

A LITTLE HISTORY OF  
CHERINGTON AND  
STOURTON

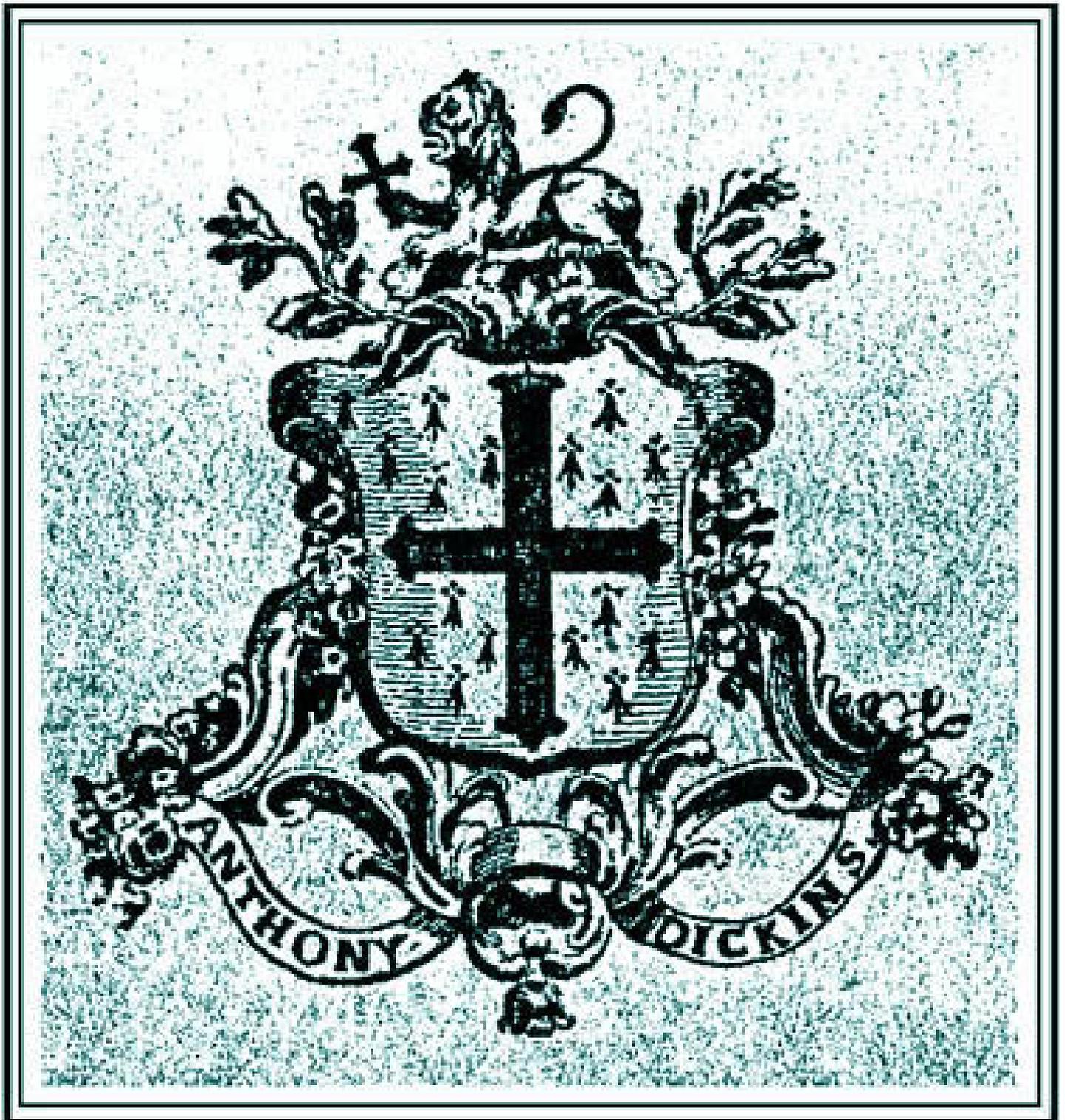
WARWICKSHIRE



BY

MARGARET DICKINS

Price 3s. 6d.



The Bookplate of Anthony Dickins, born at Cherington in 1734

Title page of First Edition

# A Little History of Cherington and Stourton Warwickshire

BY  
MARGARET DICKINS

Author of "A History of Hook Norton" and  
"A Thousand Years in Tardebigge"

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"From one generation to another" – Psalm xc.

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BANBURY:  
"The Banbury Guardian" Office.  
1934.

Photographs from the 1934 book



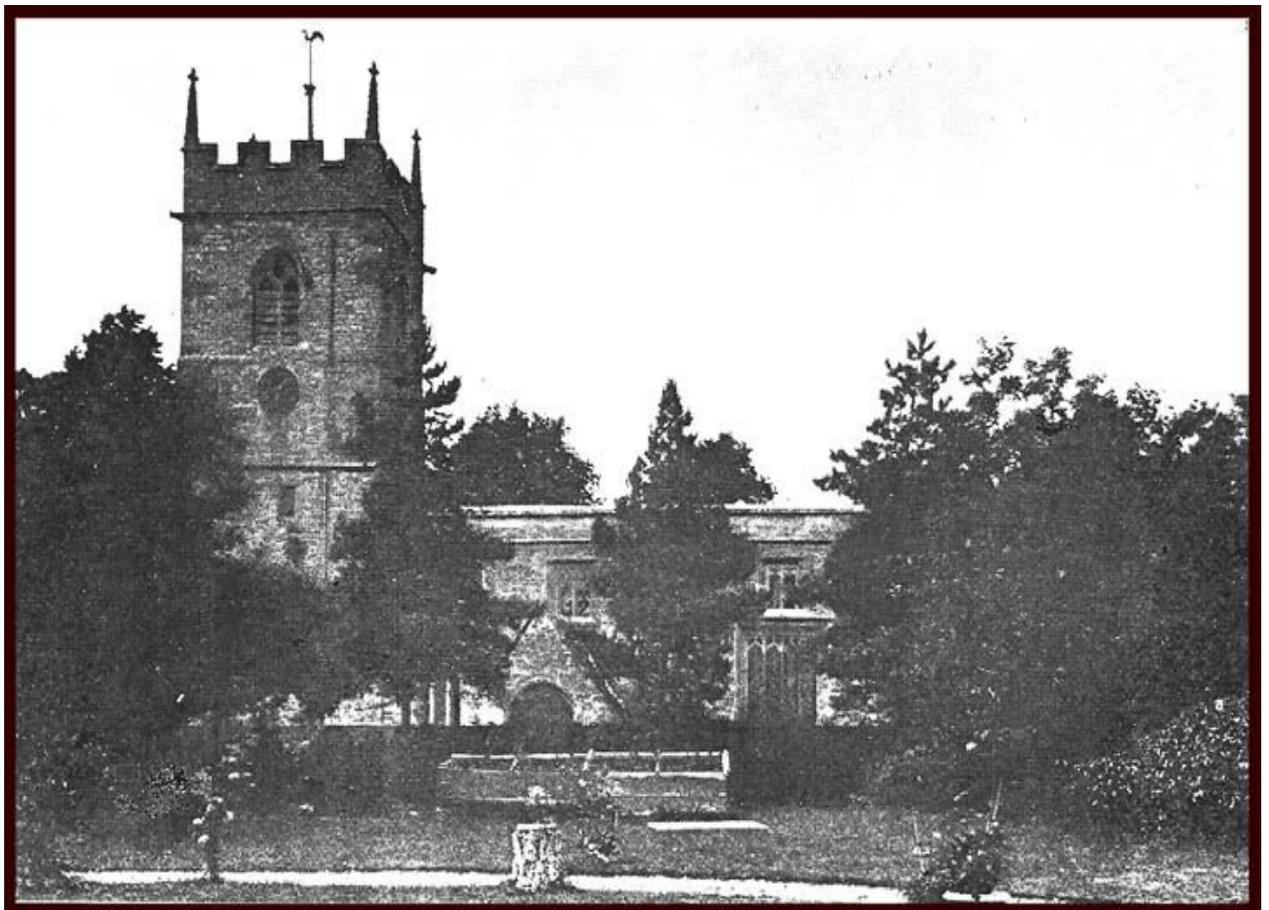
The Village of Cherington



The Lower House, Cherington



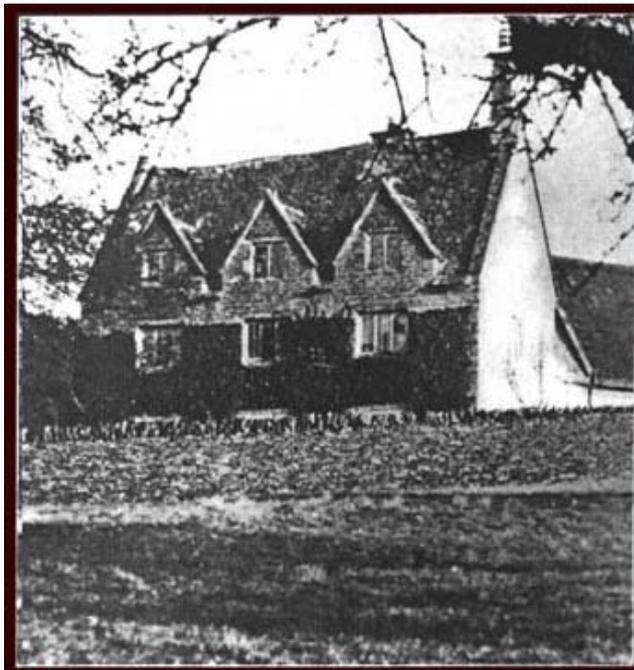
Cherington House



Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Cherington



The Tomb of the Franklein in the Parish Church



Two Stourton Houses: The Manor and Shaws' Farmhouse

# Third Edition

Text digitised, reset and prepared  
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The sole changes in the third edition are the addition of a full illustration of the Dickins bookplate, and the inclusion of the seven original photographs from the first edition of 1934, which unfortunately were rather poorly reproduced there.

## A Little History Of Cherington &amp; Stourton

Author's Dedication, Preface and Note to the First Edition

*To my father and mother:**Charles Allan Dickins, of Cherington; and**Frances Barbara Whitmore-Jones, of Chastleton.*

## PREFACE

The story of Cherington is a story of very little things. History seen through the wrong end of the telescope! But things seen through the wrong end of a telescope are as real as things seen through the right end, and a dim light is better than utter darkness even if it should shine only on the forefathers of the hamlet, on the yeomen whose limbs were made in England. A Cherington child learning history may by this glimmer see the Saxons ploughing the fields his father ploughs, and calling his village by the name it bears to-day - the first Norman king holding Cherington as his own property - the lord of the manor fighting at the battle of Evesham - the Cherington men who for hundreds of years made and executed the manorial Byelaws under which the village lived, and by which the village was guided. How far that little candle throws his beams, and how interesting it makes the fields, the roads, and the old buildings. A local history should render its readers proud of their traditions, and should help them to realize that what they do for their own village they do for England.

My thanks are due to all Cherington and Stourton people who have given me information, to W.G. Dickins, Esq., for the use of his family papers, and to the Rev. L.G. Tucker, Rector of Cherington, who has allowed me free access to the Registers and other Church records.

The design on the Cover is the Book Plate of  
Anthony Dickins, born at Cherington in 1734.

## FOREWORD TO THE DIGITISED EDITIONS

You will probably have just read Margaret Dickins' preface to the first edition of her *Little History*. Today, seventy years on, not too many Cherington and Stourton children have ploughman fathers, and probably even fewer of the adults believe - at least, not in these terms - that "what they do for their own village, they do for England". The tremendous change seen over the last seven decades has made the author's words sound like an echo of a remote age. Yet thanks to the scale of that change, her diligence in recovering records of lives and events from the previous seven hundred years is today rewarded by the attention of a wider public than she could ever have imagined. Whoever you are, and wherever you are as you read these lines, the fact that you have an interest in this book means that you will share my gratitude to the Margaret Dickinses of our world, the fruits of whose long hours of labour we can often now enjoy at the mere twitch of a mouse.

"How far that little candle throws his beams ....."

## Biographical Notes on the Author

Margaret Dickins (1858 - 1947)

Margaret Dickins was born on Christmas Eve, 1858<sup>i</sup> at Tardebigge, Worcestershire<sup>ii</sup>, and baptised there on Sunday, January 30, 1859<sup>iii</sup>, no doubt by her own father, Charles Allan Dickins, incumbent of the parish of Saint Bartholomew, Tardebigge, from 1855 until his death in 1917<sup>iv</sup>.

Margaret hints at the origins of her parents, who knew her as "Peg", in her dedication to this "Little History". Canon C. A. Dickins was born in Cherington at Cherington House<sup>v</sup>, one of thirteen children of magistrate William Dickins and his wife Lucy (née Park). The Dickins family had become established in the village through marriage in the mid-seventeenth century, as the writer herself relates in Chapter VII of this book.

Her mother, née Frances Barbara Whitmore-Jones, was the third daughter of John Henry Whitmore-Jones, and a descendant of Walter Jones, the affluent barrister and Cotswold wool merchant for whom the beautiful Jacobean mansion of Chastleton House in Oxfordshire was built in the early seventeenth century, and which remained in possession of the same family for nearly 400 years until it became a National Trust property in the last decade of the twentieth.<sup>vi</sup>



The author in 1912

In her late thirties, the author settled in the Oxfordshire village of Hook Norton, some seven miles (12km) from Chastleton. Margaret became the honorary organist of the Parish Church of St Peter in 1896, was later the first president of the Women's Institute<sup>vii</sup>, and remained in the village for the rest of her life, residing with her brother Herbert and younger sister Barbara at Bridge House, formerly one of two poor asylums in the village<sup>viii</sup>.

Thus it was that the first of her books to be published, when she had already reached her seventieth year, was *A History of Hook Norton 912-1928* (1928). Indeed, like the present work, inspired by centuries of family association with Cherington and Stourton, all her other books related the history of places with which she had close personal links. A history of her birthplace, *A Thousand Years in Tardebigge*, was published in 1931; the appearance in 1934 of *A Little History of Cherington and Stourton* was followed by her *Chastleton House*.

As well as being a writer, Miss Dickins was an accomplished musician - an Associate of the Royal College of Organists<sup>ix</sup> - and took charge of the choir and Choral Society in Hook Norton, as her cousin and sister-in-law Mrs Harriet ("Nora") Dickins<sup>x</sup> did in Cherington. Old Cheringtonians remember that the latter would call on "Miss Margaret's" sister, "Miss Barbara", to assist in adding a final polish before performances. A tablet inside St Peter's church was erected "in Grateful Memory" of Margaret and Barbara, "who [...] devoted their lives to the welfare of its inhabitants and to the service of the church."

Margaret Dickins died on Friday, July 11, 1947, at the age of 88, and is buried at Hook Norton alongside her sister Barbara and elder brother Herbert<sup>xi</sup>. There is a further commemoration of the Dickins sisters within the church there, their names being inscribed on two of the bells<sup>xii</sup>.

## Sources for the biographical notes

<sup>i</sup> Monumental Inscriptions, Hook Norton, Oxfordshire (fiche) compiled by Hook Norton Local History Group.

Burial Ground entry No. 586: *Margaret Dickens* (sic) *born December 24 1858 died July 11 1947*. The transcription uses the erroneous spelling Dickens for all three family members buried here.

<sup>ii</sup> 1881 census of Tutnall & Cobley (ecclesiastical parish of Tardebigge), Worcestershire. TNA ref. RG11 Piece 2944 Folio 23 Page 7.

<sup>iii</sup> International Genealogical Index. ©1997 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

<sup>iv</sup> Crockford's Clerical Directory (various years) and Tardebigge burial register.

<sup>v</sup> Censuses confirm his birthplace (see note 2); see also his daughter's dedication to him in this work.

<sup>vi</sup> Margaret indeed describes her mother as "of Chastleton" when dedicating this *Little History* to her parents; elderly Cherington people remember the visits that members of the Dickins family would make to Chastleton House. The National Trust handbook confirms the unbroken association of the writer's ancestors with Chastleton House.

<sup>vii</sup> *Obituary in the Banbury Guardian, Thursday July 17, 1947 (page 2):*

District Intelligence: HOOK NORTON

Death of Miss Dickins With regret we report the death of Miss Margaret Dickins, of Bridge House, which occurred at an Oxford Nursing Home, at the age of 88.

Miss Dickins and her sister, the late Miss Barbara Dickins, worked unceasingly for many years for the people of Hook Norton, being the voluntary organists of St Peter's Parish Church, training the choir and Choral Society, making good music appreciated. Miss Dickins was the first president of the Women's Institute, holding the position for about 20 years. She was beloved by all who came into contact with her, and when she wrote her "History of Hook Norton" she characteristically put it within the reach of all.

Miss Dickins was the oldest daughter of the late Canon Dickins, of Tardebigge, Worcs. Two sisters, Mrs Ball, of Oxford, and Mrs Whitmore-Jones, of Chastleton House, survive her.

<sup>viii</sup> On March 31 1901, the census enumerator recorded Margaret at Bridge House, with her brother Herbert, (a "retired farmer"), and a single servant. Barbara was not present. PRO Ref RG13/1401 Entry 10

<sup>ix</sup> The letters A.R.C.O. are given after her name on the title page of "A History of Hook Norton"; the page also identifies her as Hon. Organist of St Peter's Church.

<sup>x</sup> Harriet Eleanor Dickins, daughter of William Park Dickins, married Margaret's brother Rev. Alan Dickins. Tragically, Alan died before the couple could embark on their honeymoon.

<sup>xi</sup> Monumental Inscriptions (see note 1). Together with Margaret in entry 586 is her sister: *Barbara Dickens born July 17 1860 died March 26 1943*.

Entry 587 is as follows: *1856 Herbert Dickens 1929. I look for the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to come.*

Their family relationship is confirmed by entries in the IGI (note 3).

<sup>xii</sup> The memorial tablet on the west wall inside St Peter's, Hook Norton, reads:

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF MARGARET DICKINS DIED JULY 11 1947 AND BARBARA DICKINS DIED MARCH 26 1943 WHO FROM 1896 LIVED IN HOOK NORTON AND DEVOTED THEIR LIVES TO THE WELFARE OF ITS INHABITANTS AND TO THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH.

THEIR NAMES ARE INSCRIBED ON THE TREBLE AND 2<sup>ND</sup> BELL OF THIS CHURCH AS A FURTHER TRIBUTE TO THEIR MEMORY.

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