

Church Farm House (formerly Moat Farm) Brize Norton, Oxfordshire

Church Farm House is situated between St Britius Church and the Vicarage. St Britius church dates from 1086. The current vicarage was rebuilt in 1878.



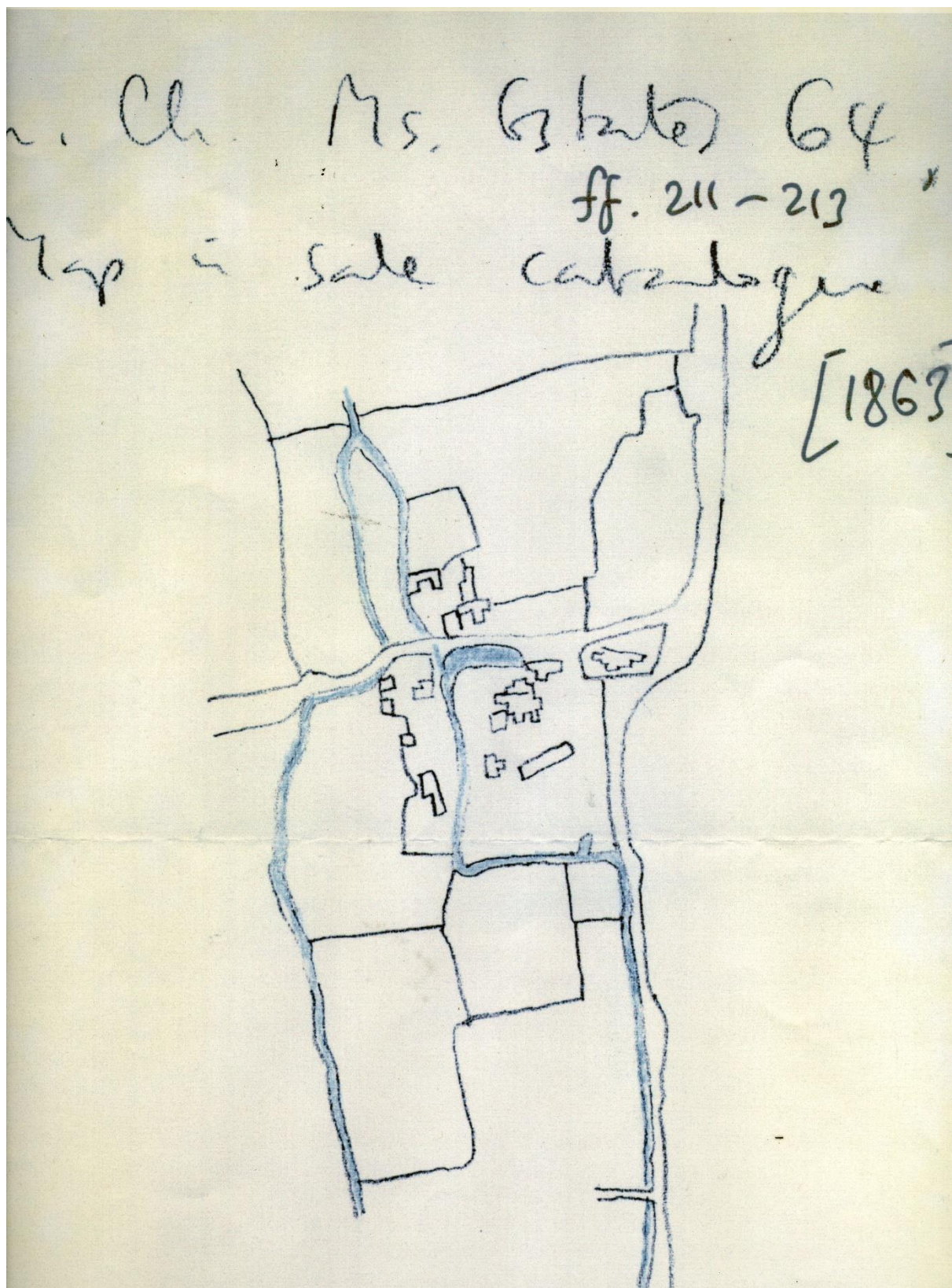
The [Victoria County History - Oxfordshire - A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 15, Bampton Hundred \(Part Three\)](#), Brize Norton provides a history of Brize Norton in an Introduction.

"The manorial centre was established at the settlement's north end possibly soon after the Norman Conquest, when Roger d'Ivri took over lands previously held by 14 thegns. (fn. 104) Its location, on the site of Church Farm, lay near the brook that flowed along the west side of the gravel. (fn. 105) A church and parsonage were also established, respectively east and west of the manorial centre, possibly by 1074. (fn. 106) From the late 12th or early 13th century there was probably a second manorial centre: it may have occupied the site of Brize Norton Manor House, north of the gravel patch, though the existing house is 16th-century and later, and no earlier evidence is known. (fn. 107) In the 12th century a monastic grange was established, (fn. 108) probably on the site of Grange Farm, north-west of the village on the north side of the Burford road. Its lands were distributed widely in the open fields, (fn. 109) of which the medieval village had two, one on each side of the Burford—Bampton road; villagers also used downland below the parish's north-western boundary, and a cow pasture to the south, near Marsh Haddon. (fn. 110) The parish's brooks appear to have been too weak to drive a watermill, and villagers presumably used Worsham or Asthall mill."

and goes into more detail in chapters on manorial and religious buildings.

"*Manorial Site* A reference in the early 13th century to a fishpond belonging to Matilda Hareng (senior heiress and successor of Walkelin Hareng) near the parson's *curia* suggests that the principal manorial *curia* was probably situated between the church and parsonage (later vicarage). (fn. 69) In 1228 Stephen of Fritwell possessed a pond, (fn. 70) which suggests that in the rearrangement of manorial assets after Matilda's death the *curia* was allocated to the Fritwells' manor. (The site still contained a pond in 1863, but it was removed by 1880.) (fn. 71) In 1308 the Fritwell manor included a chief house worth 6s. 8d. (fn. 72) Richard Fritwell was probably resident in 1306, Ralph in 1316 and 1327, (fn. 73) and Thomas in 1388. (fn. 74) In 1423 the manorial centre included a hall with two rooms, and a barn, stable, and sheephous; it was reportedly valueless after maintenance. (fn. 75) In the mid 16th century the site, together with houses and buildings, was held on lease with the manor's demesne lands, (fn. 76) and was presumably the centre of the farm run by Thomas Greenwood in 1620. (fn. 77) It apparently became a subsidiary farmstead on the manor in the late 17th or 18th century, when the lord of the now-combined manor lived at the house associated with Rathbones manor. (fn. 78) "

The author of the Victorian History kindly provided a copy of a map (fn. 71 above) in a Christ Church Sales Catalogue date 1863 showing the site of the fishpond. Church Farm House is situated adjacent and was built on the original manorial site. The stream serving the fishpond ran between the vicarage and the house and then flowed down the side of Station Road. At this time Church Farm House was known as Moat Farm, hence the name given to Moat Close. Below is a picture of threshing at Moat Farm from the early 19th Century.



The Victorian History has several references to Church Farm House dating from the 17th Century.

"Brize Norton's earliest, largest, and most sophisticated houses, the Manor House and Grange Farm, were built in the 16th century. During the first half of the 17th century they were improved in similar ways, most obviously by the addition of stair towers to serve new rooms in their attic storeys. Otherwise 16th- or early 17th-century work incorporated into the important houses seems to be confined to the core of Rookery House; the one and a half-storeyed west part of **Church Farm House**; and the north-west part of Astrop Farm. [\(fn. 161\)](#) "

“Several smaller houses were built throughout the village in the first half of the 18th century and the larger, older houses were significantly improved. About 1700 a west range was added or rebuilt to create an L-plan at **Church Farm House**, and Rookery House was developed into a two-storeyed, four-bayed house. From the midcentury houses were rebuilt or remodelled on a slightly grander scale, mostly with four or five bays, two full storeys of vertical proportions, and attics lit by dormers. At Astrop Farm the old house became the service wing (with north dairy) of an L-plan house when a five-bayed south range was added, together with a detached outbuilding for brewing and baking. Only the 16th- or 17th-century dovecote and 17th-century barn at Grange Farm seem to predate 1700, but several groups were built during the 18th century including those at Grange Farm and at **Church Farm House**.”

“After inclosure in 1776 several farms, including Manor farm, were provided with new buildings and some houses were gentrified. At Grove Farm, a five-bay barn was built in the late 18th century and was extended, probably c. 1815, by three bays and a stable and granary; at about that time a two-bayed, two-storeyed house was built at the south-west corner of a very large farmyard. (fn. 162) The south front of Astrop Farm was given 16-pane sashes and cement render, Rookery House was refronted and a rear extension was built, and Marsh Haddon Farm (demolished) also seems to have been enlarged round an older core. A new farmstead was built when Kilkenny farm was created c. 1817, complete with a solid twostoreyed house of four bays and three main rooms served by a central and a west stack, and a barn, wagon house, and implement shed. (fn. 163) The house, which may have been built round an 18th-century core, was extended by an east bay soon afterwards. Later in the 19th century or in the early 20th it was divided into two cottages, each with a porch, staircase, rear extension, and new casements. Probably after 1870 **Church Farm House** was extended, mainly by a gabled south bay, and given a Victorian veneer with red clay tiles, a gabled porch, and dormers; one or two other houses in the village were given a similar treatment. Though buildings were added to the Manor farmyard, and at Grove Farm a coach house, cart shed, and long cattle shelter were built, Glebe (later Foxbury) Farm of 1879 was the only brand-new farmstead. (fn. 164) ”

“In 2003 the area between the church and (former) vicarage house contained two barns converted for domestic use, and **Church Farm House**. The core of the latter consists of two units of one and a half storeys, set at right angles to each other with significantly different floor levels: they date from the earlier 17th century and appear to represent a fragment of a larger building. A two-storeyed east range was added c. 1700, possibly replacing earlier work. It was built with two end stacks and has a timber partition, probably north of its original position, dividing two ground-floor rooms. The two barns were probably built at the same period as the east range; the initials and date 'LW 1739' have been scratched inside the south one.”

An aerial view of Church Farm House taken in 1964 shows the buildings at that time.



