



Memorial Bench Installed



This month finally saw the installation in Garth Park of the memorial bench we commissioned last year in memory of the local people who served in the First World War.

We felt that it was important to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War in a way that would honour those involved and be a permanent memorial to it, and we felt that this was the best option. We considered putting it in St Edburg's churchyard, next to the war memorial, but the grounds of The Garth

offered more protection and a more peaceful atmosphere to contemplate its meaning.

The installation isn't quite as we would have liked it, but we are trying to rectify that with the Town Council. We also still have a plaque to put on to explain what it is. But it is at least in place, next to the pond and ornamental fountain at the front of the building.

It has been entirely funded by the Society, and hopefully you'll all agree with us that it was money well spent.

- Matthew Hathaway



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3rd February 1893

MAGIC LANTERN EXHIBITION - On Wednesday evening, under the auspices of the Church of England Temperance Society, Mr James Whitaker, of Oxford, gave a lecture in Crockwell Mission Room, illustrated by lime-light dissolving views.

The Rev. J. Blackburne-Kane presided, and suitably introduced the lecturer. Mr Whitaker said some would think it useless for him to portray the objects and work of the C.E.T.S., but in going about the country, they found a great deal of ignorance prevailed both as to its past work and present condition. In fact, there were a surprisingly large number of members who were ignorant of the points named. He then proceeded to give the origin of the Society in 1862, its re-organisation in 1872, and its three-fold objectives - the promotion of habits of temperance, the reformation of the intemperate, and the removal of all causes leading to intemperance.

The names of the eminent men who were regarded as pioneers in the movement were next mentioned, and the pledge cards for abstainers, non-abstainers (who pledged themselves to discourage intemperance), and juveniles, enlarged upon.

Mr Whitaker then endeavoured to give the work the Society had accomplished, particularly mentioning that among prisoners, cabmen, busmen, sentry, and soldiers, which was recently greatly helped by the provision of homes and shelters.

In conclusion he spoke of legislation favourable to temperance, and mentioned that from the present government great things were expected in that direction. The views were exceptionally clear and interesting, and gave evident delight to the large audience assembled.

5th February 1926

FIRST GENERAL MEETING - The first general meeting of members of the Ashton Club (Bicester) Limited took place at the club premises on Thursday evening last week, when further proof of the enthusiasm which prevails in the welfare of the institution was evidenced by the fact that between seventy and eighty financial and honorary members attended. Mr G. Plater (President) was in the chair, and was supported on the platform by Mr H.E. Chatwin (Hon. Treasurer) and Mr J. Wilson (Hon. Secretary).

Amongst many points on the agenda was the statement of accounts. After giving particulars on this, Mr Chetwin then made a brief reference to the financial position of the club, saying although the balance was on the debit side there were many items of expenditure that would not occur again, and their position was therefore quite solvent.

The chairman then delivered the committee's report. He said that they were all pretty well aware of the history of the club, and of the difficulties with which they were confronted from the outset, but fortunately all these had been overcome. They were looking out for premises a long time before they acquired the present ones, and it was only just as they were all getting sick and tired of it that the present accommodation was offered them. Having secured it they thought their difficulties were over, but they found that they had only just begun. They

found that they were up against all sorts of opposition in one form or another, but they carried on and eventually succeeded in wearing the bad feeling down.

He explained that the club had opened with about 25 members, and the membership now was in the neighbourhood of 180. Furthermore, there was every indication of their numbers becoming greater. What they had done in starting this club was done in the interests of every ex-service man in the town.

13th February 1959

BOY SMOKERS IN OXON SCHOOLS - Many boys in Oxfordshire schools are regular smokers. Dr P.W. Bothwell, acting principal school medical officer, said so in a report on the smoking habits of Oxfordshire schoolchildren to the special services board of the Oxfordshire Education Committee.

The report stated that many children said they began smoking when they were seven or younger, and that they smoked mainly at home or in the cinema.

A total of 4,270 boys were interviewed. Of those, 2,853 tried smoking and 1,245 of them continued to smoke. Fewer schoolgirls are smokers however. Of the 4,044 interviewed, 1,276 tried smoking but only 328 continued.

Dr Bothwell said that fewer than 20 percent of the children had families in which there was a complete absence of smoking. That means that any educational programme has to be set against a background of more than 80 percent of families smoking, which is a pretty hefty task.

In terms of cash, Dr Bothwell said £4,375 was being spent each year on cigarettes by the children who were interviewed. Many of them were buying cigarettes either from shops or from slot machines.

5th February 1993

SALE PROMPTS MEMORY OF REMARKABLE WOMAN - The 'For Sale' board going up on Ambrosden House, on the corner of Market Square, prompted memories of a remarkable businesswoman, the late Mrs Lilian Cannon.

Mrs Cannon and her husband George were at one time involved in several retail and commercial businesses in Bicester.

The story goes back to 1936 when Mr and Mrs Cannon moved to Bicester and took over what was Richardson's Bakery in North Street. Mrs Cannon came from Whitchurch, near Aylesbury, and she had married Mr Cannon, who was a baker and lived at Waddesdon. Together they ran the bakery with Mr Cannon as baker and Mrs Cannon running the shop, selling bread, confectionary and groceries.

After the 1939-45 war they began to branch out and they took over Fringford Bakery, which they ran for four to five years.

In 1947 they built a new bakery and staff house at the bottom end of Priory Road, Bicester. In 1951 they sold these properties to Nash's Bakery, which a few years ago opened a purpose-built bakery round the corner. Nash's had also come to Bicester in the 1930s and still has shops in Sheep Street, as well as in Oxford's Covered Market and Blackbird Leys estate.

The Cannons' next enterprise was to open in 1952 the

Rendevous Cafe after buying and converting a Market Square property that is now home to Michael Crouch estate agents. But a year later they sold the cafe and moved to Weymouth.

However, the urge to run a business must have remained strong for the next year they returned to Bicester to live in Priory Road, and when properties owned by another Bicester businessman, the late Mr George Layton, came on to the market Mr and Mrs Cannon returned to retailing. At the auction of Layton's properties they purchased Layton's furniture shop (now the Gateway supermarket). This also included a builder's yard stretching back to Victoria Road. At the same time they purchased Ambrosden House, on the corner of Market Square and Chapel Street, which also included the adjoining cottage.

They carried on Layton's furniture shop and opened

a household removers and storage business in the yard behind. In 1960 the ground floor of Ambrosden House was converted into Gina's women's wear shop. Gina was their daughter Georgina.

When the former Ploughley Rural District Council moved out of Market Square to new offices in Queen's Avenue, the Cannons again bought the property. They converted it into Gina's children's wear shop. In the mid-1960s they bought the property next door, which they ran as a tobacconists and confectioners shop. Later both these adjoining properties were opened up to make space to sell prams.

By the mid-1970s the Cannons disposed of Layton's furniture shop and they retired to Marsh Gibbon where they had earlier bought the Old White Lion.

Mr Cannon died in 1979 and Mrs Cannon died on 31st December 1991.

Churches Have Memories Talk

For our January talk Christopher Young highlighted a selection of memorials in St Edburg's Church and the personal and social history they portray.

The only wooden memorial is to Sarah Kendall (d. 11.7.1803) and has the most theological epitaph, being metric Psalm 4 written in the 1540s and still in use in the 19th century.

The remaining memorials mostly have a low theological content; include biographical information and burial details.

The form of current memorials is wood, stained glass, stone, plate (silver vessels etc), brasses and other gifts to the church, and number more than eighty.

Visitations in the 16th century list coats of arms displayed and show what has been lost in terms of wainscots, glass and boards. After the storm of 1765, very little mediaeval glass survived and there are no pre-1500 tombs. People may, in any case, have opted to be buried in the Priory church. Dunkin's history mentions at least four memorials that are no longer in place. Drawings from the period of extensive restoration work in 1862/3, led by the Rev'd John Watts, show changes in the church and its memorials, some of which are gone.

Brasses date from the 16th-17th centuries and the 19th century and include that of Roger Moore (d. 1551). This memorial, which contains extensive biographical detail, is currently being conserved.

Stone memorials date from the early 17th century. Early

examples were recessed into the stonework. In the late 17th century/early 18th century a baroque style became popular and prominent among these are that of Sir Thomas Grantham (pictured), who died in 1718. He was a tobacco trader and naval commander who worked for the East India Company. His monument was designed by Delvaux and Scheemakers, well-reputed Belgian sculptors, and would have been an expensive construction.

Towards the end of the 18th century plainer memorials were favoured.

The stone memorial to Lewis Aubrey Coker (d. 1953) and Margaret Rosalys Coker (d. 1978) was installed at a time when the use of stone for memorials had largely ceased.

Of the stained-glass memorials, only one remains from before the restoration of 1862. This is the St Peter window, installed in memory of Lewis Coker who died on 9 April 1858, aged 38.

The ascension window was installed in the 1860s in memory of Sir Gregory and Lady Page-Turner and is located in the south transept. Designed by Edward Burne-Jones, a prominent member of the pre-Raphaelite moment, it depicts the angels of hope, faith and charity trampling on the vices of despair, unbelief and hate.

The Gordon of Khartoum window, located above the vestry, was dedicated in May 1885.



By the late 19th century, and particularly after World War One, people tended to be remembered by items donated to the church. These include the reredos behind the high altar and its six candlesticks, the altar cross and, more recently, bibles. The baptistry was re-named in memory of the Rev'd Crawford. This trend reflects the lack of space for memorials; the fact that people are no longer buried in the church; the need for a faculty from the diocese for additions to the church fabric and the sentiment that a donation will perpetuate the memory of the deceased.

- Sally James

Talks Update

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

Monday 18th March

Deborah Hayter looks at local enclosure acts in her talk: **Common Right to Private Property.**

Monday 15th April

Janice Kinory explores old photos of the city in her **Oxford Past & Present** talk.

Monday 18th May

To be confirmed.

St Laurence's Church, Caversfield

The parish church of Caversfield, dedicated to St Laurence, was originally a Saxon structure, though only the lower portion of the tower remains of the 10th century church. The upper portion of the tower was added, or rebuilt, in the 12th century. The chancel and nave also date back to this time.

North and south aisles were added in the early 13th century. These were demolished in the 18th century and then rebuilt in 1874 when Henry Woodyer restored the rest of the building. There is no stained glass in the church at all but there is a lot of carved stonework, some original but most dating to the 1874 restoration.



At the base of the tower is an oak frame holding an early 13th century bell. The inscription on the bell reads, in Latin, "In honour of God and St Laurence, Hugh Gargate & Sibilla, his

wife, had these bells erected." Hugh Gargate held the manor of Caversfield in the early 13th century and documentary evidence shows that he died some time between 1216 and 1219. This dates the bell to some time before 1219, making it one of the three oldest inscribed bells in the country.

During the second world war a large portion of the churchyard was used by the military to create a Commonwealth War Cemetery. There are 26 plots in total, all relating to airmen who served, and died, at RAF Bicester, a few minutes down the road. Most of the airmen buried here died in their twenties, but there are a couple of nineteen year olds and one



man, Davis Hewson Reed, who was 53 when he was killed.

If you are interested in helping to research more about this fascinating old church then the parish council would love to hear from you. Please contact me for more details and I'll put you in touch with the relevant people.

- Matthew Hathaway



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