



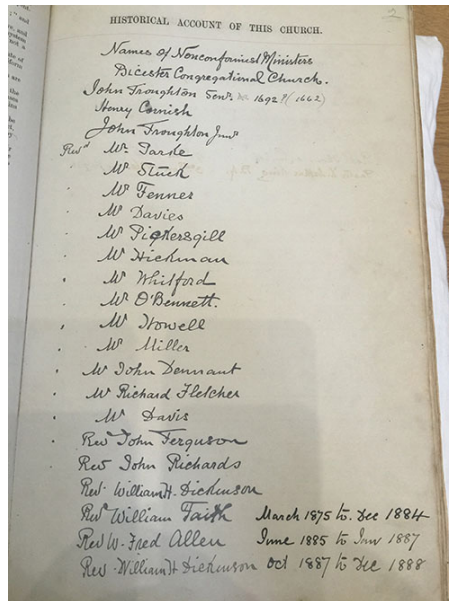
History Centre Saved (For Now)

Last year it was decided that some of Oxfordshire History Centre's collections would be re-located to the refurbished Central Library in Oxford (due to open in October), to take advantage of the anticipated large numbers of people who would be visiting the Westgate complex.

But, due to the increased demands on the County Council to use space at the Westgate to deliver a wider range of customer operations, the extent of what the History Centre could offer at the Westgate location would have been greatly compromised.

For this reason, the whole of the Oxfordshire History Centre service will remain at its current base at St Luke's, in Cowley, and will not now be closing for several weeks in September and October. However, footfall is very much down at the current site and their operating hours may well be cut if the facilities are not used more.

I personally find it an invaluable source of information in all the local history projects I do, whether its old photographs for the book I co-wrote on the history of St Edburg's Church or old maps and building records for the DVD we produced last year on Bicester's buildings. This monthly newsletter would be mostly empty without the microfilm copies of the Bicester Advertiser that the History Centre holds, and a lot of the great new features we are implementing on the society's website wouldn't be possible either.



Congregational Church ministers list - 1929

I strongly urge you to visit them and see for yourself. If you're working on a project then you're sure to find helpful information in their archives, and if you're not then its still worth a trip just to browse. The team of helpful staff will be more than happy to guide you towards what you want, and when you need a break they even provide refreshments in the reception cafe.

Some of the sources I've used there include parish records, maps, council minutes, poor law records, local newspapers, school records, photographic collections, oral histories, electoral registers, probate documents, health and hospital records, street and trade directories, court records, family records and non-conformist church documents. But they have so much more. Give it a try, you never know just what you might find.

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- Matthew Hathaway

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Dates For Your Diary

- September Newsletter Submissions Deadline
1st September
- AGM Submissions Deadline
4th September
- St Edburg's Church Heritage Day
9th September
see page 2
- Annual General Meeting
18th September - 7:30pm
see page 5

BICESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL.
Prize List - July, 1958.

Form VI		
Arts	Third Year	Valerie Freeman
	Second Year	Mary Stanford Joan Roberts
	First Year	Ann Scotney
Science	Second Year	G.M. Duxey
	First Year	D.M. Websdale
Form 5		
	1	G.M. Davies
	2	N. Gascoyne
	3	Jacqueline Lapper
	4	Fat Connor
Form 5p		
	Maureen Beardon & Sandra Morgan (General Progress)	
Form 4		
	1	J.W. Roberts
	2	Hleanor Shears
	3	G.A. Williams
Form 4p		
	Rosemary Freeman (General Progress)	
Form 3		
	1	F.A. Hudson
	2	M.C. Sawyer
	3	S.F. Merry & M.R. English (General Progress)
Form 3p		
	1	Joan Bartley

Grammar School student prize list - 1958

AVAILABLE NOW!

Our new DVD, **Bicester's Buildings**, is on sale now.

See the website for more details.



Marj's Memories The Old Workhouse

The Workhouse stood on the grounds where Market End Way is now. My earliest memory of it is during the war. Inside and around was a hive of activity with Nissen huts and tents, even some on the other side of the road on the corner of George Street/West Street (where now there are houses built on that corner). The inside was used for training purposes by the ARP and the like.

A company of NCC (Non-Combatant Corps) was stationed there and billeted in the Nissen huts; one of these huts became the first Highfield Social Club premises in 1953. The children got to know the NCC soldiers and one, in particular, a man called Roy Cutus would tell us Bible stories. They wore the army uniform and worked towards the war effort, but refused to fight.

Just along from the Workhouse was a long lane (still there now). At the bottom was The Sanatorium. It was a forbidden territory because of the illness contained therein.

After the war, because of the shortage of houses, the Workhouse was converted into flats and was named "Market End House". There were no houses on that side of the road except, further along, Primrose Cottage and the orchards.

The "old" people used to call George Street and the track across the fields "The Workus Path". (Bicester pronunciation of workhouse.) It led into Bicester and we called it the "field way". The new road, now called Queen's Avenue was built in the early thirties; the Police Station was then opposite the Church and the Fire Station was near the swimming pool along with



the Council Yard off The Causeway. The field was called Bell Field; it was divided into two and half-way along the track was an old-fashioned stile that we had to climb and lift our bikes over the top.

When we got to what is now Queen's Avenue, on the right-hand side was The Fox Inn but before that, where the antiques place is now, were a lot of horse chestnut trees, lovely when in bloom, where the children got their conkers. It was a much played game and quite competitive, to the point that we baked the conkers in the oven to make them harder to crack. We had bruised knuckles and flying conkers which could be dangerous, but I don't think anyone saw that side of it. Someone would shout "Iddley Iddley onker, my first conker, Iddley Iddley ho, my first go!" and the game began.

There were many places to get conkers. Just over the level crossing on the London Road there were horse chestnut trees all along the left-hand side going out of Bicester.

- Marjorie Dean MBE

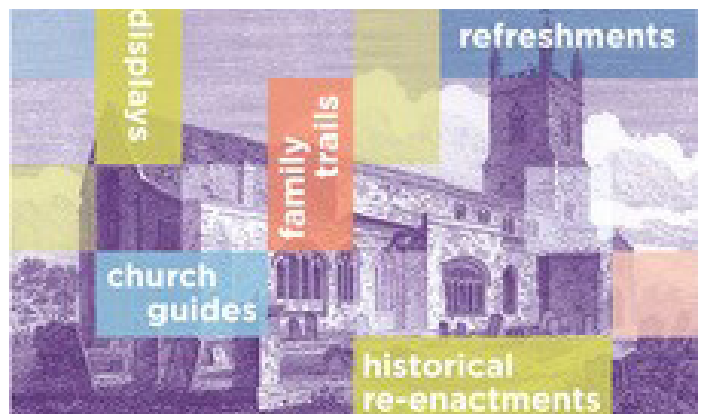
Church Heritage Day

St Edburg's Church is the oldest building in Bicester and the only grade 1 listed. It has been a place of worship for over 900 years and many of its beautiful stained-glass windows tell the Christian story. But the building itself also reflects the changes in architecture through the centuries and the many monuments and memorials tell the stories of local people, the history of this town.

On Saturday 9th September the church will be opening its doors as part of the Heritage weekend and would love to see as many members of BLHS as possible supporting the event.

There will be information, trails and displays including items now rarely seen. Church members will be on hand to show you round and hopefully to answer your questions. There will be costumed re-enactments (with a few additions to history!) in the afternoon at 2pm and 3:30pm and refreshments will be available all day. It is a free event and all are welcome - do come in costume if you wish!

We want to be able to share as much as possible, not just about the history of the church itself, but also the



organisations connected with it, such as St Edburg's School, Crockwell School, Bicester Workhouse and Bicester Cottage Hospital. If anyone has any relevant photographs or artefacts that you would be willing to lend (we can take copies of photos and documents rather than use your originals) we would be very grateful - please do get in touch via the editor. We would also love to hear your memories of the church or the schools - please do come along on the day and talk to us. - Gill King

15th August 1863

TEA MEETING - On Wednesday last, the school children of the Bicester and Launton Congregational Chapels, numbering about 150, held their annual treat in a field kindly lent for the occasion by Mr Smith, of Wretchwick.

At two o'clock Mr Hedges' van, filled with the youngest children, while the elder ones walked behind, started off in high glee to the field. The children then amused themselves at various games till half-past four, when they sat down to partake of the tea and cake kindly provided for them.

After the tea the teachers had a game of cricket between themselves, but the darkness compelled them to give in a little after seven and commence amusing themselves in other ways.

Dancing was tried first, but was soon put a stop to on someone proposing "Kiss in the Ring", which so took the fancy of all present (especially the ladies) that it was kept up without intermission till after ten.

As the field was open to anybody who liked to go, several parties availed themselves of the opportunity of having a bit of fun. The children returned home in Mr Hedges' van after receiving a short address from the Rev. J. Richards.

11th August 1905

VISIT OF GENERAL BOOTH TO BICESTER - The Salvationists of Bicester and district were en fête on Monday afternoon, when General Booth paid a visit to the town in the course of his motor car tour through parts of Great Britain. Placards and small bills announcing the General's coming were freely distributed, and the public were fairly cognisant of the particulars.

The Norland Castle Band visited the town in honour of the event, and after parading the streets gave selections of music opposite the Crown Hotel. At many places flags and streamers were displayed, whilst people flocked to the town in numbers.

It was somewhat late before the cars came in sight on the Oxford Road, and an expectant crowd, many of whom had deprived themselves of witnessing the earlier part of the sports in the cricket field, gave a hearty greeting as the cars travelled past them. There were five cars in all, and it was known that General Booth would occupy the white car.

The streets in King's End were lined on either side with people cheering the General, who acknowledged their welcome. The police kept the road clear in Sheep Street, and when the cars reached the Crown Hotel the occupants alighted and at once proceeded to the Corn Exchange, which was packed to excess.

Mr Thomas Grimsley (Sheep Street) welcomed General Booth at the entrance and then introduced him to the meeting, which was very representative of all denominations. The proceedings commenced with the hymn "When I survey the wondrous Cross", following which came prayer by Colonel Eady. The Chairman then addressed a few words of welcome to General Booth, who replied with a most forcible speech, chiefly on the work and progress of the Salvation Army. The meeting over, a collection was taken, and the proceedings closed with the Benediction by Commissioner Cadman.

After having partaken of tea at the residence of Mrs Palmer, Rose Cottage, General Booth started for Northampton at six o'clock, receiving a hearty send-off, the band playing "God be with you till we meet again".

15th August 1947

FOOD CONTROL - A meeting of the Bicester and Ploughley Food Control Committee was held on Monday, Mr E.A. Clifton (chairman) presiding. The directors of Mogfords Ltd were granted a catering license in respect of Weston Manor Hotel; and Mr F.J. Bowden, of Grendon Underwood, was granted an extension of his license for the sale of fish to include fruit and vegetables. Two applications for catering licences for mobile vans were refused.

The Ministry of Food are told that some retailers are still selling pears at 1s 6d per lb. This price may no longer be charged for any variety of imported pears. The maximum retail price for any imported pears exceeding 1 3/4 inches in diameter is 1s 1d per lb; for smaller pears 6 1/2d per lb.

18th August 1989

COURT BRACES ITSELF - Court cases from the entire stretch of the M40 motorway through Oxfordshire will be dealt with at Bicester and Thame.

All the court cases from the county's stretch of the extended M40 motorway will be divided between Bicester Magistrates' Court and Thame Magistrates' Court, which already has part of the existing M40 within its division.

Bicester court, based at Waverley House in Queen's Avenue, will therefore be holding an extra sitting every fortnight to deal with the new work which will be generated by the extended motorway.

The clerk to the justices for the North Oxfordshire Group of Divisions, Mr Chris Bazell said: "The extra work anticipated through the extension of the M40 motorway through Oxfordshire is likely to amount to 500 extra prosecutions and about 1000 extra fixed penalty tickets per year."

"The entire court work for the whole of the M40 through Oxfordshire will be dealt with in the Thame and Bicester courts purely because the Banbury court at present does not have any spare capacity to deal with extra cases."

"The Bicester court at present has two courts sitting regularly every Monday and courts on Friday roughly once a fortnight. We therefore are going to have one extra court every fortnight to deal with the extra motorway work. We anticipate about a 20 per cent increase in court time needed to deal with it."

Although the motorway work would be dealt with at Bicester courthouse, Mr Bazell said the magistrates dealing with it would come from both the Bicester and Banbury benches. Mr Bazell said: "We anticipate that the court work will start coming through about three months after the M40 extension through Oxfordshire is opened."

Most of the Oxfordshire stretch of the extended M40 motorway will be policed from a new motorway patrol base being built as the first phase of the new Thames Valley Police headquarters complex at Bicester. The new motorway patrol base is expected to open in June next year.

Roll of Honour

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

Lieutenant Wilfred James Dashwood, of Kirtlington.

Died: 2nd August 1917 Aged: 34 Served in: Grenadier Guards

Private William John Edwards, native of Islip.

Died: 15th August 1917 Aged: 24 Served in: Machine Gun Corps

Sergeant Gilbert Humphries Burden, of Islip.

Died: 16th August 1917 Aged: 22 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Frederick Arthur Crawford, of Merton.

Died: 16th August 1917 Aged: 33 Served in: Royal Berkshire Regiment

2nd Lieutenant George Herbert Farley, of Bicester.

Died: 16th August 1917 Aged: 22 Served in: Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

Private William George Hathaway, of Wendlebury.

Died: 16th August 1917 Aged: 34 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Joseph James Millioli, of Islip.

Died: 16th August 1917 Aged: 35 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Henry Edwin Turner, of Merton.

Died: 16th August 1917 Aged: 31 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Sergeant Edward George Joines, of Bicester.

Died: 17th August 1917 Aged: 34 Served in: Royal Field Artillery

Private William James Callow, of Souldern.

Died: 22nd August 1917 Aged: 27 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Aubrey Castle, of Launton.

Died: 22nd August 1917 Aged: 19 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Gilbert Collins, of Stoke Lyne.

Died: 22nd August 1917 Aged: 21 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Vincent Sampson Ellington, of Bicester.

Died: 22nd August 1917 Aged: 37 Served in: Seaforth Highlanders

Private Percy James French, of Hethe.

Died: 22nd August 1917 Aged: 19 Served in: Royal Marine Light Infantry

Private Howard Stanley May, of Baynard's Green.

Died: 22nd August 1917 Aged: 21 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Percy Nash, of Bucknell.

Died: 22nd August 1917 Aged: 38 Served in: Royal Berkshire Regiment

Private Frederick Berry, of Little Chesterton.

Died: 23rd August 1917 Aged: 24 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Charles Austin, of Blackthorn.

Died: 27th August 1917 Aged: 46 Served in: Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Private Frederick James Batchelor, of Fringford.

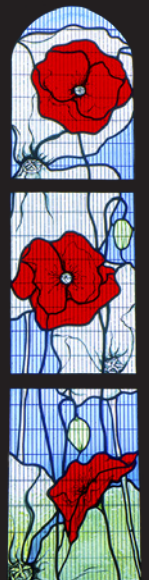
Died: 27th August 1917 Aged: 28 Served in: Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Private Edwin Neale, of Islip.

Died: 27th August 1917 Aged: 33 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Sidney George Scragg, of Upper Heyford.

Died: 27th August 1917 Aged: 30 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry



Village History Noke

Noke is a small village about 5 miles northeast of Oxford, on the southeast edge of Otmoor. It is known as one of the “Seven Towns of Otmoor”.

The toponym is derived from Old English and means “at the oak trees”. The parish still has two woodlands: Prattle Wood about 500 yards southwest of the village, and Noke Wood about 1 mile to the southeast.

Some land within the parish formed part of Edward the Confessor’s gift to Westminster Abbey, and Noke has been connected with the Dean and Chapter of Westminster at various periods in its history. As late as 1800 the Dean and Chapter claimed the overlordship of Noke and villagers were required to attend formal readings of documents in Islip, mainly concerning tithes. The advowson of the parish church was purchased by the Dean and Chapter in 1915.

The parish church of Saint Giles dates from the first half of the 13th century, though it is believed that a church stood on the site in the time of William the Conqueror and a priest is recorded as working there in 1191. This earlier church may have been a

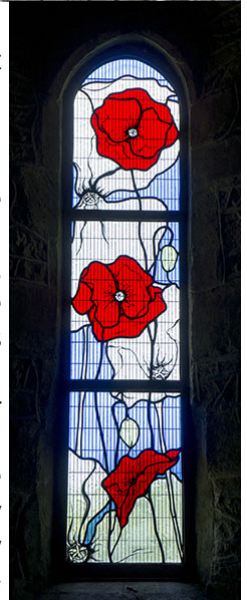
chapel of Islip. Traces of the foundations of an earlier building on a slightly different alignment to the existing church were revealed in archaeological test pits dug close to the chancel wall back in the 1950s.

The present church building is a small but beautifully proportioned stone building constructed in limestone rubble with ashlar dressings, under a plain-tile roof. The chancel arch is part of the original 13th century structure, as is the south wall, south door, porch and the plain double lancet window in the south wall. The nave roof with its curved wind-braces was probably replaced in the Elizabethan period, when the church was extensively repaired by Joan Bradshaw and her grandson Benedict Winchcombe, and a family mortuary chapel was added to the north side, but this was in a ruinous condition by 1745 when it was pulled down and its doorway blocked up.



St Giles' Church

were carried out in 1758. Then some restoration work was carried out in the Victorian period by W. Wilkinson, at which time the plaster was removed from the interior of the church and the square wooden belfry was replaced by the present bell-turret, carrying two bells.



War memorial window

Noke Parochial School was built in 1863. It was reorganised as a junior school in 1931 and closed in 1946. Noke also used to have a public house, but this too has closed. Both the school and the pub are now private houses.

- Matthew Hathaway



Noke Parochial School - 1906

Further repairs to the building

Annual General Meeting

This year’s AGM is at 7.30pm on Monday 18th September at The Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, Bicester.

This is your chance to hear about what the society has achieved over the past year; find out about our plans for next year; put questions to the Committee; offer help or suggestions; and renew

your subscription.

If you would like to add an item to the agenda, make a nomination for the committee, or find out more about joining either the committee or one of our ‘volunteers’ groups, please contact our Chairman, Bob Hessian on 01869 350662 or chairman@blhs.org.uk by the 4th September.

Talks Update

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

Monday 18th September

This meeting begins with our AGM, which will then be followed by some **Historical Miscellany**.

Monday 16th October

Martin Greenwood talks to us about **Evacuation to Bicester and Local Villages in 1939-45**.

Monday 20th November

Society member Pat Snelson gives us **A Window into Bicester's Architectural History**.

Glove Making in West Oxfordshire Talk

Carol Anderson began her talk by explaining that before the industrial revolution, glove-making could be found all over the country, dependent only on the proximity of the raw materials and the availability of skilled tradesmen. After the industrial revolution, with the establishment of factories and mechanization, it was the proximity of good transport links that concentrated the industry into particular areas, like Yeovil, Worcester, and West Oxfordshire.

Factories were located in Witney, Burford, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, and Woodstock. Woodstock had its own tannery, situated on the outskirts of the town. In the mid-19th Century, 600 women and girls were working in Dent's factory in Woodstock, and 753 were working at Pritchards in Witney. Records show that in 1850, the total number of different firms in Woodstock alone employed 100 men and 1,500 women, who between them produced 6,000 pairs of gloves a week.

There were two glovers noted in Bicester around the 16th Century: 1597 William Fly and 1613 Walter Hunt. The numbers of glovers in the town increased slightly during the 17th and 18th Centuries, but output was at a low level compared to that of West Oxfordshire. A small factory was located in Bicester behind Sheep Street.

The glovers (men) covered all the processes up until the stitching. The gloveresses (women) would then take over the stitching of the gloves. Skins were checked, sorted and scraped clean by the glovers, then washed, dyed and stretched to ensure maximum suppleness. Then the leather was cut (there was a seven-year apprenticeship for cutters, which was considered a very

skilled profession). Card patterns were used for the initial cut, then the leather would be thinned out further over a marble slab before the final cut with a press, to the exact shape of the glove. The glovers tended to work together in one location, and once their work was completed, the cut gloves would be bundled out into neighbouring villages for the gloveresses to carry out the stitching as 'piece work' at home. The gloveresses were paid per pair of gloves stitched.

Each full-time cutter would need 12 – 15 women to stitch his output. In the early 19th Century, men earned double the pay of women, whose average output was three pairs of gloves a day, stitched by hand. In the latter 19th Century with the establishment of factories, mass production and the introduction of Singer sewing machines, the stitching time for one pair of gloves was reduced to only 20-30 minutes.

The gloving industry was faring well until just after the Second World War. By this time, gloves had evolved into fashion items, therefore susceptible to the peaks and troughs of trends. Anything 'in fashion' could easily go 'out of fashion'. Cheap imports (particularly from Italy) flooded the market, offering exotic styles, and synthetic materials. Cold carriages had been replaced by motor cars. Motor cars had become heated (no need for driving gloves); church-going by the masses had declined (no need for Sunday best gloves). Quite simply, gloves went out of vogue, and as a consequence, factory after factory closed. The last factory in Woodstock closed in 1966, followed two years later by the closure of the last factory in Charlbury.

- Sally Dexter

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