Headington Quarry c. 1820–1860: a Study of a 19th-Century Open Village

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SUMMARY

This study attempts to discover, from censuses, parish records and a number of miscellaneous sources, the different elements which contributed to the development of the village of Headington Quarry in the early and middle 19th century. It examines the origins, the family connections and the occupations of the inhabitants and attempts to assess their social and economic status. It describes the development of the village, its population growth from around 1800 to the 1860s and the establishment of its own Methodist chapel, church and school. It assesses the impact of these and of the Union Workhouse on the growing population and attempts to show how the tiny settlement existing at the end of the 18th century grew into a particular kind of open village with its own complicated social structure.

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EARLY HISTORY

The parish of Headington is situated about four miles E. of Oxford, astride the road to London. It has long been noted for its stone, which was used for the buildings of the University at least as far back as the 14th century. Most of it was taken from the eastern end of the parish N. of the old London road, and some of the pits extended over the parish boundary into Shotover. Most pits were fairly small, and as one was exhausted the quarriers moved to a nearby site, fragmenting the landscape and producing pockets of semi-waste which later could be bought comparatively cheaply. Some stone-workers probably always lived in the quarry area, and by the 16th century it was recognised as a hamlet of Headington. In 1630 there were complaints of cottages built without licence 'to hold lewd and disorderly persons'.[1] Quarry Farm, situated very close to what was to

[1] *V.C.H. Oxon*, v, 164.

become the centre of the village, is first mentioned soon after, and at least one nearby house is said in the village to have been by the same builder.[2]

The 17th century was the most productive period for the quarries, and by the 18th development was continuing southwards. The old road from Oxford to London over Shotover Hill was turnpiked in 1718 and in 1759 there are references to a hostelry, Titup Hall, on the road on the Headington side of the hill.[3] In 1775 the new turnpike was built, continuing the road up the hill from Oxford and dividing Headington village and the hamlet of Barton from the hamlet in the quarry, which then lay between the two roads.[4] The new road was much busier than the old one had been, and with such a barrier the Quarry probably felt closer to its Shotover neighbours than to the parent village. The boundary of the new ecclesiastical district of Headington Quarry which was created in 1851 lay along the turnpike and included the western part of Shotover. It must have been the official acknowledgement of a division which had long been recognised.

If the turnpike set the stage for the new village, the 1805 Inclosure Act for Headington and the events which followed it encouraged its rapid growth as an open village in the early 19th century. The distinction between open and closed villages was widely understood and accepted at this time. Closed villages had usually one landowner owning at least half the property, or occasionally a very small group of owners dividing the area between them, who were able to exercise considerable control over the lives and fortunes of their tenants. Open villages, growing to fill a particular need, or to take advantage of an opportunity for expansion, had many small landowners and their inhabitants enjoyed an independence which many felt compensated for lower economic standards. They were not popular with the authorities, who saw them as centres for religious dissent and lawlessness, characteristics which were soon attributed to the Quarry.

The immediate results of the inclosure award did not seem conducive to the development of an open village. There was a feeling locally that the act was hastened unduly by wealthy interests in the city and initially two-thirds of the parish passed into the hands of four people, two of them brothers; but there were also a number of small landowners and over half the forty-one assignees had less than ten acres.[5] The major owner was Henry Mayne Whorwood, lord of the manors of both Holton and Headington, who had 590 acres in Headington, including fifty in the land around the pits. He died in 1805 and his land was gradually sold off. By 1832 the land tax returns record eleven purchasers from the estate and at least five of these were in the quarry.[6] By the end of 1836 the whole of the rest of the estate had been sold, being advertised first as a single estate and later in thirty lots, although only some of these would have been in the quarry.[7] The financial collapse of the Whorwood family and what would appear to have been the difficulty in selling the estate must have provided a good opportunity for buyers to purchase small lots fairly cheaply, especially if they consisted of semi-waste land which was left when a pit was exhausted.

[2] Ibid. 159.
[3] Paul Marriott, *Oxford Pubs Past and Present* (1978), 12.
[4] R. and M. Beckinsale, *The English Heartland* (1980), 151.
[5] O.R.O., Headington Inclosure Award, MS DD Par Head al.
[6] O.R.O., QSD L 147.
[7] *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (JOJ) advertised the estate in September 1835 'as a whole or in several lots', on 28 May 1836 (not 3 August as stated in *V.C.H.*) and the weeks following, when the thirty lots are mentioned. The sale took place on 3 August.

So by the early to mid 19th century the area of and around the quarry was divided into a number of smallish plots, which were nevertheless large for gardens, many of them being parts of worked-out quarries and semi-waste, and these must have presented an attractive proposition to the younger generation in the more crowded neighbouring villages of Headington and Barton, especially as the area had access to what was in post-inclosure days an unusually large amount of common land. Shotover, on its eastern border, was originally forest land but, following its disafforestation in the 17th century, 230 acres of common known as Quarry Coppice were awarded to Headington to compensate the villagers for the loss of forest grazing.[8] Their legal right to this was confirmed in 1820 when it was contested by Thomas Schultz, the then owner of Shotover House.[9] Much of the other land on Shotover was open and the villagers were accustomed to using it for grazing, wooding and poaching.

POPULATION

It is rarely possible to discover who was living in the quarry and its surrounds before the end of the 18th century. Occasionally names appear in press reports or other documents that mention the quarry and the names of a few families appear in deeds; but ownership did not necessarily involve residence.[10] The Davis Map of 1797 gives some indication of numbers, for it shows ten houses clustered round the quarries and another one or two buildings at Titup Hall on the old London Road. The inclosure map of 1802 shows about twenty buildings, although the shape of some of them suggests that they may have been small rows of cottages.[11] It was probably another two decades before the village became a coherent community. The first baptismal entries in the Headington register recorded as being from the Quarry were in 1818, when there were two.[12] In the following years they rose from 14% of the total in 1821–25 to 24% in the years immediately before the new church was opened in 1850. An estimated increase in population, based partly on the baptisms as a percentage of the Headington totals and partly on an assumed average household of about 4.6, shows a rapid rise between 1820 and 1840.[13] There is then a lull before a further increase later in the century.

TABLE 1: BAPTISMS IN HEADINGTON REGISTER 1821–1848

Years	*1821–25*	*1825–30*	*1831–5*	*1836–40*	*1841–5*	*1846–8*
Headington (including HQ)	229	239	243	224	270	171
H Quarry only	33	54	40	47	55	42

[8] *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 163.
[9] G.A. Coppock and B.M. Hill, *Headington Quarry and Shotover* (1933), 13.
[10] Magdalen College Archives give details of leases (Headington 17a).
[11] O.R.O., MS DD Head. a 1.
[12] O.R.O., MS D D Head. A. b 4, b 5, b 9; and see Table 1.
[13] See Table 2.

Fig. 1. The village lying in the quarry. The buildings and roads are from the 1881 Ordnance Survey Map, the first to show the village in detail, and were not all there before 1860. It is impossible to date most of them.

TABLE 2: PROBABLE POPULATION, 1797–1861

1797	68
1805	90–112
1821	118
1831	270
1841	394 (including part of Shotover)
1851	403 (including part of Shotover)
1861	508

Source: Calculated from baptisms and households until 1841. Thereafter from census returns.

The village is rich in theories about the origins of its early inhabitants. There are murmurs of pretty tin-miners' daughters from Cornwall and Jones and Morris families from Wales. In fact most of the early 19th-century occupants of the new village were born in Headington. There are 95 adult males listed in the 1841 census for the Quarry and the surnames of almost all of them are to be found in the Headington registers.[14] Eighty-two were born in Headington and only 13 came from outside the parish, half of whom moved into outlying districts rather than the village itself. They share the surnames of local men, and most come from Oxford or Cowley or the villages round Shotover. Many of the families had been in the district a considerable time. Of the 51 names to be found in the 1841 census, 23 appear in Headington before 1780, at least six of them before 1710.[15] It appears that young married couples or even unmarried youths in their twenties, anxious to set up their own homes, spread into the quarry area, joining the nucleus of families already there. The ages and shape of the families in the 1841 census support this. Most of the older householders can be identified as living in the quarry for some years before the census; but the most striking characteristic of the 1841 returns is that it was a very young community. Almost 60% of the householders were under 35, in marked contrast to those in the tiny but longer established settlement at the base of Shotover Hill, and also to the figures for the village itself twenty years later.[16]

TABLE 3: AGES OF HOUSEHOLDERS AND THEIR WIVES IN HEADINGTON QUARRY

	under 25	*25–35*	*35–45*	*45–55*	*55–65*	*over 65*
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1841	26.6	37	14.5	12.8	4	4.8
1851	12.9	32.6	25.9	13.6	7.4	7.6
1861	6.8	28.5	25.8	20.8	10	8.2

Source: Headington Quarry Census Returns.

The most common unit, both in 1841 and 1861, was the nuclear family. Occasionally a parent was living with the householder, but in 1841 three-generation families were more

[14] Headington Census Returns 1841, HO 107/877.
[15] Headington Census Returns 1851, HO 107/1727, 1861, RG 9/890, 1871, RG 10/1434.
[16] See Table 3.

likely to have the grandparent as householder. Mixed households were often the result of second marriages where there were both children and stepchildren. Very few widows and widowers, except for the elderly, remained unmarried for long, and third marriages were not uncommon. No servants appear in the 1841 census, although some young, unrelated persons may have been servants. In 1861 a servant appears in five of the households. In 1861, as the families grew older, the village shows a much more balanced age pattern.[17]

TABLE 4: FAMILY STRUCTURE IN HEADINGTON QUARRY 1841(A) AND 1861(B)

Average age of householders/parents	*30*		*35*		*40*		*50*		*60*		*70*		*70+*	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
M. couples with ch.	22	10	8	10	4	16	4	17	1	1	9	1	-	-
With ch. & 1 parent	1	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Couples no children	2	5	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
One parent & children	-	-	1	-	1	3	2	2	3	1	1	3	-	2
Living alone	2	-	1	-	-	-		-1	-	2	-	2	1	1
Mixed households	1	2	1	1	-	-	2	2	3	4	1	4	3	5
Totals (72A, 113B)	29	19	13	12	5	20	11	23	6	19	4	12	4	8

Source: Headington Quarry Census Returns.

A surprising number of names, 15, found earlier in the parish registers and other places have disappeared by 1841 and another 17 have gone by 1851. Then the population seems to be more static, as only six names go by 1861 and only one in the next decade. There were, of course, newcomers to the village, but comparatively few strangers. By 1861 the number of households had increased from 72 to 113. Thirty-seven householders had been there 20 years before; 24 were descendants of the 1841 settlers; 22 newcomers came from Headington and bore familiar names; and 30 were 'strangers'. These latter were for the most part very different people from the earlier villagers. A group of them were living along the turnpike rather than down in the older part of the village, and they included the schoolteacher, toll-keeper and a domestic servant. Other newcomers noted were the curate, two farmers, a number of farm servants and four vans of gypsies.[18] In 1861 the greater part of the village families bore names familiar in the quarry much earlier in the century, and by 1871 the population of the village was two-and-a-quarter times that of 1841, but the original names accounted for two-thirds of the population. Twelve different surnames, all to be found in the 1841 census, if not before, encompassed over half the population.[19]

[17] See Table 4.

[18] The gypsies had camped just outside the parish for many years and the Headington vestry made frequent attempts to keep them out of the parish. (Headington Vestry Minutes 1818–35, O.R.O., MS DD C e 1.) They made the pit their winter quarters for a long time and seem to have become accepted by the village community.

[19] See Table 5.

TABLE 5: INCREASE IN POPULATION COMPARED WITH INCREASE IN NAMES

Year	*Population*	*Households*	*Names*
1841	407	90	55
1851	451	101	48
1861	508	112	52
1871	848	152	73

Source: Census Returns.

It may have been this concentration of long-dwelling families which later gave the village its reputation for clannishness, but the villagers had plenty of links with the outside world. Many were builders of some kind and frequently had to travel to find work. Many of the families in the village had relatives nearby, and there was movement to and from the Quarry and other parts of the parish. Henry Hedges was one man who lived in the quarry in the 1830s, when he appears in the parish registers variously as labourer and stone merchant. His two sons Joseph and John, with whom he ran a brick and tile yard, lived in Quarry. By 1840, following the death of his father, he had moved to Barton where he was described as yeoman and farmer. He still kept his interest in the yard and he joined with other landowners in the Quarry when they first protested about the inclosure by a local farmer of the open ground known as The Magdalens.[20]

Marriage brought in newcomers, for although most of the men in the village came from Headington, a surprising number of their wives did not. Fifty of the 65 women householders or wives of householders in 1841 can be traced. Twenty were outsiders, and only three of these were from Oxford or villages within a few miles of the parish. The 1851 and 1861 census returns show an even wider spread. In 1851, 51 of the 93 women were Headington-born, the others coming from over 30 different places as far away as Guildford, Bristol and London. In the Shotover part of the parish there were 11 incomers to seven Headington-born wives, although most of them came from places within a radius of five or six miles. In 1861 the incoming figures were even higher and half of the incomers came from outside Oxfordshire, some from as far away as Somerset, Staffordshire, Birmingham and Scotland. Others came from Abingdon, Eynsham, Henley and Dorchester as well as nearby villages. So many incomers must have had an effect in encouraging travel and in preventing too great a feeling of parochialism in the village.[21]

TABLE 6: MEN AND WOMEN BORN IN AND OUT OF HEADINGTON AND SHOTOVER

	Born	*Men In*	*Men Out*	*Women In*	*Women Out*
1851	Headington	70	16	51	42
	Shotover	9	12	7	11
1861	Headington	83	36	64	54
	Shotover	8	6	5	4

Source: Census returns.

[20] R. Samuel, *Village Life and Labour* (1975), 233 gives a very different account of Henry Hedges, describing him as a well-known figure (in Headington Quarry) in the '50s and '60s, but both censuses and directories put him in Barton, and he died in 1859.

[21] See Table 6.

THE ECONOMIC BASE

At least five of the buyers of the Horwood estates by 1816 were of families living in the quarry then or soon afterwards. It is impossible to establish the size or value of these holdings from the Land Tax Returns, because, having been exonerated, the group of 11 holdings is bracketed together to give a total value of £30 1*s*. 10*d*.[22] The 1830 Poor Rate Book gives a little more detail.[23] This lists 34 rate-payers who can fairly certainly be identified as living in Headington Quarry. There may have been others, but a comparison of the list with the 1841 census suggests that this figure is accurate: the householders at that time consist of those shown to be there by 1830, some incomers whose ingress it is impossible to date, and a number of young couples in their twenties who would have been children in 1830.

Of these 34 rate-payers in 1830, 11 were owner-occupiers but only one of these also let land. His three parcels incurred a total rate of 3*s*. 9*d*., suggesting three average properties. None of the holdings around the pits was of high value. Although the quarry inhabitants represented over a third of the total population of the parish, their contribution represented less than 20%. The majority of their holdings were probably similar to most of those in the rest of Headington, but the Quarry had no big rate-payers.[24] By 1850 the 75 Quarry properties included in the Headington Rate Book were held by 37 owners including 22 owner-occupiers.[25]

TABLE 7: POOR RATE PAID BY HOUSEHOLDERS IN HEADINGTON QUARRY AND THE REST OF THE PARISH 1830

	£1+	10s+	5s+	3s+	2s+	1s+	9d+	6d+	6–
H.Q.	–	–	–	2.9%	2.9%	35.29%	23.52%	23.53%	11.76%
Rest of H	3.44%	3.44%	10.34%	6.89%	3.44%	27.58%	31.03%	10.34%	3.44%

Source: Headington Quarry Poor Rate Book 1830–31.

There were 26 family names and 14 of these families held more than one property, although only eight individuals held more than one. George Coppock, the largest owner in the village, had ten, with a rateable value of £29 5*s*. 0*d*. The Jones family had five properties, the most valuable worth £3 5*s*. 0*d*., the Bushnells three, giving a total of £13, and the Snows and the Taylors each had two, worth £9 and £5 respectively. These same names held more than one property in the 1830 records, but by 1850 they had increased their holdings as their children grew up and had their own households. About twenty properties were held by owners living outside the village.

The ownership or rental of property provided much of the subsistence of the villagers. The gardens were a very important part of the Quarry economy. They were unusually large, and for many households not only provided the families with most of their food but also gave a surplus for trading, an invaluable asset in a place where much of the work was seasonal. James Jones appears in the censuses as a labourer or brick labourer, but he also had an orchard in which he bred turkeys, very much a rich man's

[22] O.R.O., QSDL 147, Headington Land Tax 1832.
[23] O.R.O., MS D D Head. 1832 e 6.
[24] See Table 7.
[25] O.R.O., MS D D Head. 1850 b 20.

dish.[26] In his diary in the 1880s, mason Charles Snow has more entries for his garden than his employment.[27] Other householders had cows or horses which they often grazed on the slopes and open parts of Shotover. Parish land was also let in smallish lots. In 1837 the vestry directed Thomas Snow to let land to the poor in lots of 20 poles each at 2*s.* 6*d.* a year.[28] The seasonal nature of the wages work also meant that when a man was not working on his garden he would probably have a number of other occupations either concurrently or at different times of life. Farmers might be brickmakers; Thomas Snow appears variously as labourer (1833), surveyor (1837), mason (1841), quarryman (1858) and publican (1861). A teenage labourer might be a stonecutter ten years later and finally a mason. The baptismal registers give some indication of occupations in the years before the 1841 census, and although not everyone is included, a comparison of the occupations given in the baptismal register for the years 1841–1850 with those shown in the census returns of 1841 and 1851 show a surprising similarity, the only significant difference being that the blanket coverage of 'labourer' in the registers is replaced by a more exact 'brickmaker' or 'stone-cutter'.[29]

TABLE 8: OCCUPATIONS REVEALED BY BAPTISMAL ENTRIES & CENSUS RETURNS

Occupation	*1821–30*	*1831–40*	*1841–50*	*1841*	*1851*	*1861*	*1871*
Yeomen	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Labourers	42	37	45	37	32	51	8
Stone labs.	–	–	–	5	5	7	–
Masons	2	1	1	6	15	17	25
Quarrymen	3	1	–	–	–	–	–
Brickmakers	0	5	9	19	9	4	–
Brickburners	1	–	–	1	3	3	1
Brick labs.	–	–	–	–	13	7	2
Brick merchants	–	–	–	–	3	–	1
Bricklayers	–	–	–	–	–	–	8
Carpenters	–	2	1	5	–	1	3
Painters	–	1	1	–	–	–	–
Butchers	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
Servants	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Publicans	–	–	1	1	3	–	–
Shoemakers	–	–	–	1	1	–	–
Farmers	–	–	–	1	1	1	4
Farm labs.	–	–	–	1	1	3	4
Ag. labs.	–	–	–	3	21	12	13
Shepherds	1	1	1	1	3	5	3
Carters	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Higglers	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Gardeners	–	–	–	4	2	1	3

The wage-labour available was usually hard manual work. Both in the quarries and the brickyard most of it was still done by hand. Samuel describes the process: 'the stone was dislodged with a "puggle" – a flat spear-shaped piece of steel at the end of a long

[26] Told by his granddaughter, Mrs. Alberta Stowe.
[27] Charles Snow's Diary, MS in the writer's possession.
[28] O.R.O., Headington Vestry Minutes, MS D D Head. C b 20.
[29] See Table 8.

pole; it was raked out with a long shovel . . . and split . . . with long metal chisels with very sharp points. The larger falls of rock were dealt with by the sledge-hammer, an enormous tool weighing about forty pounds. Sometimes explosives had to be used'.[30] Clay for brickmaking was also dug by hand, usually during the winter so that it could be weathered.[31] In early summer it was mixed, usually at Shotover with a spade, although there are stories of it being trodden with bare feet, a common practice in some places. Then it was shaped in moulds brick by brick. A skilled worker could probably produce up to 700 bricks a day, and during the comparatively short period he might take his wife and older children to help mould. The bricks would then be dried and finally fired. It was all heavy work, which nevertheless called for a considerable degree of skill.

A seasonal occupation which never appears in the census returns was that of morris dancing, although it seems to have been confined to a fairly small number of families, most of them stone and brickworkers.[32] Usually thought of as a pastime, it was also a valuable source of extra income. Traditionally the dancers performed locally at Whitsuntide, but they would dance their way to London between the hay and the corn harvests. On a good day, they could hope to make as much as 10*s*. a day each and they expected to make at least as much as they would in the harvest field — another indication of multiple occupations for the stone and brick workers.

If the census records are to be believed, very few children were employed under 13, and, surprisingly, in 1861 three out of the five 15-year-old boys were said to be still at school. Women played an increasingly important part as the century wore on, although it is possible that the figures are misleading and merely reflect a greater accuracy in recording their occupations in the later census returns. In 1841, 10% of women were listed as working. In 1861 it was almost 30%. Laundrywork was to become an important industry in the village and not merely a lifeline for the very poor. A number of the laundresses were the wives of masons and brickmakers, probably the least poor householders, and some employed others to work for them. It may have been only the better-off wives who could afford to start a laundry, because at the beginning of the century there were few wells in the village and water was fetched from flooded pits. Presumably a laundry would need its own well and this could have been a large expense to an aspiring laundress.[33]

TABLE 9: WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONS AS LISTED IN THE CENSUS RECORDS

Occupation	*1841*	*1851*	*1861*
Labourer	4	1	–
Fieldwork	1	7	2
Laundress		15	24
Washerwoman	–	2	2
Dressmaker	1	–	1
Shopkeeper	1	1	1
Charwoman	–	3	–
Schoolmistress	1	–	1
Lacemaker	–	2	1
Servant	–	4	4
Publican	–	2	–
Pedlar/hawker	–	1	3

[30] Samuel op. cit. note 20, 165.
[31] J. Bond, S. Gosling and J. Rhodes, *Oxfordshire Brickmakers* (1980), 24.
[32] For information on morris dancing I am indebted to Mr. Robert Grant of Headington Quarry.
[33] See Table 9.

It was inevitable in such an environment that poor relief should play an important part. Of the 41 names which appear in records as being in the village before 1835, 19 occur in poor relief records.[34] Fifteen received some form of relief, either bread money or payment for illness or confinement, often accompanied by the services of a doctor. Ownership of a house, a gun or a dog was often a disqualification and sometimes relatives were ordered to contribute. Although Headington parish had its own workhouse, the former Inn on the old turnpike, there are only two references to Quarry inmates, although a Quarry family lived in an adjoining cottage let by the parish. In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act united Headington with 21 other parishes to form the Headington Union and a new workhouse was built about 1838 on the site of a worked-out pit by the side of the turnpike.[35] Poor though the village probably was as a whole, only a few families had members in the workhouse. Of the 56 Quarry names in the 1841 census, only eight are found among the Quarry admissions. About 20 people from the village were admitted from August 1841 (when the records start) to the end of 1843.[36] Only one family is included. There was one married couple, a father with three children whose wife was away and an old woman of 86 who was admitted a few days before she died. There were three teenage boys, and four unmarried mothers who either entered the Union for the birth of their children or were admitted while the children were very small.

For the period 1846–8 there were three families, although the emphasis was still on the young. Twenty-two-year-old Jo Horrod was admitted in December 1847, because 'his wife was away'; and there were seven unmarried mothers, one with two children, and seven youths who were admitted several times.

It is difficult to judge the attitude of the villagers towards the Union. Inmates appear to have been treated fairly and there is little sign of the abuses found in some of the unions. The most common work was the dreary oakum-picking, but there are records of inmates gardening and doing work about the building. The food was no worse and sometimes rather better than standards laid down by law. Vegetables were grown in the gardens and pigs were kept, providing some variation in the diet. The guardians seem to have taken some care to ensure that standards were maintained.

Outdoor relief continued to be available. For Quarry the figure for outdoor relief, about 18, exceeded the admissions in 1842. The following year eight applications were granted and there were 18 admissions; the same proportion appears for 1846, with 13 grants and 32 admissions. These figures do not include the long-term paupers, but it is probable that this element was fairly small. The guardians were assiduous in demanding payment from more prosperous sons.[37] The census figures show very few paupers in the village. There are none recorded in 1841; in 1851 there are seven, four widows, three of them living with other members of their family, one crippled youth and the partly supported John Snow, aged 86 and living with a niece of 73, also a pauper. By 1861 the figure had dropped to one. The belief that 'the village looked after its own' appears to be well-founded.

[34] O.R.O., MS D D Head. C e 1.

[35] *V.C.H. Oxon* v, 159, following Coppock and Hill op. cit. note 9, gives its date as 1858, but the 1841 Census gives 97 inmates and the surviving minute books of the Guardians date from 1841. References in these minutes to repairs and meeting the architect, as well as evidence of its position, show it to be the same building. Perhaps the date 1838 was inadvertently changed in 1858 during the printing of Coppock and Hill op. cit.

[36] Headington Union Minute Book, O.C. Archives, A61ff. The earliest Union records have not survived but the Guardians' Minute Books run from August 1841, and until 1848 give details of paupers admitted, although unfortunately not the dates when they left.

[37] Thomas Snow was ordered to pay 4*s.*, later reduced to 2*s.* 6*d.*, towards his father's keep in 1848. Other villagers were refused help because of their children's means.

CHURCH, CHAPPEL AND SOCIAL LIFE

'The inhabitants of Quarry say that as they are to be deprived of their funeral path they will not come to Church at all but will intend to have a Methodist preacher come to them'.[38] So the local curate reported, when men from the quarry smashed the fence, erected after the inclosure, which barred the path from the hamlet to the church; and within the next 40 years Quarry village was to become a stronghold of Methodism.

Early in the century meetings were held in the house of James Coppock next to the Six Bells and their numbers increased until the Oxford circuit decided to put up a chapel.[39] A subscription list, which unfortunately no longer exists, was opened in 1829, a loan was raised, and building, using mostly local labour, was completed in 1830. The final cost was £131, about £25 more than had been originally raised, and the early income, which came from collections and 'boxes' held by some members of the congregation, went on repayment of loans, besides the necessary candles and cakes for Easter 'love feasts'.[40] The chapel had seatings for 100, all free, and standing room for 20.[41] By 1851 the average congregation was six in the morning, 30 in the afternoon and 40 in the evening.[42] These may not all have been Quarry people as the chapel also served other parts of Headington, although the burial register from 1863, the earliest in existence, contains almost entirely Quarry entries.[43]

The middle years of the century were a bad time for Methodism, which became divided by bitter quarrels, but at Headington Quarry, according to the Oxford Superintendent, the Rev. Thomas Rayne, 'the young men of that day . . . were charged by the divine spirit'.[44] The chapel was found to be too small and a new one, built by mason Thomas Snow and costing £300, was opened on Whitsunday 1860. In 1862 there were 487 members of the Oxford Circuit. If a chapel capable of holding 100 was considered too small, then Headington Quarry must indeed have been one of the more prominent congregations. In 1863 a burial ground was added at the side of the building, and a large schoolroom built in 1874.[45]

Ecclesiastical circles saw the development with dismay. The fears that the curate had voiced in 1805 were apparently being realised. The parish church, which had a very poor reputation, did little to help. By 1847 diocesan anxiety led to action and an Anglican church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was built and consecrated in 1849.[46] Whether the inhabitants of the village were fully appreciative of the benefit they were receiving is doubtful. They were resentful that local labour had not been used, and the early incumbents do not seem to have been very suitable choices. It was a very poor living with a stipend at first of only £20 a year, and it was another twenty years before the endowment was increased.[47] The vicarage was close to a pit where the gypsies encamped and was said to be haunted. By 1870 there had been eight incumbents and

[38] O.R.O., MS Oxon. Diocesan Papers c 657.
[39] Coppock and Hill op. cit. note 9, 3.
[40] O.R.O., MS dd Oxf. Meth Ct e 42: Wesleyan Chapel Trustees Records.
[41] O.R.O., 1851 HO 129/157: Eccesiastical Census.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Headington Methodist Burial Register: held by the Superintendent of the Circuit (The Rev Martin Skinner).
[44] O.R.O., MS DD Oxf. Meth Ct c 2: Nix Papers.
[45] Coppock and Hill op. cit. note 9, 32.
[46] Ibid. 25.
[47] Ibid. 28.

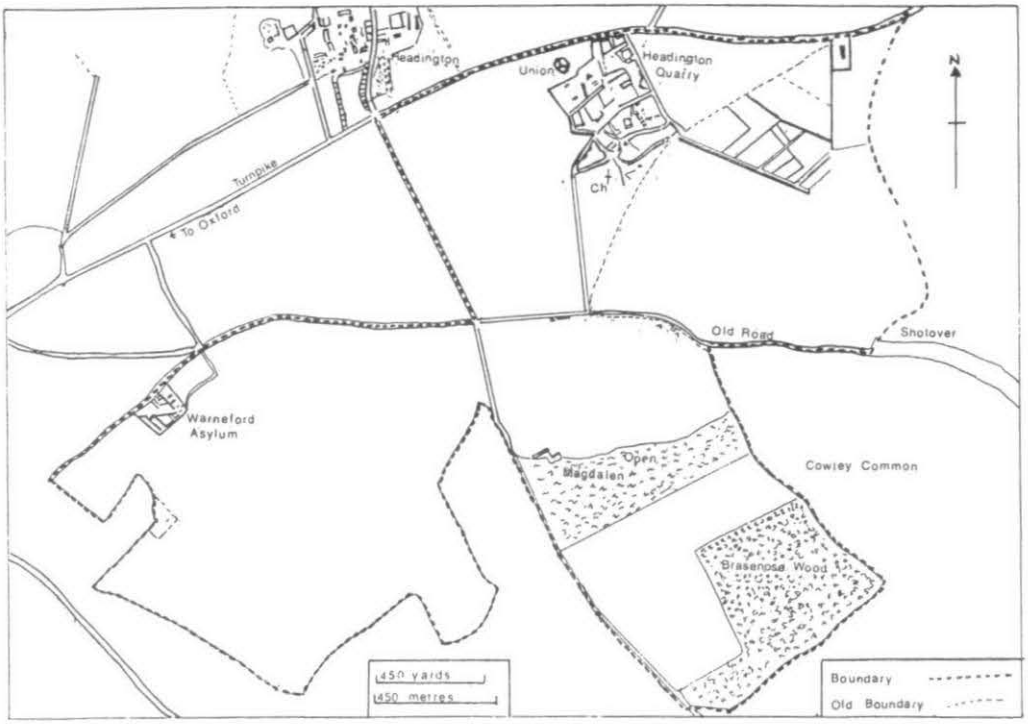

Fig. 2. The Ecclesiastical District of Headington Quarry, 1850.

only two of them, Browne and Magin, stayed as long as five years. Of Browne, the bishop wrote in 1858 'I fear a total failure. James [the archdeacon?] goes over and finds all gone to ruin . . . the people unvisited etc.'[48] Browne may have become discouraged over the years; his replies to the 1854 Visitation inquisition, the year after he was installed, show that the number of services and catechisms which he took compared well with those of the neighbouring clergy, and he held a Sunday school for girls which was usually attended by 30 or more pupils.[49] But interest in the church was already declining by 1854. The 1851 Ecclesiastical Census claims average congregations of 65 in the morning and 80 in the evening besides 50 children. Browne could only expect 30 in the morning and 60 in the evening including the children.

The vestry book shows a similar decline in interest.[50] After the first two years it was rare for anyone apart from the churchwardens to attend the vestry meetings, and sometimes even they were not both there. In the first 20 years there were seven churchwardens and two of these, serving six years, were local landowners from outside the village. It is perhaps not surprising that the church fell into disrepair, and in the sixties the Rev. A. Dalton had to repair the gates because the children were using the churchyard as a playground.[51] But there were successes. After 1870 the vicars, by now

[48] O.R.O., MS Oxf. Dioc. Papers d 178; the Bishop's Book 1854–64.
[49] O.R.O., MS Oxf Dioc. Papers d 7028; Archdeacon's Visitation Replies 1854.
[50] Headington Quarry Vestry Book: in the hands of the Vicar.
[51] Conversation with Canon Head, Vicar of Holy Trinity Headington Quarry.

housed in a fine new vicarage on the other side of the church, stayed longer, and the church became more integrated into parish life. Improvements were made to it in 1871. A church school was built in 1864 which evoked much more support than the church itself and was attended by the children of both church and chapel families.

The new school must have made a considerable difference to the village. The earlier history of schools in the village is difficult to untangle. In 1805 Catherine Mather's school, which was partly endowed, was opened in a room beside the Chequers Inn to cater for six poor boys, six poor girls and 18 other children paid for by the vicar.[52] This was to serve the parish of Headington. Other schools opened at various times in Headington and on Headington Hill, but these were fee-paying schools. In 1833 there were five small paying schools, but the poor were inadequately catered for. At some time Catherine Mather's little school became the National School and in 1851 it moved to a new site on the corner of Windmill Lane and the London Road.[53] In 1854 an infant school was added but there is no record of a school within the Quarry, except for the classes sometimes held in the workhouse from 1851 until the church school was built in 1864.

CONCLUSION

Like many other open villages, Headington Quarry has received a bad press. It was essentially a community of labourers and artisans. Its uneven terrain, its rough paths between the sheer drops of the old quarries and its lack of roads had nothing to attract the gentry or even the growing middle class. It was as a peasant community that the village developed. The family and its garden was the important economic unit, family income being acquired by combined work in harvesting and marketing their crops or drying the wash. Whole families could make use of one of the village's chief assets, the access to Shotover, for grazing their animals, courting, wooding and berrying and poaching rabbits.

This peasant community had a complex social structure. Master and man would work side by side in the village, but there was a distinction in status, even if it was a subtle one. The resident freeholders and larger tenants, brick and stone merchants and quarrymen, usually, although not exclusively, married amongst themselves. When Harriet Coppock, daughter of William and niece of George, owner of *The Six Bells*, married James Trafford in 1833, her family highly disapproved because she had 'married beneath her'.[54] William was not inhibited by the prison sentence he incurred for fence-breaking in 1802. In the eyes of the villagers, defence of their rights was not a crime and he was later a respectable and respected member of the community. His sister had married into the 'carriage class' and the cousins were sometimes to be seen visiting the village. These families tended to witness each others' wills and to provide the village with overseers, constables and other officials.

Some at least of the men moving into the quarry were the relatives, often younger sons, of families owning or leasing substantial property in the neighbourhood. Henry Hedges was one who returned to the family home at Barton when his father died. They had many connections with the outside world and rightly saw the area as one where

[52] *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 168.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Conversation with Mrs. Albeta Stowe, 1987.

much development would take place. This attitude was shared by the Church, who built Holy Trinity bigger than its parent church, and by the local authorities, who petitioned for a railway through the village.

To the young men and women who moved to Quarry in the first three or four decades of the century, the prospect must have been a challenging one. It was their ability to meet the challenge which laid the foundation of a village that developed into a coherent community with a strong and lasting sense of its own identity. Many of their descendants are in the village to-day, and have maintained the same pride in their community in spite of the overwhelming development that has taken place in later years.

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