

From the Chair

Congratulations go once more to Colin Cohen for producing another large, high-quality issue of 224. I want also to thank Norman Stone and Moira Byast for their fascinating notes to the photographs and postcards contained in this edition. They provide excellent examples of just how good a historical source such images can be when intelligently analysed and researched. We are very anxious that any member who can add further information should contact us so that we can incorporate it in a future edition of 224.

Indeed, we would love to receive contributions from members on any relevant historical topic. The newsletter can only survive if Colin receives copy to put in it, so put your fingers to the keyboard! Historical pieces, reminiscences, historic photographs, extracts from old newspapers or other sources can all be considered. If you are unsure about the suitability of a piece that you have it in mind to submit, just have a word with Colin or me.

A Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year to all our readership.

Chris Day

Programme

11 December—Christine Bloxham: Christmas customs

8 January—Charles Tyzack, 'The decline of Wychwood Forest'

12 February—Peter Allen, 'The Cherwell Valley Railway, a social history'

The Society's meetings are held at the Windmill Centre, at 7.30 on the second Wednesday of the month

Deddington and district in postcards



Castle End in the snow

1 It is very difficult to date this photograph. We are standing in Castle Street, in the middle of the road, on a winter's day possibly early morning, or perhaps after a snowfall. Anyway, there are no obvious wheeltracks or footprints. To our right is Castle Lodge, which today guards the entrance to the Castle Grounds, as it has done since the nineteenth century. The stone gatepost, with its four-pediment capstone, is still there, though largely hidden by ivy. Much of the stone wall on the nearside of the lodge was demolished when two post-war houses—Hen Cloud and The Mews House—were built. The empty space on the far side of the Lodge is where Sentry House was built in the late twentieth century. Dead ahead stands Castle End, known at various times as Blounts Farm and the Poplars. This is a building of two halves. On the left we clearly see one of the gables of

Walter Sanders and his confectionery van





3 Chapel Square (above) and Churchill's shop (below)



a handsome seventeenth-century house, three storeys high. Partly obscured by trees, the right hand half looks Georgian, but behind the facelift is a hall-house of the early 1500s. This beautiful photograph is full of atmosphere. Wouldn't it make a good Christmas card?

2 Walter Sanders married Pauline 'Mollie' Weston Wickins in 1929. Six years later they came back from Duns Tew to Deddington and in 1939 they bought The Priory, in Hudson Street. Walter was an enterprising man. He and Mollie travelled round the villages in a horse and carriage selling confectionery retail and also to small shops. He bought the motor vehicle, a bullnosed Morris van, in November 1926 for £30 0s 10d, plus £1 9s 4d motor tax. Walter opened a shop, delivered newspapers, collected,

charged up and returned batteries (weren't these also known as accumulators?), hired out a mobile public address system, ran a dance hall, and, during World War II, learned to identify aircraft to Observer Corps standards. Walter died in 1971. His son Clive took over the business—businesses might be a better word—and still lives in The Priory, the one-time home of Charles Faulkner, antiquarian and museum maker. Clive ran an ice cream parlour, which closed in 1985 and is now May Fu II. Mollie's hundredth birthday falls on 24 January 2003. We wish her a wonderful day of celebration.

3 This photograph was taken through a wide-angle lens and gives the impression that Chapel Square—Tabernacle Square in the 1851 census—is very much wider

than it actually is. On the left, there is a grocer's shop. The partly visible signboard, which may carry the proprietors name, ends with the letters TON. Or could the word be DEDDINGTON? The shop has at different times been a grocer's, butcher's, antique shop and now Centrepoint. The cottage next door is The Nook. From this angle the Wesleyan Church cannot be seen. The other side of the road looks very much as it is today. Dead centre of the picture is Featherston House, formerly The Blocks, a seventeenth-century house altered and partly rebuilt for his own use by H R Franklin in the nineteenth century. The figures in the photograph are interesting: on the left, busy women (full-length skirts) and girls (mid-calf length pinafores) push perambulators, admire babies and no doubt discuss the merits of Colman's Starch. In the right foreground, two men chat. Their body language suggests that they have nothing urgent on their minds.

4 William Churchill's splendid, double-fronted Colonial Meat Stores was in what is now Wychway House. The photograph (early 1900s?) does a hard-selling job. The two men flanking the entrance look reassuringly neat and competent, the signs tell you what brands you could get—Whitbreads Ales, Stouts and Beers, Mazawattee Tea—while the windows suggest an abundance of goods for sale. Note that the wines are foreign (exotic) as distinct from colonial (reliable). Mr Churchill clearly preferred cash customers. Alongside his name he trumpets 'HOUSEHOLD CASH S(TORES)', and a less strident notice argues 'CASH V CREDIT. TRY THE ADVANTAGES WE GIVE FOR CASH'. Contrast this with another well-known local retailer, Ticky Wells, so called because he always gave credit, a boon when times were hard, as they often were.

5 The bikes in the King's Arms photo (*upper right*) would no doubt enable a cycle expert to date this image to within a few years. Harry Davis, the licensee named on the sign, is listed in Kelly's Directory for 1915. The man standing in the doorway, holding a child by the hand, is wearing the kind of clothes that were in use for decades. Around the

time of the second World War, the railings to the left were replaced by petrol pumps, which have long gone. Today, the former King's Arms is The Deddington Arms, and has an extra gable on the left, built in the late twentieth century, alongside the seventeenth-century gables and stone-mullion windows, and sixteenth-century chimney stacks.

6 Fêtes and pageants were a regular feature of life in Deddington between the wars. This photograph of the WI fête was taken at Deddington Manor, now the home of Buffy and Denys Heywood. The woman in the tall conical hat is Mrs Roberts, who owned the Manor, then known as Deddington House. Standing by her left arm is her daughter, Primrose, who is now Mrs Buckell and lives in Liss, Hampshire. Just to the right of them, in the foreground, is Josie Stevens, who lives with her husband Bob in the Hempton Road. Between Josie and Mrs Roberts, and a little farther back, we see Mabel Gilkes, now Mrs Godfrey, of The Paddocks. On the left of the picture, carrying the 'baby' (Josie assures me it was a doll!) is Dora Lines. But who is that behind Dora? And who are the two girls on the far right? It would be good to hear from them, and anyone who was in the pageant, or remembers it—perhaps one of the Rats of Hamelin, all of which were played, of course, by boys.

7 Boys in knickerbockers and Eton collars could indicate that this post-card dates from the early 1900s. The boys are carefully posed and hold their positions well for the relatively long exposure time. Not so the girls. One is crossing the road and while her legs and feet are easily recognisable, the rest is a blur. Over by the furniture shop, next to the Congregational Church, another girl seems to be doing a double take. The buildings shown on the right hand side of the picture, right down to Deddington Manor, look pretty much the same today. On the left of the postcard, dominating the foreground, is the sign of The Volunteer Inn, where Herbert Mason sold Fine Ales and Stouts. Mason was listed in Kelly's Directories for 1891 and 1915 as a beer retailer. Neither mentions The Volunteer, which is, however, named in the 1881 Census, when the proprietor was John Wheeler. The Volunteer was at one



King's Arms public house (top), The WI Fête, 1935: 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' (middle) and High Street to the south west (bottom)



time called The Flying Horse, and more recently, Hotel Russell. It became an antiques shop in the late twentieth century, and is now a pri-

vate house. The timber support for the sign is still there. It would be nice to see it restored and conserved.



High Street, with the back of the card below



A tale of two postcards

Deddington postcard

The left-hand card is a scene of the High Street, looking south, towards Oxford. The stamp and cancellation are still intact, which is quite unusual as often the stamp is removed. This shows that it was posted, January 7th 1907. The halfpenny green stamp of Edward VII is consistent with this date.

The message on the card is interesting. Obviously Kate is anxious to let her teacher know that she got back safely the night before. According to the postmark, she lived in Heyford or nearby.

Does Ivy Cottage still exist? Mrs Fowler, a married woman working (teaching)! Could she have been related to Miss Ruth Fowler, who was described as elderly by Mary Vane Turner in 1932? Miss Fowler had a sweetshop in New Street, and was reputedly the last living person to know the authentic recipe for Deddington Pudding-Pie.

I know that where teachers were scarce, widows, childless or with older children sometimes returned to work. A headmaster might be employed by an education committee, with his wife, as assistant.

This was often the pattern in rural schools. It would be fascinating to know more of the people behind the message.



Clifton: St James' Church

Upper New Street had become High Street by the time of the 1881 census. This postcard is surely later than that. The telegraph pole on the right-hand side of the road, at the

corner of what is now Three Horse-shoes and was Compton's Fish Shop in the first half of the twentieth century, should be a help in dating the scene. Light snow has fallen,

and there are tracks in the road that may have been made by the dog. On the left of the picture there are at least three shops before we get to the corner of Hudson Street, where a woman is pushing a pram. Someone is cycling down Hudson Street, and there is also a bicycle propped up against the second tree. On the far corner of Hudson Street is the gable end of what may have been the stables belonging to the Priory. I think I can just make out more shops as the road continues southwards. On the right hand side stands a boy in shirtsleeves, knickerbockers and cap. Behind him is the biggish house now known as No 1 Grove Cottages. Is that a shop or pub on the corner by Grove Lodge? The Congregational Church, designed by Sulman, dates from 1881. It is one of four public places of worship in the parish that are still used for their original purpose. (A small medieval chapel inside Cas-

Hempton postcard

This time the postmark is unreadable. It was posted in Bloxham, but the date is unclear. The stamp is a George V penny red. These were in circulation from June 1918 to June 1921 and again from May 1922 until the King's death in 1936.

Now, the message. There are two different handwritings on the back of the postcard. That for the address appears to be a more 'educated' writing than that of the message. It looks as though someone has passed on a stamped addressed postcard to another person, to be used in emergencies, or such cases.

The less regular handwriting and the message give rise to an imaginary picture, whereby a 'daily cleaner' is sending a message to her lady employer and saying that she is now unavailable to work as she has another job.

The 'Madam' of 'Dear Madam' seems to indicate something like this. There is another speculation, the signature A H Williams could be male and perhaps was expected to perform some service (chimney sweeping, or such) for Mrs Harley, which he is now having to cancel because he has full time work.

Does anyone know of a Mrs Harley of Barford St Michael, or A H Williams of Bloxham in the same period?

Moira Byast

10



The main road at Hempton, with the back of the card below



tle House, Deddington, is still consecrated.)

9 The chapel of St James (*left*) was designed by Buckleys and built in 1851 on land given by the owner of St James' farm, which can be seen next to the chapel. Cotton Risley paid for it, although the stone was donated by the Cartwrights of Aynho (Northants). The cross on the apex of the chapel's far gable was retained when the building was closed in 1976, and later was given to the Warriner School, Bloxham. In the photograph, one of the Morland Series of postcards, it looks as if the entire congregation lined up for the camera, although since they are mostly young, it could perhaps have been a school occasion. The Chapel is now used for business purposes.

10 Did every shop in the parish sell Colman's Starch? Here, (*top*) in

11



Hempton, with wheel-barrow

Hempton, the shop on the right has quite an array of advertisements, on sheet metal; Lyon's Tea (three times), Lyon's Cocoa and, yes,

Colman's Starch (twice). Yet another bicycle—clearly a popular form of transport in the period covered by

this postcard. Both the shop and its adjacent cottage are built of random rubble-stone, with what looks like a local speciality, tuck pointing. Instead of the usual technique whereby the mortar between the stones is recessed, and shaped to throw off rainwater, tuck pointing projects beyond the stonework. Anywhere else but in the Deddington district, this might be called bad practice. The buildings in the middle distance no longer exist, but St John's Church has been there since 1851, when the Rev'd Wilson of Over Worton designed it and paid for it, while Franklins of Deddington built it. Wilson bought the land with the Rev'd Cotton

Risley, the indefatigable diarist of Deddington.

11 Here, (*on previous page*) the viewpoint is more or less on a level with the thatched barn which is in the middle of the other Hempton picture. St John's Church is the focus of this photograph, and the buildings to the right of it have gone. Was the building whose gable end is seen on the left of centre, the Plough? This was a late eighteenth century inn which was closed in the early twentieth century and has since been demolished. The woman to the right of the wheelbarrow is wearing the kind of clothes that my Great Aunt Polly wore for the

whole of her adult life, from about 1860 to the 1930s, or so I'm told.

The captions to these photographs owe a great deal to Betty and Edmund Pearson, Clive Sanders and Josie and Bob Stevens. Any authenticity my words have is because of their unstinting help. The mistakes are all my own. I'm only sorry that there wasn't more time for talking to them and others who know recent local history because they lived it. I hope that they, and History Society members generally, will feel free to add further information, challenge my assumptions, answer my questions and correct my errors. I won't mind—it's the best way I know to learn.

Norman Stone

Great Tew and the Tew Estate

Great Tew is now a fixture on the tourist trail. It has a strong appeal for those who, as was once mischievously noted, like their villages to nestle and their cottages to peep. It has recently joined the select rank of villages which have a coach park on their outskirts.

Its 'overwhelmingly picturesque appearance' has excited comment from the mid-nineteenth century, and it has frequently been presented as a 'carefully contrived essay in irregular planning and planting'. But its history reveals it as rather more than simply a picturesque estate village.

To characterize Great Tew crudely as an estate or 'closed' village, the complete opposite of an 'open' place such as Deddington, is to do neither place many favours. The trouble, of course, with labels is that they carry with them bundles of assumed characteristics which, while convenient, are likely to hinder us from looking at a place as individual. On an open-closed continuum, Great Tew is towards the closed end, but with anomalies. For one thing, it has lacked for long periods the overbearing presence of a resident lord. For another, nonconformity was prominent there. There were Roman Catholics and Quakers in the parish in the seventeenth century, and Baptists and Primitive Methodists in large numbers in the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, the parish's present appearance is in large part due to the fact that Great Tew has been an estate village almost entirely in single ownership since the mid sixteenth century. Sir Laurence Tanfield carried out extensive enclosure of the fields in the 1620s, and the process was completed by parliamentary enclosure in 1767. The Tanfields were unsympathetic characters: Elizabeth Tanfield's response to villagers protesting about enclosure was that they were 'more worthy to be ground to powder than to have any favour showed them'.

In the limited space available here I want to concentrate on a key, but misrepresented, period in Great Tew's development in the nineteenth century. The effects are still very visible today. Before that, however, it is worth mentioning that as you walk around the village your eye may be drawn towards the considerable attraction of the Falkland Arms. In case there is anyone left who doesn't know, the pub name is not some jingoistic 1980s leftover from the Falklands Campaign. It commemorates Lucius Cary, 'blameless' Lord Falkland, who lived here until his death at the Battle of Newbury in 1643. The witty and cultured circle of friends that gathered here around him and his wife is celebrated in Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*.

In 1800 Great Tew was inherited by

George Stratton, whose father, an Indian nabob, had bought the estate in 1780. The estate was regarded at the time as one of the finest in the county. Enclosure had led to an increase in rents, the total rental bringing in some £4,000. Seduced, however, by the agricultural reformer Arthur Young's opinion that the estate was capable of yet greater improvement, Stratton became involved in a short-lived and extravagant agricultural experiment. The famous landscaper and gardener John Claudius Loudon persuaded him that the estate's value could be more than doubled. Most of the existing tenants were bought out and the estate was divided into two large holdings, one for Loudon himself, the other for someone recommended by him. The new tenants offered rents of £3 an acre, which, if the scheme had worked, would have raised the total rental to £10,000.

Loudon created, at his landlord's expense, a 'ferme ornée', comprising a paper-roofed house, pleasure grounds, an elaborate farmery, and a large mill. Loudon's estimate for the cost of improvements was £4,000, but by 1810 £13,500 had been spent on his farm alone. Moreover, Loudon was unable to sub-let on the expected advantageous terms, and many farms were left untenanted. In 1811 he departed, and in 1815 Stratton, facing heavy losses, put the estate on the market.



Great Tew Park, looking to the south-east

Loudon typically went to some lengths to justify himself, though admitting that the episode was likely to be remembered as a 'ruinous project of wild adventurers'. He claimed to have founded an agricultural college there, but it seems to have amounted to little more than a few pupils staying at his house. He also claimed that serious-minded young Scottish ploughmen had rescued some of Great Tew's natives from the alehouse by demonstrating the virtues of milk, oat-meal, and vegetables.

Loudon's lasting impact was on the landscape, notably extensive planting in the north of the parish. Much of that planting can be seen still as you walk the estate's footpaths. The involvement of so noted a landscaper, however, has given rise to a tenacious myth that he was responsible for landscaping the village. Loudon, an unabashed self-publicist, made no such claims in his detailed accounts of his brief association with Great Tew. Credit for the village's appearance lies, rather, with the estate's purchaser in 1815, Matthew Robinson Boulton, son of the celebrated engineer and industrialist Matthew Boulton of Soho, Birmingham.

Boulton seems originally to have been attracted by the sporting potential of the estate, but he became increasingly involved with the life and appearance of the place. He it was who began to rebuild Great Tew in a consciously picturesque style, employing the architect Tho-

mas Rickman to make designs in 1820. Later, Boulton employed the young architect Thomas Fulljames, son of his agent at Great Tew and Rickman's pupil. In the context of the persistent belief that Loudon's hand is everywhere to be seen in Great Tew, it is worth noting a comment by the antiquarian Sir Thomas Phillips, in a collection in the Bodleian Library: Matthew Boulton, he noted, 'rebuilt the village almost entirely in a very ornamental and singular style'.

What one might call diagnostic features of the rebuilding include the use of sawn softwood for floors and coppice poles for the roofs, stone mullioned windows, drip moulds with large diamond stops, stone door-heads, and elaborate stone porches. It seems likely that in some cases former outbuildings were converted and gaps between cottages infilled to form rows. More generally, you may feel as you look around that the height and scale of many of the cottages are too expansive for typical farmworkers' cottages of the seventeenth century, and there are certain infelicities such as the misplacing of datestones.

Boulton's son, also Matthew, severely altered the village's street plan. The main north-south street formerly ran down from the church into the village. Boulton blocked it in 1855 and built the new road that curves round to the west, around his new manor house. Boulton closed off one or two other streets and built new ones. The village

green was altered by the building of a new school on its south side in 1852. The result of the changes was to divide the village into three or four apparently unrelated groups of houses.

Nevertheless, the village has maintained a reputation for its outstanding appearance, and even its surviving 'plan' was much admired by *Country Life* magazine. The houses and cottages are of the local ironstone, roofed with thatch or stone slate; they stand in box-hedged gardens against a background of large ornamental trees. Some of the houses date partly or wholly from the seventeenth century, but the scale of nineteenth-century renovation in traditional style or reusing old materials makes identification uncertain.

Both Boultons were enthusiastic tree planters, in the village and in the parish as a whole. You will note as you look out beyond the village that the whole landscape has a park-like appearance. The extent of the planting met with disapproval from some agricultural improvers.

When I first came to Oxfordshire twenty-five years ago, the village was partly derelict and its population in decline. From 1914 until 1962 the estate had been in the neglectful keeping of the Public Trustee. In 1962 it was inherited by Major Eustace Robb. His policy was to revive the estate and to restore village properties for families employed locally, thus preserving a 'rural community of rural workers'. The unusual social structure of Great Tew, the absence of commuters, weekenders, or retired professionals aroused comment as early as the 1950s, but it was the continuing decay of some of the cottages which c1970 brought the local authority to question the nature and timing of the estate's policy.

Thereafter, Great Tew became the subject of local and national controversy, in which many of the issues of rural planning were raised. In 1978 the village was declared a conservation area. In 1980 the estate began at last to sell off houses. Prices shot up and Great Tew started to become what Major Robb had feared, a village in which local people could no longer afford to live. It

has not, however, become a deserted commuter village. Nor is any daytime busyness due solely to the presence of visitors. Talking to villagers to-day, one is told that it is still dominated by families working in and around it. Many people work at least partly from home. There is plenty of part-time work available locally, and that suits some, who can combine part-time work, for example, with the school run. The school, significantly, is bursting at the seams. Few such families work on the land, of course. But there has been a revival locally of crafts such as stonemasonry, thatching, and ironworking.

There is much else to Great Tew, of course, but I hope that our History Society members, who doubtless visit it regularly, will find interesting this lesser known but important period in the parish's history. Anyone who wants to read a detailed history of the place should look at *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, Vol 12, pp 223ff.

Chris Day

Colin Cohen

The Society is most grateful to Colin Robinson for providing most of the photographs, without which this issue of 224 would not have been possible,

Can you help?

Bimney Mead

Deborah Hayter, who is known to some of our members from her recent enjoyable course 'The Seventeenth-Century Village', held in Bloxham, writes: I found a reference to Bimney Mead amongst the Christ Church documents. Bimney Mead (it would be low-lying water meadow or hay meadow) belonged to the Christ Church manor of Deddington and Clifton, but it was in Northamptonshire.

I am interested in examples of shared meadow or pasture (shared between different vills), or detached portions of parishes where they appear to be the result of one parish hanging on to a particular resource in another parish. These are probably relics of much earlier patterns of land-use, where several communities shared a common resource such as hay-meadow, wood or pasture. In the case of Bimney Mead, as it lies in a different county to its manorial centre, it is probably part of, or significant of, a larger territorial grouping pre-dating the county boundary.

I want to know where it actually was. Any light which can be shed by the local historians of Deddington will be gratefully received.

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The Tew Estate, reduced from a 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1885



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