was laid in 1805 and later William Curle was appointed master for £50 a year from which he was to pay for land tax, books and stationery.¹⁶⁵

In 1825 45 boys and 35 girls attended daily and on Sundays. They were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and the catechism according to Bell's system, the girls also learnt needlework and some children received clothing.¹⁶⁶ However, in 1833 the only schools recorded were an infant school teaching 15 children at their parents' expense and the Sunday school with 50 children supported by subscription.¹⁶⁷

In 1842—3 37 girls and 29 boys aged 6 to 16 attended the endowed school of whom

¹⁶³ The family, probably from Elsworthy in Wootton Courtney, dropped the 'y' in the 18th century.

¹⁶⁴ SHC, Q/RDd 32.

¹⁶⁵ Abstract of Returns of Charitable Donations made in 1787—8 (Parl. Papers 1816 (511) xvi), 1050—1; 11th Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales (Parl Papers 1824), 385—9; The Ipswich Journal, 10 Aug. 1805 accessed at British Newspapers on-line 15 Aug. 2013; Devon RO, 1148M/add 19/4.

¹⁶⁶ Ann. Rep. Bath & Wells Dioc. Assoc. SPCK. (1826); 11th Rep. Com. Char. 388; SHC, A/BWQ.

¹⁶⁷ Abstract of Educational Returns (Parl. Papers 1835 (62) xlii), 825.

18 were non-parishioners and 16 received clothes at Christmas. Their fathers were mainly labourers and some children also worked.¹⁶⁸ Similar numbers attended c. 1846, although seven children attended on Sunday only. The school had room for more children.¹⁶⁹ The teachers William Wood (d. 1860), who had served at Trafalgar, and his wife Joan lived at the school and took boarders.¹⁷⁰ By 1856 teachers at Timberscombe and Cutcombe took £130 out of the £260 charity income; a pension, repairs, the secretary's £10 a year and prizes for the children took most of the rest leaving little for the other elements of Ellsworth's charity.¹⁷¹ At £100 a year the Timberscombe teacher was better-off than the vicar. The poor sent their children to the charity school, which was then free, but the chapel school, probably kept by Elizabeth Beadon between 1861 and 1871, was said to be more popular. Many boys were rarely at school and had started work by age 11 but girls seldom went out to work until 15 when they entered service.¹⁷²

School managers met in the vicarage from 1876 and the vicar was usually the chairman. Fees were then levied at 2d for a labourer's child to 6s. 6d. a quarter for the children of farmers and tradesmen, with large families getting reductions. A new school was built behind the old by Messrs Brown and Hole for £560 partly from charity funds.¹⁷³ In 1877 Sir Thomas Dyke Acland offered two £5 exhibitions to local schools including Timberscombe in addition to those paid for by the Ellsworth charity.¹⁷⁴ The schoolmaster received £80 and his assistant £60-70 although only £15

¹⁶⁸ Devon RO, 1148M/add 19/4.

¹⁶⁹ Nat. Soc. Inquiry, 1846-7, Som. 16—17.

¹⁷⁰ TNA, HO 107/936, 1920. Gravestone in church porch.

¹⁷¹ Devon RO, 1148M/add 19/4; SHC, Q/RSc 3/7.

¹⁷² TNA, RG 9/1602; RG 10/2351; Children and Women in Agriculture, 442.

¹⁷³ SHC, D/P/timb 18/7/1.

¹⁷⁴ SHC, A/BWQ.

as she his wife. Monitresses and pupil teachers got c. £6 a year in 1876 but only £2 10s in 1880s, rising to £20 for a qualified assistant in the 1890s. Despite obtaining a £50 government grant from 1878 both for day and evening schools were in debt and in 1901 the auditors refused to pass the accounts. The school was handed to the county council in 1903 with £50 a year from the charity, decreasing to £30 by 1905. The two-room school had 64 children on the books in 1902 and there was a twice-weekly night school.¹⁷⁵ The Sunday school was attended by 30 children who paid a subscription based on attendance.¹⁷⁶

In 1910 the school comprised teacher's house, schoolroom for 100 and classroom for 20 although average attendance was only 46.¹⁷⁷ A bad school report and problems recruiting staff in the 1920s led to many boys attending Dunster school. There were three teachers until after 1930 when pupil numbers peaked at 64. In 1932 one teacher was dismissed to save money and the parish council wanted the school limited to children under 9. Evacuees doubled the size of the school during the war although there were only three teachers. By 1960 the school was a primary school with 48 children under one teacher and by 1980 it was a first school with only 25 pupils.¹⁷⁸

In 1953 the charity spent large sums of money obtaining voluntary aided status for the school, which was improved and extended in 1955. The charity money was spent mainly on school maintenance and a swimming pool was built in 1979. In 1985 the school resisted closure¹⁷⁹ and c.1992 had up to 45 pupils drawn from

¹⁷⁵ SHC, D/P/timb 18/7/1—3; *ibid.* C/E 4/380/397, 4/401/41; *ibid.* A/BWQ.

¹⁷⁶ SHC, D/P/timb 23/1.

¹⁷⁷ TNA, IR 56/82659; SHC, C/E 4/64.

¹⁷⁸ SHC, C/E 4/64; *ibid.* A/BJS 3/45; *ibid.* D/PC/timb 1/2/2.

¹⁷⁹ SHC, A/BWQ; *ibid.* C/CA 1/280A; *ibid.* D/PC/timb 2/2/2.

Timberscombe, Wootton Courtney and Luccombe.¹⁸⁰ Pupil numbers had fallen to 37 by 1995 and one classroom was converted into a meeting room and library.¹⁸¹ The school remains open but the former teacher's house on the street is a private dwelling. A large stone plaque on its side commemorates the charitable foundation.

CHARITY

In 1605 John Pearse left £10 to the overseers to distribute the interest and in 1614 his widow added £80.¹⁸² Those probably made up the surviving Poor's Money of £43 in the 1780s. Later lost, £3 3s 6d was paid out of the poor rates instead but in 1810 that practice was objected to and the charity was discontinued. The rent of Poor's or Church's Meadow, a 7-a. field in Winsford given long before 1680 by an unknown donor,¹⁸³ was distributed to those not receiving relief. The number of recipients rose from 35 in 1802 to over 50 by the 1880s and the rent from £10 to £13.¹⁸⁴ In the early 20th century £9 'gift money' was distributed by a committee of the parish council in small sums to up to 54 recipients.¹⁸⁵ By 1973 £15 was distributed amongst needy pensioners but in 1978 the land was sold to the owner of Stetfold Rocks.¹⁸⁶ From 1984 the charity was used for relieving need.¹⁸⁷

The Ellsworth charity included a gift of £10 a year to the poor of Timberscombe which was not paid until 1804 when £20 a year was assigned for

¹⁸⁰ SHC, D/P/sel 1/7/4.

¹⁸¹ SHC, A/BWQ.

¹⁸² SHC, DD/HCK 9/1/13.

¹⁸³ SHC, D/P/timb 4/1/1; Abstract of Returns of Charitable Donations made in 1787—8 (Parl. Papers 1816 (511) xvi), 1050—1; 11th Rep. Com. Char. 389.

¹⁸⁴ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/3/1.

¹⁸⁵ SHC, DD/C 327.

¹⁸⁶ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/1/1; *ibid.* A/BJT 5.

¹⁸⁷ Char. Com. Reg.

clothing the poor, £10 charged on Bickham.¹⁸⁸ Education took most of the Ellsworth charity's £50 rent charges and interest on nearly £7,500 stock and by 1905 only £10 was given to the poor as clothing and coal tickets. The last recorded distribution was in 1935.¹⁸⁹

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Settlement law was enforced against two children whose father was in Ireland in 1654¹⁹⁰ but Timberscombe had to provide for its parishioners who fell on hard times elsewhere.¹⁹¹ Poor boys apprenticed by the parish in the 1780s became farm labourers¹⁹² and a new scheme of c.1830 based on property valuations required the overseers to bind out poor children before their accounts were approved. Between 1804 and 1835 46 pauper children were apprenticed representing c.12 per cent of the population.¹⁹³

A workhouse occupied by four paupers was repaired at a cost of £150 in 1801—2¹⁹⁴ but had no paupers in 1803 and 1815.¹⁹⁵ In 1841 the house was occupied by two women and a child.¹⁹⁶ It stood on the north side of the churchyard¹⁹⁷ but has been converted into two cottages.

¹⁸⁸ 11th Rep. Com. Char. 388; SHC, DD/FR 17.

¹⁸⁹ SHC, Q/RSc 3/7; *ibid.* DD/C 327.

¹⁹⁰ SHC, Q/SR/30/136; 48/139; 90/50, 65; 92/12—13.

¹⁹¹ TNA, 11/813/28; SHC, Q/SR 321/4/11.

¹⁹² SHC, DD/FR 17.

¹⁹³ SHC, D/P/timb 13/6/1, 23/2.

¹⁹⁴ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/3/1.

¹⁹⁵ Abstract of Returns...of the poor (HC 1803), pp. 428--9; Abridgement of the Abstract of the Answers and Returns...so far as relates to the poor (HC 1818), pp. 382—3.

¹⁹⁶ TNA, HO 107/936.

¹⁹⁷ SHC, tithe award.

Over £160 a year was spent on 26 poor households in 1801—2 and wheat costing £85 was sold for £50 to the poor.¹⁹⁸ In 1803 43 adults and 14 children were relieved, of whom 20 were non-parishioners, but only 36 in 1815.¹⁹⁹ The parish paid a doctor six guineas annually to treat the poor and by 1840 poor relief cost £390 a year.²⁰⁰

Two unmarried women, one a labourer, were prosecuted for concealing a birth in the 1850s.²⁰¹ Infant mortality was high for much of the 19th century and life expectancy was low; the average age of adults buried in 1905 was only 52.²⁰² For most of the 20th century a doctor held a surgery in the village and a district nurse visited but after 1980 the surgery closed.²⁰³

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

In 1803 the friendly society had 10 members.²⁰⁴ A new society established in 1827 was not to meet in a public house but on the first Tuesday in June all healthy members within 15 miles were to meet at 10 a.m. and process to church before dinner at 2s 6d each. In 1860—1 the society was in debt having had two deaths and paid nearly £100 to sick members. At least 20 men a year were on weekly pay, mostly 3s, but from the 1880s less was spent on sick pay but more on deaths at £7 each. In the early 20th century there were between 12 and 20 sick members and membership declined from 130 in the 1890s to c.60 in the 1930s. For the club day there were flags, bought from

¹⁹⁸ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/3/1.

¹⁹⁹ Abstract of Returns...of the poor, (1803), pp. 428--9; Abstract of ... Returns, (1815) pp. 382—3.

²⁰⁰ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/3/1.

²⁰¹ SHC, Q/AP 88/4.

²⁰² SHC, D/PC/timb 2/1/2.

²⁰³ SHC, A/AGH 1/385.

²⁰⁴ Abstract of Returns (1803), pp. 428—9.

Minehead Friendly Society in 1876, tents, a band and bellringing until 1939. The society survived until 1948 or later.²⁰⁵

A blanket club received half the Ellsworth poor's money in the 1870s²⁰⁶ and had 53 members. A clothing club had 22 members and a coal club 14. A children's clothing club started in 1878. Membership of the clubs averaged 30 for the rest of the century and people often belonged to more than one.²⁰⁷

READING ROOM AND VILLAGE HALL

In 1714 Richard Ellsworth left £100 for a library and £10 a year for additional books to be chosen by the archdeacon of Taunton.²⁰⁸ Subsequent litigation relieved the charity of setting up the library²⁰⁹ but a parish library was established before 1861 and by 1874 had 847 books. However, 287 were missing, others were in Minehead and most were said to 'rubbish'. The library was transferred to the school.²¹⁰

An iron reading room was erected in 1913 adjoining the churchyard restricted to men. It was sold to diocesan trustees in 1929²¹¹ and leased back. It burnt down in 1944 and was replaced in 1947 by a wooden hall that was open to women. It was inadequate by the 1970s when the church authorities wanted to sell the land but a new lease was secured and in 1976 a new hall was built closer to the school to allow parking. The village also has a social club.²¹²

²⁰⁵ SHC, DD/X/PLS 1—8; Henderson, Timberscombe, 21.

²⁰⁶ SHC, A/BWQ.

²⁰⁷ SHC, D/P/timb 23/1.

²⁰⁸ SHC, Q/RDd 32; *ibid.* DD/FR 7.

²⁰⁹ 11th Rep. Char. Com. 386.

²¹⁰ SHC, A/BWQ.

²¹¹ SHC, D/D/Rd 9.

²¹² Char. Com. reg.; SHC, D/PC/timb 2/2/2, 12; DD/WBF 2/125.

COMMUNITY LIFE

The Butts were recorded in 1585.²¹³ A parish revel, held on the Sunday before Old Michaelmas in the 1780s, was last recorded in 1872.²¹⁴ Timberscombe band, with nine members in 1882, usually led the friendly society procession.²¹⁵

A bathing house on the stream was disused by 1912 and its removal was demanded in 1918.²¹⁶ The Timberscombe cricket club was said to have used land near Knowle from the 1930s until c. 1980.²¹⁷ The prebendal estate was sold in 1860 with the proviso that land west of the vicarage was not built on so it has been used to create a recreation ground.²¹⁸

Among local organisations were Timberscombe Horticultural Society, begun before 1938 but closed in 1951, a British Legion branch formed in 1946 and closed in 1969²¹⁹ and a Women's Institute established in 1952 and closed c.1984.²²⁰ A scout group met at Knowle in 1947 and was revived in 1963 but had ceased to exist by 1993.²²¹

Of 61 men who served during the First World War 11 were killed and three were taken prisoner.²²² All are commemorated within the church including brothers Eric and Philip Battersby, killed in 1914 and 1917 respectively. The organ was given in memory of Robert Ryder killed in 1917. During the Second World War the Home

²¹³ SHC, DD/FR 19.

²¹⁴ McDermott and Berry Rack's Survey, 90; Morris & Co. Dir. Som. (1872).

²¹⁵ SHC, DD/X/PLS 2.

²¹⁶ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/2/1—2.

²¹⁷ SHC, A/AGH 1/385; *ibid.* D/PC/timb 2/2/2.

²¹⁸ SHC, DD/CC P/33444.

²¹⁹ SHC, D/PC/timb 2/2/1, 9.

²²⁰ SHC, DD/WI 133.

²²¹ SHC, A/AGH 1/385; Char. Com. Reg.

²²² SHC, D/P/timb 4/1/2.

Guard occupied the vicarage cellar²²³ and a German plane came down in the parish but the parish did not want shelters although there was an air raid warden.²²⁴ A farmer was evicted from Allercott farm, which was used as a depot.²²⁵ A welcome home gift of £5 was paid to 42 men and two women who had served during the war and a tea and sports for the children were organised. Nothing was done for the Festival of Britain but a committee was set up for Coronation celebrations. In 1977 each child in the parish received a mug for the Queen's Jubilee and a pensioners club was established at the village hall.²²⁶ In 1989 Princess Margaret visited to open a new housing development.²²⁷

²²³ SHC, DD/WBF 2/125.

²²⁴ SHC, A/BJS 1/9; *ibid.* D/PC/timb 1/2/2.

²²⁵ SHC, A/BJS 3/22.

²²⁶ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/1/1, 2/2/1, 2/2/16.

²²⁷ SHC, D/PC/timb 1/2/6.