St Clement's

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St Clement's was originally a small settlement at the foot of Magdalen Bridge, where the roads from London, Headington, Cowley and Iffley converged on its main street. The boundaries are described in a charter of 1004 granting the land to St Frideswide's monastery.[1]

The area was enclosed early, when the manor was bought by the lord of Headington in 1547,[2] so very few field names survive.

The street leading to Magdalen Bridge was often known as **Bruggeset** – the settlement at the bridge – from the Old English *brycg,* bridge and *(ge-)set,* dwelling, camp or fold. *Brycg* may also have been used to mean a track through marshy ground,[3] which could well apply to St Clement's Street. The name Bruggeset was in use around 1250 (when it was mentioned in the records of St Frideswide's)[4] and was still in use in the mid-eighteenth century.[5]

1. S. Wigram, *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford, edited from the Christ Church and Corpus MSS* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 4.
2. "Parishes: St Clement's" in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957), 258-266.
3. A. H. Smith, *English Place Name Elements, (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).
4. S. Wigram, *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford, edited from the Christ Church and Corpus MSS* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 456.
5. E. C. Davies, *A chronological synopsis and index to Oxfordshire items in Jackson's Oxford Journal 1753–70.* PhD dissertation, University of Oxford, English Faculty Library 1967.

Proper names in St Clement's

The area as a whole takes its name from the parish church of **St Clement**, which is a relatively rare dedication. St Clement was said to have been martyred by being thrown into the sea tied to an anchor (his emblem) and was believed to give protection from drowning. Many Clement churches are in areas prone to flooding or by a bridge or ford.[1] The original St Clement's Church was positioned in direct line with the foot of Petit Pont (the modern Magdalen Bridge).

The manor was known as **Bolshipton** or Bolles Shipton. The personal name is that of the Bolles family who farmed the area in the thirteenth century, such as Walter and Parnel Bolles (c. 1235–40) and Walter's son Robert (c. 1260–70).[2]

The remaining element may be 'shippon' from the Old English *scypen,* a cattle shed. The name remained in use for centuries after the change of ownership. Bolshipton House lay north of the High Street, opposite the Black Horse Inn.

Bolleslees was an enclosure lying between Bolshipton and the original church. It combines the Bolles family name with Old English *laes,* pasture. The water meadows surrounding the Cherwell were always a valuable source of pasture.

Marshall's Close is mentioned on a late sixteenth-century map held in the archives of Magdalen College,[3] and the hedge bordering it may have been one of the early boundary markers of the parish. It is not known who Marshall was, but the historian Anthony Wood[4] mentions one Thomas Marshall of Oxford, who held several parcels of land in the manor of Bruggeset in 1324.

1. Barbara E. Crawford, "The Saint Clement dedications at Clementhorpe and Pontefract Castle: Anglo-Scandinavian or Norman?" in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks,* ed. Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) 189.
2. "Parishes: St Clement's" in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957), 258-266.
3. C. M. Woolgar, "A Late Sixteenth Century Map of St Clement's, Oxford" *Oxoniensia* XLVI (1981) 97.
4. Anthony Wood, *Survey of the Antiquities of the of the City of Oxford, composed in 1661–66* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1889–1899) Vol. I, 287.

St Clement's industry

Hacklingcroft Meadow is mentioned in the original charter of 1004[1] and the name was in use in various forms until the nineteenth century. The modern church of St Clement's was built there in the nineteenth century. 'Hackling' refers to combing fibres in [flax] or hemp processing.[2] Water was necessary for this, and the industry was a smelly one, so it was carried out away from habitation.[3] It seems likely that Hacklingcroft Meadow, on the banks of the Cherwell, was set aside for flax processing.

There were two water-mills in the parish. **Boy Mill** on the Cherwell lay near Milham Ford; its name may come from the Old English *boi(a)*, a boy or servant. The land around it was known as Mill Acre. **Templars' Mill** lay between Boy Mill and Magdalen Bridge. It was given to the Templars in 1146 by the Empress Maud. Like Boy Mill, it was no longer in use by the fourteenth century.[4]

1. S. Wigram, *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford, edited from the Christ Church and Corpus MSS* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 456.
2. Margaret Gelling, *The place-names of Oxfordshire: Pt.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 32.
3. Penelope Walton Rogers, *Cloth and Clothing in Early Anglo-Saxon England, AD 450–700* (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2007) 14.
4. "Parishes: St Clement's" in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957), 258-266.

St Clement's land use

Campus Field is mentioned in the late sixteenth-century map held in the archives of Magdalen College;[1] it lay south of St Clement's Street, and appears on an 1865 Tithe Award Map[2] as **Compass Field**, which seems likely to be a corruption of the same word. There were gravel pits in this field, which suggests that the soil was light and dry, and would have needed to be enriched with manure. One possible derivation of its name is that it was called after its own [compost heap].[3]

St Edmund's Well lay in Campus Field. [St Edmund of Abingdon] had a vision in a meadow near Oxford, and the well gained its name when he was canonised in 1247.[4]

Milham Mead and **Long Mead** (Old English *maed,* meadow) were both water meadows alongside the Cherwell – Milham Mead presumably named because it was close to Boy Mill and sometimes called Mill Acre, and Long Mead because of its distinctive shape. Meadow land, which could be used for grazing or cut for hay was highly prized in mediaeval times, when winter fodder for beasts was vital.

1. C. M. Woolgar, "A Late Sixteenth Century Map of St Clement's, Oxford" *Oxoniensia* XLVI (1981) 97.
2. Oxfordshire History Centre, Tithe Maps and Awards 298 Oxford St Clement's Award S1865.

3. Richard Jones, "Manure and the medieval social order" in *Land and People: papers in memory of John G Evans. Prehistoric Society Research Paper 2*. ed. M.J. Allen et al. (Oxford: Oxbow, 2009) 215–225.
4. T. Williamson, *Shaping Mediaeval Landscapes: Settlement, Society, Environment* (Macclesfield: Windgather Press, 2003).
5. M. Cox, *The Story of Abingdon: Part II. Mediaeval Abingdon 1186 – 1556* (Abingdon: privately published, 1989) 25–29.