

From the Chair

This September sees the start of our fourth season, which will offer a familiar mix of speakers and activities. It will be a great help if members can recommend to us speakers that they have come across in another context: some of our most successful evenings have come about as a result of recommendations. I hope that this year we can make some progress with the small research groups that should form the backbone of a society such as ours. I feel that the society's vitality will be greatly enhanced if a proportion of its members are actively engaged in researching the history of our community. Buildings, images, reminiscences all need to be recorded and analysed. If anyone has an historical interest, do please let us know. The ultimate aim, of course, will be for members to report back at some of our monthly meetings and, eventually, publish their findings. Perhaps one of our meetings each year should be devoted to brief reports by those who have been undertaking work on any aspect of the history of this area?

Finally, can I ask you all to bring along friends and neighbours who you think might enjoy the society's activities? We are lucky enough to enjoy healthy attendances but we need the ideas (and the subs!) that a steady influx of new members brings.

Chris Day

Why 224?

For the curious: 224, the title of this newsletter, is taken from the sheet number used by the draughtsmen of the Ordnance Survey in the early years of the 19th century to identify the individual drawings made by the surveyors for the first edition one inch maps. For more information see 224 March 2000.

Sir Frederick Morton Eden's *State of the poor*

Sir Frederick Morton Eden published his remarkable three-volume survey, entitled *The State of the Poor*, in 1797. The book's full title is *The State of the Poor, or an History of the Labouring Classes in England from the Conquest to the present period; in which are particularly considered their domestic economy with respect to diet, dress, fuel and habitation; and the various plans which, from time to time, have been proposed and adopted for the relief of the poor*. Besides being a political economist and writer, Eden was a man of business: he was co-founder of the Globe Insurance Company. He was drawn to study the conditions of the labouring classes by concern at the very high prices of 1794-95. His was one of the first of a great series of surveys during the late 18th and 19th centuries investigating just about every aspect of life in this country. He and a paid investigator carried out much research, but most of his information came from local correspondents, usually clergymen.

We are fortunate that Deddington was chosen for a case study. Below we reproduce the text of the Deddington entry. A few words of introduction may help readers make the most of it. In the late 18th century the generally compassionate and benign attitude adopted towards the poor during the preceding period of affluence hardened as expenditure began to rise. The Napoleonic Wars produced shortages and high prices. Wages were static and, especially in the agrarian south of the country, lagged further and further behind inflation. The resulting unemployment (or, more precisely, underemployment) led to a sharp increase in poor relief and a financial crisis in many places. Relief at this time was not a national responsibility. Each parish was responsible for its own poor. On top of it all, the poor harvests of 1794 and 1795 led to shortages of basic

foodstuffs—especially bread, which was the dietary staple. This, then, was the background to Eden's survey.

There are a few specifics in the survey that require explanation. Note the reference to 'culinary contrivances': Eden felt that with greater imagination poor families could manage their food supply much better. The distress of the poor was commonly blamed on their own fecklessness. Eden refers to 45 acres of common in Deddington. Families might keep one or two animals and gather fuel there. This provided an important supplement to inadequate wages. *Tithes*: they were payable on all produce and belonged in Deddington to the Dean and Chapter of St George's Chapel, Windsor, whose farmer, unusually at this time, collected them in kind rather than in cash. *Friendly societies* were one way in which the poor could help themselves. Contributions were paid 'into the box', and sick

Programme

2001-02

We are still working on the full programme for this season, and details will be published in the next issue of 224, but our programme for the rest of the year is:

12 September: David Eddershaw, **Oxfordshire in the Civil War**

10 October: Donald Lane, **The History of Public Health Provision**

14 November: Barry Davis, **Bells and Bellringers**

12 December: **Christmas Social**

Monthly meetings are normally held at the Windmill Centre, at 7.30, on the second Wednesday.

members receiving payments from the society were said to be 'on the box'. The very poorest did not benefit, for they could not afford even the modest subscription of 8d a month. *The Act* was an Act of 1793 providing for the registration of friendly societies. *The poor are farmed* means that a contractor undertook to maintain the destitute in the parish workhouse, as a business. In exchange he would be allowed to keep the profits of their labour. The workhouse is now Quinke House, towards the south-east end of New Street. *Roundsmen* were out-of-work labourers sent to the parish's farmers on a rota basis. The parish subsidised their wages. *The common field*: until 1808 Deddington's fields were unenclosed. Farmers' land was scattered in strips across the parish, intermixed with the strips of other farmers. Decisions on cropping and grazing were necessarily communal. There was a great drive under way to enclose land and redivide it in consolidated blocks. The result in the long term tended to be for small farmers to sell out to the larger and for labourers to lose their rights of common. The situation in Deddington was exacerbated by the fact that it was an 'open' parish (a multitude of freeholders, no single landlord in control), taken advantage of by the proprietors of 'close' parishes (eg North Aston, Aynho) who strictly controlled the number of cottages in their own parishes. They drew on Deddington's surplus labour at harvest time and turned it off again afterwards. His text follows.

Chris Day

'Deddington contains by estimation 4,000 acres. 102 houses pay tax, the number exempt near 300. There are 10 ale-houses, a few years ago 21. Farms are from £15 to £315 a year, chiefly £100. There are 45 acres of common. Tithes are farmed at £750 a year, and taken in kind. Prices of provisions: Beef and mutton and veal, 5d per lb; bacon, 10d, butter, 9d and 10d; milk, 1d. the pint; bread, 1s 10d. the half-peck loaf. Common labourers earn 7s a week in winter, 8s in spring, and 12s in hay and corn harvest. Women are paid 6d. a day for weeding corn, 8d for haymaking, and 1s in corn harvest, without victuals. There are two friendly societies with 120 members each. They



This postcard—which dates from about 1910 and belonged to the late Fred Deely—shows the Plough Inn (now a private house) nearer the camera, and beyond that what is now Quinke House.

'ALL WHICH said property was formerly described as ALL THOSE five messuages or tenements with the yards gardens out-buildings and appurtenances thereto belonging situate and being in New Street Deddington in the County of Oxford and formerly used as a workhouse for the said Parish of Deddington such messuages or tenements being bounded on the North West side thereof by a messuage or tenement known as 'Lime Cottage' New Street aforesaid... ' [Extract from a deed.]

Does any reader know anything of the history of this building pre-1835?

pay 8d into the box monthly, allow 6s week to sick members during the first twelve months and 3s a week after that period. Both societies have taken the benefit of the late Act. The Poor are farmed in the parish Workhouse for £1,000 a year. The parish, however, defrays all expenses arising from bastardy, small-pox, broken bones, dislocations and law concerns [*sic*]. The number of inmates in July, 1795, was 18. Out pensioners receive about £7 a week, besides which the roundsmen (or labourers who cannot get employment) are often chargeable and supported by the parish. In winter their number is sometimes 40 or 50; the parish employs them in stone quarries in the neighbourhood. No regular bill of fare is observed in the Workhouse. The Poor were not all farmed till the present yearh (1795), but were chiefly supported by weekly pensions. In general, however, about 20 persons have been maintained in the Workhouse, under a contractor who was allowed 2s 6d a head for their weekly maintenance. The expenditure on the Poor in 1795 was £1,343 odd. No account of receipts or expenditure before 1786, when the expenditure

was £1,126 odd, could be found, but it is said that for some years before, the rates were as high as in that year. An old farmer adds that he had heard his father say that 55 years ago he paid £3 12s Poor's Rates for a farm which now pays £26, and that in 1740, the year alter the great frost, 9 galls of wheat at one time cost 11s, but fell in a few months to 3s. In the country between Oxford and Deddington the rates are from 1s 3d to 3s 6d in the pound, in several parishes which are almost entirely agricultural. The high rates in this parish (6s in 1794, and 6s 6d in 1795, on nearly the full rental) are ascribed to the common field, of which the land principally consists, whereas the neighbouring parishes have been inclosed many years, and many small farms in them have been consolidated, so that many small farmers with little capital have been obliged either to turn labourers or procure small farms in Deddington or other parishes that possess common field. Besides this, the neighbouring parishes are, many of them, possessed by a few individuals, who are cautious of permitting new-corners to obtain a settlement. The general opinion

here is that canals are a great injury to the Poor, by enabling farmers to send their corn abroad. Such erroneous ideas do not merit a refutation, but the farmers are very apprehensive that they will produce serious consequences. A boat load with flour was lately seized by the populace, but was restored on the miller's promising to sell it at a reduced price. According to the present price of bread, a family here which consists of a man, wife and three children (the eldest 4 years old), will expend in bread alone £16 8s in a year. The whole earnings of the man, provided he continues in health and can obtain constant work, will not exceed £22 15s, and as his wife and children can earn nothing, there will only remain £5 17s to provide him and them with lodging, fuel, clothes, every other necessary of life, and his deficiencies must be made up by the parish.

Some tribulations for Methodists

This account of non-conformist life in Deddington and the Barfords comes from 'An Account of the Persecution at Barford, and Deddington, near Banbury, Oxfordshire' in The Methodist Magazine for February 1800. The magazine was first published in London by the Rev John Wesley.

'In the spring of 1798, Charles Leonard, and his brother, Members of our Society at Heath [probably Hethe, 8 miles ESE of Deddington], removed from that place, to Deddington; where they found the generality of the people of the town and neighbourhood, much addicted to drunkenness, and other concomitant vices. As soon as our friends saw the deplorable state of the people, they were moved with compassion, and reasoned with them on the Necessity of Repentance, and a total change of heart and life, in order to obtain future salvation. A few of the inhabitants attended to what was spoken to them; and began to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, by ceasing to do evil and learning to do well.

Our friends immediately began prayer-meetings; which drew great members to hear; so that the houses where they were held, were gener-

ally well filled. This being noised abroad through the neighbouring villages; many of the people, led by curiosity, came to hear for themselves; and being convicted of the truth of what they heard, they were induced to invite our friends to come and hold prayer-meetings in several of the adjacent places. At Clifton, about a mile and a half from Deddington, there was, for some time, a very promising prospect; till the rioters assembled, and abused our friends in such manner, that they thought it most prudent to discontinue the meeting.

At Barford, another village, about two miles from Deddington, the Lord was pleased to bless the prayer-meeting, so that several of the inhabitants were awakened to a sense of their sinful state, and began earnestly to seek the Lord. Hearing, soon after, that they had gotten a house licensed, and wanted to have preaching there, on 16th of October, at their earnest desire, I visited them, and after preaching, formed them into a society. A class was also formed at Deddington, about the same time; and the work went forward at both places; more and more being convinced of the error of their ways; and the necessity of inward and outward holiness.

But the adversary of souls, seemed now to be alarmed for the safety of his kingdom. He saw himself in danger of losing some of his most faithful subjects;—instigated by him, they commenced a violent persecution against us. When I came to Barford on the 8th January, 1799, I found that the mob had formed a design of making an attack upon us that night. Their plan it seems, was, to come in a body, and drag me out of the place. But having let their scheme take wind, it was soon known in the neighbourhood; and, at the time of preaching, a considerable number of persons, otherwise, no friends to the Methodists, came from the adjacent villages, on purpose to protect me; saying, "They would not suffer a stranger to be abused in such manner."

This, for the present, disconcerted the plan of the rioters. On that day month I was prevented from going. On the fortnight between, when Mr Dean was there, being moon-light

evenings, and consequently, not so fit for their purposes, they did not attempt anything of consequence, but contented themselves with making a noise. But on the 5th of March, in the afternoon, as I entered the place, there were somewith [sic] bells in their hands ready to salute me; which I found, was also a signal to collect their associates. Some time before preaching, a numerous mob assembled about the house, with bells, horns, an old kettle for a drum, etc. The Society, and a few others being met together, I began the service with prayer, which the mob suffered us to finish without much disturbance. But when we began to sing, the floods lifted up their voice. The shouts, etc., of the mob, were so loud, that my voice was lost; and after waiting some time, we were obliged to break up the meeting; but none of the congregation durst venture out, as the mob surrounded the door of the passage, pouring out the most horrible oaths and imprecations, mixed with threatenings, against us. Dirt, stones, and snow-balls, were plentifully thrown into the house. They had also prepared a kind of wooden horse, for the purpose of carrying John Lenard to the Bridge, in order to throw him in the river. They continued to keep us prisoners, till finding they could not accomplish their design of getting us out of the house, they were compelled by the severity of the cold, to quit their post; and between one and two o'clock in the morning they were so much dispersed, that our friends were enabled to return. home without molestation.

On the Sunday, March the 10th, while John Leonard the Leader was speaking to the people, the mob again assembled They entered the house, dragged him from among the people, and forced him to go to a deep pond near the village, into which they violently threw him; and kept him there a considerable time, throwing dirt and mud in his face. Not content with this, when they suffered him to get out, they forced him to go to Hempton, another village about a mile from Barford, where was another deep, filthy pond, into which they threw him with violence; treating him as before; and with wanton barbarity, repeated this twice. When they had

thus satiated their brutal rage, and seeing him almost exhausted, they permitted him to go home. His health has suffered considerably by this barbarous treatment

The mob at Deddington did not come far short of their neighbours at Barford, in opposition to the Truth. Charles Leonard, having had his house licensed for preaching, on Sunday March 3, Mr James Ward, one of our Local Preachers, went over in order to preach. During the sermon, the mob assembled; part of them entered the house, and insulted both the preacher and congregation, so that he was obliged to discontinue the service. After violently pushing and jolting him and his friends, mixed with oaths and imprecations, with a plentiful shower of stones, dirt, etc, they pelted them out of the town.

On Wednesday, March 13th, we applied to the Justices' Meeting, for that hundred. There was then present only one Magistrate, who candidly heard our depositions, and issued out a warrant to summon the rioters, to appear at the next meeting, which was on the 27th. They accordingly appeared, attended by their friends and employers. So sure were they of gaining the day, that, according to their own confession, they brought their bells, &c in their pockets, in order to insult us on our return home. They brought with them a person who "did himself the honour to undertake their cause!" However, the worthy Magistrate who sat upon the bench acted with his former candour and impartiality; and the guilt of most of the rioters was so clearly and fully proved by the witnesses, that, on their refusing to submit to any reasonable terms, they were bound over to the sessions, which were to be held at Oxford on the ensuing Tuesday. But before the time came, perceiving themselves to be on the wrong side, they were glad to employ a friend to make it up for them. That gentle-

man wrote to our Attorney, and likewise to our friends, begging pardon in the name of the rioters promising never to molest us any more. Upon which the following terms were agreed to, viz to pay three Guineas for the Deddington rioters, and eight Guineas for those at Barford; which together made a sum, nearly, but not quite adequate to the expences [sic] we had been at on the occasion. Since which, our friends, who before could not meet together but at the hazard of their lives, have been, able to assemble in quietness; and, although the persecution seemed to cast a damp on the work of God for a time, yet, before I left the Circuit, the work in both places, appeared to be again in a promising condition.

My design in requesting this Narrative to be inserted in the Methodist Magazine, is to prevent ignorant persons in other parts of the Nation, from being seduced by wicked and designing men, to commit crimes, which might not only involve them in heavy expences, but even endanger their liberty and lives, should the laws be rigorously [sic] put in execution against them. That there are persons, who neither fear God, nor honour the King, is a fact but too well known, and much to be lamented; but it is astonishing, that there should be found, in this enlightened age, men of principles so base, and of dispositions so cruel and diabolical, that they are not content with persecuting persons of a religious character, with lies and slanders of their own invention; but in direct violation of all Laws, human and divine, excite their poor ignorant neighbours to riots, and acts of wanton cruelty! And what are the crimes which these rioters and their crafty instigators, lay to the charge of the Methodists? Why,—they assemble together two or three times a week for public prayer,—to hear the Word of God,—and to exhort each other faithfully and diligently to discharge the duty

they own to God and Man! —It is however happy for us, and happy for the Nation in general, that there are wise discerning Magistrates, who clearly see the dangerous consequences to the public at large, should they permit rioters, under the pretence of persecuting the professors of Religion, to exercise their natural brutishness and ferocity. When reforming mobs, either in Church or State, are suffered to establish themselves, and become habituated to atrocious deeds, it is not easy to predict where the mischief will end. It is not improbable, that when they have satiated themselves, in afflicting and tormenting an harmless, unoffending people, they may then turn their weapons upon those who instigated and initiated them into the practice of wickedness.' W H

At this time the Barford house of George Nelson was licensed for Methodists. In 1819 they moved to Joseph Lovell's house and in 1832 to Thomas Lovell's. The present Chapel was not built until 1840. The current Woodworm Records studio [perhaps better known as the home of Fairport Convention] was built in 1838 and is shown as 'Baptist Chapel [General]' on the 25 inch survey in 1881, before becoming a Reading Room and now a recording studio.

We are grateful to Peter Forsaith, Methodist Heritage Co-ordinator at Westminster College, for identifying 'W H' as William Holmes who was Superintendent of the Oxfordshire Circuit, 1799-1800, and died in 1833—and to member Alan Maddison for drawing our attention to an edited version of this article.

As mentioned on page 1, we would be most grateful for readers' comments on 224, or for any contributions. We hope shortly to publish an issue devoted to Deddington maps from the nineteenth century

If undelivered please return to: Deddington & District History Society, c/o 37 Gaveston Gardens, Deddington OX15 0NX. 224 is the newsletter of the Deddington & District History Society, published three times a year and distributed free to members.

The Society meets on the second Wednesday of the month during the season, normally at the Windmill Centre in Deddington. Membership £8/14 pa single/couples, or £3 per meeting at the door.

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