

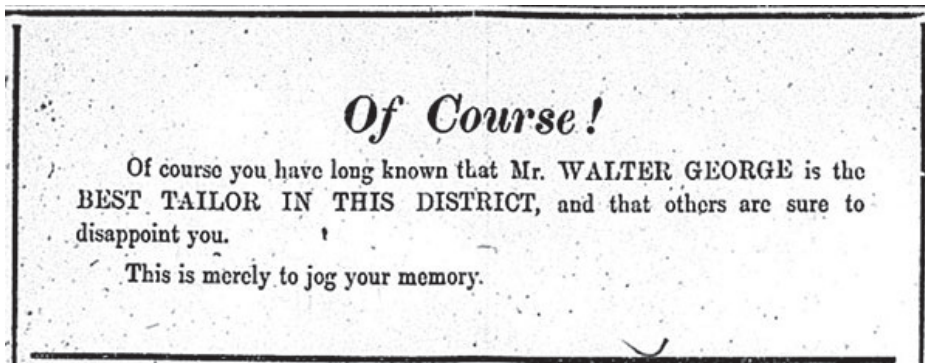
The Prize Medal Tailor

As some of you may have read in the Bicester Advertiser recently, I wrote my article this month about an intriguing local character by the name of Walter George, a tailor who operated his business in Sheep Street from 1895 until the early 1930s.

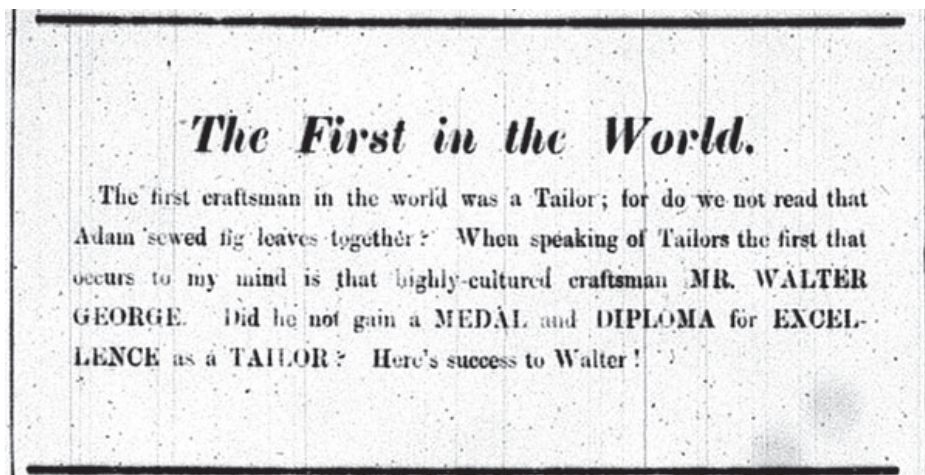
He seems to have taken a somewhat unique approach to advertising his business, and it certainly worked in making him stand out from the crowd.

I listed some of his adverts in the article, but I didn't really have the space to go into the ones he produced during the First World War. Most even making use of the war itself, and one particularly poignant Christmas message where he drops all thought of promoting himself purely to pass on his heartfelt Christmas wishes. So I bring you some of those here:

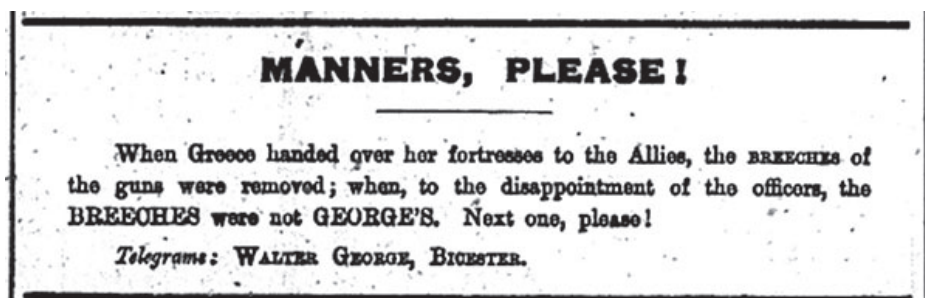
- Matthew Hathaway



July 1914



May 1915



October 1916

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HOW TO WRITE A POSTCARD.

To Mr. Walter George.

[YOUR ADDRESS HERE.]

Will you kindly oblige by sending to above address your Patterns of Spring Suitings? I have been so favourably impressed by the suits you have made for many friends of mine that I have resolved to let you make my Spring Suit. Or, if preferred, you may bring the Patterns with you. Shall be at home any evening after Five. I understand distance is no object, as you ride a motor bike.

Yours truly,

P.S.—The best road to Woodstock is through Kirtlington, not Eddington.

February 1916

I Must Contradict That!

Because a pair of GEORGE'S BREECHES should be found on a German officer is no proof that Mr. George made those Breeches for that German. I would rather think they had been taken as loot from a brave English officer. These Germans have an eye to anything of more than ordinary value, and Mr. George sees no reason why you should not recognize value too.

42, SHEEP STREET, BICESTER.

September 1916

THE LAST POST.

I have just heard a story, which is passed by the Censor, of a young knut who has recently been called to the Colours. "What's that," he asked, when the bugle sounded on his first night in camp.

"That's the Last Post," his comrade told him.

"Good heavens!" said the knut, "and I intended posting an order off to GEORGE'S, at Bicester, for half-a-dozen pairs of warm KHAKI SOCKS. What time is the First Post?" An owl hooted "To who?" and the nut said "George's, of Bicester."

November 1916

CHRISTMAS WISHES.

That the vacant chair may again be filled.
That the troubled mind may be greatly solaced.
That the broken heart may soon be healed.
That the present anxieties may be early relieved.

Are the sincere wishes of

Yours very truly,

WALTER GEORGE.

29th December 1916

WHEN WILL "THE WAR" BE OVER?

Ask Mr. George this question, and he won't be able to answer it.

Then ask yourself the question, and you won't be much forwarder.

* * * * *

But ask MR. WALTER GEORGE how much his Three Guinea Suits are, and he can answer you at once.

Then ask yourself how it is you have not ordered a Suit of Mr. George and that will prove a poser. Solve the question by Ordering a George's Suit to-day.

July 1917

Bygone Bicester (Taken from the Bicester Advertiser)

20th January 1893

JOLLY JOHN NASH - This noted performer, who is described by some as the merriest man alive, paid a visit to the Corn Exchange on Wednesday evening, and was well received by a large audience.

Throughout the whole programme, which was replete with fun and humour, the audience never had a dry moment, for Mr Nash seems to have acquired the knowledge that plenty of variety is always acceptable, and this he provided in peculiar ways.

His Irish, Scots, and English wit were highly appreciated, as also were his comic songs, especially that of his own composition, "Sister Mary". Miss Sestini was the pianist, and also sang a few songs.

8th January 1926

YESTERDAY'S HAPPY GATHERING - A child likes nothing better than going to a tea party, and when that party is on the scale such as that arranged by the Old Folks' Dinner Committee yesterday, the pleasure derived therefrom is greatly enhanced.

The children, to the number of 379, were marshalled from their respective schools to the old Brewery premises. The large store had been completely transformed, thanks to the exertions of the committee, the Brewery staff, and others, and also to the decorations by Messrs Sidney Hedges, Arthur Dixon and Maurice Brown.

The children very quickly seated themselves and, after singing Grace, an attack was made on the good things provided for the "inner man".

There were plenty of willing helpers to supply the wants. All the teachers assisted, and others were: the Rev. W. O'Reilly, Rev. D.A. King, Rev. A. and Mrs Fretwell, Mr and Mrs Davey, Mr G. Layton, Mr and Mrs S.H. Swell, Mrs Winship, Mrs Rose, Miss Davey, Miss Winnie Grimes, Mr B. Walker, Miss M. Bonner, Misses Bellam (3), Mrs Dancer, Misses Wrapson, Mr Durrant, Mrs Timberlake, Mrs Pauffley, Miss Evans, Miss B. Coleman, Mrs Winterbourne, Mr Albert Lambourne, Mr A. Whetton, Mr E. Scrivener, Mr S.G. Hedges, Mr A. Dixon, Mr M. Brown, Mrs and Miss Pickvance, Miss D. Dixon, Miss Bowerman, Mr F. Clifton, etc.

Tea over, the tables were quickly removed, and the building turned into a concert hall. Valento, a conjurer and ventriloquist from Banbury, then gave an enjoyable entertainment.

9th January 1959

LOWER HEYFORD NEW YEAR PARTY - This photo shows some of the members and guests at the New Year's Day party of the Lower Heyford Forget-Me-Not Club, held at the village chapel schoolroom.

After an excellent tea, Sgt. Cunningham, from the nearby United States Air Force Base, gave a film show. His programme included films of May Day celebrations at Upper Heyford and Lower Heyford. The film show was followed by carol singing, accompanied by a small orchestra. Members of the orchestra were Miss Dew (violin), Mr F. Milton (viola), Mrs Busby (cello), and Mrs Greenslade (piano).

Refreshments followed, and Mrs Parrish proposed a



vote of thanks to Mrs Humphries and her committee for an enjoyable party.

1st January 1993

CLASH AS PROTESTERS PICKET HUNT GATHERING - Tradition and protest clashed when anti-bloodsport protesters staged a peaceful demonstration in Bicester as the hunt congregated for the traditional Boxing Day Meet. Placards and slogans made the feelings of members of the League Against Cruel Sports and the Oxfordshire Anti-Death Sports Society members plain.

About 50 members of the Bicester and Whaddon Chase Hunt were met in the Market Square by a similar number of protesters. When the hunt moved off saboteurs followed, trying to put the hounds off the scent. But there was no violence.



Mr John Howard-Jones, from the hunt, said more people than usual lined the streets to see them. They failed to catch a fox, however.

The party earlier presented a cheque for £50 to St Edburg's House old people's home in Old Place Yard.

In a call for support, a farming councillor, Mr Billy Evans, wants colleagues in Cherwell to support field sports, particularly fox hunting. Mr Evans, of Field Farm, a Conservative councillor for Launton, has put down a motion for Cherwell District Council's meeting on Monday. He wants the council to recognise the vast public support for field sports, especially fox hunting, as seen at the meet in Bicester. He calls on the council to urge the Government to ensure that proper legal pursuits, such as fox hunting and field sports, be allowed to continue unhindered.

Talks Update

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

Monday 18th February

Elaine Steane MBE comes to talk to us about **Oxfordshire Mills**.

Monday 18th March

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

Monday 21st April

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

Christmas Social Film Show

Our December meeting for 2018 took the form of the usual Christmas social. As well as the now familiar refreshments and relaxed atmosphere, we entertained the members present with some old films, found online as part of the BFI's digital archive.

Of the many films available, free to view, in their online player (player.bfi.org.uk/free) we selected a few that had a local link.

"Cotswold Club" was filmed in Somerton in 1944 and tells the story of the villagers setting up a Village Produce Association to help coordinate and manage the village's food production.

"Glimpse of Oxford" showed us some of the city's landmarks in 1930, including Queen's College, the Radcliffe Camera and Hertford Bridge.

"Safety all the Way" featured Oxford's dopey drivers and careless pedestrians in a road safety film from 1953. Including some unusual product placements, the astonishing sight of Cowley factory workers cycling home en masse, and the military precision of a convoy of gleaming Morris motors wending their way to the docks.

- Matthew Hathaway



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