

## Residents Don't Want A "Shanty Town"



The new residents of Longfields, back in 1965, had a series of clashes with the council over the conditions on their new estate. "The Bicester Council's lackadaisical attitude to their complaints" was even reported in the Bicester Advertiser.

A letter, with nine serious development complaints, signed by 104 people was casually cast aside at the Council meeting, said Mr. R. Robbins, of 32 longfields.

"I feel the Council are lethargic in not seeing that the Developer did the job properly in the first place" Mr. Robbins said.

He went on to say that even if the estate verges and common land were good enough for a Council estate it was not good enough for them. He was sure the outlook on the estate would de-value the houses, then costing between £3,000 and £4,000.

"The surroundings look like a slum area" Mrs. Robbins said.

The Council meeting upset the residents of this private estate because the Clerk of the Council. Mr. R. W. Bainton took it upon himself to refer to the letter as a complaint from a "number of residents."

Mr. L. G. Bailey, of 15 Longfields, said the Council seemed to be Mr. Bainton. The members were not told the contents of the letter or of the number of people who signed it, and he feels that it was passed off to the committees on Mr. Bainton's say-so only.

Reports of the progress made with the developers have been made to Bicester Council at interim periods, and the present Engineer, Mr. Stanley, has tried on a number of occasions to get the matter sorted out. He has suggested that the Council could take on the job of finishing off the remaining items

but the Council feel that the bond should be invoked.

Mr. Robbins feels the development (or lack of it) warrants a full inquiry. Some people's gardens were taken away to allow more houses to be built and he claims these people have not been remunerated.

The complaints signed by 104 residents were:

*The grass verges on the estate and the common land that fronts Longfields and Fallowfields Court are in a disgusting condition and should be ploughed up and re-turfed. Further, that this having been done, the grassed area should be maintained in a first class condition in the future.*

*Due to the number of complaints regarding the sewers, we request that a full inspection of the system be carried out and that they shall be maintained properly in the future.*

*We wish that a regular road sweeping service be initiated, without delay.*

*The residents of the estate request the planting of trees on the verges and the grass areas of the estate.*

*We urge the Council to approach the police with a view to enforcing the speed limit on the Launton Road and Longfields.*

*We request the council to investigate the possibility of setting aside a small area of the field partly occupied by Longfields Primary School as a play area for the young children on the estate.*

*The outlook to the rear of Fallowfields Court is unsightly and we bring this to the attention of the council, for their suggestions as to its improvement.*

*Full rates have been paid by many residents for 3 to 4 years; and during this period the first three items above have been unsatisfactory. We therefore feel that a reduction in rates for this estate is justified until such times as these matters are completed.*

Mr. Bainton said, "the Council consider everything that is on the agenda and Mr. Leach was quite right in referring complaints to the committees concerned. The letter from the estate only came in on the day before the meeting".

- Matthew Hathaway

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### Dates For Your Diary

Souldern Village Walk  
14th June

Victorian Leisure & Entertainment Talk  
15th June - 7:30pm  
see page 5

Souldern Countryside Walk  
21st June

Marlborough Trip  
24th June

Meadow Farm Visit  
28th June

July Newsletter Submissions Deadline  
3rd July

King's Sutton Village Walk  
12th July

Tin Helmets & Gas Masks Talk  
20th July - 7:30pm  
see page 5

King's Sutton Countryside Walk  
26th July

# Marj's Memories

## When Teachers Came Back From The War

I went up to the Senior School (Bicester CofE) from Crockwell School, around 1946. Mr Price was the Headmaster, but most of the teachers were women.

There was suddenly an influx of male teachers and this must have coincided with the demobilisation of the men that had fought in the war. There were comments about their "demob" suits – possibly issued by the Government.

Mr Putman was my first male class teacher and I attribute his teaching to the fact that I have always loved the English subject.

Mr (Tudor) Jones had been a pilot during the war. He brought back his plane with 19 bullet holes in the cockpit and a piece of shrapnel in his eye. I knew about this from my friend who was his sister. I don't think he spoke much in school about his war experiences.

Mr Simms (affectionately called Reggie Simms) taught History, among other subjects, and would often relate to events not far from where we lived. He had originated from Marsh Gibbon; his father had been, many years before, a shoemaker there.

Mr Simms's lessons were never forgotten and he would read books to us such as King Solomon's Mines and Lorna Doone. He always did the accents and you could have heard a pin drop – it was so interesting. He would sometimes side track into stories of the war, but suddenly stop and remind us that it was time to get on with our lessons.

Mr Price and Mr Simms both had cars, which was quite something in those days.

- Marjorie Dean MBE

# Bygone Bicester

(Taken from the Bicester Advertiser & Mid-Oxon Chronicle)

## 16th June 1865

**TEMPERANCE FESTIVAL** - The annual festival of the Bicester Temperance Society was held on Thursday last in a large tent erected in the paddock adjoining the premises occupied by Mr Facey, seedsman. The weather was beautifully fine.

Every exertion was made by the committee to render the festival worthy of the name. The tent was gaily decorated with evergreens, flowers, ornamental plants, flags, etc.

At four o'clock in the afternoon a procession of the children of the Band of Hope (each of whom was provided with a pretty rosette kindly made and given by ladies of the town friendly to the movement), headed by the Bicester Rifle Corps Band, with large temperance banners and flags, paraded the town, producing considerable excitement. Hundreds of persons lined the roads as the procession passed up to the top of King's End, back through the market place, up Sheep Street and then returning to the tent, where an excellent tea was awaiting them.

The cool shade of the tent, the sweet fragrance of the flowers and the refreshing beverage which cheers but not inebriates, were peculiarly gratifying after the long march under the broiling heat of the sun.

About 200 persons sat down to tea. Fourteen ladies, including Mrs Bliss, Mrs Hunt, Mrs Scrivener, Mrs Grimsley, Mrs Nicholls, and the Misses Stone, Ivens, Hunt, Morris and Thomas, kindly presided at the tables. The Band of Hope, about 80 in number, were plentifully supplied with tea and cake on the grass outside the tent.

## 4th June 1915

**DEATH OF THE EARL OF JERSEY** - A great loss to the district.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to announce the death of the Earl of Jersey, of Middleton Park, which took place on Monday evening at Osterley Park, Isleworth.

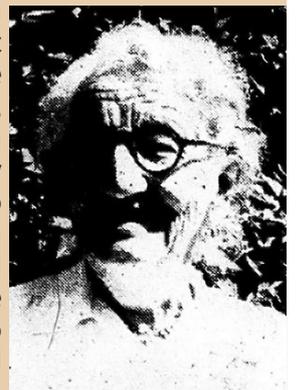
It was only a short time ago that Lord and Lady Jersey left Middleton Park for Osterley, his Lordship then being fairly well. On Friday morning last, however, he was

taken suddenly ill with a cerebral haemorrhage and, falling into unconsciousness, he never rallied, passing away about ten p.m on the following Monday. His Lordship had been in indifferent health for a long time, but he had recovered to such an extent as to take some part in the public duties of the county with which he has been so long associated, and the interests of which were always his first care.

There was no man in Oxfordshire who was more universally esteemed, and deservedly so. He touched the life of the county in so many ways, and always with so much ability, that his death will be keenly felt by all classes in it.

## 11th June 1965

**NINETY ON SUNDAY** - On calling to see Miss Emily Small at 5 Newport Terrace, Bicester, we were expecting to be introduced, with mixed feelings, to a person who celebrated her 90th birthday on Sunday, by the person who answered the door. But human nature is full of surprises and we were amazed when the bright eyed, cheerful lady who answered the door introduced herself as Miss Small.



A native of Bicester, her father used to work as an upholsterer at Layton's, she was a staunch supporter of the Methodist Church since its inception in Bicester. For many years she belonged to the choir as well as taking an active interest in many other activities with the Church.

In later years she became a member of the Red Cross Sunshine Club.

When she was a young woman she left home on obtaining employment as a Lady's Companion. She returned to Bicester in 1914 to look after her father, and has remained here ever since. Both her parents are dead and she is the only surviving child of the family of five.

Her recipe for the secret of being 90 years "young"? - "Just being bright and cheerful" she said.

# Archive Update

A copy of Pankhurst's Almanack and Directory for 1917 was recently donated to the BLHS Archive. It is a fascinating read and gives a good insight into Bicester of yesteryear.

Major the Hon. Edward Beaumont was living at Manor Farm, H. G. Fane at Bicester House, Mrs. J. W. Hunt at the Old Priory, C. A. Keith-Falconer at The Garth, Mr. T. C. Finch at Claremont House and F. A. Page-Turner at Old Place Yard.

As well as listing the residents – private and commercial – it also has the public and charitable institutions current in that year. Most of these have long since disappeared, but a few continue. They include Bicester Central Slate Club, who held their meetings at the White Hart Inn, and the Jersey Lodge of Freemasons who met at the Masonic Hall, Market Square (does anyone know where that was?)

Sport featured prominently in the town at that time, with Bicester Cricket Club, Bicester Rifle Club, Lord Jersey's Football Association and Bicester Bowling Green Club (at that time it was based at the back of the King's Head Inn premises).

The Chairman of the Bicester Urban District Council

was Mr. F. Hudson, and of the Bicester Rural District Council, Mr. E. Greaves. Clerk to the latter was Mr. Alfred Truman, who was also clerk to the Bicester Union.

Listed among the Charitable Institutions were Bicester Benevolent Society, Bicester Branch of the Girls' Friendly Society, Mothers' Meeting and the Sick Visiting Society.

Advertisements for local businesses include the Crown Hotel, Harry Kinch, William Grimsley and C. Ashmore.

If anyone holds any directories they could either donate, or lend for photocopying or scanning, it would be much appreciated.

- Gill King

## THE BICESTER DIRECTORY, 1917,

Containing Lists of Private and Commercial Residents  
Public Societies, Posts, Carriers, Fairs, Advertisements, &c.

### Notability, Clergy & Private Residents.

Abbott Miss, Ambrosden  
Adney Mrs. R. S., Ardley  
Armstrong Rev. A. St. Quinton, Newton Purcell  
Ashby Mrs. A., 6, Field-st., Bicester  
Baker Rev. S. H., Chesterton Vicarage  
Ball Rev. Dr. C. J., Bletchington  
Barker Rev. J. H., Marsh Gibbon  
Barnes Rev. G. E., Somerton  
Barrett Mr. W. S., Bucknell  
Bass Rev. Charles, Steeple Claydon  
Bayfield Rev. C., Ambrosden  
Beaumont Major the Hon Edward, Manor Farm, Bicester  
Beaumont Hon. Hubert, Wootton House, Aylesbury  
Bevan Rev. Philip Charles, Weston-on-the-Green Vicarage  
Bell Mrs., 3, Market-square, Bicester  
Bennett Mr. James, Sheep Street, Bicester  
Bertie Mrs. Rose, Manor Cottage, Weston-on-the-Green  
Bertie Mr. Richard, Manor Cottage, Weston-on-the-Green  
Bill Major, Sheld Farm, Bicester  
Bowen Mr. Joseph, 42, London Road, Bicester  
Bradshaw Miss, The Grange, Steeple Aston  
Brazier Mrs., Ambrosden  
Brooke-Smith Rev. A., Edgcott  
Brookes Mrs., Middle Aston House  
Brown Rev. F. J., Steeple Aston  
Brown Mr. John, Islip  
Brown Richard Charles Staples, Esq., The Elms, Bampton  
Brown Rev. Stafford Meredith, Fringford Rectory  
Buckle Mr. T., Banbury Road, Bicester  
Bunting Mr. H., London Rd., Bicester  
Burchard E. A., Esq., 62, Banbury Road, Oxford.  
Burton Rev. F. M., LL.D., Launton Rectory  
Carpin Mr. John, Pevensey House, Sheep Street, Bicester  
Carlton Captain, Grange Cottage, Steeple Aston  
Carter Rev. James Holderness, Islip Rectory  
Chimney Mrs. H. J., Fringford  
Coleman Mrs., St. Edburg's Villas, Church Street, Bicester  
Cooper Rev. Sydney (Rural Dean), Upper Heyford Rectory  
Cottrell-Dormer Capt. C. W., J.P., Rousham Park  
Daddy Miss, The Willows, Upper Heyford  
Dashwood Sir G. J. E., Eydon, Banbury  
Deeley Miss, London Rd., Bicester  
Dewar Miss, Cotmore  
Dewar-Harrison Major A. W., J.P., C.C., Willaston House  
Dewar Charles, Esq., Cotmore  
Dewar Colonel J. E., Cotmore  
Draper Rev. W. H., Middleton Stony Rectory  
Edbury Mr. William, Priory Villa, Chapel Street, Bicester  
Etingham Earl of, Tusmore Park  
Eliot Colonel G. E., Islip  
England, Lieut-Col. A. E., J.P., C.A., Souldern  
Evans Mrs. Louisa Julia, Beech Cottage, Lower Heyford  
Faithful Rev. C. H., Rousham  
Fane H. A., Esq., The Bank, Bicester  
Fane H. G., Esq., Bicester House

# Roll of Honour

*These are the local men who died in the Great War, 100 years ago this month.*

**Commander Alexander Young Spearman**, native of Fringford.  
Died: 4<sup>th</sup> June 1915      Aged: 52      Served in: Royal Navy

**Private Edwin Francis Lane**, of Hethe.  
Died: 6<sup>th</sup> June 1915      Aged: 17      Served in: Wiltshire Regiment

**Private William Thomas Hunt**, of Bicester.  
Died: 7<sup>th</sup> June 1915      Aged: 29      Served in: King's Dragoon Guards

**Private Frederick James Powell**, of Bucknell.  
Died: 9<sup>th</sup> June 1915      Aged: 33      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Gilbert Boddington**, of Weston-on-the-Green.  
Died: 20<sup>th</sup> June 1915      Aged: 33      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Lieutenant Cadwallader John Coker**, of Bicester.  
Died: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1915      Aged: 23      Served in: Welsh Regiment

**Private Edward Henry Blencowe**, of Mixbury.  
Died: 24<sup>th</sup> June 1915      Aged: 21      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry



## Village History Beckley

The village of Beckley lies just at the edge of the Society's area on the south-eastern side of Otmoor.

A former Roman road from Dorchester on Thames to Alchester passes through the village. Part of it is now a bridleway and artefacts found in the 19th century amongst the remains of a Roman villa near the road are now held in the Ashmolean Museum.

In the early Middle Ages Beckley was reputedly the home of a Saxon saint called Domnanuerdh.

Before the Norman Conquest in 1066 the manor of Beckley was one of many that belonged to Wigod of Wallingford. After the conquest the Norman baron Robert D'Oyly married Wigod's daughter Ealdgyth and thereby acquired all his estates. D'Oyly then gave a number of the manors, including Beckley, to his brother-in-arms Roger D'Ivry.

Beckley remained with Roger's heirs until early in the 12th century when, by 1156, the D'Ivry estates had passed to Reynold de St.Valery. Reynold died leaving the estates to his son Bernard, who in turn died leaving them to his younger brother, Thomas.

Thomas supported Philip II of France in his wars against England, so by 1197 Richard I seized the de St.Valery estates, including Beckley. But during the 13th century Thomas de St.Valery and his heir by marriage, Robert de Dreux, changed sides a number of times between England and France, forfeiting and regaining their English estates a number of times as a result.

In 1227 Henry III granted the

St.Valery estates to his brother Richard, 1st Earl of Cornwall. When Richard's heir, Edmund, died childless in 1300 his cousin Edward I inherited his estates. From then until 1550 the freehold of Beckley remained with the Crown, with a succession of noblemen appointed keepers or "Parkers" to manage Beckley Park on the King's behalf.

Under the will of Henry VIII, Beckley manor passed to Princess Elizabeth in March 1550 and in April 1550 Sir Walter Mildmay conveyed it to Sir John Williams, later Baron Williams de Thame. In 1559 Baron Williams died leaving Beckley and Horton to his daughter Margaret and son-in-law Sir Henry Norreys. The manors remained in their family until 1645, when Elizabeth, Baroness Norreys died leaving her estates to her daughter Bridget Wray, Baroness Norreys. When Bridget died in 1657 Beckley passed to her son James Bertie, 5th Baron Norreys, whom Charles II made 1st Earl of Abingdon in 1682. Beckley and Horton remained with the Bertie family until 1919, when Viscount Bertie, son of the 7th Earl of Abingdon, broke up the estate and sold it in small lots.

Bernard of St.Valery had a deer park at Beckley, the earliest known record of which dates from 1176. In 1229 the Earl of Cornwall had the park stocked with deer and a deer-leap built. When the manor reverted to the Crown, Beckley Park became a royal deer park.

Oxford University students were constant poachers in the park. So much so that in 1413 the Crown



threatened to deprive the University of its royal privileges.

The Earl of Cornwall had a hunting lodge built near the centre of the park, at the foot of the hill overlooking Otmoor to the north. It was fortified with three concentric, rectangular moats. The lodge no longer stands but its moats survive. After Sir John Williams bought the manor of Beckley he had the present Tudor house built, just outside the moats and adjoining the outermost one. Jacobean panelling was added to the parlour in the 17th century but otherwise the house remains very largely as it was built. It is a Grade I listed building.

The parish church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was originally Norman, but rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries. The interior has a number of wall paintings dating from this time, including a Virgin and Child, the weighing of souls, the torments of the damned and Saint Peter, Saint Paul and a Doom (shown above).

- Matthew Hathaway

## Bicester's Big Lunch

The Society's stall at this year's Big Lunch, on Sunday 7th June, was well recieved. We were located at the Sheep Street end of Crown Walk and displayed a collection of old photographs that had been shortlisted for next year's anniversary calendar. Inviting members of the public to vote for their favourites proved a good way of drawing closer attention to the images, and also helped the committee to decide which photographs would be used in the calendar.

- Matthew Hathaway



## Talks Update

Over the next few months we have a varied itinerary of talks that we hope will prove very interesting.

### Monday 15th June

Liz Woolley talks on **Leisure & Entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford**. Describing how Oxford's citizens spent their free time, and how the middle classes attempted to impose 'rational recreation' on their working-class contemporaries.

### Monday 20th July

Martin Way explores the work of the Home Front during World War 2 in his talk **Tin Helmets & Gas Masks**. Discussing the civilians' support for the military, the mobilisation of women, rationing etc. Illustrated with an array of interesting artefacts.

### Monday 21st September

Bill King's talk about **Industrial Archaeology in your Shed, Garage or Attic** shows us how artefacts reveal, over a timescale of thousands of years, the development of culture and society through the use of materials and technologies.

## Oxford's Historic Waterways

On the 18th May 2015 Mark Davis gave us his talk on Oxford's Historic Waterways. He had spoken to us previously on many occasions and this one proved to be just as interesting as the others. He began talking about the River Thames by quoting Raphael Holinshed: "Sometimes named Isis, or the Ouse, although ignorant call it the Thames." With Godstow Nunnery and St Margaret of Antioch Church close by, the towpath running along the side of the river through Port



Meadow was used more as a pilgrimage path than a working one.

Popular for sport and leisure, the Thames has also always been used for the University Boat Race, between Oxford and Cambridge, which began in 1829 at Henley.

In 1786 work began on the Oxford Canal. Daniel Harris came to Oxford as a journeyman carpenter and rose to become Governor of Oxford Prison from 1786 until 1809. He developed a contracting business using convict labour and was responsible for the canal construction within Oxford. He built from Hayfield Road to Worcester Street and the Worcester Street wharves in 1788. He built four pound locks to replace flash locks, the first being



Osney Lock in 1790. In central Oxford the canal and river were originally linked by a flash lock at Hythe Bridge. But, in 1795-97, Harris replaced it with Isis Lock, a broad lock to allow Thames barges in and out of the Worcester Street wharves. The Oxford Canal Company then rebuilt Isis Lock as a narrow lock in 1844.

The Oxford Canal Association formed in 1955 to prevent the closure of the canal by promoting its leisure uses and people are still promoting it today. The new Canal Heritage Trail hopes to continue encouraging its use.

- Matthew Hathaway

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