

15 February 2021

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Dear All,

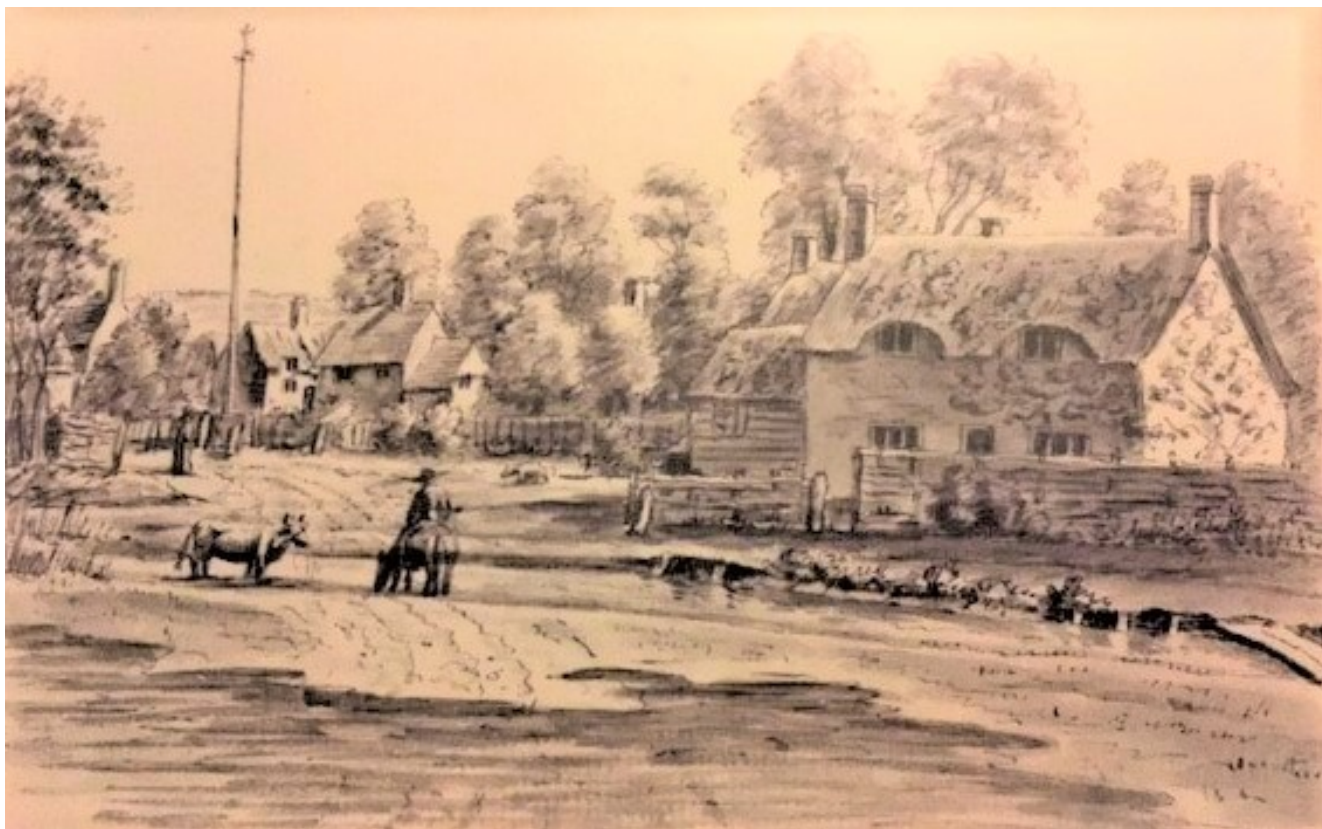
I wonder if any of you watched Country File on Sunday evening? I was struck with a remark that cattle were needed to crop the grass short in a field, or wild flowers would be smothered and die.

This reminded me of two pictures of Cheriton village green (see attachment).

The first is a sketch drawn in the 1780s from the Old Rectory gate and looking towards Old Rose Cottage, with Lime Tree Cottage just peeping out behind it and what could be Brookside to the left. Apart from an exaggerated maypole, it is fairly recognizable with a plank across the stream (far right) where now there is a bridge. Animals are grazing the village green but it is possible that the grass would have been cut short with scythes in July/August to get a crop of hay before animals were let on to graze. I well remember men cutting meadows with scythes in the 1940s. The scythes were constantly sharpened and could cut the grass cleanly and to within two inches of the ground.

The second is a postcard of the 1920s showing two haycocks (little haystacks) on the village green. Chris Joyce says that his grandfather would use a scythe to cut grass and a note on the back of the card states that his grandfather made the hay and fed it to his dairy cows. Note the forge to the right of the green and, in the foreground, the track where carters would take their horses down to the river to drink and in hot weather (when the metal cart tyres would expand and rattle against the wooden cartwheels) the cold water would shrink the tyres back again.

Best wishes,
Edward



Cheriton Village Green in 1787



Cheriton Village Green in the 1920s