

Chaundy: The History and Origins of an Oxfordshire Surname

Genealogical research indicates that all current bearers of the surname Chaundy (196 in the 2011 UK Census, and several more overseas, including the USA, Australia, and New Zealand) can trace their ancestry back to individuals living in the west Oxfordshire village of Ascott-under-Wychwood in the early seventeenth century.¹ The twin aims of this short note are, firstly, to present new research taking the surname and its history in Ascott back into the Middle Ages, and, secondly, to shed light on its origins and meaning (hitherto unexplained).²

EARLY BEARERS

In her article on the Chaundys Barbara Adkins traced the family back in Ascott through Bartholomew (d. 1596) to his father John (d. 1590–1).³ Both individuals have their surnames recorded as *Chawney* in contemporary documents,⁴ and further spelling variations are evident in earlier records relating to the village. John *Chawney*, recorded in a will of 1556,⁵ was presumably the John *Chaundy* named in another dated 1546.⁶ Furthermore, he was almost certainly the John *Chaundy*, constable of Ascott Earl (one of two hamlets and tithings in Ascott parish) in 1547,⁷ who as John *Chandit* in 1547 and John *Chaundett* in 1552 held a piece of land in Ascott Earl called Balls Close.⁸ He or an earlier John *Chaundit* was a free tenant in Ascott Earl in 1515.⁹

Having established that the surname originally had a final ‘-t’ which was dropped in the sixteenth century, it can be traced even earlier in Ascott and the immediate vicinity:

1483 John *Chaundyth* (deed concerning charity land in Ascott Earl).¹⁰

1478 John *Chaundit* of Ascott (deed concerning charity land in Ascott Earl).¹¹

¹ www.chaundy.tripod.co.uk (accessed Jan. 2017); B. Adkins, ‘The Chaundy Family of Ascott under Wychwood’, *Wychwoods History*, 11 (1996), pp. 41–5; P. Hanks et al. (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (2016). This note has been informed by the author’s professional experiences working for both the University of the West of England’s ‘Family Names of the United Kingdom’ research project and the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire. He is grateful for the advice of colleagues past and present, in particular Professor Richard Coates and Dr Peter McClure.

² ‘Unexplained’, in Hanks et al., *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names*.

³ Adkins, ‘Chaundy Family’, p. 43. For their wills: OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 188, f. 148 (John); TNA: PRO, PROB 11/87/468 (Bart.).

⁴ OHC, MSS Wills Oxon. 185, f. 447; 188, f. 148; J. Howard-Drake (ed.), *Oxford Church Court Depositions, 1570–4* (1993), no. 66.

⁵ OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 181, f. 68.

⁶ *Ibid.* 179, f. 217.

⁷ TNA: PRO, SC 2/197/64, m. 1. For the history of Ascott: S. Draper, ‘Ascott-under-Wychwood’, *VCH Oxon.* 19 (forthcoming): draft available at www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/oxfordshire/work-in-progress.

⁸ *Glos. Archives*, D9125/3/26, f. 35v; TNA: PRO, LR 2/189, f. 105; cf. R. Graham (ed.), *Chantry Certificates and Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ORS, 1 (1919), p. 40.

⁹ Merevale Hall (Warks.), Dugdale MSS, HT I/14.

¹⁰ OHC, AS.PE.C. I/i/2 (eighteenth-cent. copy).

¹¹ *Glos. Archives*, D9125/3/26, f. 46 and v. (1547 copy).

- 1468 John *Chaundite* (deed concerning Ascott property later purchased by Brasenose College, Oxford).¹²
 1456 John *Chandeyt* (ministers' accounts, Ascott).¹³
 1381 Walter *Chandyt* (poll tax, Shipton-under-Wychwood).¹⁴
 1327 Walter *Cheyndut* (lay subsidy, Ascott Earl).¹⁵
 1316 Walter and Bartholomew *Cheynduit* (lay subsidy, Ascott Earl).¹⁶

The 1327 and 1316 references are particularly significant, taking the link with Ascott back before the Black Death and demonstrating the family's enduring link with the small hamlet of Ascott Earl (as opposed to the neighbouring and more populous Ascott D'Oyley).

ORIGINS AND MEANING

The 1316 spelling (*Cheynduit*) strongly suggests that the Ascott name equates to the medieval surname (*de*) *Chenduit*, of Norman French origin derived from a place or region near Putanges in Orne called Chénéduit (Chênedouit), apparently a compound of French *chesne* 'oak' + *duit* 'stream, aqueduct'.¹⁷ The surname was borne by a wealthy knightly family with property in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and (from the 1230s onwards) Oxfordshire: the Oxfordshire connection came about when Ralph Chenduit (d. 1243) acquired the manor of Cuxham through his marriage to Joan, daughter and heir of Walter Foliot, sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1225.¹⁸ Cuxham, however, is some thirty miles distant from Ascott, and there is so far no known historical link between west Oxfordshire and the senior line of the Chenduit family, which can probably be traced all the way back to Ranulph, Robert of Mortain's sergeant of Berkhamsted castle (Herts.), the man who presumably brought the surname from Normandy and had up to sixteen estates across Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and Sussex in 1086.¹⁹

Instead, we must look elsewhere for a link between the Chenduits and Ascott, and one appears to be present in the cartulary of Eynsham abbey. There, a series of charters records the gift of land in Bulstake meadow outside Oxford to the abbey, originally (in 1142×7) by Roger d'Oilly in support of his son William becoming a monk. That grant was soon after (before 1178) confirmed by Roger's son Roger, and in 1178 confirmation charters were issued both by the younger Roger's daughter Helewise and also by her husband William *Cheinedut*, perhaps a junior member of the landowning family.²⁰

The significance of this is that both Rogers were successive lords of Ascott D'Oyley manor in Ascott-under-Wychwood, and both appear to have had their principal residence there in a castle, the remains of which were partially excavated in 1946–7.²¹ Presumably Helewise also spent time there, perhaps remaining in Ascott even after her marriage to

¹² Brasenose College Archives, Ascot Doyley 1.

¹³ TNA: PRO, DL 29/654/10582.

¹⁴ C.C. Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381*, Part 2 (2001), p. 333. No detailed returns survive for Ascott.

¹⁵ TNA: PRO, E 179/161/9, rot. 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* E 179/161/8, rot. 3, m. 2.

¹⁷ The author is grateful to Prof. Richard Coates for this information; cf. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People* (1999), p. 329.

¹⁸ C. Tilley, 'The Chenduits in the Fine Rolls – A Gentry Family in the Reign of Henry III' (2012), online at www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/redist/pdf/fm-11-2012.pdf (accessed Jan. 2017); *VCH Oxon.* 18, p. 163.

¹⁹ Tilley, 'Chenduits in the Fine Rolls', p. 1; Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 329; PASE Domesday website (domesday.pase.ac.uk, accessed Jan. 2017), s.v. Ranulph 10.

²⁰ H.E. Salter (ed.), *The Eynsham Cartulary*, vol. 1, OHS, 49 (1907), nos. 163–8.

²¹ Draper, 'Ascott-under-Wychwood'; E.M. Jope and R.I. Threlfall, 'The Twelfth Century Castle at Ascot Doilly, Oxfordshire: Its History and Excavation', *Antiquaries Journal*, 39 (1959), pp. 219–73, where the manorial descent on pp. 220–6 is somewhat confused with that of Ascott in Great Milton: cf. *VCH Oxon.* 7, p. 126.

William Chenduit. If this was so, the surname may have originated in the village with William and his descendants. Thus it seems possible that a surname that went extinct in Ascott with the death of Clara Chaundy in 1965 may have had a continuous existence there for almost 800 years.²²

SIMON DRAPER

²² Adkins, 'Chaundy Family', p. 44.

