

Issue: 58 June 2019

# Bicester Historian

The monthly newsletter for Bicester Local History Society

## A Wonderful Resource

This month's talk (a synopsis of which will be published in the July edition) introduced us to the Historic Environment Image Resource. An Oxford University initiative to digitise and collate their vast collection of old photographic slides and negatives.

The collection includes photographs from all over the world. The talk itself focussed on images of Oxford. But the entire collection is freely available online (<http://heir.arch.ox.ac.uk>) and these are a few of the more local images they have.

- Matthew Hathaway

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Above:  
Windmill near Charlton-on-Otmoor. Built 1610, destroyed 1905.



Above right:  
Long rooms 1 & 2, Alchester excavation - 1926.



Right:  
House, Alchester excavation - 1928.



Windmill near Arncoth. - June 1907.



3rd century wall, Alchester excavation - 1926.

### Dates For Your Diary

July Newsletter Submissions Deadline

5th July

Oxfordshire & the Norman Conquest Talk

15th July - 7:30pm

see page 4

Bicester Advertiser Local History Article

18th July

August Newsletter Submissions Deadline

2nd August

Bicester Advertiser Local History Article

15th August

Annual General Meeting & Talk

16th September - 7:30pm

see page 4

## 9th June 1893

### NATIONAL SCHOOLS INSPECTION

The report made this year on the condition of the National Schools by the Government examiners has this week reached the hands of the Secretary (Mr J.F. Jones), and on the whole may be deemed satisfactory, and creditable to the teachers and managers alike.

The scholars in the three sections have won the word "creditable" from the examiners, which, coming from the pen of Government officials, means a great deal. We can therefore congratulate our teachers on the progress made by the scholars, and no doubt the weaknesses referred to will receive special attention during the present year.

Boys School: "The boys are in very good order, and they have passed a very creditable examination both in elementary and class subjects. The arithmetic of the sixth standard is the weakest point of the school, and there is a little inaccuracy in the arithmetic of the fifth standard. The first standard boys have been very well taught by Miss Nelson. The third is also a very good standard. Map drawing is passable, but might be much better."

Girls School: "The girls are in very good order, and they have passed a very creditable examination both in elementary and class subjects. They show much intelligence in their recitation. The sewing of the second standard requires attention. In the fourth standard, though there were no failures in arithmetic, nearly all the passes were gained with difficulty. But it is very creditable to Miss Breeke that they passed at all, for the attendance is extremely irregular."

Infant School: "In spite of a double change of teachers during the year, the school has passed a very good examination, and is making very satisfactory progress. The order is excellent, and the infants take great interest in their lessons. The desks in use are quite unsuitable for the infants, some smaller desks are distinctly necessary."

In addition to the Government report, a report has been received from the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union, announcing that certificates of merit have been awarded to twenty boys from the National Boys School for "Excellence in reporting a lecture on Alcohol and the Human Body".

The lecture was given on the 20th February last, and the following boys have received the certificates: Frederick Parsons, Albert Harris, Frederick Elliott, William Powell, Edward Hearn, Edward Heath, Joseph Carthew, John Shillingford, Joseph Baughan, James Chisholm, Frank Sirett, Herbert Beckett, Frank Grant, Samuel May, Reginald Wood, Francis Dagley, John Grimsley, Edward King, William Hitchman, and Thomas King.

## 11th June 1926

### A TRAVELLING SHOWROOM

Considerable interest was manifest in Sheep Street last Saturday morning by the appearance of a large and

expensively decorated motor van.

On enquiry we were privileged to satisfy our curiosity by an invitation to inspect the interior of the van which proved to be an elaborate showroom on wheels. In it were displayed all kinds of dainties in the confectionery line, manufactured by Messrs. Yeatman and Co. Ltd, 9 Denmark Street, London E1, and known as the "Yeastward Ho Confectionery". The van was specially designed so that atmospheric conditions would have no bad effects upon the exhibits.

By sampling some of the chocolates it was soon ascertained that the display did not flatter the quality, which was excellent in the extreme. We understand that a stock of the good things referred to is held by Miss Sherwood, Market Square, Bicester.

## 19th June 1959

### BICESTER WATER CRISIS

Bicester is short of water in the middle of one of the hottest and driest spells for years. The shortage is so serious, in fact, that Bicester Council has warned the public to avoid waste and to stop using hose pipes for watering gardens and washing cars.

On the north side of the town, in the Buckingham-Banbury-Brashfield Road area, the situation has already reached crisis point. Householders in the area are confronted daily with low pressure, near-empty tanks and dry taps.

One householder complained to the Council of their being no water available one evening when two of his children were ill. Another resident claimed that when the taps were dry he had to melt ice from the refrigerator in order to boil a kettle for tea. Many housewives in the area have complained of the water being cut when they have been in the middle of their weekly washing day.

Bicester Council's new Surveyor, Mr G. Carline, who took over the post on June 1st, responded to residents' complaints by explaining that the general shortage of water in the town is due to the fact that demand has outstripped supply. Increased building since the war has resulted in hundreds of extra properties being connected to the mains.

At present Bicester has a three-point water supply. Water comes from the Bucknell Road headworks, the British Railways pump in Buckingham Road, and from the River Cherwell at Upper Heyford, which is controlled by the Air Ministry. The daily amount piped from Upper Heyford is limited to 100,000 gallons. This amount, together with the supply from the Bucknell Road works, supplies the main area of the town.

The British Railways pump serves the northern suburbs of the town. A maximum of about 62,000 gallons is being pumped from there daily and until more water is brought into the town the northern suburbs will continue to experience low pressure and shortages.

But, in six month's time it should be solved. Mr Carline

and his department are going ahead with a £30,000 scheme to bring more water from the River Cherwell at Upper Heyford. The plan is to lay a nine-inch main from Bicester to Heyford and so greatly increase the daily supply. Details of the scheme are being placed before Bicester Council and there seems little doubt that they will give it their full support. The cost of the scheme will have to be borne by the ratepayers. So it may mean as much as a 6d rate increase.

In the meantime, the public are being asked to use water with care.

## 25th June 1993

### FUN IN THE SUN



Victorian line-up at Fringford (from left) Alison May, Emily May, Susan Long, Sarah Long and Ellie Long.

From ferrets to face-painting, it was a week-end of fete-full fun for many.

At Fringford's Candleford Fair ferret racing made an impressive return by popular demand after the little creatures were a runaway success last year. Stallholders dressed in Victorian costume re-created the atmosphere of yesteryear and the ferret races brought brisk business from punters. Proceeds

from the look-back-in-time will help local groups.

Meanwhile, the summer fair organised by North Bicester Community Association had youngsters queueing to get their faces painted - and then taking part in a series of races for all ages at the community centre in Keble Road. Money raised will help refurbish the



Gary Venters, painted for pleasure at North Bicester.

It was animal day at Chesterton Primary School's annual summer fair as the thrills and spills of a donkey derby also gave local youngsters an opportunity to take their own pets for the best pet competition.

A display of dog agility added to the animal action - and Fox FM radio station added its mascot to the day's fun by offering a trip in its helicopter for the raffle prize winner.

## Fred Withington

Fred Withington was the son of a parson. After his education at Eton, he became a good amateur jockey. Later, he became a trainer and had success in the 1908 Grand National.

The first running of the Cheltenham Gold Cup took place in March 1924. Trainer Fred Withington of Fringford Lodge, near Stratton Audley, had in his stables a 5 year old horse called Red Splash belonging to Major E H Wyndham, an officer in the Life Guards who lived at Caversfield House.

Fred had entered Red Splash for the Gold Cup; he was only 5 years old, and only carried 11 stone 5 lbs. All the other runners carried 12 stone. Fred Rees was his jockey. On the day of the race Red Splash was 5/1. In a thrilling finish Red Splash won by a neck, winning £680 for Major Wyndham.

- Albert Parker



## Talks Update

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

### Monday 15th July

Julie Ann Godson comes to tell us about **Oxfordshire and the Norman Conquest** of 1066.

### Monday 16th September

Our **AGM**, followed by a talk by our chairman, Bob Hessian.

### Monday 21st October

Liz Woolley returns to tell us about Oxford's suburbs in her talk, **Oxford's Base and Brickish Skirt**.

## Cholera Boy Nearly Buried Alive

In St Edburg's Churchyard there is an old weatherbeaten stone that just about still bears 64 names. The stone, with the names upon it, is a historic record of the lightning cholera plague which scourged Bicester 187 years ago.

The dreaded cholera struck Bicester in 1832, and within a few days 64 people in the town - men, women and children - were dead. Bicester could do little but let the plague take its course.

In those days medical and hospital services were practically non-existent, doctors and nurses were few, and the standards of public hygiene were generally low and near primitive. People who contracted cholera died within a few hours. Terror quickly mounted in the town, and so did the death toll.

But the total of 64 deaths was nearly increased to 65, if not for the remarkable story of a young boy who escaped being buried alive just a few hours before his funeral.

A young boy named John Hudson fell ill with the disease. He collapsed into unconsciousness and was later

certified as being dead by his doctor. The funeral arrangements were made by his family and the boy's body was placed in a coffin.

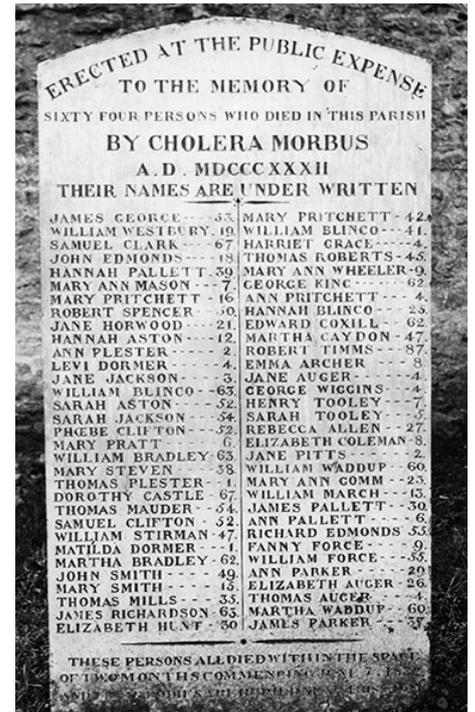
A few hours before the time fixed for the funeral, and before the undertaker had screwed down the coffin lid, the boy's grandmother bent down to kiss her grandson for the last time.

She felt him move.

Quickly the boy was lifted from the coffin and as the hours passed he showed further signs of being very much alive.

Subsequently young John Hudson made a complete recovery from the dreaded cholera and lived a full and active life. As a young man he entered domestic service and travelled hundreds of miles on stagecoaches. For nearly 40 years he worked at the Bicester brewery owned by Charles and William Shillingford, until the firm disbanded in 1891.

Apart from his remarkable escape during the epidemic, John Hudson was the first old-age pensioner in Bicester to receive his pension application form from the Post



The cholera stone, as it once looked. Office.

On 7th June 1909 John Hudson was struck down by a cerebral haemorrhage and died at his home in Manchester Terrace, Victoria Road. He was 78 years of age.

- Matthew Hathaway

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