



Bicester Historian

Issue: 30 February 2017

The monthly newsletter for Bicester Local History Society

Bicester in Old Photos

For January's meeting our Chairman, Bob Hessian, showed us a collection of old photographs of Bicester. But this was just a small selection of the images that the society holds. Some more pictures from our collection are shown here, and continued on pages three and five.

- Matthew Hathaway



Banbury Road - May 1974



Derelict Cottages, Oxford Road - June 1957



Market Square & Causeway - November 1971



Market Square - June 1973

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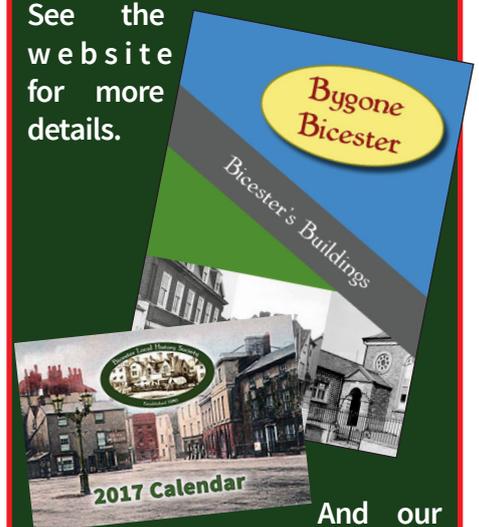
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Dates For Your Diary

- No Little Scandal to God or Man Talk
20th February - 7:30pm
see page 5
- March Newsletter Submissions
Deadline
3rd March
- Potted Histories at Bicester Library
18th March
see page 4
- Oxfordshire Castles Talk
20th March - 7:30pm
see page 5

AVAILABLE NOW!

Our new DVD, **Bicester's Buildings**, is on sale now. See the website for more details.



And our 2017 Calendar is still available through Coles Bookstore.

Village History Launton

The village of Launton lies on the eastern outskirts of Bicester.

The manor of Launton was granted to Westminster Abbey in 1065 by King Edward the Confessor. The abbey surrendered the manor to the Crown during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540, but in 1542 the Crown granted it to the abbey's Dean and Chapter.

Queen Mary restored the Roman Catholic church in England so in 1556 the manor was again surrendered to the Crown, who restored it to the reinstated abbot and convent of Westminster. Then Queen Elizabeth I restored the English church, so in 1560 the manor was surrendered to the Crown for a third time, who again granted it to the Dean and Chapter.

In 1649 the Commonwealth of England assigned Launton manor to Westminster School, a part of Westminster Abbey. Then in 1860 all the lands of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster were vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

The present manor house is 17th century, with a court room that was re-ordered in the 19th century. Its farmyard has a 14th/15th century barn of ten bays, with 17th century roof timbers, which may have once been a tithe barn and is now a grade II* listed building.



Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary - 1904

The grade I listed Church of England parish church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built in the 12th century. The four-bay aisles of its nave were added in the 13th century but it is not clear as to whether the west tower was part of the original 12th century church or was added as part of the 13th century alterations.

Originally the chancel had an

apse, but in the 15th century this part of the church was reordered with a rectangular east end. The nave has a clerestory with 15th/16th century windows and some of the aisle windows are also 16th century.

In 1891 a pair of flying buttresses, designed by Reginald Blomfield, were added to the west tower. In 1910 an Arts and Crafts style screen, designed by John Oldrid Scott, was added to the south aisle.

The bell tower has a ring of six bells, all cast by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon in 1907. The church also has also a Sanctus bell that was cast in 1352.

Launton had a Presbyterian congregation in 1772, when a meeting house was licensed for it. The congregation lapsed by about 1800, but was re-established by 1806. Zion chapel was built on the western edge of the village in 1807 to house this congregation. Later in the 19th century the chapel was used as a school.

Bethel chapel was built in 1850 for an independent Nonconformist congregation. By 1855 it had a lending library and a school. It later combined with the Congregational Church.



Bethel Chapel - 1978

- Matthew Hathaway



North Street - 1902



Sheep Street - 1890

Bygone Bicester

(Taken from the Bicester Advertiser)

7th February 1863

NARROW ESCAPE - On Tuesday last Messrs. Shillingford Brewers, Bicester, had a very narrow escape from explosion at their brewery.

One of the men had lit a fire under the boiler which, by some oversight, was dry inside. Shortly after some water was pumped in, and falling on the red hot surface, caused the materials of which the boiler is made to expand and crack.

It is only surprising that an explosion did not take place. As it is, it cannot be used again for three weeks or a month, and the actual damage to the materials will necessitate an outlay of about £100.

3rd February 1905

OBSCENE LANGUAGE - Tom Higgs, labourer, formerly of Fencott, was summoned to the Petty Sessions for using obscene language at Islip on September 23rd 1904. Defendant pleaded not guilty.

P.C. Bryan stated that he was on duty at Islip on the day named when he heard defendant using bad language towards some young men. The words used by defendant witness produced in writing. Witness cautioned him, but he continued his conduct and would not go away until threatened that he would be locked up.

Supt. Bowen said defendant was a bad character, and had given the police a lot of trouble. There were many convictions against him, though not recently.

Defendant was fined 10s, with 7s costs.

7th February 1947

EMLYN HOUSE CENTRE - Despite the severe weather there has been no falling-off in attendance at the Young Men's Club, although the premises had to close during the weekend owing to frozen pipes and, consequently, no water.

The usual Tuesday whist drive was held, with the following winners: Mrs J. Allum (highest); Mrs E.J. Smith and Mrs Frith (equal); Mr A. Grace and Mr J.H. Phipps (Wretchwick); miniature, Mrs L. Turney and Mrs Allum; consolation, Mr R.C. Garbett. A competition for cigarettes was won by Mrs A. Allmond.

The football (if possible) this week is at Oxford, where a Minor League fixture is due to be played with Barton Minors. The Bicester team, as selected, is: G. Austin, W.

Timms, W. Ware, R. Simons, V. Houghton, A.N. Other, R. Jeacock, J. Baughan, J. Long, D. Jeacock and R. White.

Mr F.C. Scarrott is resigning in March from his honorary post as leader of the Young Men's Club, which he founded and has carried on since 1944. It is anticipated that a paid official will be eventually appointed to take charge of the Youth Centre as a whole.

3rd February 1989

DISMAY AS HISTORIC WALL IS LOWERED - Town councillor Mrs Joan Blackman is dismayed to see how much of a high stone wall is being demolished at Bicester House.

Bovis Retirement Homes bought the house and gardens last year and have now started building nearly 30 cottages plus flats in the grade II listed house within the town's conservation area.

While people have expected changes to accommodate the development, some were unaware of the alterations to the main gates and entrance off King's End.

Mrs Blackman said: "I have had a lot of people complaining about the change. I do think it is a pity. I have seen the plans and there will be two gates or accesses."

She appreciated that the gate was not the original one, which was several yards away on the corner of what is now the junction of King's End and Queen's Avenue. The gate was moved from the corner to its present location when Queen's Avenue was built in 1938.

Mrs Blackman added: "I think it would have been better to use the rear access to Bicester House off what is now the Hunt Close estate. However, I appreciate people in Hunt Close would not want more traffic going through their road."

Cherwell's south area planning officer, Mr Bob Duxbury, said that some of the demolition was premature but it had been agreed that alterations would be made to the gate and entrance.

Mr Duxbury explained: "There will be two entrances and the existing one will end up being put further back. The changes will help to preserve the trees in the grounds and also in King's End. I hope the overall effect will not change the look of the wall significantly when everything is finished."

He said alterations would be subject to consultations with Bicester Town Council.

Roll of Honour

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

Private Arthur George Butler, of Launton.

Died: 8th February 1917 Aged: 29 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Arnold Drinkwater, of Islip.

Died: 10th February 1917 Aged: 22 Served in: Royal Army Service Corps

Private Arthur Cooper, of Charlton-on-Otmoor.

Died: 16th February 1917 Aged: 21 Served in: Royal Berkshire Regiment

Private Percy Frederick Pittam, of Chesterton.

Died: 19th February 1917 Aged: 27 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Henry Williams, native of Middleton Stoney.

Died: 23rd February 1917 Aged: 34 Served in: Worcestershire Regiment



Society News

- The redesigned website is now live. Most of the existing content has been moved over to the new site, but a few small areas are being updated and will be launched, together with all the new content, within the next couple of months.
- Oxfordshire Museum Services have invited us to participate in the 'Potted Histories' event at Bicester Library in March. This includes the artefact displays and our new display banners (which will remain on display after the main event), as well as a short talk on the history of Bicester given by our Chairman, Bob Hessian.

Potted Histories at Bicester Library
Saturday March 18th 2017
From 10.30am – 4pm
Provided by Oxfordshire Museum Service and Bicester Local History Society

Marj's Memories The Co-op

During the war, a large proportion of Bicester people were Co-op members. I have recently asked several people who, like me, spent their childhood here and all of them can remember their mum's Co-op number. The Co-op was a large shop, bare-looking, with floor boards and a counter running all the way down the left-hand side. The cashier's little area was half-way down. Miss Cox, a pretty lady with long, thick, wavy hair was the cashier. Mr George Dean was the manager, father of Wendy Wall and Marguerite Smith. Housewives had an order book and listed what they needed for the week. Milk tokens were bought with the groceries. Milk was delivered daily round the houses and tokens were put in the empty bottles to indicate how many pints were required. There was also a bread delivery.

There didn't seem to be a lot of food displayed: some large rounds of cheddar cheese which was cut with a wire; bacon, cut with the bacon slicer and large bags of sugar that was weighed and put into blue bags as required - all on a shelf on display behind the counter. On the right, on the floor, were boxes of vegetables and

fruit and square tins of biscuits, sold by the pound. If jam was available, the allowance was taken out of the sugar ration.

To the front of the shop, on the right was a small arcade displaying clothing; facing the entrance to the Clothing Department which was upstairs.

The Co-op Butcher's Shop was to the left of the Grocery shop. I was queueing in the butcher's one Saturday morning with a friend who was doing shopping for her mum, and a lady in front of us asked for some pigs' trotters. As she took them she said, in a typical Bicester accent, "My hubby'll enjoy them, he'll smack his old chops round them!"

The Co-op shops were to the left of Pevensey House (now Bannisters and USA Nails). Pevensey House had railings outside with a bit of greenery growing in the small enclosure. People stood their bicycles against the railings with no locks or chains. Specsavers is possibly where the grocery and clothing shop was and the butchers to the left where the Heart Foundation and Scrivens are now.

- Marjorie Dean MBE

Talks Update

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

Monday 20th February

Chris Day talks on **No Little Scandal to God or Man: The Extraordinary Story of Town/Gown Relations in Oxford.**

Monday 20th March

Trevor Rowley talks to us about **Oxfordshire Castles.**

Monday 24th April

This talk is still to be announced.

Old Photographs Talk Continued from front page



Upper Arncott Mill - December 1931



Station Road, Launton - 1904



Fringford Water Mill - 1965



Red Cow Inn, Chesterton - March 1956

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