

Beyond the Priory

The development of Old Place Yard was approved by Cherwell District Council's Planning Committee on Thursday 7th July, but the approval carried with it some conditions. The main one was that an archaeological excavation had to be carried out before any construction work could begin and that the foundations of the new buildings would be altered where possible to mitigate damage to any remaining priory structures.

The development is split over two sites, one either side of the old library. The archaeological work on the first site, next to the dovecote, has now been completed. It's widely accepted that the Priory's buildings were focused on the eastern side of the enclosure, where the second site is planned to be excavated in the future. So nothing much was expected to show up on the first site, which is believed to be where the Priory's gardens and orchard were located.



Evidence of planting holes and a pathway have been discovered which, for some, suggests an orchard, and a number of rubbish pits have shown up, giving some idea of the monks' diet. One of the rubbish pits contained an intricately decorated pin, probably used to fasten a cloak or cowl, that may date back to Saxon times. The head of the pin has been fashioned into a multifaceted shape with designs stamped into each of the many faces.



Everything seems to fit with what we already know about the Priory site, but a much more interesting discovery, and something completely new, was the evidence of Saxon activity on the site.

Evidence of Saxon occupation found on the Saxon Court development, on the far side of Chapel Street, showed that the settlement back then was located on that side of the River Bure. Saxon burials found during the building of the John Paul II Centre, behind the Catholic Church, point to a burial ground being located there. And a triangular headed arch in St Edburg's Church suggests that there was a stone building there, probably a church, at around the same time.



But now a series of equally spaced parallel ditches have been uncovered which could indicate agricultural activity on the site, possibly linked to the settlement on the far side of the river, or maybe a separate settlement of its own.

The Priory was founded on land owned by the Bassett family back in 1182, possibly even in the manor house that the Bassetts had been living in, but there is no evidence that the Bassett estate had existed before then and was taken over by the family after the Norman Conquest. However, this new discovery might lend weight to that idea if more signs of early occupation show up in the next phase of archeological work.

The archeological work on the first site is now complete and an official report on the findings will be published soon, which will be made available on our website. We now have to wait for the developers to start the works on the second site to be able to complete the story. Though we don't yet know when that will take place.

- Matthew Hathaway

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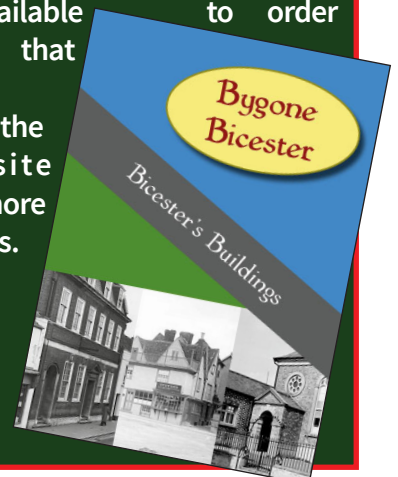
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Dates For Your Diary

- AGM & Mediaeval Women Talk
19th September - 7:30pm
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- Middle Barton Countryside Walk
25th September - 2pm
- October Newsletter
Submissions Deadline
30th September
- Oxfordshire Family History Fair
1st October - 10am
see page 4

AVAILABLE NOW!

Our new DVD, **Bicester's Buildings**, goes on sale at the AGM on 19th September and will be available to order after that date. See the website for more details.



Village History Hardwick

The village of Hardwick lies to the North of Bicester, half way between Bicester and Brackley. It is on the edge of the estate at Tusmore and in 1932 the two parishes were joined to form the modern parish of Hardwick-with-Tusmore.

The village's toponym comes from the Old English for a farm, or dwelling place for sheep, and indicates that a settlement was made there because the drift gravel of the uplands provided fine pasture. As its church was originally a chapelry of Stoke Lyne it is possible that the area was the 'herdwick' of a Saxon estate there.

After the Norman Conquest in 1066 Walter Giffard, Lord of Longueville, held the manor. But the Domesday Book records that by 1086 he had given it to Robert D'Oyly in an exchange of lands. Of the 7.5 hides that Hardwick was then assessed, 2.5 hides later became part of the manor of Tusmore. The estate then descended with D'Oyly's heirs until Henry D'Oyly died in 1232, when it passed to Thomas de Beaumont, 6th Earl of Warwick. It then followed the same descent as the overlordship of Bucknell.

William Fermor, of Somerton, bought a third of the manor in 1514 from Thomas Colyer and his wife Margery. Then in 1523 William Spencer, son of Robert Spencer and Elizabeth Arden, released his third of the manor to Fermor. And by 1548 Fermor had acquired the remaining third from Edward Chamberlain. In 1606 William's grandson, Sir Richard Fermor acquired the neighbouring manor of Tusmore and united the two estates.

The house at Manor Farm was built late in the 16th century. The Fermors usually rented it out to tenant farmers. It is now a Grade II* listed building.

Some of the farmland in the parish seems to have been enclosed in the 16th century for sheep pasture, but there was still an open field system of three fields in 1601. By 1682 parts of Heath Field and Mill Field had been enclosed, and by 1717 the

enclosure of Heath Field was complete. Enclosure of the remainder of the parish was complete well before 1784, when Tinker's Field and the remainder of Mill Field were described as having been enclosed "from time immemorial".

By the middle of the 12th century the parish was a chapelry of Stoke Lyne, and by 1250 Hardwick had become a separate ecclesiastical parish. The Knights Hospitaller owned the advowson in 1252 after it was granted to them by Osney Abbey, and held it until Henry VIII suppressed the Order in 1540. In 1545 The Crown sold the advowson to an associate of William Fermor and it then remained with the Fermors until the middle of the 19th century, when their direct line died out and their estates at Tusmore and Hardwick were sold.

The earliest parts of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin are the north and south doorways. Dr Mary Lobel says the doorways are from late in the 12th or early in the 13th century, but Sherwood and Pevsner states they are Decorated Gothic, which would give them a slightly later date of 1250–1350. The chancel is Decorated Gothic and certainly from the 14th century. The nave was rebuilt in the 15th century with a large Perpendicular Gothic west window. In 1877 Henry Howard, 2nd Earl of Effingham, commissioned George Gilbert Scott, Jr to restore the church. Scott virtually rebuilt it and added the south aisle, porch and bell-turret.

The Fermors were recusants and supported the continuation of Roman Catholicism in the area from the English Reformation in the 16th century until after the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1791. Late in the 16th century there were few



St Mary the Virgin Church

recusants in Hardwick, but after the Fermors moved from Somerton to Tusmore in 1625 their numbers increased. Roman Catholics formed more than half the village by the 1760s and the overwhelming majority by 1802. Roman Catholic villagers went to Mass at the Fermor chapel in Tusmore until 1768, when Tusmore House was being rebuilt and the chapel was closed for refurbishment. A chapel was then established in the attic of Hardwick Manor Farm, which remained in use for worship until the priest died in 1830. The chapel was succeeded in 1832 by a newly built Roman Catholic church at Hethe, just over a mile to the east of Hardwick.

In 1857 Henry Howard, 2nd Earl of Effingham bought the estates of Tusmore and Hardwick. In 1869 he demolished the old cottages of the village and replaced them with new ones of stone with brick quoins. He built a village school, which was finished in 1873, and his heir, Henry Howard, 3rd Earl of Effingham, maintained the school until at least 1895. However, the 3rd Earl died in 1898 and by 1903 the school had closed. It is now a private house..

- Matthew Hathaway

Bygone Bicester

(Taken from the Bicester Advertiser)

20th September 1856

UNJUST WEIGHTS - William Holton, of Wendlebury, was charged by Mr R. Castle, inspector of weights and measures, with having on the 12th of August in his possession, at Wendlebury, in his shop, wherein goods were exposed for sale, 3 unjust weights. He was ordered to forfeit the weights.

Thomas Trafford, of Bletchington, on a similar charge, was fined 7s 6d, and 12s costs.

Emmanuel Berry, of Bicester, for having six unjust weights, in his shop, was fined 15s, and 10s costs.

Amelia Harris, of Fringford, beer seller, was charged with having one unjust drinking cup upon her premises, and was fined 2s 6d, and costs of 10s.

4th September 1896

BICESTER FOOTBALL CLUB - A committee meeting of the newly-formed Bicester Football Club was held at St Edburg's Hall on Wednesday evening to receive the report of the special sub-committee with respect to a field for practice.

A general meeting of the club is to be held on Tuesday evening next in St Edburg's Hall, at 8:30pm, the business to be transacted by such meeting being the election of a captain and treasurer, choice of club colours and confirmation of rules.

The notice which appears in our advertisement columns cordially invites the attendance of all interested in football, and as the foundation of the new organisation

will practically date from such meeting, the importance cannot be over-estimated by lovers of the sport in the town.

4th September 1936

LOCAL EXAMINATION RESULTS - In the Oxford Local Examinations, held in July last, results of which have now been announced, the following pupils from Bicester County School gained School Certificates:

E.T. Beasley, T.W. Gardner, Joan Hedges, Barbara Molyneux, Hilda Morpeth, A.E. Phipps, L.V. Reinger, Joan Spencer, G.J. Tompkins, Beryl Tyrrell and L.G. Wickson.

A.F. Ward gained a Higher School Certificate.

9th September 1976

END OF THE SIREN ERA - The mournful wail of the Bicester fire sirens will soon be a thing of the past.

The sirens — one in Sheep Street and the other at the Queens Avenue fire station — are being withdrawn to make way for pocket "bleepers" to summon the Bicester part-timers to a fire call.

The firemen will carry the bleepers with them at all times and a transmitter at the fire station will transmit the call signal when they are needed.

They are effective within a three-mile radius and are considered more efficient than the sirens and alarm bells in firemen's homes.

All the Bicester firemen have been issued with their "bleeper" for use in conjunction with the sirens, but the bells and sirens will be phased out in the next fortnight.

Marj's Memories

The Causeway Shops in the Forties

In the forties the traffic was two-way in the Causeway, but there was not so much of it.

On the corner of the Causeway and Church Lane was a school. Paragreens (pictured), on the same side, was a double shop: half of the shop was a cobbler, manned by Mr Paragreen; he had a lovely kind face and always had time to talk. It was a regular occurrence to get your shoes mended there. Next door was his daughter Betty's shop where you could buy so many different things from wool and sewing products to toys, baby clothes, postcards and more.

A few doors down, on the right, was Tommy Harris's butcher's shop. There was sawdust on the floor (as in all butchers' shops in those days) and the big carcasses of beef and lamb, and rabbits in their skins hung all around on butchers' hooks and, at times, there were crates with day old chicks. What a thrill for me when I went to get 6 day-old chicks! Tommy Harris was the father of Jack Harris who later had the shop with his son John.

Next was Smiths, a cycle shop. Mrs Smith was a French lady, quite a character, known as Frenchie Smith. Mr Smith was a typical laid back country man. Nearby was Woodhouse's, a small grocery shop; a narrow shop, but nicely stocked, like a delicatessen.

Opposite was Capel Smith the bakers. You opened



the door and stepped down. He made wonderful bread and cakes and the aroma as you stepped in made you feel immediately hungry for some of that crusty bread. He was a kind man, a widower, and was bringing up 3 boys after the loss of his wife.

Catlin's shoe shop and taxi office was also nearby. On the same side was the Rose and Crown public house and the library. An alleyway leading to the council yard, fire station and swimming pool later became the opening to Manorsfield Road.

- Marjorie Dean MBE

Roll of Honour

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

Private William Clifford, of Finmere.

Died: 3rd September 1916 Aged: 26 Served in: Royal Sussex Regiment

Lance Corporal John Horwood, of Newton Purcell.

Died: 3rd September 1916 Aged: 27 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Corporal Reginald Arthur Smith, of Bicester.

Died: 3rd September 1916 Aged: 26 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private William Collett, of Charlton-on-Otmoor.

Died: 5th September 1916 Aged: 36 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Private Alfred Read Blackwell, native of Wendlebury.

Died: 15th September 1916 Aged: 43 Served in: Royal West Kent Regiment

Pioneer Sidney Massey, of Bicester.

Died: 15th September 1916 Aged: 21 Served in: Royal Engineers

Private Richard William Mosto, of Kirtlington.

Died: 15th September 1916 Aged: 31 Served in: East Kent Regiment

Rifleman William James Shepherd, of Charlton-on-Otmoor.

Died: 15th September 1916 Aged: 20 Served in: Surrey Rifles

Private Ernest David Wilkins, native of Bletchingdon.

Died: 15th September 1916 Aged: 35 Served in: Coldstream Guards

Private William James Russell, of Bicester.

Died: 16th September 1916 Aged: 26 Served in: London Regiment

Private Charles Douglas Giles, of Kirtlington.

Died: 18th September 1916 Aged: 19 Served in: Machine Gun Corps

Private Albert Hounslow, of Lower Heyford.

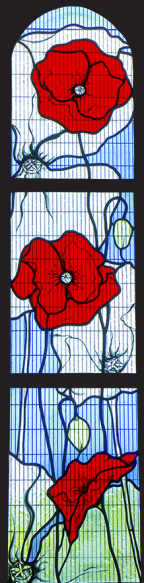
Died: 25th September 1916 Aged: 26 Served in: Canadian Infantry

Lance Corporal Sidney Gaskin, of Cottisford.

Died: 27th September 1916 Aged: 27 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

Captain George Edwin Mullis, native of Upper Heyford.

Died: 30th September 1916 Aged: 38 Served in: Royal Garrison Artillery



Oxfordshire Family History Fair



Oxfordshire Family History Society will again be opening the doors of Marlborough School, Woodstock, OX20 1LP between 10am and 4pm on Saturday 1st October for their Family History Fair, in what is now their 40th anniversary year.

This year they will be teaming up with Ancestry to launch the Oxfordshire parish register scans on the ancestry.co.uk website. And they also plan to offer something for the younger members of the family.

With over 30 different organisations, societies and companies all joining the Oxfordshire resources you're sure to find a great source of expertise and advice to help you further your family history research. Books and materials will also be available to buy, and refreshments will be available from Good Food Catering.



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**.

The Real Candleford Green Talk

At our monthly meeting of Bicester Local History Society our Chairman first gave a report on the very successful walk he did on Sunday about the back yards of Bicester. He then introduced our speaker, Martin Greenwood, who has recently finished and published his new book "The Real Candleford Green". This book explains how many local characters and people from Fringford and the surrounding area were used by Flora Thompson in her "Lark Rise" books. But it focuses more on their real lives in the village where our speaker lives and works.

Martin explained how the present day descendants of the Victorian population had helped his research and provided old photographs. His research led from Sarah Butler-Rennison, who followed Flora Thompson (née Timms) as letter carrier, to Sarah's four brothers who emigrated to Queensland, Australia, in the 1870s. They called their new

property in Australia Fringford Farm, where they grew maize and bananas. Martin was given access to some old family photographs from Queensland.

We were shown some interesting lists taken from the census showing trades and occupations in Fringford between 1851 and 1911. They showed that a high percentage of the male population were classed as labourers, with carpenters and blacksmiths also well represented and the women mostly employed as domestic servants. Martin also showed us some trade accounts from the John Price family business and their customer ledger from 1869 to 1877. Another table showed the rise and fall in population from 479 in 1871, down to 268 in 1931, and now at over 600.

Martin's book also covers information on Shelswell Park, owned by the Dewar-Harrison Family, who were generous

The Real Candleford Green

The Story of a Lark Rise Village



Martin Greenwood

benefactors of the Fringford area and gave employment and trade to many local people. And he talked about the Oddfellows Friendly Society, which was one of the first, and largest, sickness and unemployment clubs in the country by 1850.

- Peter Crook

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