

Tithe maps, and their accompanying apportionments, were drawn up in response to the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 and provide a snapshot of rural life at this point in history.

Before this Act, people had to give a tenth of their agricultural produce to support the church and clergy of the parish. By 1836 growing industrialisation meant that farmers were paying a tithe that was not required of the inhabitants and manufacturers of the growing towns and cities. The growth of non-conformist churches also bred resentment as they felt they were paying for a church they were not part of. The Act enabled them to 'commute' this payment in kind to a monetary payment following a reassessment of land use and ownership/occupation.

Contents

In order to work out exactly how much people had to pay maps were drawn up of every parish and 'Apportionments' or 'Awards' decided.

Maps

The maps were drawn up mostly between 1838 and 1850, and they are 'one-offs', although occasionally they were copies of estate maps where the parish was wholly part of an estate, such as Bathwick. They are not like Ordnance survey maps where there are editions for different dates, and they were all drawn to different scales and with different degrees of accuracy. Each piece of land on the tithe map is numbered, with a corresponding number on the Apportionment. The land belonging to exempt persons – such as the vicar or lord of the manor – were unnumbered.



Part of the tithe apportionment map for Chew Stoke

Apportionments

The Apportionment lists the details of landowner, tenant, the use of the land, and the acreage and value of land. There may be a short introduction to the parish and a list of the exempt landowners where there are unnumbered plots on the map.

C.C.—London: Printed and Published (By Authority) by Shaw and Sons, 187

LANDOWNERS.	OCCUPIERS.	Numbers referring to the Plot.	NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF LANDS AND PREMISES.	STATE or CULTIVATION.	QUANTITIES IN STATUTE MEASURE.				Amount of Rent-Charge apportioned upon the several Lands, and Payable to the Rector.	REMARKS.
					a.	b.	c.	d.		
<i>James Sarah</i> <i>(Widow of James Thomas continued)</i>	<i>Wyatt George</i>	<i>596a</i>	<i>House and Garden</i>					<i>1 9</i>		
<i>Noyd William</i>	<i>Hazel William</i> <i>(Butcher)</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>Short yards</i>	<i>meadow</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>24</i>		<i>5 9</i>		
		<i>252</i>	<i>Short yards</i>	<i>meadow</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>14</i>		<i>1 10</i>		
		<i>253</i>	<i>Short yards</i>	<i>arable</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2 12</i>		<i>5 3</i>		
		<i>254</i>	<i>Orchard</i>	<i>orchard</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1 28</i>		<i>8 10</i>		
		<i>251</i>	<i>Garden</i>	<i>garden</i>		<i>10</i>		<i>4</i>		
		<i>252</i>	<i>House Butcher's shop</i>			<i>0</i>				
	<i>88</i>			<i>arable</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2 15</i>		<i>0 3</i>		
	<i>129</i>			<i>meadow</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3 14</i>		<i>14 4</i>		
					<i>15</i>	<i>2 29</i>		<i>2 2 1</i>		

Extract from the tithe apportionment for Chew Stoke.

Tithe maps give us a detailed picture of almost every parish in the country in the mid nineteenth century. They are an invaluable resource for local, house and family historians, who can pinpoint properties in which they are interested. They are also a major source of information for social, economic and agricultural history.

Holdings

All the original tithe maps are held by Somerset Archives & Local Studies, but we have access to digital copies on our public computers. The apportionments have been transcribed and are available in printed files. Please ask the staff for access to these resources. Please remember that there are no tithe maps/apportionments for the Bath parishes of St Michaels, Abbey, St James and Walcot inner as these were part of the city and not subject to tithes.