



Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

A talk given in All Saints Church,
Barton Stacey
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Authors: Linda Moffatt & Stuart Rippon

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Barton Stacey Parish Local History Group

We exist to preserve the archives of our parish and to do more research into its history.

We do not organise a programme of talks of general historical interest - there are other local groups who already do this superbly. Instead, we talk to local people and ex-residents and we go to original documents and research the detailed history of this parish.

All our findings are freely available on our website - and through talks like this one.

Of course, we have the inevitable Committee but we also welcome other people contributing memories, stories and research of their own.

Our web site can be found at

[*http://www.bartonstaceyhistory.co.uk/*](http://www.bartonstaceyhistory.co.uk/)

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Part 1

The lot of the farm worker.
The scene nationally and in the Dever Valley.

The agricultural protests which became known as the Swing Riots began in Kent in July 1830, peaked in November 1830 and continued sporadically into 1831 & 1832. Berkshire, Wiltshire and Hampshire were the most troubled counties, where the 23 November 1830 was the peak day of protest.

The people who took part were totally unprepared for the savage crackdown by the authorities which followed.

1830.... Our story starts From the Dever to Australia



Swing Riots

The Eleanor loading



Sydney
From Dawes
Point c 1820

The words of David Kent, one of the renowned researchers of this period in our history, set the scene:

'On 26 June 1831 the convict transport Eleanor anchored in Sydney Cove. Its unhappy human cargo consisted of 133 agricultural labourers and rural craftsmen who had been exiled for taking part in the protests which had swept across the English countryside late in the preceding year. The labouring men from Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire did not deserve their fate and it is doubtful if any convict vessel ever left England with a less criminal body of men aboard.'

Men from Barton Stacey parish, Bullington and Wherwell were on this ship. Others were transported on a similar convict ship called the *York* which deposited them in Van Diemens Land (now, of course, called Tasmania). Three men - two of them from Barton Stacey - were not transported. They were hanged at Winchester prison in 1831 and 1832. We shall first consider the events which led up to this tragic state of affairs and then concentrate on the people and events in this parish. We begin by putting the Swing Riots into some perspective on a national scale.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

William Cobbett



There were political commentators who had, during the 1820s, highlighted the plight of the farm labourer. Notable amongst these was a man called WILLIAM COBBETT.

‘William Cobbett was a farmer, an adventurer and a sharp-tongued political journalist. He was an anti-radical who became a radical. What changed him was the plight of English farm workers in the early 1800s. He cared passionately about traditional farming and rural life and when he feared that all that was under threat by rapid industrialisation he set off on a series of amazing investigative journeys - and wrote a book about it [called Rural Rides].

This film about Cobbett explains the national scene with regard to agriculture at this time and gives some insight into what led up to the Swing Riots.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1zVT_9qKxM

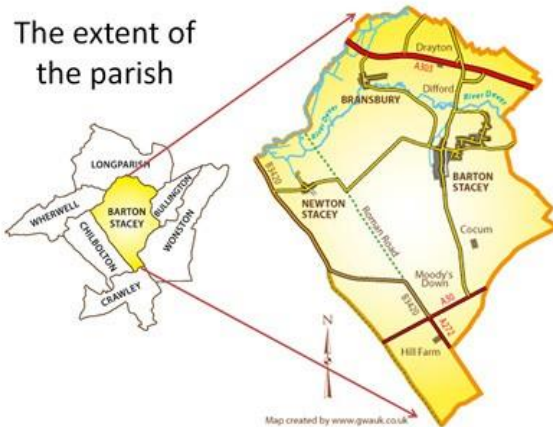
Some reasons for the discontent of farm workers should have emerged from this piece:

- the volatility that arose from the ending of the Napoleonic war,
- many landowners were moving away from feeling responsible for their workers,
- the increased wealth of farmers and the decline in the standard of living of their farm workers,
- the enclosure of farmland and the game laws which reduced farm workers’ ability to feed themselves,
- poor wages and the ending of full employment,
- the process of industrialisation - threshing was the winter job for most labourers – the machines took this over.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Before turning to Barton Stacey to discover whether this scenario plays out here, we first need to understand how the parish was organised - what the hierarchy of society was like.

The extent of the parish



Here is a modern map of our parish with its surrounding six parishes.

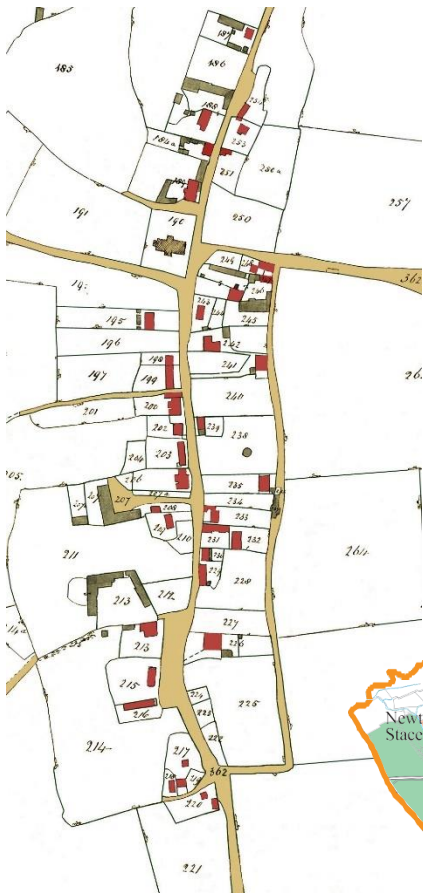
The farmland today essentially consists of four farms - Hill Farm, Cocum and the Reads land, the Middleton Estate Farms and the Govett's land in Newton Stacey, although these farms are not necessarily farmed by the owners.

The number of workers has also reduced over the years with now just a handful on each farm.



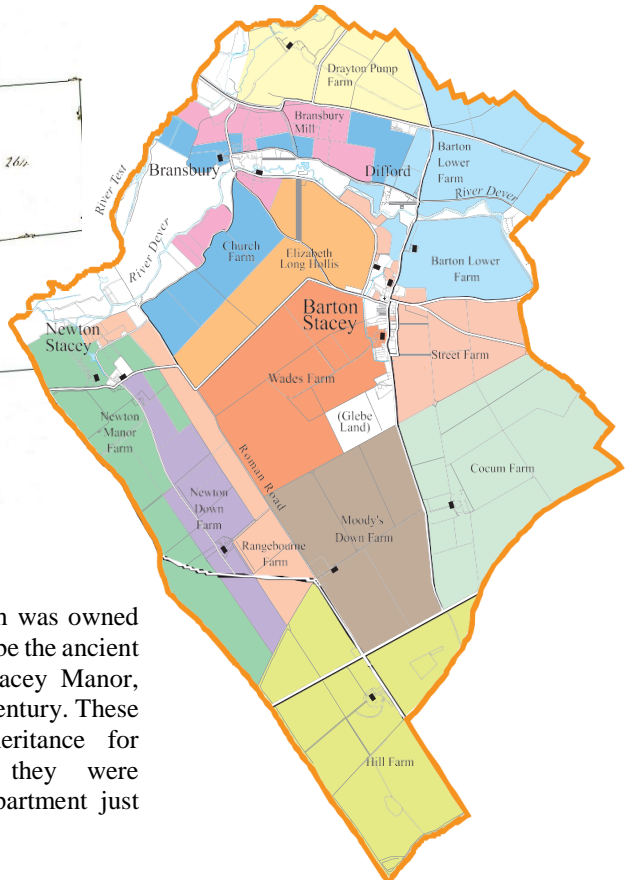
This map, drawn in 1826, is the nearest in date we can find to the Swing Riots of 1830. The village has the same linear arrangement, and the hamlets of Bransbury and Newton Stacey have scarcely increased in size at all.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots



We also have the incredibly detailed title map dated 1840 which shows each building, each field, each bit of wood and river, and each of these is given a number. For each number we are told the owner and the occupier. We have spent hours and hours going through every field - and as a result, we believe there were as many as 13 distinct farms at this time.

There were certainly ten farmsteads, occupied by the farmers - and three other farmyards and their buildings.



Much of the land in this parish was owned by the MOD. This land used to be the ancient lands belonging to Barton Stacey Manor, dating back as far as the 11th century. These lands passed down by inheritance for hundreds of years until they were requisitioned by the War Department just before World War 2.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

At the time of the Swing Riots in 1830 these lands were owned by the **WRIGHT WILSON family**. They owned

- All the land north in Drayton
 - Their own private estate and the manor house called Drayton Lodge (they were absentee landlords who lived in London and visited their country home of Drayton Lodge)
 - Drayton Pump Farm just over the A303 on the Longparish road
- Moving south towards the village
 - Lower Barton Farm [this was later Manor Farm]
 - Street Farm
 - Cocum Farm
 - Moody's Down Farm
 - Hill Farm
 - Rangebourne Farm, one of the 3 farms in Newton Stacey.

These farms were leased to yeomen farmers who occupied a house with its surrounding farm buildings. They were the managers who employed the agricultural labourers who worked the land. However, it was the landowners who owned the cottages in which the labourers lived. This, then, was the hierarchy as far as employment was concerned. The labourers were totally dependent for their homes, for their work and for the level of their wages on the farmers and landowners above them.

This is where we come to another very prominent family in our history – the **COURTNEY family**, who had a major role to play at the time of the Swing Riots. The Courtneys came to the parish probably in the 1760s, already comfortably-off yeomen and maltsters. By 1830, when the Swing Riots happened, they owned more than half the land in Newton Stacey - Newton Manor Farm and Newton Down Farm - and half the land in Bransbury- Church Farm.

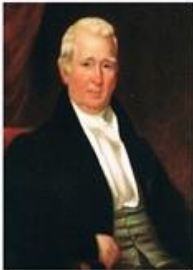
In addition, they leased and farmed four of the farms owned by the Wright Wilsons - Street Farm, Hill Farm, Moody's Down Farm and Rangebourne Farm. The Courtneys owned the labourers' cottages in Bransbury and in Newton Stacey and several at the southern end of the village.

So the Courtneys and the Wright Wilsons had this place pretty well sewn up!

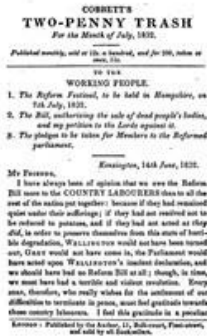
We need to mention a couple of additional pieces of land – Wade's Farm owned by the Wade family in the centre of the village and farmland owned by Elizabeth Long Hollis – that's on our list to research later.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

THE DEVER VALLEY SCENE



William Cobbett c1830



So why did the Dever valley become a “hot bed of unrest”?

By 1830 a significant portion of the working population had at least a minimal reading ability and the writings of radical journalists like Carlyle and Cobbett circulated widely. Cobbett’s Political Register, according to the Attorney General in 1831, had a ‘prodigious effect’ on working people all over the country, who clubbed together ‘in great societies’ to buy copies which were read, and read aloud, ‘in many places where the poor are in the habit of resorting’.

One such society, the significantly named ‘Radical and Musical Society’ with members in the villages of Wonston, Sutton Scotney, Bullington, Micheldever, Newton Stacey and Barton Stacey, was inextricably bound up with the disturbances in this area. The Radical and Musical Society drew together craftsmen, small farmers and labourers in the cause of radical reform. Its leader, Enos Diddams, a correspondent of Cobbett, was a shoemaker from Bullington and appears in Cobbett’s *Two-Penny Trash* his ‘newspaper for the poor’.

Its supporters of most relevance to us - and who were later transported - were two brothers from Bullington called Robert Mason and Joseph Mason. They were articulate men and regularly read the Political Register aloud to a group of twenty to thirty of their fellow villagers at Bullington.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Friday September 29th
 The Petition to the King
 TO THE
 KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble petition of the undersigned persons, belonging to the working and labouring classes of the parishes of Wonston, Barton Stacey, and Bullington, near Winchester, together assembled within their respective parishes.....

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Barton Stacey | | |
| James Diddams | William Propal | Richard Mills |
| Charles Blackman | James Wield | William Roe |
| Thomas Talmage | George Casson | Anthony Antony |
| Henry Hunt | Isaac Farmer | Edward Anthony |
| Robert Anthony | James Wheeler | David Coastman |
| Thomas Beryman | William Garger | Robert Hays |
| John Dore | Thomas Pitters | Charles Hutchener |
| Charles Stubs | Thomas Annal | James Rolf |
| James Ball | George Guyatt | Charles Davis |
| John Joyne | Robert Elliott | Henry Bugis |
| Joseph Beryman | James Ball | Daniel Diddams |
| William Renolds | James Antony | Charles Ball |
| William Mills | John Adams | William Pase |
| John Mackmaster | James Panton | John Pane |
| Nathaniel Ponton | Benjamin Caselman | George Pase |
| George Dasel | William Luck | John Guyatt |
| John Pace | Thos. Beryman, jun. | John Carter |

May God speed your petition
 Mr Thomas Alexander Mr James Prictow

A meeting of the Radical and Musical Society was held at the White Swan at Sutton Scotney. It was attended by a number of farmers, labourers and freeholders from the parishes of Barton Stacey, Bullington and Wonston (Wonston parish includes villages from Sutton Scotney to Micheldever). A petition, pointing out the distress faced by the poor of England, was drawn up and signed by 176 people.

This remarkable document from 'the working and labouring classes' described in graphic detail their state

of misery with 'not that sufficient to satisfy our hunger we have not clothes to hide the nakedness of ourselves nor fuel with which to warm us' and yet, all around them, the fields of Hampshire were rich in produce. They sought the vote, complained at the weight of taxes, and quoted the law 'money shall not be taken without their approval'.

The group each subscribed to pay Joseph Mason, a smallholder of Bullington, to walk to Brighton to the deliver it to King. He arrived but was sent away to take it to the Secretary of state of the Home Office in London. It was another 120 miles to walk to London and then home but he was rescued by Herbert Taylor who sent it to his brother in London and thence to Cobbett.

The Times dismissed these village radicals as 'Hampshire bumkins' but there is clear evidence that members of the Society directed the strategy of strikes and machine-breaking locally.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Part 2

Protest And Rough Justice

TO THE **Labouring Classes**

THE Gentlemen, Yeomen, Farmers, and others, having made known to you their intention of increasing your Wages to a satisfactory extent; and it having been resolved that Threshing Machines shall not be again used; it is advised to your good sense that it will be most beneficial to your own permanent Interests to return to your usual honest occupations, and to withdraw yourselves from practices which tend to destroy the Property from whence the very means of your additional Wages are to be supplied.

Manchester, 12th November, 1830.



Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

We now move on to the impact these events had on the men and their families in Barton Stacey. We shall be talking about places in and around the village you can all relate to today, many of which still exist although others have now disappeared in the intervening 200 years and as a result of the MOD's involvement.

Much of this information has been gathered from the newspaper reports of the time and the court cases that followed.

We have pored over maps, researched at the Hampshire Record Office, spent hours on the internet and read thousands of pages of information. Much of it as you will see has been hard to decipher. By the very nature of this topic our work has only really just begun and each stone we turn uncovers other stories which we could explore.

We shall see the riots growing across the South, hear about local men handed out summary justice and examine what happened when some of them came to court.

The Dever valley – Barton Stacey, Bullington, Sutton Scotney and Wonston (which included villages all the way to Micheldever) was a hot bed of protest but we are going to focus mainly on the Barton Stacey men.

We must thank the many people who have helped with this research, with particular thanks to Jill Chambers for the wealth of information in her book *The Hampshire Machine Breakers* and to David Kent for his *Popular Radicalism and the Swing Riots in Central Hampshire*.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

The disturbances had begun in July 1830 in north-east Kent and spread rapidly across most of southern rural England.

The labourers were seeking to persuade farmers and landowners to raise wages and preserve employment and typically, a group of men, usually from one village, travelled around the farms and hamlets in their area gathering men, demanding higher wages, destroying machinery and in some cases asking for money from the farmers and substantial houses in their locality. One of their number was usually elected as the spokesman or leader - usually called Captain. In the crackdown the law pursued these leaders relentlessly.

Protests started in Kent in July 1830 and quickly spread across Southern England



What we found most interesting when we were researching this was that these protests were based on tradition. Groups of men visited the homes of farmers and landowners to demand higher wages, or to ask for money or food, and this was an accepted and traditional method of protest by agricultural labourers.

The protests were open - usually in daylight between men who knew each other. The protestors could be easily identified.

In protesting so openly and with such boldness, the rural protesters were confident that in this form of protest at least they were behaving in the customary way to get their social superiors to recognise their grievances.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

What form did these protests take during the Swing Riots?

- They might hold Public meetings to negotiate wage increases and more generous poor law allowances.

Meetings here were at The White Swan at Sutton Scotney.

- Farmers and landowners were sent letters threatening fire or other destruction of property

These were signed by the mythical 'Captain Swing' - this is what gave these protests the name of the Swing Riots.

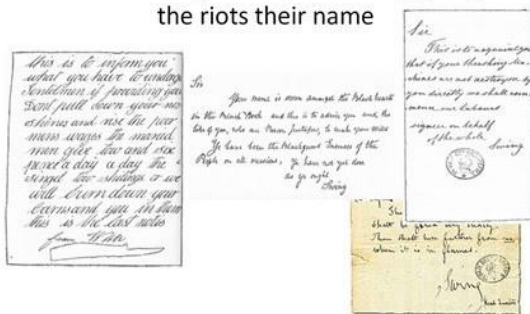
These threats were usually sufficient for farmers to agree to the labourers' demands.

- In some cases agricultural machines were destroyed - in the countryside this machine-breaking was targeted on the recently-introduced threshing machines which were seen to take away the staple winter work of threshing the harvested corn and thus the livelihood of the labourers. You can see in the map how active Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire were, accounting for more than half the incidents of machine breaking in the country.

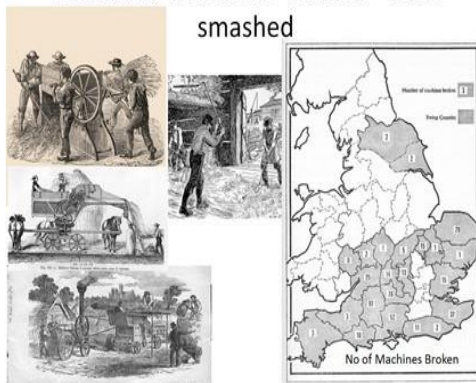
- Sometimes fires were set, destroying ricks and barns. This was seen as one of the worst crimes as it took place at night and the culprits could not be identified – but again this was a traditional if severe form of protest.

We will come back to this in a moment in terms of our own Barton Stacey men.

Letters were sent to farmers and landowners signed Captain Swing giving the riots their name



The hated machines "sheans" were smashed



Fires were set



Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Moving now to **Saturday 13th November 1830**....

At Sutton Scotney the labourers met at night to hear Joseph Mason read an unsigned letter which he and others recognised as coming from Enos Diddams.



Joseph Carter, who some years later spoke to a writer visiting Sutton Scotney, gave these recollections of its content:



Joseph Mason read a letter from Enos Diddams to the Radical and Musical Society.

'It said we was all to leave off work; and the Sutton men was to go out and stop the ploughs. They was to send home the horses for the farmers to look after themselves, and was to take the men with them. And they was to go and turn the men out of the barns. And they was all to go and break the 'sheens' as the farmers had got to do the thrashing.'

Then on **Thursday 18th November** the trouble started....

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

(This account is from the Hampshire Chronicle)

Thursday November 18th 1830



The home of the Reverend James Jolliffe, curate of Barton Stacey, was visited today by a mob. They demanded meat and drink. He told them that he could not give them much. Among the mob was Robert Mason, he said "You have more than we have, and you must give us something." A number of men in the crowd called out, "We must have five shillings." Fearing that they might cause damage either to himself or his property Mr Jolliffe handed over the money to Mason.

This was typical of other altercations in many places and money was either handed over or promises made by farmers to do something about the low wages.

When the crackdown came, people like Robert Mason were charged with robbery from the people of whom the demands were made. Robert himself and his brother Joseph were transported for seven years. Joseph Mason returned after his seven years and died in 1863 aged 64. His brother Robert stayed on in Australia.

Friday 19th November was a big day of action.

A large body of labourers from across the Dever valley gathered in Sutton Scotney in the early morning and headed off in different directions.

As the day proceeded more farms were visited and, according to newspaper reports, the younger men became more belligerent. They reached Weston by 10 o'clock where a threshing machine was broken and money handed over to Joseph Carter.

They then went to Micheldever, to Thomas Dowden's farm, where again they broke machines. And Dowden gave them money. Mr William Bingham Baring arrived with 25 men in support and addressed the mob. The young Henry Cook from Sutton Scotney lost his head and knocked Mr Baring's hat off and he fell to the ground. Cook was later tried and hanged for attempted murder.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

By noon they reached East Stratton - Sir Thomas Baring lived at Stratton House - and went to the house of Francis Callender, Sir Thomas Baring's steward. They broke several pieces of machinery and then Thomas Berriman Snr, a Barton Stacey man, threatened that they would break the windows of the house unless they were given £10. They then went to a pub at East Stratton where 'a quantity of beer was drunk and £5 handed over by Joseph Mason to pay the bill'.



In the afternoon they were returning to Sutton Scotney, intending to destroy a threshing machine belonging to Mr James Wickham but they met the Rev. Dr Newbolt, a county magistrate, on the way and told him of their demands.

They wished their wages raised to 12s a week for married men, with the price of a gallon loaf and 6d for every child above two. Dr Newbold told them that he thought this was a reasonable request and that he would put it to the farmers and overseers. He would also recommend that the single men have their wages increased to 9s a week. The men agreed to disperse and return to work the next morning.

However, at about half past ten that evening, around 20 or 30 men armed with bludgeons arrived at the home of William Courtney, a farmer and maltster at Newton Stacey. They asked for food and money. He recognised three men - Jacob Turner, James Annalls and William Smith. Annalls said "Look at the light over the hills." but Mr Courtney could not see anything. They told him they had been breaking machinery and had already been given quite a bit of money. They then demanded a sovereign and were, after some negotiation, given 15s.

They moved on to a nearby house belonging to Leonard Lywood. They demanded money from his maid. Jacob Turner called out to Mr Lywood "Come out and we will show you a light over the hills." Mr Lywood came out and asked if they intended burning property, but was assured this was not the case.

At around half past eleven a large fire was started at Barton Manor Farm (we think this was Drayton Pump farm) and 3 barns, a granary and ricks of hay and wheat were totally destroyed. Fortunately, the house and stables were saved. This was the property of Henry Wright Wilson, occupied by Mr Pierce.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots



BY THE KING.

A Proclamation.

WILLIAM, R.

WHEREAS great multitudes of lawless and disorderly persons have for some time past assembled themselves together, in a riotous and tumultuous manner, in the Counties of Wilts, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Dorset, and Berks, and for the purpose of compelling their employers to comply with certain regulations prescribed by themselves, with respect to the wages to be paid for their labour, have had recourse to violence of force and violence, and have actually committed various acts of violence in different parts of the counties above-mentioned, whereby the property of many of our good subjects has, in several instances, been wholly destroyed, and their lives and properties are still greatly endangered.

We, therefore, being duly sensible of the mischievous consequences which must inevitably ensue, as well to the peace of the Kingdom, as to the lives and properties of our subjects, have with strict and illegal pretences, if they go unpunished, and being fully resolved to cause the laws to be put in execution for the punishment of such offenders, have thought fit, by the advice of our Privy Council, to issue this Proclamation, hereby strictly commanding all Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Under Sheriffs, and all other Civil Officers, whatsoever within the said Counties of Wilts, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Dorset, and Berks, that they do use their utmost endeavours to discover, apprehend, and bring to Justice, the persons concerned in the aforesaid proceedings above-mentioned.

And as a further inducement to discover the said offenders, we do hereby promise and declare that any person or persons who shall discover and apprehend, or cause to be discovered and apprehended, the authors, abettors, or perpetrators of any of the offences above-mentioned, or that they, or any of them, may be duly convicted thereof, shall be entitled to the sum of FIFTY POUNDS for each and every person who shall be so convicted, and shall also receive one guinea per diem for the said offence, in case the person making such discovery or apprehension shall be liable to be prosecuted for the same.

And whereas certain wicked individuals have, lately, by fire, in many parts of the said counties, destroyed the corn, hay, buildings, and other property of our subjects, We do hereby promise and declare, that any person or persons who shall discover and apprehend, or cause to be discovered and apprehended, the authors of the said fire, or that they, or any of them, may be duly convicted thereof, shall be entitled to the sum of FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS for each and every person who shall be so convicted, and shall also receive one guinea per diem for the same, to wit, the actual apprehension of any of the said fire, in case the person making such discovery shall be liable to be prosecuted for the same.

And the Lords Commissioners of our Treasury are hereby required to make payment accordingly of the said rewards.

Given at our Court at St. James's, this 13th day of November, 1830, in the first

GOD SAVE THE KING.

The establishment was really worried that the revolutionary fervour on the continent would spread to England on the back of the Swing Riots.

They took action with a proclamation from the King....Whereas great multitudes of lawless and disorderly persons.....in a riotous and tumultuous manner...etc.

The Proclamation offered a pardon to anyone who gave information leading to a conviction and rewards of £50 for each but £500 if the offence was Arson.

Special commissions were also set up to be held at the assizes as the local magistrates were considered to be too lenient and examples had to be made of the men involved especially the ring leaders.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Moving to December 1831



- Cowcombe (Cocum) farm set ablaze
- Clearly there was some effort to identify the culprits

We are now moving on to an incident in 1831 when Cocum farm (spelt CowCombe then) was set ablaze. The motives of the men who set the fires is unclear – there is not the evidence of a mob at this time, rather of individuals committing arson.

Who were they

- Henry Hunt - Bricklayer aged 24
- Thomas Berriman Jnr Farm labourer aged 27
- John Dore – Ploughman aged 21
- James Whitcher – Farm labourer aged 25
- Thomas Edwards – aged 28

- Charles Blackman - apprentice carpenter
- George Burroughs



Cocum was set alight on December 11th and the details came out in the court case. However, in investigating this event at Cocum, the authorities uncovered who had set the fires in 1830 at Pierce's farm, of which more to come.

Five men were put on trial from Barton Stacey. The last two in the list – Blackman and Burroughs - were key witnesses. As

we explore the evidence we see that these men all knew each other well and were probably 'friends' – well, before the trial at least...

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

The prosecutor opens the case



The case against Henry Hunt, Thomas Berriman and James Whitcher was laid down by the prosecution. On the night of the 11th December 1831 or the morning of the 12th in the parish of Barton Stacey they did unlawfully, maliciously and feloniously set fire to a certain stack of wheat, a stack of barley, and other effects to the value of £800, the property of James Smith and two barns, stables and a cart shed the property of Sir Henry Wright Wilson (here we see the landlord and tenant farmer relationship mentioned earlier).

James Smith was called and confirmed that, after going to bed at 10 and seeing nothing unusual, he was woken by Brickman and Bastin (both shoe makers) and saw his ricks on fire.

Bastin testified that he was on his way back to Barton Stacey, returning from Downshens Band that evening. (We assume he had been to band practice). He had come from Longparish on his way home from Hurstbourne. He saw the fire, raised the alarm and let out James Smith's horses. He saw Henry Hunt at the fire.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Charles Blackman gives detailed evidence

Charles Blackman was an apprentice carpenter. These extracts from what was reported give some real Barton Stacey colour to this tale....

On the '29th of November, I was under the school room at about 6 in the evening. Hunt and Whitcher were with me. Whitcher asked Hunt to go with him to set Cowcombe-farm on fire. Whitcher had some gunpowder and tinder done up in a paper together. Hunt and I refused to go.

I saw Hunt again on the 11th of December about 10 in the morning, at his mother's. I said I was going home, and asked him to go with me- We first went to Sutton Scotney, to John Hoare's who keeps a beer- shop; we got there between 11 and 12. We drank there one-quart of beer.

We then went to my father's. We had a conversation that Cowcombe Farm was to be burnt that night. Whitcher was with us there. We left Whitcher at Hoare's and got back to Sutton about 4 o'clock and went to David Diggins, who keeps the Swan. Whitcher followed us directly afterwards. We remained there till 6 o'clock. Charles Twining was there. Hunt and Twining went out, saying they were going to Hoare's. Whitcher and I joined them in a quarter of an hour. All 3 of us left Hoare's around 8 and came on the road to Barton Stacey.

We all had lighted pipes with us. We went about half a mile, and then sat under a hedge, on account of the rain. Our pipes went out.....I went back to Hoare's for some tobacco and a light, and then joined Hunt and Whitcher again. We then went across some fields to Cowcombe farm. Hunt and Whitcher entered the rick-yard. But could not light them. We then went to Barton Stacey, to a place called Shortdrove.

Hunt and I then sat under a hedge. Whitcher said he was going to Berriman's to light his pipe, he was absent five minutes, then came back with Berriman who quickly left again. Hunt, Whitcher, and I went back to Cowcombe. Whitcher again said he could not light it with what he had, but he said he was going to Berriman's to get some striking tackle,



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We all went to Berriman's house. I heard one of them ask Berriman for the striking tackle.

Hunt and Witcher then went into the road. And I went to sleep in the wood-house, and waked in about half an hour to see a fire at Cowcombe-farm. I went there, and saw Hunt and Witcher and lots of other people. I then saw Hunt and Witcher on Wednesday, the 14th, at Fyfields's beer shop at Barton Stacey. Witcher said to me, "Mind, don't say anything about the fire".

That story paints a picture of some of the lanes in our village. We observe that they seemed to have a good capacity for drinking ale and also that they were pretty incompetent at lighting fires on a wet night ...

Under cross examination it is clear Blackman had been arrested around the 15th (we think along with others) and confessed to the governor shortly after. He did not expect to get off by confessing but apparently he did.

More witnesses for the prosecution were then called

George Webb, blacksmith, Edward Hoare, son of the beer shop owner in Sutton Scotney, Charles Blackmore Snr, Thomas Hatcher and John Barber who lodged with Witcher, all confirmed elements of the earlier story.

John Child, the carpenter with whom Blackman lodged, Jacob White who was drinking with Berriman and also Mary Purman, the landlady of Henry Hunt and his wife, all gave evidence that cemented the prosecution case.

Hunt's arrest

Hunt was arrested by John Diddams who was a tythingman (a peace officer or underconstable). Interestingly, they stopped at the Duke of Wellington on the way to Winchester gaol for a last drink and for John to write down Henry's confession. By now Hunt knew Witcher had spilled the beans and realised, as he says, "it was a done job for him".

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

James Whitcher

Finally we move to Whitcher.....the prosecutor had interviewed him on the 14th December. Whitcher went away, apparently not having said anything, only to return later to ask if the King's Proclamation was still in force. On being told that it was, Whitcher then confessed to the arson: this confession brought Hunt and Berriman to trial. Was it the reward or the chance of a pardon or was he coerced in some way, which resulted in his sending his mates to almost certain death. With Blackman confirming the story there was only one way this would go.

We do not know what pressure he may have been under - it looks like a number of them may have been rounded up on the 14th and 15th. But from an interview with Joseph Carter in 1845 we have an insight into the pressure the law was applying.

Joseph Carter interviewed in 1845

"I needn't ha' been tried at all. They came to me times and times alter I was in Winchester gaol, to get me to speak agin the two Masons. They offered to let me clear, if I could only tell what I knowed agin them. Had I told what I knowed, they'd ha been hung, as sure as Barrouman, and Cooke, and Cooper, was hung. I was took out with the other prisoners to see they hung. They tried to frighten us by it to tell all we knowed on one another. But I wouldn't split. So the Masons was only transported, and they transported me, too."

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Hunt and Whitcher were found guilty of the arson at Cowcombe – Berriman was acquitted as there was insufficient evidence against him. However, any joy was short-lived as he was put straight back into the dock along with John Dore and charged with the arson that had taken place at Pierce's farm more than a year before, on 19th November 1830.

George Burroughs (noted as an accomplice in the records) gave damning evidence against them and against himself for that fire almost a year earlier He said...“I agreed to accompany them to Pierce's farm to set it on fire. Thomas Berriman took the tinder box from his pocket and struck a light, John Dore brought some straw we saw it burn then ran away together.”

The prosecutor said that this case only came to light when researching the previous case. We can only speculate that Burroughs and others were pressured into confessing and sending his friends to the noose. Berriman and Dore were both found Guilty. Burroughs was not even tried.

Hunt was then brought back to the dock again with Thomas Edwards for the crime of burning a cart shed and outhouse, again at Pierce's farm. No evidence was brought against Hunt as he had already been convicted of arson. Edwards was acquitted.

Sentencing



The judges donned red robes and the black cap was put on Mr Justice Gaselee's head. The judge stated they had been convicted of one of the most serious crimes and justice demanded they suffer an ignominious death – Hunt, Berriman, Dore and Whitcher were all sentenced to hang.

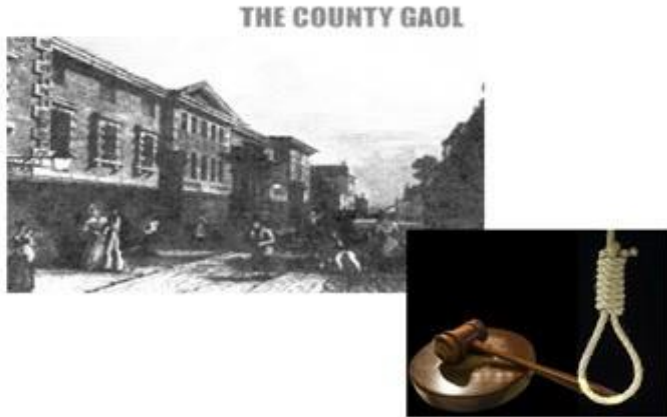
Whitcher pleaded with the court that he had been told the King's Proclamation held – so we can assume he expected pardon and a reward. The judge did not grant this and instead transported him for life. John Dore's sentence of death was also commuted to transportation for life.

However, Hunt's and Berriman's sentences stood.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18SWVDFoQ28> in particular the 2nd minute of this 9 minute clip.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

The executions



Hunt and Berriman were both executed at Winchester gaol on 17th March 1832. Their bodies were returned to their families and buried in Barton Stacey the following day. They do not appear in the cemetery records so we assume they have unmarked graves.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

John Dore and James Whitcher were sent to the prison hulk *Leviathan* in Portsmouth and on the 6th August they were transferred to the prison ship *York* and set sail on 1st September 1832 for Van Diemens Land (now Tasmania). They arrived on the 9th December in Hobart and - stayed on board the ship until processed. Documentary records are meticulous and detailed, to the extent that identikit drawings have been made of some men from the detailed description of them.

Transportation



Convict Ship York

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

John Dore's records say..... He was

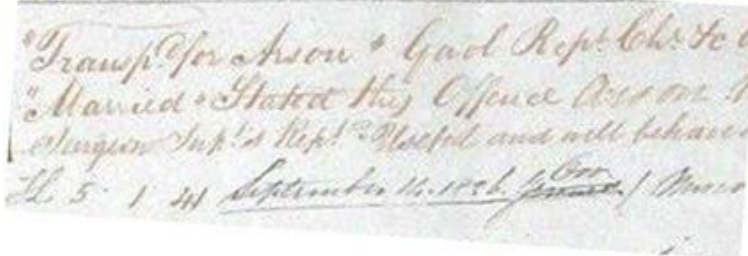
- 5ft 7 ½ ins
- Stout and with dark brown hair
- Dark complexion
- Oval face with high retreating forehead
- Hazel eyes
- Sharp nose with broad nostrils
- Small mouth and chin



Using an internet identikit package, this is how he might have looked.

John Dore had a good prison record. These records are preserved in the wonderful archives in Tasmania.

John Dore's prison record



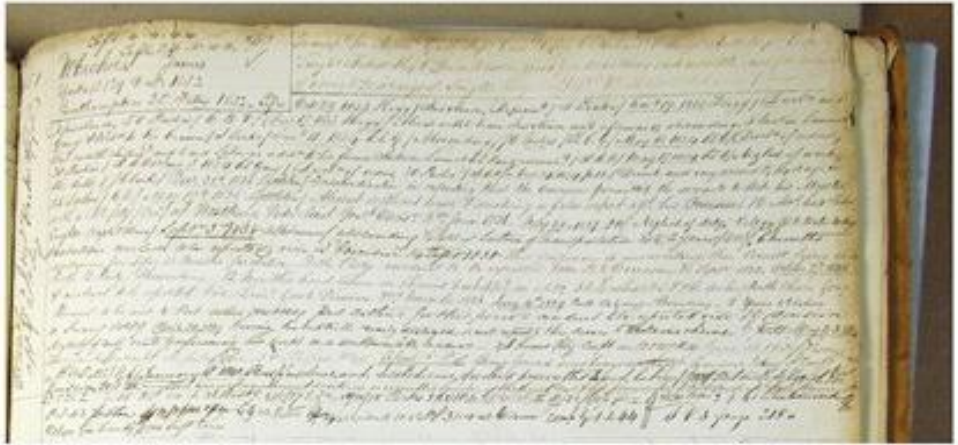
They show that he had been married (the marriage took place in December 1831 in Barton Stacey, just before his trial). He was 'useful and well-behaved' apart from one count of misconduct in a pub in Tasmania, for which he did 24 hours hard labour. He married again in 1841 – it was the assumption of transportees were automatically released from their marital obligations in Britain, although he did apply for his wife to come out, citing Rev. Jolliffe and James Smith as references. Amelia did not come.

He was pardoned in March 1845 and later moved with his growing family to what is now Melbourne. John Dore had a son John who had 16 children and 41 grandchildren - now there are more than 100 of his descendants spread across the continent, some of whom have made contact with the Barton Stacey history group.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

James Whitcher's is a different story. He had turned King's Evidence but was still transported.

Whitcher's prison record



We have prepared a transcription of this record below. His records show so many offences that they had to write his pardon in the margin. We count 240 lashes. A couple of records are particularly interesting. On 11 Jan 1839 and 30 April 1839 'having his bed tick nearly destroyed and not reporting the same' (his bed tick was his straw mattress). Should we speculate that he was being goaded into trouble? It was Whitcher's testimony that caused Hunt and Berriman to hang and Dore to be transported. He sailed with Dore and there were other Dever men already in Van Diemens Land. They would have known of his role - did the Dever men set him up?

He left Tasmania for South Australia as soon as he was pardoned. We have not yet looked into what happened to him then.

Convict stain - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uoc8tX_7fCg

Link to Tasmania convict records -

<https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Convict-life.aspx>

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots



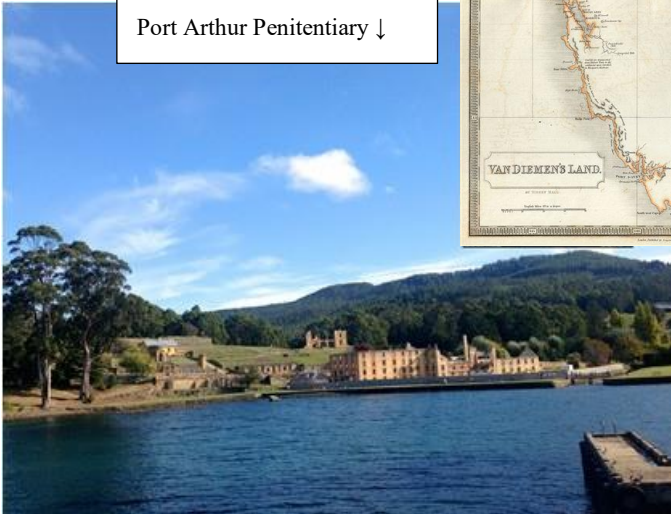
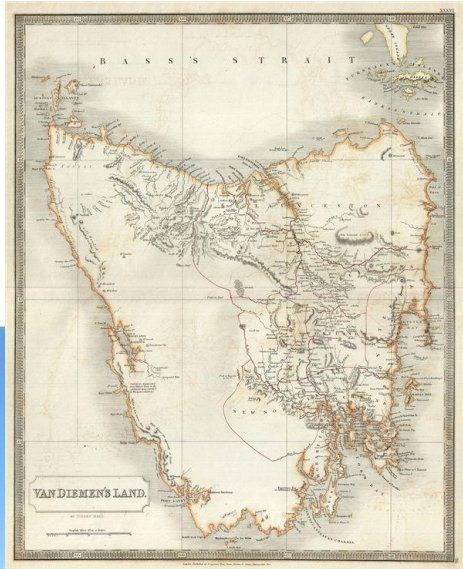
- 29th October 1833 Hogg/Insolence - reprimanded.
- 19 Nov 1833 Hogg/Disobedience and insolence - **50 lashes**.
- 17 Dec 1833 Hogg/Absent without leave, insolence and afterwards absconding - 6 months in Laun.... Gang and returned to the crown.
- 11 Jan 1834 Chain Gang/Absconding - **75 lashes**.
- 13 May 1834 Chain Gang/Disobedience of orders - 1 month imprisonment and hard labour in addition to his former sentence Launceston Chain Gang recommended.
- 17 May 1834 Chain gang neglect of work - **20 lashes**
- 5 June 1834 Chain gang/Disobedience of orders - **20 lashes**.
- 24 Nov 1834 PW/Drunk and very disorderly - 14 days in the cells.
- 28 Dec 1835 Littleton/insubordination in reporting that the overseer permitted the servants to rob his master - 25 lashes
- 17 May 1836 Littleton/Absent without leave and making a false report against his overseer –
- 12 months hard labour with a Road party at Westbury Vide lieut Gov decision,
- 2 June 1836 - 22 Feb 1837 PW/Neglect of duty - cell on bread and water for 4 days and nights.,
- 3 Sept 1838 Ashb/Absconding - existing sentence of transportation extended 2 years. 6 months' probation conduct to be reported vide Lieut Gov decision
- 14 Sept 1838. This sentence is unavailing the Convict being under sentence for life. 12 months' probation Perth Party conduct to be reported vide L G decision
- 21 Sept 1838 - 27 Oct 1838 Perth Party/Absconding 12 months hard labour in chains and whipped in addition **50 lashes**, Path Chain Gang and conduct to be reported vide Lieut Gov decision
- 2 November 1838 - 4 January 1839 Perth Chain Gang/Absconding - 2 years hard labour. Recommended to be sent to Port Arthur.
- Port Arthur for this period conduct to be reported vide Lieut Gov decision
- 11 Jan 1839 - April 30 1839 having his bed tick nearly destroyed and not reporting the same - 6 weeks in chains.
- 23 May 1839/Neglect of duty and not performing his work in a workman like manner - 48 hours solitary confinement on bread and water
- 18 April 1840/ Being found smoking contrary to rules - 3 days solitary confinement on bread and water.
- 18 Jan 1842 Ross/Insolence and disobedience of orders - 6 months hard labour.
- PARDON: Recommended for a Conditional Pardon - June 1846 approved 5th October 1847.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

In Tasmania convicts were assigned to farmers who were obliged to clothe them with new clothes twice a year, house them and feed them, with again a rich diet being the norm including plenty of meat, fruit and veg – far better than the diet at home (which some of the letters home demonstrate).

Tasmania 1835 →

Port Arthur Penitentiary ↓



Research in Tasmania has shown that children of these convicts were significantly taller than those of similar families back in Britain, thanks to the healthy diet and beneficial environment.

The severe impact of the Swing Riots

By the time the crackdown had finished...

There had been 1,976 trials in total. Of the men tried, sentencing was as follows:

- Sentenced to death 252
- Commuted to transportation for life 233
- Executed 19 (of which 3 were Dever men)
- Transported 505
- Imprisoned 644
- Fined 7
- Whipped 1
- Acquitted/ bound over 80

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Families were torn apart, in many cases the bread winner was imprisoned or transported and in rural communities there was little their families could do but fall back on the parish. Many had to resort to poaching to feed the family and ended up being transported as well, exacerbating the situation.

However, surprisingly, well-behaved prisoners did better - life was harsh but even on the hulks they got 14oz of meat four times a week, while at home their families were on bread and water.

It was harsh hard justice designed to shock the labouring classes into submission and Barton Stacey and the Dever valley felt the impact more than most. We may feel sympathy for the working men and women, but these historic events are lent an added poignancy by the living relatives, amongst whom we have here Jill McHenry (née Annell). James Annells was Jill's great great grand uncle. George and Charles Batt were Jill's great, great, great grand uncles and their brother James Batt's daughter was married to James Annell's brother William. Another descendant of the Batt family in Australia is Colleen Arulappu who has published the book *I Wood Send You My Hart if I Could* based on family letters to and from Barton Stacey, a copy of which she kindly donated to the people of the parish. And of course there is the Dore family in Australia, mentioned earlier.

The following Barton Stacey men were charged for their part in the Swing Riots of 1830.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Henry Cook (Wonston) | Executed (Buried Micheldever) |
| Thos Berriman Jnr (25) | Executed (Buried Barton Stacey) |
| Henry Hunt | Executed (Buried Barton Stacey) |
| James Annell | Transported 'Eleanor' |
| Jacob Turner | Transported 'Eleanor' |
| John Dore | Transported 'York' |
| James Whitcher | Transported 'York' |
| Charles Batt | Acquitted |
| George Batt | Acquitted |
| Thomas Batt Jnr | Acquitted |
| Thomas Webb | Acquitted |
| Thomas Edwards | Acquitted |
| Thos Berriman Snr | Not transported (on hulk 'York', transferred to 'Hardy', free pardon granted 14 Mar 1833) |
| William Smith | Death ordered, but commuted to transportation, and ultimately not transported |

James Batt (1802 – 1877) was transported in 1838 to Tasmania for stealing.
James Batt's sons, Charles (b. 1827) and William (b 1828) were transported in 1848 to Tasmania for stealing.

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

The Radical and Musical Society was severely disrupted by the persecutions after the disturbances, but popular radicalism could not be silenced. Within a year the Winchester National Union was sending delegates into the surrounding villages to remind labourers of their 'political rights' and urging them to 'exert themselves' and 'unite together'. In the villages of Wonston, Sutton Scotney and Barton Stacey, the political union attracted the support of 'one half of the Labourers upwards'. The Mason brothers and others who had shown leadership during the protests had done their work well, so well in fact that, like other known radicals and trouble-makers, they were singled out for punishment.

The Swing Riots were a forerunner of much more activity, including the rapid growth of trade unions. In 1834, farm workers in west Dorset formed a trade union. Unions were lawful and growing fast but six leaders of the union were arrested and sentenced to seven years' transportation for taking an oath of secrecy. A massive protest swept across the country. Thousands of people marched through London and many more organised petitions and protest meetings to demand their freedom.

The Legacy – things did change slowly

| | |
|------|---|
| 1833 | Factory Act passed prohibiting children aged less than nine from work in factories, and reducing the working hours of women and older children. |
| 1834 | Poor Law Act is passed, creating workhouses for the poor. |
| 1834 | The Tolpuddle Martyrs are transported to Australia for attempting to form a trade union. |
| 1837 | Victoria succeeds her uncle, William IV |
| 1838 | Publication of People's Charter. Start of Chartism. |
| 1846 | Repeal of the Corn Laws |
| 1848 | Major Chartist demonstration in London. |
| 1871 | Trade Unions are legalized |

The protest campaign proved successful and the Tolpuddle Martyrs returned home in triumph. The Tolpuddle story is about how ordinary working people combined together to defend their families.

You can find more about the History Group and our research on our web site.

<http://www.bartonstaceyhistory.co.uk/>

Barton Stacey and the Swing Riots

Tasmanian Prisoners in Irons

