

What were tithes?

Tithes were a kind of tax levied on produce, mostly agricultural, that was paid to the church. Tithes were meant to be a tenth of the produce, and were paid in kind rather than in money. Most parishes had a tithe barn, often built near the church, for storing tithes in. The right to receive tithes did not always belong to the church. In many cases, they were received by someone called an impropiator, who was usually a local landowner. This right to receive tithes was called the 'advowzon'.

Tithes were notoriously difficult to collect and farmers routinely tried to avoid paying them. The rise of nonconformity, especially in Wales, meant that many farmers resented paying a tax to an institution that they did not attend. By the nineteenth century the situation was beginning to change. Payments in kind were beginning to give way to cash payments, which was more convenient for both parties, but there was considerable inconsistency in the way in which these were calculated.

The Tithe Commutation Act and tithe surveys

The result of this was the Tithe Commutation Act 1836, which initiated a radical overhaul of the tithe system. The Act directed that all payments should be in money rather than in kind, and that a proper survey should be done of each parish where tithes were paid, to set in stone the rate at which those payments should be made.

The survey consisted of two parts, a map and an apportionment. These were drawn up over the decade or so that followed the passing of the Act. For each parish, commissioners were appointed, whose task it was to draw up a map and an accompanying schedule (or apportionment) giving a detailed breakdown of the landowners, occupiers and their land.



There are some exceptions to this. For example, where an entire parish had belonged to the same person who was also the impropiator and received the tithes, the tithes could be formally merged with the freehold, making the entire parish tithe-free. Other lands were tithe-free because they had belonged to abbeys before the dissolution of the monasteries. In West Glamorgan the parishes of Briton Ferry and Margam fell into these categories, and no tithe map was drawn up for either parish.

In most cases, however, three copies of the survey were made. The original was sent to the Public Record Office in London (now the National Archives). Two further copies were made, one of which was kept by the relevant diocesan registry and another kept locally in the parish. The diocesan copies for Wales are now held in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Parish copies, where they have survived, are usually deposited in the relevant county record office. The parish copy tends to be in the worst state of preservation of the three. Later copies were sometimes made by the agents of landed estates, and can be found among the estate papers. Sometimes they are partial copies, only including land owned by the estate. The Penrice and Margam estate records contain many examples of complete copies of both tithe maps and apportionments.

What do the maps and apportionments show?

The maps show each plot of land with a number referring to the apportionment. The amount of detail given varies, but typically the maps include roads, houses, gardens, woods, rivers and the names of farms and other significant buildings. Some include insets at a larger scale to show villages and towns in more detail. The apportionment is typically a parchment file which commences with the legal agreements as to the total titheable area and the annual tithes payable on the parish, before giving a detailed breakdown. The detailed section includes the following columns:

1. 'Landowners': the landowners' names are given, usually with the surname first followed by the Christian name. They are usually arranged in alphabetical order.
2. 'Occupiers': this will be the person who actually lived in the house and farmed the land. Occupiers' names are usually given the natural way round, i.e. Christian name first, then surname.
3. 'Numbers referring to the plan': these are the field numbers. It should be noted that these are never in numerical order, as the apportionment is organised by landowner's name not by field number.
4. 'Name and description of lands and premises': this is the column where the field names are recorded. Depending on how rigorous the commissioners were, this column is sometimes left blank. This column also contains the names of farms, usually underlined.
5. 'State of cultivation': this column records the land use. Common terms here would be arable (i.e. ploughed land), pasture, meadow, woodland, heath, marsh.
6. 'Quantities in stature measure': this column was for recording the area, expressed as acres (a), roods (r) and perches (p). A rood is a quarter of an acre, and there are 48 perches in a rood. Depending on how rigorous the tithe commissioners are, this column may include acreages for each plot of land, or summary totals for each farm.
7. 'Amount of rent-charge ... payable [to the rector, vicar or impropiator]': this was the amount calculated by the commissioners to be a tenth of the likely produce from the land.

Cheriton: surveyed 1848 (reference P/104/2-4). This is the parish copy of the map and apportionment, with a facsimile of the diocesan copy of the map.

Cilybebyll: surveyed 1840 (reference P/73/1-2). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.

Glyncorrwg: the tithe map and apportionment is in two parts corresponding to the two divisions of the parish. They are facsimiles of the diocesan copy.

Blaengwrach hamlet: surveyed 1846 (reference P/145/1-2)

Glyncorrwg hamlet: surveyed 1847 (reference P/72/1-2)

Ilston: surveyed 1844 (reference P/105/2-3). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.

Knelston: surveyed 1846 (reference P/132/1). This is the parish copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 835.

Llanddewi: surveyed 1841 (reference P/107/1-2). This is the parish copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 835, 837

Llandeilo Talybont: surveyed 1840 (reference P/108/9-10). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.

Llangennith: surveyed 1847 (reference P/109/1-2). This is the parish copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 838.

Llangiwg: surveyed 1842 (reference P/59/9-10). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy. The parish copy of the tithe apportionment is also held, reference P/59/16.

Llangyfelach: surveyed 1838 (reference P/58/24-25). The map is a facsimile of the diocesan copy; the apportionment is the parish copy.

Llangynwyd: surveyed 1839. Only part of the Higher division of the parish was part of West Glamorgan. There is an estate copy of the tithe map only, reference D/D Ma 261/1-4

Llanmadoc: surveyed 1845 (reference P/110/1). This is the parish copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 834

Llanrhidian: the tithe map and apportionment is in two parts corresponding to the two divisions of the parish:

Llanrhidian Higher: surveyed 1847 (reference P/111, plan only, a facsimile of the diocesan copy). There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 839

- Llanrhidian Lower:** surveyed 1847 (reference P/111, plan only, a facsimile of the diocesan copy). There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 841
- Llansamlet:** surveyed 1844 (reference P/160/1-2). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.
- Llantwit-juxta-Neath:** the tithe map and apportionment is in three parts corresponding to the three divisions of the parish:
- Clyne:** surveyed 1845 (reference P/74/2, 3, 8). This is the parish copy and also a facsimile of the diocesan copy.
 - Llantwit Lower:** surveyed 1845 (reference P/74/4, 5, 9). This is the parish copy and also a facsimile of the diocesan copy.
 - Resolven:** surveyed 1841 (reference P/74/6-7) This is the parish copy and also a facsimile of the diocesan copy.
- Loughor:** surveyed 1839 (reference P/112/1/1-2). This is the parish copy of the map and apportionment. The map is a later, altered version produced in 1925.
- Margam:** no tithe map or apportionment was made
- Michaelston-super-Avon:** the tithe map and apportionment are divided into two parts corresponding to the two divisions of the parish (Michaelston Higher and Michaelston Lower). surveyed 1839, 1841 (reference P/75/1-2). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.
- Neath:** surveyed 1845 (reference P/76/22-23). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.
- Nicholaston:** surveyed 1844 (reference P/113/1, plan only, a facsimile of the diocesan copy). There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 842-843
- Oxwich:** surveyed 1844 (reference P/114/2, plan only, a facsimile of the diocesan copy). There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 844
- Oystermouth:** surveyed 1844 (reference P/115/3/1-2). The map is the parish copy; the apportionment is a facsimile of the diocesan copy. The map includes inset enlargements of Mumbles, Newton, Norton and Blackpill villages, and of Clement's Row.
- Penmaen:** surveyed 1844 (reference P/116/1-3). This is the parish copy.
- Pennard:** surveyed 1846 (reference P/117/1-2). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.
- Penrice:** surveyed 1846 (reference P/118/1/1-2). This is the parish copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 845

Port Eynon: surveyed 1846 (reference P/119/1). This is the parish copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 846-847. The map includes an inset enlargement of Port Eynon village.

Reynoldston: surveyed 1838 (reference P/120/1, plan only). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 848

Rhossili: surveyed 1847 (reference P/121/2). This is the parish copy. There is also an estate copy of the tithe map and apportionment, reference D/D P 849

St John-juxta-Swansea: surveyed 1844 (reference P/106/2-3). This is a facsimile of the diocesan copy.

Swansea: surveyed 1843 (reference P/123/18 and P/123/CW/681). There are two maps, one covering the entire parish and the other covering the town only/ at a large scale. This is the parish copy of the tithe map and apportionment.

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