

Twyford village Buckinghamshire

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT APPRAISAL / July 2011

Including HS2 high-speed rail line Impact Assessment

**Buckinghamshire
Archaeological
Society**



SURVEY:
Members of the
Buckinghamshire
Archaeological
Society and
residents of
Twyford
REPORT:
Marian Miller

Report number
BAS/2011-06



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Compiled by Marian Miller from documentary research and a field survey by residents of Twyford and members of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society as detailed below.

This is report number BAS/ 2011-06.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background to this Appraisal

On 28th February 2011 the Department of Transport launched a five-month public consultation on the Government's proposals for a national High Speed Rail network. The proposed initial high speed rail line from London to the West Midlands ("HS2") would pass close to buildings in the village of Twyford, Buckinghamshire. From information in the county's Historic Environment Record it is evident that Twyford is an ancient settlement but there has been no systematic investigation of its archaeology, origins or historical development. Since the consultation is not accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment the object of this appraisal is to establish the significance of Twyford's heritage and the likely impact of the HS2 proposals on Twyford's historic environment. This appraisal will be made publicly available to inform the public consultation.

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society ("BAS")

BAS was founded in 1847, making it one of the oldest archaeological societies in the country. It founded the County Museum, which is now operated by Buckinghamshire County Council, although the building and much of the collection are still owned by BAS. BAS operates its own library and archive (free to the public) and publishes the journal, *Records of Buckinghamshire*, and other papers relating to the County's heritage, all in accordance with rigorous academic standards. BAS is a registered charity and its officers, trustees and members are all volunteers.

Methodology

This appraisal is based on:

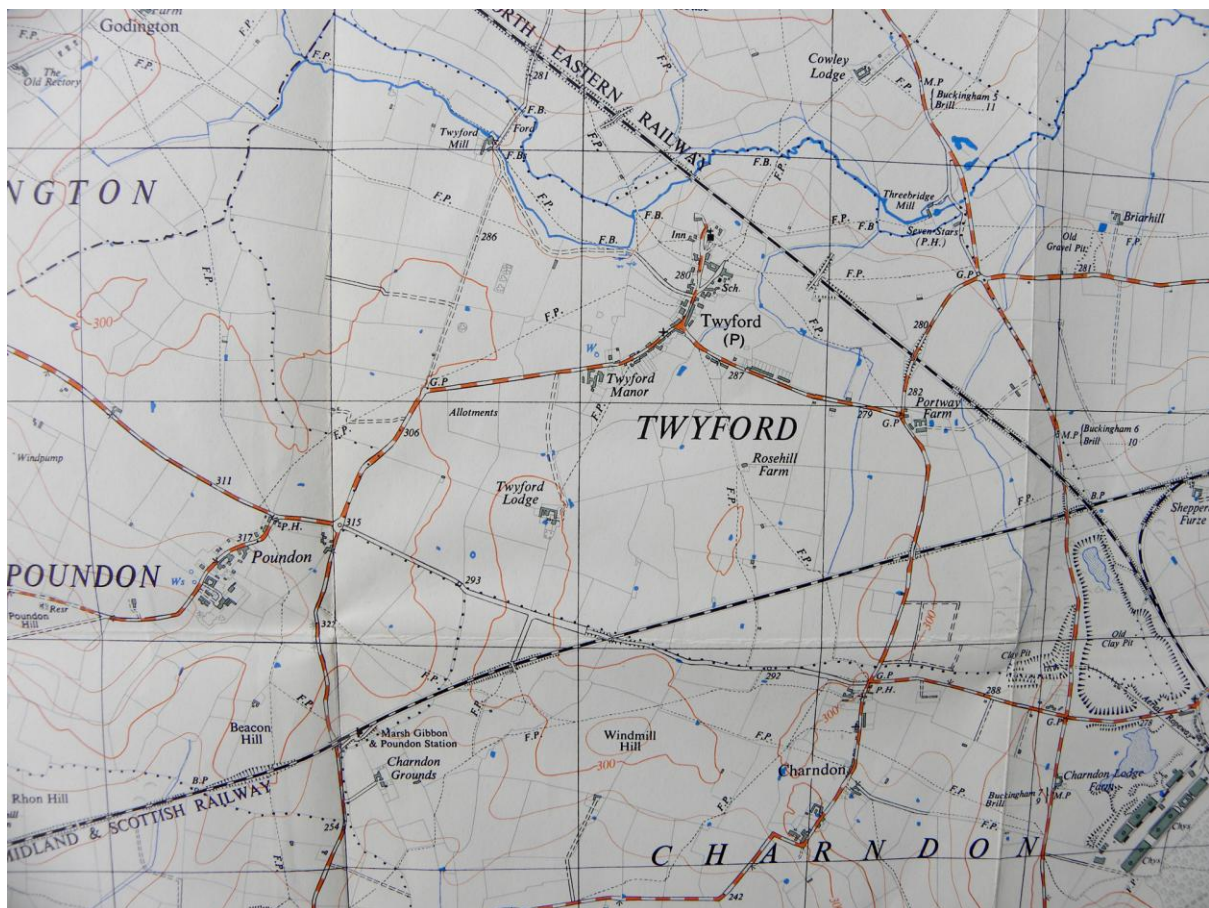
- research in the primary and secondary sources mentioned in the Sources section of this appraisal.
- a rapid survey of village buildings carried out by BAS members and residents of Twyford on Saturday, 2nd April 2011. In most cases this was an external visual survey of the frontage from the street, although some residents permitted access to their gardens allowing a view of the rear of some properties. A few building-interiors were also seen.
- anecdotal evidence from residents of Twyford.
- a visual survey of Twyford Parish Church. Documentary research has been delayed owing to temporary unavailability of the Oxford diocesan records but BAS intends to publish a report on the church at a later date.
- a visual survey of Portway Farm where access to the interior of the house and farm buildings was available. A report is attached to this Appraisal.
- a measured survey of the interior of St. Mary's House carried out by BAS members on 5th and 28th April 2011. A preliminary report is attached to this appraisal and BAS intends to publish plans and a more detailed report at a later date.
- a visual survey of earthworks carried out by Mike Farley, formerly County Archaeologist for Buckinghamshire. His report is attached to this Appraisal.

Outcome

This appraisal has been prepared on the basis of limited research so as to be available in time to inform the consultation, due to end on 29th July 2011. It does not purport to be a complete record of Twyford's historic environment. In particular some relevant documents were unavailable for research because of the temporary closure of the archives of Lincoln College, Oxford and the Oxfordshire County Record Office (which holds the records of the Oxford Diocese). Further research will be carried out in these archives as soon as practicable and the results will be made publicly available on the BAS website and deposited in Buckinghamshire's Historic Environment Record.

2. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Twyford is a parish and village in the north-west corner of Buckinghamshire with Oxfordshire on the western side of the parish boundary. The local authority is Aylesbury Vale District Council. The parish is large in area (over 4,000 acres) and includes the hamlets of Charndon and Poundon. The nearest towns are Buckingham roughly five miles to the north-east and Bicester about the same distance to the south-west. The area is essentially rural and sparsely populated; indeed the village is somewhat isolated since the roads to Twyford from west and east serve only this village and the village core is on a spur which terminates near the parish church. The lack of passing traffic is a significant factor in the present tranquil character of Twyford. In 2001 there were 213 dwellings in the parish and the population was 542 (Neighbourhood statistics website).



Part of Ordnance Survey sheet SP62 printed in 1951 (scale 1:25,000)

A tributary of the River Ouse (Padbury Brook) meanders west to east just north of the village and has presumably played a part in hampering vehicular access to and from the north. The river has created a very gently sloping valley with the village lying at 85 metres above sea-level. The ground

rises to over 100 metres at Hillesden to the north and Windmill Hill to the south. The soil is mainly clay and brick-making was a major occupation in the 20th century until the London Brick Company works at nearby Calvert closed in 1991. Mechanisation of agriculture means that farming is no longer a significant occupation and most residents must now travel to nearby towns to find work.

However the village, unlike many, could not be described as a “dormitory” since it retains a strong communal spirit, with numerous village events. It has a parish church, chapel, primary school, village hall, public house and recreation ground where the two village cricket teams and the football team regularly play. The village shop has recently been turned into a community store and there is a takeaway next door to it. The village history day on 2nd April 2011 attracted a good turn-out and residents have recently formed their own local history group.

Although there was never a railway station at Twyford the 1951 map above shows two railway lines passing through the parish; the Oxford to Cambridge line (or “Varsity Line”) to the south of the village, and the former Great Central Railway (GCR) north-east of the parish church. The Bicester to Calvert stretch of the Oxford-Cambridge line only carries freight traffic, having been closed to passenger services in 1967. The GCR north of Calvert was dismantled in 1966.

The current HS2 proposals are for the line to follow the course of the GCR past Twyford, but on a viaduct.

3. ORIGINS AND HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF TWYFORD VILLAGE

The origins of Twyford are not known but there was a settlement here in the Anglo-Saxon period. The first extant written record is in the Domesday Book of 1086. Twyford (then written as “Tueverde” or “Tuiforde”) was one of the estates of Ralph of Fuegeres (or Ralph de Fougeres): “In Lamua Hundred:

Ralph of Feugeres holds Twyford. It answers for 17 hides. Land for 18 ploughs; in lordship 6 hides. 3 ploughs there; a further 2 possible.

15 villagers with 10 smallholders have 11 ploughs; a further 2 possible.

9 slaves; meadow for 3 ploughs; woodland, 100 pigs.

Total value £10; when acquired £8; before 1066 £12.

Countess Goda held this land; there a man of Earl Harold’s had 3 hides as one manor; he could sell.”

This indicates a substantial settlement with a mixture of arable, pasture and woodland, as well as a remarkably high number of slaves. The place name means “double-ford” and refers to the double ford by which the old road from Twyford to Cowley crosses the two streams at Twyford Mill (Gelling, EPNS and Mills).

A record of a perambulation of the 12th century showed that Twyford was one of the fifty parishes in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire included within the boundaries of the Bernwood Forest. A medieval forest was not necessarily heavily wooded, but simply an area reserved for hunting by the King and subject to special forest law. Bernwood Forest was apparently an Anglo-Saxon creation recorded in the early 10th century. Edward the Confessor built a royal hunting lodge at Brill and following the Norman Conquest, Bernwood was designated as a royal hunting forest. The area of the forest changed throughout the medieval period but was at its largest in the late 12th century when it ran almost continuously from Oxford bridge to Stamford bridge. The existence of royal control in the forest was anathema to local barons and the size of Bernwood Forest gradually diminished until its forest status was finally abolished in 1632 (Bucks County Council Bernwood Forest Project website).

No archaeological investigations have taken place in Twyford but aerial photographs show how the village has shrunk since the medieval period.



Aerial photograph taken by Michael Farley on 14th January 1997 centred on grid reference SP6655 2675 looking east (ref. A25/39/6). Supplied by the Historic Environment Record.

The disused railway (and line of the proposed HS2 track) cuts diagonally across the left-hand corner. Padbury Brook, meanders across the foot of the picture.



Aerial photograph taken by Mike Farley on 10th February 1999 centred on grid ref. SP66352635 looking west (ref. 506/21). Supplied by the Historic Environment Record.

The evidence of the large medieval village can be seen in the lines which were trackways and housing platforms, and the traces of ridge and furrow left from medieval ploughing. The earthworks which are still visible in Twyford are dealt with in the separate earthworks' report.

There are several deserted or shrunken medieval villages in Aylesbury Vale. A measured survey of the earthworks and further documentary research might reveal more about Twyford's apparent decline. Whilst the 14th century Black Death is often blamed it is rarely the main cause. In the Vale the heavy clay soils proved more suitable for grazing animals, which was less labour-intensive than arable farming, and often accounted for population decline in the villages around the 16th century.

Written evidence for the history of Twyford is patchy and, perhaps not surprisingly, there is no definitive account devoted to the village. A former vicar, the Revd. Edmund Greaves, wrote notes on the history of the village evidently based on research of various original sources. A copy is kept at the Centre for Bucks Studies (CBS) with additional notes by Revd. G.R.W. Beaumont. The sources used for this appraisal are listed in the **Sources** section.

No evidence has been found of surviving manorial records, apart from one entry in the Manorial Documents Register for ministers' accounts, with other manors dated 1359-1362, at the National Archives (ref. SC6/121/6 not researched). The Victoria County History recounts the complex descent of ownership of the manor at Twyford. For a short period during the early 13th century the manor was at the disposal of the Crown but in 1246 it was granted outright to Ralf Fitz Nicholas. He, or his son, sublet the greater part of the manor, so there were then two manors in the village.

There is no evidence that Twyford ever had a market but in 1250 Ralf was granted the right to hold a fair at Twyford on the vigil, Feast and the morrow of the Assumption of Our Lady (VCH). The parish church is dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a feast day on 15th August under the old Julian (pre-1752) calendar. In his historical notes the Revd. Greaves records how Twyford Feast was held on the Sunday after 26th August (the feast day under the current Gregorian calendar) and that the older people in the village still marked the day.

The church was extended and altered around the middle of the 13th century and it is interesting to speculate how far the institution of the fair and the sale-off of part of the manor might have been fund-raising measures by Ralf Fitz Nicholas.

The Giffard family was associated with Twyford for over 250 years. John Giffard became holder of the greater part of the manor by 1290. The Rolls of the Buckinghamshire Eyre for 1296 record the continuing court battles between John Giffard and Ralph Pippard, ostensibly over the custody of the son and heir of Simon of Twyford, but essentially about land-holding in Twyford. Giffard maintained that Ralf Fitz Nicholas had given him two-thirds of Twyford and the court found that Giffard had a bailiff called John Cok, who was reeve (or manager) of his manor. Giffard, who said he was holding a manorial court at Twyford every three weeks, was the winner in these legal contests.

The two manors were reunited in the mid-15th century when they both came into the hands of Thomas Giffard. His great grandson, Thomas, died in 1550 and a transcription of his will has been prepared and will be deposited in the BAS library. His likeness is preserved on the lid of his tomb is in the south aisle of Twyford church.

His daughter Ursula was married to Sir Thomas Wenman and thus the Twyford estates passed to the Wenman family.

Image of Thomas Giffard on his tomb in Twyford parish church taken from Lipscomb's "History and antiquities of the county of Buckinghamshire" p.135. . The inscription reads:

"Here lyeth buried the Bodyes of Thomas Giffard of Twiffard in the Countye of Buck Esquyer and Marie his Wyffe Doughter of Wyllm Staveley of Bignell Esquyer, which Thomas decessyd the xxv. Day of November in the yere of our lorde Godd mcccccl. On whose Soules Thou have mercy. Amen"

The manor remained in the Wenman family until the 1860s. Richard Wenman was created the first Viscount Wenman of Tuam in 1628. According to Browne Willis the manor house, where the Giffards and Wenmans would have lived, was near the church and was in a state of decay when Lord Wenman built a new manor house "in the park". This was on the site of the present Twyford Lodge (to the south of the village and outside the study area). The Wenmans left Twyford in the early 18th century to take up residence at Thame Park (where a new house was built c.1745). The new manor house in Twyford became a farmhouse occupied by the Harper family, and was demolished in 1857.

Further investigation of the earthworks north of the parish church should yield more information about the medieval manorial complex.



The wealth of Twyford during the medieval period is apparent from the records. For 1332, 1336 and 1446 Twyford was the highest taxed place in the three hundreds of Buckingham; Hillesden was the second highest and Buckingham third. (Chibnall 'Early taxation Returns').

The Muster Certificate book for 1522 demonstrates the disparity in wealth between the lord of the manor and other residents of the village. Thomas Giffarde (sic) had personal property within his manor valued at £200 and real property worth £69 **per annum**. The next wealthiest person, in personal property, was William Carter with only £16 worth of goods and no land holding. The next wealthiest landowner (with holdings worth £33 6s 8d per annum) was Joanna Gifforde, widow, probably Thomas's mother, who had no goods in the parish and so was not resident there. Of the 58 other individuals named in the Muster Certificate only four had landholdings within the parish and of those three were resident, the other being Sir Thomas Darrell with land worth £3 per annum. This demonstrates the dominance of the Giffards and the unequal society over which they presided in Twyford.

The Rector, by then Lincoln College Oxford, held land worth £13 6s 8d probably represented by the parsonage house, now St. Mary's House.

An interesting inclusion in the list is the Fraternity of St. Rumwold of Buckingham with landholding worth 5 shillings per annum. The cult of St. Rumwold (or Rumbold), a saint said to have lived for only three days in the year 622, was quite prevalent in the area since his relics once lay in Buckingham, where there is a St. Rumbold's well. He is the patron saint of Buckingham and the church of St. Rumbold in Buckingham is now part of the University of Buckingham.

The Subsidy Roll of 1524 also shows Sir Thomas Gifford with goods worth £200.

There appear to be no surviving estate, or other early maps of Twyford. Twyford and Charndon were enclosed by private act of parliament in 1774 and the enclosure award was made in 1764. The Centre for Bucks Studies has a note that the enclosure award has not survived. From the Tithe file at the National Archives it is evident that the tithes were also extinguished as part of the enclosure so there would have been no separate Tithe map. The extract from the Enclosure Act with the Tithe file shows a dispute between Lord Viscount Wenman and Lincoln College about the tithes. Lincoln College received an allotment of land in lieu of tithes, presumably the site of Portway Farm which they owned until the 1950s.

The Jefferys map of the 1760s shows the area before the enclosure:



Extract from Jefferys Map 1760s reproduced courtesy of Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society

This map shows the large area of common at Charndon Common which reaches the eastern edge of the village; Portway Farm had yet to be built by Lincoln College on the north-east corner of that common. The village consists of one main street terminating at the church and a wider area where The Square now is, in front of the Crown. At that time there was still a windmill, as well as the water mill which still stands on the lane from Twyford to Cowley. The windmill is said to have been destroyed by a high wind in 1860 (Sheahan).

The next available map is the Bryant map from the 1820s.



Part of the Bryants Map of 1820s reproduced courtesy of Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

This map postdates the enclosure. By the 1820s Portway House had been built with a road westwards from Portway to the village. The road from Charndon to Portway was not yet in existence. Within the village the road now seems to form a loop north of Mill Lane.

There appear to be more houses in the village and the southern end of Main Street appears to be narrower.

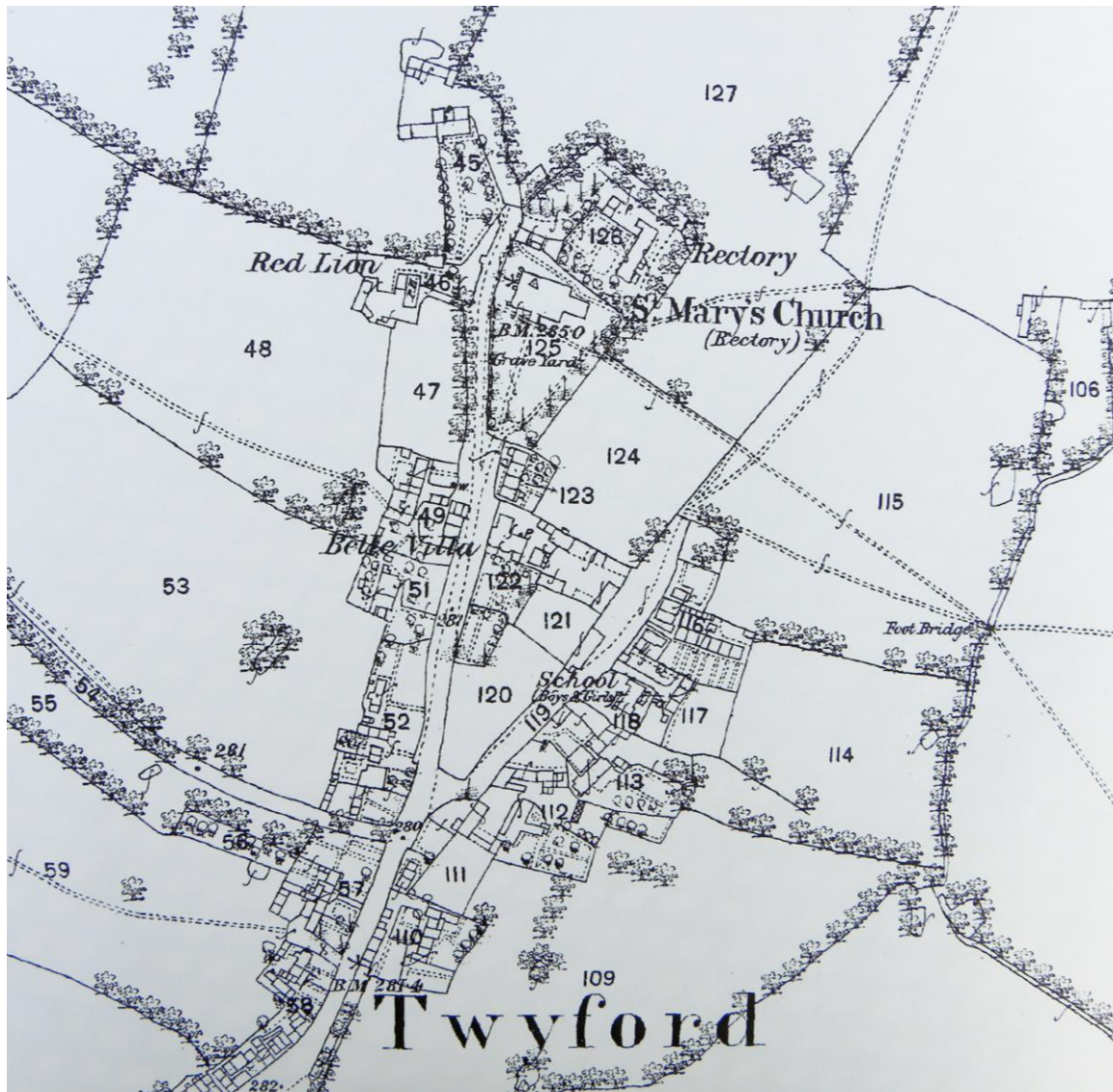
The Posse Comitatus of 1798 is a list of men under 60 years of age and gives us a snapshot of the make-up of the village community. 117 people were listed for the parish of Twyford with Poundon and Charndon; of course this was not the total population since the list did not include women, children or the elderly. Of these 21 were farmers, 33 servants and 34 labourers. There was a resident minister, one miller, one constable, two publicans, five carpenters, two bricklayers and two pig-pokers. Apart from two shoemakers there were no men with occupations associated with a town, such as shop-keepers, bakers, tailors, etc. This was essentially an agrarian community with, apparently, no resident gentry.

In the Appendix is a list of wills for Twyford people from 1551 to 1857 with their occupations. It is interesting to note how farmers, such as the Harpers, described as yeomen in the 17th century became gentlemen by the 19th century!

A study of the ten-yearly censuses from 1841 onwards would give a better idea of the make-up of the community. Population totals are available from the less detailed censuses starting in 1801.

These show a considerable increase in population from the start of the century. The population of Twyford township was only 296 in 1801 and reached a peak of 511 in 1851 (the parish population was then 848). By 1861 this had dropped to 429 and there was a further decline to 340 by 1901 (parish population 534) (source Genuki website). With the dependence on agriculture in Twyford this decline is probably attributable to the general collapse of the agricultural economy and a move away from the land to the towns. However further research might reveal if any particular factors were responsible for these changes in Twyford.

The next available maps are those of the Ordnance Survey which give a far more accurate representation of the land and buildings.

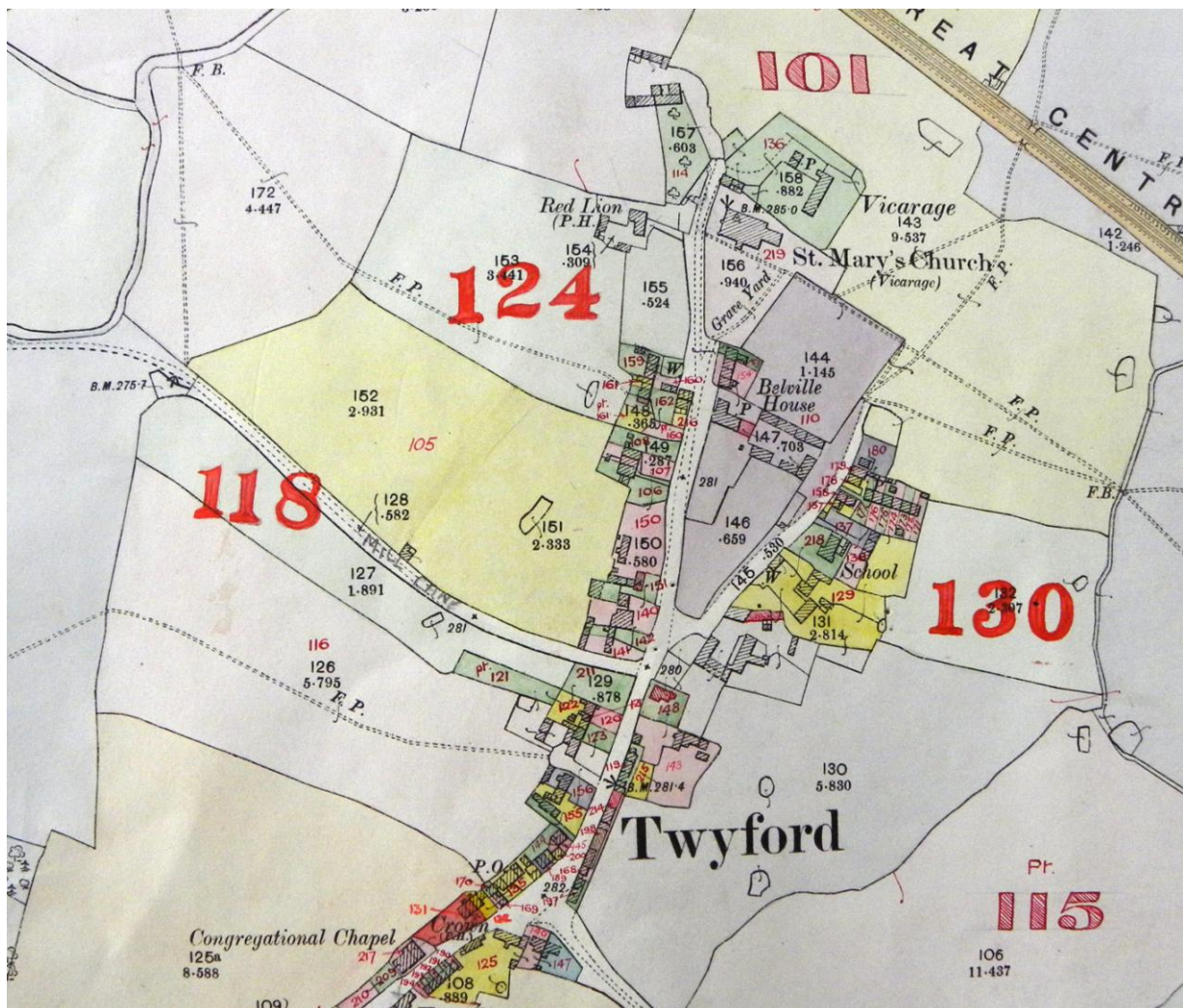


1870s Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale showing only the study area. Map supplied by the Historic Environment Record

Whilst Twyford was not well-served with roads this map does show the network of paths to and from the village core. The plan-form of the village is as today with the main street terminating at Church View Farm, north west of the church. There does not appear to be a loop-road (perhaps the Bryant map was wrong) but there is a road branching north-east off the main street, and which

served the National School, attended by about 40 boys and girls in the 1860s. The numbers refer to a reference book showing the uses of the various pieces of land (not seen for this appraisal).

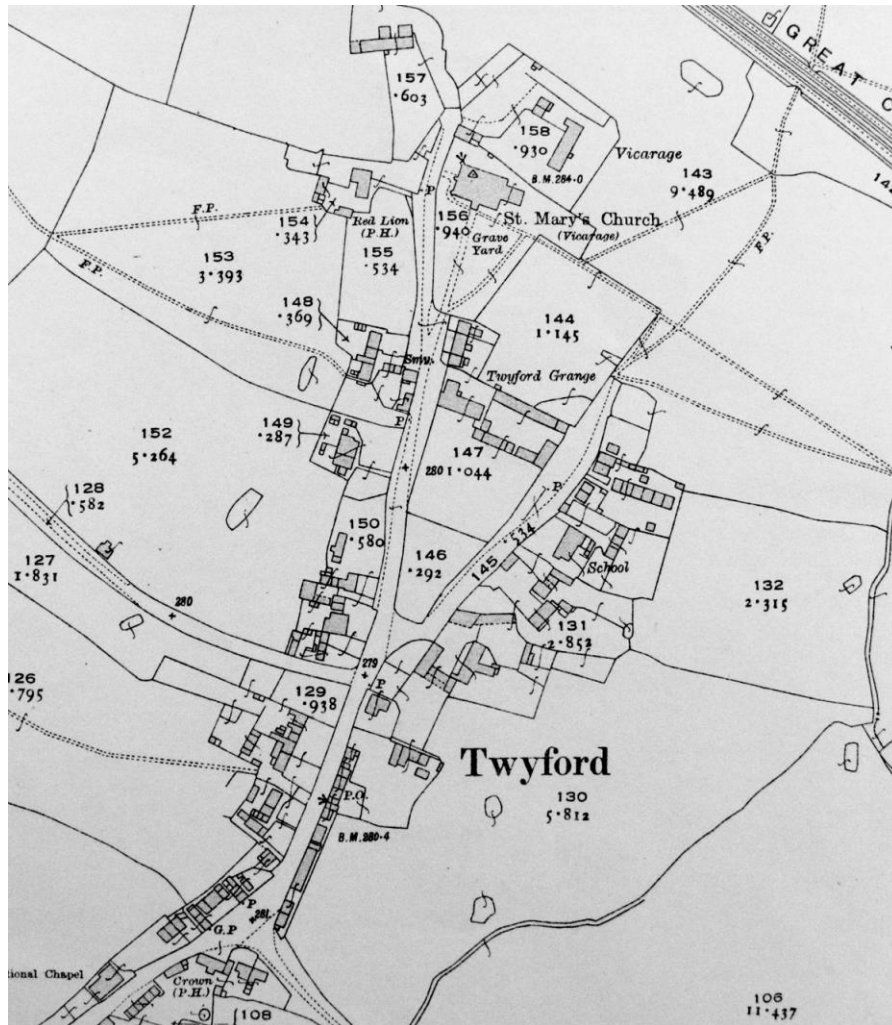
The 1910 Valuation Survey (the so-called “Lloyd George Domesday”) was a comprehensive survey of every piece of land in the country to calculate a valuation intended to form a base for a tax on later increases in value of that land. The tax never materialised but the records of the survey give an invaluable record of the ownership and occupation of properties at that time. The map below is based on the Ordnance Survey 25-inch scale maps. Every piece of land was given an assessment number – these appear in red on the map. The “Domesday Books” at the Centre for Bucks Studies give brief details – names of owners, occupiers and valuations. The surveyors who carried out the valuations created more detailed Field Books which are kept at the National Archives. These usually give a brief description of each building and often include a sketch of larger properties, such as farms, which comprised several buildings.



1910 Valuation Survey map at National Archives ref. IR126/1/169

The main change is that the map shows the Great Central Railway (GCR) passing close to the church and vicarage. The GCR company was formed in 1897 when the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway changed its name ahead of the opening of the ambitious extension of its northern lines southwards to London. The line opened to passenger traffic in 1899 and was the last main line to be built in the UK, that is before HS1. In 1923 it became part of the London and North Eastern Railway. The line always struggled to compete with the other well-established north-south

routes and became a victim of the “Beeching Axe”. The driving force behind the creation of the line was Sir Edward Watkin whose grand plan was to connect the north to the continent by rail. For this reason the line was built to continental loading gauge, with higher and wider bridges. The railway bridge survives close to Portway Farm (but the road over it is in such a poor state of repair that it has been closed to traffic).



1923 Ordnance Survey 6 inch map supplied by the Historic Environment Record

The village centre appears unchanged from the 1910 map except that Belville House has become Twyford Grange.

During the first half of the 20th century there was development along Portway Road but the village core remained almost unchanged until the 1960s. A new school was built on the west side of Main Street and land formerly part of the Grange was developed for modern housing as was the former Home Farm.

4. HERITAGE ASSETS

The “Buckinghamshire Monument List Report” supplied by the Historic Environment Record (HER) is reproduced in the Appendix.

From the BAS survey it is evident that there are significant heritage assets within the study area - Church Street, School Lane and Main Street - which are not designated. It also seems that the significance of some designated heritage assets has been underestimated; it should be borne in mind that listed building descriptions were, in the past, based on only cursory property inspections.

There are nine listed buildings in the study area, one Grade I and the others Grade II. Another Grade II listed building, the Congregational Chapel, is within the village but just south of the study area and is among the buildings not considered for this report. Twyford Mill is also listed Grade II and set apart from the village, to the west. It is not within the study area but would be within the setting of HS2 as proposed and merits further consideration.

The listed buildings descriptions are set out in full in the Appendix in a report extracted from the English Heritage online register

The designated heritage assets will be considered first, and then non designated heritage assets. , street by street.

CHURCH STREET – DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

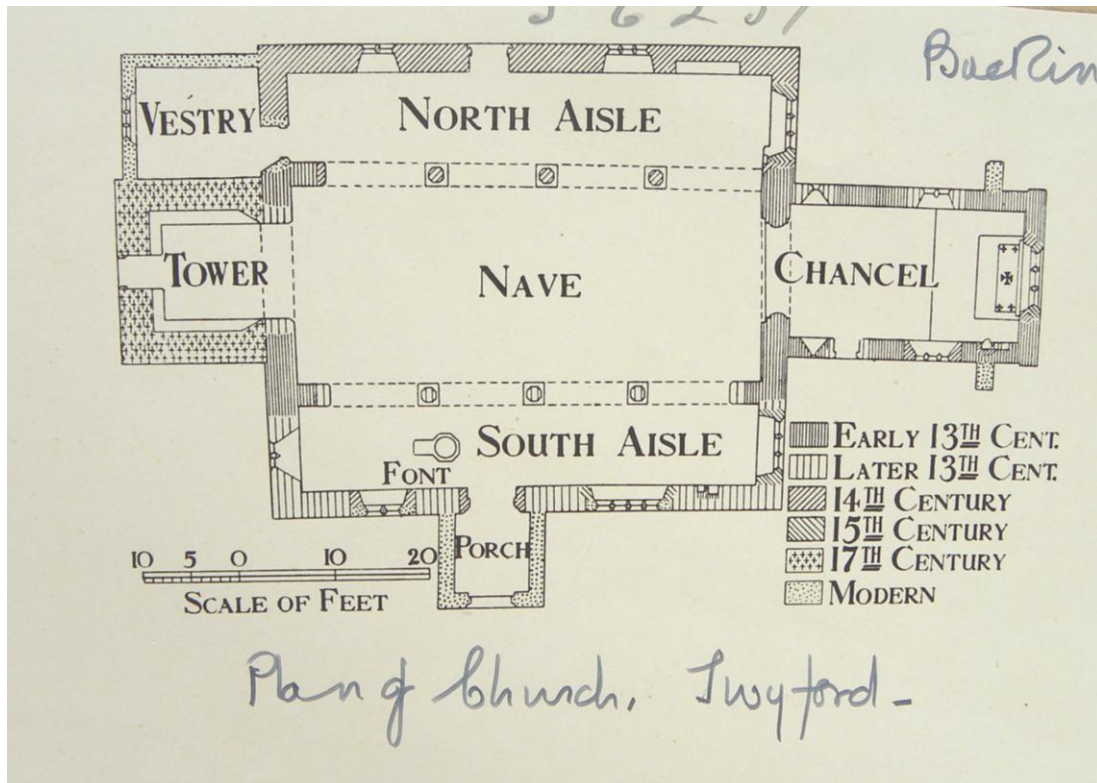
The parish church and churchyard

The significance of the parish church, dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is recognised in its Grade I listing. A cross in the churchyard is separately listed.



The churchyard showing the listed cross and the parish church.

The earliest part of the church is the splendid Norman doorway, now protected by the south porch. There were major programmes of work during later centuries and the church was sympathetically restored by John Oldrid Scott in 1887 and 1897.



Plan showing the phasing of the church from the National Monuments Record (ref. S6251)

There are some important monuments in the church, especially to the Wenman family who continued to be buried here after they had moved their principal seat to Thame Park. As previously mentioned, BAS intends to publish a more detailed report on the church in the near future.

St. Mary's House

The east front of the former vicarage, now St. Mary's House.

A separate report on St. Mary's House has been prepared and plans based on a measured survey will be published in the near future. These will be used to support an application to upgrade the listing from Grade II to II*.



The Old Red Lion

Formerly a public house from the mid-18th century, when John Clayton was the licensee, until the 1990s. The 1910 survey shows it had land of 4 acres and was then occupied by Joseph Hill, and owned by Walton Brewery of Aylesbury.

Photo by Karen Pepler



2 Claydon Place

This is the middle of a row of cottages and the only one to retain its thatched roof. At the time of the 1910 survey all were owned by Joseph Hill of the Red Lion and let to tenants.

The listing date of late 18th century appears conservative and it may well be earlier. Further inspection is required to gather more dating evidence.



Dove Cottage and Laburnum Cottage

Dove Cottage is on the left and Laburnum Cottage on the right. Both are obviously timber framed and thatched and evidently restored, since the list description describes them as a pair with render over the timber frame and a corrugated iron roof over the thatch. Surely a 17th century date seems more likely than 18th century.



In the 1910 survey they were grouped together with the brick house on the right, The Laurels, then called The Bench and owned by Margaret Holt. The 1911 directory lists a Mrs M Holt at The Firs.

CHURCH STREET – NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The field called **Lion Close** behind (to the west of) the Old Red Lion has a pond and pronounced humps and bumps. On a brief inspection there appear to be old house platforms and a hollow-way. This is monument 0674500000 in the HER list in the Appendix (see the Earthworks report).

Churchgate

Clearly much altered this building probably has historic interest since it is said to have been a school (verbal comm.) The 1910 Field Book entry has not been checked but this building appears to have been included with the church in assessment 219. It stands at the north-west corner of the churchyard next to the entrance to the former vicarage. There was a school in Twyford in the early 18th century since Euseby Cleaver was born here in 1745 to the schoolmaster, Revd. William Cleaver (1711-1783). Euseby went on to become archbishop of Dublin, and his brother, William (1742-1815) became bishop of St. Asaph (ODNB). There are memorials to Mary and Ann Cleaver in the church who died as young children in 1744 and 1748 respectively. The Jefferys map shows the name of Revd. Mr Cleaver (see page 8) but why is not clear. Presumably he was a landowner at Twyford. He was not the curate at that time since, according to the list in Lipscomb, the curate in the 1740s was Knightley Adams. The Rector was Euseby Isham, and perhaps Euseby Cleaver was named after him.



Church View Farm

The buildings were not inspected but look 19th century. There are earthworks visible in the fields (see the top aerial photo on page 5 which shows Church View Farm in the foreground). The property was assessment no. 114 in the 1910 survey when the three-bedroom house with 320 acres was let to Henry Gascoyne.

Laurel Cottage, Lavender Cottage and Grange Cottage

These buildings have an early 19th century appearance. The first edition Ordnance Survey map shows a row of 4 buildings here.

Laurel Cottage (L) and Lavender Cottage (R).

All are in different brick and evidently much altered. Grange Cottage(not pictured off to the right) is in red and grey brick. In the 1910 survey Laurel Cottage is described as a cottage and smithy let to Mrs Harriet Cross. Elizabeth and Rebecca Cross were the tenants of Lavender Cottage but the



owner was the Post Office. It was described as double fronted, with two bedrooms and of brick and thatch. Grange Cottage had just one bedroom and seems to have been occupied by someone called Batts.

Lime Tree Court

This is now a care home but its former name were the Grange, Belville House and Belle Villa. The 1910 survey shows it was a substantial house with 6 bedrooms and accommodation for servants, set in two acres, with a thatched barn, stabling and a coach-house. It was then owned by J.B. Akroyd and let to Captain Joliffe.



The building is quite dominant in the streetscene, being set at a higher level than the road, and of a larger scale than neighbouring cottages. The roof is, unusually for Twyford, covered with plain clay tiles. The chequered brickwork, scalloped bargeboards and ridge crest all contribute to the ornamental appearance of this building in contrast with the plainer, vernacular cottages. According to Revd Greaves' historical notes Christopher Perkins, son of the curate William Perkins, lived at the Grange "and suffered much from early indulgence in food and drink" and took to riding to hounds. The 1851 census shows Christopher Perkins aged 51 living in an unnamed farmhouse, and farming 130 acres and employing nine labourers.

The Forge (left) and Calgary Cottage (right)



The similarity of these two houses, and The Laurels to the south, indicates they may have been built at the same time and by the same builder. The 1910 survey for The Forge (assessment no. 216) shows it was a blacksmith's shop owned and occupied by William Hurst. Calgary Cottage was assessment no. 151 and the property was owned and occupied by Albert Tew, described as a farmer in the 1911 Kelly's directory. The survey says the 2 up – 2 down house was only six years old (the survey was done in December 1913) but there were old cottages at the back of brick with thatch and corrugated iron roofs.

1, 3 and 4 Claydon Place

Only number 2 of this row of cottages is listed, presumably because it is least altered and retains a thatched roof, which all appeared to have at the time of the 1910 valuation survey. A brief internal inspection of number 1 shows it is timber-framed. A more thorough inspection of these houses would yield further dating information. They may all be of 17th or 18th century date.

SCHOOL LANE – DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

This road was named after the National School which stood on the site of Pineda and Beckydene. There is only one listed building in School Lane, the Grade II Old Post Office.

Old Post Office

*Survey in progress at the Old Post Office.
Photo by Karen Pepler.*

This building has additional significance through its association with Flora Thompson, the author of *Lark Rise to Candleford*. Flora was, albeit unwittingly, distantly related to the Giffards and Wenmans of Twyford. Her uncle, Thomas Whiting, moved to Twyford around 1877 and Flora would come to stay in Twyford. She is said to have worked briefly at the Old Post Office in 1895 (Watts & Bloxham pp.207-214).



The 1910 survey (taken in 1914) shows the house and shop owned and occupied by Philip George Dudley, listed as a butcher in the 1911 directory. At that time the property included land now redeveloped as part of Brook Farm Close and there was an old brick and thatched barn.

SCHOOL LANE – NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Kennan

The 1910 valuation survey for the Old Post Office (assessment no. 129) included a brick and tile stable and shop with loft over all. This must be Kennan, a house which has the appearance of a former stable with evidence of a large opening on the ground floor. The walls have attractive chequer-patterned brickwork.

Photo by Karen Pepler



Chilton Place

Flora Thompson's uncle, Thomas Whiting, is listed as a shoemaker in the 1911 directory and, according to the 1910 Valuation Survey, was a tenant of one of the 2 up -2 down cottages at Chilton Place. His house also included a shoemaker's shop which had been an old one up- one down cottage. This house seems to be the sole survivor of what were probably about nine cottages , two of which faced the street, with the others at right angles behind. This is so altered that it looks like a completely modern house, but bears a date stone "Chiltons Place 1861".



It is however of some historical interest because of the association with Flora Thompson who would have visited here, and perhaps lodged with her uncle and aunt whilst working at the post office in Twyford.

MAIN STREET

There are two listed buildings in Main Street, both Grade II.

Bay Tree Cottage (listed as The Haven)

Photo by Karen Pepler

This seems to be assignment 145 in the 1910 survey described as a poor plaster and thatch one up-one-down with wash house, WC and pigstye! If so, presumably it has been extended. It was then occupied by George Tew as tenant of John Chilton.



Old Post Cottage

This complex building was the post office at the time of the 1910 survey (in January 1914) described as part brick and slate (dated 1847) and part brick and thatch. There was also a disused bakehouse, at the left hand end. Charles Hall was tenant and E. Harper the owner. The 1911 directory shows Mrs Mary Elizabeth Hall as shopkeeper and Post Office. The owner told us it was once a haberdashery shop.



Photo by Peter Marsden

MAIN STREET – NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Rosemary Cottage

Brick-faced timber framed house with stone side walls. Long-straw thatched roof and the owner informs us there is an inglenook and bread oven. In the 1910 survey this was assessment no. 156 and was described as brick and thatch two up – two down with a brick and corrugated iron barn.

Photo by Karen Pepler



Holly Cottage and Sunnyside

Holly Cottage is the thatched cottage whilst Sunnyside, on the left, is unusual in being built end-on to the road. According to the owner it was built in 1787 and was once thatched. The brickwork is attractive with red and grey bricks.



Bessemer

A pretty late 19th century detached brick and slate house set a long way back from the road. It does not appear on the first edition Ordnance Survey which shows a row of cottages set behind a row containing Old Post Cottage, but it is on the 1900 map. In the 1910 survey (assessment no. 143) it was owned and occupied by John Chilton, who seems to have owned several cottages in the village. In the 1911 directory he is listed as living at Marianne House so perhaps this was an early name for Bessemer.



Photo by Peter Marsden

5. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- The significance of some elements of the historic environment in Twyford has already been recognised by the listing of some important historic buildings.
- The research done by Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society over a short period has demonstrated that there are heritage assets in Twyford, both designated and non-designated, which merit further research to assess their true heritage significance.
- We recommend that an application be made to upgrade the listing of St. Mary's House to Grade II*. Such an application could be supported by the report on St. Mary's House and plans which will be prepared by BAS shortly following the measured survey.
- We urge the implementation of the recommendations in the Earthworks report.
- We recommend that there is sufficient special interest in Portway Farm and the brick barn there to support an application for listing.
- There is no conservation area in Twyford at present. We believe that there is sufficient special architectural, historic and archaeological interest to justify designation of a conservation area to include medieval earthworks, the church, churchyard, St. Mary's House, and much of the village core. We recommend further historical research and survey work which could inform the preparation of an appraisal to be presented to Aylesbury Vale District Council with a request for designation of a Twyford village conservation area.
- The results of any research, whether by BAS or others, should be deposited in the county's Historic Environment Record where they will be available to all. This is particularly important since the Environmental Impact Assessment – should the government decide to proceed with HS2 – will be informed by entries in the Historic Environment Record.

6. THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF HS2

The impact of HS2, as currently proposed, would be greatest on the most historically and archaeologically significant part of Twyford village, that is the site of the ancient church and medieval manorial complex.

Without precise details of the location and width of the track and nature of the structures it is not possible to assess the extent of any direct physical impact. However it seems inevitable that it would involve some destruction of medieval earthworks.

It is also assumed that the existing former Great Central Railway bridge near Portway Farm would have to be demolished, as would the old railway track-bed.

The buildings most seriously affected would be the Grade I listed church and Grade II listed St. Mary's House whose setting would be significantly damaged by the visual intrusion of the track, raised on a concrete viaduct with overhead gantries exaggerating the height of the structure.

The noise of the railway would also be a significant intrusion, especially since the village is notable for its seclusion and tranquillity. The noise would presumably also be exaggerated by the raising of the track above ground level. It is difficult to imagine how services could be conducted in the church with high-speed trains passing every few minutes.

Physical damage may be caused by vibration to buildings, particularly the timber-framed St. Mary's House.

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APPENDIX

Contents

Historic Environment Record – Buckinghamshire Monument List Report

To display records enter the Unlocking Buckinghamshires Past website (link below) – advanced search - and enter Twyford in the parish box

<https://ubp.buckscc.gov.uk/AdvancedSearch.aspx?advancedsearch=y>

Listed buildings – enter the English Heritage website to make an advanced search of the National Heritage List

<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/advancedsearch.aspx>

Use location search – enter County Buckinghamshire, District Aylesbury Vale , Parish Twyford