

# Bicester Historian

Issue: 93 April - June 2023

bringing local history to life...

**Can Onions Cure Earache?**

Medical advice from the 18th century

**Bicester's Boer War**

The final instalment of Lewis Turney's tale

**Coronation Celebrations in Bicester**

Unparalleled demonstrations of loyalty and rejoicing

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# From the Editor

**H**ello, and welcome to the fourth edition of the quarterly Bicester Historian magazine. As always, I hope you find plenty in here to interest you. It is certainly an interesting job putting it all together. My highlight this time has to be the article about the celebrations of George V's coronation in 1911. I've seen the photographs and postcard prints many times before, but putting them together with the detailed descriptions in the text of the newspaper report somehow brings them to life.

The transition from the old monthly editions is still a work in progress, so we welcome your comments and suggestions. Is the layout easy to follow? Are the articles too long? Are there other features you'd like to see added? If so then we want to know.

The new style contents page now includes direct links to the articles, so you can simply click on the item to be taken directly to that page. Something that should make things easier for those of you reading this on your computer.

The next edition will be the final stage of the transition, where we introduce a central theme to tie together all the articles. Anyone who would like to contribute articles, please feel free to get in touch with me. All contributions are always very welcome.



**Matthew Hathaway**  
Editor





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# Brewing in Oxford

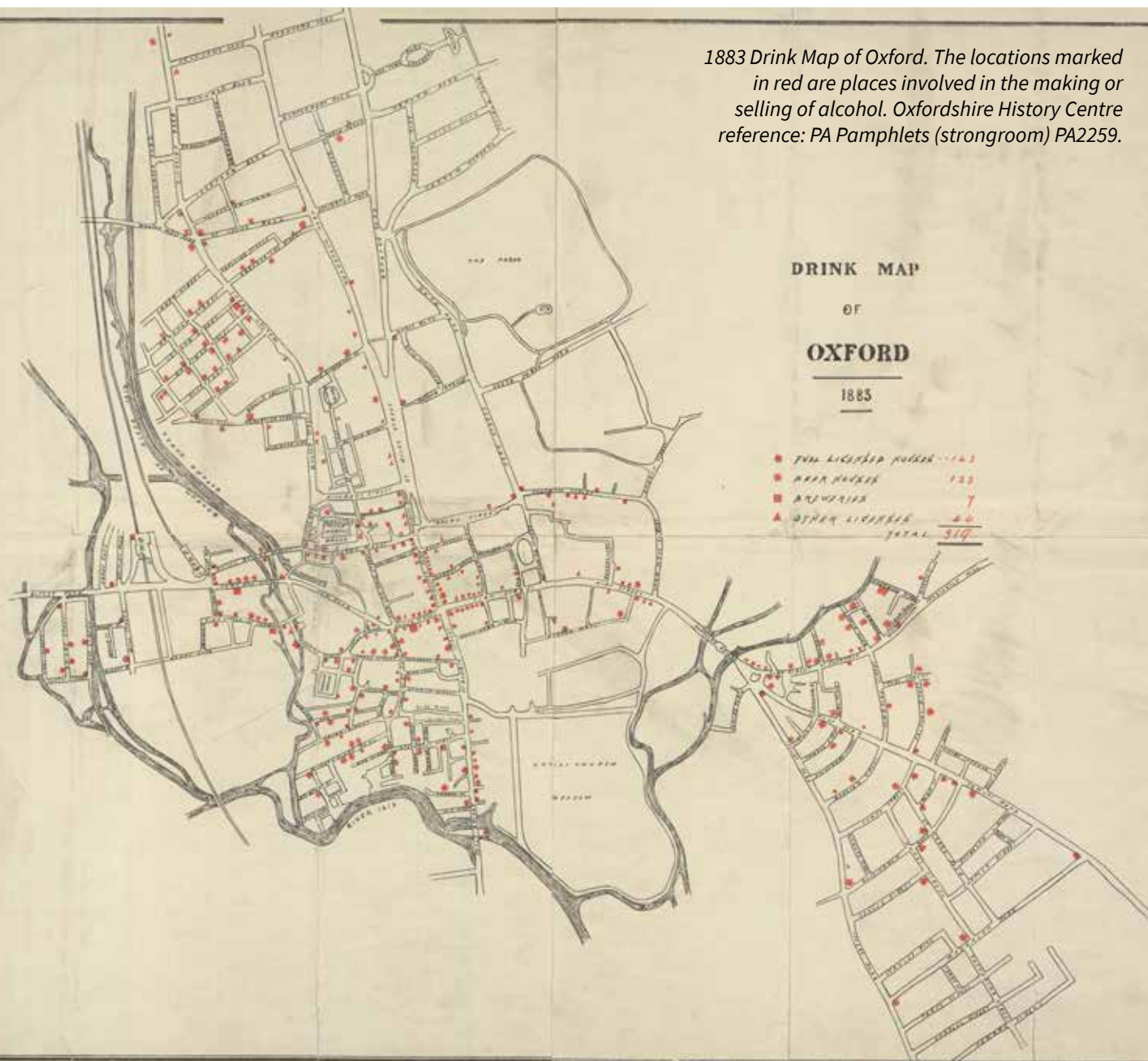
January's talk by Liz Woolley

Written by Mark Lewandowski

Oxford has had a long association with brewing. There were many breweries in the city in the Middle Ages and as early as 1267 there are records of brewing taking place at Oxford Castle. By the 13th century, we have records of professional brewers in the city with the Chancellor of the University and the Mayor of Oxford

exercising joint control over the trade. However, after the St Scholastica's Day Riot on 10th February 1355. The disturbance began when two students from the University of Oxford complained about the quality of wine served to them in the Swindlestock Tavern, which stood on Carfax, in the centre of the town. The students quarrelled with the taverner; the argument quickly escalated to

1883 Drink Map of Oxford. The locations marked in red are places involved in the making or selling of alcohol. Oxfordshire History Centre reference: PA Pamphlets (strongroom) PA2259.





blows. The inn's customers joined in on both sides, and the resulting melee turned into a riot. The violence started by the bar brawl continued over three days, with armed gangs coming in from the countryside to assist the townspeople. University halls and students' accommodation were raided, and the inhabitants murdered; there were some reports of clerics being scalped. Around 30 townsfolk were killed, as were up to 63 members of the university. An annual penance was imposed on the town: each year, on St Scholastica's Day, the mayor, bailiffs and sixty townspeople were to attend a Mass at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin for those killed; the town was also made to pay the university a fine of one penny for each scholar killed. The practice was dropped in 1825; in 1955—the 600th anniversary of the riots—in an act of conciliation the mayor was given an honorary degree and the vice-chancellor was made an honorary freeman of the city. As a result, the control of brewing came under the control of the Chancellor of the University.

The 1381 Poll Tax returns recall that there were 38 brewers in Oxford. Many brewers were rich and modernised their brewhouses to survive, an example being that built by Richard Honey in Pembroke Street in 1641. Brewer Street is close to the city wall, part of the wall forms one side of it, as is the Trill Mill Stream, a small branch of the Thames, which is still there, although now running through a tunnel. It emerges and flows past the Memorial Garden adjacent to Christ Church Meadow. The stream provided clear, clay-free water, for the brewing process. The fact that Brewer Street was just outside the south gate of the city and close to running water provided water for power, brewing, transport, disposal of waste and fostered the growth of the industry in this part of Oxford. This was the site of breweries from the 13th century right up till the 1930s. Butchers were moved here from Carfax during the 14th century giving it the alternate name of Sleyng Lane. As late as 1840 it was known as Slaughter Lane and only subsequently was it renamed Brewers or Brewer Street.

By the 1700s the high taxes on malt and hops had increased costs incurred in the brewing of beer and had made home production uneconomical and beer was increasingly bought from professional brewers who were also involved in associated trades – malting and inn keeping. By the late 18th century brewing had really become big business, but the quality of the beer was not



*Brewer Street looking east towards Christ Church. Image courtesy of the Oxfordshire History Centre. POX0101259.*

always up to standard. Guidance was issued by the Vice-Chancellor of the University to the town's brewers that their beer should be 'good, wholesome and agreeable'. The beer brewed by the colleges was often not much better. In 1729 the Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum is reported to have died from drinking small beer brewed at Christ Church. Beer played a major role in the daily lives of most college. Many colleges had their own brew houses on site. The Queen's College on its foundation in the 1340s had the last surviving college brewery by over 50 years until its closure in 1939, whereas most colleges stopped brewing their own beer much earlier in the Victorian period. Historian and author of "Six centuries of an Oxford college; a history of the Queen's College, 1340-1940", Robert Howard Hodgkin quipped that Queen's College students were far more likely to boast about their brewhouse than about their library. Students who misbehaved at mealtimes were made to drink two pints of ale in one go, a tradition known as

sconcing. This was discontinued in the same year that the college brewery was closed as it was felt that the beer produced was too good to be used as a punishment. Queen's College used to possess a three-pint mug dating from 1700 with pegs to mark the level of each pint for each successive drinker. This was possibly the origin of the expression 'to take someone down a peg or two'. The Queen's College brewed two main beers: College Ale, which was brewed monthly except in the summer when it was too warm, and that made-up the vast majority of beer brewed and consumed at the college; and the special beer was Chancellor Ale, brewed once a year and with the strength of almost 11% abv, powerful enough for the Dean to prevent anyone from having more than one pint and it was commented that two glasses were more than enough to intoxicate anyone. A fellow of the college quipped that some may question its flavour, but none its potency.

There were four big brewing families in Oxford: Tawney, Treacher, Hall and Morrell, all of whom were related to each other by marriage and dominated the brewing trade in the city. Between them they carried a lot of weight; they owned much property, including many pubs, were big local employers and influenced the way that Oxford was run by becoming members of the corporation, and even as members of Parliament.

Beer was the popular drink of the masses. Before the coming of the mains water system during the late Victorian period, beer was safer to drink than water – it had been boiled and it contained certain preservatives. Many drank what was known as 'small beer', morning, noon, and night. This was very weak, perhaps only ½% or 1% abv, but its constant consumption may have resulted in the population being slightly sloshed all the time. In the early 19th century beer was promoted as a safer alternative to gin.

The 1830 Beerhouse Act abolished the tax on beer and liberalised the regulations concerning its brewing and selling. It enabled any ratepayer to brew and sell beer on payment for a licence costing two guineas (£2.10 in decimal currency, just over £300 today). The intention was to increase competition between brewers; lowering prices and encouraging people to drink beer instead of strong spirits. It resulted in the opening of thousands of new public houses and breweries. This was promoted by those who were anxious to see a reduction in crime and disorder which they perceived as being

caused by the ready availability of strong spirits. The coming of the railways in 1844 brought new breweries and brewers' agents whose job it was to arrange for the import of beer from outside of the city – including one from the Shillingford Brewery in Bicester. An Oxford trade directory from 1875 lists eight big commercial brewers in the city. There was a brewery at the Radcliffe Infirmary brewing once a month with weaker small beer for the patients and a much stronger brew for the nurses and other staff. Any beer not fit to be drunk was used for poultices. The recommended amount was 1½ pints of small beer per patient per day – not a bad time to be in hospital!? The brewery closed in the mid-1800s.

The demand for beer increased in the late 19th century; the population of Oxford doubled between 1851 and 1901. As wages rose, beer became increasingly affordable. In 1883 it is recorded that there were 319 licensed premises in Oxford, one for every 110 residents – man, woman, and child, many in the poorer working areas. In Jericho there was a beer house on every corner, sometimes mid-terrace as well. There were many in the working-class districts of St Thomas's and St Ebbe's. In the High Street, more in the 'gown' part of the city, licensed premises were only about twenty yards apart. Most of the breweries were, although not exclusively, in the western part of the city. This was an important place for the brewing and associated industries going back to the Middle Ages. The presence of these and other light industries was aided by the presence of



*Town house of Edward Tawney at the corner of Fisher Row and Quaking Bridge, with the almshouses next door. Photograph by Malcolm Graham. Image courtesy of the Oxfordshire History Centre. POX0562013.*



numerous streams and waterways. In a survey of St Thomas's High Street in 1846 of the 32 businesses listed, twelve were beer shops or public houses, within some 300 yards (a lot of choice if you wanted to go for a pub crawl in that period) – the area had gained a somewhat disreputable reputation. Fights between women were not uncommon. The men tended not to intervene but would look on and might place bets on the outcome.

By the 19th century there were four major breweries in the St Thomas area to the south of Park End Street, in addition to numerous malt houses.

Fronting on to Park End Street was the Eagle Brewery. The Lion Brewery, off the High Street, was on a site that had housed a brewery since at least the 1590s. Just to the south was the Swan Brewery that would later become Halls. Richard Tawney, one of the four big Oxford brewers, took over the Lion Brewery in the 1740s. Edward Tawney built himself a substantial red brick townhouse which stands today at the junction of St Thomas' Street, Fisher Row and Quaking Bridge. It must have looked very different to the humbler dwellings around it. The Tawney family were influential locally, with Richard (father (1748) and son (1764, 1778 and 1790)), Edward (1772/3, 1784 and 1797/8) and a first cousin twice removed, Charles (1837/8 and 1840/1) Tawney being Mayor of Oxford on several occasions. He was also a man with a social conscience and was responsible for building a series of almshouses, unusually, literally next door to his own house which also still survive. These were for three poor men and three poor women of the parish as is confirmed by a plaque affixed to their pediment. When he died, he left the then substantial sum of £5,000 (more than £500,000 today) for their upkeep. He and his family are commemorated at the church of St Margaret of Antioch, Binsey. The text on the commemorative tablet in the church reads as follows, "Near this place are likewise interred the Remains of Edward Tawney, Alderman of Oxford, who, as well as his brother, three times discharged the office of mayor, with credit to himself & advantages to the public. besides other charitable benefactions, during his life, he founded & endowed an alms-house for the support of three poor men & three poor women. he died March 10th 1800, aged 65 years, and in compliance with the directions of his will this monument was erected by his executors".



*Main gate to Morrells Lion Brewery in St Thomas Street. It was generally known as Morrells, even after the 1870s when given the alternative name of the Lion Brewery. These gates, erected in 1877, reflect both names. Photograph by Henry Taunt. Image courtesy of the Oxfordshire History Centre. POX0116802.*

In November 1797 Edward Tawney entered into an agreement with Mark and James Morrell to take them into partnership with him while they began to buy out his interest in the brewery. Morrell's moved into the Lion Brewery on St Thomas' Street and remained there for the next 200 years until its closure in 1998. The growth in the popularity of beer in the mid-Victorian period led to increased capacity and efficiency. Like many breweries, Morrell's upgraded their equipment in the late 19th and early 20th century. Architect Harry Drinkwater was commissioned to design various buildings for them, essential for the more modernised and mechanised production of beer driven by the need to remain competitive. These were specialised buildings, arranged logically around a "U" shaped central courtyard and might have included a brewery tap where the beer was sold directly to the public, a function fulfilled by The Marlborough Arms, later The Brewery Gate, literally next to the gates of the brewery and in business since 1782 – now closed.

Morrell's had a substantial workforce which was put under stress by the call up of men during the Great War, particularly after the introduction of conscription in 1916, with the result that for the first time in their history they were forced to employ women. Images from the time show them in elaborate and weighty leather protective gear with heavy wooden clogs on their feet. They

were exclusively employed in the semi-automated bottling plant where there was a real danger of a bottle flying off the conveyor belt and injuring one of the employees – the reason behind the elaborate protective gear. Morrell's drew their water from several local streams which did influence the taste of the beer, and which led detractors to unkindly term it "Morrell's River Water". These also powered the brewery through several water wheels – one is still in existence but no longer in use. Later Morrell's changed to coal power which necessitated the installation of boilers and a large chimney, again designed by Harry Drinkwater, which remains standing today. The site has been redeveloped as housing although many of the brewery buildings remain, now serving new functions but keeping their old character.

Although now used interchangeably, the definitions of "ale" and "beer" differ; with ale being flavoured with herbs, and beer being flavoured with hops. Hopped beer was first imported from Holland around 1400. There is an old folk rhyme which says "hops and turkeys, carp and beer, came into England the same year". There was also a popular saying that "heresy and hops came in together" and an old ballad assures us that "the old Catholic drink is a pot of good ale". There is a local tradition that the hop garden at Little Chart in Kent was the first to be planted in England about 1542. The hop is a native plant but was not largely grown in England until the early part of the reign of Henry VIII. It must have spread rapidly, for at the end of the 16th century Reginald Scott, the author of "The Discovery of Witchcraft" refers to the large-scale cultivation of hops in Kent. There was a prejudice against using hops and in 1519 the corporation of Shrewsbury forbade the brewers of the town from using "that wicked and pernicious weed" in brewing under a penalty of 6 shillings and eight pence.

Malthouses, key to the brewing process, are characterised by their shallow floors. No mechanical devices were needed, just a large open area to spread out the barley and with sufficient headroom for someone to periodically turn this with a malt shovel.

Horses were of key importance to the brewery trade and since 1887 Morrell's had a 'horse hospital' close to the Lion Brewery complete with its own farrier and the ability to treat minor equine ailments.

By the time of the brewery's closure in 1990 Morrell's owned some 130 pubs, both

in Oxford itself and in the surrounding area, which included The Plough and The White Horse in Bicester, and many of which had been designed by Harry Drinkwater (1844–1895): The Anchor in Polstead Road (1893), The Grapes in George Street (1894) and the Cape of Good Hope on The Plain (1892) are examples of his work, as was the New Theatre (1886) in Oxford – subsequently demolished and replaced with a new building in 1933. In 1824 the Morrell family built Headington Hill Hall, extended between 1856 and 1858. After being requisitioned as a military hospital during the Second World War, and subsequently used as a rehabilitation centre, in 1953 James Morrell sold the hall to Oxford City Council. The extensive grounds became Headington Hill Park and South Park. The Hall itself now houses the School of Law of Oxford Brookes University. Today the brewery is remembered by Morrell Avenue which skirts the southern perimeter of South Park and Tawney Street nearby.



*Water wheel that powered Morrell's Brewery. Photograph by J. E. Lloyd. Image courtesy of the Oxfordshire History Centre. POX0069477*



*This May Morning procession across Magdalen Bridge, in 1912, shows a long line of brewery drays, reflecting the importance of the industry to the city. Photograph by Henry Taunt. Image courtesy of the Oxfordshire History Centre. POX0088902.*

Adjacent to the Tawney/Morrell Brewery was the Swan's Nest Brewery on either side of the Castle Mill Stream – access to water being again important. It was in existence by 1718 and in 1780 passed into the ownership of Sir John Treacher (1719-1807), another of the four big Oxford brewing families, who disposed of it to William Hall of Hall's Brewery in 1795. Sir John Treacher who, like the various members of the Tawney family, was Mayor of Oxford on multiple occasions: 1741, 1754, 1763 and 1784, acquired or leased several properties in the City of Oxford (most notably a malthouse on the site of the Paradise Garden in St Ebbe's), but it seems that the centre of his operations was the Swan's Nest Brewery in St Thomas. Malt-making was important on the site in the 17th century and was carried out on a large scale, with malt being taken to London by barge – again access to water being important.

Towards the end of the 19th century Hall's began to take over the smaller breweries in Oxford and the surrounding area, including Shillingford in Bicester, until by 1900 only they and Morrell's remained brewing beer in the city. At their height Hall's had some 200 pubs in and around Oxford, including nine in Bicester: The Angel, The Bell, and The White Hart, which are still open, and The Cross Keys, The King's Head, The Rose & Crown, The Star, The Swan, and The White Lion, all

of which have served their last pint. In 1889 Hall's employed some 200 people making them one of the biggest employers in the city centre. Halls carried out beer deliveries by a fleet of sixty horse drawn drays which were very useful for publicity, some of which are seen crossing Magdalen Bridge on a May Morning in 1912. All breweries used horses for local deliveries. Most of the brewery buildings were demolished in the 1960s, and the Oxford Telephone Exchange and Cooper Callas were built on the site. They are remembered by the Halls Hare, still seen on some buildings.

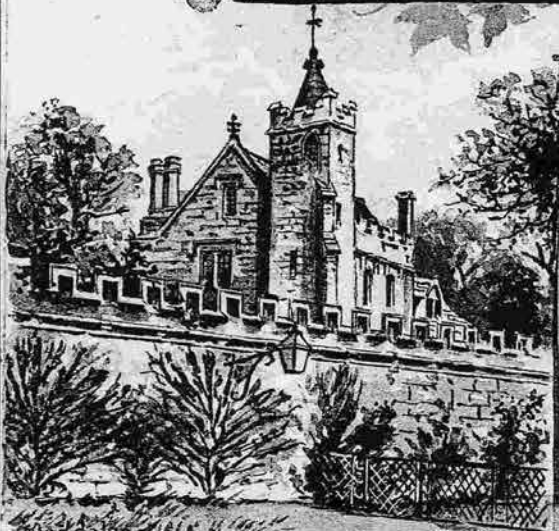
Another local beer producer was Hanley's City Brewery founded in the 1840s by Daniel Hanley (1811-1878) who also had the distinction of being Oxford's first Roman Catholic Mayor in 1870/1, an interesting development in a very strongly Anglican city dominated by the University. The brewery occupied a very large site running between Queen Street and Pembroke Street, approximately the site currently occupied by Marks & Spencer. The brewery features in "The Noted Breweries of Great Britain and Ireland" by Alfred Barnard, published in 1890 in three volumes. He had spent seven years travelling around the country, visiting breweries, and sampling their produce before writing the book. They had about 100 pubs, mostly in Oxford, with just one in Bicester, the long-gone Wheatsheaf in Sheep Street. They had



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Magdalen College

### CITY BREWERY, OXFORD.

The LARGEST BREWERS of FAMILY ALES in the COUNTY.

#### SPECIALITIES FOR FAMILY USE

**B.B. Family Bitter Ale**

1/- per Gallon.

**XX. Family Mild Ale**

1/- per Gallon.

**I.F.A. Intermediate Family Ale**

1/3 per Gallon.

**D.S. Double Stout**

1/6 per Gallon.

Delivered Carriage Free to any part of this District.

EXTRACT FROM "NOTED BREWERIES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND."

By ALFRED BARNARD, 1890.

"WE CANNOT CLOSE OUR REMARKS ON THE CITY BREWERY WITHOUT STATING THAT WE NEVER SAW A PLACE SO WELL ARRANGED, AND KEPT IN SUCH EXQUISITE ORDER AND CLEANLINESS."

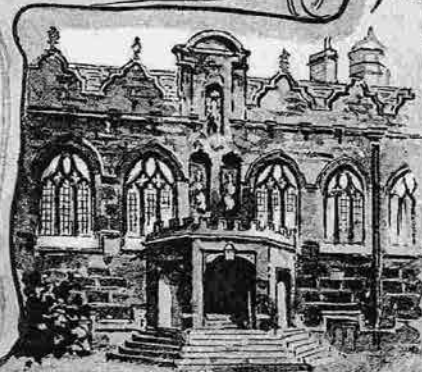
Branch Stores: THAME, WALLINGFORD, BICESTER.

A BRILLIANT GOLDEN ALE, RECOMMENDED FOR ITS KEEPING QUALITIES, AND MOST POPULAR WITH FAMILIES WHO DESIRE A DELICATE DINNER ALE.

THIS QUALITY CONTAINS MORE MALT AND LESS HOPS THAN THE ABOVE, AND IS BREWED ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT LIKE A BITTER ALE.

A SEASON-BREWED ALE, PRODUCED FROM THE BEST LOCAL BARLEYS AND FINEST KENT HOPS, SOUND, AND OF PLEASANT FLAVOUR.

A RICH, SOFT, NOURISHING STOUT, RECOMMENDED FOR INVALIDS, SUPPLIED IN 4½ AND 9 GALLON CASKS.



Oriel College

We guarantee that the only bitter used in the manufacture of these Ales is that obtained from the best English-grown hops.

stabling for 32 horses behind the Wheatsheaf Inn in St Aldate's, as well as other associated buildings extending under the present Westgate Shopping Centre. In the 1920s the brew-house became council offices and then, in 1966, the gallery of Modern Art Oxford – impossible to see from the outside due to the surrounding buildings. Entrance is through a building built in 1888 in Pembroke Street, the 'square room', so called because beer was brewed in square vats instead of the more traditional round ones. Barnard noted that the round one was fourteen feet in diameter. Demand for their beer was so great that sometimes they mashed twice a day and Barnard noted that they were installing a second mash tub. Hanley also had a large, five storeys, malting house in Beckett Street in St Thomas's, just to the south of St Thomas's church, away from the brewing part of the operation to take advantage of the proximity of the railway sidings to deliver the barley and to take away the malt. The building was destroyed by fire in 1921. Nothing now remains of these, and the site is a car park.

The emphasis on family in the above and in other advertisements of the time, not only from Hanley, was in response to the assertion from the temperance movement that the consumption of alcohol was a threat to family life and to reassure their customers that it was not. That it was safe to drink their beer and still have a happy family life.

Daniel's brewery passed to Charles and Edmund Augustine Hanley, who in 1890 turned the business into a company, trading as Hanley & Co., trading from the City Brewery in 20 Queen Street. In 1893, they took over the firm of Shillingford & Co. of Bicester, but in 1898, they were themselves taken over by Halls Oxford Brewery.

Other local brewers were also modernising their plant at this time. In Park End Street, William Miller of The Eagle Brewery, announced his modernisation by adding one word to the name and re-branding himself as The Eagle Steam Brewery. This in addition to putting up all the buildings that would be associated with a modern brewery.

As the demand for beer increased, so did the number of pubs. This alarmed the temperance movement. The temperance movement had its origins in the early Victorian period out of concern about the consumption of spirits and as the sales of beer increased, this also became a matter of concern. They considered pubs to be the cause of most social ills. In the mid-nineteenth century it was reported that more money was being spent on drink than on food. A Band



*Yard and drays at the Hanley City Brewery.*

of Hope poster put out at the time stated that that drink was the cause of a quarter of all illness, crime, lunacy, and poverty in the country. The government of the day was reluctant to make any changes because it derived so much revenue from the sale of alcohol – so no change there. The Band of Hope showed great imagination in organising attractions that would entice people away from the pub. They organised friendly societies, picnics, concerts and rallies and they provided places where visiting teetotallers could stay. There were several temperance hotels in Oxford: one in Queen Street, another near the railway station in what is now Frideswide Square and on the Botley Road, now the Westgate Hotel.

They also encouraged the production of non-alcoholic drinks and there was a surprisingly large number of producers and products: mineral water, lemonade, non-alcoholic wine, and beer. There were twenty such manufacturers in Oxford in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Brewers like Morrell's also turned to brewing non-alcoholic beer in addition to the normal production. North in Grandpont near Folly Bridge was another manufacturer. They were producing about 30 products including non-alcoholic beers and stouts, wines, fruit cordials and mineral water. North's factory could produce 12,000 bottles of mineral water per day; North's ginger beer, the recipe for which had been in the family for many years, was particularly popular. The factory later produced Coca-Cola and has been demolished and replaced by a block of flats. Brewing of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages was big business in Oxford but fell into decline during the 20th century.

Morrell's was bought up by Allsop's in 1926 which was in turn bought up by Ind Cope. This was a part of a trend towards the consolidation of brewing that was taking place all over the country not just in Oxford. Hall's ceased brewing locally in the 1970s. Morrell's continued brewing until 1998 until an acrimonious family dispute brought about the end of the company.

Reversing the trend, small breweries or micro-breweries are beginning to spring up and some are doing very well. So, you can still buy Oxford and Oxfordshire beer today.

# The Outbreak of Smallpox

Published in the Bicester Herald 11th April 1902

**A**t the monthly Rural District Council meeting on Friday evening Dr Cole (the medical officer of health) gave a report relative to the outbreak of smallpox. It was as follows:

“On 23rd March I was asked by Dr Long to see a patient at the Workhouse. We came to the conclusion that he was suffering from smallpox. Dr Drinkwater subsequently confirmed this diagnosis. The man had been taken ill on 19th March and the rash appeared on 22nd March. Subsequently on the 25th George Franklin fell ill. On the 27th John Harris had smallpox rash, as had also John Collett, while a rash appeared in the case of Jonathan Mitchell on the 29th March.

These five cases were removed to the smallpox hospital, which was ready within twenty-four hours of the first case being reported. The rest of the inmates were vaccinated as soon as possible, beginning with the men. Casuals were sent to the lodging-houses, and all visiting stopped.

Allowing an incubation period of twelve days and for the rash to appear on the third or fourth day of illness, the first case was infected with smallpox on the 8th or 9th of March, subsequent cases infected on the

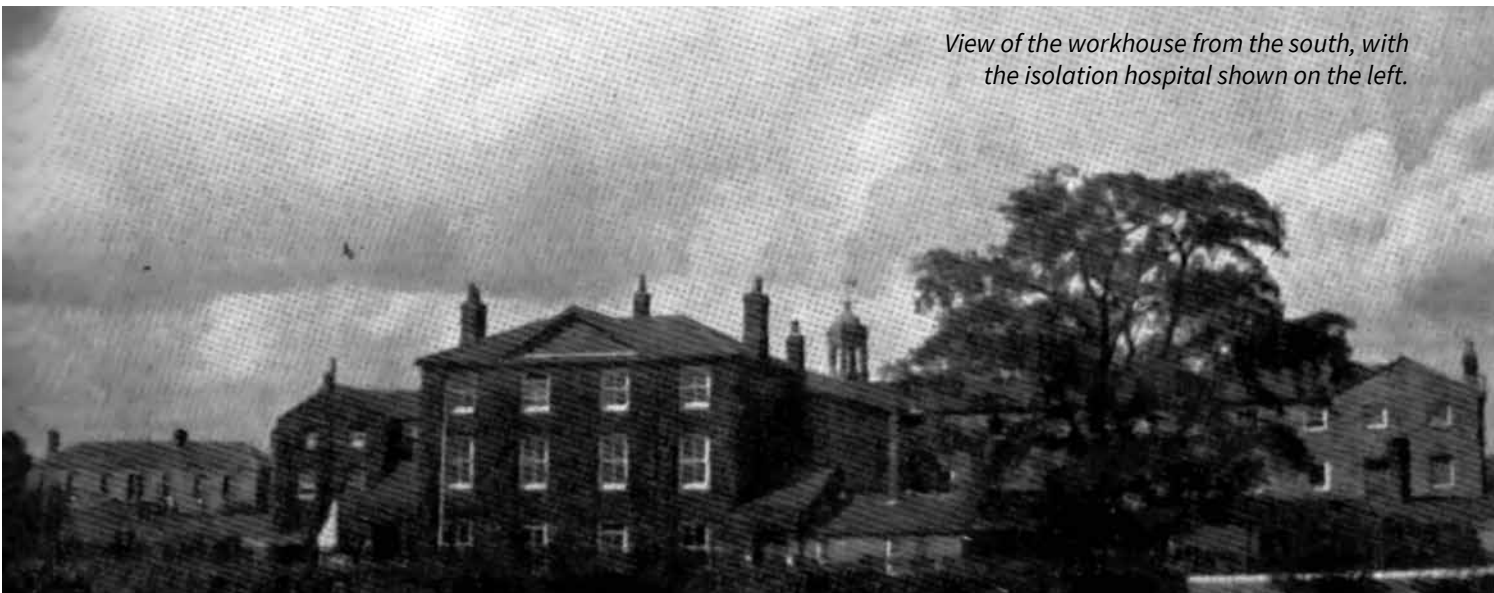
12th or 13th, and the final case infected on 15th March. The cause of the outbreak, such as it was, appears, therefore, to have been operative only from 8th March to 15th March. The men's side of the house only was invaded, and as far as I know no casuals were affected; also no one in the urban district of Bicester.

The fact of the patients having been infected on different days extending over a week is against the disease being due to contact with a casual.

The only person admitted to the men's side since January 29th is Walter Clements. He arrived on March 1st from London, where he had been in contact with a case of smallpox and had been isolated for three weeks. He had not been re-vaccinated at that time.

This man was examined carefully on March 2nd and was well then. He gives a history of having had a crop of spots - a few on the face and arms and trunk - on about March 3rd or 4th. He had also had a previous attack of malaise. He did not complain of anything being wrong with him at any time.

I am inclined to think from this history and from the appearance of the remains of the spots on the 23rd March that this man had an extremely mild attack of smallpox,



*View of the workhouse from the south, with the isolation hospital shown on the left.*



but I give this opinion with due deference to the views of Dr Drinkwater and Dr Long, who, I believe, think otherwise. It is almost impossible to be certain on the point, and the case would have been overlooked by anybody entirely if the subsequent cases had not occurred. I may say that Clements, although he denies re-vaccination, has three good marks of primary vaccination on each arm. These marks are sufficient to account for the extremely mild nature of his attack of smallpox.

I do not anticipate any further extension of the disease, and may I congratulate the Council upon the fact they had the hospital in readiness to receive the patients so quickly."

Sir George Dashwood asked where it was supposed that the man Clements came in contact with the smallpox.

Dr Cole replied that it was at St George's Hospital, Hanover Road. He was brought to Bicester by an official.

The Clerk - And under an order of justices.

In answer to the question, Dr Cole said the man had been previously isolated for three weeks. He was examined directly after coming into the workhouse.

Dr Cole said two of the patients had died, and the other three, according to the latest report, were going on well. He was at the workhouse that morning, and there were no suspects.

The Clerk then mentioned that Sir George Dashwood had offered a tent if it was required, which would accommodate one or two patients. The Council gladly accepted Sir George's offer. The question was then discussed as to further tents, and the clerk was directed to write to Mr Putman and Mr Edgington for terms.

The Chairman said that as regarded the supplies to the hospital they had engaged a man who took them to a distance from the hospital, then left them and they were taken in. Sir George Dashwood had sent papers, and Mr Rowles was prepared to receive anything for the hospital, and to see that it was delivered.

A gentleman, who wished his name to be anonymous, had sent a very liberal cheque, with which to provide luxuries for the patients, as soon as they were able to take them, especially extra tobacco. The clerk had written to the gentleman, and thanked him for his kindness.

The Chairman said he had arranged with the rural dean that if any clergyman of the Church of England was wanted one would be supplied, and he would be re-vaccinated. One of the patients was a Wesleyan, and the Wesleyan minister was going to be re-vaccinated. All the clergymen would have to adhere to the precautions given by the doctors.

In answer to a member of the Council, Dr Cole said the patients would be kept at the hospital till the doctors were satisfied that the disease had gone, when the skin was smooth. It might be a month or two months, and more if complications set in.



*Mrs Ethel Harris, standing outside the isolation hospital with two parrots belonging to the hospital matron, Mrs Fox.*

**D**r Cole's report was also presented to the Urban Council at their meeting on the following Tuesday.

Dr Hendriks expressed the hope that the tramp ward would be opened as soon as possible, as there was danger in continuing to receive so many tramps in the common lodging-house. There were 22 tramps in the town the previous evening, and the lodging houses were full of them. They really had no check over them, and there was no possibility of examining them at the lodging-house. If a tramp went to the workhouse they would be able to see if there were any spots on him. So far no harm had come, and he hoped this would continue. While speaking on this subject, he should like to state that he considered the Council should have been formally advised of the closing of the tramp ward. As far as he knew this had not been done. Then their inspector might have been more watchful.

Mr Goble quite agreed with all that Dr Hendriks had said.

Mr Jones – Are you sure the inspector did not know of it?

The inspector said he was first informed on 27th March, and since then he had made two visits each day. He had previously noticed that there were more tramps at the lodging-house.

Mr T. Grimsley did not think there was sufficient protection taken with regard to those persons who buried the two patients who died from smallpox.

The Clerk stated that all precautions were taken: they were disinfected.

Dr Hendriks thought Mr Grimsley's was a proper question to put. There was rather a scare in Bicester, but there was no necessity for it.

Mr Jones considered that the Council should ask the Rural Council to draw their attention to any recurrence of sending the tramps to the lodging-houses.

The Clerk said he ought to say in justice to the Rural Council that they had had no meeting, and all the arrangements had been made by the Vice-chairman and Clerk.

Mr Jones – I have no doubt it was an oversight.

Mr Piggott said he had heard that the tramps liked the new arrangement, and there had been an increase of them in the town.

The Chairman said there had been no increase in the average number of tramps. They always got more tramps in the spring-time. The average had been 96 or 97 per week, but last week there were 102. Mr Walsh then mentioned what instructions the Rural Council had given their inspector regarding the lodging-houses.

Dr Hendriks said they could have given extra instructions. He did not speak in the spirit of censure but it was in the spirit of precaution.

It was decided that the clerk should write to the Rural Council, asking them in future to give immediate information to the Council if the occasion arose to send the tramps down to the lodging-houses.

# Smoking Concert at Bicester

## Oxford County Territorial Association

Published in the Bicester Herald 28th April 1911

**W**ith a view to awakening interest in the Territorial movement in Bicester, a smoking concert was held in the Corn Exchange, Bicester, on Wednesday evening.

The band of the 4th Battalion (T) Oxfordshire Light Infantry, followed by the headquarter companies, first paraded the town. The Corn Exchange was filled to overflowing. Mr H. Tubb presided, and was supported by Lord Saye and Sele, Captain Fane, Surgeon-Major Sankey, Captain Cooper, Captain Rose, Captain and QMS Bridgewater, and the committee: Messrs. H.C. Jagger, H.A. Fane, J.T. Mountain, and Sergeant C.H. Grimsley. The platform was nicely decorated with pot plants, kindly lent by Mr Tubb.

The evening's proceedings commenced with the following programme:

Song – The Veteran's Song – Captain Cooper.

Song – McHooley's Supper Party – Mr Loader (encored, and "An Irish Spree" given.)

Sword dance – Private Hutt.

Song – The Old Soldier – Mr W. George.

The Chairman said he was very pleased to see such a large number assembled there that evening, because it was a meeting called by the County Territorial Association. They were met partly to enjoy themselves and partly to do a little bit of business. The main object was to get the Territorial Force up to its proper strength. His duty, however, was not to go into that, but to see that the evening passed off successfully, and he hoped it would do so.

The following programme was next gone through:

Song – Home, Boys, Home – Captain Cooper.

Sword dance (backwards) – Private Hutt.

Cornet solo – Killarney – Sergeant Carter.

Song – Ballyhooley – Mr Loader.

Lord Sale and Sele then addressed the meeting. He said the particularly well-executed sword dance reminded him very

forcibly of his old regiment, the Scotch Fusiliers, and also of his commanding officer, Colonel Campbell, and his motto "No obliviscor," which meant "Lest we forget." They must not forget what primarily they had met together that evening for.

At a gathering in Oxfordshire only a few months ago he was described as the chief recruiting sergeant in Oxfordshire, and really that was what had brought him there that day. He had not a mournful story to tell them of affairs in Oxfordshire, for they were now moving upwards. He would only take a portion of the success to his credit, for there were a great many who were helping him in every possible way. He might mention Captain Melville Lee, who would have been amongst them that evening except that he was taking a holiday on the Continent. He was secretary of the County Territorial Association. Captain Melville Lee had left them a very able assistant in the shape of Captain Bridgewater.

Besides those, there were all over Oxfordshire registrars who were registering old soldiers for the Veteran Reserve, and they would be interested to know in Bicester that they were getting on well. In Oxfordshire there were over 500 men registered. At Thame they had a dinner and church parade with fifty veterans. Next Sunday they were going to have a church parade, followed by a dinner, at Banbury, where they had 100 members. In Oxford they had over three hundred veterans registered. He believed in Berkshire, their next county, there was not one registered.

As regarded the active force of Oxfordshire, the Yeomanry was up to strength both for officers and men; the Hospital Corps was well up; and their line battalion was coming up now. He hoped it would not be very long before the Bicester chaps would come along; if they did not come along they would find the door closed.





*The Bicester & District National Reserve on parade in Sheep Street in 1911. These were men who had already served in the military but remained “on call” should they be required. Many of the men pictured would have been at the concert to show their support and encourage the younger residents to sign up.*

He wished they would take it very seriously to heart. Every young man before going away from that meeting should put this question to himself: Supposing there is the hour of need come upon this country, what shall I do? Was there a single young man of the age to be a soldier – which they might take to be from 17 to anything up to 50 (there were plenty of good men over 50 in the Veteran Reserve) – was there a man of the age to be a soldier who would stand up now and say if there was an hour of need he would not want to help. Was there a young fellow who would say “I will stop at home with my mother” whilst the others were fighting the enemy. If there was a man like that amongst them he would like to see him. That hour of need was not impossible. He was not there to preach danger, panic, or famine, but the days of war were not yet over, and the hour of need might come. What would they say of those who said “I don’t want to join, but I want to do something.” They would be absolutely useless,

and therefore it behoved every young man of the age to serve to say “Thank my God there is no compulsory service in this country, and I am going to do my share by joining the Territorial Force, for which my county, Oxfordshire, is responsible.”

He believed that some time ago in Bicester there was quite a good detachment, but at this moment he believed – and he hoped they were all present that evening – there was only about twenty belonging to the Territorials in Bicester. He asked them to work to get those numbers from twenty to a half company. Let there be a Bicester half-company, which could mess together and be in tents together in camp, and pride themselves on being a Bicester half company. He hoped a few men would come forward and do honour to their country and especially to their county, Oxfordshire. (Applause.)

Captain Rose proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Tubb for so kindly taking the chair. As a serving officer in the Battalion he could not

refrain from just impressing upon Bicester that if they wanted to figure in the county battalion as they figured in the county, they would have to jolly well pull up their socks and make the Bicester detachment a half company. They were not crying out for men, but Bicester was in a disgraceful condition, for with the crowd in that room and plenty of people in the town, they only had fifteen rifles there. Surely a half-company was nothing to ask of Bicester. They must really bear in mind that if they did not come forward and complete the number of men required they would be found elsewhere, and Bicester would disappear from the county battalion. With such a gentleman in the chair as Mr Tubb – (applause) – they could be quite sure they were recruiting under the most favourable local conditions. He then appealed for recruits from Bicester. - The vote of thanks was passed with acclamation.

The Chairman said he was very much obliged to Mr Rose for proposing that vote of thanks. He was very proud to take the chair, and he hoped that evening would be productive of recruits. He hoped Bicester would not lag behind; he should be sorry if it did. He thanked the Oxford Battalion for coming over and encouraging them, and he would call for three cheers for Captain Cooper, Mrs Cooper (who had so kindly attended) and the Oxford Battalion.

The Chairman's call was heartily responded to, and Captain Cooper then called for three cheers for Mr Tubb and Lord Saye and Sele, which call was lustily responded to.

The Oxford Battalion then left to catch the train.

Later in the evening Captain Fane said they had had a very pleasant evening, and he thought a hearty vote of thanks was due to the gentleman who had been primarily responsible for collecting such a nice assemblage. He might say that the whole country ought to think that gentleman, because it was most important in these days that they should do what they could to get recruits who would fight for their country in the hour of need. He would digress for the moment.

When volunteers were wanted for the Crimean War in 1855 the Oxfordshire Militia was one of the first to volunteer to go. Some

two years later, when the Indian Mutiny broke out, the Oxfordshire Militia were again the first to volunteer to go out. Then a few years ago, in the South African War, when volunteers were called for, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire were again to the front, and those present remembered how glad they were to welcome the men on their return home. He had unbounded admiration for those who came forward. One of those gentlemen was there that evening and was mainly instrumental in getting up that meeting. That gentleman was Mr Jagger – (applause) – and he was now going to ask them to drink his health.

Was the character of Oxfordshire, he asked, which it had had the last fifty-seven years, to be kept up? Were they going to lag behind their forefathers? He said "No, we must not do it." – The toast was received with musical honours.

Mr Jagger said there were many in that district who had done a good deal more service than he had, but he was fortunate enough in generally having his name brought forward. In connection with that gathering he certainly formed a small committee, who had worked hard. The committee were Mr Fane, Mr Mountain, and Mr C.H. Grimsley. The work was thrust upon them rather quickly, but people had recognised that the cause was exceptionally good, and, he might say, an urgent one. He did not think that service would do any man any harm, and he hoped that that meeting would be productive of bringing up the Bicester detachment to a half-company.

The following songs were next given:

Song - Old Farmer John - Mr E.A. Clifton.

Song - Let's Be as We Used to Be for Old Times' Sake - Mr W. George.

Song - 'Tis Hard to Say Goodbye - Mr L. Turney.

Song - The Old Brigade - Mr H. Penn.

Song - I Couldn't Help But Laugh - Mr H.C. Jagger (encored, and "The Football Match" given).

Song - Goodbye, Daddy - Mr Woodward.

Mr H.A. Fane proposed a vote of thanks to the accompanist, Mr W.H. Grimsley. Then the proceedings closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

# Improvements at London House

Published in the Bicester Advertiser 2nd April 1937

**M**r H.J. Preece, of London House, Bicester, has endeavoured since taking over the drapery and millinery business, to improve the interior of his premises to a degree of comfort and convenience to customers, and to a great extent he has achieved this.

Cabinet glass counters on the ground floor have considerably changed the atmosphere, giving much light, and at the same time offering suggestions to shoppers with their tastefully arranged displays. Upstairs, however, the millinery department has undergone a complete transformation and there now exists a large roomy showroom, where goods can be displayed to better advantage and customers can inspect and attend to their requirements with a greater degree of comfort.

The ladies' fitting room has been dispensed with in this particular department, and is now built at the rear of the new fashion salon, adjoining the millinery department. Mr Preece has for some time been dissatisfied with the arrangements for ladies' fitting, and at great expense has now provided accommodation which, on modern lines, affords complete privacy and far greater comfort. The fashion salon is furnished tastefully with white oak fittings and has room for a much larger selection of goods than has been possible before.

Mr Preece has, indeed, made great efforts to bring his establishment on a level with that of similar businesses in much larger towns, and customers can now be afforded that expeditious and satisfactory service so necessary in these days of strong competition.

*Next page top: Druce & Co milliners and drapers shop, shown in 1910, which would later become Weston Blake's drapers before being sold to Henry Preece.*

*Next page bottom: The frontage of Henry Preece's shop in London House.*

*Below: Advert printed in the Bicester Advertiser in 1937.*

**SPECIAL DISPLAY OF BLOUSES**

In Crepe, Suedes, Satins, Locknit, etc.

**Complete Range of FURNISHING FABRICS,**  
Nets, Casements, Folk Weaves, Cretonnes,  
and the Noted TOOTAL Cloths.

New deliveries of the well-known  
**Benbro Corsets, Corsellettes, Brassiers, Etc.**  
in all styles.

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**H. J. PREECE** (Late Weston Blake)  
LONDON HOUSE, BICESTER.

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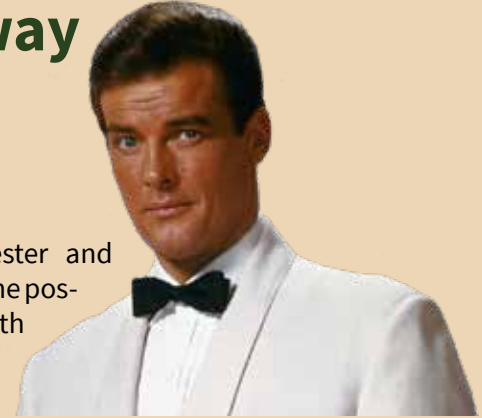




# From Doilies to 007 - Bicester's Manorial Past

February's talk by Matthew Hathaway

Written by Matthew Hathaway

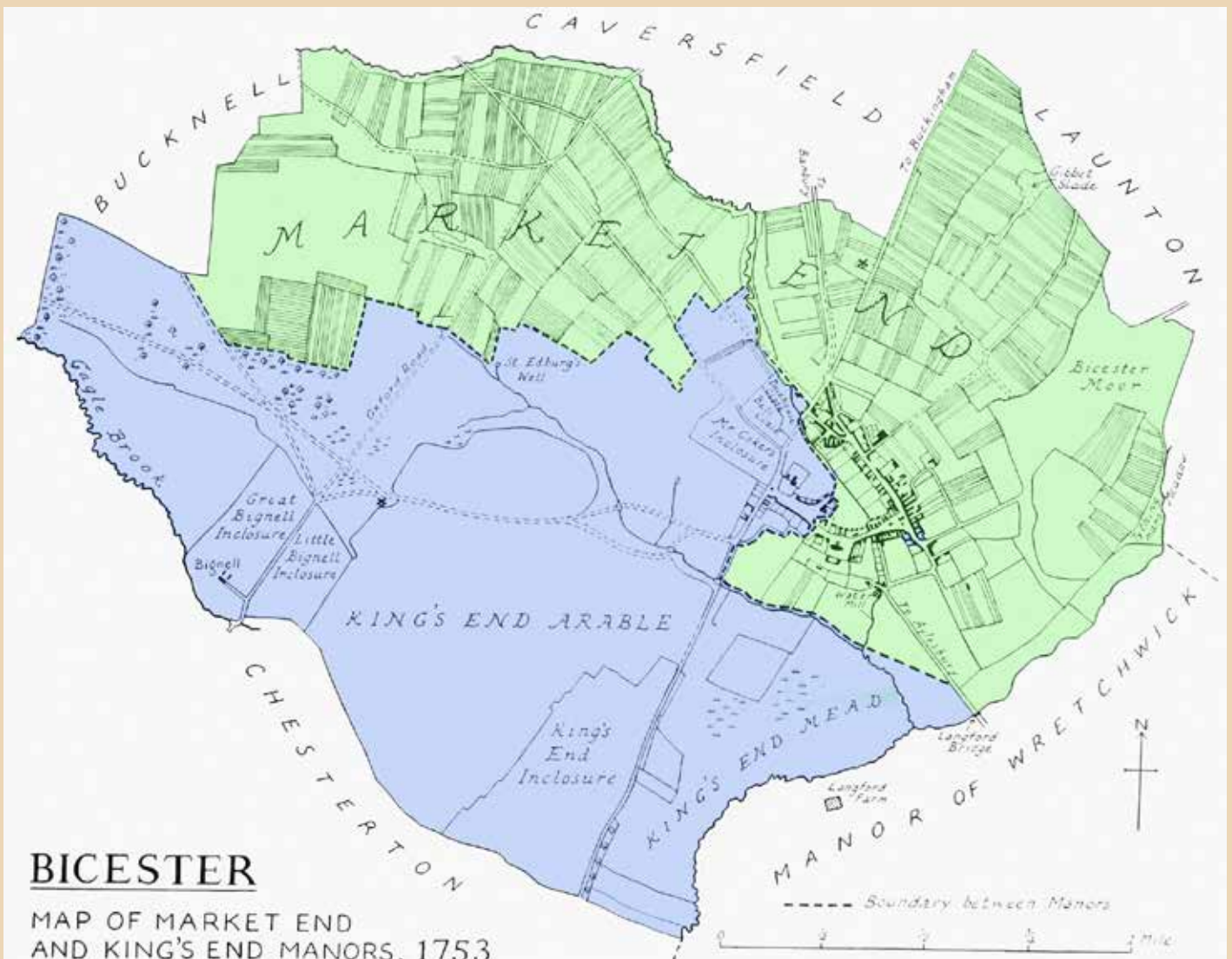


**B**efore the Norman Conquest in 1066, within the parish of Bicester, the manors of Bicester and Wretchwick were owned by Wigod of Wallingford, whilst the manor of Bignell was owned by the Crown as part of the royal manor of Kirtlington.

After William the Conqueror took the throne he set about seizing the estates of the Anglo-Saxon lords and awarding them to some of his Norman friends and supporters.

Which is how Chesterton, Bicester and Wretchwick found their way into the possession of Robert d'Oilly, along with other estates like Hook Norton, Goring and Water Eaton, as well as a large portion of Oxford.

Robert was appointed High Sheriff of Oxford and was responsible for the construction of Oxford Castle. From then on, Bicester's two manors, King's End and Market End, follow very different journeys.



## BICESTER

MAP OF MARKET END  
AND KING'S END MANORS, 1753



King's End was originally part of Bignell manor, and thus owned by the Crown. We don't know exactly when it was separated off from the rest of the estate and given to Markyate Priory, or even who gave it to them, but we do know that the Priory obtained lands somewhere in Oxfordshire shortly after it was founded in 1145, and they definitely owned the land here by the early 1200s as they then exchanged part of the land for some owned by Bicester Priory.

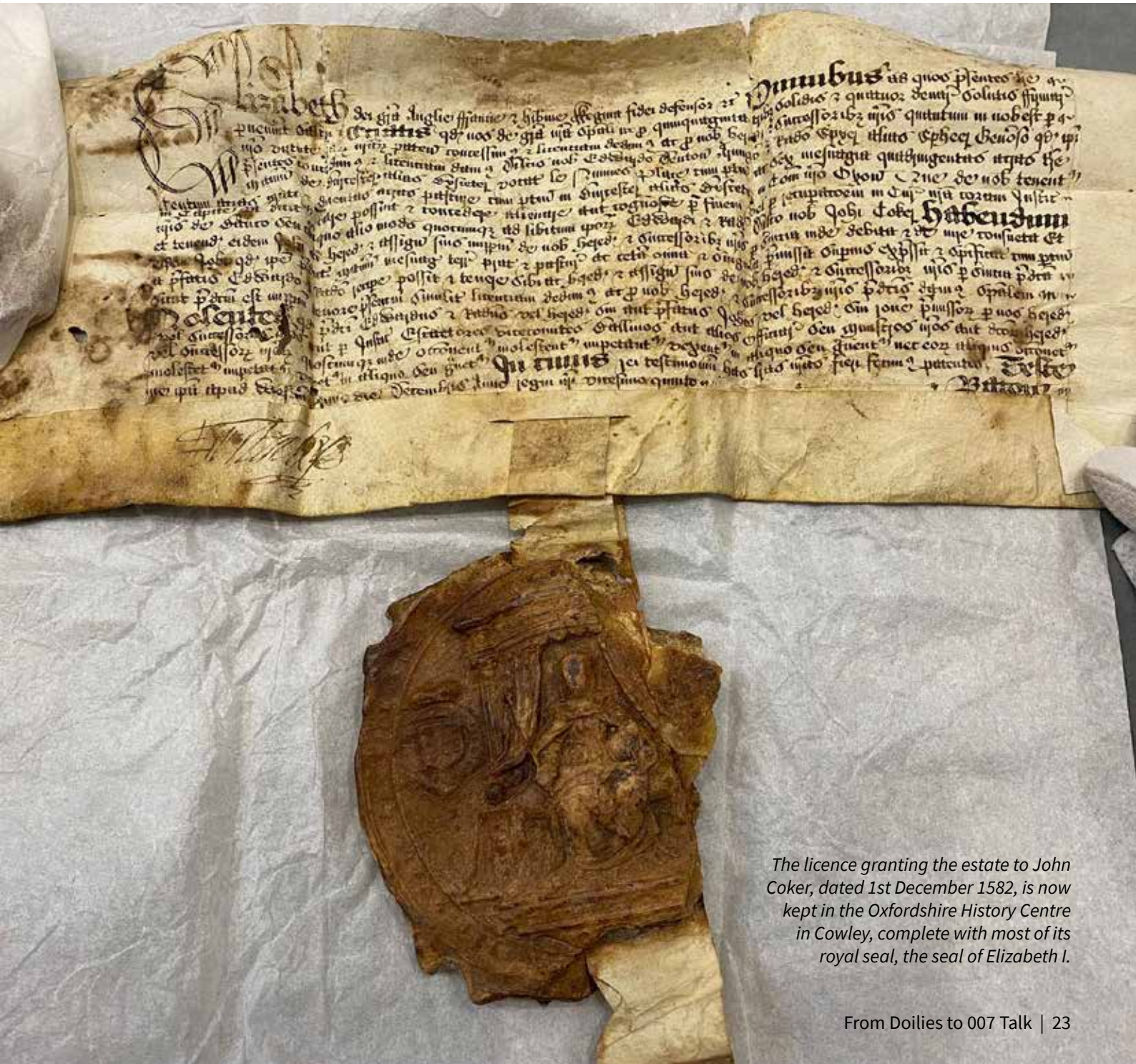
Markyate Priory was a Benedictine order of nuns near Caddington, in Bedfordshire. It was established by Geoffrey de Gorham, the 16th abbot of St. Alban's Abbey, after having developed from a hermitage, and was dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

In 1291 their estate in Bicester was valued at £2 16s 10d a year, and by 1316 it had become known officially as King's End, but colloquially as Nun's Place. Though it

isn't clear which king it relates to. Edward II was on the throne at the time so it could be him, or it may refer to when the land was part of the Royal estates, so could be any of Edward's predecessors, or, as it was owned by the Priory, it could simply be referring to God.

In 1530 the Priory leased the estate to John Griffith for 21 years at a rent of 10 marks a year. Then in 1536 the Priory was dissolved and all its lands, including King's End, were seized by the Crown.

In 1542 the Crown sold the estate, still with 9 years left of John Griffith's lease, to John Denton of Blackthorn. He died in 1576 and passed everything on to his son, Edward. Then, in 1582, John Coker purchased the manor from Edward Denton. At that time the estate consisted of the manor house and grounds, six cottages, 400 acres of farmland, 100 acres of meadow, and 200 acres of pasture.



The licence granting the estate to John Coker, dated 1st December 1582, is now kept in the Oxfordshire History Centre in Cowley, complete with most of its royal seal, the seal of Elizabeth I.



The Coker family had originated in the West Country. They moved into the “Nun’s Place” manor house and renamed it Bicester Hall. John then acquired part of the former Bicester Priory estate from Sir Richard Blount in 1605, but died in 1606 leaving the estate to his son, Cadwallader.

In 1643, in the midst of the English Civil War, Parliament tried to deter the Royalists, and raise funds to continue fighting the war, by setting up two committees. The Sequestration Committee had the power to confiscate estates held by Royalists who had fought against Parliament, and the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents had the power to return the seized estates to their previous owners in exchange for payment of a fine and a pledge that the person would not take up arms against Parliament again.

The size of the fine depended on the value of the estate, and in 1646 Cadwallader Coker was compounded by these committees and forced to pay a fine of £290.

When Cadwallader died in 1653 the estate passed to his son, John. Then, when John died in 1710, it passed to his son Thomas, who was the Canon of Salisbury. Thomas died in 1741 leaving the estate to his eldest son, John. But when John died childless in 1767 it passed to Thomas’ second son, also called Thomas. Thomas junior eventually chose to make the property over to his nephew, John, who was the eldest son of his other brother, Cadwallader, with the stipulation that it be passed down through his male heirs.

In 1790 John had the Manor House demolished and replaced with a much grander looking Georgian edifice, which he named Bicester House. The building works included expanding the grounds around the house to create a more impressive park. This involved demolishing the cottages in King’s End that backed onto the gardens, relocating the residents to new cottages built on Oxford Road. It also included blocking off the road that ran from King’s End to Crockwell, where Queen’s Avenue now runs, so as to give the house an uninterrupted view out across the estate.

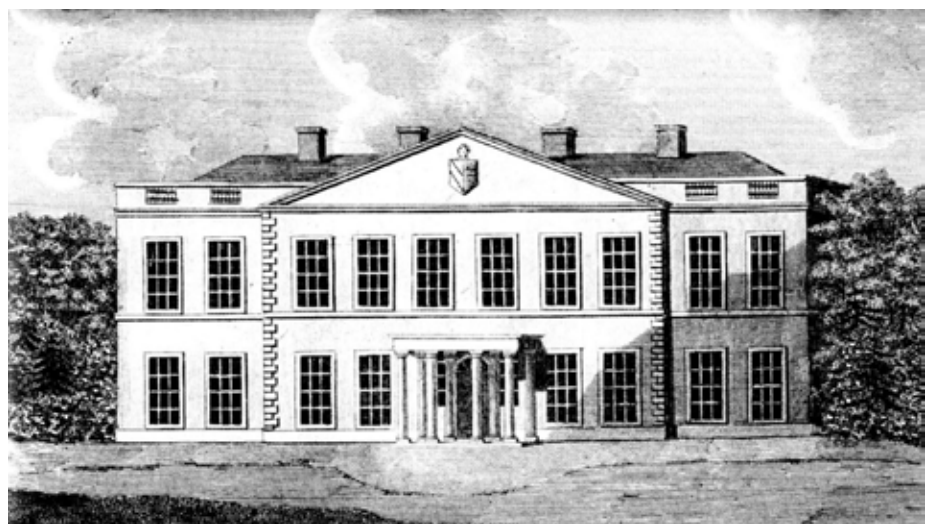
When John died in 1819 his daughter, Charlotte, being a girl, was unable to inherit the estate thanks to Thomas Coker’s



stipulation about male heirs only. Since she was John’s only child, the estate passed to John’s nephew, Thomas Lewis Coker. But Thomas was immediately thrown in at the deep end because 1819 also saw a large fire destroy parts of the house that John had built, forcing Thomas to remodel it into the house we see today.

The side elevation, facing King’s End, became the new front elevation, with the addition of an entry porch and new entrance. The original gable-fronted elevation, which had sustained most of the damage, was replaced with a flat roofline and a bay window, looking out over the gardens and new terrace. If you look closely though you can still see the step in the wall where the gable-front originally projected from.

*The old manor house that John Coker demolished.*



*The Georgian manor house that John Coker built in 1790.*

The estate continued to be passed down through the family, though it was occasionally rented out to others. The manorial rights lapsed in the 1920s when a large portion of the estate was sold off, but the rest remained in the Coker family until Major Lewis Coker died in 1953. At that point Bicester House and the remainder of the estate were inherited by his niece, Denise, Lady Kilmarnock. However, Major Coker's widow, Margaret Coker, was allowed to keep living in the house until she died in 1978. It was then sold off and the house passed through a number of private owners before it was eventually converted into old people's flats, which it still is today.



*Major Lewis and Margaret Coker, in the gardens of Bicester House, 1950.*

King's End complete, we return to Robert d'Oilly and his Norman friends to follow the much more complex story of Market End. Robert gave the manors of Bicester and Wretchwick to Miles Crispin as part of his daughter Maud's marriage dowry. Miles then sold them to Gilbert Basset shortly before his death in 1107.

By 1154 Gilbert was dead and had been succeeded by his son, Thomas, who was the Sheriff of Oxfordshire. He held the manor until he died in 1180, when it passed to his eldest son, Gilbert.

Gilbert established Bicester Priory in 1183 and endowed it with part of his estate, including the manorial house complex, next to the parish church, which became the main priory buildings. This is the area we know today as Old Place Yard, a corruption of its earlier name, Old Palace Yard, which comes from that earlier use.

When Gilbert Basset died in 1205 his property, including the remainder of Bicester manor, was held in dower by his widow,

Egeline. She went on to marry Richard Burdun, but was widowed again by 1219. She continued to live on the estate until her death in about 1225, but throughout those 20 years the ownership of the estate actually passed down through a number of hands.

Firstly it went to Eustachia, Gilbert and Egeline's only daughter, in 1205. She had married Thomas de Verdun, but after his death she married Richard de Camville, the son of Gerard de Camville who owned the manor of Middleton Stoney. Eustachia was dead by 1215 when her only daughter, Idoine, was taken into the King's custody, thanks to Richard taking part in the Baronial Rebellion.

Idoine's wardship was granted to the Earl of Salisbury. She later married the Earl's son, William de Longspee, who was formally granted Idoine's inheritance when she came of age in 1226. By then her father was also dead and so the inheritance included Bicester, Wretchwick, and Middleton Stoney manors.



*Basset coat of arms.*



*de Camville coat of arms.*



*de Longspee coat of arms.*



From then the manors followed the same descent through the generations until 1577, when the then owner, Henry Stanley, Earl of Derby, leased the Bicester manor to Thomas Wygyns, of Bicester, for 20 years.

When that lease ended in 1597 Henry's heir, William Stanley, sold a 9,999 year lease on the manor to thirty-one of his Bicester tenants for £750. He later sold the freehold of the manor to trustees of the leaseholders.

In 1605 Thomas Clements, the leaseholder who held the manor house, tried to claim the manorial rights so that he could gain the profits of "his" estate, but it was decided that these belonged to all the leaseholders. So a bailiff was brought in to manage the manor on behalf of the leaseholders and it became known as the Bailiwick of Bicester Market End. A bailiwick being the jurisdiction of a bailiff.

In the 18th century the Clements estate was divided between Thomas Coker, of King's End, and Edward Turner, of Ambrosden. By 1816 the Cokers and Page-Turners were the largest lessees of the bailiwick. The Page-Turners tried to claim to be lords of the manor of Market End, but this was unfounded since, like Thomas Clements before them, they didn't own the whole of the estate.

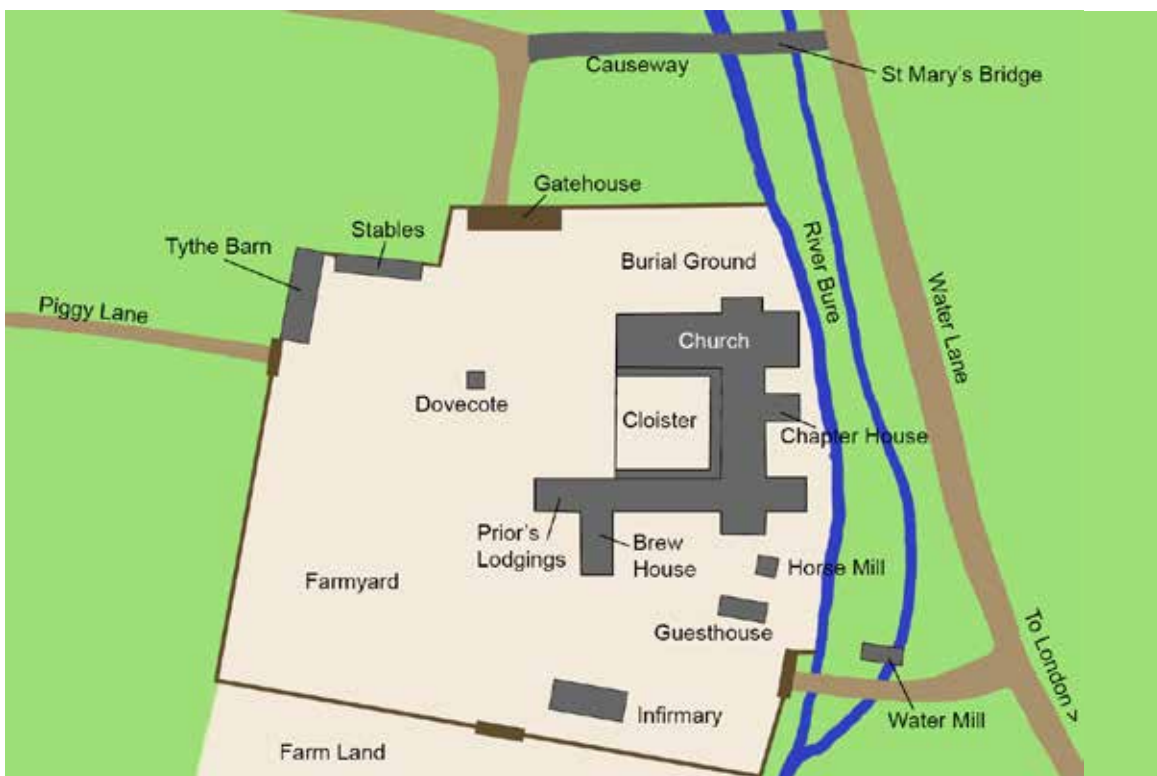
In fact, the manor wasn't fully united again until the early 20th century when, in 1902 and 1913, Bicester Urban District Council managed to purchase the manorial rights with all the shares in the bailiwick, from the lessees.

*William de Longspee went on to serve in the 7th crusade, where he died in 1250, during the assault on Mansoura, in Egypt.*



Meanwhile, a portion of the manors of Bicester and Wretchwick had been given to the Priory by Gilbert Basset when it was founded. But over the life of the Priory more and more parcels of land and property were donated or purchased until, at the dissolution of the Priory in 1537, the property seized by the Crown was valued at £176 a year.

The priory estate was then granted by the Crown to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who, in turn, sold it to Roger Moore for £505.





This included the main monastic site, now Old Place Yard, and 400 acres of land. Roger then set about converting the old priory buildings into a family home for himself, his wife, Agnes, and their three children, Thomas, Mary and Elizabeth.

Roger died in September 1551 and was buried in the chancel of St Edburg's Church. His memorial (shown below), hidden away for many years, is now mounted on the south wall of the chancel, but it would originally have been fixed to the floor, marking the family grave.

Thomas then inherited the estate, though he didn't come of age until 1558. Thomas became a Gentleman Pensioner to Queen Elizabeth, serving in her troop of personal bodyguards for many years until he was killed on service in Ireland on 10th March 1574. Thomas died without an heir and so his mother continued to live on the estate until she died in 1583, then it was divided between Thomas' wife, Livia, and his two sisters. Mary, who had married Sir Michael Blount of Mapledurham, and Elizabeth, who had married Gabriel Fowler of Tilsworth.

Gabriel died in 1582 so Elizabeth held her portion in her own right until she conveyed

it to Sir John Brockett when she married him later in 1583. But in 1589 Sir John conveyed all their share to Sir Michael and Mary Blount.

Mary died in 1592 leaving a son, Richard Blount, who inherited the estate when he succeeded his father in 1610. When Livia died in 1597 her portion of the estate was also passed on to Richard, so he ultimately came to possess all of the original Moore estate.

Sir Richard Blount served as the Sheriff of Oxford in 1625 and 26, and had been a member of parliament for Chipping Wycombe in 1601. He died in 1628, having already passed on the Bicester estate to his son, Sir Charles Blount.

In 1644, during the Civil War, Sir Charles was with the King's forces in Oxford and was accidentally killed







*Sir Charles Blount.*

by a sentry. His eldest son, Michael, then inherited the estate, though he was still a young child.

Two years later the estate was sequestrated by the same committee that Cadwallader Coker had been dealing with, but the family were unable to regain their estate. Michael died in 1649 and his brother, Walter, inherited the claim on the estate. He appealed for the discharge of the estate, but the number of other claims against the estate reveal that it was heavily mortgaged, and when Walter's appeal was finally successful he was forced to sell the property to Chief Justice John Glynne in order to settle the family's debts.

John Glynne died in 1666 and passed the estate on to his son, Sir William Glynne, who had been educated at Jesus College, Oxford, taking his degree in 1656. He had served as Member of Parliament for Caernarfon in 1660 and 1661, before being made 1st Baronet of Bisseter on 20th May 1661. He was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1668 and served as Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire from 1688 to his death on 8th September 1690.

The estate then passed down to William's eldest son, also William, who died in 1721 without an heir. It then passed to William's brother, Sir Stephen Glynne, the 3rd Baronet. Stephen sold the manor of Bicester to Sir Edward Turner in 1728, and then he sold the manor of Ambrosden to Sir Edward the following year.

Sir Edward Turner was made 1st Baronet of Ambrosden in 1733, but died in 1735 and



*Sir Edward and Cassandra Turner.*

was succeeded by his son, Sir Edward Turner, 2nd Baronet. The 2nd Baronet was only 16 years old when he inherited the estate and title from his father, studying Law at Balliol College, Oxford, at the time.

He married Cassandra Leigh on 8th September 1739 and they went on to have five children: Elizabeth, Cassandra, Gregory, William and John. He was a magistrate for some years and eventually became a member of parliament, representing Great Bedwin from 1741 to 1747, Oxford in 1754, and Penrhyn from 1761 until his death in 1766. His representation of Oxford in 1754 having been secured partly through him converting some of his Market End bailiwick leaseholders into freeholders in order to create additional voters who would support him in the election.

Edward had the existing Ambrosden House replaced by the architect Sanderson Miller in the 1740s. This included a landscaped park, 5 miles in circumference, laid out around the house and ornamented with lakes and statues. The drive to the house was along a semicircular avenue of trees.

In 1741 Edward built a new road between Ambrosden and Merton. He intended to continue it to Oxford but the remainder of the project was never executed. It includes a completely straight stretch of about 1.5 miles which runs across level ground, but anyone who has driven along it knows that

it undulates at regular intervals, apparently intended to help draught animals pull the vehicles more efficiently.

Edward's eldest son, Gregory Turner, inherited the estate and title upon his father's death, and then in 1780 he also inherited the estate of Battlesden Park, in Bedfordshire, from his aunt, the Honourable Judith Page. One condition of the inheritance was that he adopt the name Page, and so from then on the family name became Page-Turner. Though we don't know if he ever saw the joke.

Sir Gregory never lived at Ambrosden. He thought the house too big and in 1767 sought to demolish part of it to make it smaller. This proved impractical. so in 1768 he had the entire house demolished.

He died in 1805 at the age of 56 and was buried in Bicester, inside the family vault under the chancel with his parents. He had married Frances, the daughter of Joseph Howell, and their son, Gregory Osborne Page-Turner succeeded him to become the 4th baronet. A monument in Ambrosden Church shows that the 4th Baronet was also buried in the vault inside St Edburg's when he died in 1843.

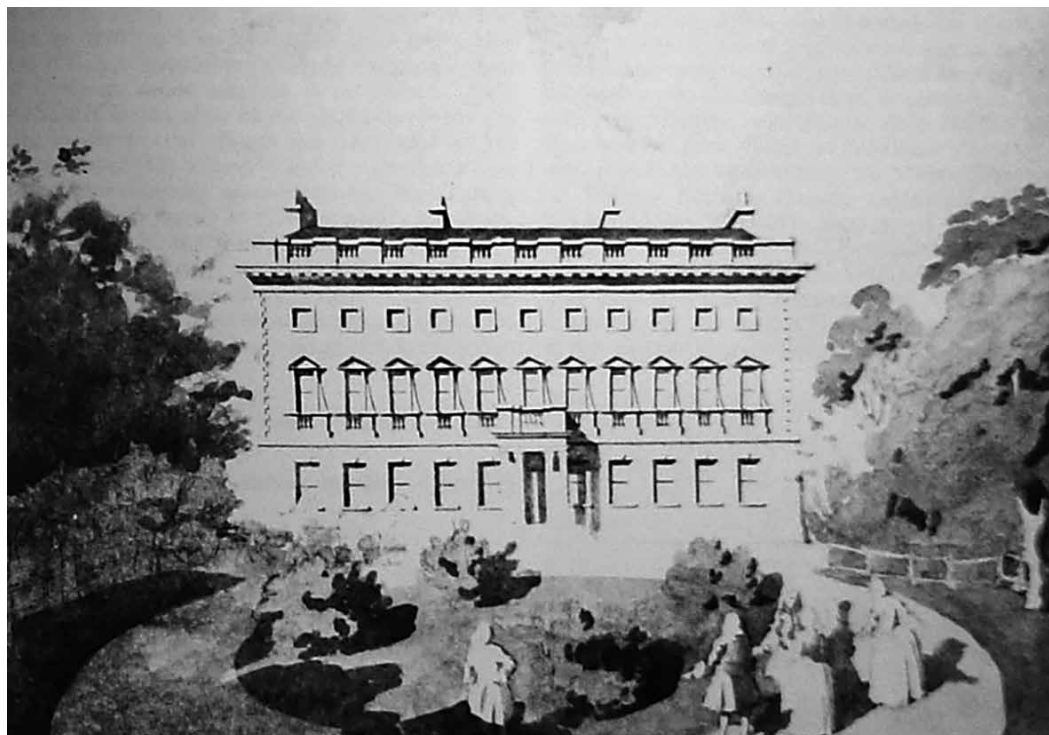
After him, the Bicester and Ambrosden estates were then passed down through the Page-Turner family until the last parts were sold off in 1930. However, they still retain part of the patronage of St Edburg's Church. When the present holder of the title, Canon Gregory Page-Turner, visited the church back in 2012 he could clearly remember growing up in Bicester when the family lived in Ambrosden House, which is now the Wimpy restaurant on the corner of Market Square and Chapel Street.

Traditionally the patronage was held by the lord of the manor, but when the Priory was founded by Gilbert Basset the parish church was given to them, and from then on the patronage was passed down with their estate. One perk of being the patron was that you got the privilege of being buried inside the chancel of the church, a space otherwise reserved for active clergy. That is why, if you look around at the monuments within the church today, you'll find that all the ones in the chancel are Moores, Turners or Page-Turners, while all the Cokers, Clements and the like are in the nave or aisles.



*Sir Edward Turner, 2nd Baronet, who gave away land in Bicester to secure votes.*

*Ambrosden House, as it was rebuilt by Sir Edward in the 1740s.*





# Death of Mr John Phillips

## Inquiry Into His Accident

Published in the Bicester Herald 23rd May 1902

**W**e deeply regret to announce that the accident which Mr John Phillips, of Bicester, met with on May 1st ended fatally shortly before noon on Wednesday. He fell from his horse on the Bucknell Road when proceeding to his farm early in the morning. His horse stumbled over a cutting made to convey the water from the road to the ditch, and Mr Phillips was pitched over the horse's head. Although considerably cut about the head and face and bruised about the body, he walked in a semi-conscious state to his farm a mile and a half away, and was then driven to his home in Sheep Street, Bicester.

It was at first thought that two ribs were broken, but this apparently was not the case. More serious symptoms manifested themselves – first, bronchitis generally, and then pneumonia. Mr Phillips rallied slightly on one or two occasions, but became decidedly worse last Friday, and continued to get weaker until his death at 11:40 am on Wednesday.

Mr Phillips has twice before met with serious accidents. It is over 20 years ago that he sustained a broken leg through being kicked by a horse when out with the Yeomanry at Hopcroft's Holt; and a few years ago he was thrown from his horse on Bucknell Road by the girth giving way, and he then broke his collarbone.

The deceased was the son of Mr John Phillips, who kept the Six Bells Inn. He had resided in Bicester practically all his life, the exception being brief periods at Whaddon, Blackthorn, London, and elsewhere. He was also landlord of the Angel Inn for some years. He leaves a widow and two sons – Mr Alfred Phillips, of Oxford; and Mr Albert Phillips, of Ohio. He was 58 years old on March 15th. Mr Phillips was a farmer and coal merchant. He had held about 385 acres at Bucknell under Mr F.D. Hibbert, and now under Mr R.F. Hibbert, since late in the eighties. His

farming was a success. He had been overseer for the village on two occasions.

By his death Bicester has lost a useful townsman, and many institutions will miss him.

Mr Phillips, we believe, first sat on the old Local Board in 1892, remaining during the three years for which he was elected. In 1897 he came forward with three others who were opposed to the provision of an expensive water supply for the town, and was returned by the casting vote of the returning officer, he and another candidate tying for fourth place. After three years of office Mr Phillips retired and again sought the suffrages of the ratepayers, and he was then (April 1900) returned third on the list. In December of the same year Mr Phillips referred, at the Council meeting, to a recent action at law, by which the then chairman was disqualified from continuing as a councillor for participating in profits of work done for the Council, and said possibly he might have to resign for the same reason.

In January of last year he resigned, but in April was again a candidate and was returned at the head of the poll, and remained a member until his death. He was vice-chairman for the last two or three years. Mr Phillips was most regular in his attendance, and evidenced considerable interest in the management of the affairs of the town. He always backed his own opinion fiercely, and often advocated his views with great earnestness. He considered all general questions on their merits, but on several standing subjects, such as the making up of South View Road and the opening of Cemetery Lane, his mind was made up from the first. There can be no doubt that the Council has lost a good member and the town a useful representative by Mr Phillips' removal.

Mr Phillips' connection with the Freemasonry was contemporaneous with the commencement of the Jersey Lodge, No.2334, for the consecration ceremony



took place on March 10th, 1890, and Mr Phillips became a mason on the 2nd of the following month. He had held office, and was a frequent attendant at the meetings during the twelve years he was a member.

He had been interested in the welfare of Court Loyal Oxonian of the Ancient Order of Foresters for a great number of years, and was one of the trustees. He had also shown his interest in a practical way by giving medals to the members who induced the most persons to join the court.

Mr Phillips had been a member of the Bicester Agricultural and Horticultural Association for many years, and was on the General Committee and the Horticultural Committee.

He was very fond of bowls, and played a good and reliable game. He had been captain of the Bicester Bowling Club. He was likewise on the committee of the Bicester Cricket Club.

### **The Inquest**

This was held before Mr W.W. Robinson at the Crown Hotel yesterday at 12:30. The following comprised the jury: Messrs. T. Grimsley (Causeway), who was chosen Foreman; W. George, T.A. Scrivener, W. Plant, Jonas Harris, A. Couling, J. Evans, W. Goble, G.A. MacKenzie, W.J. Tompkins, T. Buckle, and J. Hedges. Drs Brooks, Drinkwater and Long were also present.

In opening the inquiry the Coroner briefly explained that the jury had been called together to inquire into the death of one of their neighbours, who had lived in Bicester a great number of years and must have been well known to all of them. He had been informed that the deceased had met with some accident, and it would be the duty of the jury to see if death resulted from the injuries he had received.

Mary Ann Phillips said she was the widow of the deceased, who was a farmer and coal merchant, and was 58 years of age on March 15th. He occupied a farm at Bucknell, which was 2 to 3 miles from Bicester. She remembered him leaving home at about 6:40 on the morning of May 1st to go to Bucknell on his horse, a dark brown nag. She next saw him when he was brought home by his own men in his own cart at about 8:30 the same morning. He was suffering from injuries and was very much hurt. Deceased asked her to send for a doctor and to put him to bed. His upper lip was very much cut and there was a lot of blood. He said he had been thrown

from his horse, and that he had walked from the place where the accident happened to Bucknell, a distance of about a mile and a half. He said he was not conscious when he walked to Bucknell. The accident happened on his way to the village. He did not then know whether the horse had struck him, but some time afterwards he saw the horse had rolled upon him. He said he at first thought that his collarbone was broken. He had ridden the horse a great many times, having had it for four years. He had had no accident before with the same horse, but with other horses. Mr Long, surgeon, first saw him, and he was afterwards seen by Mr Drinkwater and Mr Brooks, of Oxford.

The Coroner – Did he tell you anything else about the accident?

Witness said deceased thought the horse rolled upon him, because he felt so crushed inside. Deceased died yesterday morning at twenty minutes to twelve. He remained conscious up to the time of his death. He had been in the habit of going to Bucknell almost every day, and sometimes twice a day, and generally rode there.

Walter Barratt, who said he lived at Ladysmith Terrace, Crockwell, and was a farm labourer, said he knew Mr Phillips by sight. Mr Phillips passed him and Edward Ayres on the Bucknell Road, about 80 yards from the cross-roads. He was riding. The horse blundered down on its knees near the cross-roads, and Mr Phillips fell over its head. When they got up to him they found him on the road on his side. The horse fell down on the turf by the side of the road, and was standing about two yards from Mr Phillips; he was not under the horse; the horse had got up before they got there. They lifted him up, and he asked where the horse was, and how it was done. He did not say anything else, except that he should be alright in a few minutes. He caught hold of the reins and walked gently towards Bucknell with Ayres. Witness left them. Ayres worked at Hawkwell Farm. Witness saw some blood on the ground where the accident happened, and there was blood on Mr Phillips' chest from his head. The horse did not appear to be injured. – In answer to further questions by the coroner, witness said he did not think deceased was in a fit condition to walk to Bucknell, but did not tell him so. – By the Foreman: witness was about 80 yards from where deceased fell, which was near the cross-roads, just on the edge of the turf. Witness left to go to Himley Farm. He did

not go with Mr Phillips, because Ayres did. He was sure he had told the Coroner all he knew about the accident. – By Mr Buckle: The horse was on the turf, but Mr Phillips was thrown on to the hard road. – By the Coroner: The horse was trotting at a gentle pace when it fell.

Edward Ayres, Albert Place, Bicester, deposed to being in company with Barratt at the time of the accident. Mr Phillips passed them near the Workhouse turn, and in five or six minutes afterwards they found he had been thrown. Witness did not see the accident. They saw Mr Phillips on the ground and the horse grazing near the turn. They went up to him and asked if he had had an accident and he replied that he had. His head was on the road. Witness assisted to pick him up, but he could not stand for three or four minutes. He then got hold of the horse's head and said he would walk to Bucknell. He had hold of the reins and walked on the turf towards Bucknell, witness accompanying him as far as Hawkwell Farm, which was about half-a-mile from the cross-roads. On the way Mr Phillips asked witness his name, and also said that he did not know how the job had happened. Witness told him the nag had fallen upon its knees and that he was thrown over its head. This was from what witness could see of it. The bridle was smothered in dirt; it was a wet morning. He last saw Mr Phillips going up the road about 20 yards from Hawkwell Farm. The horse was quiet, and he saw nothing to lead him to believe that it was out of condition in any way. Two men, George Young, a shepherd, and James Tyrrell, a cowman, came up when they had got Mr Phillips on his legs. – By the Foreman: Witness was sure deceased said nothing else while they were walking together, except that he did not know how it was done. – By Mr George: He thought Mr Phillips was capable of going on to Bucknell. – By Dr Long: Deceased's head was just on the hard road.

Thomas Wakelin (Bucknell) said he had worked for Mr Phillips for nearly 14 years as a farm labourer. He saw Mr Phillips when he got to Bucknell farm; no one came with him. He arrived at 7:30 or a little later. He was walking, holding the horse by the bridle, and had his riding stick in his other hand. Witness asked him what was the matter, and he said the horse had blundered in a trench by the side of the road and had fallen on to its knees, and that he was pitched over the horse's head. Deceased gave him the key of

his room and asked for a little whiskey, as he felt faint. Witness gave him some. He could see that his head and face were smothered with blood. He helped him to his room, and got some warm water and washed him. He complained of pains in his head, and said he believed he had loosened all his teeth. Witness knew the horse to be a quiet one, and that his master had been in the habit of riding it. The horse's knees were dirty but were not broken; he could see that the horse had been on to its knees. Deceased, or no one else, had never had an accident with the same horse before. The horse was six years old. Witness helped his master to get into a trap and drove him to Bicester. He complained all the way that he had hurt his head. – By the Foreman: Deceased only complained about his head to witness.

Superintendent Bown said there was a witness in attendance who looked after the horse, and he would say that the horse was quiet. The Coroner thought the jury had already had sufficient evidence that this was the case.

Herbert Birch Long, MRCS, etc., said he believed he had attended Mr Phillips once before the accident, and then for a minor ailment. It was a little before nine on May 1st that he was called to deceased, whom he found in bed at his home in Sheep Street. He was conscious; bleeding freely from the nose and mouth; and he complained of a great deal of pain on the left side of his chest. His upper lip was split quite in two. Most of the blood came from the lip and nose. Four or five of his teeth were loosened in the upper jaw. These were things which might happen from a fall. Witness examined him all over. There were a few abrasions on his forehead and cheeks, but they were mere scratches and of no depth at all. Witness stitched his lip up. He afterwards examined his chest more thoroughly. He had pain all over the left side of the chest from about the middle of the breast-bone, upwards to beneath the arm, and when witness pressed him there at all it appeared to make the pain much worse. Witness's opinion at that time was that two ribs were broken. He had examined him since then, but the result did not confirm his suspicion, although it was quite his view on the first day that they were. On the following morning his breathing appeared to be very quick indeed, and was much quicker than it was when he first saw him after the accident. On that day he discovered that there was evidence of general bronchitis

on the chest, both back and front. Witness asked Dr Drinkwater to accompany him and see deceased on the Friday evening. The bronchial attack did not get much worse, but about the Sunday morning following there were distinct signs of pneumonia in right lung, behind. Deceased began to spit blood, and there were marked signs of the consolidation of the right lung. Deceased improved a little, and there was a little hope that he might go on doing so, but he was not then, or never had been, out of danger. Last Friday, however, he became distinctly worse, and continued to get worse until the time of his death.

The Coroner – Did he tell you how it happened?

Dr Long replied that when he first saw deceased, he said his horse had blundered, and that was all he could remember, but after that witness heard him say on two or three occasions that he believed the horse rolled upon him, although at the time he could not say that. He did not seem to remember walking to Bucknell at all.

The Coroner – From your visits what do you say was the cause of death?

Dr Long – I should say pneumonia, and that the predisposing cause of pneumonia was the shock following the accident and the injuries to the chest.

The Coroner – Do you believe that if the accident had not have happened he would have been alive now?

Dr Long – Yes, I believe so. I believe the shock from the accident, the bruising of the chest and the loss of blood predisposed him to the onset of pneumonia. I should like to add that in my opinion there should be a post-mortem examination, I think he may have had further internal injuries.

The Coroner – I do not think that is at all necessary.

Dr Long – I understand Mr Phillips was insured against accidental injuries.

The Coroner – We have nothing to do with that here. All we have to do is to enquire into the cause of death. It seems that he died from the injuries caused by the fall.

Mr Evans asked if it was correct that Mr Phillips was in bed the day before the accident.

The Foreman said he saw Mr Phillips out on that day and spoke to him.

The Coroner said his opinion was that deceased died from pneumonia, arising from shock caused by the accident. He did not know whether all the jurymen were satisfied on that point.

The foreman then interviewed each juror and said it was their unanimous opinion that the verdict was one of accidental death, but some of the jury favoured a post-mortem examination.

The Coroner asked those jurymen who were of opinion there should be such an examination to hold up their hands, and two were raised. The Coroner said he did not think it was at all necessary. It might settle the point whether any ribs were broken or not, but he did not see how it could alter the verdict. He then read the finding of the jury, which was to the effect that deceased met his death “from an accident, by accidentally falling from the horse on which he was riding, and that he suffered from pneumonia, arising from shock from such fall.”

After the jury had subscribed to this verdict, Mr George suggested that the deep sympathy of the jury should be conveyed to Mrs Phillips, and that she be informed of the high esteem in which the deceased was held by all of them.

The Foreman was sure they all sympathised with Mrs Phillips in the great loss she had sustained, and he would convey this expression from the jury to her.

The inquest then ended.



# Bad Language

Published in the Bicester Herald 19th May 1911

**H**enry Parker, labourer, of Wills' Yard, Bicester, was summoned to the Bicester Petty Sessions on Friday for using obscene and profane language at Bicester on May 6th.

Defendant pleaded not guilty.

PC Cash deposed that at 12 o'clock on the night of the 6th instant he was on duty in Sheep Street, Bicester, when he heard a man and woman making use of very indecent language in a room over the entrance to Wills' Yard, right on the street. There were several people passing by at the time, and the bad language could be heard very distinctly from some distance. In the presence of a witness he wrote down some of the language used by the defendant. He heard them leave the room and come downstairs, and he met them as they came out of the door. He asked for defendant's name, and defendant gave his name as Henry Parker. Defendant afterwards returned upstairs, where he made use of further bad language. He told the defendant he should report them.

By the Clerk – The window was shut.

Witness produced the written statement as to the language used.

By Mr Hunt – He could only hear a man and woman's voice in the room.

Defendant – Where did you hear me swearing?

Witness – In the room.

Defendant – Can you prove it was me?

Witness – I spoke to you afterwards.

Defendant – Did I not come downstairs, and you asked me my name?

Witness – Yes.

Defendant – Did I not tell you Henry Parker?

Witness – Yes.

Defendant – I said "Good night"?

Witness – Yes.

Defendant – Did you hear me any more?

Witness – Yes.

Defendant – You are telling an untruth.

Charles Hawkins said he lived at Bennett's Yard. He was at home on the evening of the 6th, and when he heard the swearing he came into the street. He could then hear swearing.

The Clerk – By whom?

Witness – Henry Parker.

The Clerk – And where was he?

Witness – Upstairs in the house over Wills' Yard.

Was anyone else there besides? – There were three or four people on the other side of the road.

Did you see the constable there? – Yes.

Did you see him write anything down? – I was there whilst he wrote it down.

What did he write down? – The bad language used.

Continuing, witness said the language written down was that used by the defendant. Witness did not afterwards see the defendant. He knew the defendant by sight.

The Clerk – Are you prepared to swear that was his voice you heard?

Witness – Yes.

Defendant – Did you know it was me swearing?

Witness – Yes.

Defendant – Did you see me?

Witness – No.

Defendant – How could you tell, then?

Witness – I knew your voice.

Defendant was fined 5s. and 5s. costs, including 1s. 6d. witness; in default, seven days.

Defendant was allowed a fortnight in which to pay.

**N**elly Leach, single woman, of Bicester, was then summoned for using obscene and profane language at Bicester on May 6th. Defendant pleaded guilty.

PC Cash deposed that he was on duty at 11:40pm on the 6th inst. in Sheep Street, Bicester, when he heard a woman making use of obscene language in Wills' Yard. Witness went into the yard, where he saw Nelly Leach, and ask her who used the bad language, and she said she did not know. He left the place, and returned at 12 o'clock, when he heard a man and woman making use of obscene language in a room over Wills' Yard. There were several people about, and witness wrote down the language used, in the presence of a witness. The man and woman came downstairs.

Witness met defendant at the door, and asked her for her name, but she refused to give it. He told defendant he should report her. Defendant afterwards went upstairs with the previous defendant, where defendant in the present case again used bad language.

Fined 2s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. costs, and allowed a fortnight in which to pay.

# Coronation Celebrations in Bicester and District

## Unparalleled Demonstrations of Loyalty and Rejoicing Rain Causes Curtailment of Programmes

Published in the Bicester Advertiser 14th May 1937

**S**cenés unprecedented in Bicester and the district marked the celebrations this week in connection with the Coronation of King George VI and his Queen. For a week or more prior to the great historical event the town had gradually been transformed from its normal appearance, until on Wednesday the decorations and illuminations were complete and presented a scene of the greatest jubilation and loyalty. Tradesmen had spared no effort, with an exception here and there, to decorate their premises lavishly, and had introduced into their window displays touches of red, white and blue, while private residents had been no less painstaking in making attractive decorations, so that the principal streets of the town, especially Sheep Street, presented a blaze of colour.

At night various flood lighting and coloured lamps, ingeniously erected, have thrown out a harmonious and colourful scheme, so that Bicester has done well in creating a gaily bedecked and beflagged appearance.

Everything had been well planned for Wednesday's celebrations by various committees, and fine weather was hoped for. However, though remaining settled for the greater part of the day, entirely different and disheartening conditions existed in the evening, and what would have been the most attractive of the day's proceedings as far as Bicester was concerned had to be curtailed, and some of it cancelled, in view of the heavy and persistent rain.

The young people, however, made the best of it, and the appearance of the Market Square yesterday morning testified that the spirits were not by any means damped. A happy and carefree atmosphere pervaded everywhere, and in the midst of the rejoicings a thought was spared for the numerous organisers and helpers who worked hard to ensure that others had a good time.

### **The United Service**

Bicester commenced the day at 9:30am, when a large crowd assembled on the Market Square for the united service, special forms of which were distributed. On the gaily bedecked platform gathered the leaders of the religious denominations in the town – the Rev. W. O'Reilly, Rev. E.R. Bishop (Methodist Church), Mr A.F. Lambourne (Congregational) and Lieutenant R. Wright (Salvation Army). Also on the platform were Councillor H.H. Alley (chairman) and several members of the Bicester Urban Council, and representatives of the various business and social organisations of the town. By means of Messrs. Lambournes' amplifier the proceedings were heard clearly on all parts of the Square and the service was one of impressive sincerity for the blessing of God on our King and Queen.

Councillor Alley delivered the following message to the assembly:

"We are gathered here today to celebrate another historic event – the Coronation of Their Most Gracious Majesties, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. These occasions do not occur very often, yet, like milestones, they mark our progress through life. Our new King and Queen have come to the throne under unusual circumstances, but we thank God that through all the difficulties wise counsels have prevailed, and we have been spared the tragedies and horrors which are happening in another great continental country today.

We look with confidence to our King and his gracious Queen to maintain the high traditions which became associated with the throne during the reign of the King's esteemed father – traditions of dignity and deep and genuine interest in the welfare of his people.

To their Majesties we fervently wish long life, health and happiness. We are only a small community here, compared with the vast Empire of which we form part, but we feel we are taking part in a great duty of paying homage to our King and Queen and we are proud of the privilege we thus enjoy. We should not, however, forget those who, by their sacrifices, have made it possible for us to celebrate this occasion in peace and security, and I hope the memories of this Coronation will remain with us for many years to come."

Prior to and at the conclusion of the service the bells of the Parish Church rang out. Later many stayed to hear a portion of the broadcast from Westminster Abbey, and the Brackley Town Band, which had been engaged for the day, played a selection of tunes for an hour. During the greater part of the morning and afternoon the streets were fairly deserted, as many of the inhabitants stayed indoors to hear the broadcast.

### The Afternoon Sports and Teas

Commencing at 1 o'clock, sports were held in the Sports Ground for children and adults, and these provided plenty of amusement and interest. There was no lack of entries and the children's events were run through rapidly.

As the hour of 4 o'clock drew near, the field was practically devoid of children except the mere toddlers, the others having proceeded to the Tun Room for tea.

The adults' races afforded considerable amusement, and for the elder people proved the most interesting of the afternoon's proceedings, especially the cycle musical flags. The Rev. W. O'Reilly, Rev. E.R. Bishop, Dr G.N. Montgomery, Dr A.V. House and Mr Pickvance acted as judges, and the results were as follows:

40 yards, girls under 8 - 1 Edna Harris, 2 Elsie Dancer;

boys ditto - 1 John Vinall, 2 Peter Chase.

50 yards, girls under 10 - 1 Winifred Cockcroft, 2 Rita Cousins.

60 yards, boys under 10 - 1 Clifford Nash, 2 Robert Simons.

80 yards, girls over 10 - 1 Florence Hicks, 2 Marion Redfern.

100 yards, boys over 10 - 1 Maurice Cousins, 2 Derek Pankhurst.

100 yards, girls under 15 - 1 Doris Palmer, 2 Delphine Scarrott;

boys ditto - 1 Tudor Jones, 2 Frank Palmer.

Girls skipping - 1 Doris Palmer, 2 Delphine Scarrott.

Boys wheelbarrow - 1 Tudor Jones and Percy Truby, 2 William Payne and Jack Castle.

Boys three-legged race - 1 John Bloomfield and Cyril Perry, 2 Peter Barrett and Frank Palmer (after a dead heat).

Girls egg and spoon - 1 Patricia Vinall, 2 Vera Harris.

Ladies egg and spoon - 1 Mrs B. Haynes, 2 Mrs H. Tuffrey.

Mens backward race - 1 J. Edgerton, 2 W. Price.

Mens slow bicycle - 1 B. Phipps, 2 T. Jeacock.



Mens dressing race - 1 F. Smith, 2 B. Alford.

Veterans race - 1 E.A. Clifton, 2 M.W. Smith.

Bicycle musical flags - 1 G.L. White, 2 C.H. Rawlins.

Mens sack race - 1 A.J. Simons, 2 J. Cleaver.

Ladies slow bicycle - 1 Mrs E. Hopcraft, 2 Mrs H. Collett.

The Tun Room, soon after 4pm, presented a remarkable scene, six rows of children seated at three tables, stretching the length of the room, tightly packed as far as elbowroom would allow. Bread and butter and cakes were placed before them in abundance by the numerous helpers, and each had a souvenir mug.

After about an hour there were sighs of contentment among these young ones, the remnants of the tea being pushed as far away as possible out of range by many of them, as if the site of any more food had a sinking effect below their waistbands. Grace said by the Vicar was followed by a storm of cheering - the youngsters' way of thanking the helpers for the tea - and in orderly fashion they filed out.

The whole assembly of children could not be accommodated in the Tun Room, tables having to be provided outside, so that altogether about 650 children were entertained. There was also a distribution of souvenir mugs on the Square to those children who did not attend the tea.

With the last of the little guests having departed, a



quick transformation took place inside the building. The tables were cleared, litter swept up, and clean cloths, silver, plates, etc., soon laid out in readiness for the next batch of visitors – the old folks – some 250 of whom were entertained to a meat tea. There was plenty of food for everyone, also beer and lemonade, and right well did the guest do justice to the good things, and their comments and thanks at the conclusion proved how much they had appreciated everything.

### **Evening's Proceedings Curtailed**

With the sun shining brightly after tea, a particularly large crowd assembled on the Market Square for the fancy dress parade, for which there was an especially good volume of entries, several competitors showing original ideas.

But alas, with every indication that the procession would be one most colourful and interesting, and one to which the townspeople were looking forward, the rain commenced to fall as the first two classes were judged, and the children's classes had just been adjudicated when heavy rain caused a hurried dash for shelter.

With conditions becoming worse the vehicles were judged on the Square and the remainder in the Tun Room. The parade, unfortunately, also the torchlight procession, had to be cancelled.

The awards were as follows:

Boys original - 1 Donald Murray (I'm Electric),  
2 Peter Chase (Airman).

Boys comic pairs - 1 Leslie and Jack Payne  
(Bits Kids).

Boys decorated cycle - 1 Ronald Tyrrell.

Girls comic - 1 Rose Alley (Injured Footballer),  
2 Pat Parrott (Postbox).

Girls original - 1 Joyce Murray (Coronation  
Queen), 2 Pauline Chase (Safety First).

Mens comic - 1 H. Collett (Rags and Bones).

Mens comic pairs - 1 W. Winman and R. Auger  
(Darby and Joan).

Mens comic group - 1 H. Hawtin and party  
(Chain Gang), 2 G. Taylor, C. Powell and T.  
Kierman (Triplets).

Ladies original - 1 Mrs E. Hopcraft (Vegetable  
Woman), 2 Betty Lane (Coronation).

Ladies comic pairs - 1 Mrs Murray and Mrs  
Horton (American Boy and Girl Friend), 2  
Ruth Wilkins and Hilda Holder (Weary Willie  
and Tired Tim).

Ladies original pairs - 1 Miss McCarthy and  
Miss Madge Morgan (Executioner and Anne  
Boleyn), 2 Miss Joyce Smith and Miss Dinah  
Fairbrother (Spanish Costumes).

Ladies comic group - 1 Miss E. Blake and party  
(Buggins' Family), 2 Miss M. Goble and party  
(Coronation Ragtime Band).

Girls original pairs - 1 Edna Lockett and  
Dorothy Marsh (Bride and Bridegroom), 2 Stella  
Weatherbee and Muriel Gordon (Spaniards).

Decorated vehicle - 1 Miss Neal and party  
(Gipsies), 2 Mr T. Harris' party (Nudist Colony).

The judges were Major and Mrs L.A. Coker, Mr  
and Mrs O.H. Gilbey, Mr and Mrs J.L. Howson,  
Mrs G.W. Lewis and Mrs A. Evans.

At 8pm the King's speech was relayed to the  
waiting crowd on the Square, following which  
a confetti battle created considerable amuse-  
ment and afforded enjoyment for many of the  
younger people. To finish the day, dancing went  
on in the Tun Room, and by a little after 11pm  
Bicester, for the most part, had ended its date  
of festivity.

Despite the free and easy manner in which  
the Coronation was celebrated here, there was  
no unseemly behaviour on the part of anyone.  
The helpers at the various events during the  
day completed their arduous tasks to the satis-  
faction of all concerned, and although most of  
them saw little of the celebrations, they never-  
theless entered upon their duties with cheerful  
demeanour and willingness.

We understand that a telegram of loyalty was  
sent to their Majesties on behalf of the town of  
Bicester.



# Bicester's Boer War (Part 8)

## Concluding the reminiscences of Lewis Turney

Written by Mark Lewandowski

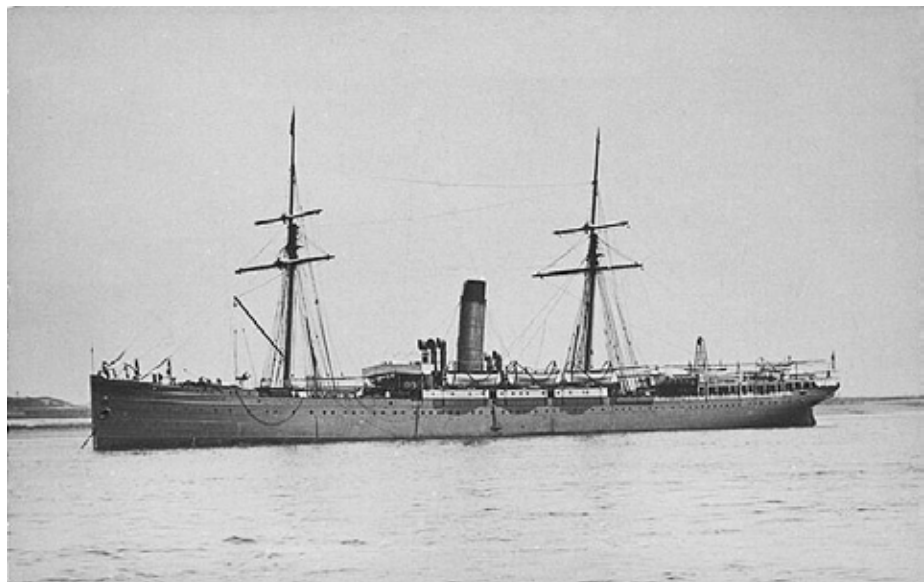
**T**he Bicester Herald of Friday, 1st November 1901 reported that; "After serving two years in South Africa, Sergt Lewis Turney, of the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Brigade is now on his way home. Turney was a reservist, and before re-joining his regiment he was postman to Hethe. When he returns to Bicester, at which place he is expected to arrive about the middle of the month, the local postman will, no doubt, give a hearty welcome to their respected comrade."

A week later the Bicester Herald reported that Sergeant Lewis Turney had received orders to leave Durban on the Roslin Castle on the 24th of October and that he was expected to arrive home sometime next week. This contrasts with his journey out from London to Cape Town via St Vincent, on the SS Sunda where he dutifully made note of the number of miles that his transport had travelled that day. The total comes to 6,444 miles.

The SS Roslin Castle (shown below) had been built on the Clyde by Barclay, Curle & Co. Ltd., Glasgow, and was launched on 24th April 1883 and had served as HMT 26 during the Boer War. Following heavy weather damage, she was sold at Genoa to be broken up on 3rd May 1907. During her period of engagement by the Admiralty between 3rd of October 1899 and the 3rd of October 1902 she carried 343 officers, 9 warrant officers, 5,474 men, 12 horses to South Africa, and 330 officers, 6,019 N.C.O.s and men, and 15 horses from South Africa, she had spent a total of 423 days at sea. A part of the Castle Line she played a major role during the thirty months of the Boer War from October 1899 to May 1902. Castle Line carried 172,835 troops and passengers to Cape Town from Southampton. Southampton had replaced Dartmouth as the embarkation point for the mails in June 1891, with Castle Line sailings then alternating with those of Union Line. Large amounts of Army guns, ammunition and stores were also carried during the

Boer War. Four Castle Line steamers carried troops during the first week of the conflict, Dunottar Castle, Harlech Castle, Lismore Castle and Roslin Castle, together with their officers and commanding officer Sir Redvers Buller.

The Bicester Herald of the 29th of November carried the following account of Sergeant Lewis Turney's return – a more restrained celebration to that for the return of Sergeant Frederick Goble some weeks previously; "After eighteen months active service in South Africa Sergt. Turney returned to Bicester on Friday by the five o'clock train, where he was met at the station by a few friends from the Bicester Post-office, Mr Turney being postman to Hethe before being called out. The whole postal staff would doubtless have been present to greet him at the station, but owing to the majority of the postman being on duty they were unable to do so. At the outbreak of the South African war Sergt. Turney, who was a reservist, was called up, and for a few months he was on garrison duty in Ireland. He joined the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, to which regiment he belonged, at Elandsplaagte in April 1900, after the relief of Ladysmith, and was present in subsequent engagements



at Biggersberg, Laing's Nek, and Majuba, under General Buller; and also during the operations in the Transvaal in 1900 and 1901 he commanded a section, as sergeant, with the division under General Clery; and he fought in the Eastern Transvaal under General French. Therefore, he has seen somewhat severe fighting and did some very hard marching over a difficult country. Sergt. Turney arrived at Southampton from Durban on Wednesday week. His time as a reservist has now expired." The Advertiser appears not to have covered the event.

He appears to have settled down to the working and social life of Bicester. The Herald of Friday 21st March 1902, in a much longer piece describing a supper arranged by the Bicester branch of the Postmen's Federation, held at the Wesley Hall, and attended by about forty postmen, their wives and friends, states that; "The Chairman, in introducing Mr Turney, whose name was the next on the programme, said they will take that opportunity of welcoming him on his return from South Africa. He could assure him of the interest they took in him while he was at the front. He did not know how many Boers Mr Turney had killed or eaten - (laughter) - but, as a medical man, he could say he looked remarkably well, and South Africa had done him a great deal of good. Mr Turney then sang "It's hard to say goodbye"." Later in the same programme Lewis Turney is recorded as delivering a second song "It's nice to have a home of your own"." The Chairman mentioned above was Dr Hendriks. The Postmen's Federation was something that the now civilian Lewis Turney would get involved with. At the annual meeting of the Bicester branch, the Herald of the 24th of February records him and J.J. Coles being elected to the committee to replace two sitting members who had retired.

And added to this were the return to the joys of parenthood. The Herald of Friday 14th July 1905 reports that while playing on a wall surrounding the Rookery, his son Cyril, then aged seven, fell and broke a bone in his wrist. After the death, injury, and disease that he had witnessed during the South African War, a childhood injury of a simple broken bone must have been a walk in the park.

In civilian life, Lewis Turney was also involved with the Bicester and District Rifle Club. The Herald of the 3rd of August 1906 gives the result of the club's monthly medal



*Bicester Rifle Club at the Butts in 1909. Image courtesy of the Oxfordshire History Centre. POX0066903.*

competition at the London Road range, with Lewis Turney coming 6th out of a field of 23, just six points behind the eventual winner, S.R. Hepworth. That of 12th October carried the following report: "The shoot off for the final possession of the silver medal, given by the President (Mr Graham), which has been competed for monthly, took place yesterday. The event aroused a great deal of interest, as the competitors represented the best talent in the club, each having won in the monthly stages with a small handicap, with the exception of Mr Hepworth, who won with a handicap of seven, but subsequently justified himself by winning the Graham Cup with a handicap of two. The weather yesterday was all that could be desired, there being no wind and a good light prevailed. The conditions were 10 shots at each range, with a sighter at 500. Mr L. Turney proved to be the winner with a good score of 83 out of a possible 100.

In presenting the medal to Mr Turney, Mr Graham congratulated him on winning, and also on the consistent form he had shown throughout the season."

Lewis Turney's marksmanship earned him a singular honour the following spring, as the Herald of the 17th May reported, the first AGM of the Rifle Club had been held at the Red Lion two months previously:

"On Tuesday the preliminary stage of the Queen's Cup for miniature rifle shooting took place, with the result that Mr L. Turney will represent the Bicester club in the first stage.

The Queen's Cup is open to all clubs affiliated with the National Society. Each



club appoints a representative, either by the choice of the members or by competition, to shoot in the first stage, on which the representatives of each club in the county come together. The conditions are ten shots at a decimal target at 25 yards and ten shots at a similar target and range in ninety seconds. In the next stage the county representatives shoot, the conditions being the same as in the first stage. In the final stage the representatives of the twenty best counties shoot for the cup, the additional conditions being ten shots each at disappearing and moving targets. Each representative will shoot on his own range to the final stage.

For Tuesday's shooting Mr T. Grimsley kindly lent the Clay Pits."

Turney topped the list with 59 out of a possible 70.

Lewis Turney would be called upon to provide one more service for his country. The Supplement to the London Gazette of the 4th of August 1914, published on the following day, carried this announcement:

#### "A STATE OF WAR

His Majesty's Government informed the German Government on August 4th, 1914, that, unless a satisfactory reply to the request of His Majesty's Government for an assurance that Germany would respect the neutrality of Belgium was received by midnight of that day, His Majesty's Government would feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold that neutrality and the observance of a treaty to which Germany was as much a party as Great Britain.

The result of this communication having been that His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin had to ask for his passports, His Majesty's Government have accordingly formally notified the German Government that a state of war exists between the two countries, as from 11 p.m. to-day."

With the outbreak of the 'war to end all wars', and Lord Kitchener's new volunteer army of 100,000 men, Lewis became the Recruiting Officer for Bicester and the surrounding area. The Bicester Herald on 21st August 1914 carried news of the appointment made by Captain Fane at "An overflow meeting held in the Corn Exchange on Friday night, to answer the "call to arms" of Lord Kitchener, who is appealing for 100,000 men to join the regular army" in Bicester's Corn Exchange that stood behind the Crown Hotel in Sheep Street. Among the first was his son Cyril, a former member of the Church Lads' Brigade in Bicester. On 18th September 1914

the Bicester Herald reported that:

"Private Cyril James Turney (11th Prince Albert's Own Hussars), son of Sergt Turney, Bicester, has left with his regiment for the front. Writing to his father, he says: - "Just a line to say I am following in Dad's footsteps, and am proud to do so. Our regiment, of which I am the youngest member, goes to the Front today."

His first service abroad was on 14th September 1914. Lewis Turney appears to have exhibited a noteworthy enthusiasm for the new task, as the Bicester Advertiser of 11th September reported:

"Recruiting for Lord Kitchener's new army is going on apace, and Sergt. Lewis Turney, in whom the authorities have a most energetic officer, has received the following names since our last Issue - F. Powell, R. Rolfe, F. Simmonds, F. Napton, G. Judge, S. Jones, J. Vaughan, C.G. Kiddle, H. Blaby, A. Hitchcock, W. Barnes, W.G. Golder, E. Floyd, A.J. Jeacock, J. Carey, W. Phillips and P. Gibbard. Others who have volunteered in various branches are C. Paragreen, Territorials (has offered his services for the front), F. Smith, R. Hawes, V. Malins and J. Bustin."

Sadly, the Bicester Herald of 28th May 1915 reported that "News was received on Saturday last of the death of Pte. Cyril James Turney, the only son of Mr Lewis Turney, late Sergeant of the Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own), now postman and recruiting sergeant for Bicester and district.

Capt. A.B. Lawson writes to Sergt. Turney - "I very much regret to have to tell you that your son, Pte. Turney, 11th Hussars, was killed in action on Thursday, May 13th, near Ypres. He was carrying ammunition up to the front line, and was hit on the way up; he was killed almost at once, and suffered no pain. I hope you will accept my sincerest sympathy for you in the loss you have sustained, and it may be some consolation for you to know that he died for his country. I can assure you that I shall miss him very much from my squadron. He was buried close to where he fell. If possible, I will send you any papers which may have been found on him."

The fallen soldier joined the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) in October 1913. Previous to his enlistment he was employed at Swift's House under Sir Algernon Peyton, Bart., as hall boy, for a period of 21 months. Being well recommended, as of good character, he was accepted as an under-age recruit on the conditions laid down in the amended recruiting regulations. Pte. Turney

was posted to the Irish Cavalry Depot, Richmond Barracks, Dublin, and whilst there he obtained two Army school certificates of education – a third class on October 30th, 1913, and a second class on December 3rd, 1913. He had intended trying for a first-class certificate when he was dismissed drill as a trained soldier. He then joined his regiment at Aldershot in February 1914. The regiment left with the Expeditionary Force about the middle of August, and Pte. Turney went with a draft in September, having volunteered as the youngest soldier to join them in France. The utmost sympathy is felt with his relatives in their loss.”

Cyril Turney’s body was never found, or if it was found it was never identified. His sacrifice is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres. He was just eighteen.

After his return from the South African War, Lewis Turney continued to make entries in his journal, but these appear to cease with the death of his son.

The personal tragedy of the loss of his only son did not diminish Sergeant Lewis Turney’s recruiting efforts. The Bicester Herald of 15th October 1915 reports that; “Since the commencement of the War the recruits have passed through Sergt Turney’s hands to join the various sections of the Army number upwards of 350. These include ex-servicemen, Kitchener’s Army, and territorials. It is hoped that Sergeant Turney’s list will soon total 400, and in order to make this possible all eligible for the Army should apply to him at 1 Priory Terrace, Bicester.” The Bicester papers would regularly publish lists of names of those who had been recruited during the previous week.

The Bicester Herald of 17th December 1915 published a Roll of Honour of the men then serving the armed forces in various capacities running to four full columns of their broadsheet format.

Part of Lewis Turney’s role as a recruiting sergeant was the issuing of free travel passes to any volunteers to enable them to travel to Cowley Barracks to complete their enlistment procedure. He also put his previous military service to good use in preparing the recruits for army life as the Herald of 18th August 1916 relates, when describing the Volunteer Training Corps. “A large step has been made towards the forming of an efficient body during the past few weeks by the advent of a large number of recruits, and it is now no uncommon sight to see as many as four recruits’ squads at work on the lawn

of Bicester House, each squad composed of men who have received higher or lower stages in their recruit course. The local core now numbers between 60 and 70 men, the more advanced of which have literally received great help by the re-joining of the corps of Sergt Turney, a most capable drill instructor. The usual body of workers journeyed to Didcot on Thursday. They numbered 14, and, joining the Oxford contingent, spent the afternoon in unloading shells, of which work a good amount was done. The men now receive 5d per day ration money.”

Nor were his skills as a marksman neglected. The Herald of 27th October 1916 carried the following report of a competition between the Bicester Detachment O.V.R. versus “A” Company, Kensington Battery. “Shooting took place on Saturday in the first round of an all-England Miniature Rifle Shooting Competition, promoted by the B.S.A. Company, and in which the Bicester volunteer contingent had entered a good team. The local team was opposed to that of a Kensington detachment and came off easy winners. High scoring was made difficult by the use of small, “invisible-bull” targets, and the conditions were turn shots each at 25 yards, and open, army sights were used.” Bicester won by 569 points to Kensington’s 556 with Sergt Lewis Turney being Bicester’s top scorer with 99 points.

In common with many properties across the country, Bicester House, now Hometree House on the corner of the Launton and London Road, had been requisitioned as a temporary hospital for the wounded soldiers from the Western Front. This was staffed by local members of the Voluntary Aid Detachment and relied to a great extent on charitable donations from members of the local community of food and other items to aid the patients in their recovery. As much as was possible, efforts were made to make the patients feel that they were part of the social life of Bicester. Among these were games evenings between teams from the hospital and people from Bicester. One such event took place in January of 1917 between the Bicester detachment of the O.V.R. and the patients and nurses of the hospital. The games included billiards, bridge, shove-halfpenny, ping pong, rings, whist and draughts. It was in the last of these events that 13380 Corporal W. Sinfeld of the 7th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, who had been admitted on the 24th of November, defeated Sergeant

Turvey. Rank counted for little in competitive dominoes. Or it seems, in whist. This was most definitely not Sergeant Turvey's night. The same report details that 16066 Private Gorton from the Royal Berkshire Regiment and Nurse Meredith defeated Sergeant Turvey and Private Grimsley by 80 to 76 in whist. The venue was a "hut" which had been recently built adjoining the hospital as the Herald reported; "Considerable surprise was evinced by the visitors at the general appearance and fittings of the hut, with its billiard, ping pong, and other tables, well-lit by gas and with good heating arrangements and the majority of the patients appeared to have made a good use of their opportunities, for so far as the "games" were concerned the Volunteers had scarcely a look in."

There was a return match on Wednesday 7th February with slightly better fortune for Sergeant Turney. The report in the Herald the following Friday recalled that he defeated Private Arthur Bedser at shove halfpenny, 24165 Private Earl of the Grenadier Guards at dominoes, but Privates Gorton and Fishwick defeated him and Private Cattell at rings, and Corporal Clarke and 1899 Private Arthur Glynn defeated Sergeant Turney and Private J.W. Grimsley at whist by 73 to 51.

In what was becoming a regular feature on the Bicester social scene, the Advertiser of 9th of March gave a detailed report, with the scores of the individual games played, on what it described as; "An enjoyable games tournament was held on Wednesday evening last at the local Red Cross Hospital between teams representing the town and the Hospital. The Hospital proved victorious by 21 games to 17." Lewis Turney again met Corporal Sinfield across the dominoes table, (one game, twice round the cribbage board) emerging victorious on this occasion. He was less successful on the shove halfpenny board, losing to 45454 Private Edgar Tratt of the Devonshire Regiment.

The late spring of 1917 with its longer days and improved weather brought with it the return of more outdoor pursuits for Lewis Turney and the other members of the Bicester Rifle Club. The Herald of the 25th of May reported that; "The result of the first round of the Queen's Cup Competition, for which five members of the Bicester Club competed, has been announced. The first phase was fired in order that the 20 best men in the county might be found, these to reshoot, and find the best six shots, who would form the county team. As however,



Entries from the Bicester Red Cross Convalescent Hospital album.

less than 20 men in the county competed as far as Oxfordshire was concerned the second round was dispensed with, and the team of six men taken from the first-round contestants. Of these Bicester has contributed three – Messrs. J.T. Mountain, L. Turney, and D. Harris – each of whom made excellent scores, while the two other Bicester



men, Messrs. E.G. Colby and A.F. Porter, each put up targets which would have entitled them to certificates had the county entry been a larger one. This occasion is the sixth consecutive one on which Mr Mountain and has represented Bicester in the county team – a very creditable performance – neither is Mr Turvey’s inclusion in the team his first one, as he lays claim to being the first Bicester man to shoot in the county team in this competition, having been a member of it in 1907. The three men above mentioned fired off the team cards in the first-round proper for the Cup on Wednesday, and if their fellow members uphold the average which they made, the Oxfordshire representatives should have little difficulty in emerging into the next round.”

Given his past military experience it was perhaps inevitable that Lewis Turney would become involved in the Bicester Rifle Club. Within two months of the outbreak of the South African War the superior marksmanship of the Boer forces had come as an unwelcome surprise and their ability to pick off British officers, sometimes at ranges of more than 1,000 yards, led to the issue of a general order that officers should dress as private soldiers. The British Rifle League was formed on 12th May 1900 with the stated intention of bringing into one association all civilians who want to be able to defend their country in case of invasion. A meeting at the Mansion House on 23rd March 1901 led to the passing of a resolution “That the foundation of the Society of Workingmen’s Rifle Clubs for the facilitating of shooting more especially in the evening, with small bore and inexpensive ammunition, as an ordinary branch of recreation by working men’s and working boys’ clubs and institutes, be now preceded with”. Towards the end of 1902, by which time nearly 80 clubs had affiliated through the society, preparations were going ahead to hold the first shooting meeting. In May the following year the name of the society was changed to the Society of Miniature Rifle Clubs which eventually would become the National Small Bore Rifle Association. The Bicester Rifle Club itself was founded in 1906, its range being situated in a field by the Bicester to Oxford Road.

When, at the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month, the guns of the Great War finally fell silent, Bicester had lost about one hundred of its men-folk. In the more compact community that it was in 1918 everyone would have known someone, or the family of someone, who had made the ultimate sacrifice. With this shadow over them the people of Bicester, along with other communities across the United Kingdom, and Europe, set about picking up the pieces of their shattered lives and returning to some sense of normality. Lewis Turney continued in his position at the Bicester Post Office, and he was still there at the time of the 1921 Census, retiring eight years before he passed away. By 1939 he was a gentleman of leisure, and still residing at 1 Priory Terrace, and described himself as being a “jobbing gardener” – although “skilled plantsman” might have been a more apt description, based on his obituary,

quoted below. With him is Florence May, who is listed as carrying out “unpaid domestic duties”.

Lewis Turney passed away, aged 68, on 6th May 1940 at The Radcliffe Infirmary on the Woodstock Road, in Oxford and was buried at St Mary’s, in Chesterton, three days later. The Bicester Advertiser reported the death as follows:

“Death of Bicester resident. Mr Lewis Turney, of 1, Priory Terrace, Bicester, a well-known resident and former postman, passed away at the Radcliffe Infirmary on Monday, after an illness of five weeks duration. He was 68 years of age. A native of Winslow, he came to Bicester nearly 40 years ago, and was a postman attached to the Bicester office retiring 8 years ago. Mr Turney served in the South African War and attained the rank of Sergeant. Although actually above military age in the last war he nevertheless did useful work as instructor in the Bicester Volunteer Corps, and on the cessation of hostilities, he was presented with a clock by the Corps in recognition of his work. He was also a recruiting Sergeant. Mr Turney’s only son, Cyril, was killed in the last war. Deceased was a keen and clever horticulturalist and his flower garden in Priory Terrace was always the object of much admiration, while he was a frequent and successful exhibitor at the Bicester horticultural shows. Mr Turney was a prominent member of the British Legion, and at his funeral yesterday (Thursday) at Chesterton the coffin was covered with the Union Jack, and members of the Bicester branch were present. The Rev W.E. Womersley officiated, and Miss Tanner was at the organ. There was a number of beautiful floral tributes.”



Florence May survived him by many years and continued to reside at Priory Terrace. She passed away, again at The Radcliffe Infirmary, on the 21st of December 1963.

Lewis Turney’s journal, on which most of this series has been based, is held at the Oxfordshire History Centre, reference: “SZ Stack oversize (strongroom) SZ483 (Reference: 307621212)”, to both of which much gratitude is extended.

# Bicester & Ploughley Raise

## £189,136

### Wings for Victory Week Success

Published in the Bicester Advertiser 18th June 1943

**T**he Bicester and Ploughley Wings for Victory Week officially ended on Saturday last, and the response to the appeal for the raising of £160,000 to provide four Halifax bombers, has been remarkable. Lord Bicester, the worthy president of the week, announced the final figures of £189,136 2s. at the indicator last (Thursday) evening. The result reflects the greatest credit on those who have been responsible for the organisation, the many others who have given assistance in various ways, and on the public themselves. Particular mention must be made of the valuable part played by the villages in the area, their contributions in many instances being amazing. The War Weapons Week total in 1941 was £230,012 1s. 11d.

On Thursday week at Bicester it was the turn of the evacuee children of Bignell Park School to contribute to the Wings for Victory Week programme of events, and right well did they do so. They assembled on the Market Square before a large audience and opened with choral items, "Land of Our Birth" and "Lords of the Air."

The girls performed two country dances, "Black Nag" and "Rusty Tufty," and Master E. Rosen sang "Smilin' Thro'" and "Old Father Thames."

The drill display by boys, under the direction of Mr H. Evans, was greatly appreciated, as were solos by Master J. Wood, who sang "The Rose of Tralee" and "Danny Boy," which were followed by two more dances, "Gathering Peascods" and "The Old Mole."

The finale by all the children was reached by the singing of "Land of Hope and Glory," conducted by Mrs E. Hart, with Miss N. Barnwell at the piano, and Mr Howard Cherry playing the piano accordion.

The grounds of the Garth provided a pleasant setting for the entertainment later in the evening, arranged by Mr and Mrs Greetham, and a large audience showed their appreciation of the items in an unmistakable manner.

A dance later held in St Edburg's Hall, arranged by the Bicester Girls' Club, proved very successful.

A baby show, organised by Mrs W. Cripps and Mrs J. Allum, and held in the Congregational Schoolroom proved a great success, 100 entries being received.

The pupils of the County School, who had met with disappointment on Monday, were more fortunate on Friday evening and were able to perform their dances of the Allies with complete and uninterrupted progress. The gay flash of colours as the dancers tripped around in the Square, bordered by its old buildings, formed a picturesque setting, and Miss Burrows and her pupils are to be congratulated on their performance.

After the grand auction sale on the Market Square on Saturday afternoon, which realised £2,300, a final open-air dance was held on the Sports Ground, and was well attended. The Bicester Home Guard then performed its final guard mounting ceremony on the Square, having provided a guard for the Blenheim bomber every evening of the week, and the week's events officially closed.



# Roll of Honour

*The following are the local men, and those buried locally, who died in the Second World War, 80 years ago.*

**Sergeant Peter Leslie Carey**, of Chatham. (Buried in Middleton Stoney)

Died: 2nd April 1943      Aged: 21      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Pilot Officer James Gilbert Lyon**, of Rochester. (Buried in Middleton Stoney)

Died: 2nd April 1943      Aged: 30      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Sergeant Allan Robinson**, of Auckland, New Zealand. (Buried in Middleton Stoney)

Died: 2nd April 1943      Aged: 25      Served in: Royal New Zealand Air Force

**Sergeant Christopher Francis Ball**, of Colchester. (Buried in Middleton Stoney)

Died: 4th April 1943      Aged: 20      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Sergeant Douglas Nicoll**, of Nova Scotia, Canada. (Buried in Middleton Stoney)

Died: 4th April 1943      Aged: 28      Served in: Royal Canadian Air Force

**Sergeant Maurice Shibko**, of Hendon. (Buried in Middleton Stoney)

Died: 4th April 1943      Aged: 21      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Sapper Joseph John Scott**, of Catford. (Buried in Bicester)

Died: 10th April 1943      Aged: 25      Served in: Royal Engineers

**Pilot Officer Arthur Cecil Sawdy**, of Woodfield, Bicester.

Died: 27th April 1943      Aged: 32      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Private Douglas John Bull**, of Finmere.

Died: 6th May 1943      Aged: 20      Served in: Hertfordshire Regiment

**Private George Bernard Hopcraft**, buried in Ambrosden.

Died: 13th May 1943      Served in: General Service Corps

**Sergeant Robert Allan**, of Aberdeenshire. (Buried in Bicester)

Died: 19th May 1943      Aged: 22      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Sergeant Sydney Roy Barnes**, of Portsmouth. (Buried in Bicester)

Died: 19th May 1943      Aged: 21      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Pilot Officer Harold Geoffrey Thompson**, of Muswell Hill. (Buried in Bicester)

Died: 19th May 1943      Aged: 32      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Pilot Officer Raymond van Cleaf**, of Ontario, Canada. (Buried in Bicester)

Died: 19th May 1943      Aged: 21      Served in: Royal Canadian Air Force

**Warrant Officer Charles Ernest Cresswell**, of Fritwell.

Died: 18th June 1943      Aged: 52      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Sergeant Roy Charles Garton**, of Bletchingdon.

Died: 22nd June 1943      Aged: 21      Served in: Royal Air Force

**Sergeant Edgar Philip Watson**, of Islip.

Died: 29th June 1943      Aged: 23      Served in: Royal Air Force





# The Postponed Coronation

## Original Programme Partly Carried Out at Bicester

### Serious Accident at the Sports

Published in the Bicester Herald 27th June 1902

**B**icester, in common with towns through the country, had only to put the finishing touches on a full day's programme of great rejoicing, when news was received about two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon of the King's serious illness, and shortly after the fact was known that an operation had been performed. It was some time before belief could be given to such unexpected and startling news. Then the visible preparations by townspeople were stopped, and the various committees appointed to carry out the day's public rejoicing ceased their work.

A meeting of the general committee was called for the evening, at which Mr Gordon Walsh, the chairman, said that no body of men received the news of the terrible disaster to the King with more profound regret than the members of the committee did, and they sincerely hoped it might please Almighty God to bring him back to vigour and health. He was sure this was the earnest prayer of the committee. (hear, hear!) As to whether the celebrations in Bicester should come off, he intended to propose that a certain course be adopted, which he believed would commend itself to the meeting. It was that the various committees should proceed with every detail they might have to discuss, and that they should get everything completely ready for the celebration on Thursday, should they come off in the country, but that the question of carrying out the programme should be postponed until the following evening (Wednesday). (hear, hear!) They would then have heard from the highest authority as to the state of the King's health, and they could act accordingly. At present reliable news was very meagre; there had been no telegram received into the town since three o'clock.

After some discussion it was decided that it be left to a committee to decide – on the receipt of graver news – whether the

celebration should be postponed or not. The Rev. G.P. Crawford, Messrs. J. Campin, J.W. Hunt, J.F. Jones, and W.H. Piggott – the sub-committee – met at 12:30 on Wednesday, and after about half-an-hour's consideration, they announced that all festivities would be temporarily abandoned or postponed.

It was evident that the adoption of such a course would cause a disappointment which would be too great for many to accept or experience. The General Committee met again at 8:45 on Wednesday evening when the secretary (Mr E.F. Tanner) informed the members of the sub-committee's decision, and that they were guided in coming to this conclusion more particularly by the bulletin signed by the doctors that the King would not be out of danger for some days, and they also took into account the reports in the morning papers that a great many towns had decided on postponement. – several members of the committee questioned the necessity of the sub-committee meeting at all; they contended it was only on receipt of graver news that the question of postponement rested. Others took an opposite view, and in the end it was agreed that there had been a misunderstanding.

The chairman was asked to allow the question to be re-opened, and he ultimately consented to do so, although he was sure he was taking an improper course, but he felt that the circumstances justified him doing so. There was a general feeling that the teas should be given and that the sports should be held, as the day would be a general holiday with nothing for the inhabitants to do.

A large number of people were in waiting outside the Crown Hotel to learn the decision of the committee, and the Chairman, shortly after ten o'clock, announced that they had thoroughly thrashed out the matter. They had taken into consideration the personal wish of the King, and had decided

that there should be the sports, the tea for the children, and the meat tea for the old folk. The Oakley brass band would attend the sports. There would be no trade procession, no torchlight procession, no dancing, and no decorations. This announcement was received with cheers, and the very large attendance at the sports yesterday was, we venture to state, a proof that the committee had acted wisely in the interest of the town to provide an entertainment for the people.

The teas were well carried out and thoroughly enjoyed, and the sports, although arranged more for the amusement of the spectators than for the promotion of first-class racing, were productive of at least two excellently contested races. In the mile bicycle handicap the scratch man (J. Wells) got on a line with the other riders about two hundred yards from home and won a splendid race in good time by less than a machine's length. The other race of note was the mile flat handicap, in which E.A. Clifton came away with a splendid spurt 25 yards from the tape.

During the evening a telegram received by Mr Gordon Walsh, announcing that the King continued to make satisfactory progress, was read to the large attendance at various intervals around the course and was received with cheers and the singing of the National Anthem. This telegram created additional interest in the proceedings, and the programme was continued with increased light-heartedness until a very unfortunate accident occurred at about 8:30, by the bolting of a horse into the crowd, many of whom were injured - one or two seriously.

### **Services at the Churches**

There was a larger gathering at St Edburg's Church at matins yesterday than was usual. Supplications were offered for the health of the King.

A united service of Nonconformists was held at the Wesleyan Chapel, when there was a large attendance. The Rev. T.H. Norton conducted the service, the captain of the Salvation Army read the lessons, and the Rev. H.N. Startup offered prayer. Suitable addresses were delivered by the Rev. T.H. Norton and the Rev. H.N. Startup. Patriotic hymns were sung, and the National Anthem was rendered at close of the service.

### **A Procession**

Mr Walsh, as chairman of the committee, requested that the inhabitants would take

no part in any procession or illuminations. Many, however, had been at great expense and trouble in decorating cars, bicycles, etc., and these decided to have a procession at one o'clock. A vehicle, nicely decorated with the workmen, employed by Mrs T. Smith, at their usual labours, headed the procession. This was followed by a representation of the ancient Forestry by members of Court Loyal Oxonian, 5947. Much preparation must have been done, and the result was a good one, although the representation had been too thickly bowered. A vehicle had been made to look like a forest, and members were attired in the costumes of ancient foresters. The following were the characters: Robin Hood, Mr F.J. Elliott; Little John, Mr W. Clifton; Alan Adair, Mr H. Hancock; Woodward, Mr C.H. Grimsley and Mr J. Grimsley; Bill Scarlet, Mr D. Neal; Friar Tuck, Mr J. Harris; and Maid Marion, Miss L. Neal.

Many bicycles had been made to look like pagodas, ships, etc., and the persons who accompanied them were suitably attired. Edward III, Britannia, a Rajah, nurses, soldiers, clowns, etc., both on foot and horse-back, helped to swell the procession, which was concluded with Mr Crook's decorated carrier's cart. In this were passengers, and a masculine-looking nurse, attending children, took a "back" seat.

### **The Sports**

For the sports in the cricket field almost the whole town turned out, and the racing was fairly interesting. The flat events were very good. There were in all twenty-four items, both amusing and otherwise, and such that no one was debarred from competing. The sports took from two to eight o'clock, and then all the programme had not been completed, as a regrettable occurrence caused the other events to be abandoned.

A bridle was being changed for a halter on a horse attached to a trap belonging to the Eclipse Mineral Water Company and the horse bolted. The horse rushed through a throng of spectators, and eventually stopped at the rails which border the cricket ground from the adjoining field. During its rush the horse ran over Mr Morris, who was attending it, and Mr White, and others were knocked about. Mr White was apparently seriously hurt, but this morning we hear that his injury, which is to one kidney, is not thought to be so bad as at first considered. All the injured, numbering about ten, were attended on the field by Dr Hendriks and his assistant.

Those who were wounded were taken to the doctor's house and had their wounds bandaged up. Among the injured were Mr E.C. Bird (right arm sprained), Mrs Bird (bruise on right cheek), Mrs Bowler (severe bruises to legs, arms, and

other parts), Mrs Bowler's two children (slightly bruised), Mr Brinklow (bruises), Mrs Brinklow (injury to knee), Miss Harriett Hudson (injury to ankle). After this occurrence the committee wisely decided not to proceed any further with the programme, and the field was cleared.

The sports committee all worked hard to make them a success, and they succeeded in doing this. The following were the officials: Judges, Colonel Borrodaile, Mr J. Campin, and Mr Fowler; handicappers, Rev. C.J.N. Page, Mr W.H. Piggott, and Mr F.R. Mansfield; starter, Mr E.A. Palmer; committee, Messrs Evans, F. Clifton, Sars, J.W. Grimsley, Mansfield, Jagger, Palmer, W.R. French, Smith, Davey, Newby, W. Clifton, and Tompkins.

The following were the results:

100 yards, boys 10-15 - 1 F. Eakins, 2 Albert Smith, 3 J. King.

100 yards, girls 10-15 - 1 M. King, 2 B. Holland, 3 Lena Thorburn.

100 yards flat handicap - 1 H. Alley, 2 R. Wood, 3 A. Gibbs.

Half-mile bicycle obstacle race - 1 H.J. Smith, 2 A. Prentice, 3 W.R. French. (The competitors had to guide their machines between bottles and ride over two narrow bridges.)

440 yards flat handicap - 1 H. Alley, 2 F. Stockley, 3 C. Powell.

100 yards, men over 40 - 1 William Motley, 2 J. Grace, 3 H. Ward.

Cigar and umbrella race - 1 E. Scarrott, 2 A. Wood, 3 G. Sirett.

100 yards, boys under 10 - 1st heat: 1 W. Grimsley, 2 T. Woods, 3 C. Bannister. 2nd heat: 1 James Ayres, 2 G. Castle, 3 J. Hawkesley.

100 yards, girls under 10 - 1 Cissie Palmer, 2 Cissi Cousins, 3 Mary Boyles.

One mile bicycle handicap - 1 J. Wells, 2 A. Hone, 3 T. Wells.

Sack race - 1 A. Bannister, 2 A. Winman, 3 W. Scott. (Competitors had to lie down to start.)

Putting the weight - 1 A. Stone (25' 6"), 2 W. Walduck (25' 1"), 3 Arthur Kirtland (24' 9").

100 yards, women over 30 - 1 Miss Ayres, 2 Mrs Botley, 3 Mrs E. Clifton.

120 yards hurdle handicap - 1 A. Gibbs, 2 A.G. Smith, 3 R. Wood.

Buns and treacle competition - 1 G. White, 2 H. Castle, 3 D. Saunders.

Egg and spoon race - 1 H.J. Smith, 2 E.A. Clifton, 3 P. King.

Tug of war (eight-a-side) - 1 Mr J. Castle's team, 2 Mr C. Pitts' team, 3 Mr A. Stone's team.

Mile flat handicap - 1 E.A. Clifton, 2 A.G. Smith, 3 C. Powell.

Bicycle egg and spoon - 1 H. Hancock, 2 H.J. Smith, 3 W.R. French.

## **Tea to the Children**

At 3:30 the children sat down to a cake tea at the southern end of the cricket field. Their wants were well attended to by a large number of willing helpers.

The following were on the committee: Rev. G.P. Crawford, Rev. C.J.N. Page, Rev. R.R. Tregunns, Rev. T.H. Norton, Messrs Hedges, Piggott, Hunt, W. French, T. Grimsley (Sheep Street), J. Stockley.

## **Meat Tea to the Old People**

Those over fifty sat down to a meat tea at 4:30. The catering was entrusted to the hands of Mr J.W. Evans and Mr J. Hedges, and the old folk expressed themselves as highly delighted with the fare provided.

The committee were as follows: Captain H.G. Fane, Dr C.M. Hendriks, and Messrs. George, Campin, Liddington, Sars, J.W. Evans, J.W. Grimsley, J.F. Jones, and F.D. Holiday. Mr Walsh and Mr Tanner served on all the committees.

Many of the old people were conveyed in vehicles from their residences to the cricket field. Refreshments were provided on the field by Mr G. Walsh, of the Red Lion Inn. The Oakley brass band played at intervals during the sports.

## **Presentation of Prizes**

At 9:30 the prizes were presented by Mrs Gordon Walsh on the Market Square. This ceremony having been performed, Mrs Walsh was asked by Mr Tanner to present long-service medals to members of the Bicester Fire Brigade, who were attached to the National Fire Brigade Union. The medals were given by that Union for long service, on condition that they were presented at some public demonstration or such like. The recipients were Supt. Grimsley, Foreman Knibbs, Engineer Timberlake, Assistant Engineer C.H. Grimsley, Firemen Grantham and Fleet.

Mr Grantham thanked Mrs Walsh for her kindness in presenting the medals. Mr J.F. Jones said he was asked to propose a vote of thanks – and he was sure they would give it most heartily – to Mrs Walsh for her kindness in presenting the prizes. Mr Walsh Replied on behalf of his wife, and asked the gathering to sing a verse of "God Save the King," which was done, and the proceedings for the day ended.



## Coronation Mementoes to School Children

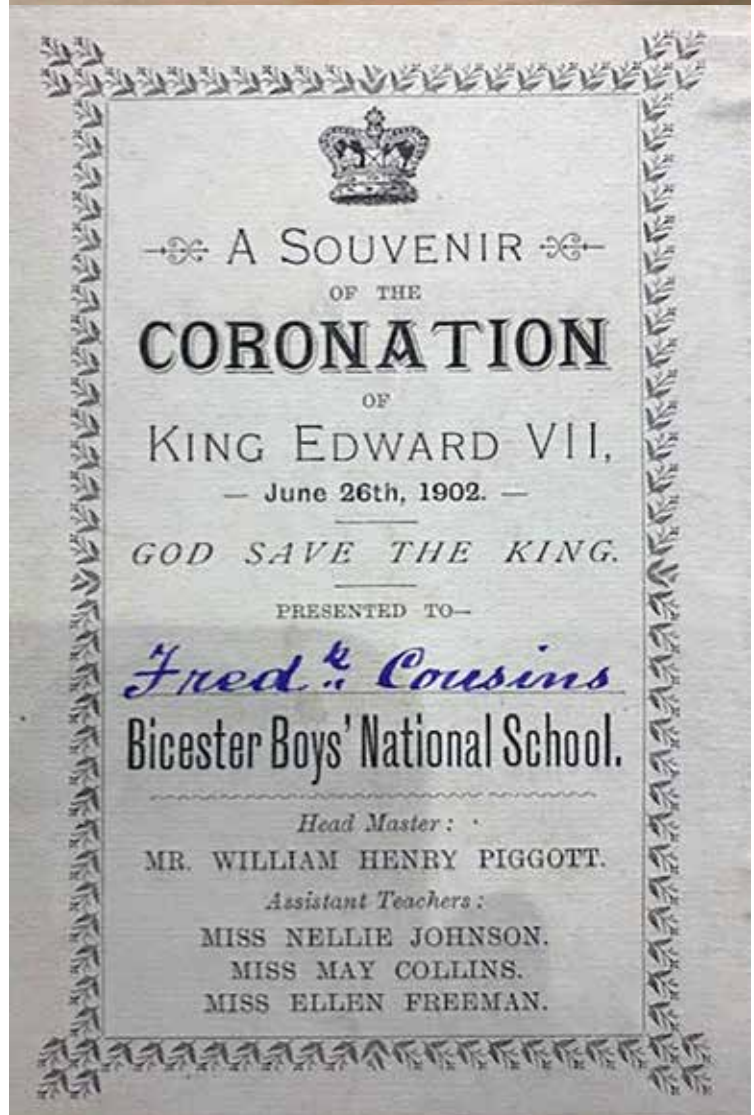
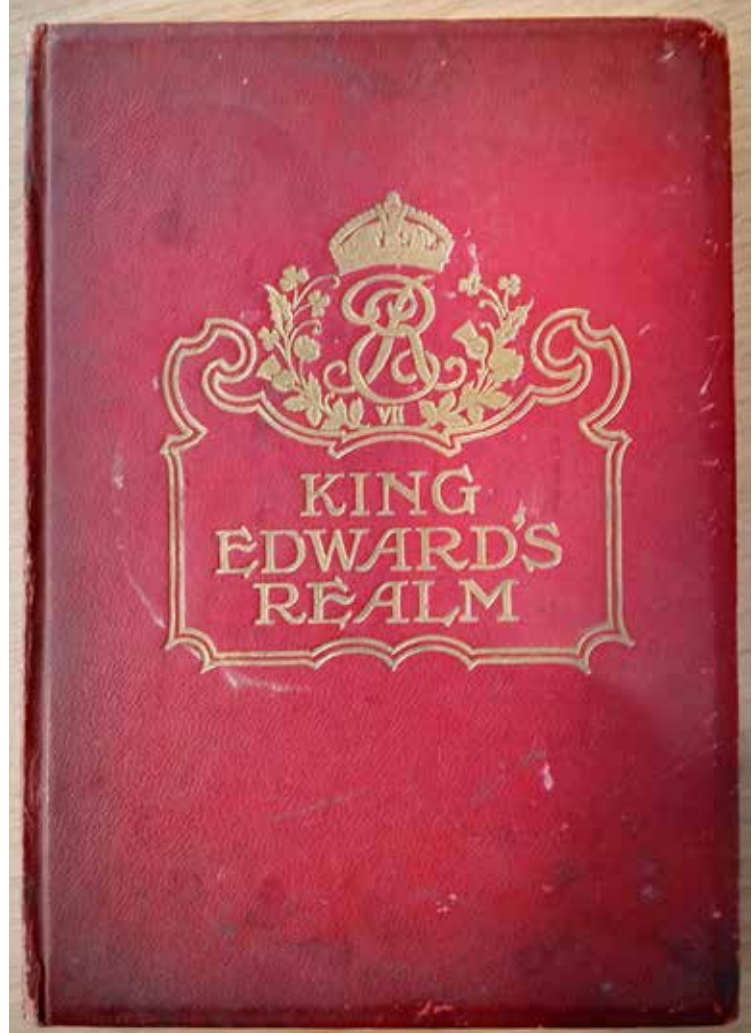
A short but interesting ceremony took place at the Boys' National School on Wednesday. Mr Piggott (the schoolmaster), having hoped that the King would soon recover, spoke of the gathering that day. He stated that Mrs Palmer usually gave two prizes to each class. He had asked her if she would give some memento of the Coronation instead. She agreed to his suggestion, and gave him the money she usually spent on the books. With this and other subscriptions he had raised he had been able to get sufficient to purchase a book to be presented to each scholar. It was well got-up, and was entitled "King Edward's Realm," and whatever happened it would be an interesting memento. He would like to tell them who had contributed towards the cost of the books. They were Mrs Palmer, Mrs Kynaston, Mr Tubb, Mr Lonsdale, Mr Thomas, Mr Keith-Falconer, Mr Burchardt, Mr Druce, Mr Hunt, Mr Jones, Mr Phillips, and himself.

He then handed the books to the teachers, and the boys each received their book, on which was inscribed the words: "A souvenir of the Coronation of King Edward VII, June 26, 1902. God save the King. Presented to -, Bicester Boys' National School. Headmaster, Mr W.H. Piggott; asst. teachers, Miss Nellie Johnson, Miss Collins, Miss Ellen Freeman."

The books having been presented, the schoolmaster said he thought it would be best for him to read two verses of the new version of the National Anthem, by Mr Henry W. Taunt, of Oxford. He thought the second verse was very appropriate in consequence of the circumstances under which they had met.

On Thursday in last week Mrs Palmer presented a Coronation medal to each scholar attending the Girls' School.

Mr T. Druce attended the Infants' School on Wednesday morning, and distributed 162 medals to the children.



# The Coronation of Their Most Gracious Majesties King George & Queen Mary Bicester's Gigantic Holiday Unbounded Loyalty in Bicester and District

Published in the Bicester Herald 23rd June 1911

**Y**esterday (Thursday) gave us the greatest ceremonial event of the year, viz, the Coronation of King George V; and Bicester and the district around, in common with every community in the Empire, celebrated the occasion lavishly. The day was one of crowded happenings, for the happiness of everyone – young and old, hale or sick – was catered for.

The celebrations began early. Merry peals from the bells of the different churches around aroused the inhabitants from their slumbers to partake in the day's amusements, and at once was begun the finishing touches to the decorations and illuminations, which presented a feast of colour and beauty. As few parishes possess a band, many had to be without instrumental enlightenment; and in one or two parishes the festivities are fixed to take place on other days, in order that the services of a band may be obtained. For instance, Ambrosden is holding its celebration today, and Aynho on Tuesday next.

On every hand at Bicester yesterday were visible signs of an intensely patriotic people. The highest to the lowest had entered into the spirit of suitably celebrating the great event with equal zest, and not a residence in the town failed to exhibit the patriotism of the occupier in a suitable manner.

The first meeting of the inhabitants of the town to consider what form the celebration





should take was held on May 5th. Previous to this date a good deal of correspondence had appeared in the local newspapers from inhabitants, who suggested permanent memorials, such as a recreation ground, public baths, etc. At the public meeting a programme was outlined in accordance with the proceedings at the Coronation of our lamented King, Edward VII. The programme agreed upon was: Athletic sports, a memento of Coronation year for every child in Bicester and a tea, a meat tea for all poor people over 50 years, and a band.

A strong committee was appointed, and, to their credit be it said, they have shirked nothing, but have worked extremely hard. Eventually the idea of a meat tea was dropped, and a dinner was substituted, and this idea met with hearty approbation from the inhabitants, who readily subscribed to the fund. The gentry of the town and district have given liberty, and the fund amounted to about £140.

This amount enabled the Dinner Committee to give a free dinner to all persons over 60 and also to all subscribers who wished to attend. Further, many unable to contribute towards the costs of the Coronation festivities were entertained, and others could purchase tickets for same at the nominal cost of sixpence.

The atmospheric conditions during the early hours of yesterday were not very promising, but a slight shower about 7 o'clock was all that occurred. As early as 4 o'clock some of the inhabitants were easily engaged in the task of embellishment. The bells of the Parish Church were rung at 6, 8:30, 10:15, 1:30, 7, and 9 o'clock.

## The Decorations

There was a complete blaze of illumination and decoration in the town, the inhabitants vying with each other to obtain the most imposing display. Every house had its quota of flags, bunting, etc, and illuminated "G.R.'s" were very conspicuous. The work in the whole town was charmingly effective, and equalled if not excelled anything that has been accomplished previously at Bicester.

Sheep Street was one mass of colours throughout. Starting from the north end one noticed good displays at Mr Henry Harris', and Mr Edward Lane's, and strings of flags across the road. There were also lines of flags from Mr R. Hollis' to Mr J. Hollis', whilst the latter had a nicely decorated illuminated

window, and there was also a line of flags from Mr Hawtin's to Mr Pritchett's. A few yards further down the street was another string of flags with bouquets of flowers from Churchill House, where there were extensive decorations, to Mrs Harris', whose house was brilliantly decorated.

At the entrance to Chapel Yard was an archway of flags. The Rookery looked nice with flags and Chinese lanterns, and on the opposite side of the road the Reading Room had been tastefully adorned by Mr James Mallett. Mr J. Stevens had bedecked his house with a row of small flags, with a shield and bunting in the centre. From the two last named houses a string of flags was stretched across the road.

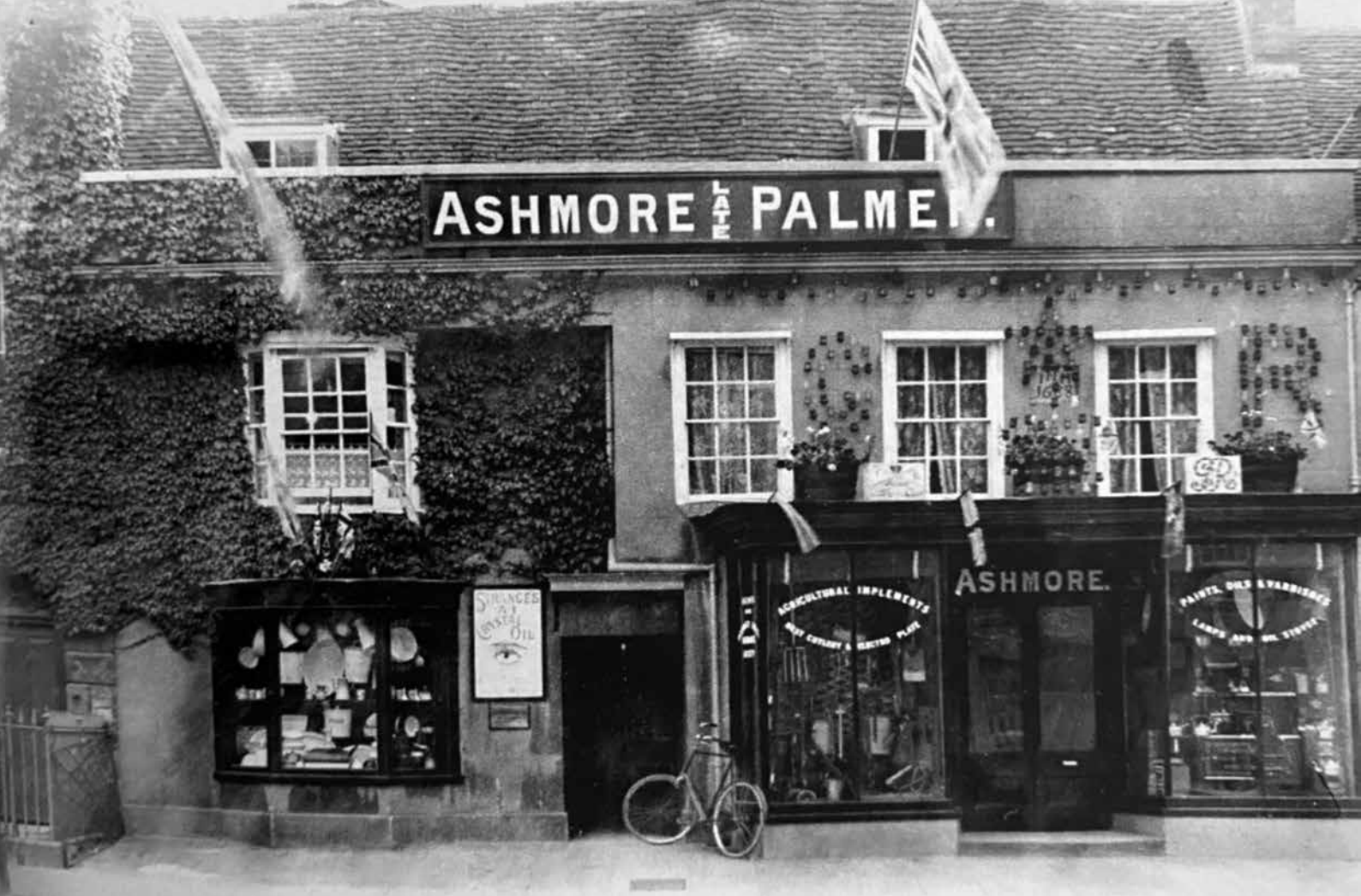
The next most noticeable display to catch the eye was at Linton Cottage, where the windows had been decorated with bunting, whilst G. and R., in gilt letters, looked prominent on a red background. There were extensive displays of flags at the Bell, Mr J. Bennett's, Mr H. Eaglestone's, Diamond Villa, St John's, and Mr T.G. Prentice's, the last named having a very large flag.

Strings of flags were stretched across the road from Mr Prentice's to Ham Hill House, and from Evans' Stores to Mr A. Evans' shop. The display at Mr J.W. Grimsley's was very noticeable, as was also Pevensey House and Mr W.E. Smith's. Messrs. T. Druce and Co, on each of their shops, had a good share of decorative materials, shields and flags being conspicuous. At Mrs Tompkins' a large amount of decoration had been tastefully done. From this residence a stream of flags reached to the other side of the road.

The Crown Hotel and the Temperance Hotel looked very nice. At Messrs. Paxton and Holiday's office were illuminations – G.R. and crown, and Mr Mountain had a neat and attractive display above the shop, with flags and evergreens, having a violet base. Alchester House, with flags jutting out from the creepers, looked exceedingly nice, and at night the illuminations high on the building were prominent. Mr Ashmore, too, had an excellent show of bunting and an illuminated G.R. and crown. Messrs. Goble and Son had a nice display of geraniums on the ledge over the shop, whilst the front of the house was decorated with a large flag in the centre and small flags at the sides, with an illuminated star and G.R., and a row of lights under the upstairs window.

King's End presented a smart appearance with its decorations and innumerable flags.





At South View an archway of evergreens had been erected. A string of flags was carried across the road from Mr Parrott's to Mr G. Plant's. Illuminated G.R.'s and other conspicuous adornments were seen at Mr G. Plant's, Mrs Forrest's, Mr Forrest's, Mr W.H. Clark's, Mr T. Harris', Mr E. Howell's, and Oxford House no.2.

The post and sign to the Fox Inn had been emblazoned with red, white and blue bunting, evergreens and flags. Mr C.H. Grimsley had a nice display of poles covered with a red, white and blue material, and a motto on a white material, flags, etc., and the residence was well illuminated. Clifton Villa was very effectively decorated. A row of flags was suspended from the roof; an archway erected over the gate, and the railings were bedecked with flags; whilst the villa, too, had an illuminated G.R. and crown.

Littlebury was very neatly decorated with flags and bunting and illuminated G.R. King's End House looked remarkably pretty with illumination and decorations, the streamer of evergreens and flowers along the front setting off the whole display. The decorations at Mr John Stockley's and Stow House helped to make the whole of King's End parish a most effective exhibition.

At the Schools the entrance gate had been entwined with evergreens and flowers, and the schoolhouse itself looked very pretty.

Church Street contributed its share to the decorations splendidly, and none looked better than at Mr Townsend's. The Vicarage, too, looked remarkably pretty with innumerable flags, coloured poles, fairy lights and mottoes. St Edburg's Villas, prettily situated and equally prettily decorated, had the lawn encircled with fans of red, white and blue, whilst flags and fairy lights made the view a most charming one. The Swan, Tysul House, and Kilglass House were well illuminated; Mr E. Smith's, Crick House, The Limes, St Edburg's Cottage, Mr E.H. Smith's, Mr Gough's, Mr Golder's, Mr Neal's, Mrs Coles', and the Police Station were nicely decorated.

Church Lane had a couple of strings of flags along it and Old Palace Yard had a floral archway and flags.

The Causeway had a very compact show of bunting, flags, etc. Starting from the King's End entrance one's eye was first attracted to a large number of flags flying across the road. Mr P. Flemons had a good display, whilst Mr Paragreen's residence looked nice. The Y.M.C.A. members rose to

the occasion, and an excellent spirit prevailed, for hours of labour were freely spent in adorning the building, the result being most charming. The lower windows were filled with festoons, Chinese lanterns and fairy lights brightened the building, and the letters Y.M.C.A., G.R. and crown was formed in illuminations. Bunting and flags helped to make a most imposing show.

At Henley House there was extensive decorative lighting. Messrs. Bennett, Busby, Freeman, and Sherwood each had a nice display, as did Mrs Hall, the decorations at the last named being exceedingly light and tasteful.

Other noticeable displays were at Mr T. Buckle's and the Boy Scouts headquarters. Mr W. Davey had a splendid compact show, with evergreens for a background; framed pictures of the King and Queen, mottoes, flags, etc. Bridge House was nicely decorated and illuminated.

The Market Square was a blaze of decoration and illumination, and here was witnessed some of the best exhibitions in the town. The massive pillars at the entrance to Claremont House looked beautiful, and the creeper and flowers set off the remainder of a fine display of illumination and decoration. Messrs. Finch and Son's shop, Messrs. Layton and Son's shop, Mr Tanner's residence, the front of Mr G.W. Hedges' residence, and also those of Mr C.A. King and Mr E. Dealey looked very good. The George Hotel presented a very smart appearance, the decorations being very effectively done by Mr Preston.

At all the residences on the Market Square a number of flags were hung out, and they were also nicely illuminated, those calling for mention being Mr Scivyer's, Messrs. Walker and Bard's, Mr T.H. Wells', Mr W.J. French's, Mr S. Flemons', Mr Stevens', Mr Plant's, Mr J. Hedges', Eastmans Ltd., the Cross Keys, the "Advertiser" Office, Mrs Stuchfield's, Mr Sirett's. The Mid-Oxon Gas Co. had a very compact and imposing display. Mrs Hone had very effective illuminations, whilst at Mr Page-Turner's estate office bunting, flags, evergreens, mottoes, and illuminations made a very nice display.

Illuminations were conspicuous at Messrs. Harris and Son's, Mr Lewis', and the Red Lion, and at Layton's motor works were a large number of flags. The Bank house looked exceptionally charming. Large letters, G.R. and M.R., were brilliantly illuminated, and evergreens, flags, bunting, etc. were arranged with great effect. The King's Arms

had a good display of decorative material and illumination.

Priory Road, Chapel Street and Victoria Road were well decorated.

In the London Road, Miss Harper's residence, Woodbine Cottage, Rose Cottage, the Aylesbury Brewery Co.'s stores, Mr A. Baker's residence, and Mr H. Jackson's workshop looked smart. A string of flags was placed from Mr A. Parsons' to the other side of the road. Bicester Hall was bedecked, and there were prominent illuminations at the King's Head and Nag's Head.

Dr Hendriks' lighting was on a large scale; each window had fairy lights, and there were illuminated G.R. and crown. Messrs. King and Son had erected a line of electric bulbs, beautifully festooned, across to the King's Arms, and this was very effective. Mrs Timberlake and Mr R. Parker had appropriate displays.

Crockwell and Field Street were well decorated; the latter thoroughfare had a wide string from the Plough Yard to the terrace opposite. North Street, too, contributed a fair quota to the decorations and illuminations, a string of flags across the road from Ivy Cottage to Messrs. Thomas Smith and Son's being conspicuous. Prominent



decorated houses included Mr A.E. Prentice's and Mr T.G. Prentice's.

## The Churches

Unfortunately, Bicester did not follow the example set by many towns of having a united service.

There was litany and holy eucharist at the Parish Church at 9am. The service commenced with the 122nd Psalm, followed by the singing of the Old Hundredth. In the communion service, special collect, epistle, and gospel were read, and after the Creed, the Vicar read the Order of Proceedings at the Coronation at Westminster Abbey. The service was sung to Woodward in E flat, and concluded with the hymn "Now thank we all our God," and the Nune Dimittis.

A special service was held in the Parish Church at 10:45, and consisted of the Psalm, and Litany sung in procession, and the hymn "Now thank we all our God," and Dykes' Te Deum. The Territorials and the Church Lads Brigade paraded for this service.

In the morning a free church United service was held in the Congregational Church. The Rev. J. Rhys Price presided, supported by the Rev. F.T. Buckingham (Wesleyan minister), and Lieutenants Green and Parker (Salvation Army). The hymns sung were "Our God our help in ages past," "God bless our native land," "Lord, while for all mankind we pray," and "To Thee, our God, we fly." Miss D. George presided at the organ. Lieutenant Parker having read the lesson, the Rev. A. Robinson (former Wesleyan minister at Bicester) and Mr F. Kirtland offered prayer. Later Miss K. Sulston rendered a solo, and Mr John hedges offered prayer.

Lieutenant Green, in her address, said it gave her great pleasure to speak at such a gathering. On that day all their minds were upon one thing, and everyone, she believed, had one thought and hope. They hoped that King George would make a good king, and that he would continue in the grace of God. No country or monarch could do without religion. The speaker instanced King Solomon, who, after he had forsaken God, died in the midst of evil and vice. Let them pray, for King George would be the last to say their prayers could do him no good. He had often spoke of the good work of the Bible, and she thought one of the best items in the great ceremony that day would be when the King was presented with the Bible. The speaker hoped that as King George took the Bible, his country would so take the word of God

that it would benefit thereby. Might God crown their King with glory, and allow him to see the kingdom of Jesus, and might his faithful service to his country be rewarded when the time came.

The Rev. F.T. Buckingham then gave an appropriate address. He said that they were not to ask for the blessing of God upon their King and country. He was proud to be a British subject – a member of a community so loyal as the English people. They were glad to know that they had such a good King. They realised that no man could have at heart more sincerely the well-being of the people over whom he reigned. One of the most striking features of the Coronation festivities was the intense patriotism displayed by all sections of the community. Of course there were various ways of expressing that patriotism. Some men would express it by singing Rule Britannia or the National Anthem at the close of their festivities. He would say that the greatest patriot, the man most loyal to King and country, was the man who was striving to improve the society in which he lived. It was character which made a nation great and mighty. England's greatness was not in her mighty navy, or in the wealth and strength of her colonies, but in the moral strength of the men and women who dwelt within her borders. The greatest possible work for the "safety, honour and welfare of his Majesty's kingdom" was striving to enrich the character of the nation. That was patriotism of the highest type, and it was for that that they worked and prayed. Proceeding, he said that they wished for King George and Queen Mary a long and prosperous reign. That the reign would be great, none of them doubted. The next forty years would probably be among the most remarkable in the world's history. They were living in days of big movements and great happenings. They all rejoiced in the great social improvements which had been taking place around them. They all rejoiced in the efforts which had been put forward for the world's peace, and they looked forward to the future with great hopefulness, because they believed the future to be pregnant with great possibilities. They trusted that the reign of King George and Queen Mary would see a great advance in the direction of the world's peace. Edward VII earned for himself the title of Peacemaker. It was a new name for a king. Usually a king was considered great if he could point to mighty victories, and earned for himself the fame of conqueror. Thank God their ideas of greatness had changed, and they considered a king truly great who could promote the peace of the nation. They hoped that King George, like his father, would throw the whole weight of his influence on the side of the world's peace and



thus bring about the Kingdom of a greater King, whose reign would ever mean "Peace and goodwill among men."

### Mass Meeting

At 11:45 the inhabitants assembled on the Square, where the Oakley band, the Territorials, the Church Lads Brigade, and Boy Scouts were formed up. It was a most imposing sight, and the National Anthem was sung with much fervour, and the proceedings concluded with cheers.

### The Dinner

Most excellent arrangements had been made for the dinner at the Brewery Stores, kindly lent by Messrs. Hall's Oxford Brewery Company Ltd. The large storeroom had been completely transformed, and made a capital dining room, seating about 500 people, whilst arrangements had been made for seating 150 under a shed adjoining the room and also for 100 in an adjoining storeroom. The pillars had been covered with red, white and blue papers, festoons hung on the walls, and also appropriate mottoes, and from the roof were suspended flags, mottoes, bunting, festoons, etc. With the tables nicely decorated with pot plants, kindly lent by Messrs. Goble and Son, the scene whilst the dinner was in progress was an imposing one.

So many came to the dinner that it was necessary to have two sittings. The viands were most excellent, and Mr J. Dearn, of the King's Head, is to be complimented on giving such satisfaction. The carvers and helpers did their works splendidly, and there was absolutely no delay. Grace was said before the repast by the Rev. W. O'Reilly. Messrs. W.E. Pankhurst, C. Ashmore, and A. Nichols had arranged for carvers, who in turn appointed their own waiters, two for each carver.

Dr C.M. Hendriks, who presided, said: Ladies and Gentlemen, - I am here by a common right with you of citizenship and loyalty to the same sovereign. But perhaps you will ask how it is I am presiding at your feast. Your dinner committee did me the honour of proposing that I should take the head of your table, and it was an honour I could not resist, for I am fond of honour. That is the how. But why am I here? Your committee best know what they think of my qualification; but I take it they needed no orator, though there is plenty for the eloquence of the orator, and even for the rhapsody of the poet. They wanted someone to put in simple words what is passing in the minds and hearts of you and me today.

First, our idea is centred on our King, and nobody else's King, but our King: the king of these vast dominions, the glories and responsibilities of which you and I share. There isn't one of us who is not thinking of what is taking place today



in our magnificent old Abbey, every stone of which reeks with our history, and through whose every window light or shadow falls on the tomb or memorial of some illustrious dead.

And what is it that is taking place there? It is no one-sided affair; it is a pledge of King to Subject - that's you and me - and Subject to King of an abiding loyalty and fealty to one another. It seems to me that kingship or headship is necessary for the flowing of effort, aspiration and authority; and this kingship of ours is no thing of yesterday. Is it not strange how little new things please? We like old silver, old furniture, old pictures, statues, even old clothes, and we are proud of a King who goes back near two thousand years in history, and then passes into the twilight of legend. Time has a tooth that bites hard, and takes from us much that we love, but time, too, has an artistic hand, which tones, mellows, beautifies, and hallows what it touches. We are proud, too, of that unbroken continuity of descent that links our present King with every period of our glorious past. And what a past! Look at it! Semi-savage Briton and Celt, Roman, Angle, Saxon, Norman, Scot - victor and vanquished - blending and assimilating to form a race bold to conquer and strong to hold, which has spread over the whole world, not for purpose of tyranny, but for the bettering of its subject peoples, carrying to them all the advantages that science, art, culture, and civilisation generally, can give. See how more than successful this process within the Empire has been, for we are all one, mind and soul, in loyalty today. But there are also the difficulties of kingship. How many qualities are needed

now to make a successful monarch? Tireless he must be, quick in sympathy, prompt in decision, self-sacrificing, putting himself aside to know and do the will of his people; urbane, with a full knowledge of men, their possibilities, and their susceptibilities, moving always in so-called strictly constitutional lines; the King of his subjects, but also the subject of his subjects; the master of his servants, and yet the servant of his servants.

But today we are especially concerned with King George. He is the present link of a long chain of sovereigns; but most of us will be thinking of his immediate predecessors - the beloved Victoria and the diplomat and conciliator Edward VII. They have set him glorious examples. It is but a year since King George's succession, and this already we know of him. He is hard-working, earnest in purpose, sympathetic, a model father and husband, living and determined to live in a pure atmosphere. It augurs well, and our hope and belief is that in the other sterner and subtler qualities, he will not fall short of the best of those who have gone before him. Today we are, as it were, catching the glories of the sun, and bringing them to a single focus. From the wide and magnificent circle of our empire, every thought, every wish, every hope runs on converging lines to a centre, individualised in the person of the King. Isn't it so? Of course it is. And so I give you the honour, the glory, the health, the happiness and long life of our Sovereign Lord King George V. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the toast of "The King."

The company then loyally drunk to the health of "The King," and hearty cheers were raised.





### Athletic Sports

At 2 o'clock a programme of athletic sports was commenced in the Cricket Field. About £20 was offered in prizes, and the events filled remarkably well. These included 100 yard flat races, obstacle races, cycle races, 150 yard hurdles, and a marathon race. The course for the marathon was from the Cricket Field through Number Hill to the Oxford Road Gate, past the Fox Inn and the Workhouse, along Bucknell Road, through Crockwell, Sheep Street and Chapel Street, finishing back in the Cricket Field. Fourteen started for the race, which covered a distance of over three miles. H. Waine was first, P. Smith second, and J. Banister third.

A hat trimming competition for men, judged by Mrs Tompkins, Mrs W.E. Pankhurst, and Miss K. Sulston, awarded first prize to P.C. Holiday, second prize to R.A. Pankhurst, and third prize to W. George.

In the preliminary round of the tug-of-war the G.W.R. defeated Mr F. Elliott's team by two pulls to nil. In the final they met the Brewery, and defeated them by two pulls. The following comprised the winning team: F. Middleston (captain), Slater, Harris, Powell, Grimsley, and G. Watson. Mr Elliott's team and the Brewery pulled off for the second prize, the former winning.

Mr F.W. Goble won the air pistol competition after a keen struggle. Mr P.R. Smith was second and Mr A. Cripps third.

At the close the prizes were presented to the successful competitors by Mr H.C. Jagger. The sports were voted a complete success. The ground was in good condition, and the races were kept well within time.

### Children's Tea

Seven hundred sat down to tea in Mr Grimsley's field. The children were accommodated on boards, and were arranged in excellent order. Before commencing tea,

Coronation mugs were presented to them.

### Dancing on the Square

At 8 o'clock the Oakley band played for dancing on the Market Square, and a large number joined in the terpsichorean art. Soon after this hour the work of the illuminating began, and the streets were quickly a blaze of lights.

### Fancy Costumes

Far more than was expected took part in the fancy costume competition, there being between thirty and forty ladies and gentlemen competitors, many of whom had spent much time in preparation. There were many excellent characters portrayed, and the judges – Messrs. P.C. Holiday, W. Davey, and H.C. Jagger – had a difficult task in selecting the winners. Eventually the first prize for ladies went to Miss Maggie Townsend, as Queen Elizabeth; the second to Misses D. and H. Mountain as John and Mary Bull; and the third to Miss Dorothy Keepence as the Flower Girl. In the class for gentlemen Mr M.W. Smith was first as the Prehistoric Man, Mr George Goble second as the Indian Chief, and Master Cyril Williams third as the Little Jester.

### Torchlight Procession

At 10 o'clock began the torchlight procession, which was headed by the Oakley band and the bugle band of the Church Lads Brigade, and followed by those dressed in fancy costumes, all of whom carried torches. The procession, in which the members who formed it were very enthusiastic, passed through all the streets of the town, concluding on the Market Square, where the Royal Salute was given by the bugle band, "God save the King" was played by the band and sung by the huge company, and the revelry concluded with loud cheers.



# Empire Air Day at Heyford

Published in the Bicester Advertiser 4th June 1937

In common with other RAF Stations, Upper Heyford was open to the public on Saturday, and with ideal weather prevailing about 8,000 visitors spent an enjoyable day at the camp.

There was an attractive programme arranged, containing much of interest. In the air park were all types of the latest bombers and other machines, which attracted considerable attention. Visitors were also privileged to make a tour of the buildings and hangers, and instructed in the use of gas masks, etc. The “camera obscura,” a device which enables the results of practice bombing to be assessed without the release of bombs, came in for much attention, and in the air drill visitors were able to give orders to the aircraft by radio telephony.

*The first production model of the Hawker Hind, on display at Brooklands. The Hind was used as part of the RAF's expansion in the 1930s and was the RAF's last light bomber biplane.*





*An unarmed, dual control, Hawker Hind training model.*

Height judging competitions were won by Mr E.G. Stanton, of Twyford (1,440 ft) and Mr E. Hawes, of Banbury (4,200 ft). The holders of programmes with the lucky numbers secured an air trip.

From 3pm to 5:45pm a flying programme was carried through with success. Squadron formation flying by the Hawker Hinds day bombers, an aerobatic display, balloon bursting, flight dive bombing, flight drill, etc., all proved most entertaining, while the parachute descents (dummy) provided a thrill for the watching crowd. As a finale there were successive bombing attacks on an enemy "stronghold," by flights of the bombers. A recruiting kiosk was in evidence on the station.

Lord Swinton, the Minister for Air, arrived by plane during the afternoon and stayed for a short time before leaving to continue his tour of various Stations.

In the evening there was dancing in one of the hangers, a number of visitors staying to enjoy a pleasant evening to music by Ken Prewer's band.

# Can Onions Cure Earache? - 18th Century Medical Advice

## March's talk by Melanie King

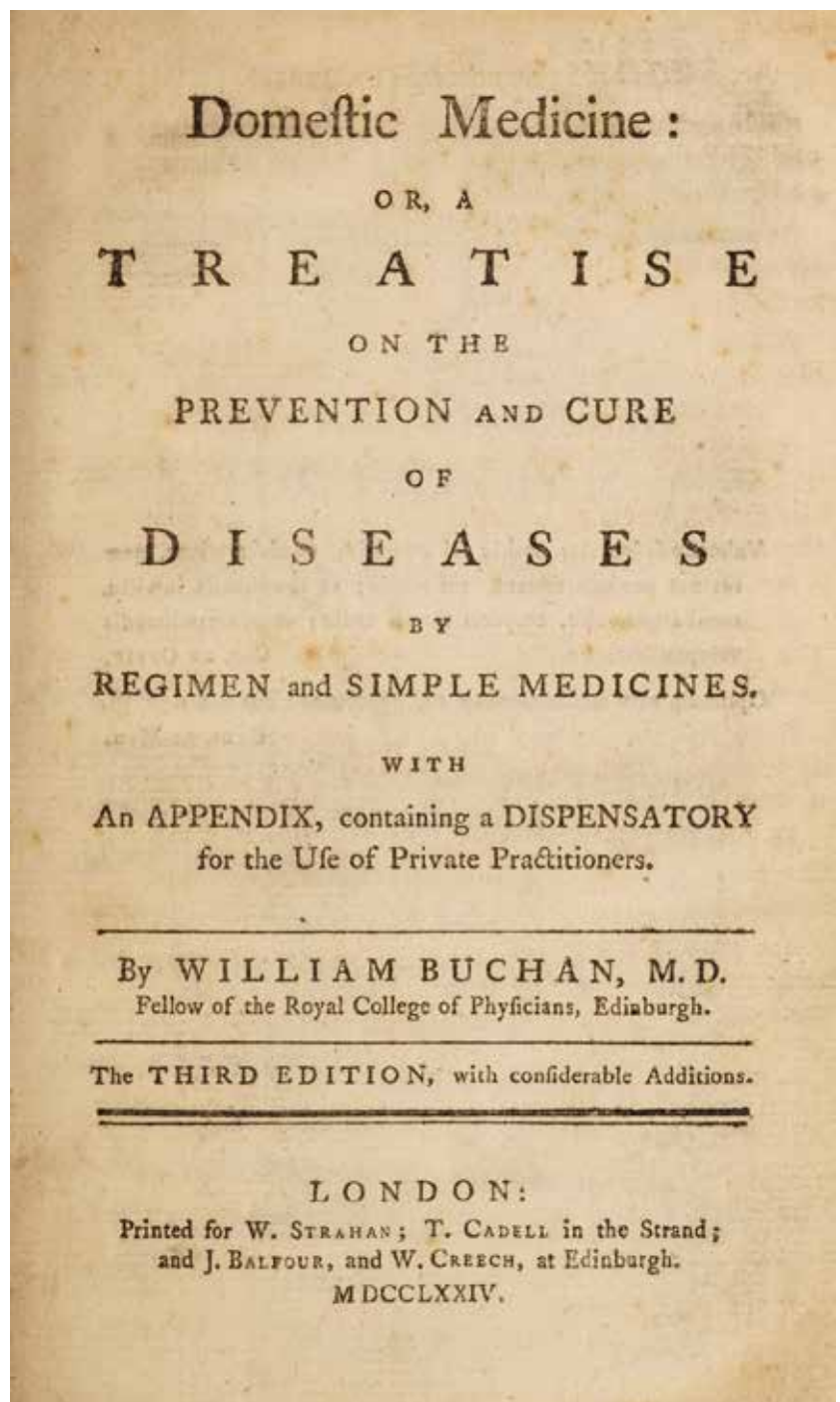
Written by Sally James

**M**elanie King gave us a picture of life and health issues in eighteenth century Britain. This was not a healthy time to be alive when, without the benefits of modern medical science, many ailments would have killed you.

In 1769 Dr William Buchan (1729-1805) published a medical volume for the home, called *Domestic Medicine: or, a Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases by Regimen and Simple Medicines*, containing advice on how to stay healthy and the remedies available.

Out of a UK population of 7-8 million at that time, many endured poor living conditions, contending with fleas and gutters running with human and animal waste. Bad diet was common as was the excessive consumption of alcohol. One in five children died before their fifth birthday and the average life expectancy for a man was 44 years.

The use of open fires for heating and cooking, and candles for lighting were the cause of numerous accidents. The *Gentleman's Magazine* of 12th January 1792 outlined a catastrophic fire in Birmingham and a further edition of 12th August 1815 described the consequences of an overturned coach. Dr Buchan advised various approaches to such accidents, for example, where the skin was unbroken, he advocated holding the limb to the fire and rubbing in salt, or, where blisters had formed, he favoured the application of calamine lotion (Turner's cerate). Surviving broken bones was not always preferable, as amputation, without the benefit of anaesthetic, was sometimes necessary.







Medical care was based on the Four Humours – choler, blood, bile, phlegm. It was believed that these should be in balance to avoid disease. Blood-letting, vomiting, purging, drinking mineral water and consuming herbs were all thought to aid the balance of the humours, although these treatments were not always effective.

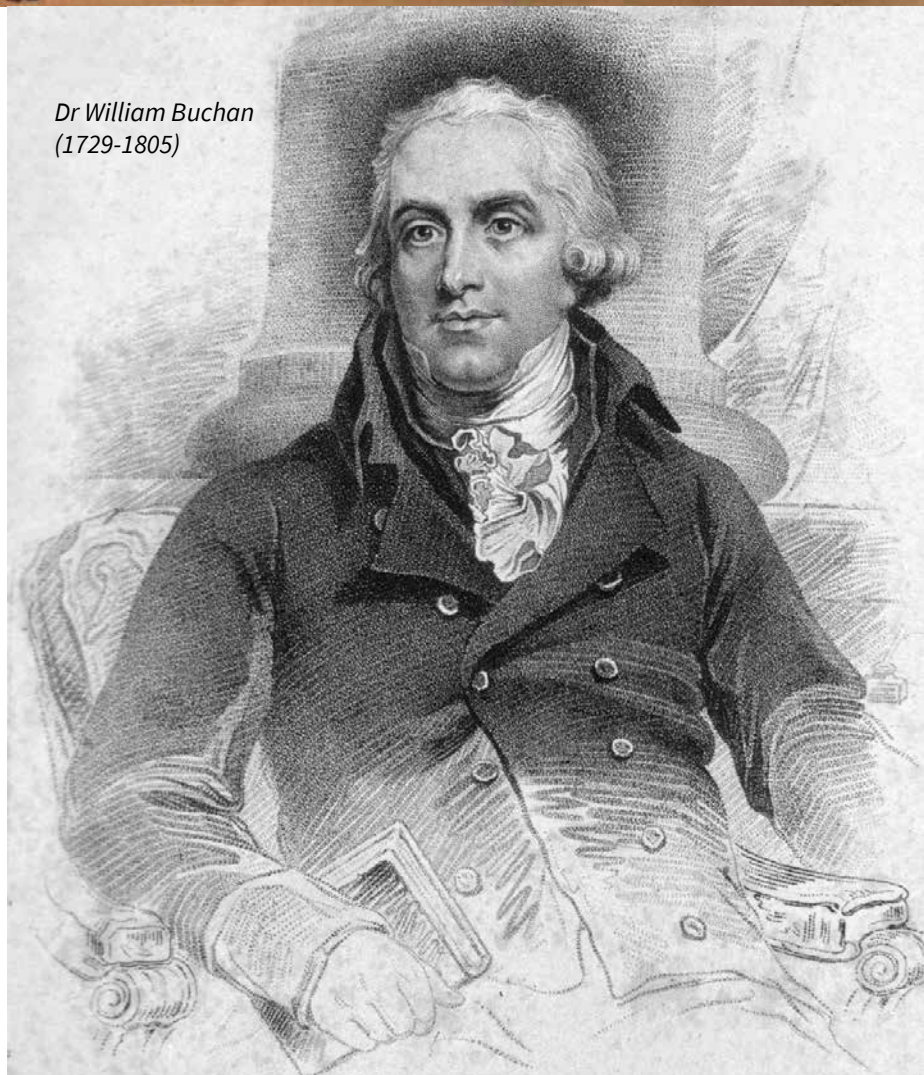
Herbal remedies, found in the countryside, were available to those who could not afford to consult an apothecary. ‘Taking the waters’ became popular towards the end of the eighteenth century; important spas were established at Harrogate, Bath and Tunbridge Wells.

Illnesses prevalent in the eighteenth century included: TB, typhus, smallpox, whooping cough, cholera, plague, dysentery and gripe (flu).

Dr Buchan advised a regime of prevention. For example, he considered that a sore throat was caused by singing, not covering one’s throat, wearing wet clothes or having wet feet. He favoured blackcurrant jelly or a sage tea gargle with vinegar and honey.

Cold symptoms could be alleviated by eating less, reducing meat/fish consumption, eating chicken broth or bread and milk, and lying in bed. Dr Buchan believed that a

*Dr William Buchan (1729-1805)*





cold could be a forerunner to TB (not true) and recommended jelly of roses or breast milk.

Other cures for coughs and colds included gum ammoniac, squills (first cultivated at the Oxford Botanic Garden), Burgundy pitch, which was applied between the shoulders for 3-4 days, wild poppy, marshmallow roots and colt's foot flower.

Substances that we now know to be dangerous, such as lead or mercury, were commonly used.

Mithridatium was considered something of a wonder drug. It had been known since Roman times and was used in the plague in 1665. It contained up to sixty-five ingredients and took forty days to prepare. It was taken with wine or water, or spread on the skin. It became known as Venetian or London Treacle and was sold as late as the 1790s, although by 1745 it was widely criticised.

Melanie King concluded her talk by assuring us that, despite some unusual remedies, Dr Buchan was a fully qualified doctor, having completed his studies at Edinburgh University in 1758. His advice to restrict the consumption of meat and alcohol; to get sufficient sleep and undertake exercise, such as gardening, strikes a modern note.



*Cinchona tree bark, from Peru, contains quinine, a common treatment for malaria.*

*Figs could be used for, amongst other things, easing labour.*



*Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus, who created Mithridatium in the 1st century BC.*





*Saltpetre could be used to treat gout, inflammation or skin lesions.*

*Squills were used as a cure for coughs and colds.*



*Wild poppies were used as a cure for coughs and colds.*

*Melanie's modern take on Dr Buchan's remedies is available now.*

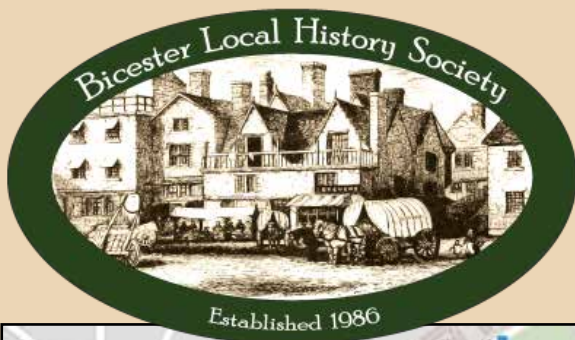
**Can  
Onions  
Cure  
Ear-ache?**

Medical advice  
from 1769

Foreword by  
**ROBERT  
WINSTON**

*Edited by Melanie King from an original text by William Buchan*

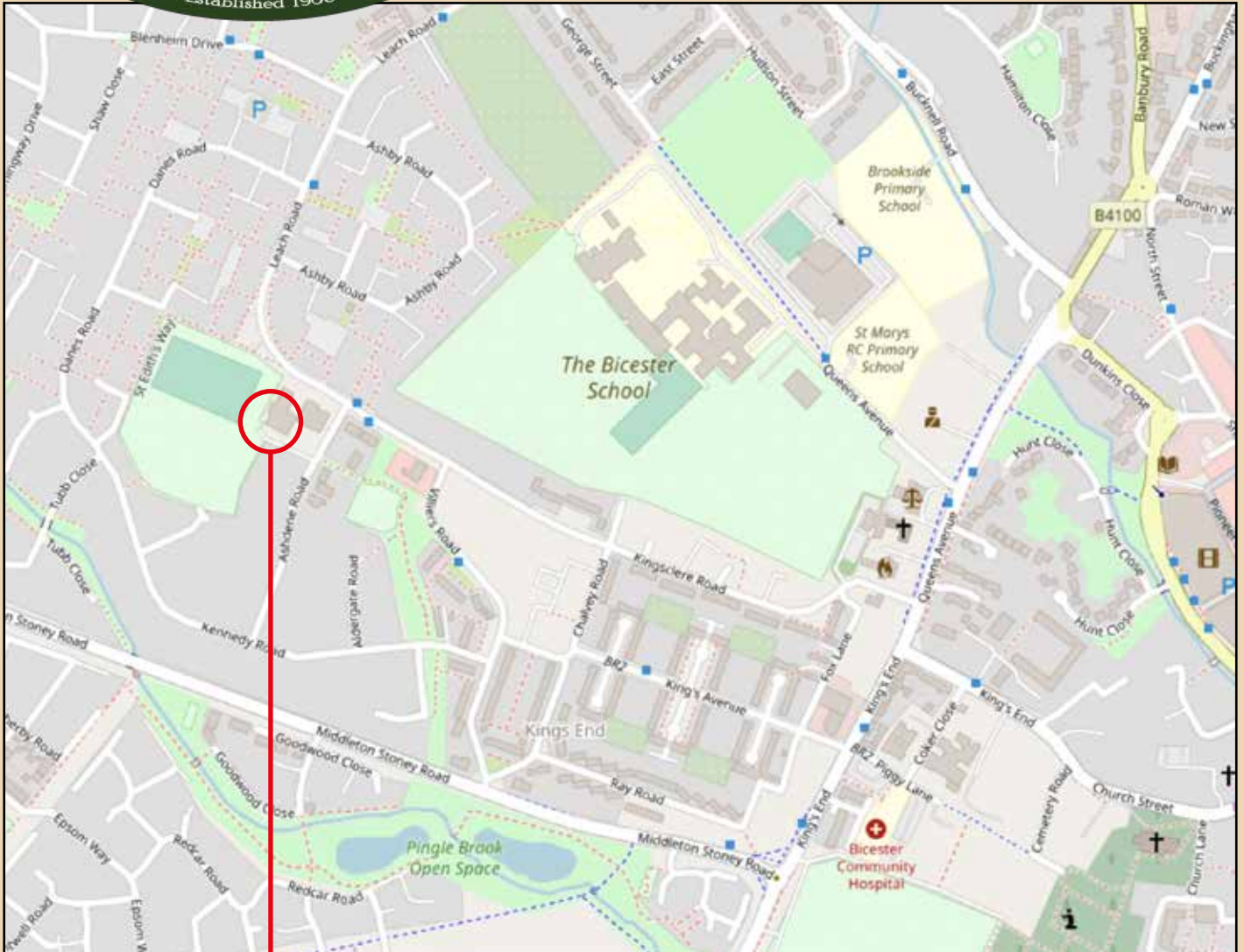




BLHS's monthly meetings are held on the third Monday of every month (except August) and begin at 7:30pm. Members entry is free, visitors pay £3 at the door. Refreshments are included and a raffle is usually held at the end of the talk.

The September meeting includes our AGM and forms the start of our membership year.

Annual membership fees (at time of printing) are £13 for individuals and £20 for joint memberships.



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