

# Health and Safety Culture

Some people see today's health and safety culture as a sign of the "nanny state" that our government seems to have become. Interestingly the term "nanny state" dates back to 1965 when, it seems, things were a lot more lax than they are today.

In November 1965, building work on Bicester's "Western Development" was completed. 311 houses around Kings Avenue and Kingsclere Road, for the Army Department, and thirty houses around Leach Road, for the council, were built together in one large project. But the construction site, like many others, was plagued with incidents right from the beginning.

Apart from a number of occasions when fighting broke out amongst the Irish labourers on site, there was one incident where their foreman, Patrick Ryan, went to trial for assaulting John and Charles Ward, both of North Street, Bicester. An argument started between them in The Star public house at lunchtime on the 26th July 1965. After they returned to site that afternoon the argument resumed and eventually Ryan struck both of the Ward brothers with a shovel.

But much worse was to come for the site.

Later, in August 1965, two eleven-year-old schoolboys were killed on the site. They were crushed underneath a seven ton digger when the driver, twenty-year-old Terence Northwood, reversed over the den they had made with the cover of a cement mixer.

The inquest recorded a verdict of accidental death after Mr McDonagh, the banksman working with Mr Northwood, explained that he saw about a dozen children playing on the site that afternoon. He used his own common sense in keeping children away but, just after 4 o'clock, he left the site to chase away children who were playing nearby.

The Coroner said that it was only too clear what had happened. He directed the



Some of the Leach Road houses, close to where the two boys died.

jury that it was for them to say if they were satisfied that the boys got under the cover of their own accord. He also talked about how the tragedy could have been avoided. "You know what children are. The site is open, whether it ought to be fenced or not is another question. I don't know if it would even be humanly possible to secure a site of this size. But all the parents in Bicester whose children go to this site will know about it."

On the same day as the inquest into the death of the two boys a girl playing on the site became trapped under some paving slabs and had to be rescued. Luckily she wasn't seriously hurt and didn't require hospital treatment.

John Walker, Labour Relations and Safety Officer for the main contractors, told the Bicester Advertiser that "The site has notices up, but the children completely disregard them. To fence off the site would be impossible in view of the heavy machinery being used. Parents will have to realise the many dangers children are placed in when they play on building sites." He also said that as well as the dangers, "The damage caused by children has run up a bill of hundreds and hundreds of pounds. A load of drain pipes have been smashed, a consignment of tiles were broken up, and street lights are continually being broken."

- Matthew Hathaway

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## Dates For Your Diary

Putting Bicester on the Map Talk  
16th November - 7:30pm  
see page 6

December Newsletter Submissions Deadline  
4th December

St Edburg's Christmas Tree Festival  
11th-13th December  
at St Edburg's Church

Festive Social Event  
21st December - 7:30pm  
see page 3

Telephone 23.

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Taken from the Bicester Advertiser - September 1924

## Marj's Memories World War II

The war started when I was 5 and ended when I was 10, but things, such as rationing, didn't end for a long time after the war.

I remember:

- When we had marsh mallow in cornets instead of ice-cream. I had my first ice-cream after the war.
- Seeing a banana, I thought, for the first time when I was 9 years old.
- Having a hen's egg at Easter with a pencilled face on it. I could vaguely remember the pretty baskets with Easter eggs before the war.
- When we only had oranges occasionally, but we did have an orange at Christmas.
- A convoy of tanks going through Sheep Street and cutting up the road with their tracks.
- The night Coventry was bombed and my family stood outside in our front garden saying "Coventry has got it" The sky over that area with one big red glow.
- The windows of Crockwell School all stuck up with masking tape.
- Playing in the air-raid shelters by the school, where a row of fine houses now stands.
- Going to school and never forgetting to carry a gas mask.

• Going to the Congregational Chapel to be inoculated. We walked in twos and the boy who partnered me, John Smoker, had lost his soldier father fighting in the war.

- Margaret Walton in my class, saying her dad was coming home from a Japanese prison camp and bringing her some chocolate.
- When the Italian prisoners walked up Bucknell Road each Sunday in their brown outfits with bright coloured patches of different shapes on their backs. We were allowed to talk to them and one made a brass ring for me.
- The Americans joining the war; when Pearl Harbour was bombed and word went round that "the Yanks were coming to Heyford".
- A song about "Over there, over there" "...the yanks are coming, the yanks are coming". It's the same tune as "Go compare, go compare" that we hear on the television now.
- The jeep convoys coming along the road and sometimes goodies being thrown out for the children, such as chewing gum.

These are sad memories this time, but perhaps they shouldn't be forgotten completely.

- Marjorie Dean MBE

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Adverts taken from the Bicester Advertiser - November 1915

## Bygone Bicester (Taken from the Bicester Advertiser & Mid-Oxon Chronicle)

### 17th November 1865

**BICESTER AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION** — The following were the awards given by this Society for competition in draining, hedging, and ditching, on Tuesday last, the 14th inst.

The judges were Messrs. R.K. Foster, C. Fowler and G. Attenbrow. The draining in each case was excellent, and the hedge-cutting was a great improvement upon former years.

Class 35 - Draining: four feet in depth; ten entries.

First prize: Hitchcock, in the employ of Mr J. Simons. Second: James Massey, employed by Mr S. Malings. Third: Jarvis, in the employ of Mr S. Smith. Highly commended: Thomas Sansome.

Class 36 - Hedging and ditching: ten entries.

First prize: James Lake, Souldern, in the employ of Mr Thomas Jones. Second: Richard Mitchell, employed by Mr S. Smith. Third: C. Crook, employed by Mr Attenbrow. Highly commended: John Lapper, employed by Mrs Tanner.

### 26th November 1915

**LONG SERVICE REWARDED** — Mr George Timberlake, who joined the Bicester Fire Brigade as long ago as 1882, and appointed engineer in 1890, has just been given a bar to attach to the ribbon of the long service medal awarded to him some years ago by the National Fire Brigade Union when he had completed 25 years service. The medal is awarded for 20 years service, thus two bars are now attached to the ribbon.

Mr Timberlake is the oldest member of the local Brigade on active service.

Foreman John W. Knibb, who joined the Brigade in 1890, has also received a silver bar for a further period of five years' service, making 25 in all. Fireman A. Fleet, who has been in the Brigade 24 years, has received a bronze bar.

The bars have all been sent to the men through Mr D.A. Pearson, the Superintendent, who has handed them to the respective recipients.

### 5th November 1965

**A KISS FOR A HERO** - Mrs Adele Kelly congratulating her husband with a kiss at the Bicester Garrison last week. He was awarded the Queen's Commendation for bravery for his action in rescuing two Irish soldiers from a blazing vehicle at Famagusta in June. Corporal Kelly's two children, Debra 5 and Wayne 4, were also at the presentation. Corporal Thomas Kelly and his family live at 58 Willow Road, Ambrosden.



## Dutch War Dead

Whilst researching the story of the German airmen who were buried in Caversfield churchyard then later disinterred and moved to Cannock Chase (see Issue 8 - April 2015) I came across the slightly more recent story of Lieutenant Jan de Zanger, of the Royal Netherlands Army.



Son of a professional soldier, Lt de Zanger was born in Dordrecht on the 23rd January 1914.

During World War II he was taken prisoner by the Germans and held as a prisoner of war in Germany for four years. With other Dutch captives he was first sent to Nuremberg in southern Germany, then later to Stanisławów, Poland (east of Warsaw).

Shortly after his return to the Netherlands on the 5th June 1945 he suffered a heart attack due to his treatment whilst held by the Germans. He had lost a lot of weight.

A few weeks after his recovery he was sent to England to work with the allies in the rebuilding of Europe. He was given temporary accommodation at Chesterton Lodge. But after only being here a month his work and his fragile health led to a second heart attack. Then, while recuperating in the village, he developed pneumonia.

He died at Chesterton Lodge on the 6th November 1945, aged 31, and was buried in the churchyard of St Mary's Church.



In 1964 the Dutch government established a central British cemetery for Dutch casualties of the two World Wars at Paddington Cemetery, in Hendon, Middlesex. Lt de Zanger was disinterred in October of that year and moved to join his fallen comrades in the new cemetery.

- Matthew Hathaway

## Festive Social Event

Next month, instead of our usual talk from a guest speaker, we will be holding a social event on Monday 21st, starting at 7:30pm as usual.

There will be refreshments, a quiz, and some entertainment, as well as the opportunity to socialise with fellow members in our warm and friendly atmosphere.

Anyone planning to attend, please could you let us know by the 4th December, either by contacting Sally James or Bob Hessian, or by putting your name down on the list at this month's meeting. Just so that we have an idea of numbers for the catering.

We, the committee, hope to see you all there.

## Roll of Honour

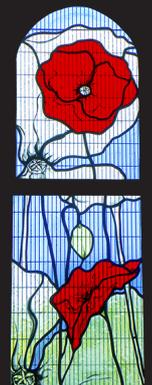
*These are the local men who died in the Great War, 100 years ago this month.*

**Private John Henry Payne**, of Souldern.

Died: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1915 Aged: 25 Served in: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry

**Private Charles W. Butler**, of Stoke Lyne.

Died: 29<sup>th</sup> November 1915 Aged: 31 Served in: Hampshire Regiment



# Village History Charlton-on-Otmoor

Charlton-on-Otmoor lies to the south of Bicester, on the northern edge of Otmoor, close to the River Ray.

In the 17th century, apart from the Rectory, there were 24 houses listed for the hearth tax of 1662 and in 1665 there were 16, 4 of which were substantial farm houses with 3 or 4 hearths each. Today it has a population of over 400.

There is no record of any manor house ever having existed. The manor itself was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as being in the possession of Roger d'Ivry, on behalf of his father-in-law, Hugh de Grantmesnil. With Hugh's content it was later granted to St Evroul Abbey, in Normandy.

The Priory of Ware, a cell of the Abbey in Normandy, held the manor until it was suppressed in 1414. Then, in the following year, Henry V granted it to his new foundation at Sheen. Sheen then held it until the Dissolution in 1539.

The crown kept it for a number of years and it was used to secure loans for Elizabeth I in 1558 and 1560. It was eventually granted to Lord Cheney of Toddington in 1574, who passed it to Sir John Dudley the following year. It was then sold to William Shillingford who died in 1589 and left it to his son, Edmund. But it was charged with so many

legacies by him that his son, John, was forced to mortgage it in 1668. It then went through a number of legal disputes until it was sold to John Pope in 1688.

John Pope gave it to his son, Gregory, in 1717, whose widow then sold it in 1732 to Thomas Cooper. Cooper immediately mortgaged it to John Coker, of Bicester, and eventually sold it in 1753 to Sir Edward Turner, of Ambrosden. The Turner, and later Page-Turner, family remained owners of the manor until 1874.

Charlton had a parish church by the 11th century. But the present Church of Saint Mary the Virgin didn't arrive until the 13th century. Originally an Early English Gothic building, it received substantial Decorated Gothic alterations in the 14th century. The east window is slightly later, in the transitional style from Decorated to Perpendicular Gothic. Then, around the beginning of the 16th century, the clerestory and new roof were added to the nave and a new window was added to the south aisle.

In the early 16th century the present rood screen and rood loft were added to the church. During the English Reformation Edward VI's injunctions of 1547 instructed that rood screens and lofts be removed from all churches in England and Wales. But Charlton's screen and loft managed to survive these injunctions. A tradition of garlanding the rood cross with flowers and box greenery on May Day also survived the Reformation and continues to the present day.

By 1553 the bell tower had five bells plus a Sanctus bell, but all have since been recast or replaced. Richard Keene, whose foundries included one at Woodstock, cast the two largest bells in 1681. The treble bell broke in 1789 but John Warner and Sons of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry recast it that same



St Mary the Virgin Church

year. In the 19th century one of the bells survived for a long time with a fracture, but in 1895 its tongue and head fell out. It was recast in 1898.

In 1998 the Whitechapel Bell Foundry cast a new treble bell, making the 1789 bell the second bell and increasing the tower to a ring of six bells. In 1999 the new bell was hung and the old bells re-hung as a project for the village to celebrate the Millennium.

The church clock is of an unknown date, but appears to be late 17th century. Two of the wheels of the going train are characteristic of the work of the clockmaker Edward Hemins, of Bicester, which would make them an early 18th century alteration.

In 1830 the locals met in the George and Dragon, a 17th-century public house that stood at the eastern end of the village, and formed the Otmoor Association. This led to the Otmoor Riots in opposition to plans to drain and enclose Otmoor. The rioters achieved their objective, and the villagers continued to farm a four-field open field system. A subsequent attempt at enclosure in 1858 was successful.

The enclosure of 1858 set aside land for the building of Charlton Parochial School, which opened in 1866. The number of pupils grew and a second classroom was added in 1892. It was reorganised as a junior school in 1937 and is now Charlton-on-Otmoor Church of England Primary School.

- Matthew Hathaway



The village's 13th century preaching cross

## Talks Update

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

### Monday 16th November

John Leighfield explains the development of maps from Gough to Google in his talk: **Putting Bicester on the Map.** Covering all the key stages and people from the first Oxfordshire map by Christopher Saxton in 1574 to the present day.

### Monday 21st December

We round off 2015 with a **festive social event.**

### Monday 18th January

Liz Woolley tells us about **Beer, Sausages & Marmalade.** Explaining how Oxford became well-known for its 'Celebrated Oxford Sausages' and for Frank Cooper's 'Oxford Marmalade'. Examining the link between food production, tourism and politics.

## Oxfordshire on the Home Front 1914-18

The First World War was a war of attrition. The British Expeditionary Force in France was larger than the present day NHS and Lord Kitchener knew from the beginning that we wouldn't be at full strength until 1916. He knew that the home front was key to winning the war.

The British army started running out of shells in spring 1915 because factories couldn't manufacture them fast enough. New factories were set up by the coalition government to help meet demand, including one in Banbury, that opened on 24th April 1916, and two in Cowley.

In 1914 the Defence of the Realm Act was introduced. It included the first form of blackout regulations and forbade rationing, people were expected to be economical with what they could get. At the same time panic buying led to shortages and food hoarding became an offence. Allotments were opened up on spare ground for people to grow their own food. And government restaurants were opened to help people eke out what food they had at home.

The Order of the White Feather formed in late



A woman at work in an armaments factory.

1914. A women's organisation aimed at shaming men who didn't volunteer for service. 10,500 men enlisted at Cowley in 1915 and conscription was eventually introduced in January 1916.

As well as shaming men into going to war, women also found their role in society starting to change. Particularly in the countryside, where over 1,600 women were working on the land by January 1916.

In July 1914 3.25m women were employed in Britain. This figure rose considerably during the war but reduced back to 4.3m by January 1919, once the returning soldiers took their jobs back.

- Matthew Hathaway

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