

David Pannett's History of Bicton part 33

Let there be light (some seasonal observations)

Flying over Europe on a clear night is quite an experience as the 'map' below is picked out by lights. Venice is clearly visible against its dark lagoon, while in northern France the glow of Paris can be seen from far off. Nearer home, the 'greenhouse' roofs of the Milton Keynes shopping centre pour vast amounts of light into the night sky. Back home in Bicton, the lights of Shrewsbury can be detected in the eastern sky and there are even streetlamps in the village.

Today we take such electric light for granted, but the oldest inhabitants can remember a different world. Once there was real darkness at night (as it had to be in the wartime blackout) before electricity reached the village in the 1930s. The 'national grid' and larger power stations had only been developed in the 1920s and naturally served the main towns initially, often replacing local systems and gas lighting (old Buildwas power station was built in 1932). Rural areas remained longer with candles and oil lamps, not unlike those illustrated by the T.V. 'Victorian Farm.'

For centuries candles have been made from tallow, animal fat, with finer quality versions incorporating beeswax and vegetable oils. Being thus almost a food related product, candles were handled by grocers. Locally, when James Morris of Ruyton was apprenticed to a Shrewsbury grocer, he realised that they could be an important aspect of the trade. When he then set up his own business in 1869 it included a candle factory in Frankwell and in this way the well known Morris Company was born.

Vegetable oils had also been used in lamps but in the latter years of the 19th century American paraffin (from mineral oil) became available. This in turn stimulated the manufacturer of suitable lamps of all kinds. In this way the Morris company became involved in the oil trade which later led to the blending of lubricants for the new motor trade. The rest is another local story!

From now on the provision of oil and lamps became more appropriate

for the hardware rather than the grocery trade and was therefore taken up by the Birch family of Roushill in 1909. Their delivery service also covered Bicton, where some local smallholders and traders also held stocks for those who missed the van.

Once the village was finally connected to the system, there could be electric light and, since then, an increasing number of household gadgets. At the same time essential services such as mains water and later sewerage systems could reach the area since they were so dependent on electric pumps.

The downside of all this has been the spread of 'light pollution', whereby streetlights etc., obscure our appreciation of the natural night sky. Today amateur astronomers seek the Brecon Beacons and the forests of Galloway in order to escape it. The moon, planets and star patterns were once important to early religions and the Christmas story includes those three wise men seeking guidance from them. Ironically the Christian Church discouraged astrology from then on and replaced the winter solstice celebrations with Christmas. Nevertheless strange events were still noted in the sky over the years. Then many were a mystery, but some we now understand better.

These include those recorded in the 16th century chronicles of Shrewsbury:

October 1564 "was seen ⁱⁿ the element many fiery impressions... all the north parts seem covered with flames of fire... staying for most part of an hour"

It was obviously the 'aurora borealis' or Northern Lights, normally only visible in polar regions. They were also noted in 1573 - 5 and again 1581 - 1584, each time near the autumn or spring equinoxes, October and March. Then . . . , no more sightings that century. What did this all mean?

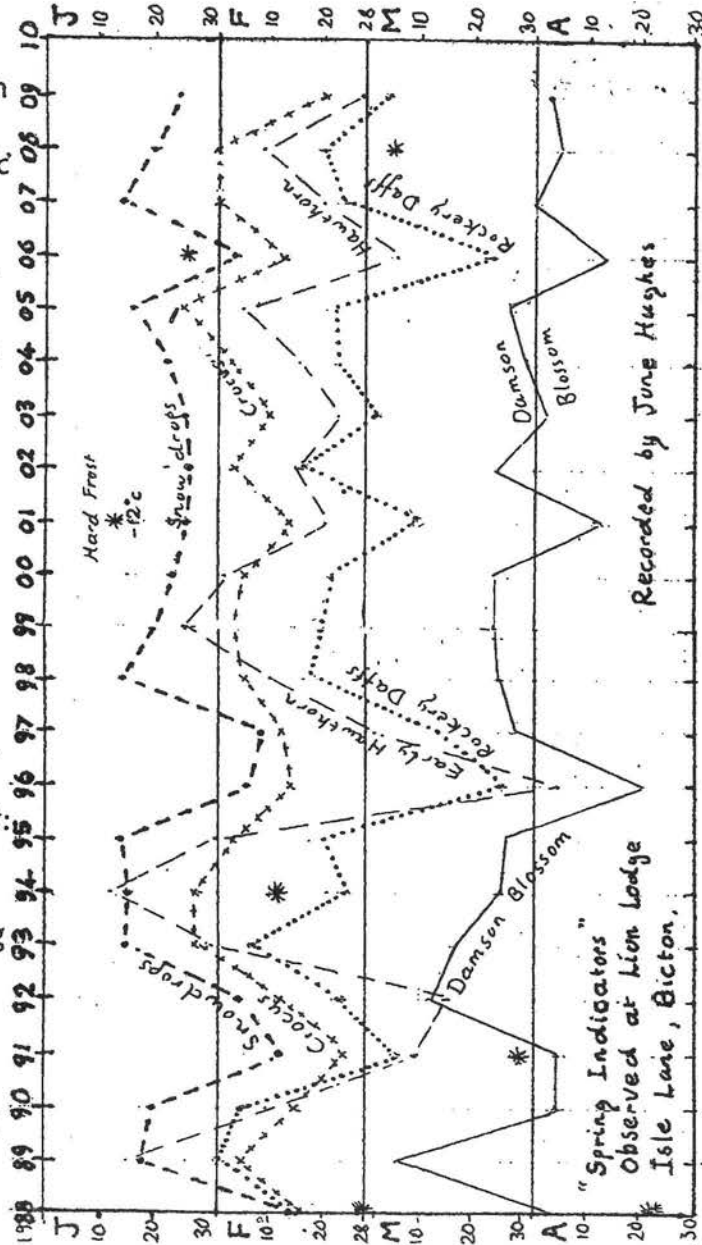
The aurora is caused by charged particles from the sun interacting with the upper atmosphere. Normally the earth's magnetic field deflects them towards the poles, but a strong 'solar flare' can burst through to effect

have become fewer as the Little Ice Age fades away!

Records and tree rings both then and now show how weather has varied so much from year to year, that general trends cannot be detected until several years have passed. One measure of variability can be the dates when flowers open each year. June

Hughes has noted these in Bicton for the last 21 years and, when plotted as a graph, they suggest a rhythmic pattern of changing Spring temperatures, but no overall change since 1988. You can add your observations for this year! The regular rhythm, which may well relate to the behaviour of ocean currents and cycles of solar activity, already suggest that 2010 should start cool. Not even the Met office predicted how cool!.

This leads to a final political comment: King Canute is often dismissed as fool for trying to stop the rising tide, but in reality he was a wise ruler demonstrating to his followers the limits to his power over natural forces. This message is still relevant today.



February 2010
No 523

offprint

Bicton

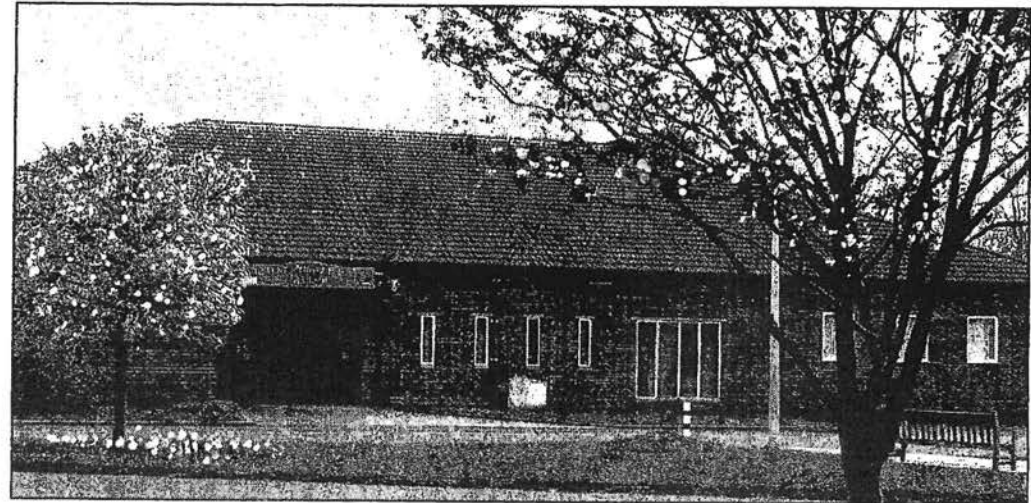
David Pannett's
History of Bicton part 34

Village

News

www.bictonvillage.co.uk

'Which way the Weather?'



David Pannett's History of Bicton part 34

'Which way the Weather?'

"If you do not know history, you cannot understand the present, nor plan for the future"— Helmut Kohl

Wise words from a German politician caught up in the county's recent history. Today non-stop discussion of climate change seems to involve a lot of future planning based on computer models, without reference to history. We should do our bit to correct the balance!

On the long-term geological timescale, the earth is currently in a 'cool' period caused by the movement of the continents, which has left Antarctica isolated with an ice cap at the south pole, while northern continents restrict warm water access to the Arctic Ocean. In between, chemical weathering of recently elevated mountains has been removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere faster than volcanoes are replacing it. This has allowed the regular variations in the earth's orbit to trigger a series of 'Ice Ages'. In the past two million years our local climate has been 80% cold and only 20% mild, including our current 'inter glacial period'. There is no geological or astronomical reason to say this pattern will not continue for the next few million years!

Within our current mild period there have been several minor variations over ten thousand years. The 'Bronze Age', for instance, was especially warm and dry in Europe, allowing farming to spread into upland areas, such as Dartmoor and the Scottish highlands and nearby Stapeley Hill. Locally, some wet hollows dried out curtailing the growth of peat.

After about 1200BC, however the 'Iron Age' climate became cooler and wetter, so that larger peat areas grew again, expanding into the adjacent forests such as at Whixall and the Scottish Highlands. The larger population was now more stressed, leading to more warfare, while under cloudy skies, religious observance shifted from viewing the heavens to revering the woodland and water features (we still celebrate with holy and mistletoe and throw coins in a fountain)

Weather was rather mixed in the Roman period, but gradually returned to the warmer drier conditions afterwards. As the weather systems continued to shift, Vikings colonised Iceland and Greenland,

while in mainland Europe agriculture and settlement flourished as never before. Conditions to the south, however, became more stressful and perhaps led to a religious revival rooted in traditional desert culture, which is still with us today.

In northern Europe more land was brought into cultivation' (with eroded soil finishing up on river floodplains) and towns like Shrewsbury expanded, especially after the Norman conquest.

In the fourteenth century, however the 'Little Ice Age set in, bringing poor harvests, famine and diseases, including the bubonic plague. Loss of population undermined the old feudal systems helping to change the 'Middle Ages' into the 'Modern World'. The Bicton area provides examples illustrating this and will be discussed further some other time. A Shrewsbury Chronicler recorded extremes of weather, both good and bad in the sixteenth century (Jan 09). At the end of the 1650 Humphrey Sandford of the Isle, during a dispute with his neighbour over Rossall Heath, (Oct 08) also felt moved to record the very disappointing weather on the back of the legal documents.

January: very hard frost

February: moist weather with rain.

March: winds and storms with rain

April: fair sunshine weather

May: a little frost and sunshine weather with wind

June: Fair bright sunshine days, a little frost.

July: a hard frost dark and cloudy all day

August: a hard hoar frost

September: snow and frost

October: hard frost and snow

November: hard frost and snow lying on the ground

December: frost and some snow

How such poor weather influenced the politics of the Civil War and Commonwealth is not clear. In the following century poor harvests in France certainly caused civil unrest, which led to the revolution when Marie Antoinette suggested the peasants should eat 'cake', meaning 'oat cake', not the Mr Kipling type, since oats are more tolerant of damp weather than bread wheat; i.e. a tactless but logical remark. There were many more examples of extreme weather during this period, but they

the old disused Bicton church at the top of Bicton Lane. Then as elder brother Folliot took over, Richard married and moved to 'Udlington Lodge', now to be known as plain Udlington.

Richard, by now a successful solicitor in Shrewsbury, with offices in College Hill, had the resources to modernise the house, more by adding on than knocking down. The old villa with its rougher local bricks still peeps out between the additions with the smoother factory made bricks and fine lime joints. Typical Edwardian stained glass windows boldly display the Sandford boars head crest.

The stable block and grounds were also improved. The new driveway swept around the wide lawn, the scene of many a summer fete for the local community. (related by Dorothy Lewis) They were the highlight of the year for the village children. His wife Amy Constance Louise was an All England Archery champion, and the lawn was again used for tournaments.

As was typical of the times the household required several staff which in the 1920's included two Edwards sisters from Shrawardine, Edith and Olive who married local farmer James Paddock becoming mother of Mary Fowles Old School House and Jim Paddock of the White House. This was a typical situation of many local families at the time. (cf Lewis Dec '08) Jean Jones of Horton Lodge Cruckton was similar. Her grandfather was gardener at Udlington and met her grandmother headmistress of Bicton School.

With a comfortable style of living and 'long life' genes Richard survived a lot longer than the Pritchards, dying in his eighties. His wife survived him and continued to be involved in the local community. After the Sandfords the house 'Udlington' appeared to have suffered some neglect with a succession tenants. Morris Care has now brought it back to life and renamed it Isle Court.

David Pannett's History of Bicton part 35 'The Isle Court'

One recent development in Bicton has been the opening of the ISLE COURT Nursing Home by Morris Care.

Over the years Morris and Company have shrewdly adapted to changing market opportunities (candles and oil Jan,10) and involvement in care for the elderly reflects the demand posed by our aging population.

In Shrewsbury the company has earned a good reputation for the quality of its buildings, respecting the old while adding the new and Isle Court is within this tradition. It is a tasteful adaptation of an existing site with its own interesting history.

At the enclosure of Bicton Heath in 1768, Richard Crowther was allotted a small patch adjacent to his property here. The pattern of 'old enclosures' also suggests that they may have originally been taken out of the heath at some earlier unknown date. They include uneven ground, a 'peat' moss and are even crossed by the Bicton - Udlington township boundary, all of which are appropriate to this background.

The first clear map in 1812 shows this small farm with house and barn owned and occupied by Thomas Hitchen. Other documents suggests he was still here in 1824, but by 1843 John Strange had taken over and the tithe map shows a new replacement house nearer the lane.

About this time it was not clear in the records who was actually living here, since references to Udlington could have also refer to the adjacent estate and more often no separate name was given. As the century progressed, however. It acquired the name of 'Udlington Villa' when occupied by the Pritchards and the picture became much clearer. +

By 1828, Daniel Pritchard had ^{taken over his father's} started a grocery and drug business in Dogpole. Sometime before about 1850 he married Lucentia with whom he had two children, Edward in 1851 and Jane in 1852. This was a small

+ Trade directories and census records

family by Victorian standards, perhaps because of Lucentia's age, 37 in 1850.

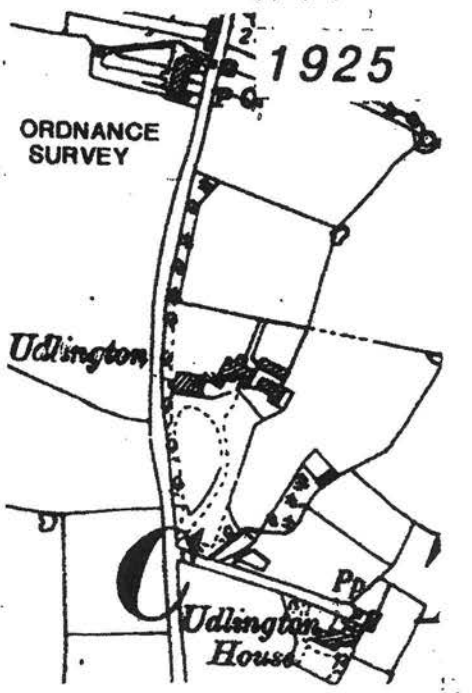
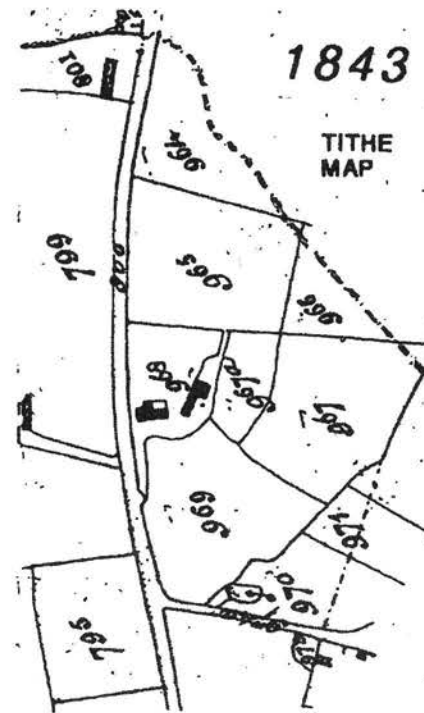
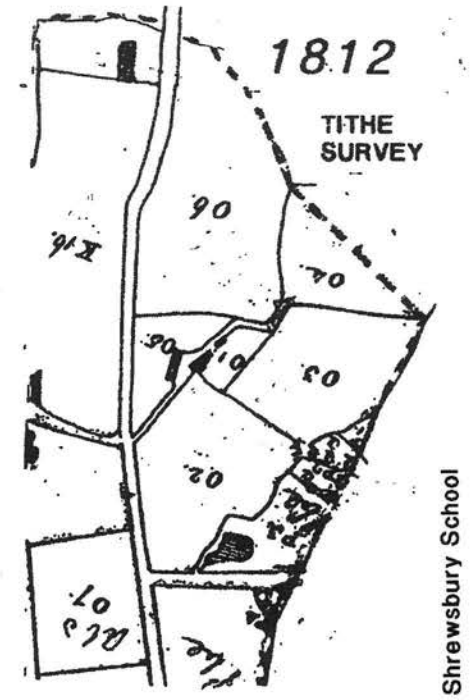
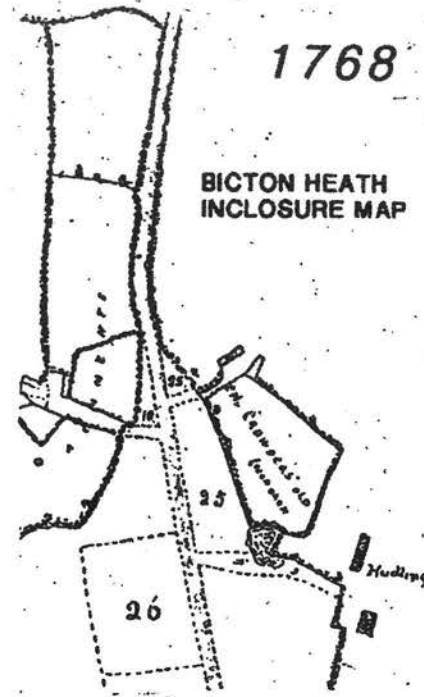
No doubt they first lived over the shop, but by 1861 they moved here to Uddington. This was part of the trend during the nineteenth century for town centre business people to live in such 'villas' in the outer suburbs, enjoying some of the pleasures of country life. Soon after, however, in 1863 Daniel died aged 54, leaving Lucentia to run the business. Then by 1881 Edward was old enough to take over, while his mother looked after their little farm at the 'villa' with the help of two servant girls.

One feature of the shop trade, much discussed in the nineteenth century, was the curse of very long hours. Even the getting an agreed half day closing on Thursday afternoon was eventually only helped by the need to allow workers to attend the military drill, when there was fear of a French invasion. So many customers also worked long hours and only had time and cash in the evenings, forcing the shops to stay open even longer. The impact on the health of shop workers was obvious and it is no surprise that Edward had closed the business by 1885 and was dead by 1890 at the young age of 38, by which time his aged mother had probably died.

By co-incidence, while all this was going on, James Morris was starting up his own grocery business in Shrewsbury which led to the creation of Morris Company (Jan '10)

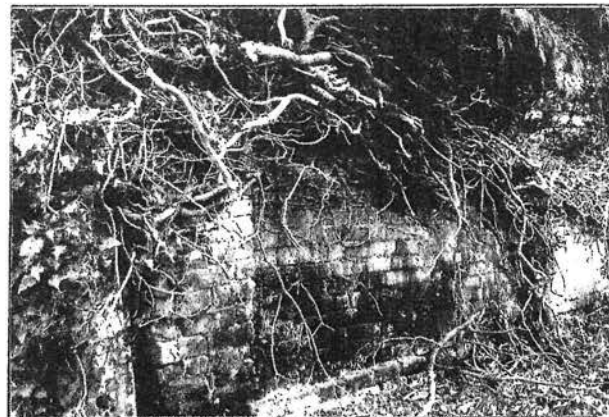
Uddington Villa now had a succession of new occupants starting with a Mrs Rigby; later Edward Pugh, a farmer, perhaps a tenant of the Oxon Estate, who named it 'Uddington Lodge'.

Meanwhile, the next chapter in the story was developing nearby at the Isle, where Richard Sandford younger son of Humphrey Sandford, was gaining qualifications as a solicitor, very much in the family tradition. In 1901 he was still single and living at home at the age of 37, but soon after, it was all change at the Sandford household. Humphrey died in 1902 and was the last family member to be buried in the old family vault in



Shrop. Archives

Shrewsbury School



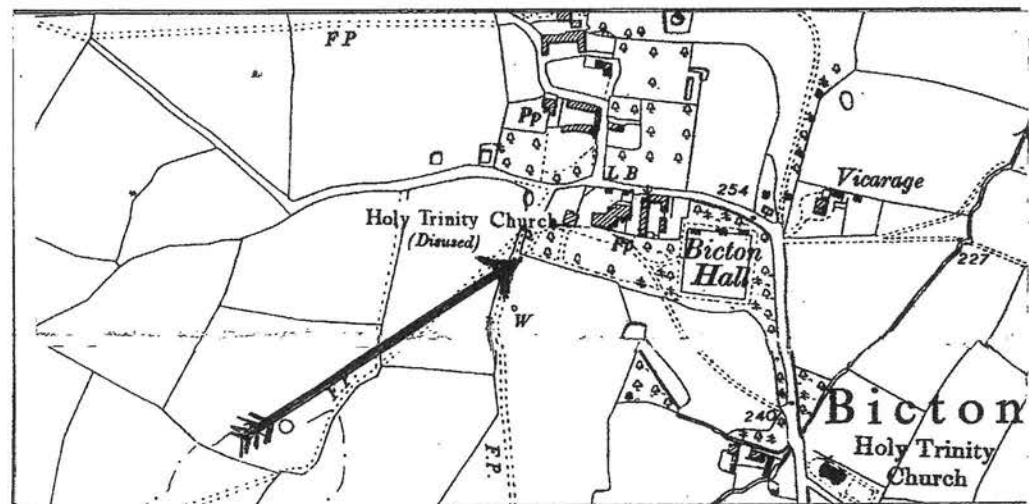
April 2010
No 525

offprint

Bicton Village News

History of Bicton
part 36

What future
for our past?



David Pannett's History of Bickton part 36

What future for our past?

In recent years many older buildings discussed in Bickton have been restored and tastefully modernised, the Isle Court last month being but one of them. The local authority planners have generally encouraged such work.

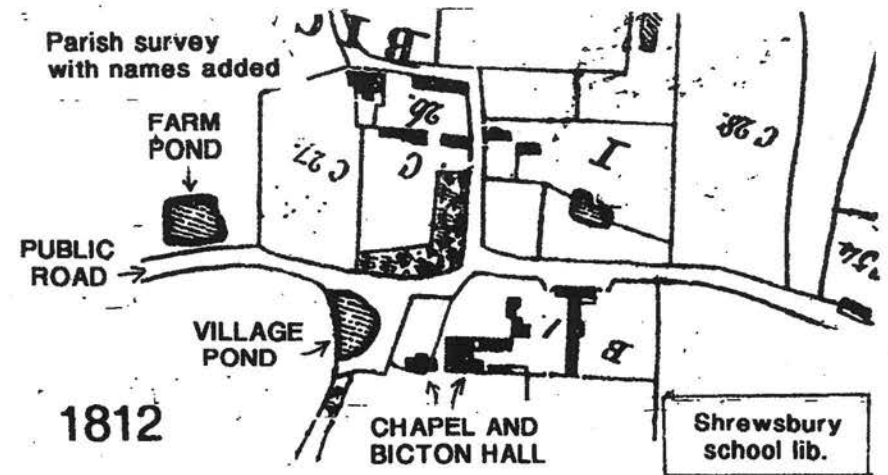
Restoration of the memorial church clock was one part of this trend.

Meanwhile in the neighbouring villages some landscape features have been preserved for the enjoyment of everyone both resident and visitor: Shrawardine 'Millenium Green' enhances the old castle ruins and has been the focus of much community activity; at Montford the village green and 'duck pond' have been brought back to life; at Great Ness some historic features have been both conserved and provided with interpretative signs. Here in Bickton a small patch of woodland by the church has been acquired for the benefit of both locals and wildlife.

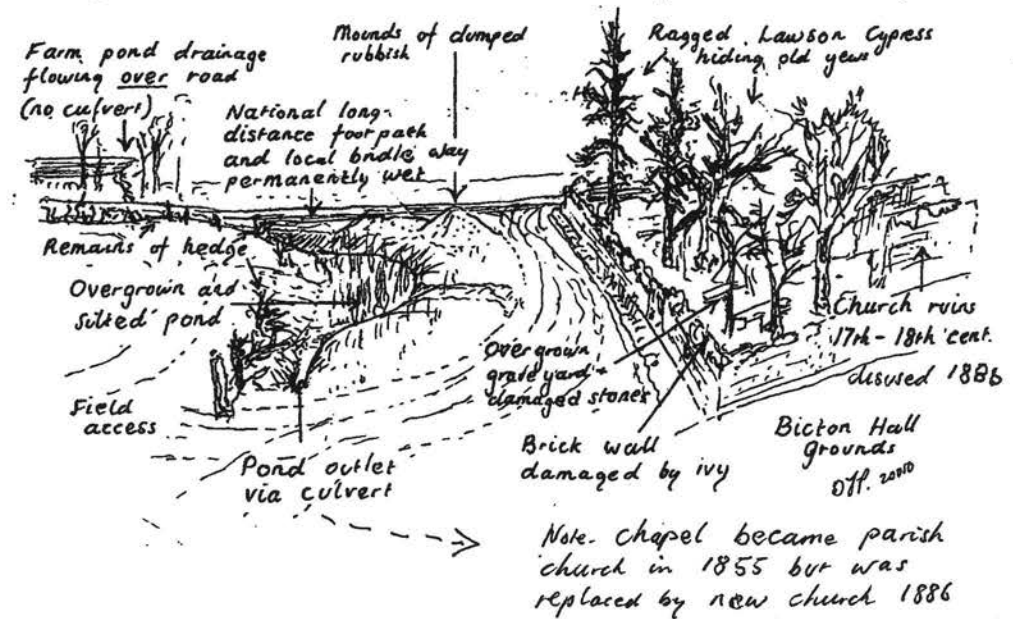
However here in Bickton there still remains a 'blot on the landscape' arising from serious neglect of our heritage. The 'old church' and environs includes a mixture of public road and open space together with both private and ecclesiastical property and has suffered 'from confusion over ultimate responsibility. By its location it has been 'out of sight and out of mind' for most people in Bickton, so few have been stirred to say anything about it.

We know about the history of the site (see various maps and comments in this history series, e.g March '08). We can see its present state, which has declined for several decades and now we must work towards a better future, which could include all those aspects shown by the work of our neighbours across the river.

The following illustrations make the point!

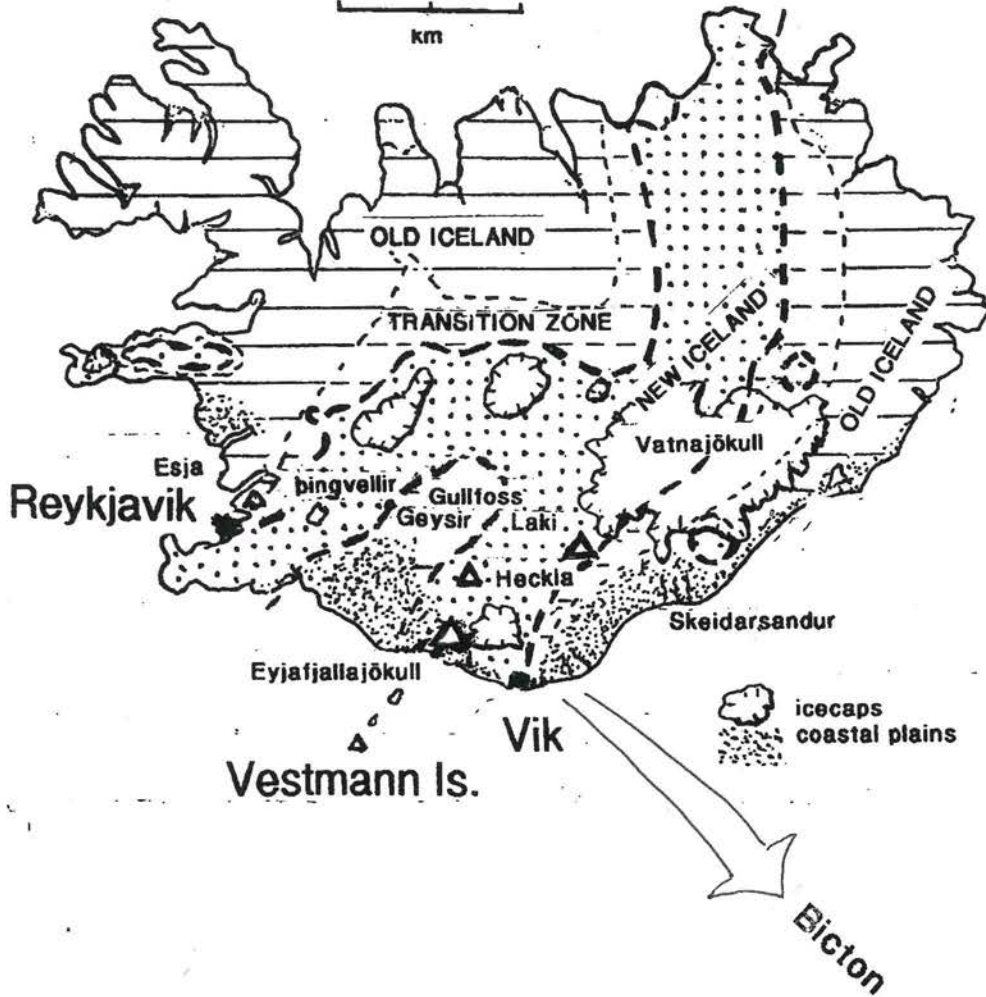


Rough sketch of old church and village pond area (2010)



ICELAND : outline of geology

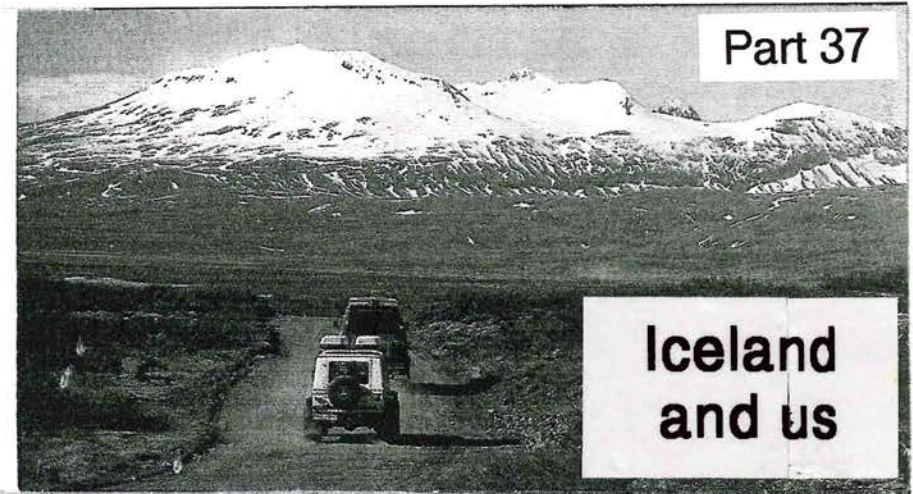
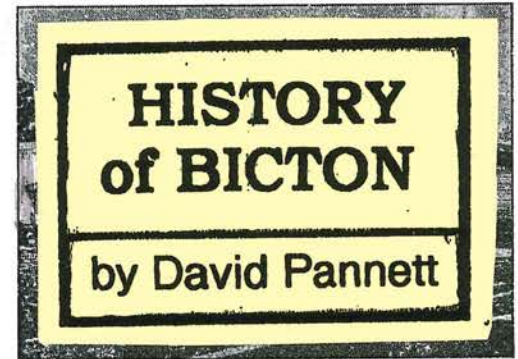
0 100
km



May 2010
No 526

Offprint

Bicton Village News



Part 37

Iceland
and us

David Pannett's History of Bicton part 37

Iceland and us: a topical note

Iceland has certainly been in the news a lot recently. In the Bicton history essays we have often referred to it as the best place to see glacial landscapes 'in action', which help us understand the 'Ice Age' landscape still lurking under our feet.

Ice caps still cover some high plateaus in Iceland, as they once did in Wales. Glaciers flowing from them have carved deep valleys on their way to the surrounding plains. Here, fluctuating ice fronts built up arc shaped 'moraines', which often hold back lakes as the ice has melted back.

Such a 'moraine' forms the curving ridge from Bicton to Fords Heath, while upstream, a later one runs between Fensdon and Shrawardine, all clearly visible from the A5. Downstream from such moraines, meltwater has spread out vast sheets of sand and gravel forming both coastal plains in Iceland and the level fields west of Montford Bridge. Geologists have adopted the Icelandic term 'Sandur' to describe them both. During such deposition, blocks of ice often got left behind and buried, later melting to leave craters termed 'Kettle holes' - well seen between Calcott and Oxon.

The varied patterns of this glacial landscape have greatly influenced the historical development of the Bicton landscape on its surface. Meanwhile, in Iceland its marginal position has made it sensitive to changing climate. Viking settlement took place in the Medieval warm period, but life became harder later, especially after 1600 as glaciers advanced, reaching their furthest by the late 19th century. Is their current retreat therefore a cause for worry or rejoicing?

The volcanic activity in Iceland is, however, not represented here, but as the last few weeks have shown, its influence may still reach Britain. Some years ago, during the 'cold war' one MP pointed out the obvious geographical fact that our westerly winds constituted our best 'nuclear deterrent'. Any Russian sending a missile here could get the dust back in his face a few days later. Iceland volcanoes, especially Hekla, have been demonstrating this for centuries!

From time to time the people of Bicton would have seen fine sunsets and shared the cooler weather felt in most of Europe caused by a dirty atmosphere. In the year 1783 was a famous example: Laki burst from a fissure 20 km in length and sent a vast stream of lava down onto the coastal plain, while the wind took its dust and fumes to mainland Europe.

Iceland is part of the 'Mid-Atlantic Ridge', where crustal plates are pulling apart. Old lavas, now much eroded, form each side of the island, while the central zone is being filled in with new volcanic material from below. The volcanoes here are long fissures running south-west to north-east, or broad domes of basalt lava. This type of lava has little 'fizz' caused by trapped gases, so that conventional volcanic cones of ash are only small and nowhere like Fuji or Vesuvius. Hekla and Eyjafjallajökull are the nearest match thanks to their more explosive eruptions, as the latter is demonstrating.

This long-established volcano overlooks the sea, which has trimmed its base with dramatic cliffs, across which plunge waterfalls much loved by tourists. The summit supports an ice cap (jökull) which also fills its central crater. Since its last eruption in 1821 lava pressure has been building up again until released by blasting through this thick ice. This mixture of hot gas and steam has blown the rising lava into dust propelling it skywards in 'champagne' fashion rather than like the usual 'guinness'. Such eruptions usually calm down as gas pressure is exhausted, leaving only streams of basalt lava.

The weather systems in 1783 must have been similar to those this time, since sulphurous fumes hugging the ground, drifted as far as France. Many farm workers experienced damaged lungs, while nobility escaped in the shelter of their homes, all adding stress at the time of revolution.

The chaos this year reminds us how modern society is still vulnerable to disruption by natural forces. We are relatively safe in Bicton, but just take care when booking holidays! Iceland is nevertheless still worth a visit some time.

birth, the Royal Salop Infirmary was making a public appeal for 50,000 shillings (£10000) to top-up of its funds (for comparison 'Home and Colonial' store was offering margarine at one shilling (5p) per pound)

On the brighter side, the lads were noticing how girls were showing more leg with the shorter skirts. More seriously, women since 1918 now had the vote and could have been involved in the election that year returning G. Butler Lloyd as Unionist MP for Shrewsbury. By 1920 government was a Liberal - Conservative coalition (Lloyd George - Bona Law) whose most pressing problems included the political settlement in Ireland leading to 'Home Rule' and 'Partition'. By coincidence, in the midst of such troubles, Francis Smyth was born in Belfast that same year, and eventually became a popular vicar of Bicton, where he now lies buried.

Finally, as Dorothy was arriving, Shrewsbury town beat Kidderminster Harriers 3-1.

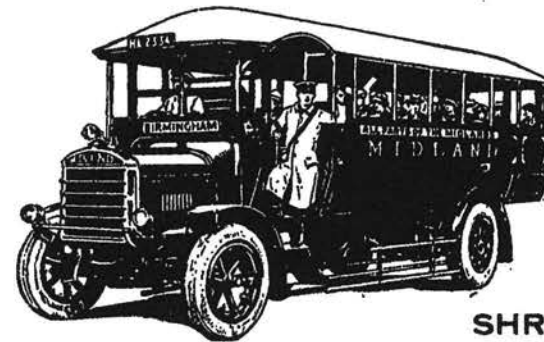
Bicton Village News

Offprint from

Jun 2010
No 527

Tales from the Twenties

Midland "RED" Motor Services



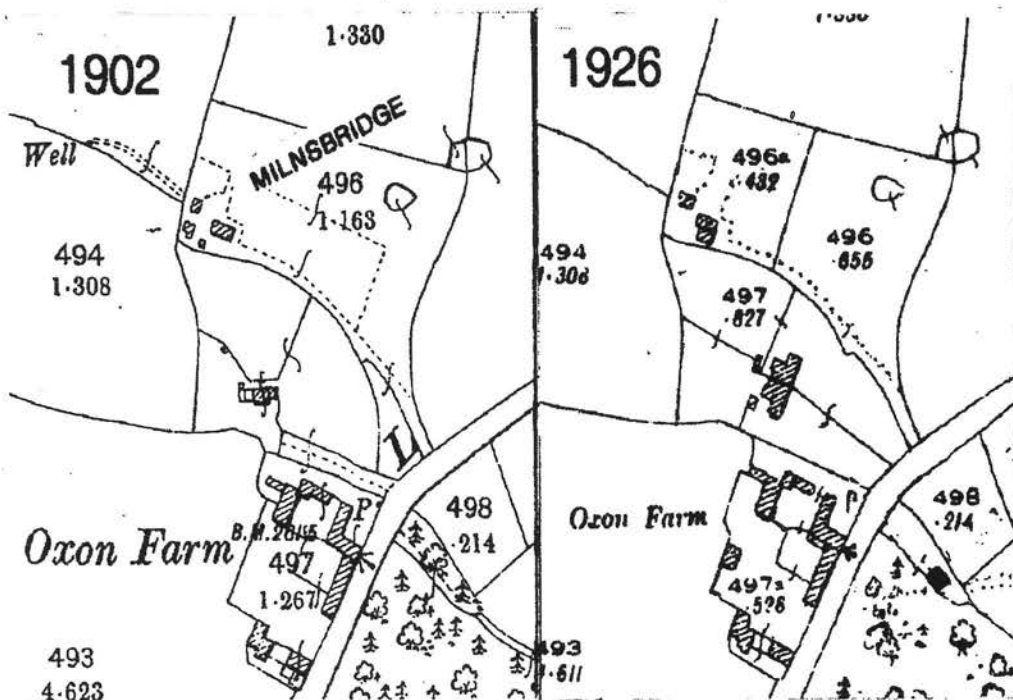
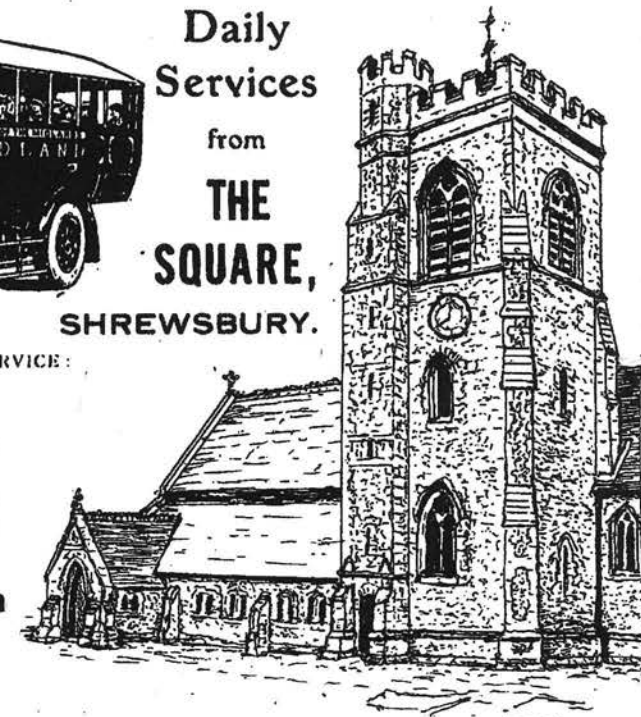
Daily Services from THE SQUARE, SHREWSBURY.

Bayston Hill
Bicton Heath
Montford Bridge
Pulverbatch

DAILY SERVICE:
Hanwood
Pontesbury
Minsterley
Ditherington

David Pannett's
History of Bicton

part 38



David Pannett's History of Bicton part 38

Tales from the Twenties

Towards the end of last year, the memorial clock installed in the church tower in 1922, was restored, while in February this year Dorothy Lewis, our oldest inhabitant celebrated her 90th birthday. They are therefore of similar age and also linked by association with Ernest Lewis, who was Dorothy's father and the one who started the clock and wound it for many years.

That time was one of looking back in sadness at all those lost in the First World War, 1914-18, with the erection of a variety of such memorials. However, it was also a time for looking forward to making changes which would make all that suffering seem worthwhile. Therefore, as Dorothy grew up and changed, the world was also changing all around her.

Dorothy was born at Milnsbridge, off Shepherds Lane, in February 1920 and christened by the Rev. George Fletcher at his church at Oxon on May 16th. This location was necessary since there was a vacancy for a vicar at Bicton. One reason for this is perhaps suggested by reports in the Shrewsbury Chronicle for that same week of her birth: The Rev W. Roberts, who claimed to be the vicar designate of Bicton was in dispute with the furniture removers, Alick Low and sons, over their bill. Low was rightfully claiming payment of £7 - 5 shillings and 11d (£7.30) through the County Court, while Roberts was counter claiming £5-10 shillings (£5.50) on account of damage, dirty boots on stairs, boxes stacked too high on the floor and possible pilferage of cigars. Judge Ivor Brown scornfully dismissed all this commenting that 'the Bishop was a bit shy of him' and that Roberts 'did not belong to this particular parish' nor 'did the vicarage belong to him' and, any way, some slight damage was only to be expected during removals.

After all this it is no wonder he was not around to christen Dorothy! Bicton parish had a lucky escape from such a character. The Rev John Purser later took up the post.

At this time, Bicton Hall was occupied by Miss Edith Dorothy Milbank, who involved herself like a sort of 'fairy godmother' in the

affairs of the local community. Besides helping to sort out problems with Dorothy's christening, that same year she was lending money to the Peoples Refreshment House Association for the purchase of the Four Crosses nearby. Later she helped finance secondary education for Dorothy's brothers, Walter and Herbert and also others in the village, before it became free and universal. Sunday school children also had regular treats.

The arrival of Dorothy made the Milnsbridge household even more crowded: three brothers and one sister aged 4 to 12, parents Ernest and Blanche and also her mother Constance and even a wartime 'landgirl' still working at the Woodlands. In such a rural cottage facilities were still basic with most cooking done on a traditional range as seen on the TV 'Victorian Farm'. Blanche managed well, as she had been Cook at the vicarage when she met Ernest and was well-equipped with her a copy of Mrs Beeton's BOOK OF HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT. Improved facilities of piped water and electricity did not reach them until the 30s'. Till then, Dorothy remembers visiting a friend in Shrewsbury where she would enjoy the novelty of 'pulling a chain'.

Nearby, there were signs of improving standards as the 1919 Local Authority Housing Act allowed Atcham Rural District Council to build their 'rural cottages' at Oxon and Montford Bridge in 1921.

Other clues to improved technology, partially stimulated by the war, were also reported in February 1920: Corbets were arranging tractor ploughing demonstrations at Uffington, while at Hantscott the government was selling surplus cars, vans and lorries, Morris and Co. had already expanded their oil business by buying up similar government surplus oil stocks and confidently faced the future with their new offices at Welsh Bridge. As a stunt, an ex-serviceman even drove a car up to the Wrekin! The motor age have arrived! The Shrewsbury By-pass opened from the Oak and by 1926 Midland Red were running a bus service through Bicton. Percy Mead of the Woodlands is remembered as buying the first car in the village (see prominent grave near church tower).

Caring for the family involved a lot of self-medication since doctors visits were expensive. In later life, as a nurse, Dorothy became a passionate advocate of the National Health Service. In the week of her

this time for landowning families to supply incumbents for their own parishes, thus keeping local affairs very much 'in house'. Brothers Edward and Humphrey married sisters from Milnsbridge House in Huddersfield. Later when Humphrey's daughter Annette Armine owned a cottage in Shepherds Lane she called it Milnsbridge in the family tradition of recycling names gained through marriage.

In 1902, Humphrey IX was the last to be interred in the family vault under the old church, since by then the new graveyard was already available. Son Humphrey X with his wife Phoebe was buried there in 1952, after a varied life as a soldier, sportsman, local JP and Churchwarden. Described as a perfect English gentleman, he broke from the Sandford legal and clerical tradition, leaving that to brother Richard at Uddington. Son Humphrey XI was in a similar mould with varied experiences related to farming. He died aged 100 in 1988. He was affectionately known as 'young Humphrey', since the younger Humphrey XII his son was out of sight pursuing a varied agricultural career in different parts of the world. Thus young Humphrey lived on his own for many years after the war, in a caravan, while the house was let as a hotel. In 1979 it finally returned to the family.



The Isle

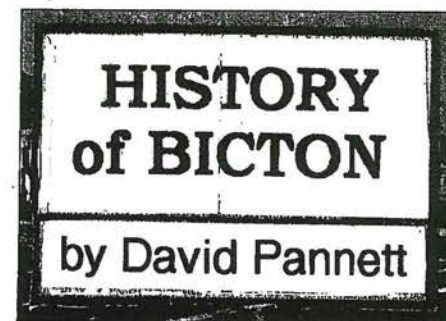


Offprint from

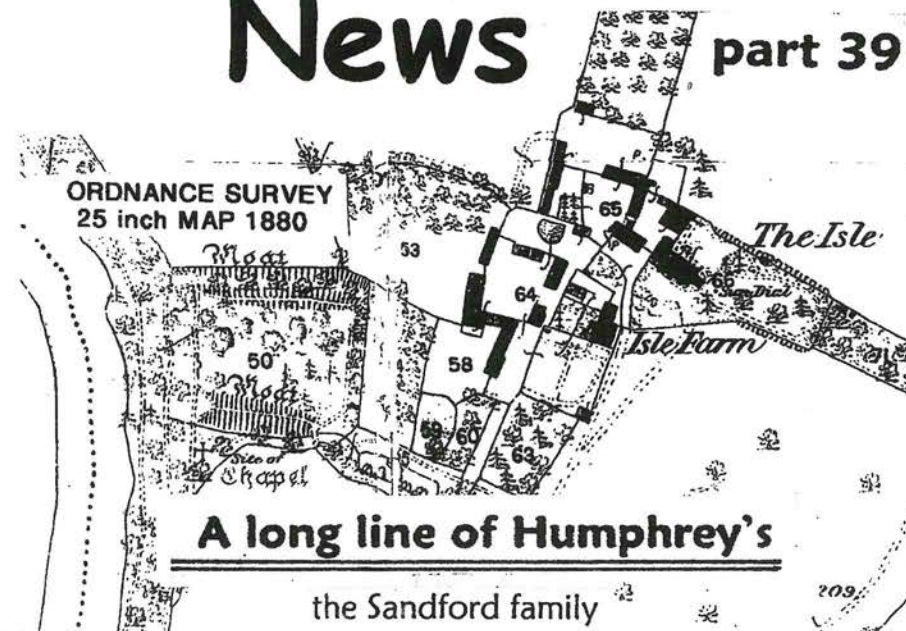
Jul 2010

No 528

Bickton Village



News part 39



David Pannett's History of Bicton part 39

A long line of Humphrey's

To many people the name Humphrey may only be associated with Humphrey Littleton, a cat at 10 Downing Street or the civil servant in 'Yes Minister'. Here in Bicton, however, thanks to the Sandford family, the name has been around for 400 years, from Elizabeth 1 to Elizabeth 2nd.

The local story started during the troubled times of the reformation, when Richard Sandford came to the Isle in 1580 as tenant of Sir Francis Englefield, who was then living abroad. As a catholic, Sir Francis had been obliged to leave the country when Queen Elizabeth inherited the throne in 1558 and continued the protestant reforms (which provoked Philip of Spain to send his 'armada') He also forfeited his estates, which included The Isle, Rossall and Udlington,

Richard already held land in South Shropshire where he married the daughter of Humphrey Plowden, after whom he named his son. While Sir Francis was in exile, this Humphrey no. 1 helped with keeping in contact and acting as a sort of agent and therefore was upset that he did not obtain a better share of the Englefield estate when the Queen granted it to other loyal subjects. Humphrey held some on lease by 1606 and only obtained some freehold before he died in 1611.

Son Humphrey II, as a catholic, was naturally a Royalist during the Civil War and Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. He even married Jane Gifford of White Ladies, Staffordshire, where King Charles II had hidden in an oak tree whilst escaping the Battle of Worcester. Politically, times were difficult for him as he faced fines because of his views. Locally in Bicton he got into dispute with his neighbours over the Pool and Rossall Heath (Oct '08). Perhaps all this introduced the family into practising law.

After his death in 1654, the estate passed briefly to son Richard and grandson, also Richard. By this time religious tensions were calming down but not going away, so that it was politic for the new generation

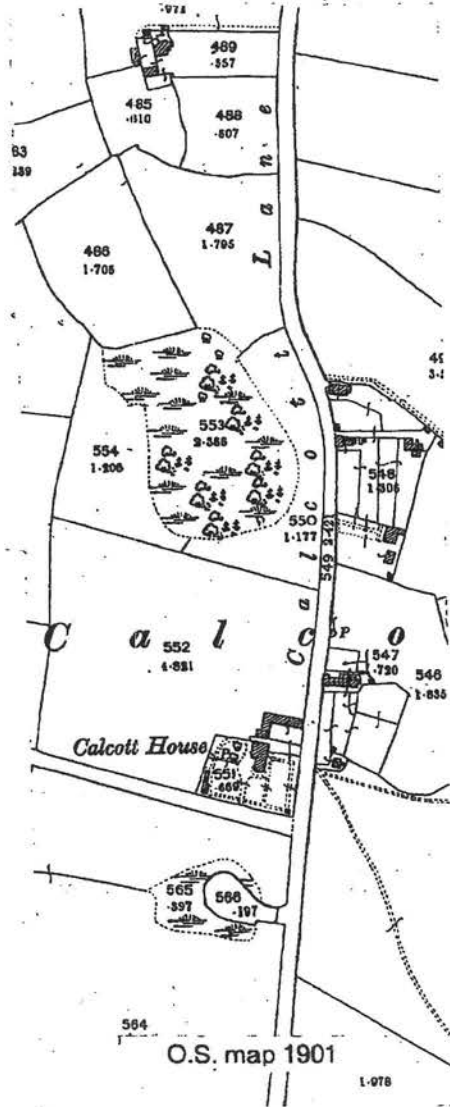
to be C of E. Nationally, there was an increasing appreciation of a good education for the sons of the upper classes (i.e not their daughters). However, as Charles Darwin found out, the typical public school curriculum was more likely to produce lawyers and churchmen rather than natural scientists.

When the estate passed to second grandson Humphrey III, he was already a fellow of St John's College Cambridge, where life prevented the production of an heir! The estate therefore passed on to his cousin Humphrey IV on his death in 1712. His son Humphrey V then married Rebecca Walker, granddaughter of the Irish aristocrat Lord Folliot and thereby introduced another name to the family collection. Now affairs at the Isle began to change, as this Humphrey and his son Humphrey VI bought up all the other properties on the peninsula, bringing it once again under unified ownership. Humphrey VI, who at one time was Sheriff of Shropshire, had married a local heiress and perhaps her money helped. He also raised a mortgage with his neighbour Thomas Wright the nurseryman. Finally, in 1749 the couple took over and remodelled the house clearly making it their main residence. To emphasise this, he also built the family vault under the old Bicton Chapel and was the first to occupy this in 1791. Earlier Sandfords had been buried in various places including Fitz, St Chad's and Lydbury.

By this time, Humphrey VII had already died, leaving brother Folliot to takeover and continue improving the estate. Towards the end of his long life, in 1810, he and his wife Phoebe moved to Bath, which at the time was a growing resort attracting many rich clients, both to 'take the waters' and enjoy the varied social life, not available at the Isle. For this period, the house was let to James Parry, while other members of the family lived elsewhere with their professional lives in law and the church. Humphrey VIII was both Rector of Edgton and curate of Bicton, (each are linked to the Sandford estate); Brother Folliot practised as a solicitor in Shrewsbury. In the next generation, Humphrey IX became barrister in Shrewsbury, while brothers Edward, originally a solicitor and William joined the church. William was the first Vicar of the new independent parish of Bicton 1853 —1875. It was not uncommon at

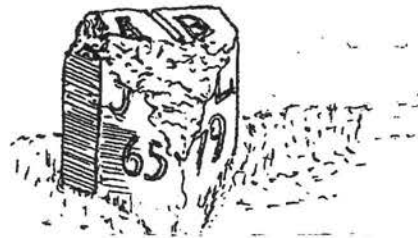
still together, aged 74 and 78 respectively, in 1901, helped by Mr. and Mrs Cartwright and their daughter.

Thereafter, records are lacking, until the two Teece sisters took over during the first World War and occupied it into the next. By this time, by coincidence, the neighbours included the Wallador sisters running their smallholding. In the Victorian period, some wealthy girls, such as the Coates sisters of Bicton Hall, could avoid the economic necessity of marriage, but one wonders to what extent the loss of men in those wars was now a factor leaving such girls 'on the shelf'. One also wonders whether the persistent absence of a 'man about the house' allowed the buildings to become run down and ripe for redevelopment as 'Haughton'.



One also wonders whether the persistent absence of a 'man about the house' allowed the buildings to become run down and ripe for redevelopment as 'Haughton'.

BICTON HEATH ENCLOSURE 1768



ROAD CARE BOUNDARY STONE IN ISLE LANE

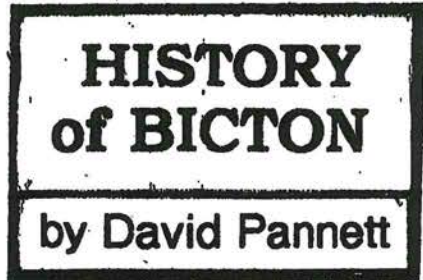
Similar to one in Calcott lane



Offprint from

Aug 2010
No 529

Down Calcott Lane

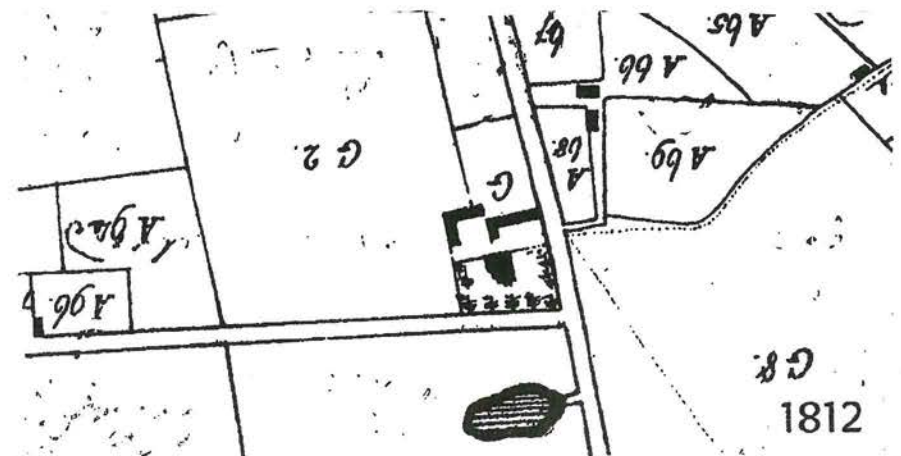


part 40

Bicton Village

News

www.bictonvillage.co.uk



David Pannett's History of Bicton part 40

Down Calcott Lane

This area has certainly been in the news recently as residents, led by Roy Bound of 'Haughton', battled with Arriva and authorities over the number 70 bus route along Calcott Lane.

This lane connects the Holyhead Road (B4380, old A5) with the Welshpool road (A458), starting off straight, then bending between the Moss and houses of Lower Calcott, before finishing with another straight section. Such a pattern obviously has some historical significance.

Once this area was open heathland thanks to its heavy soils, poor drainage and peaty hollows left by the Ice Age (Sept. 07). However, from the 17th century onwards several encroachments were taking place for cottages around its edge. Then in the 18th century 'age of improvement' the local landowners agreed to enclose the remainder and allot shares between themselves. In 1768 new hedges and local roads were laid out by a surveyor, including Calcott Lane, which remains a good example of this type of work with its straight lines and regular width of 30 feet between ditches. (good for drainage and trapping passing busses!). Initially maintenance of these new roads was divided between the landowners and in two places at least, Calcott Lane and Isle Lane, stones were set in the hedge to mark boundaries between such sectors of responsibility.

The enclosed land allowed the creation of new small farms, including one with its buildings on the site of the present Haughton bungalow. This location at the junction of lanes was not only convenient for access, but exploited the same patch of sand and gravel already used by the existing cottage encroachments of Lower Calcott.

In 1768 the land had been allotted to Mrs Griffiths, but by 1812 it had passed to Dr. Simpson, an absentee landlord who let the farm to Thomas Botwyle. He was still owner in 1824, but by 1843 it had passed to Mrs Catherine Gittins, perhaps a relation of John Gittins of Red House, Bicton. Her tenant was Thomas Wall, who could work it along with his own farm at Upper Calcott, thus hinting at a change of status for the farmhouse towards being a residence divorced from actual farming. Indeed, from now on, records show it was occupied by

a succession of single ladies, during which it acquired the name 'Calcott House'.

In 1851, part of it may have been occupied by Miss Frances Jenkins, sister of the more famous Sir Richard Jenkins, owner of Bicton Hall. She certainly would have had the means to be its owner, otherwise it was probably occupied by Mary Breeze a governess, running a boarding-school.

At 52 Mary had probably once worked in a 'big house' educating its children, especially daughters who were usually kept at home. Henry Whitling, for instance, a Shrewsbury architect at Uddington in 1841, employed a governess, aged 20, for his four daughters and one son.

In a Victorian Society obsessed with 'class' (as mocked by Gilbert and Sullivan in H. M. S. Pinafore) a governess fell into an ambiguous position in such a household. While being an employee, duties linked her more to the family than with other servants 'downstairs'. Also, at a time when education for girls was so poor, a governess must have had some privileged upbringing in order to take on the work in the first place. At this time it was one of the few professional opportunities offering girls an alternative to marriage and Victorian motherhood (Even the Queen herself found the latter an arduous duty!)

Significantly, her household recorded by the 1851 Census provides some clues to social status. Apart from one female pupil, she had two visitors, a young 'gentlewoman' and her younger brother John, a clergyman. By 1851, he had become Rector of Hanwood and later also chaplain to the Shelton Asylum, while permanently living here.

In 1871, it was a more crowded household here, since John now had a wife and also William Stott, 'gentleman' had become a lodger. Three young servants were needed to help them all.

By 1881, Mary now 82, was on her own caring for William Stott, described now as imbecile, but was also helped by neighbours John Wall, and his wife.

This gentleman obviously had sufficient wealth to support his own 'care package', thus avoiding being taken into the asylum. John Breeze's connections may have been significant in all this. The appropriate care of dementia victims is still an ongoing debate.

Mary herself did not survive long after 1885[†] and the house was taken over by Miss Jane Jones, complete with William Stott. They were

[†] buried Bicton Oct. 31 1889 aged 91 years

dangerous time for all classes, and once children had survived all this, it was all the more distressing for parents to lose them just a few years later. (Charles Darwin recorded how this experience changed his attitude to life). Significantly, child graves, such as those of Selina Lewis (Edward's granddaughter) 1877, aged four and Frederick, 1871, aged eight, son of William Sandford, (first vicar of Bickton), are as elaborate as any for an adult. Another shows how Samuel Preece, (agricultural labourer) and his wife Mary lost two young sons in the same year, 1857.

Monuments also reflect the contemporary fashions in design. The Spearman's tomb illustrate the 'Classical Revival', while later smaller tombs use 'Gothic Revival' decoration, as on that of Miss Frances Jenkins, 1867. Even smaller headstones then displayed 'pointed arch' shapes. Such 'Gothic Revival' designs continued in the new churchyard starting with the church itself.

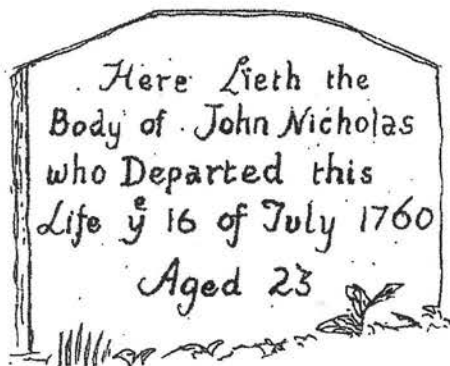
At the same time, inscriptions changed much in line with title pages of books or tradesmen's letterheads. In the 18th century blunt statements in a bold

hand were sufficient, as in the case of John Nicholas 1760, but by the Victorian period a whole range of 'type faces' were used: Roman, *Italic*, **GOthic** etc., all skilfully carved. A modern word processor now offers a similar range! The wording also included more sentiment, as with Edward Lewis, for instance.

The problem for our present generation is now how to preserve all

this for the future. What authorities are responsible now, for instance, and what can or cannot be done in practical terms are serious questions. Money, history and 'health and safety' all get involved.

Thanks to the constant turnover of population only 2 local families appear to have ancestors here. However, their varied lives can help us understand some of the history of the whole community.



Offprint from

Sep 2010

No 530

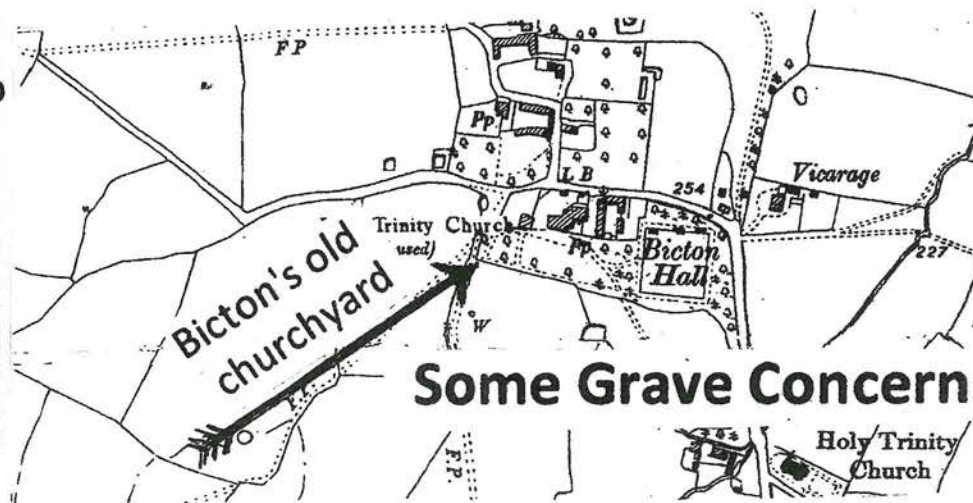
Bickton Village News

**HISTORY
of BICKTON**

by David Pannett

part 4!

www.bicktonvillage.co.uk



Some Grave Concerns

Holy Trinity
Church

Some Grave Concerns

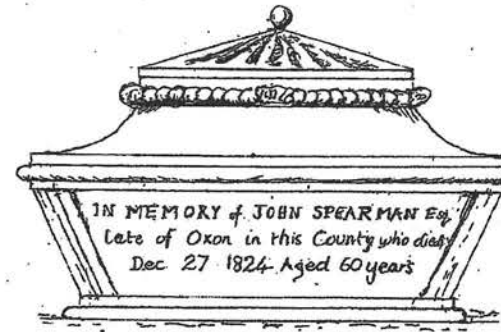
This year, thanks to a team of volunteers, the gravestones in Bickton's old churchyard have reappeared from their cloak of vegetation and can once again take their place as part of our historic landscape. We can also see the scale of further conservation work which is needed. Nationally, such old churchyards, great and small, are causing great concern amongst historians and conservationists and for this reason the diocese of Hereford, for instance, has been promoting their 'God's Acre' project to give them greater care through local groups. However Bickton is in Lichfield diocese.

Graves can provide information which supplements the written records, but many inscriptions are wearing away and need transcribing before they are lost altogether. Monuments also reflect the social status of the families concerned and the changes in fashion over time.

Traditionally, yew trees grow in churchyards, safely away from browsing livestock, while many types of wildlife also find a refuge here, so that management must strike a balance between being 'too tidy' or 'too wild'.

The Bickton graveyard was probably taken out of the adjacent village green when the chapel was built in the late 17th century. Its boundaries, now more visible, certainly give this impression. Before this, burials must have taken place in (old) St. Chad's Shrewsbury, the 'mother church.' Surviving monuments however, only date from the late 18th century and continue through to the 1880s, when the new churchyard took over.

During this period the different strata of society were certainly well matched by their monuments, nearly all of which made use of Grinshill sandstone. The principal local landowners, Sandfords of the Isle and Wingfields of Onslow, actually built their family vaults under the chapel in 1754 and 1834 respectively, only recording individuals on marble tablets on the inside walls of the chapel. Since most of these were later transferred to the new church, their words 'under this floor' can be misleading now.



Sir Richard Jenkins, sometime owner of Bickton Hall and M.P. for Shrewsbury, who died in 1857, is also under the chapel floor, while John Spearman of Oxon Hall lies out in the churchyard with his brother Richard. Nevertheless they have impressive monuments appropriate to their status. The inscription for Richard records

that he was both rector of Preston in Shropshire and Rector of Haddenham in Cambridgeshire, thus exposing one of the abuses of church organisation at that time. Some landowning families could acquire church 'livings', but chose to stay in their mansions, while employing a vicar or curate to do the actual work.

Those lower down the social scale generally lie in the plane 'table top' tombs which in some cases allowed space for other family members. The Jellicoe family from nearby Bickton Cottage (White House) is a good example with the inscriptions recording family tragedies in the early 19th century. They ran a small boarding-school, worthy of some comment some other time. Their next door neighbour, John Davies, tenant of Bickton Farm in the 1850s, is still their next-door neighbour in the churchyard!

All around, lesser ranks of agricultural workers and tradesmen are marked by single headstones, (now sadly vandalised) including those of Edward Lewis, gardener to Preston Montford Hall, who died in 1866 and the unrelated William Lewis and his wife 1858 and 1867.

The ages of death recorded here range from childhood to beyond the traditional 'three score years and ten', as diseases in the 19th century could strike at any time. Childbirth was a particularly

SACRED
to the Memory of
EDWARD LEWIS
who died May 29th 1866
aged 80 years.
Prepare to meet thy God.
Also ELIZABETH wife of the
above who died August 1867

'Straightness' was always an essentially 'classical' idea, as shown by Roman roads, and did not come fully back to us until the renaissance and the rise of professional surveyors. In the fields so much sowing and harvesting was done by hand that curving or irregular shapes presented no practical problems. Eventually seed drills and harvesting machinery certainly favoured straight lines and encouraged some landlords to redesign their estates, as around Montford, for instance.

So much for general principles, what can we see in Bicton? The landscape here certainly contains both old and new elements, although patterns are less clear with the removal of many hedges, so that the best clues must come from older maps. The 1902 - 1925 six inch map of the For Crosses area shows a good mixture close together: ancient crooked boundary hedges, between Bicton, Rossall and Udlington, an enclosed 'parcel' of the Bicton medieval fields and the straight roads and hedges laid out on the heaths of Bicton and Rossall in 1768 and 1830. Between, some old small fields were created as encroachments from the heathland before these dates. Indeed one can 'read' a great deal in this landscape when one has learned the 'language' in which it is written. Otherwise just take care driving too fast down straight roads which then become crooked!



Offprint from
Oct 2010
No 531

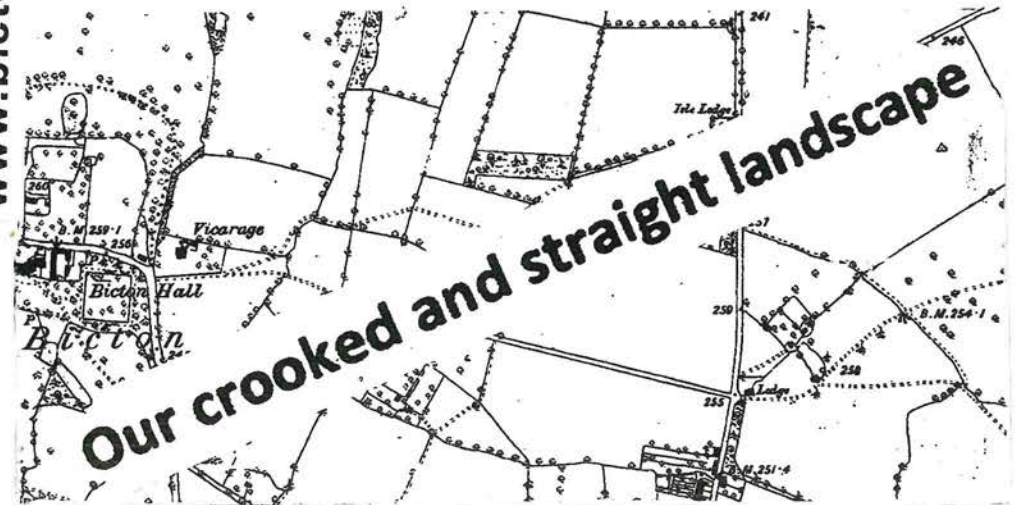
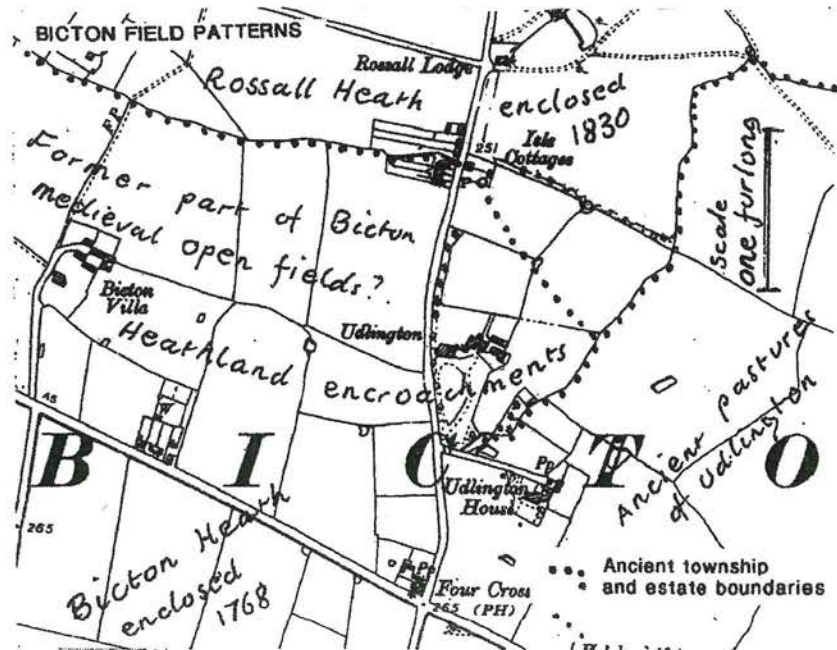
Bicton Village News

**HISTORY
 of BICTON**

by David Pannett

Part 42

www.bictonvillage.co.uk



David Pannett's History of Bicton part 42

Our crooked and straight landscape

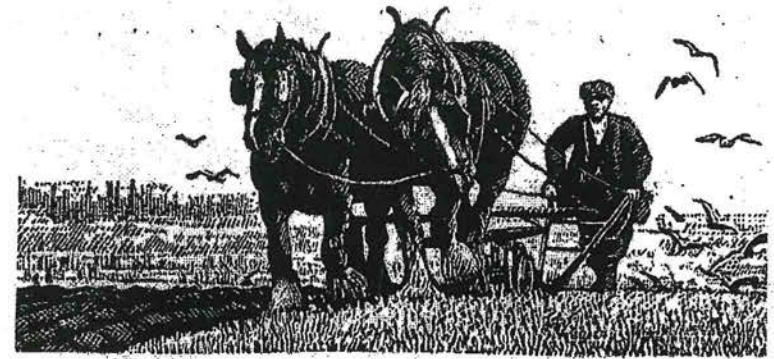
Each October, somewhere in our area, the 'Cruckton' ploughing matches take place with competitive classes for both tractors and traditional horse power. Marks are awarded for straightness and regularity of furrow width and the clean overturning of the soil.

Today many tractor mounted ploughs are not only multifurrowed, but also reversible, so that the work can simply proceed across the width of the field in one direction, even though the unit must go alternatively 'up and down'. However, the traditional 'fixed mouldboard' ploughs had to be worked in a series of 'lands', ploughed up one side and down the other, turning the soil towards the middle.

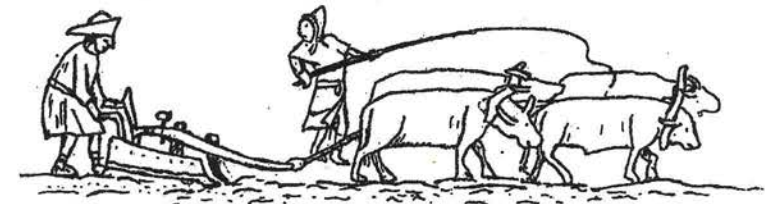
Traditional horse ploughing, demonstrated so well at such matches, involves a pair of heavy horses, usually 'Shires', controlled with reins and voice by the ploughman on his own, (although for competition purposes he may have an assistant.) At the headland, well trained horses can step sideways to the right when turning the plough for its return journey down the other side of the 'land'.

Historically, the origin of such 'heavy horses' lay not so much with farming as with the needs of heavily armoured knights in the Middle Ages. Then, ploughing was more often done with oxen (which could also be eaten after their working life). As weaker animals, they had to be worked in larger teams and therefore needed a driver to manage them. Since such drivers were normally 'right handed' it was better for them to walk on the left side of the team. As it was also better to walk on smoother unploughed ground, the plough mouldboard was set to push soil to the right, in a position where it has remained ever since. Then, at the headland the driver initially turned the team around to the left, before doubling back towards the other side of the land and for this reason it was convenient to the curve the plough lands into the headland in this direction. Oxen also needed such a regular pause in the heavy work and therefore the plough lands were normally no more than 220 yards in length: the 'furrow-long' or 'furlong', measure still used in horseracing (200 metres).

TRADITIONAL HORSE PLOUGHING



MEDIAEVAL OX PLOUGHING



The simple wooden mouldboards could not turn the soil right over or bury turf in the same way as those smooth curving blades developed by John Deere or Ransom in the 19th century.

Any 'convertible' husbandry, with the use of long leys in a rotation was out of the question. Even in the early 19th century grassland could only be broken up by first paring the turf by hand with a breast plough and then burning it.

In the open field system the plough lands, complete with curves, became permanent features locked in a pattern of grassy furrows and headlands and could therefore become the basic units of tenure. On heavy soils they acquired ridged profiles to help the drainage. In later centuries new hedges often followed these old curving shapes and furlong lengths, thus preserving a sort of ghost of mediaeval patterns, even when original ridges became obliterated by later ploughing.

In any case, the mediaeval world did not worry about straight lines, often following natural water courses or breaks in slope for convenience.

mental breakdown under stress of battle. Significantly his name appears last, as if added as an afterthought. On the other hand, he may not have been considered as belonging to Bickton, since his parents had just retired to Mountfields in Shrewsbury.

By complete contrast, at the very same time, Edward Tipton was earning a 'military medal' in a localised action further south. The 'Canadian Horse' to which he was attached, provided dispatch riders and general communications around the front line and in this particular action he endured six days manning his telephone line in a forward trench while shells rained down all around.

Meanwhile, back at the 'Ypres Salient' fighting dragged on into the Autumn. John Brown was but one of the many who died of wounds, while Joseph Brown just disappeared into the churned up Flanders mud.

After a quiet winter, the Germans then launched their final spring offensive, starting on March 21st. They overran many of the allies' hard-won gains, and perhaps, Arthur Bason a Yewbery grandson, was one of the prisoners which they took. He died in captivity and lies in a special military cemetery near Kassel.

As this advance was checked with the help of the newly arrived Americans and then rolled back, Edward Tipton's luck finally ran out only a few weeks before the armistice. He was buried in the Busigny village cemetery near Cateau. Richard Morris had also just died by this time.

Altogether these deaths reflect the whole story of the 'Western Front', in all its varied aspects. Others survived to return with their own memories, some of which they may have preferred to forget.

This has been brought together with help from Rob Lopez and also Roger Hall and Sue Coates of the Family History Society. They would be glad of any further information from family sources, concerning deaths in both wars. Sue can be contacted on 01948 841074 or COATES193@BTINTERNET.COM

The website contains past copies of Bickton News and more photos of events will appear soon.

www.bicktonvillage.co.uk



Offprint from

Nov 2010

No 532

HISTORY of BICKTON

by David Pannett

part 43



Extract from military
map of the Somme area



In some foreign field a part of Bickton lies.

David Pannett's History of Bicton part 43

In some foreign field a part of Bicton lies.

Each year in November we remember the fallen in past wars, starting with World War One, 1914-18. However, with passing years, the actual details of those named on our war memorial have often been forgotten as their families have come and gone in the neighbourhood. The list on the Bicton Memorial inside the church, is as follows (together with some additional information from records)

Arthur Bason	K.S.L.I.	2.5.18	21
John Brown	K.S.L.I.	17.10.17	21
Joseph Brown	K.S.L.I.	18.8.17	
Henry Davies	K.S.L.I.	18.8.16	21
Thomas Henry Edge	K.S.L.I.	22.4.15	24
James Morris	K.S.L.I.	10.5.15	
Richard Morris	K.S.L.I.	21.8.18	27
Frederick Newitt	K.S.L.I.	16.6.15	20
Edward Tipton	Canadian Horse	9.10.18	38
Henry Yewbery	South Staffs	13.10.16	21
Denis Blakemore	North Staffs	9.7.17	28

Most of these young men came from families employed on local farms and the call to arms would have been an adventurous escape from such low paid work and the small crowded cottages in the Isle Lane (Newitt), Shepherds Lane (Davies) and Bicton (Yewbery). Families of tradesmen also contributed. Walter Brown, bricklayer, of Isle Cottages had at least three sons including John, while Henry Edge, plumber, of Calcott raised seven children including Thomas. At the schoolhouse, headteacher since 1880, George Blakemore also had seven, of which Denis was the fifth. Elder daughter Florence became an assistant teacher and, between them they must have taught all the others before the war. By joining the local Shropshire Light Infantry they mainly served with fellow salopians; if not actual 'pals'.

At the outbreak of war in 1914, the German army advanced across Belgium towards the Channel ports, but was blocked by the British Expeditionary Force at Ypres, leading to stalemate and trench warfare, which was to

characterise the next four years. After a winter lull, in the spring of 1915, the Germans renewed the offensive, forcing a British withdrawal towards the town, which they retained as a salient in the general line. In these circumstances many casualties were simply lost in collapsed trenches and shell holes in the soft Flanders clay and are only recorded on the Menen Gate Memorial at Ypres, including James Morris and Frederick Newitt. Thomas Henry Edge may have been wounded at this time, leading to eventual death nearer home, and burial at Bicton.

After these battles, the 'Ypres Salient' remained relatively quiet, while action hotted up elsewhere along the front, which now stretched from here to the Swiss border. In particular, the French came under increasing pressure at Verdun and begged to the British to do more along their sector by way of diversion. Thus, in the summer of 1916, an assault took place in the Somme area astride the Bapaume, Albert, Amiens Road. Troops advanced in good order after a whole week of artillery bombardment designed to destroy the German defences. However, this rolling chalk landscape had provided ideal conditions for the excavation of shell-proof dug-outs from which defenders could emerge with their machine guns and mow their attackers down 'like corn'. In the end, only a few miles were gained after several months and the loss of thousands of lives on both sides.

Once again, casualties, including Henry Davies could simply disappear into the disturbed ground, so that they were only recorded on the many memorials, such as that at Thiepval. That August, units of the K.S.L.I. were known to be fighting in the Longueval-Delville Wood area and his actual remains may still be there.

Perhaps as a further diversion to all this, some action also took place in the Arras-Vimy Ridge area, which claimed the life of Henry Yewbery, who was then buried in a small cemetery nearby at Aix-Noulette.

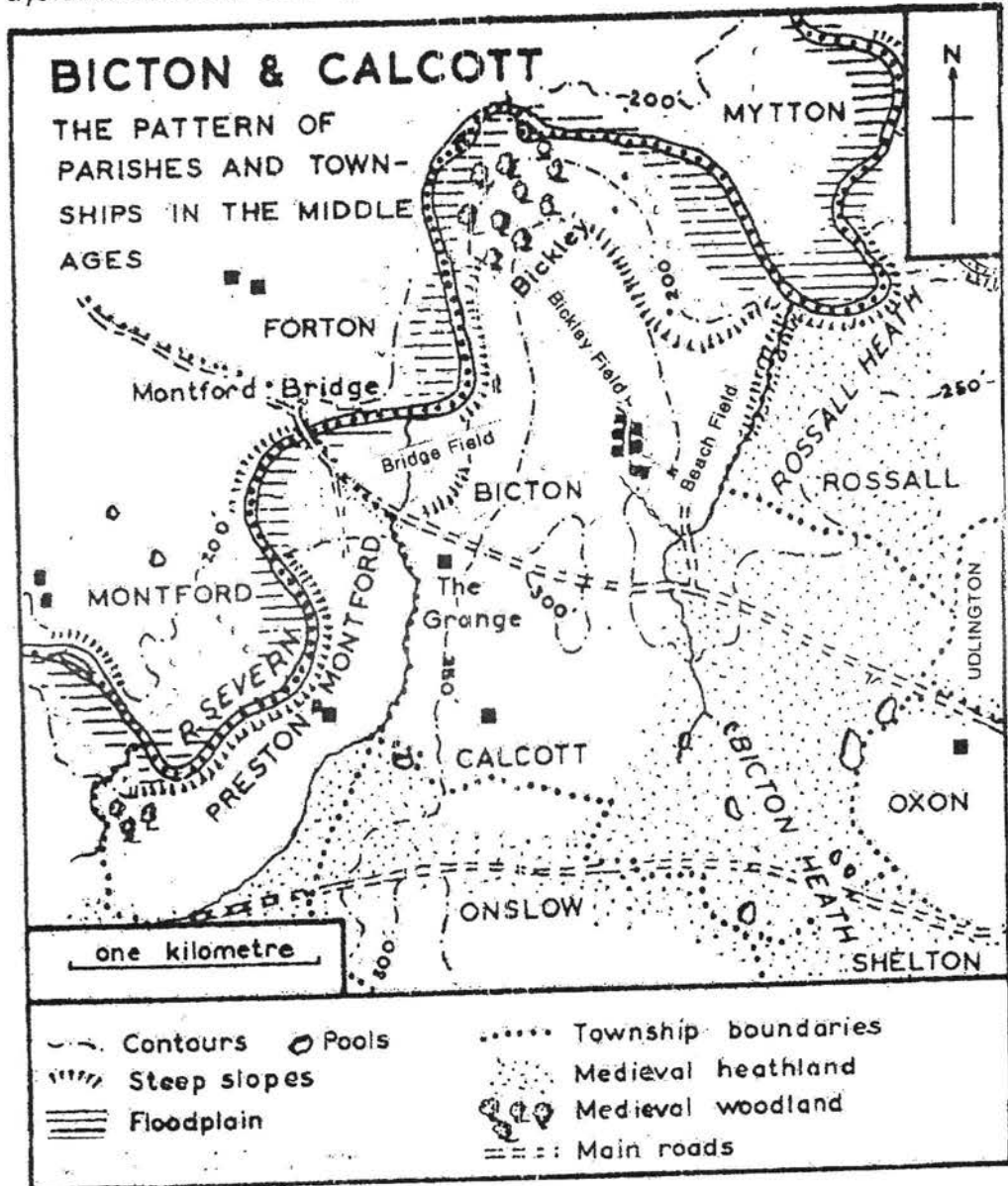
Meanwhile, in the 'Ypres salient', the British had time to prepare carefully for an assault on the German lines along the Messines (Mesen) Ridge, starting in June 1917 with the detonation of huge mines.

Later, the Shrewsbury Chronicle listed Denis Blakemore as 'missing' and then in August reported that he was in fact no longer so, thus hiding the truth that, by this time, he had already been 'shot at dawn' for desertion. Such actions have been controversial regarding what was a punishable offence or

bitterness in Scotland, for instance.

In general strong central government had triumphed over 'regional warlords' and foreign meddling, some lasting constitutional advances had been made, while the power of the commercial middle classes steadily increased. Peace also allowed essential infra structure to be maintained.

Recently a new minister visiting Afghanistan dismissed it as a 'dysfunctional 13th century state'. I wonder what he meant?



Offprint from

Dec 2010

No 533

Bickton Village News

**HISTORY
of BICTON**

by David Pannett

Part 44

Thirteenth Century Bickton



www.bicktonvillage.co.uk

David Pannett's History of Bickton part 44

Thirteenth Century Bickton

Recent discussions in the world of education have raised concerns about history teaching which concentrates so much on recent two centuries that the contributions made by earlier times get overlooked. As Michael Wood has shown in his TV series, they also helped lay the foundations of our modern world and we should therefore take another look at Bickton in the Middle Ages, especially the 13th century.

At the national level, these years 1200 - 1300 included the reigns of John, Henry III and Edward I. At the local level, the peasant farmers worked together in cooperative 'open field' villages and hamlets where their land lay intermixed in narrow strips around three large fields used for crops and fallow in rotation. Damper land along river floodplains and in odd hollows was used as hay meadows, while the worst land was left as rough grazing and heathland. Some communities also had access to woodland for various 'coppice' products and pig pasture. Bickton fitted well this 'model' depicted in many history books. Preston Montford was similar on a smaller scale, but the details of the management of yet smaller estates like Calcott, are not so clear.

The peasants also contributed rents and labour services to their feudal overlords, which in some cases were religious institutions. A local knight held 'Up Rossall' by military service to his feudal lord at Oswestry and therefore lived in a fortified manor house, the earthworks of which still survive at the Isle. The 'feudal' overlord of Bickton was actually St Chad's Church Shrewsbury, so that the status of any local manor house is not clear. Preston Montford similarly belonged to Lilleshall Abbey.

At the national political level, the reign of King John was turbulent with civil war amongst the barons never far away, during which both sides sought support from the Pope. The barons resented the King's taxes to pay for his French Wars and other abuses of power and only settled matters with the drafting of 'Magna Carta' in 1215.

As part of this national unrest, Llewellyn (the Great) of Wales increased his power, even attacking Shrewsbury, thereby stimulating the building of new town walls.

In the reign of John's son, Henry, the barons remained powerful so that the young king never really got the upper hand. Instead, there were some

constitutional advances when Simon de Montfort Earl of Leicester, called the first parliaments. Llewellyn also continued to take advantage of the situation to extend his power, during which time Montford Bridge became the recognised meeting place of English and Welsh envoys. A treaty was signed in 1221 but still Llewellyn attacked the area again 'laying waste land between Shrewsbury and Oswestry'. Bickton, on the main road could have suffered at this time.

In spite of all this, local trade prospered, especially associated with wool and cloth. In 1247 William de Bickton granted part of his lands to Buildwas Abbey for the establishment of a 'grange', together with extensive rights over the Heath. Such grants to religious houses were often considered acts of piety securing some benefit in the afterlife, but they may also have been commercial deals in disguise. Abbeys ran their affairs like business corporations and the wool trade was part of it.

Later his son Thomas was also recorded as a bailiff of Shrewsbury and therefore may not have actually lived in the village. Clearly, he had become part of the expanding commercial community, enjoying increasing local government powers granted by the King desperate for political support (and cash).

Upon the death of Henry in 1272, his son Edward returned to England to take the crown. He had been busy on the Crusades, securing the 'Holy Land' for the Christians, thus contributing to a story which still poisons our relations with the Muslim world today.

As a soldier, he now set about expanding his power over the whole of Britain, starting with Wales, by now in the hands of David, Llewellyn's grandson. His methods included a network of castles modeled on many he had seen in his travels. Unfortunately for Wales, David was still defiant and experienced the wrath of Edward, who had him executed in Shrewsbury, where a parliament had been convened for this purpose. The nasty details are recorded on the wall of Barclays Bank.

All this activity no doubt highlighted the importance of the 'Kings Highway' to Wales, and in particular Montford Bridge. In 1285 the first of several royal orders allowed the levying of tolls to finance repairs. (In normal times, traffic by both river and road would have been free). Only goods for sale were charged, both basic commodities and luxuries. River traffic included 'floats of timber'. Trade was obviously expanding.

As the century ended, peace had returned to this area, although Edward used his tax revenues to pursue wars elsewhere, still leaving lasting