



Issue: 51 November 2018

Bicester Historian

The monthly newsletter for Bicester Local History Society

We Did Remember Them



On Saturday 10th November we, together with St Edburg's Heritage Group, put on a special event in St Edburg's Church to commemorate the men of Bicester who died in the First World War.

This proved to be far more popular than we ever imagined, with about 400 visitors attending on the Saturday. So popular, in fact, that we were asked to leave the displays up for the Remembrance Service on Sunday, after which a lot of people stayed behind to view what we had done.

The church had small displays about the Red Cross Hospital and the Armistice celebrations, as well as areas where people could leave information about their own relatives. The local Scout groups made up crosses for each of the men listed on the war memorial, which were put up in the churchyard and formed a very poignant display.

Our displays focused entirely on the 131 servicemen, that we know of, who were linked to Bicester and died during the war. We included a map of the town

(shown below), that showed where each man lived, and emphasised that no part of the town was untouched by the loss. There was also a timeline plotting each man's death through the course of the war (shown above).

But the main part of the display included photographs, biographies, obituaries and census information for as many of the men as we could find. This was the part that people found the most moving. Some visitors even found relatives that they never knew they had!

It was an honour to commemorate the men in this way, and hopefully we will be able to make the information permanently available somewhere soon.

- Matthew Hathaway



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Dates For Your Diary

December Newsletter
Submissions Deadline

3rd December

Bicester Advertiser Local
History Article

6th December

Christmas Tree Festival

7th-9th December
see page 4

Christmas Social Event

17th December - 7:30pm
see page 6



One of the "There But Not There" silhouettes donated for the event.



A poppy for each man was placed by the altar as their names were read out.



The "Field of Crosses", on the southern side of the churchyard

Bygone Bicester (Taken from the Bicester Advertiser)

3rd November 1882

THE FLOODS AND GALES - The gale, with rain and snow, on Tuesday week last, will long be remembered by all, and especially by those who were exposed to its fury, or had to wade through the excessive floods which it caused. Not only was it the first snow of the season, but the north wind which accompanied it was extremely cold, so much so that a stalwart labourer, who happened to be out in it, told me it benumbed his fingers to so great a degree that he could have fairly cried "like a great baby" when the circulation was being restored to them.

The storm was unexpected, and most severe, but it saved numbers of persons the trouble of gathering their apples, and so convenient was it that in many instances

it laid the trees on the ground so that those apples which held fast could be gathered without the aid of a ladder.

The gale very forcibly illustrates the danger of trees growing by the roadside. Public Safety almost demands the prohibition of elm timber being planted within reaching distance of a road. So far as gales may affect us any number of oak trees might grow in the hedgerows bounding public roads, for during the gales of the past 12 months, I noticed one oak tree only that had succumbed to the winds.

When a brisk wind is blowing it is positively unsafe to be near an elm tree, the roots of which never strike downward, and have consequently but little weight of earth to hold them.

In this district, numbers of elm trees were last week blown across the roads, and I hear of a carrier's cart conveying three or four females that had to put by till the gale was abated on account of the danger from the elm trees which studied the roadside, several of which actually fell at the time the vehicle, in ordinary course, could have been passing.

To those who plant timber - and I wish they were more numerous than they are - I strongly recommend nothing but oak by road sides. A road surveyor would say, of course, plant none near a road.

13th November 1908

NEW RAILWAY TO LONDON - The latest account of the progress of the Ashendon and Aynho railway appears in an article from the pen of Mr R.C. Sikes M.Inst.C.E., in this month's Great Western Railway Magazine, one of the most readable productions of its class. Mr Sikes, in his article, says:

Parliamentary powers for the construction of the line between Ashendon Junction, the termination of the Great Western and Great Central Joint Railway, and Aynho, a station on the Oxford and Birmingham line, near Banbury, were obtained in 1905, and in the autumn of the following year a contract for its construction was entered into with Messrs. Scott and Middleton.

The line, which, when brought into use, will shorten the route to Birmingham and the North by nearly 19 miles, is about 18 miles in length, and has been designed for fast running. The ruling gradient is 1 in 200, and, except at junctions, there is no curve of less radius than 2 miles.

Commencing with a "flying" junction at Ashendon, where the up line crosses over the Great Central Railway on a 53 feet span girder bridge, the work is mostly through clay cuttings up to 3 miles 70 chains beyond Brill and Ludgershall station, there being a short tunnel 192 yards in length at two miles, which is now practically complete. A long embankment, with only one short break, extends from 3 miles 70 chains past Bicester, to 11 miles, crossing in its course an extent of low-lying country, much of which is liable to severe floods.

At Bicester the new line passes over the Oxford branch of the London and North Western Railway on a girder bridge of 54 feet span. At 11 miles it enters a long cutting, terminating in a tunnel 1,150 yards in length at about 15 miles. This tunnel was constructed from four shafts and one open end, and, in spite of the large quantity of water met with, the lining was completed in 18 months.

Between 15 miles and Aynho Junction, the most interesting works are two large viaducts of brick piers and arches, that at 16 miles 24 chains having 18 spans, and that at 17 miles 24 spans, of 40 feet in both cases. A "flying" junction at Aynho connects the new line with the Great Western mainline to Oxford and Birmingham.

There will be five new stations, viz., Brill and Ludgershall, Blackthorn, Bicester, Ardley and Aynho, the last-named adjoining the station on the existing mainline. The design of the stations is the standard Great Western Railway pattern, except at Bicester, where the buildings will be more elaborate, and will include refreshment and tea rooms, as well as dressing rooms for hunting people. With the exception of the stations at Blackthorn and Aynho, provision is being made for four lines between platforms, the two centre lines being

intended for through trains. At Brill and Ludgershall and Bicester passing places will be provided for 80 truck goods trains. At certain places along the route halts will be provided to accommodate local traffic.

Rather over half the contract work has now been completed, and good progress is being made with the new station buildings at Bicester and Blackthorn. When completed the work will have involved the excavation of some 2,700,000 cubic yards of clay and rock, practically all of which will have been deposited in the embankments of the line.

4th November 1932

TUNROOM HALL PERFORMANCES - A good programme is being given by Mr Will Weight's players at the Tunroom Hall this week - Maie Belle's "Happy Originals", including Billy Rogers, Frank Hellyer, Iris Hillier, Male Belle and the Sisters Deering, whilst Carlton Towers is deputising for Ernest Eden.

Last night presents of silk stockings, bottles of port, bottles of scent, cigarettes, etc, were distributed. Tonight the gift is a canteen of cutlery, and tomorrow, six presents, and match football and a clock will be given away.

Next week Mr Weight presents the wireless favourites, "The Ne'er-Do-Wells" each night, with the pantomime "Cinderella" for the children's matinee on Saturday afternoon.

8th November 1957

BONFIRE NIGHT WENT OFF WITH A QUIET BANG - Bonfire night in Bicester and the surrounding villages on Tuesday was the quietest fifth of November for many years. Only one incident marred the evening celebration. This was at Bucknell, where Bicester fire brigade was called out to extinguish a blaze in the old school building.

Village children had built a bonfire on an open space in front of the school and the fire is believed to have started in the building when fireworks were thrown. The blaze was confined to floorboards and the flames were quickly put out. The school has been unoccupied for several years.

There were the usual number of communal bonfires in Bicester and the villages, and a spectacular fireworks display was given for families at the RAF station at Bicester.

Children attending the Audley House School, Chesterton, together with their parents, enjoyed a colourful aerial fireworks display given by Langs of Bicester Ltd.

Service families at Bicester Garrison had their own communal bonfires and fireworks displays.

It was a financial boom for the fireworks retailers in Bicester. All types of fireworks were in great demand and most shops were sold out before Tuesday evening.

Bicester police report a very quiet night in the town and district, unlike Oxford, which had its rowdiest fifth of November for years. Damage amounting to £100 was caused when bottles and stones were thrown at the Randolph Hotel. A car was overturned in St. Aldates, and during the evening the police made 14 arrests. Only five of them were undergraduates. The crowds were largely formed of youths of the Teddy Boy type and their girlfriends.

Christmas Tree Festival

This year St Edburg's Church will once again be holding its annual Christmas Tree Festival in early December, and, as in previous years, BLHS will be decorating a tree of its own.

The event itself will take place from Friday 7th until Sunday 9th December, in St Edburg's Church, Bicester.



Marj's Memories Death in the 1940s

In the forties and fifties, when someone died, the deceased was usually kept in the home until the day of the funeral. I remember several Bicester women who could be called upon to "lay them out" - a procedure which is now usually done by the undertaker. The curtains of the house were drawn together until the funeral and a period of respect took place. Children rarely attended funerals.

The undertaker I remember was Mr Philpot. He always travelled to the deceased's house on his bike which had an enormous saddle - like no other. When you saw that "big saddled" bike outside a house, you knew someone had passed away. He was a big distinguished man.

With all the talk of funeral prices, I thought you might

be interested to see the funeral bill, of my much loved Grandfather who passed away on 6th May 1945 (two days before Victory). No-one was more interested than him to see us win the war, having lost his youngest son, aged 28, fighting the rear guard action to enable the troops to get to Dunkirk in April 1940. During the war when the news was on the radio, children knew they had to be silent, well, always in our house. When all the houses were adorned with flags and bunting, on 8th May, we couldn't celebrate in that way. But the Star had a victory party and in the fancy dress competition, I won First Prize (half a crown) - my mum had dressed me as a Gypsy.

- Marjorie Dean MBE

PHONE 157. BICESTER.

Sept. 1945.

Executors of the late (Mr) James Arthur Ayris.

Dr. to

H. G. PHILPOT,

Builder, Decorator, Carpenter and Undertaker.

MOTOR HEARSE PROVIDED. SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CREMATION ORDERS.

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------|
| May. Making polished elm coffin with brass fitting & shroud, making arrangements & attending the funeral of the late (Mr) James Arthur Ayris | 9 | 4 | 6 |
| Fees. | | 13 | 0 |
| Verger. | | 4 | 0 |
| Bearers. | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Hearse. | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| Car. | | 10 | 0 |
| | | <u>13</u> | <u>19</u> <u>6</u> |

Roll of Honour

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

Lieutenant Alan Thomas Reed, of London. Died at RAF Upper Heyford.

Died: 1st November 1918 Aged: 21 Served in: Royal Air Force

Private Herbert William Wise, of Charlton-on-Otmoor.

Died: 6th November 1918 Aged: 20 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

2nd Lieutenant Edgar Stanley Scott, of Newcastle. Died at RAF Weston-on-the-Green.

Died: 7th November 1918 Aged: 19 Served in: Royal Air Force

Corporal Gerald Joseph Tompkins, of Bicester. Native of Islip.

Died: 19th November 1918 Aged: 28 Served in: Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars

Lance Corporal Arthur Edgington, of Kirtlington.

Died: 20th November 1918 Aged: 21 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Lance Corporal William Joseph King, of Bicester.

Died: 21st November 1918 Aged: 26 Served in: South Staffordshire Regiment

Private Frederick Hollis, of Ardley. Native of Somerton.

Died: 22nd November 1918 Aged: 29 Served in: Middlesex Regiment

Driver Henry Patrick Farrer, of Cottisford.

Died: 26th November 1918 Aged: 37 Served in: Royal Engineers

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

Private Percy Deeley, of Arncott.

Died: 16th December 1918 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Driver Albert Thomas Clanfield, of Bletchingdon.

Died: 22nd December 1918 Aged: 22 Served in: Royal Field Artillery

2nd Lieutenant John Humphrey, of Edinburgh. Died at RAF Weston-on-the-Green.

Died: 16th January 1919 Served in: Royal Air Force

Gunner George Augustus Bullock, of Bletchingdon.

Died: 18th February 1919 Aged: 31 Served in: Royal Garrison Artillery

Private Albert Langford, of Hethe.

Died: 20th February 1919 Aged: 28 Served in: Worcestershire Regiment

Sergeant Herbert Edward Couling, of Bicester.

Died: 17th May 1919 Aged: 23 Served in: Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Driver Bernard Ayres, of Merton.

Died: 25th March 1920 Served in: Royal Field Artillery

Corporal Albert Edward Brockless, of Bicester.

Died: 3rd October 1920 Aged: 23 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Gunner William Wise, of Weston-on-the-Green.

Died: 13th May 1921 Aged: 41 Served in: Royal Field Artillery

Petty Officer William James Sherrell, of Islip.

Died: 9th December 1922 Aged: 24 Served in: Royal Navy - HMS Amethyst



Talks Update

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

Monday 17th December

This meeting will be our
Christmas Social.

Monday 21st January

Christopher Young tells us
about the memorials of St
Edburg's Church in his **Churches
Have Memories** talk.

Monday 18th February

Elaine Steane comes to talk to
us about **Oxfordshire Mills.**

A Few Old Adverts (The cover of a concert programme, 1939)

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| <p align="center">BICESTER COUNTY SCHOOL (Secondary School for Boys and Girls)</p> <p align="center"><i>FULL INCLUSIVE FEES £4 18s. A TERM.</i></p> <p align="center">For prospectus, etc. apply to the HEADMASTER.</p> | | <p align="center">W. E. SMITH & SON (MORLEY W. SMITH)</p> <p align="center">Gold Medal Bakers, Pastrycooks and Confectioners, SHEEP STREET, BICESTER.</p> | |
| <p>J. T. & D. A. Mountain Ph.C., M.P.S. & M.P.S., F.S.M.C., <i>Dispensing Chemist</i> (English and French Experience)</p> <p>Opticians to the Oxford Eye Hospital. Registered by the Joint Council of Qualified Opticians for Sight Testing & Optical Treatment under the National Health Insurance Acts The Pharmacy, BICESTER, 'Phone 27 Established over a Century.</p> | <p>P. H. G. Lane, BAKER, CONFECTIONER and CORN MERCHANT</p> <p>Sheep Street, Bicester. Oxon.</p> <p>'Phone: Bicester 87.</p> | <p align="center">Can a Penguin Swim? Yes it can; But that's not important</p> <p align="center">Can Rhode Island Reds Lay? YES, they can. Now this IS Important. . .</p> <p>Rhodes are the champion layers and best all round fowl so far bred; and if you would like some of the best Utility Rhode Island Reds in the Country, that lay and win prizes</p> <p align="center">Price One Penny.</p> <p align="center"><i>Programme</i> of The Penguins <i>Concert</i> in aid of Bicester Swimming Bath <i>St. Edburg's Hall,</i> Saturday, October 21st</p> <p align="center">Doors open 7.45 p.m. Commence at 8.15 p.m.</p> <p>F. SMITH, 88, Banbury Rd., BICESTER. Jan. 4s., Feb. and March 3s., April onwards 2/6 per sitting of 13.</p> | |
| <p>W. E. Pankhurst, for PRINTING of EVERY DESCRIPTION</p> <p align="center">HIGH CLASS WORK AT THE Cheapest Rates in the County</p> <p align="center">MARKET SQ., BICESTER.</p> | <p align="center">Fallowfield. For Everything in MEN'S and BOYS' WEAR <i>Try FALLOWFIELD'S First</i></p> <p align="center">Up-to-Date Goods</p> <p align="center">Note Address:— On the Market Square, BICESTER.</p> | <p align="center">A. V. BOWNE, <i>Ladies' and Gent's Hairdresser.</i></p> <p align="center">PERMANENT WAVING WATER WAVING MARCEL WAVING MANICURE, etc., etc.</p> <p align="center">Moderate Charges.</p> <p align="center">29 Market Sq., BICESTER. Phone 59.</p> | |
| <p>Telephone: 158.</p> <p>S. Stockley, Ladies' and Gent's HAIRDRESSER.</p> <p>30, SHEEP STREET, BICESTER.</p> <p>MacDonald Permanent Waving Water Waving Marcel Waving</p> | <p align="center"><i>"The Cosy Tea Room"</i></p> <p align="center">E. Coles, 52, MARKET SQUARE, BICESTER.</p> <p align="center">High Class Confectionery By all the leading Makers.</p> <p align="center"><i>Agents for Oxford and Midland "Red" Buses.</i></p> | <p align="center">ALF EVANS, 34/36 Sheep Street, BICESTER.</p> <p align="center">Draper, Men's and Boys' Outfitter, Boots and Shoes, Fancy Goods</p> <p align="center">We hold the finest Stock of KNITTING WOOLS in the District.</p> | |

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