

# The Tithing of Turnips – a Hampshire village in the Westminster spotlight.

By Michael Blakstad, East Meon History Group

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## B I L L

For the amendment of the Law as to the  
Tithing of Turnips in certain cases.

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[Note.—The Words printed in *Italics* are proposed to be inserted  
in the Committee.]

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**W**H<sup>EREAS</sup> the manner of tithing Turnips in certain cases is exceeding difficult, creating thereby many grievous chargeable and vexatious suits and animosities between Parsons, Vicars, Impropriators and their Parishioners; **BE it therefore**  
5 **Enacted**, by The KING's most Excellent MAJESTY, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, THAT from and after the *passing of this Act* the Tithes of Turnips severed from the land upon which they have been  
10 produced shall, if consumed upon the same either by profitable or unprofitable Sheep, Cattle or other Beasts, be considered as Agistment Tithe, and be recoverable by all such ways and means as Tithe of Agistment may now by law be recovered.

Provided always, and be it Enacted, That this Act, or any thing  
15 therein contained, shall not extend to charge any Lands discharged by modus decimandi, ancient composition or otherwise discharged of Tithes by law.

Preamble.

1. Turnips severed from the Land, if consumed on the same, to be considered as Agistment Tithe.

2. Act not to extend to any Land discharged from Tithe.

(Fig 1. The Hansard report on the Act for the Tithing of Turnips Severed from the Ground, passed in August 1835, reversing the decision of the Court of Exchequer two years earlier.)

## **Abstract**

In 1836, decades of parliamentary wrangling about culminated in the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act which converted traditional payments to the church of one-tenth of all agricultural produce into rental payments, an important step towards the eventual disappearance of the unpopular ecclesiastical tax. One year before, a motion had been brought against the vicar of East Meon, the Reverend Thomas Cooke Kemp, who had attempted to increase his income by collecting tithes on turnips grown to feed cattle. The episode illustrates the unpopularity of the vicar and of the whole system of tithing; the landlord, Captain Samuel Pechell RN, represented the farming community of East Meon in bringing the case, and we analyse the state of farming and the standing of the Church of England in the first half of the nineteenth century. We conclude that the 'Act for the Tithing of Turnips' (fig 1) was a small but significant factor played a small but significant part in the reformation of the unpopular ecclesiastical tax.

## **Previous history of tithes in East Meon**

East Meon had been a minster in Saxon times and then a substantial hundred which included the tithings of Steep, Froxfield, Langrish, Ramsdean, Oxenbourne, Bordean, Riplington and Coombe. It was the largest Hampshire estate of the bishops of Winchester, who were lords of two manors, which had been recorded in Domesday as 'Mene manor', comprising 20,000 acres, and 'Mene Ecclesia', of perhaps 750 acres. Traditionally, the rector gathered the 'greater' tithes, which were collected into a number of tithe barns around the hundred, including one at The Court House (fig 2); the produce of the diocesan demesne was kept in a separate manorial barn, also at The Court House, one of

the bishop's Hampshire palaces (fig 3). Traditionally, the rector gathered the 'greater' tithes, which were collected into a number of tithe barns around the hundred, including one at The Court House; the produce of the diocesan demesne was kept in a separate manorial barn, also at The Court House, one of the bishop's Hampshire palaces.



*(Fig 2) The 17<sup>th</sup> century barn at The Court House, which probably replaced an earlier barn for the collection of crops harvested for the rectorial tithes.*



*(Fig 3). Exterior of The Court Hall, built by Bishop William of Wykeham 1392 – 95. 'The best preserved of the Bishops' Palaces in Hampshire' (Pevsner).*

Medieval vicars subsisted on one-tenth of 'vicarial' or 'lesser' tithes and on fees received when he performed ceremonies for parishioners throughout the parish. During the Middle Ages, monasteries and secular landowners appropriated many benefices, followed by the dissolution of the Monasteries when 'all their landed assets and appropriated churches passed to the crown and when almost half the parishes in this land passed to the laity' (Pounds, 2000) . The diocese of Winchester, however, remained intact until the seventeenth century, when the whole system of tithing came under pressure from Parliament.

In 1618, the polymath John Seldon published his *History of Tithes* in which he highlighted the anachronism that, despite the number of lay appropriators, tithes were subject to canon law; the book was withdrawn but the debate had been kindled. In 1640, Parliament acted against ecclesiastical courts and in 1641 it approved the second reading of a bill for 'the utter abolishing and taking away of all archbishops, bishops....' In 1645 *An Indictment of Tithes* proposed that 'it will now appear no more strange to abolish tithes.... than it hath been to abolish episcopacy, prelacy and common prayer'. During, first, the Rump (1649 – 1653), and then Barebone's (1653) Parliament, debates raged between established churchmen who believed tithes should be maintained, moderates, led by John Owen, who proposed reform of tithes, and radicals, led by John Canne, who demanded abolition; only political manoeuvres and knife-edge votes prevented their total abolition. Owen's committee on tithes did pass a scheme 'for the appointment of commissioners .... to eject ignorant and scandalous clergymen': 2,425 benefices were sequestered and their vicars replaced with dissenting clergy (McCall, 2013). East Meon's John Shrigley had been appointed by the conservative Bishop Laud; he was ejected from All Saints in 1648 and subsequently imprisoned. However, the longer-term effect of the Commonwealth on East Meon came in changes to the ownership of land and of the greater tithes.

### **Land ownership and tithe appropriation**

Following the 1645 Bill for the Sale of Episcopal Lands, the Diocese was stripped of the manors. Court and South Farms were sold to Parliamentary supporters Nathaniel Hallowes (a Derby MP) and Richard Dannald respectively. In 1649 East Meon's manors, including over three hundred tenancies, were

bought by Francis Allen MP, a contentious and wealthy London goldsmith-financier; as Army Treasurer he had made financial arrangements for Charles I's execution. Upon the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the Bishop was reinstated as lord of the manors, but the land was leased to Sir Stephen Fox (Fig 4), who had managed Charles' finances in exile and negotiated the king's return to England. It is doubtful whether Fox, MP for Salisbury, ever visited East Meon; he sub-let the land to local farmers except for South Farm which he sold to a London doctor in 1662. Annual renewals of his (tithe-free) tenancy of Court Farm and The Court House are recorded in the manorial rolls.



*(Fig 4). Portrait of Sir Stephen Fox by John Simon. Fox, 1627 – 1716, was financier to Charles II and leaseholder after the Restoration of East Meon manorial lands*

The Diocese now started selling its rectorial tithes: as John Spurr writes, 'little is known of lay impropiators as a class ... no systematic or central record was kept and the practice of leasing tithes further complicates the picture', but by the nineteenth century, the Bishops owned no tithes in East Meon parish. A 1661 indenture records the appropriation by one secular landowner, James Sessions, of tithes for Steep. Indentures from 1794 - 1818 record the Bishop's annual renewals to the village's largest landowner, Richard Eyles, of the leases of the greater tithes of several East Meon estates, among them 'Burley', or Bereleigh. There were three Richard Eyleses: the first lived at Glenthorne House,

a handsome William and Mary building in the High Street. The second Richard was part-owner with Patrick Eyles of the Petersfield and Hampshire Bank and mayor of Petersfield in 1800; he was also deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire. It was the third Richard who in 1824 sold Bereleigh to Captain Samuel George Pechell RN. Pechell's father was Rear Admiral Sir Samuel Pechell, Third Sea Lord from 1830–1834, and his brother Richard, was also a retired naval captain and a member of Parliament; it was Richard who moved the Act for the Tithing of Turnips, challenging the Reverend Kemp and with him the established church.

### **A church's reputation in decline**

When Thomas Cooke Kemp was inducted as vicar of East Meon in 1826, the administrative role of the Anglican vestry was diminishing. 'The old parish system had depended on unpaid, annually elected local officers who were now faced with rapidly increasing populations of people who were more mobile and included larger proportions of poor' (Tiller 2000). New legislation transferred civic duties from the vestry to district government: the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 closed village workhouses and paupers were moved to 'cost-effective' Union workhouses in nearby towns: East Meon's paupers were transferred to the Petersfield workhouse when it was opened in 1835. Police Reform Acts saw parish constables replaced by officers appointed by County Constabularies: supervision of highways and bridges to Turnpike Trusts. 'The removal of the secular business left the vestry without life' (Chadwick 1970). Meanwhile, the behaviour of its clergy weakened the church's reputation. 'Many pastors were non-resident (Pounds 2000) and some antagonised their parishioners by their rapacious collection of tithes. ... they lived a life of ease on

the profits of several benefices, while underpaid curates and chaplains did their work. These were the 'fat cats' of the clerical profession ... who received in full the tithes from rich farmland'. William Cobbett railed against the system of tithing while idle (Cobbett 1822), rich vicars were Anthony Trollope's favourite target, from the *Barsetshire Chronicles* to *The Claverings*. Not surprisingly, many parishioners turned to Nonconformist religions, whose hostility to tithes was deep-rooted. In 1788, Reverend Boisdaune, vicar of East Meon, had responded to the Bishop's standard enquiry about Dissenters: 'There is nothing of the kind in any of the parishes'. By 1851, however, the Religious Census listed half a dozen Nonconformist chapels in the wider parish, and the 1869 Ordnance Survey map shows another, Primitive Methodist, chapel in the village (Fig 5 & Table 1). More than a quarter of the Anglican congregation had deserted All Saints, an exodus caused both by the church's declining reputation and by the behaviour of the vicar.



*Fig 5. 1869 OS map of East Meon village. Bottom left (698) is the site of the Providence Chapel (Calvinist). Above it (699) is Methodist Chapel (Primitive) and to the right of that, (696) is the Zoar Chapel (Baptist)*

*Table 1. East Meon and associated tithings, Religious Census 1851*

Church/Chapel	Tithe	Seats			Attendance			Rrsp. Officer	CofE/ Noncnfrm
		Free	Other	Total	AM	PM	Highest		
Steep Chapel [Anglican]	£230.00	100	240	340	200	300	300	TR Brownrigg, Curate	nc
Stroud Common Primitive Methodist	£0.00	25	0	25	15	16	16	Wm. Heath, Preacher	nc
Privett Parish Church	*	90	106	196	123	155	155	Wm. Adley, Curate	coe
St Peter's Froxfield		0	300	300	180	170	180	Edward Docker, Curate	coe
Wesleyan, Froxfield	£0.00	60	0	60	50	35	50	John Eglington, Minister (Alton)	nc
All Saints, East Meon	£560.00	370	300	670	340	320	340	Thos. Cooke Kemp, Vicar	coe
Congregational Chapel, Ramsdean	£0.00	100	10	110	200	100	200	R. Green, Manager	nc
Halley Street Calvinistic Chapel, East Meon	£0.00	100		100	47	64	64	Samuel Kille, Manager	nc
<b>Totals</b>		<b>845</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>1801</b>	<b>1155</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>1305</b>	<i>Proportion of Total Attendees</i>	<b>100%</b>
<b>C of E</b>				1506	843	955	975		74.71%
<b>N.C.</b>				295	312	205	330		25.29%

### The Reverend Thomas Cooke Kemp

Kemp had been born in 1787, the son of a Norfolk farmer, and studied at Caius College, Cambridge; his wife Jane was the daughter of Robert Pretymán, a wealthy south Norfolk landowner. She was born in Brockdish, close to the family home of the illustrious George Pretymán who had been first tutor, then close friend and private secretary of William Pitt the Younger. Through Pitt's patronage, Pretymán was successively Bishop of Lincoln, Chichester, and finally of Winchester, where he inducted Thomas Kemp as vicar of East Meon. Pretymán's distant relative Marmaduke Tomline, had made him his heir on condition he changed his surname to Tomline; from a further bequest, he acquired several farms in Suffolk which had originally belonged to the Pretymán family. George Pretymán Tomline died in 1827 leaving an estate worth £200,000 (£18 million in today's money). While there is no direct evidence of Jane's relationship with the great man, coincidences of surname, proximity of birthplace, and patronage make it likely. Thomas may have felt entitled to a lifestyle beyond the means of a country vicar.

In 1826 Kemp was 39 years old and East Meon appears to have been his first incumbency. He was soon engulfed in scandal. In 1827 a living-in servant, Elizabeth Welch, made an allegation of 'molestation' against him and he accused her of defamation of character. Judgment was given against Welch at a consistory court sitting at Steep, but, significantly, Kemp was obliged to pay costs. In the transcript of the trial, Welch is very explicit about Kemp's behaviour ('entered the bedroom of myself and fellow servant, undressed, got into the bed'); although she was found guilty, her sentence was conspicuously lenient. The scandal can hardly have endeared Kemp to his parish who had already courted unpopularity by increasing the tithes he felt he was owed.

Kemp had evidently decided that his benefice was insufficient for the upkeep of the church building, his family of two sons and two daughters, as well the salaries of two curates. Unlike his predecessor, John Docker, who himself looked after the chapelries of Steep and Froxfield, Kemp employed curates (one of them Edmund Docker, the son of his predecessor). Upon his arrival, Kemp had observed that farmers did not pay tithes on the 'Swedish turnips' they cultivated to feed livestock. This use of turnips was relatively new; Cobbett had noted in 1822, 'Greens will have helped put the latest cabbages to carry you through November, and perhaps into December, but for these six months (December to May) you must depend on Swedish turnips'. Farmers hoed up the turnips, working their way across the field and moving hurdles to contain the sheep. Kemp claimed that the farmers should pay additional tithes for these turnips; Pechell refused, and in 1833 the vicar sued him.

### A farming community.

Pechell is recorded by Hansard as saying that he fought the case on behalf of all East Meon farmers. This was a wholly agricultural community; the 1841 CEB demonstrates the extent to which its workforce was employed in farming or related trades and services (Tables 2 & 3). Every occupation in the parish supported agriculture in some way; teachers organised the school year around the agricultural seasons, rural police officers prosecuted mainly rural crimes, shopkeepers provisioned the farms and their workers (Emsley 2005).

*Table 2 1841 CEB East Meon Occupations, sectors*

Occupation	Sector	Number
Agricultural labourers	Farming	265
Domestic servants	Service	75
Farmers	Farming	27
Blacksmiths	Trade	12
Carpenters	Construction	7
Bricklayers	Construction	6
Shoemakers	Trade	5
Butchers	Retail	4
Wheelwrights	Trade	4
Grocers	Retail	3
Schoolteachers	Profession	3
Publicans	Retail	3
Millers	Trade	3
Bakers	Trade	2
Woodmen	Farming	2
Limeburners	Farming	2
Brickmakers	Construction	2
Surgeon	Profession	1
Tailor	Trade	1
Maltster	Trade	1
Carrier	Farming	1
Saddler	Trade	1
Gardener	Service	1
Police Officer	Service	1
Gamekeeper	Farming	1
Clerk in holy orders	Profession	1

*Table 3 1841 Census. Occupational sectors*

Sector	Totals
Farming	297
Service	77
Trade	29
Construction	15
Retail	10
Professions	05

The end of the Napoleonic Wars had flooded the countryside with demobbed soldiers seeking employment at a time when the country's population was doubling. New machinery and farming methods further threatened the livelihoods of agricultural labourers; in response, Swing rioters set out to destroy the new threshing machines and to burn tithe barns; many of the disturbances centred around tithe payments. They came very close to East Meon: in November 1830, East Meon landowner John Bonham Carter JP received a frantic letter from a fellow magistrate describing riots in nearby Headley and Selborne, asking for reinforcements from Petersfield. Another letter, from the Keeper of Winchester County Gaol, asked him not to send any more prisoners: 'there being already 53 in custody and in the course of an hour I expect 50 more'. The climate into which Kemp was increasing tithes was combustible.

In order to understand better who paid tithes, who benefited and, in particular, how much the vicar received, we need to go forward two decades to a time when more detailed records were available than in the 1830s: the 1851 Census and the 1851/2 Tithe Apportionments survey [TAs] which implemented the Tithe Commutation Act by calculating the cash value of tithes. The TAs list the size and value of every field, cottage, coppice and waste patch, their owners and occupiers, acreage and value, and tithes paid 'where applicable'. The cost of living in the 1850s was no higher than in the 1830s (Wrigley, Schofield

1981) when corn prices were depressed, so we do not need to allow for inflation. We have linked East Meon's TAs to CEB data to identify, firstly, who owned land in East Meon at the time, and, secondly, how much they farmed; Table 4 lists 25 farmers of whom 15 paid tithes, on whose behalf Pechell fought the tithing of turnips.

*Table 4 East Meon 1851/2 Tithe Apportionments and 1851 CEB: Locations, owners, tithed acres and occupations*

Location	Owner	Tithe Acres	Occupation
Ramsdean	Alderslade, William	174	Farmer 140 acres, 4 men & 2 boys
Glenthorne House	Atkins, John Nathaniel	127	Draper & farmer 118 acres 6 labourers & 2 boys
Park Farm	Barnard, Henry	346	Farmer 830 acres 18 labourers & 8 boys
Langrish	Berryman, Robert	206	Farmer of 200 acres 12 labourers
Hilhampton	Christmas, John	551	Farmer of 392 acres 9 labourers
Bordean	Ex.ors of John Wake	354	
Westbury	Gage, Honorable J.W.	1183	Landed Magistrate, Farmer 1500 acres, 25 labourers & 10 boys outside
Ramsdean	Green, Richard	336	Farmer 90 acres , 4 labourers & 2 boys
Coombe	Gregory, George	147	Farmer 100 acres 1 labourer
Leith House, Oxenbourne	Hillyer, George	227	Farmer 150 acres 8 labourers
Rothercombe	Padwick, Nicholas	282	Farmer 150 acres 4 men
Riplington	Ray, William	955	Farmer 950 acres 15 labourers & 9 boys
Coombe Cross	Ray, James	545	Farmer 500 acres 9 labourers 6 boys
Langrish House	Waddington, J H Esq	365	Magistrate, Farmer 300 acres 12 labourers.
Oxenbourne	Weeks, William Jnr	599	Farmer 550 acres labourers
Bereleigh	George Forbes <sup>1</sup>	274	<i>Forbes in London that day.</i>
<i>Total tithe acres</i>		6670	
Tigwell	Lipscomb		Farmer 423 acres 13 men
South Farm	Samuel Padwick		Farmer 580 acres 13 labourers & 12 boys
Court Farm	James Lock		Farmer 750 acres 22 men/boys outdoors, 21 indoors
Ramsdean	William Guy		Farmer of 630 acres 13 labourers
Ramsdean	John Green		Farmers of 94 acres 2 labourers
Ramsdean	William Green		Farmers of 94 acres 2 labourers
Ramsdean	Robert Green		Farmer 12 acres
Bordean			Robert Payne bought in 185?

Those designated as owners of land were responsible for paying tithes, and are described in the CEBs as farmers, sometimes alongside other occupations (magistrate, draper, publican &c). Most rented their land from the large landowners, who are listed as 'lessees' because they leased the land from

<sup>1</sup> Bereleigh was sold to George Forbes when Captain Pechell died in 1840.

the Diocese. Where ‘owner’ and ‘occupier’ are different, we have designated the owner as the farmer, due to pay the tithes where applicable.

*Table 5. Landowners listed in Tithe Apportionments Introduction as owning the tithes on part or all of their estates.*

Surname	Given names & title	Estate/s	Tithes £s
Carter	John Bonham	Meon	90
Carter	John Bonham	Ramsdean	190
Christmas	John	Oxenbourne	270
Hector	John Cornthwaite (execs of)	Bordean (upper)	116
Joliffe	Sir William Hylton (Bart)	Ramsdean, Langrish, Bordean (lower)	262
Gage	Viscount	Riplington	200
<b>Total</b>			<b>1128</b>

Table 5 shows the six large landowners who ‘hold a lease of the said Tithes arising from or accruing due upon the Titheable lands’, whose predecessors had appropriated the tithes and who may have sided with the Vicar in defending the system’. A third group of farms is described by the Commissioner as ‘exempt from the payment of all Tithes’ – Court, Fairfield (or South), Hiden (now Hyden, 227 acres), Park (441 acres) and Church Farms (553 acres). Finally, he comes to the Vicar’s tithes.

The Commissioner awarded the Vicar the tithes, ‘great and small’, from Westbury, Peak and Comb, and all lesser tithes, amounting to £680 per annum. He was entitled to ‘Tithes of Hops’ at the rate of 13/4d per acre: 33.48 acres of hops yielded £21. 15s. He was also apportioned tithes of £230 from each of the chapelries at Steep and Froxfield (Table 6). Using the Bank of England Inflation calculator, the vicar’s receipts from tithes in 1852 were £232,830 in today’s money. His outgoings were apparently modest; his two curates would have been paid between £70 and £100 a year: Trollope writes that Clavering’s curate, Mr

Saul, who aspired to marry the vicar's daughter, 'for this accommodation he paid £10, per annum. He then had £60 left': Cobbett writes of another Hampshire curate that his salary 'does not, perhaps, exceed seventy or a hundred pounds'. Kemp was spending around a third of his tithe income he received from the two chapelries on curatorial salaries. Despite the considerable surplus, he does not appear to have maintained the church and chapels; in 1669 his successor, Reverend William Brodie, had to commission the architect Ewen Christian to restore All Saints extensively, inside and out.

*Table H Tithes apportioned to Reverend Kemp in 1851/2*

Tithings	£s
East Meon, greater and lesser	680,00
East Meon, hops	21.15
Steep, greater and lesser	230.00
Vicarial Glebe	
Froxfield, greater and lesser	230.00 <sup>2</sup>
Vicarial Glebe	3.00
Total	£1164.15
2015 value	£232,830.00 <sup>3</sup>

### The national stage

The vicar took Captain Pechell to court in 1831: the case was heard in the Hall of Lincoln's Inn Fields on August 3rd 1833 by the Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer. Lord Lyndhurst (Fig 6) was a notable politician and a brilliant lawyer but inclined to jump to conclusions. He found that 'there was no dispute that turnips were titheable as predial small tithes, as crops', that it was sufficient that they had been severed from the land, and that it was 'not impracticable' to retain every 10<sup>th</sup> turnip. Pechell's lawyers evidently regarded the verdict as unjust and 'only' billed him £100.10s.6d. Pechell's total bill for the court case was

<sup>2</sup> HRO 11M59/E2/EAM/155461 1841 Tithe apportionment, Steep (East Meon manor) parish. TNA IR 18/8995 Tithe file for Froxfield (parish), Hampshire. It is possible that the figure has been entered twice, since no figure appears in the entry for Froxfield in the 1851 Religious Census.

<sup>3</sup> Bank of England calculator, *ibid*

£318.8s.11d, (£63,680 in 2015 values). He decided to take his cause to a higher level.



*Fig 6. Lord Lyndhurst, three times Lord Chancellor, who ruled in favour of Reverend Kemp*



*Fig 7. Captain Richard Pechell RN MP, brother of Samuel Pechell, who moved the petition on Tithing of Turnips on his behalf*

Samuel Pechell's brother Richard, another naval captain, was elected to Parliament in 1834 (Fig 7); Hansard for 19<sup>th</sup> June 1835 records that 'Captain Pechell, MP, rose pursuant to present a Petition from Capt Samuel G Pechell Esq ... complaining of the vexatious proceeding of his vicar ... praying for a speedy commutation of Tithes ... He did not intend any censure on the clergy generally, but to show the necessity of altering the present law of Tithes. Pechell was referring to long-standing resistance by the Church of England to reform of Tithes. Since 1829, Parliament had received numerous petitions calling, first, for the introduction of long leases, then for commutation from payment in kind to cash. Two weeks earlier, a similar petition had been promoted, following a case heard at the Spiritual Court at Litchfield; a Staffordshire rector, the Rev. Bernard

Port, had made claims for tithes on cabbages pulled to feed cattle. In this debate, Arthur Trevor MP had spoken against that petition and Captain Pechell had spoken in favour; Mr Richards MP had complained that 'his Majesty's Ministers proposed to delay the Commutation of Tithes for another Session, perhaps sine die...' That petition had been successful. Richard Pechell described how, in 1826, 'The Rev Thomas Kemp had entered on the vicarage, and immediately gave notice that all compositions for tithes should cease ...': his brother's composition at the time, 'stood at £19.9s 6d though only valued at £11.19s. .... which composition however he was still willing to continue to the new vicar, knowing how essential it was to keep 'on a good footing with the clergyman ... as being a Magistrate, for the common benefit of society. The reverend Gentleman however refused the old composition and actually proposed an increase of 20 per cent, which was of course refused by the whole parish.' Pechell criticised Lord Lyndhurst's ruling: "Chief Baron Lyndhurst said the turnips might be pecked in the rear of the fold, but not in advance of it. Now was there ever anything so absurd as this and so very injurious to the system of turnip cultivation?" Pechell mentions 'the hon. Member for Durham (Mr. A. Trevor)', who had attacked the Staffordshire petition; he said Trevor acted as 'conduit pipe for conveying the opinions of the clergy, to shew how this was to be effected'. Arthur Trevor MP, later Viscount Dungannon, had also vigorously opposed the Reform bills of 1831-2, against which 21 out of 26 Bishops had voted. Trevor duly inveighed 'against these attacks on the clergy in general as most unjust and undeserved. It was the duty of the Government to release the clergy from these annoyances, by securing to them a fair provision'. The petition was allowed to 'lie on the Table', and an Act entitled 'Tithing of Turnips Severed from the Ground' was passed two

months later. Pechell concluded by saying that he trusted 'that this petition would be the means of drawing the attention of the House to this branch of the subject when the Tithe Bill came before it.' Two months later, the Bill 'for the amendment of the Law as to the Tithing of Turnips' was passed, and a year after that, the Tithes Commutation Act received Royal Assent.

### **Postscript**

Samuel Pechell died in 1840 and his family moved to Alton; Kemp died at the age of 80 in October 1867, which was the year in which Froxfield and Steep became separate parishes, bringing an end to East Meon 'ownership' of these tithings. Although Kemp's burial appears in the church register, there is today no sign of his gravestone in All Saints' churchyard. During his forty-one year incumbency, he had taken his parish briefly onto the national stage and had played a small part, albeit unsuccessful, in defending the system of tithes which had survived for a thousand years. He also served to confirm the fictitious portrayals by Trollope and the political tracts of Cobbett by demonstrating just how much wealth the system could bestow on an undistinguished rural vicar. At a time when agricultural communities were fighting for survival, East Meon could hardly have had a less suitable pastor

### **Conclusion**

The Tithe Apportionments which resulted from the Act made it possible for the first time properly to understand the state of tithing in communities such as East Meon, and the substantial income which its vicar received. 'Tithe was hopelessly anachronistic in an increasingly urban society ... the Act sliced

through its contradictions and complexities ... No longer could a farmer's budget be upset by a demand from the titheman or by an attack on an ancient customary payment' (Evans 1968). Pechell had resisted the Tithing of Turnips on behalf of East Meon's agricultural community but represented all British farmers; the Reverend Kemp, acted for the Anglican church, whose reputation, we have seen, was at a low ebb and which had resisted the Tithe Commutation Act for half a decade. East Meon's local dispute was one of several actions which contributed to a movement which turned out to be irresistible, and which in time eliminated the millennium-old ecclesiastical tax.

## Sources

Many of the primary sources on which this article is based have been transcribed by the author and are available on the journal's website.

## Acknowledgments

The origins of this article lie in a talk on the litigation between Kemp and Pechell given by East Meon History Group [EMHG] member George Bartlett QC, past President of the Land Tribunal, two other EMHG members, Betty and Stewart Bussell, researched Kemp's family. Another, David Hopkins, contributed information about East Meon under the Commonwealth. As part of research the Group is conducting into the history of agriculture in the parish, East Meon's CEBs were transcribed to Excel by Robert Mocatta and aligned with the TA data. The author is grateful to them for their invaluable contributions.