



The 1891 Ordnance Survey map of our area is a good one, and fortunately for us the census of 5th April 1891 found the team of surveyors living in Chipping village. This would be a good centre for their work in the surrounding countryside and also at that time there were plenty of empty houses because of a serious decline in the local population; in Chipping township 15% less than in the 1881 census.

As the name suggests, the Ordnance Survey began as a branch of the Army. Its headquarters while in Chipping may have been the old Brabin's school, redundant since the present school was built in 1880. Living in the domestic part of the school building (formerly the Master's house) was a soldier, Irishman William Marcuis with his wife and two young children. No doubt he would be in charge of the building and the valuable surveying instruments. The old school would have space for storage of equipment and for indoor work during bad weather. There was a team of eleven, some with families. One of the families had a four-month old son born in Chipping, which suggests that the team had been in residence through the winter. There were four surveyors, an examiner, a leveller and two labourers, possibly all military men, because there was also a civil assistant. An unexpected member of the team was village lad Albert Edward Parkinson aged 13, who some of us will remember. He was listed as "assistant surveyor". Almost all of the team had been born in rural areas - Welsh Borders, Cornwall, Cumbria, - perhaps another sign of rural depopulation.

The 1891 map, at the scale of approximately 25 inches to the mile, is probably the most detailed ever produced of our area. This small piece of the map shows the numerous hedgerow trees near Leagram Lodge and the fruit and vegetable gardens and glasshouses below the Hall. The closely-planted trees in the mixed plantations of deciduous trees, bushes and conifers were not measured separately, but those trees with a "shadow" beneath were positioned accurately. Many of the big old trees in the Park remain to the present day, but most of the hedgerow trees which arched over the road past the Lodge and the "Hollins" corner to beyond Leagram Mill were cut down in the late 1940's. Some of the stumps are still alive, as a memory of 1891.