

# The Historic Buildings of Mere

## *CHARNAGE*

Charnage was a tything mentioned in the Domesday Book as Chedelwick. Chedelwick was later changed to Chadenwie, then Chadenwyche and is now Charnage.

The first know owner was Algar, an Anglo-Saxon, who occupied it shortly before the Norman Conquest in 1066. It possessed a Chapel dedicated to St. Martin, of which the fragments of a wall remain, near the north-eastern corner of the present kitchen-garden. There was one of two chapels of ease - the other being at Zeals - which must have been served by the chantry priests attached to Mere church.

In the fourteenth century Chadenwyche was occupied by Sir John Betteshorne (died 1398) whose brass is in the south chapel of Mere Church and who is an ancestor of Queen Elizabeth II (our present monarch). In this early period Chadenwyche was one of the ten tithings of the Hundred of Mere. There were 86½ hides of land, much of it owned by individuals living in distant parts of the country. The Bishop of Salisbury owned five hides at Chadenwyche.

A deed of 1591 refers to the sale by Lord Compton to Thomas Awbry, already in possession. The sum was £1400 for lands in Mere, Knoyle Oderne, West Knoyle, Sedgehill and the rights would in future belong to them. All deeds relating to the Manor and Lordship were to be surrendered before the feast of All Saints to Thomas Awbry. "Lord Compton guarantees to pay all claims that may be made against Thomas Awbry or his successors for the space of seven years and all changes in order to maintain his title, provided that Lord Compton shall not have to travel more than 10 miles from London for this purpose or be put to more expense than £20."

At some time, probably in the eighteenth century it came into the possession of the Hoares of Stourhead, the well-known banking family. It must have been at about this time that the old manor house gave place to a more modest farmhouse.

In 1780 the Phillips family became tenants of the house and farm. In about 1800 John Phillips, who had been a child of four when the family moved into Chadenwyche married Ann White, a first cousin of John White of Mells. He was succeeded by his son another John Phillips who never married and who gave up Charnage in the 1870's.

In 1830 there had been considerable unrest in the country, owing to high prices and low wages; and in particular the introduction of the threshing machines was violently resented by farm labourers who saw their jobs threatened. There were many riots including a serious one at Pyt House where the Wiltshire Yeomanry opened fire, wounding several people and killing an innocent bystander. John Phillips of Chadenwyche and

Robert White of Zeals (who had founded a pedigree herd of Herefords there in 1819) took the lead in organising a meeting of the tenants of the Parish of Mere. They obviously intended to forestall any trouble. Two of the most important resolutions passed were:

“To immediately take down our respective Machines used for threshing corn, etc., and for ever hereafter to discontinue use of the same and to use in lieu thereof Flails.”

“To pay every able-bodied man having a family 8 shillings per week, single men 7 shillings per week.”

At some date in the 1870's John Phillips was succeeded at Charnage by William White. It was leased from Sir Henry Hoare. Then towards the end of 1891 it was bought from Sir Henry for Arthur White on his marriage, by his father and father-in-law. Charnage has been occupied by the White family ever since its purchase with Geoffrey White inheriting in 1936 after the death of his father. Geoffrey died in 1970 and Charnage became the responsibility of the present owner John White.