

# The Pioneer Square Crows

If you're in the Local Studies section of Bicester's new library you can't fail to have noticed the large crow immediately outside the window, sitting on a stainless steel perch carrying a bell in its beak. And around Pioneer Square there are a further five crows on display. Their significance might not be that obvious.

timber from Bernwood Forest, so the oak obelisk references the use of oak in Bicester's history, as well as the recent use of wood in the design of the screen for Bicester's new car park. Like the car park's timber the oak of the Crow's Nest sculpture will gradually weather to a silvery grey.



Crow 1: The crow is removing the "N" from the word CROWN (from Crown Walk) to produce the word CROW.



Crow 2: This crow, positioned outside the library in 2016, sits on top of a pedestal in its Crow's Nest. Solar powered lights illuminate it at night.

The Crow's Nest sculpture in the main embodies the contemporary aspect of Bicester's new building developments and homes. The sculpture reflects this by showing a nest built from lengths of steel rebar, with the crow itself also constructed from steel - old tools and fixings, both nest and crow were welded together and then galvanised. The gently curved oak obelisk, 4m in height, supports the nest with the crow and three blown glass eggs. Two self-contained solar PV panels, with integral LED lights, are set into the top of the angled top of the obelisk to provide a night-time glow under the eggs.

The eggs, carefully tended to by the crow, provide a jewel like focus for the sculpture - glass gathers light to it.

Early secular buildings in Bicester were box framed structures, using



Crow 3: Made to look as though it's made out of aircraft parts, and the RAF roundel on one of its underwings - an association with RAF Bicester. The twiggly stick in its mouth symbolises nest building and the many new homes being built around Bicester.



Crows 4 & 5: Two cast glass crows with a surface texture that combines lace and pattern. Lace-making used to be the principal cottage industry of Bicester women. The design element relates to the designer fashion shops of Bicester Village.



Crow 6: Bronze crow carrying a bell in its beak. In the 18th Century, Edward Flemings had a bell foundry in this end of town and lived in what is now Bell Lane (he was also a clock maker). The crow is positioned so that it can be seen from both inside and outside of the library.

-Bob Hessian

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## Dates For Your Diary

**Adderbury Countryside Walk**  
*14th August - 2pm*

**Woodstock Museum Visit**  
*15th August - 7:30pm*

**September Newsletter Submissions Deadline**  
*2nd September*

**Middle Barton Village Walk**  
*11th September - 2:30pm*  
see page 5

**AGM & Mediaeval Women Talk**  
*19th September - 7:30pm*  
see page 6

**Middle Barton Countryside Walk**  
*25th September - 2pm*  
see page 5



# Village History Hampton Poyle

The village of Hampton Poyle lies beside the River Cherwell, about 1 mile northeast of Kidlington.

In 1267 Hampton Poyle was granted to Walter de la Poyle. At the time it was called 'Philipeshamton' or 'Hampton Stephani' after its 12th-century lord and his descendants. But it then changed its name to 'Hampton Poyle', 'Poyle' after its new lord and 'Hampton' being the Old English word for a village.

The Church of England parish church of Saint Mary the Virgin dates from the 13th century. The building was restored in 1844 and again in 1870. On the latter occasion it was under the direction of the Gothic Revival architect G.E. Street, who was also involved in the works carried out in St Edburg's Church, Bicester, a few years earlier.

Bartholomew Steer was born in Hampton Poyle in 1568 and went on to lead inhabitants of both Hampton Poyle and Hampton Gay to plot the agrarian revolt, in 1596, against landowners enclosing arable land and turning it into sheep pasture. The rebels planned to murder landowners, including the lord of the manor of Hampton Gay, and then to march on London. But a carpenter at Hampton Gay warned the lord of that manor and the five ringleaders were arrested and taken to London for trial. Steer was tortured and in 1597 two of his co-conspirators were sentenced to be hanged and quartered. However, the Government also recognised the cause of the rebels' grievance and determined that "order should be taken about inclosures... that the poor may be able to live". Parliament duly passed



St Mary the Virgin Church, Hampton Poyle

an Act to restore to arable use all lands that had been converted to pasture since the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558.

Manor Farm, the successor to the mansion house called Hampton Poyle Place in 1625, dates from about this time, except for its early 19th-century windows. It is L-shaped in plan and is built of local limestone with a stone band at the first floor on the south. Until 1954 it had a Stonesfield-slate roof. As late as 1949 there were traces in the manor meadow of what were apparently the fishponds of the medieval manor-house.

Between the farm and the Cherwell is the site of the mill. In 1086 Hampton's mill rendered 15s. and it appears constantly in the records until it was burnt down in 1771.

Poyle Court, the Old Manor House, and Knapp's Farm all date in part from the early 17th century, when the manor was sub-divided. Poyle Court retains its L-shaped plan and has two ancient stone stacks on each end gable, but was refronted in about

1800 when a battlemented parapet and wooden casements in Gothic style with square stone frames were inserted.

The Old Manor House was formerly called Moat Farm and adjoins 'Moat Cottage', which was its former stable. Its 'moate' is recorded in 1625. Knapp's Farm, built of limestone rubble, was originally rectangular in plan with a staircase projection at the back, but has been refashioned. A part of it was the building bought by Merton College, Oxford, in 1512 as a refuge in time of plague. Lincoln College also took refuge in the village both in 1512 and 1526.



In 2014, the village adopted a flag (pictured) which is registered with the Flag Institute. It is based on the Arms of Walter de la Poyle.

- Matthew Hathaway

## Buildings of Bicester Quiz

In last month's edition of the newsletter we published the Buildings of Bicester quiz that we ran at the Big Lunch back in July. The answers are listed here.

But if you didn't guess them all correctly then don't worry, our new DVD about Bicester's architectural heritage will be on sale at our AGM meeting on Monday 19th September. So you'll be able to buy a copy and learn all you need to know about these, and many of the

other architectural gems in the town.

### Answers:

1. 51 Market Square (A Plan Insurance)
2. Old County Courthouse (Spratt Endicott Solicitors)
3. Bicester Methodist Church
4. The Old Post Office (Penny Black)
5. Former St Edburg's School

# Bygone Bicester

(Taken from the Bicester Advertiser)

## 23rd August 1856

THE NORTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY - The society intends to have an excursion this season jointly with a society formed for similar objects in Worcestershire.

On Thursday, the 28th, the two societies will meet at Brailes, thence to Tysoe and Compton Wynyates, dining at the Rising Sun, Edgehill; the battle field and localities of the fight being of course attractions. Visits to Wormington and Shotteswell, and an evening meeting at the Vicarage Hall, Banbury, will complete the first day.

On Friday, the 29th, the trip will be through Adderbury, and Deddington, to Somerton, where the church and the monuments in the former aisle will be visited. Middleton Stoney, the moated mansion at Weston-on-the-Green, the site of Alchester in the parish of Wendlebury, the ruins of Bicester Priory, Bicester Church, and an early dinner, will fully occupy the time until the 5:50pm train is ready to take home the visitors from Worcestershire.

## 7th August 1896

SCHOOL TREAT - On Friday last the children attending the National School, and the members of the Church Choir, had their annual treat, kindly given by the Rev. J.A. Dodd, rector.

Tea was provided in the schoolroom between three and four o'clock, when some ninety children did justice to the good things on the table. The adult members of the choir and other friends partaking tea afterwards.

In the evening the Rectory Paddock was a lively place, swings, football, and other games being much appreciated, the Rector joining the juveniles at football.

At the close, every child was presented with a toy and a bun, together with a plentiful supply of cake and bread and butter, and an exceedingly happy day came to an end. With the exception that the Church Choir prolonged the happiness to a much later hour in dancing at the Rectory. The weather was everything that could be desired and the dancing ended the day most agreeably.

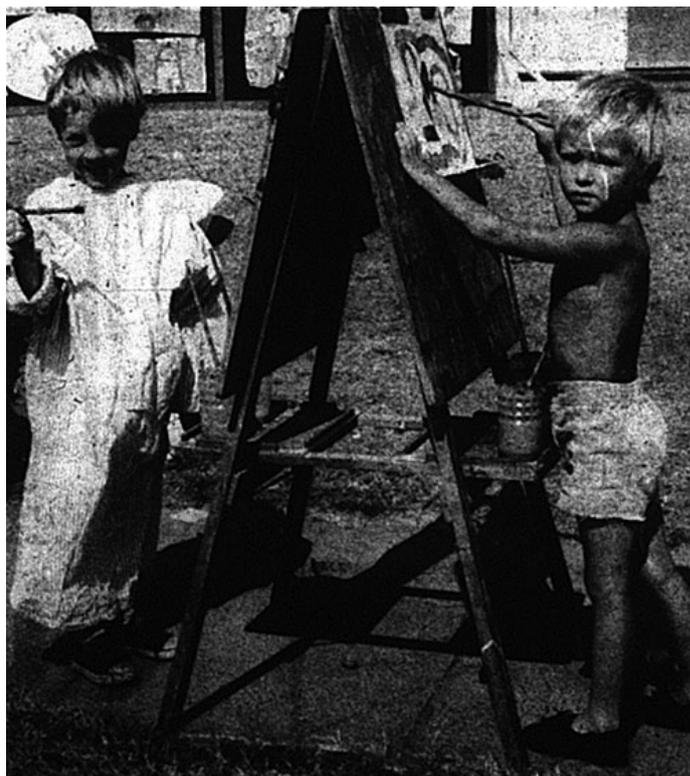
## 7th August 1936

GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY — The Bicester branch of the G.F.S. held their annual festival at Shelswell on Thursday week and were entertained by Mrs Slater-Harrison. About seventy enjoyed tea in the pavilion, following which games and a tour around the beautiful gardens were enjoyed.

Mrs W.E. Womersley delighted the company with her cleverly delivered monologues, and at 7pm a service was held in Fringford Church, the Rev. J. Harrington and Rev. W.E. Womersley officiating. Mrs Slater-Harrison was at the organ. The members spent a thoroughly happy time, the weather being fine, and they were indebted to Mrs Slater-Harrison for her great kindness.

## 26th August 1976

THE STREET THAT BECAME A PLAYGROUND FOR A DAY - Children took over Willow Road in Ambrosden as one enormous playground last week. The road on the Army married quarters estate was closed to traffic and children were able to play safely for hours on end.



A gigantic object filled with air with long bulbous arms — officially called an inflatable — was just the thing to bounce on and wear off some surplus energy. Another inflatable was a lot of air-filled tunnels, while another looking like a rocket with a bent nose was a chair lift with a marvellously springy ride.

To give a carnival atmosphere to the day the children could have their faces painted with bright colours and there were rides on a train round the estate. Ice cream and hot dogs were close at hand, and the youngsters could also try their hands at painting. And in a quiet moment, if there was one, there was a chance to catch up on a bit of reading with books from a stall by Blackwell's children's bookshop in Oxford.

The idea to turn the road into a playground came from the Social Services Department at Bicester and the Bicester branch of the Pre-School Playgroups Association. Both organisations, in conjunction with the Army at Bicester Garrison, run the Ambrosden Project.

Miss E. Birchall, director for the Social Services in the Bicester and Ploughley area, explained that the project encouraged small groups of mothers on the estate to get together and help each other.

"Their husbands are fully committed with the Army and they feel a bit isolated away from their own mothers and in-laws and this scheme encourages self-help in the community," said Miss Birchall. The day of play was designed to help mothers see what inexpensive toys and other equipment was available.

"We believe happy, stimulated children lead to happy mothers," said Miss Birchall.

The Army provided the food and some of the attractions for the play day.

"Mothers on the estate have also done a tremendous lot towards the day," said Miss Birchall.

# Roll of Honour

**Private John Pratt**, of Bicester.

Died: 7<sup>th</sup> January 1916      Aged: 25      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry  
Originally thought to be a prisoner of war, his relatives only heard of his death in August 1916.

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

**Private Albert William Busby**, of Horton-cum-Studley.

Died: 1<sup>st</sup> August 1916      Aged: 27      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Walter Walduck**, of Bicester.

Died: 4<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 47      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Henry Ashmore**, of Bicester.

Died: 6<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 31      Served in: Border Regiment

**Private Ezra Richard Jeacock**, of Launton.

Died: 8<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 30      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private George Robinson**, of Bicester.

Died: 9<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 28      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Aubrey Ernest Westbury**, of Souldern.

Died: 12<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 38      Served in: Middlesex Regiment

**Private John Gilbert Francis**, of Bicester.

Died: 13<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 30      Served in: Machine Gun Corps

**Private Albert King**, of Bicester.

Died: 13<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 20      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Charles Ernest Richardson**, of Fringford.

Died: 13<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 21      Served in: Royal Warwickshire Regiment

**Private George Howard Turner**, of Bicester.

Died: 14<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 24      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Lance Corporal Jesse Bottrell**, of Bicester.

Died: 15<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 23      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Alfred Wrighton**, of Fringford.

Died: 17<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 37      Served in: Northamptonshire Regiment

**Private Arthur John Collett**, of Charlton-on-Otmoor.

Died: 18<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 31      Served in: Middlesex Regiment

**Private Walter James Faulks**, of Islip.

Died: 18<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 21      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Arthur James Jordan**, of Beckley.

Died: 20<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 31      Served in: Gloucestershire Regiment

**Rifleman Henry Thomas Blake**, of Horton-cum-Studley.

Died: 21<sup>st</sup> August 1916      Aged: 38      Served in: Rifle Brigade

**Rifleman Thomas King**, of Bicester.

Died: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1916      Aged: 19      Served in: King's Royal Rifle Corps

**Private Harold Victor Payne**, of Beckley.

Died: 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1916      Aged: 18      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Cont...



**Sergeant Harry Cox**, of Hethe.

Died: 24<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 19      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Company Sergeant Major Harry Harris**, of Bicester.

Died: 24<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 30      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Sergeant William John Tubb**, of Islip.

Died: 24<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 23      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Albert Waddup**, of Middleton Stoney.

Died: 25<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 23      Served in: Royal Warwickshire Regiment

**Private J. W. Fathers**, of Hethe.

Died: 26<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Served in: Royal Berkshire Regiment

**Private Joseph John Boddington**, of Upper Heyford.

Died: 28<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 21      Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Cecil Arthur Brandrick**, of Stoke Lyne.

Died: 28<sup>th</sup> August 1916      Aged: 24      Served in: Royal Warwickshire Regiment



## Summer Events

We kicked off this year's programme of summer walks with a very successful tour of Adderbury on Sunday 31st July, guided by members of Adderbury History Association.

Our next walk, Adderbury Countryside, will take place on Sunday 14th August, starting at 2pm on the village green, and finishing with refreshments in the Methodist Hall.

The day after that, Monday 15th August, we have a group outing to Woodstock Museum arranged for 7:30pm. They're keeping the

museum open late especially for us and it should prove a very interesting evening.

Then Bob Hessian will guide us around Middle Barton for our village walk on Sunday 11th September, starting at 2:30pm.

And finally, John Roberts will lead us on the accompanying countryside walk around Middle and Steeple Barton on Sunday 25th September, starting at 2pm. Places are still available on both of these walks so book now if you want to join us.

With the opening of the new library in Franklin's House we are

also running a trial of local history help desk sessions.

The next session will be on Thursday 1st September, from 10.00am to 2.00pm, and another on Thursday 15th September, 2.00pm to 7.00pm.

Bob Hessian will be on hand in the local studies section of the library to help you, or anyone you know, with any local history questions that you may have.

Oxfordshire Family History Society provide a similar service for those seeking help with family history research.

## Marj's Memories

### The things we didn't have

There are a lot of things we take for granted that, in the fifties and beyond, we didn't have, such as:

No hot water from the tap. A fire was lit beneath the copper (wash boiler) to heat the water for a Friday night bath. The shampoo, if used, came from a packet of powder to be dissolved. Toothpaste was in a round block in a flat tin and Lifebuoy toilet soap for the bath – no bath cream or shower gel. We didn't have showers. We didn't have deodorant.

Washing up liquid wasn't on the market until the sixties. No-one had a fridge or freezer. The milk was delivered daily and, in the summer, often kept in a bucket of cold water. No toasters, we had long toasting forks that extended and held the bread over the open

fire. No washing machines – it was a regular thing for the washing to be done on a Monday, an "all day" job. The sheets would be billowing out on the washing lines, in rows, usually as white as snow. There were no twirl lines but line posts with rope lines and a prop which was often made from a slender tree.

We didn't have electric blankets or continental quilts but hot water bottles were put in beds; some used a hot brick wrapped in cloth. Bedrooms were very cold – no central heating.

Only a few families had a car, but there were a lot of bicycles in Bicester and people cycled for miles to work and for pleasure. The children walked to school mostly without parents.

- 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 19th September

This meeting will begin with our 2016 AGM, following which Rowena Archer will talk to us about **Mediaeval Women**.

### Monday 17th October

Kate Tiller tells us about The Oxfordshire Historical Atlas Project in a talk titled **Anatomy of a County**. Illustrating major themes in Oxfordshire's history, from Roman settlement to the M40.

### Monday 21st November

Tim Healey visits us again, this time to talk about **Drovers' Roads in Oxfordshire & Beyond**.

## Lost Villages of Oxfordshire Talk

The term 'deserted mediaeval village' is universally used to describe settlements which have been lost from the landscape. Although convenient, the description is often inaccurate, since many settlements were not completely deserted; were not deserted in the mediaeval period or were not actually villages.

In Oxfordshire, the Domesday Book records 251 villages. By the early 14th century this number had increased to about 350.

Widford, near Swinbrook is an example of a village where the location is known, but all but the church has disappeared. Sexintone has completely disappeared, but is believed to have been in the Bucknell area. The mediaeval village of Nuneham Courtenay was moved from the grounds of Nuneham House by Lord Harcourt in 1760. Lower Chalford, Wretchwick, Coat and Ditchley represent over one hundred deserted Oxfordshire villages

discovered by the 1960s.

Common factors for the decline, decay or desertion of the villages include the settlement being small or dispersed; there being a lack of basic services; the land being bought by an outsider; the village not being a manorial centre and it being a later settlement on poorer soil.

Other factors include the change in the climate. In the 1200s, the climate was favourable and there was political stability, economic expansion and population growth. New towns and markets were set up – Bicester's market charter dates from 1239. By the 1300s the climate had become wetter, there was not enough land to sustain the population and the period from 1310 to 1320 saw a succession of bad harvests and serious famines. The black death of 1348/9 exacerbated the collapse of the feudal system and village systems where the open fields were worked in common.

The population didn't recover to its former levels until about 1600.

Small villages, particularly those in the hands of a single landlord, were vulnerable as he could enclose the land or force evictions. Sheep were often seen as the culprits, the wool trade being highly profitable. Though enclosure didn't necessarily lead to desertion. Adderbury, Somerton, Aynho and Tackley all reported large areas of enclosure, but survived.

The Deserted Mediaeval Village Research Group was formed in 1952 and they embarked on archaeological and documentary research. Aerial photography undertaken by the RAF after WW2 has enhanced our understanding of deserted sites. The Group produced a map and gazetteer of deserted sites in Oxfordshire in 1965. The Oxfordshire Record Society published the latest survey in 2010 – The Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire. This includes mapping of deserted and shrunken sites.

- Sally James

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