

The Leagram Pound

Straying animals have always been a problem especially in the days before modern types of fencing. In the past some control was imposed by the discipline of the local manor, which required farmers to co-operate and establish and maintain pounds in order to restrain strays. This arrangement reduced nuisance and damage and the owners of impounded animals had to pay fines and the costs of the pound-keeper (or pinder).

When the Welds of Lulworth inherited the Stonyhurst and Leagram estates from the Shireburnes in 1754, they found the farmland poorly managed. Thomas Weld, in particular, made many improvements to the estate. When he died in 1810 the Leagram portion of the estate passed to his youngest son, George Weld, who continued the improvements.

John Weld, eldest son of George, in his "History of Leagram" written late 19th century, described the problem of straying animals before his father took over at Leagram, stating that "fences ... were neglected and wide gaps occurred" and "cattle ranged unimpeded". So George Weld in May 1811, under his manorial rights as the principal landowner in Leagram, drew up a legal document establishing a pound. This required the co-operation and mutual agreement of the Leagram landowners and occupiers (most being estate tenants).

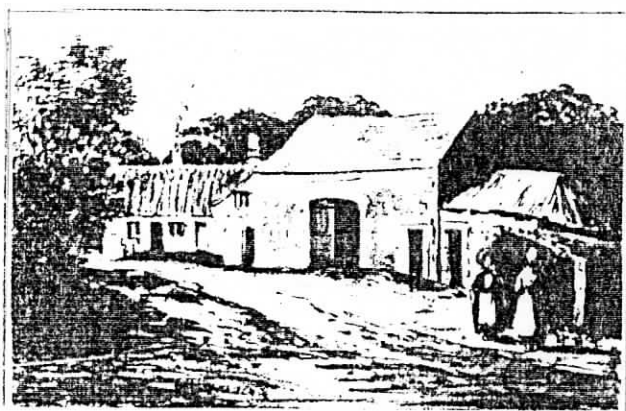
All parties signed the document defining the arrangements. George Weld gave a small area of roadside land adjoining Leagram Mill farmyard (see map below) and appointed the pound keeper. The residents agreed to use only that pound and share its building and repair costs, these being apportioned according to their rate charges.

The following were signatories to the agreement in the presence of George Weld --

Stephen Sparrow [estate steward], Rev^d John Reeve [priest at Leagram Chapel], Edward Bamber, Richard Hornby, Thomas Sumner, Charles Walmsley, Richard Kendrick, Robert Rogerson, Richard Walbank, Richard Worden, John Bolton, William Slater, Henry Watson, Henry Knowles, Robert Jackson, William Preston, John Holden, Mat[t]hew Ellison, Bernard Wilkinson, James Sumner, Thomas Slater.

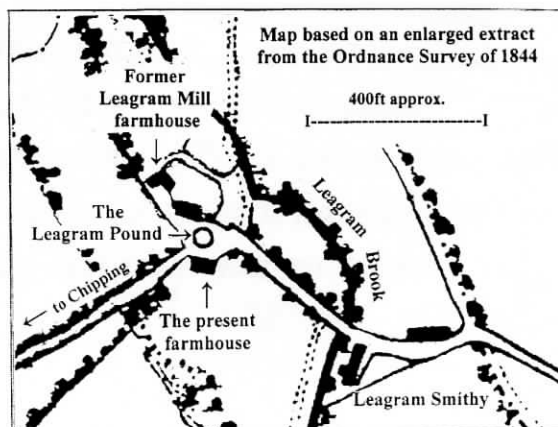
*Agreement for ... erecting and maintaining a Common Pound within the Manor.
1st May 1811. Lancashire Record Office. DDWw 3/13/6*

No traces of the pound are visible today, but clues are shown in the illustrations below.



Leagram Mill farmyard c.1840, viewed from the road, with part of the pound shown by the curving fence on the left or by the structure on the extreme right. The former Leagram Mill farmhouse, demolished long ago, is in the background.

A painting (reduced in size here) by John Weld of Leagram Hall. From the collections at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston.



Muriel Lord