

dealing with the piglets. In 1931, however, they moved to St Michaels, Shrewsbury and a totally different environment. Their leaving present was a group photograph of the choir, which John later returned to the church, where it still hangs (we must try to reproduce it sometime).

Meanwhile, back in the village, there were the first signs of new trends towards the community life we know today.

Richard Sandford's wife was very active in forming the Women's Institute, whose constitution avoided links with the church (in spite of singing Jerusalem). They first met in Bicton Heath, but later used the tea rooms built behind the Four

Crosses by the People's Refreshment House Association, which was thereby becoming almost a 'Village Hall'!

At the corner of Bicton Lane and the main road, Mr & Mrs Proctor let rooms, including some to Mr & Mrs Frank Hayward, who actually worked in Birmingham. They reached the station by car, which they also used for leisure at weekends, rather than join others in church. They would therefore wear golfing clothes rather than 'Sunday Best'!



Offprint from  
Jan 2014  
No 570

# Bicton Village News

HISTORY  
of BICTON

by David Pannett

Part 80

www.bictonvillage.co.uk  
(Managed by Richard Brett)

Church  
and Village  
c.1930



## David Pannett's History of Bickton part 80

### Church and Village c.1930

Over the Christmas season there is often debate about the meaning of the festival. While some regret that the religious significance is being lost, others point out that the European midwinter festival was, in fact, an ancient celebration of the winter solstice long before the Christian church adopted it for its own story. The design of Stonehenge and the great megalithic tombs of Ireland, for instance, enabled a symbolic 'copulation' between the sun god and mother earth at this time, in order to encourage the birth of a new year. Rubbish dumps (middens) testify to the feasting which followed.

In the duller, damper Iron Age, however, the focus of attention was less upon the heavens and more upon the apparent 'magic' of evergreens, such as holly, ivy and mistletoe. The modern Christmas still uses these symbols, partly thanks to Prince Albert and Charles Dickens for reviving interest in them after a period of 'puritan' austerity.

More recently, senior churchmen have expressed concern at falling support for the Church of England within an increasingly secular society and our local experience is no exception. This prompts us to reflect upon the former situation in Bickton as remembered by the oldest inhabitants and also by the late John Lawson, who has left us his own observations on church and village life when his father Anthony was vicar, 1926-1931.

Anthony Lawson originally came from Yorkshire, where he had started his clerical career with the Congregational church, which led to his war service as a chaplain on the 'Western Front'. The stress of this, together with life-threatening 'Spanish flu' did, however, undermine his confidence, but he was helped by wartime colleagues, who brought him into the 'Anglican fold' through a curate's post at St. Chads in Shrewsbury. Subsequently, when Revd. John Purser retired from Bickton, Anthony, with his young family, took his place thanks to St. Chads' historic links here.

In those days, the church was well attended each Sunday, especially the morning service. Most of the community were expected to be there, led by the principle landowners, their tenants and staff. There were, of course, also non-conformists in the village, including Mr & Mrs Edward Lewis, who supported Montford Bridge chapel, but somehow they were not considered 'part of the community'.

Within the church each 'rank' had their regular pews, with the leading citizens at the front, while others sat behind. The south aisle seemed to be reserved for servants, including the chauffeur who brought the Wingfields from Onslow. Seating was usually more flexible at Evensong.

Mrs Wingfield (patron of the living), now a widow, was sometimes accompanied by her two sons, Charles in his Eton suit and Owen in Dartmouth cadet uniform. Indeed, everyone wore their 'Sunday Best'. Humphrey Sandford from the Isle, who was also church warden, came with his wife and also his sister, Armine. Brother, Richard, a solicitor, came from Udlington with his wife Louis. Miss Milbank from the Hall, travelled the short distance by pony and trap and, later, in a traditional bath chair pushed by her garden staff. She was a generous supporter of the church and community, especially Revd. Lawson, since she also came from Yorkshire. Other families sitting behind included May Edwards from Montford Bridge, who helped with the Sunday school and Mr Thomas Slater, an Isle Estate tenant, who was the other church warden.

The choir of men and boys only (although supported by girls in the pews), were drawn from many family backgrounds in the village, including John Lawson. As vicar's son, educated in town, it was one of his rare opportunities to mix with other village lads. The choirmaster was Mr Ward, who cycled out from Frankwell.

Sunday school for the children took place in the village school, where between stories, they were happy to use up any sandwiches left over from the previous night's whist drive. It was timed to allow them to continue to join the main service in the church.

As it was a Church of England school, the children started each day with reciting the catechism and, from time to time, were tested on their knowledge of the scriptures by the vicar, thus earning a certificate. Secondary education was limited to the Lancasterian School, Allatt's School or the Priory in Shrewsbury. The latter was entered through scholarships and it is interesting to record how many children from humble rural families were successful here. This contribution to 'social mobility' is still a subject of discussion today.

The years at Bickton were happy ones for the Lawson family and in later life John still had fond memories of the rural life which he witnessed in his childhood: the steady pace of farm horses at work, fresh milk in open pails and jugs, the annual visit of the steam threshing team and even the castrator

and thus were avoiding using the same local school as their workers. At Bickton House there was also room for the farmer's son and his young family, for a short time at least, when they attended Bickton School.

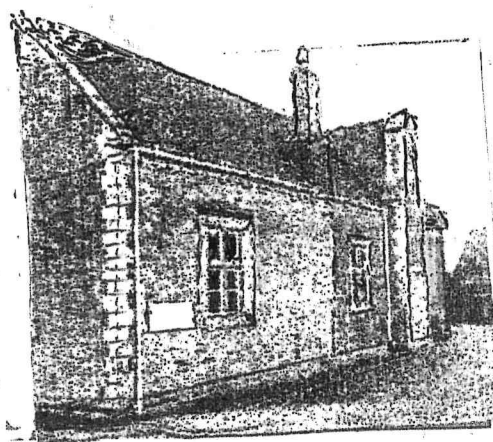
Amongst the other children there was quite a variety of backgrounds. Ernest Lewis, Dorothy's father, has already been discussed in this series (Dec '13). Victor Buckley (also in the Church choir) was son of local blacksmith, William, just down the road, where from time to time, some of the older boys went for practical lessons, while the girls did their sewing. Billy Broughall's father would have been the local vet in Montford Bridge. The father of the Bailey sisters, and their other siblings, was an attendant at Shelton Hospital (Asylum) and they all lived by Grove Farm, in a house since demolished. Edna Edge's father, Moses (brother of war casualty, Henry in our churchyard and also uncle to 'Tishy' Evans), was gardener to Mr Mead at the Woodlands. Edna was bright enough to win a scholarship to the Priory Girls School, which would certainly have given her opportunities beyond the traditional rural work. Also working at the Woodlands as cowman, was Tom Price (just a coincident with no connection to today's family), father of Ivy and Joyce, one of whom is in the photograph. The Edwards sisters, Joyce and Phyllis, from the Isle Lane, still have surviving younger sisters, Brenda and Christine, married to local lads, who no doubt have more information about them.

The infant teacher, Nellie Catterill, married Charlie Edwards from the village; he worked at a Morris store in Shrewsbury and later the Milk Marketing Board. They lived in 'The Haven', one of the early houses in Church Lane. They had no children of their own, but Nellie was kept busy teaching at Montford School.

It would be interesting to learn more about what happened to these young children after their school years. Sadly, Denis Brown of Isle Lane went down with his ship in the last war, but there must be some happier stories too.



# Bickton Village News

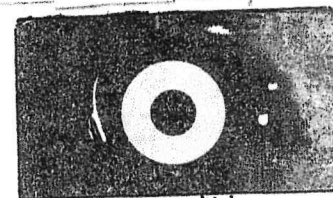


Offprint from  
Feb 2014  
No 571

**HISTORY  
of BICKTON**

by David Pannett

Part 81



Caught on Camera

1928

## Caught on Camera, 1928

As a follow-up to last month's reflections on Bicton life when the Lawson family occupied the vicarage, Miss Dorothy Lewis has provided us with her class photograph taken at that time, together with associated memories.

Nearly all the children shown would, like Dorothy, now be in their nineties, if not already deceased. By publishing this photograph, it may perhaps come to the attention of any survivors or their families, thus prompting their own memories (and even completing identifications). Such was rural life, with its short agricultural tenancies and tied cottages, only a few families have remained in the area for long, so that many descendants must be well scattered by now. Improvements in education were also allowing children to 'spread their wings' in following careers. Families of local tradesmen or those with work in Shrewsbury did however, tend to stay longer in this area, including the Lewis family. Dorothy did, nevertheless, enjoying a successful career as nurse and midwife elsewhere before returning 'home'. the daughter of classmate Arthur 'Tishy' Evans is still a local resident.

With few exceptions, these children all came from the local parish which included Montford Bridge and the Isle. Geoffrey Williams from the Isle Park probably had one of the longest journeys, helped by a taxi service provided by another Isle tenant.

The class shown ranged in age from 5 to 9 and was split into two age groups for actual teaching. Some were absent that particular day, thanks to common childhood ailments. A Hartshorne from Montford Bridge was at least one of them.

Their families were mainly drawn from the ranks of farm and estate workers or local tradesmen, while the principal 'employers' such as the larger tenant farmers, landowners and 'professional' classes, including the vicar, preferred to use private education elsewhere. In any case, most of these would have had older children by this time.

Two exceptions, which actually prove this point, were Brian Warner and the Cassels sisters. The Warners held Forton West Farm on the Montford estate



Left to right:

**Back Row:**

Billy Broughall, George Pope, Victor Buckley, John Matthews, Geoffrey Williams, Arthur Evans, Miss Catterill

**2<sup>nd</sup> Row: (from back)**

Dorothy Lewis, ? Reeves, Alice Powell, Edna Edge, Margaret Bailey, Gwen Evans, Joyce Higgs, Ivy (or Joyce) Price.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Row:**

Joyce Edwards, Phyllis Edwards, ? Asterley ? Ivy Powell, Unknown, Unknown, Joan Edwards, Unknown

**4<sup>th</sup> Row:**

Margaret Cassels, ? Ivy Powell, Phyllis Morris, Brian Warner, Denis Brown, Teddy Davies

**Front Row:**

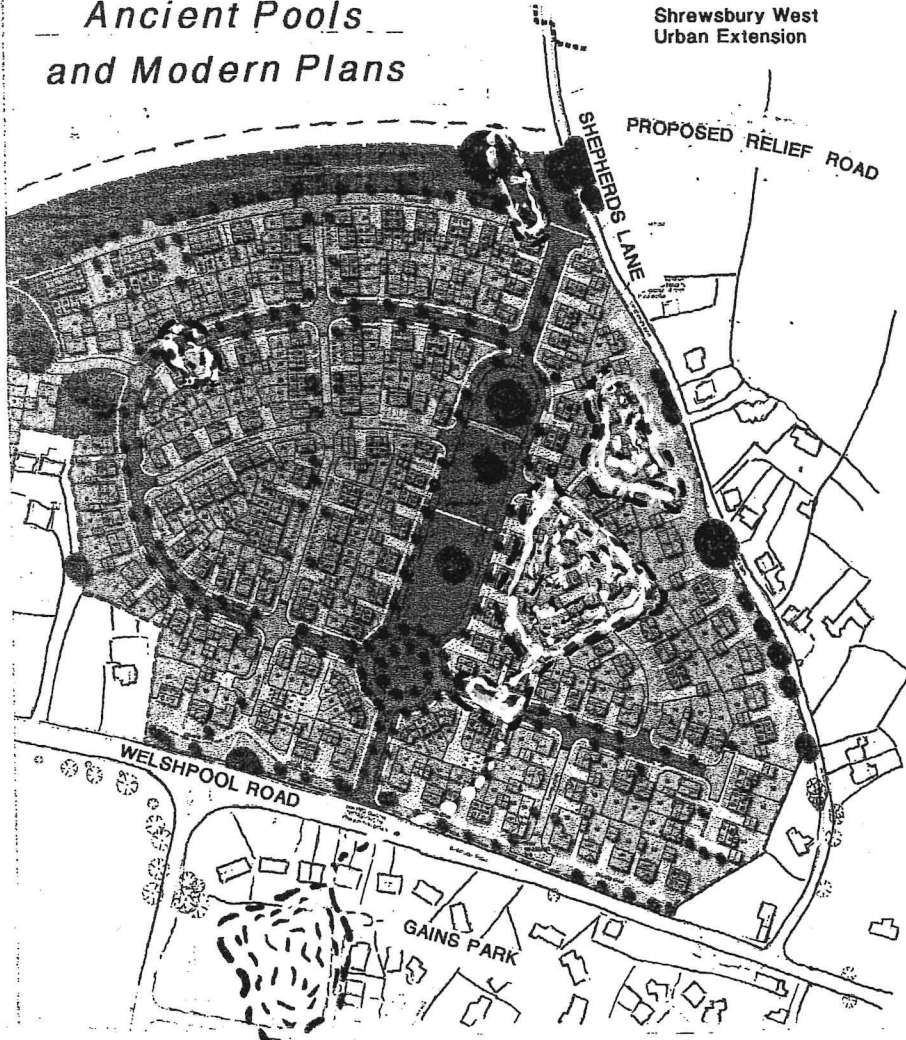
Katherine Bailey, ? Cassels, Unknown, ? Roberts

nineteenth century 'horse shoe' drain tiles turn up in excavations. Many bear a 'DRAIN' stamp, in order to avoid being mistaken for roof ridge tiles, which were then subject to tax, while drain tiles were exempt. Very broad, but shot ridges survive by some old villages, including Bickton (near Red House), which were probably used for more 'garden' type cultivation, such as hemp for fibre (and medicine), hence the term 'Hemp butts' in some field names. In modern vegetable patches, raised beds of some sort could be very useful in years such as this! Meanwhile, soft wet soil and high winds have taken their toll on some of our trees...but that is another story.



Offprint from  
**Mar 2014**  
**No 572**

*Ancient Pools  
 and Modern Plans*



POOLS SHOWN ON  
 INCLOSURE MAP 1768

Shropshire  
 Archives

# Bickton Village News

**HISTORY  
 of BICTON**

by David Pannett

part 82

Yet More Water



## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 82

### Yet More Water

This time last year we discussed the drainage network of the parish and problems caused by the Ice Age. This year the subject is even more topical although by now it is difficult to find much new to say about it.

As the year started rain gauges at Preston Montford Field Centre recorded 119mm (4.69") in January and another 85mm (3.4") during the first half of February. It is therefore no wonder that those old pools down Shepherds Lane are fuller than ever, returning to their original size as shown by the Bicton Heath Inclosure map of 1768. Improved drains then removed them for the next two centuries, but clearly recently the system has been breaking down. Nevertheless, proposed developments seem set to proceed regardless.

Experience in the western suburbs of Shrewsbury shows such sites are best left as open spaces. A few years ago one embarrassed developer in the Radbrook area had to remove one of his new houses rather quickly, when its foundation sank into a peaty hollow!

High density versions of geometric town plans, like some interwar council estates, may suit level gravel terraces as at Monkmoor, but can run into problems on uneven 'glacial' landscapes pitted with 'kettle holes'. Water may be drained away, but soft peat and sediment will remain!

Several times this year, the Severn has spilled on to its floodplain, where it has only caused problems to parts of the town built thereupon. As usual, that word 'FLOODPLAIN' is so rarely used in media reports, that some people do not realise they exist as clear physical features even when dry. If shapes are not obvious, an alluvial soil is a sure sign, well mapped by the Geological Survey many years ago.

Aerial photographs in the news show most older properties occupying higher ground, while newer developments have been less carefully sited on floodplains. Locally, Meverley illustrates this principle, while down river, Tewkesbury does so on a bigger scale.

This year authorities are also waking up to the importance of managing whole drainage basins, after perhaps two centuries of only encouraging improved drainage of farmland. For example, at great cost, the River Perry channel was lowered through Ruyton XI Towns in order to drain Baggy Moor after its peat surface had shrunk following earlier reclamation. The Somerset Levels were likewise a vast peat fen until reclaiming, after which they shrank

even nearer to sea level and vulnerable to water descending upon them from well-drained towns and farmland upstream.

Locally, some Shrewsbury people still call for the Severn to be dredged, often alarmed at sediment building up at English Bridge. This is all a sad reflection on environmental education since good old-fashioned geography textbooks would explain how rivers do such things on the inside of bends. Dredging in any part of the channel would merely cause the water to slow down and thereby drop sediment until the status quo is restored.

Politicians, often poorly educated in Earth Sciences, are getting more involved and one is reminded of the story of King Canute. He is often mocked for attempting to halt the rising tide, but in reality he was a wise ruler who was demonstrating to his flattering court the limits to his powers over natural forces, which he claimed only lay with the Christian God. Indeed, in many ancient societies natural catastrophes were usually interpreted as divine punishment for the wickedness of mankind. Now in a more scientific and secular age the people are still being blamed for upsetting the climate. In return, instead of blaming the priesthood for not protecting them from such wrath, people now direct their anger to relevant government agencies. Arguments and blame for building in unsuitable sites go back and forth, all of which is relevant to those plans down Shepherds Lane!

Water courses, floodplains and pools apart, the main problem facing Bicton farmers over the centuries has been the glacial boulder clay, which covers so much of the parish. Exposures reveal a generally silty clay made up of a mixture of ground-up Welsh mudstone and soft red sand scraped up from the valley beneath Meverley. Pebbles and small boulders of harder lumps of Welsh volcanic rocks lie within it like a 'Christmas Pudding'. Surface layers disturbed by cultivation and worm action are usually brown in colour from well oxidised iron minerals, but the subsoil is often pale yellow where these minerals have been 'reduced' by the lack of oxygen during seasonal waterlogging. Finer clay particles washed down from above tend to impede the movement of water here so it will only soak away slowly.

With these characteristics it is easy to understand why so much medieval cultivation was raised up on ridges, between which furrows took the water down the slope (see aerial photograph). In later centuries, when machinery demanded more level surfaces, 'underdraining' through bundles of brushwood and then clay pipes became necessary. From time to time, early

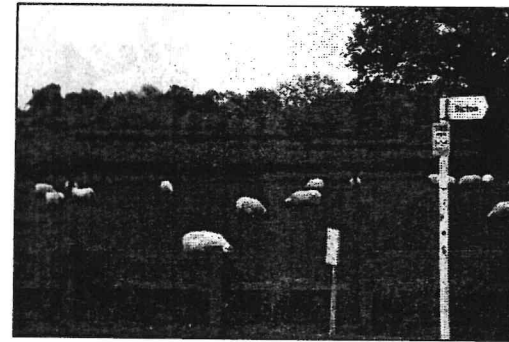
Why does Adolf Hitler  
 Wear such a comic whisker?  
 Does it give him "savoir faire,"  
 Or just make him look brisker?  
 Does he talk too long and often  
 For it to increase its length?  
 Is it, like the hair of Samson,  
 the secret of his strength?  
 Great Scott! That is the best idea  
 I've had for countless years,  
 For heaven's sake, go, Chamberlain,  
 And find a pair of Shears!

50 years ago. Shropshire Magazine August 1964

*Hall Wateridge and Owen property for sale:  
 Bicton Hall ..... is a late regency style country house set in very pleasant  
 gardens. The farmer is well equipped with modern buildings and there is  
 approximately 40 acres of sould pasture land.*

The auction, in two lots, took place in September. The sale followed the death of John Knight Overy (Jack), who ran an outfitters in Pride Hill. He now lies under red granite in our churchyard. He was one of several Shrewsbury businessmen who, over the years, have enjoyed country living at a convenient distance from their workplace. He so enjoyed life here that he was well known for coming home for lunch, but not always returning afterwards!

At this time many changes were taking place in the shopping streets of Shrewsbury, leaving us now with architecture of doubtful quality! Further away in the County, changes were also taking place around Dawley and Madeley with the creation of a 'New Town'. As housing replaced farmland the Development Corporation was able to relocate at least one of the farming families to Bicton, when the Everall family put Woodlands Farm up for sale in April this same year (Alfred Mansell & Co), Watch this space: next year we may find yet more anniversaries. If you know of any, please let us know.



Offprint from

Apr 2014

No 573

# Bicton Village News

**HISTORY  
 of BICTON**

by David Pannett

Dipping  
 into  
 History

website [www.bictonvillage.co.uk](http://www.bictonvillage.co.uk)



## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 83

### Dipping into History

Earlier this year, reports in the press have included the rare sighting of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in the County and also the many effects of our severe weather, such as uprooted trees. The weather has also been adding more damage to Lord Hill's statue in Shrewsbury. Otherwise, we are constantly reminded that the First World War started 100 years ago and the Normandy landings took place 70 years ago. Regular columns in both the Shropshire Star and Shrewsbury Chronicle also feature some minor local events '100 years ago', '50 years ago' etc. and perhaps we could join in by dipping into past records in a similar way:-

450 years ago: Chronicles of Shrewsbury, 1564. (Taylor MSS, Shrewsbury School).

*"This year was there a greate tempest with lyghtening and thoonder contjnewing the space of xj dayes the lycke was nev' seene in England before the forse of which dyd mutche harme in manye places & the forse therof was sutche that ..... by a village callyd Barwycke were ij ocks shacke' and forcyd upp by the rootes and so dryve' upright slydinge ..... downe a slope fyll into the myds of the ..... Severn and so standing as it were growing in the mydds of the same ...."*

(They became a hazard to navigation and had to be cleared)

*"This yeare ..... in the moonthe of October was seen in the Elyment many fiere impressyons .....and all the northe parts seemed to be coveryd with flames of fyer stainge the most parte of an hour ..."*

All this sounds familiar except for the spelling!

200 years ago. 1814. Extracts from St Chads Parish Register.

#### Burials at Bicton

Feb. 4	Mary Jones	10 days
Feb. 21	Richard Mansel, Isle Gate,	4 years
March 13	Sarah Pursell, Rossall Heath,	17 months
Nov. 15	Mary Pursell,	28 years
Dec. 10	Richard Pursell,	26 years

Child deaths were not uncommon at this time, through poverty, diseases and lack of hygiene. The dates significantly fall in the cold part of the year, which

gave added stress. A contagious disease could also hit more than one member of the same family at whatever age. The Shrewsbury Chronicle for this same year also provides some clues:

*Jan 28. "The cold which has been for some days experienced in different parts of country appears to have been greater than has been known for many years".*

The paper went on to report that special collections were being made for the poor during such difficult times. During the course of the year, meetings also took place to consider a suitable monument to Sir Rowland Hill, which led to the design of a column.

100 years ago. 1914. Extract from Bicton Parish Register.

#### Burials

February 7	William Joseph Evans	12 hours
October 14	Anne Lewis Montford Bridge	Age 91

Contrasting life spans illustrate the way in which those who survived the hazards of early childhood, especially cold winters, could eventually reach an old age. Anne, born in June, 1823, never married, remaining an independent 'dress maker' most of her life and thus avoided those repeated pregnancies which were also full of risks to so many women at this time. Electricity, central heating and double glazing make a big difference today!

75 years ago. March 1939. Extract from the magazine of the Shrewsbury Technical College:

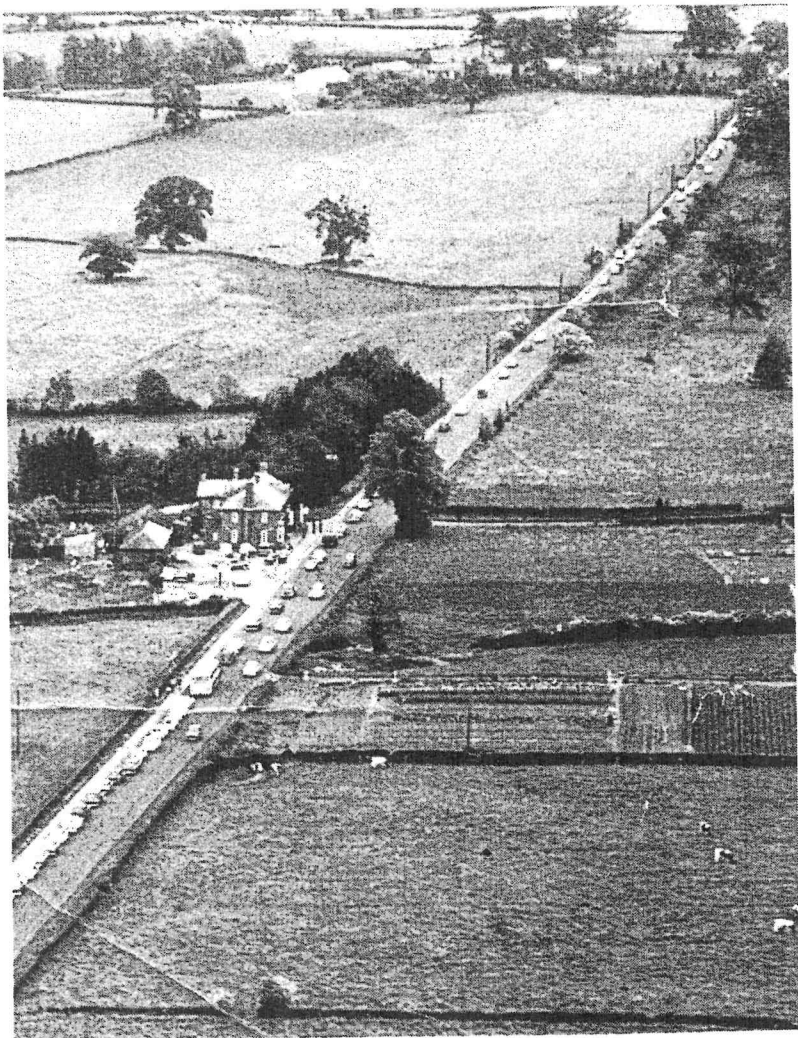
A poem by Marjorie Jones, showing British humour on the eve of war, when prime minister Neville Chamberlain was still talking with Hitler:

#### Dictator Queries

##### *Why does Mussolini*

*Wear no hair upon his head ?  
And, when he had some, was it black,  
Or was it fiery red ?  
Did he lose it all through worry ?  
Did he tear it out in rage ?  
Has he got a bust of Caesar,  
With the hair worn smooth with age ?  
Oh, tell me, Mussolini,  
If, in order to dictate,  
It's absolutely necessary  
To have a hairless pate ?*





Homeward bound by the Four Crosses Inn on a Bank Holiday c.1961



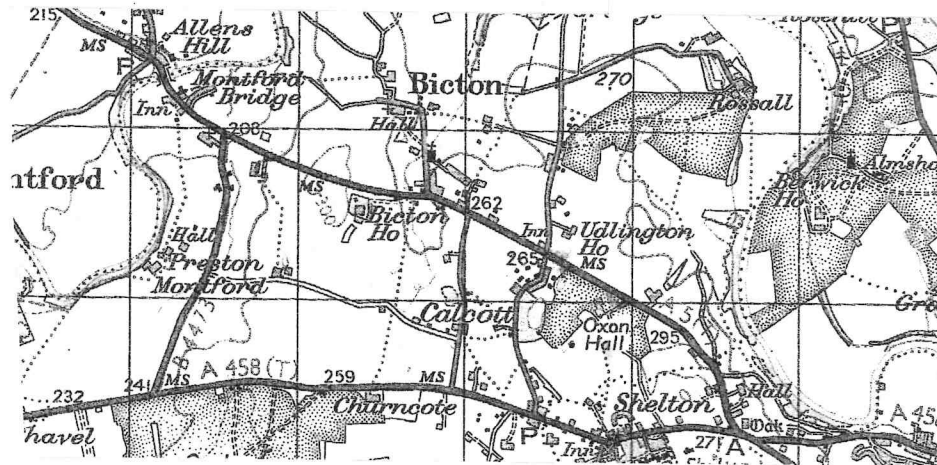
Offprint from  
**May 2014**  
**No 574**

# Bickton Village News

**HISTORY of BICTON**  
 by David Pannett

Part 84  
 Memories of the old A5

[www.bicktonvillage.co.uk](http://www.bicktonvillage.co.uk)



Homeward bound opposite the Four Crosses Inn, Easter 1991 – the last Bank Holiday on the old road



## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 84

### Memories of the old A5

The first Bank Holiday weekend of the year has just passed, with others to follow, together with many summer weekends, when many city dwellers are attracted to the hills and coasts of North Wales. Telford's old Holyhead Road route, the A5, was a particular favourite and this, of course, involved driving through Bicton.

The first Shrewsbury bypass was built in the 1920s to cope with this traffic and a new one was opened in 1991 to meet the increasing demand. Since then, our local road, now B4380, has been much quieter, although there are still worries about speed limits!

Long established residents will remember the old days along the road but newcomers need to be reminded of them:-

The numerous junctions on the old Shrewsbury bypass and the narrow state of Montford Bridge regularly caused congestion at the beginning and end of those summer weekends and Bank Holidays, during which the tail-backs often reached as far as Bicton. One such in the early 1960s was photographed from the air by the Shropshire Star by way of illustration. This photograph incidentally shows the original Four Crosses garage in the outbuildings of the Inn, while opposite, Merton Nurseries was just beginning to develop. Such traffic congestions was not always good for normal business but the proprietors sometimes sold cut flowers to the stationary drivers outside their gate instead.

About this time, the severe winter of 1963-4 caused damage to Telford's Montford Bridge, when some ice built up in the joints. Repairs were obviously necessary, but the need to close the busy road completely while these were carried out was a particular challenge. The answer lay in quickly replacing the deck with prefabricated beams held together with new 'high-alumina' quick drying concrete. The beams could also project over the side, accommodating walkways, thus freeing up more road space for traffic.

Those busy days on the road also produced regular accidents, especially around the Four Crosses, where the junctions and services posed greater risk

to locals and strangers alike. Some of us needed A&E while many a car was written off, shunted from behind when slowing to enter the Garage or Nursery. Many a new gap was punched through the hedge as a result! Excessive speed on the straight is no new problem.

Near Villa Lane a wooden fence marks the spot where, twenty five years ago, a skidding lorry full of nails demolished the original hedge (and nearly demolished the writer too!). More tales could be told of other events around Bicton Lane. Sadly, shortly before the new road opened, the family at the Wingfield Arms were devastated by the loss of their daughter just outside in a road accident.

By this time, alarm bells were ringing in the construction industry about the behaviour of that 'high-alumina' cement, which over time was just turning to powder. All that 1960s work on Montford Bridge had therefore become a liability! If a lorry had crashed through the railings it could have taken the deck with it!

Now, with the new route open, the opportunity was taken to do a 'proper job', with a new reinforced concrete deck cast 'in situ', using well tried conventional techniques, which of course needed much more time. The road was therefore closed for many weeks leaving only limited pedestrian access. The Wingfield Arms and the Garage on the Montford side (now closed) found themselves on dead ends, deprived of passing trade. In a public spirited gesture however, the new proprietor of the Inn cut a hole in his hedge so that some neighbours could sneak off the new road and use his land to reach Bicton without a long diversion. Though popular with locals, he obviously upset officialdom!

This closure, together with the design of the junction beyond Montford Bridge, (criticised by the Coroner), encouraged more use of the route in and out of Shrewsbury via Bicton Heath. Businesses in Bicton began losing passing trade and needed to adapt or close down. Bicton Cafe is now a foot clinic, Merton Nurseries has gone, while both Garage and Inns have diversified their activities beyond just petrol and beer!

Meanwhile, the new A5 can sometimes still suffer congestion at those peak holiday 'rush hours' and accidents still occur along it from time to time so do take care!

**BICTON.**

4 miles north-west from Shrewsbury.

(Postal address, Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.)  
 (Marked thus \* postal address, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.)  
 (The Telephone Exchange is Montford Bridge.)

**PRIVATE RESIDENTS.**

Allman Philip, Hawthorne villa  
 Bennett Benj. Southwold  
 Bland Jack Edgar, Tuckton  
 \*Bryce-Smith Arnold, Preston Montford hall. § 42  
 Chidley Miss, School ho  
 Cooke Isaac, Sunnybanks  
 Ensor Wm. H. Uddington manor. § 88  
 Giles Sir Rt. S. Rossall hall. § 28  
 Hillage Wtr. The Hollies  
 Jones Mrs. Lloyd, The Woodlands. § 75  
 Lewis Ernest, Milnbridge  
 Mead Geo. Percy, Bicton hall  
 Mullineux Rd. Silverdale  
 Paddock Jn. J.P. Mayfield  
 Petharick Herbt. Rossall gro. § 43  
 Philp Rev. Rd. Jn. Vernon (vicar), Vicarage. § 60  
 Plakering Jn. Corbet, Gainsthorpe  
 Powell Mrs. The Haven, Shepherd's la  
 Sandford Humphrey M.A., J.P. The Isle. § 27  
 Sandford Rd. Uddington. § 65  
 Stevenson Edwd. Hy. Bicton Heath ho  
 \*Symes Regnd. F. Brook ho  
 Teeco Misses L. & A. Calcott ho  
 Welford Arth. Edwd. The Cottage  
 Wingfield Mrs. Onslow hall. § 48

**COMMERCIAL.**

Andrews Hannah (Mrs.), smallholder, Thorngrove  
 Andrews Wm. smallholder, Cotner la  
 Ancient Order of Foresters (Court Stability, No. 2850 & Court Pride of Stability, No. 9549; Jas. Paddock, sec)  
 Barker Wm. farmer, Horton la  
 Barkley Wm. smallholder, Shepherd's la  
 Bicton Church of England School (Miss C. E. Chidley, head mistress)  
 \*Broughall Ernest, castrator  
 \*Roberts Eras. Trevor, farmer, The Grange  
 Roberts Jas. H. farmer, Bicton farm  
 Roberts Wm. smallholder, Shepherd's la  
 \*Rodenhurst Dennis, farmer, Preston Montford  
 Sambrook M. (Mrs.), farmer, Rossall Heath farm  
 Slater Thos. farmer, Isle farm  
 Stringer Broc. dairymen, Elm cott

Cassels Bernard Wm. farmer, Bicton ho  
 Clarke Alfd. Gethin, farmer, Churnoote farm. § 73  
 Clarke Thos. Jas. farmer, Corner Irim  
 Cooke Jn. Wm. farmer, The Nursery, Bicton Heath. § 56  
 Davies Alfok Wm. blacksmith  
 Davies David, smallholder, Isle villa, Isle la  
 Dorricott Jack, farmer, Horton la  
 Dudley Wm. Geo. dairyman, Bicton villa  
 Edge Wm. farmer, Isle pk  
 Edwards Hy. smallholder, Shepherd's la  
 Edwards Wm. smallholder  
 Francis Harry, grocer, Newlyn  
 Griffiths Corbett, farmer, Onslow farm  
 Griffiths David Edwd. farmer, Rossall farm  
 Hallmark Alfd. dairyman, Horton la  
 \*Hartshorne S. J. (Mrs.), shopkpr. 11 Montford bridge  
 Holloway Jn. Edwd. farmer, Dinthill hall (postal address, Ford, Shrewsbury, Shropshire). § 93  
 Hope Thos. Hy. farmer, Isle grange  
 Jones Edwd. farmer, Bicton Villa farm  
 Jones Jn. blacksmith  
 Lake Frank Edmd. poultry farmer  
 Lee Arth. shopkpr. & post office  
 Lewis E. (Mrs.), tea rms.; confctnr. & tobaccon.; bed & breakfast (Sunnyside)  
 Llewellyn Alfd. Rd. farmer, Rossall grange  
 Morgan M. E. (Mrs.), farmer, Uddington farm  
 Paddock Jas. farmer, Bicton farm  
 Paddock Jas. farmer, Pound ho  
 Painter Rd. butcher, Pump ho  
 People's Refreshment House Association Ltd. Four Crosses inn. § 68  
 Pryce Wm. S. farmer, Woodcote  
 Puffet Arth. J. smallholder, Corner la  
 Ratcliffe J. (Mrs.), tea rooms; bed & breakfast; moderate charges, Rose cottage  
 Ratcliffe Jas. H. farmer, The Grove. § 72  
 Roberts Eras. David, farmer, Calcott  
 Wallader A. M. & A. (Misses), smallholders, Calcott  
 Williams Wm. H. cowkeeper, Calcott Moss  
 \*Wingfield Arms Hotel (People's Refreshment House Association Ltd.). § 21  
 Yeomans Rd. Wm. clerk to Parish Council & rate collector for Atcham Rural District Council, Heath cott

KELLY'S DIRECTORY OF SHREWSBURY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD 1940



# Bicton Village News

www.bictonvillage.co.uk

Offprint from  
**Jun 2014**  
**No 575**

**HISTORY of BICTON**  
 by David Pannett

Part 85

H. Reeves Mrs. Mary Eliz.  
 nt. foregate  
 el. Walker W. B.  
 sel. Wigley

**History on the library shelf**

... head. Tele.  
 ...wsbury 2894  
 Salt Harold Geoffrey (firm, Salt & Sons), 10 Belmont  
 Salt Regnd. Nowell (firm, Salt & Sons), 10 Belmont  
 \*Sandford Rd. 2 College hill  
 Smallshaw Wm. Hy. B. 7 Pride Hill chmbrs. Pride hill  
 \*Sprott, Stokes & Turnbull, 3 & 4 College hill. Telephone No. 2671  
 Alexander Hudleston (firm,

**STONE & MARBLE**  
 See also Monumental  
 Edwards Geo. & Sons (Ed. Smithfield rd  
 Keable Wm. Geo. 35 friars

**SURGEON**  
 See Medical L

**SURGEON-DEN**  
 See Dentist

**SURVEYOR**

## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 85

### History on the library shelf

For any historical study of a town or village, directories published through the nineteenth century and the first part of the next are a valuable source of information, readily accessible in the library. They have already been quoted in several parts of this history series.

In the earliest local directories, such as Pigot's in 1822 and 1828, Bicton information was included in the Shrewsbury entries; since it was part of St Chad's Parish and is therefore not always clearly identifiable. In 1851, however, 'Bagshaws Gazetteer of Shropshire' set the pattern adopted by most subsequent directories in which Bicton was treated the same as other rural parishes.

This standard format, continued and refined by Kelly's, started with a brief description of the parish, any separate parts and their legal definition. In the case of Bicton, the creation of the new ecclesiastical parish in 1853 and then the civil parish in the 1880s were thereby explained. The principle landowners, 'officials' such as the incumbent and school teachers, and also post office services were likewise explained. Even soils got a mention. Lists of leading residents and those with commercial activities, both farming and trading, then followed.

Kelly's, originally founded in 1799, dominated the local market for 'County' directories for almost 80 years, although other versions were also published by Cassey and later by Wildings. As a local company, Wildings only covered Shrewsbury and its immediate neighbourhood but could offer much greater detail. Editions appeared every 5 or 6 years until the Second World War finally put an end to the system.

The type and timing of the information provided usefully filled the gaps between the ten-yearly census records and together they make it easier to note changes in the community. For instance, the succession of innkeepers, clergy and mainly tenant farmers can be noted over the years. Minor landowners as well as tenants of Bicton Hall or Preston Montford Hall also changed frequently. Since some local residents were, in fact, Shrewsbury businessmen, their work addresses can also easily be found in the town entries. Most of such aspects have already been illustrated in this series. For instance, we have already told the story of what is now known as 'the

Yews' in Montford Bridge, which was once the home and business of the Thomas family. They were recorded very well in the census but the successive directories traced the story of their business from a grocery store in the 1850s to an ever-expanding post office from the 1870s. Bit by bit new functions were added including the first telephone exchange in the 1920s. Meanwhile, next door, the Wingfield Onslow estate also owned Preston Montford Hall since acquiring it from the Hill family in 1829. At first Sir Francis Hill remained here as sitting tenant, but the Revd. Charles Wingfield, brother of the new owner, John, retired here in the 1850s. After his death the house was then let to a series of tenants, at least three of whom were absent on census day (in a way not unknown with wealthier citizens but rare amongst workers) so that directories prove useful in identifying them. They were William Butler Lloyd (1870), the Earl of Leitrim (1879) and William Ingram Shaw (1885). Incidentally, the Earl's Irish title may perhaps explain the Irish and other distant birthplaces of his young staff recorded by the census, suggesting he had brought his own household with him rather than recruit locally.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Charles Ralph Borlase Wingfield, who now held the estate, was a prominent military man and therefore it may be no surprise that his tenants were of similar rank: Major Walter Garret, Major William Borfield (Royal Artillery Reserve) and Colonel Robert Philips. By 1913, Arnold Bryce Smith, also said to have a military background, became tenant and then owner for the next 26 years, a period during which census data is not yet available.

In the nineteenth century the long established Sandford family of the Isle included lawyers who practiced in Shrewsbury, where the directories record their offices in Belmont. Richard Sandford, with offices in College Hill, in 1907 took over Udlington Villa, which earlier had been the family home of the Pritchards who had a grocery business in Dogpole. As with the Thomas family, personal details were recorded in the census, but directories trace the story of the business from the early nineteenth century until 1885.

Kelly's directory of 1941 and a Shrewsbury edition incorporating Wildings directory, illustrated here, represent the last of this long line of publications as the wartime problems developed. Bicton has always experienced a steady turnover of population and it is interesting to study the list of leading citizens and tradesmen and reflect on how many families are still in the neighbourhood today.

brother Charles and his wife Anne, in a similar way, joined his parents under that granite obelisk in Shrewsbury Cemetery. Thanks to 'health and safety' concerns, this now lies dismantled and half hidden in the grass, while the Bicton angel still proudly looks over our churchyard after more than a century. Let us hope it may do so for many more years as a celebration of a personal story and the Victorian ways of treating death.

This whole story also highlights the modern issue of conserving and maintaining these old graveyards as part of our national and local heritage. With the old churchyard, as well as the plots around the angel, we in Bicton certainly have our share of this problem to deal with somehow.



Offprint from

Jul 2014

No 576

# Bicton Village News

**HISTORY  
of BICTON**

by David Pannett

part 86

Mr. TISDALE'S  
ANGEL

www.bictonvillage.co.uk

In ever loving Memory of  
**JANE,**  
THE DEARLY BELOVED WIFE OF  
**T. W. M. TISDALE,**  
OF SEVERN LODGE MOUNTFIELDS, SHREWSBURY,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
JULY 8<sup>TH</sup> 1890.

"Say what a good wife should  
be and she was that!"

## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 86

### Mr Tisdale's Angel

Anyone walking through our churchyard, or just passing along Church Lane, cannot fail to notice a white marble angel standing high above the surrounding gravestones. Closer inspection will reveal her to be a monument to Jane, wife of T W M Tisdale of Severn Lodge, Mountfields, who died in July 1890. At this date she must have been one of the first to occupy the new graveyard, recently opened in 1886. Census records show that she died aged only 43 at a time when death could strike all ages through common diseases and everyday infections which got out of hand. She was obviously sorely missed by her husband and the scale of the monument reflects his grief, as was his comment: "Say what a good wife should be and she was that."

Clearly we have a very personal story in an age when such display or proper 'celebration of death' was seen to be important, especially for those cut down at a young age. By contrast, her husband lived another twenty six years before joining her here at the age of 71 in 1916.

Elaborate monuments at this time would have also displayed a family's wealth and importance in the community as can be seen, for instance, in the older parts of Shrewsbury Cemetery. Some rise so high that they risk becoming a 'health and safety' issue. Fortunately, this angel still stands upright, although nearby stones have sunk. These include that of Revd. George Newton Lloyd, who played an important part in establishing this new church and graveyard in the 1880s. The design of his gravestone consists of a cross laid to rest on a pillow as an appropriate symbol for a departed vicar, (as well as being safe from the present dangerous tilting).

While it is quite obvious why the Revd. Lloyd and other 'locals' lie here, the Tisdale connections with Bicton remain unclear. Their resting place should have been the Shrewsbury Cemetery, opened in 1856, where Jane's parents-in-law already lay under a granite obelisk. Perhaps Thomas felt that Bicton was just as close to his home in Frankwell and the new graveyard could offer a better highly visible site for a more romantic monument.

At this time, there were several monumental masons trading in Shrewsbury,

of which the Edwards brothers at the Welsh Bridge in Frankwell would have been the most likely providers. They advertised as 'Monumental, Architectural and Ecclesiastical sculptors and masonry contractors'.

Such monuments would have been very expensive and therefore we need to take a closer look at the Tisdale family fortunes and connections. The inscription 'T W M Tisdale' actually hid his full name, known from other records: Thomas (after father) William (after grandfather) Matthews (after father's cousin). He was a surveyor by profession and at times worked with his brother Charles Edward as surveyors and estate agents from their offices in Talbot chambers in Market Street (since rebuilt after fire). All this was actually a business started by their father which they carried on after his death in 1876.

By this time, Thomas 'senior' had also been Borough surveyor and engineer for 26 years, alongside that private practice as civil engineer, surveyor and valuer. Amongst other things he designed the Welsh Methodist Chapel in Frankwell which has since been incorporated into Theatre Severn. Then, in 1875, he produced a fine map of Shrewsbury, which unfortunately was soon rendered obsolete by the new large-scale mapping by the Ordnance Survey. The sons therefore found themselves in a new world of national mapping which would undermine the traditional work of local surveyors.

In his will, originally made in 1867, Thomas senior also left Severn Lodge to his two sons. Wife, Elizabeth, had already died by this time, as well as a daughter, Elizabeth, who appears to have died in infancy. Subsequent census records show that Thomas W M and new wife Jane had taken over Severn Lodge by 1881 while brother Charles and new wife Anne moved eventually to Admaston. There is no mention of any grandchildren, except in very general legal terms, in the will, and no children appear in any other records.

The will also included several other rented properties in Frankwell and even Rhyl, together with a range of commercial investments. Clearly the brothers had good financial backing even if the surveying business was proving weak.

In the 1890s, after Jane's death, directories show a succession of different occupiers of Severn Lodge, while Thomas disappears from the professional lists. He retired to Brighton (Freshfield Road), but he returned to be buried beside Jane in 1916. Later, in 1922,

at Rose Cottage). From the 1920s, the People's Refreshment House Association also took over the Wingfield Arms and the Four Crosses.

By this time local manufacture had ceased, but there remained fourteen cycle retailers in Shrewsbury. By 1940 there were still eleven during a time when cyclists were sharing the road with an increasing number of motor cars.

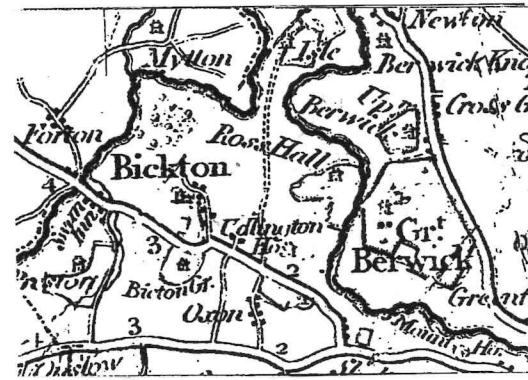
One piece of safety equipment developed at this time was the acetylene head lamp. Water was dripped from a tank into a lower chamber filled with calcium carbide, where they reacted to form that flammable gas. There were amusing stories of such lamps either freezing or running dry, and which were then revived with the help of one of the young men in the party!

As a reflection of the roughness of roads at the time, both acetylene and oil lamps were mounted on spring brackets to minimise vibration. Saddles were also well sprung. It is easy to understand why contemporary babies' prams also had large wheels like bicycles and large springs beneath the body.

With rising fuel costs and the need for exercise, perhaps we ought to get out on those old-style machines much more – but do take care!



*Pram as 'they used to build them'!*



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# Bickton Village News

**HISTORY  
of BICTON**

by David Pannett

Part 87

[www.bicktonvillage.co.uk](http://www.bicktonvillage.co.uk)

On yer bike!



On yer bike!

The recent Tour de France race through parts of England has certainly drawn attention to cycling while, in London, the Mayor is a good advertisement for bicycles in towns. Locally, one result of the downgrading of the old A5 is that the Bicton route is now part of a national cycle network. Groups or individuals, often clad in shiny lycra and 'high viz' tops, are therefore often seen passing through, especially in Summer. Less often seen are local workers and school children on their daily commuting, but this would have been a lot different in the past.

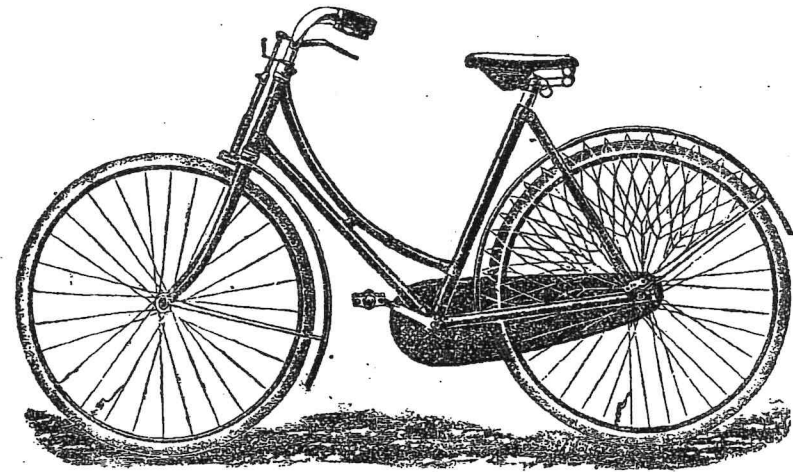
The second half of the nineteenth century saw the gradual evolution of the modern bicycle from a gentleman's plaything to a form of mass transport available to all. Pneumatic tyres, improved chains, standardisation of parts and mass production in factories in places like Coventry all contributed to this. Improved road surfaces maintained by new highway authorities also helped.

In rural areas especially, workers were able to reach varied jobs more easily, as well as a wider circle of social contacts. (Ranging further afield to find marriage partners was always good for communities). Rural postmen, nurses and midwives, as illustrated on TV, could also perform their services much better. Hitherto, such mobility had been restricted to those who could afford at least a 'pony and trap'.

In Shrewsbury, directories reveal the rapid expansion of the cycle trade from 1890 onwards, with seven agents and at least one local manufacturer operating by 1900. The firm of Groves had a depot in Castle Street and a works in Claremont Street, where they made their 'Salopian' model. The basic design was available at £7-10s. (£7.50), but, for a little extra, it could be fitted with a 'free wheel' and 'rim brakes' as an alternative. Otherwise one had to control speed with the pedals all the time or rely on a front brake pressing on the tyre! Ladies and gents versions were available, with the former having both chain-case and net over the back wheel to avoid problems with those long Edwardian skirts.

# Groves' "Salopian,"

The only Bicycle Manufactured in the Town.



**GROVES' 1900 PATTERN BICYCLE,**

By 1910, there were two such manufacturers and another eleven agents for other makes, one of which also offered repairs. These traders were both general stores, such as Della Portas and well established hardware merchants such as Shukers and Lewis & Froggatt, who were neighbours of Ernest Lewis in Frankwell.

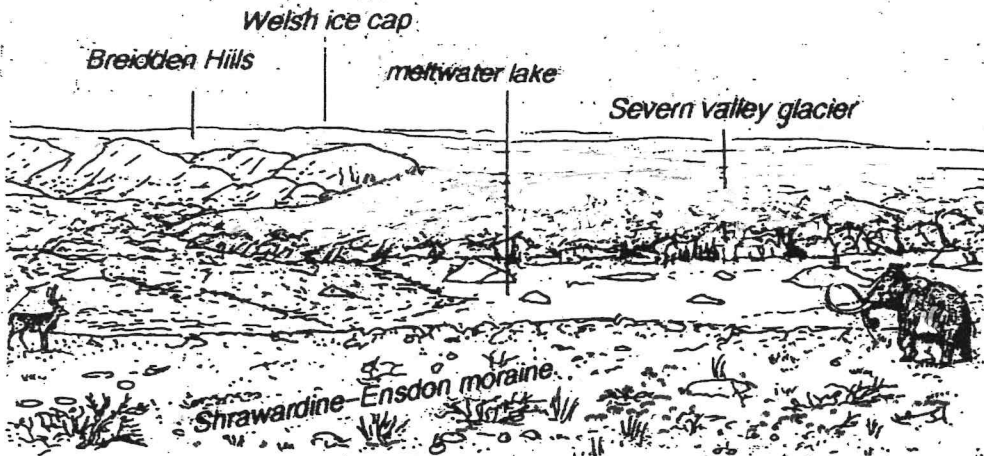
As already discussed in this series, Ernest Lewis of Milnsbridge (Shepherds Lane), who had his watch-makers business in Frankwell, was a great user of bicycles. Apart from his daily journey to the shop, he also travelled around winding clocks in both public and private buildings. In addition, he was a keen photographer who worked 'out and about' rather than in a fixed studio. Significantly, some of his surviving photographs show people proudly showing off their new bicycles, even those ladies in long skirts!

Apart from such useful rural mobility, the period after WW1 saw flow in the opposite direction as townspeople explored the countryside. Nationally, the Ordnance Survey 'popular' editions of maps specifically targeted cycle tourists, while locally; several tea shops had already opened to cater for them along the Holyhead Road (William Proctor at Lyndhurst, John Ratcliffe



The View from SHRAWARDINE CASTLE then and now

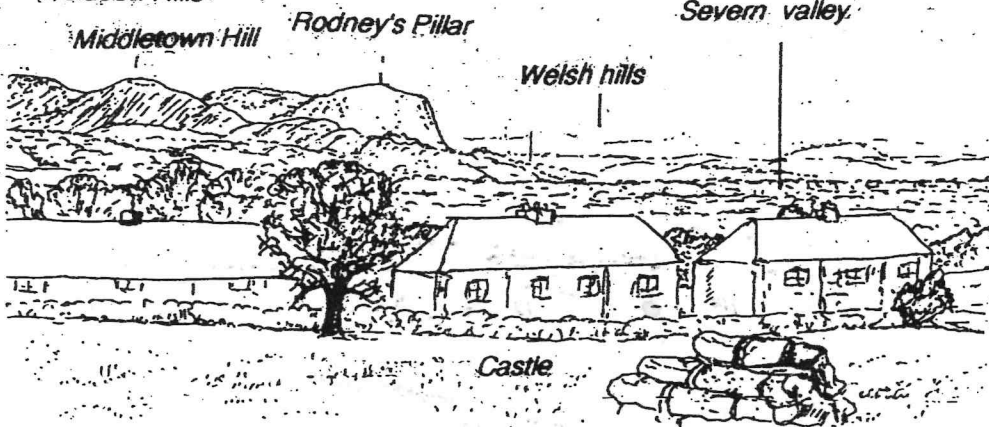
18,000 years ago



Towards the end of the last Ice Age the glaciers are melting back to reveal our present landscape

Today

Breidden Hills:



Since then the 'natural' landscape has been modified by human activity in various ways.

At this latitude we are still vulnerable to periodic 'Ice Ages'!



Offprint from

Sep 2014

No 578

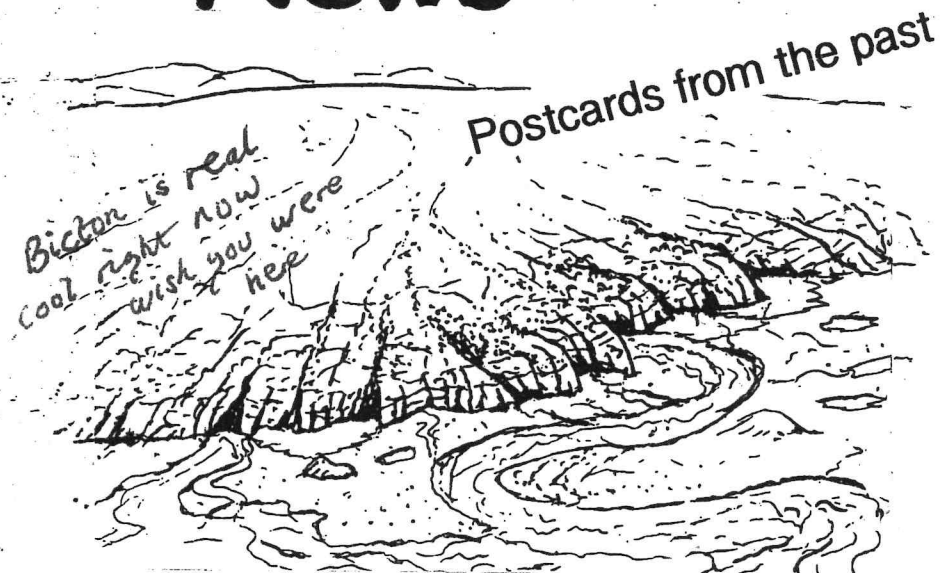
# Bickton Village News

**HISTORY  
of BICTON**

by David Pannett

part 88

[www.bicktonvillage.co.uk](http://www.bicktonvillage.co.uk)



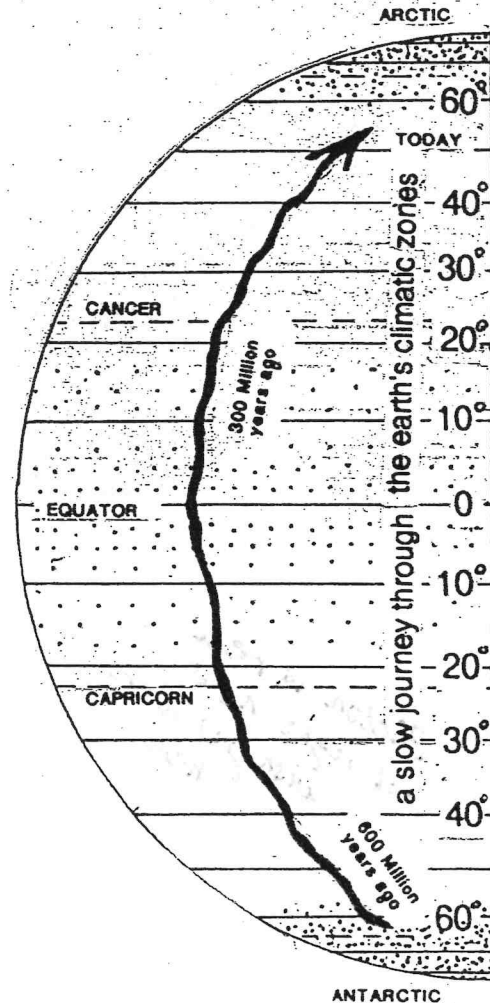
## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 88

### Postcards from the past

Once again, August has been the popular holiday month. In 'olden times' such a break from normal work or school allowed extra hands to help with the harvest, but now it is more likely to provide an opportunity for travel. Many travellers might also send a picture postcard to friends and family as a means of keeping in touch between the regular exchanges of Christmas cards.

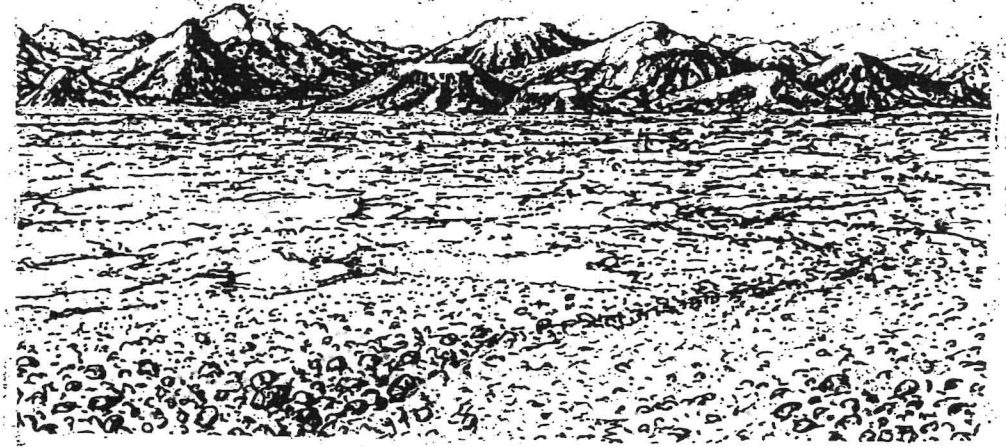
While out and about one may also notice how our local rocks reveal that they have also travelled! Over the last 600 million years our local piece of the Earth's crust, i.e. our 'tectonic plate', has been drifting north from the Antarctic, picking up sediments or suffering erosion associated with each climatic zone. At the same time, life upon it was evolving. If it could have sent some postcards, what would they have shown? Read on for suggestions.

For homework, why not measure the distance on the atlas map and work out the speed of this plate's movement?



### 550 million years ago

Sediment eroded from old volcanoes fills a deep trough in a bare cold landscape yet to be colonised by life. After later earth movements it is exposed at Bayston Hill where it is quarried for excellent road stone.



### 300 million years ago

Sand and gravel washed from the Shropshire Hills fills the plain on the site of Shrewsbury. A 'tropical savanna' climate with long dry seasons presents a challenge to primitive conifers and early reptiles. The resulting 'rust' coloured sandstones, dug from The Quarry (creating the Dingle) can be seen in the town's medieval buildings.



A serious display of handicrafts



A not so serious display of fancy dress



Oct 2014

No 579

Offprint

# Bickton Village News

**HISTORY of BICTON**

by David Pannett

part 89

BICTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Programme 1978

President:  
Mrs E.M.Parsonage, Racecourse

Secretary:  
Mrs M.J. Smith, 55 The Oval, Bickton  
Tel: Montford Bridge 535.

Asst. Secretary:  
Mrs A.King. Tel: M. Bridge

Treasurer:  
Mrs E.Beswick, 31 The Oval,  
Tel: Montford Bridge 340.

and Mrs Fowles.  
Competition: A limerick using for the first line: "Here comes Heather Game again".

Nov. 1st: A.G.M.

Tea Hostesses: Mrs Rogers, Miss Warley and Mrs King

Dec: St. Giles W.I.

Ringers (O-)

Tea Hoste

Trow and

Competition: mince pies - to help with refreshments.

Trading Stall: Mrs O.Jones, Mrs. Wartsby

www.bicktonvillage.co.uk

Jam, Jerusalem and more besides

## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 89

Jam, Jerusalem and more besides

As the whole nation commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the start of the First World War, here in Bicton our local Women's Institute celebrates its own ninetieth anniversary. The two events are not altogether unrelated... The WI movement really started in Canada during the last years of the nineteenth century, but attempts to introduce the idea to the traditional male dominated world of Britain in the following century proved rather slow. However, with some support from enlightened branches of the 'Agricultural Organisation Society' in September 1915, an institute was set up at LlanfairPG in Anglesey (better known for its long name) which could provide a model for others to follow.

By then the war was changing the world for women anyway, giving them greater opportunities beyond domestic roles and breaking down the barriers of male prejudice. In particular, the role of rural women in coping with food shortages, through co-operation, mutual support and education, was at least appreciated by the 'men from the Ministry'. The WI association with jam and food preservation was thus established!

After the war, the desire to forge a new world after so much suffering could be summed up by those poetic images in Blake's 'Jerusalem'. Women in particular benefitted from the changes, gaining more political freedom and confidence in organising institutions (as well as freeing themselves from large hats, long heavy skirts and tight Edwardian corsets).

As more local institutes were established, the national and regional administrative structures of the movement were set up, breaking free from wartime ministry support.

After that serious business of the war, and while there remained continuing social issues, the national leaders nevertheless stressed the need to have more fun with music, drama and outings. For some isolated rural women in those days a 'charabanc' ride gave them a rare opportunity to see a wider world. The movement therefore grew from strength to strength, establishing new groups including that covering 'Bicton and District' in 1924. The first president for several years was Mrs Amy Sandford of Udlington (now Isle Court) helped by Kathleen Edwards, Miss Lee and Mrs Olive

Paddock. Monthly meetings were then held in rotation at the Four Crosses tea rooms, the Grapes at Bicton Heath and the Wingfield Arms at Montford Bridge.

Since those days the same formula of varied local activities and involvement with other groups at county level has continued. The Second World War also made it necessary to return to those skills developed in the First – jamming and canning and dealing with welfare issues, including refugees. In peacetime the scope for activities has become even wider, too numerous to list, but can be illustrated by the following examples from the 1980s. There was more going on than just those monthly meetings in the new Village Hall. Such outside events also tended to produce more photographic records, particularly those competitions staged at the West Mid show ground.

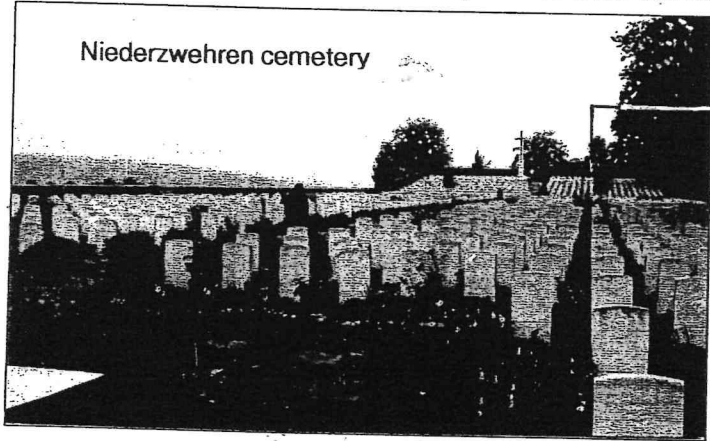
Finally we must not forget the 'behind the scenes' help from many husbands over the years (perhaps new 'equality' legislation means they could join too!). At least they were invited to join a weekend in Paris 30 years ago this month - another anniversary!



which he had little normal family life apart from that provided by grandparents. Meanwhile 'uncles' Harry and Frank Yewbery, now from Bickton, also joined up, but only Frank returned. He had already married Mary Groom just before the war and now continued life as cowman at the Woodlands. Mother/ Grandmother Mary moved to Corner Lane by Bickton Heath, where she died in 1930 aged 80.

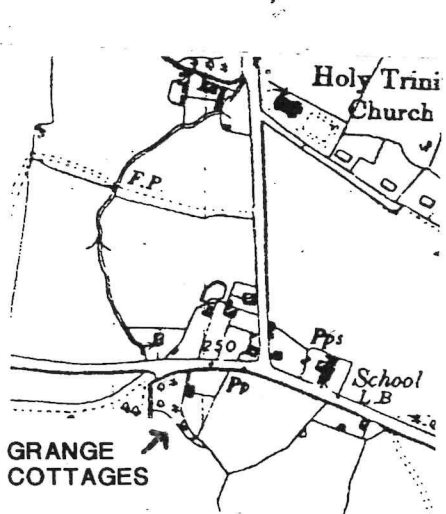
The nearest neighbours around Grange Cottage likewise experienced both joy and tragedy during the war: two Cassels boys from Bickton House returned safely, as did Arthur Edge from Calcott Lane, although his brother Harry only returned to die from his wounds and now lies in our churchyard. Across the road at the school the master's son Denis Blakemore was 'shot at dawn' for desertion and lies in another small 'out of the way' cemetery in Belgium. We could discuss the details some other time.

If any readers have their own family stories from the war do let us know.



Niederzwehren cemetery

ARTHUR BASON



GRANGE COTTAGES



Offprint from  
Nov 2014  
No 580

# Bickton Village News

**HISTORY  
of BICKTON**

by David Pannett

Part 90



www.bicktonvillage.co.uk

## David Pannett's History of Bicton part 90

### Far away but not forgotten

Once again in November we remember the fallen in past wars, although this year the focus has already been upon the events starting in 1914. The Bicton memorial boards inside the church record that 58 men from the parish joined that war but that 11 did not survive it, so there must be many personal stories to tell. For instance, that of Len Cooke of the Grange has already featured in this history series.

The national and international commemoration of the war has already boosted the growing 'Battlefield Tourist industry', so that many key sites now have improved facilities to cater for visitors, such as those around Ypres and the Somme area (Menin Gate, Tyne Cot, Thiepval). These will, of course, be the focus of particular attention, but many smaller and 'out of the way' sites may be overlooked. Since some of these contain Bicton men, perhaps we ought to draw attention to them with two examples.

Harry Yewbery died in October 1916 aged 21 and is buried in a small cemetery in woodland near the village of Aix-Noulette in northern France. It had been originally established by a casualty station set up in the sheltered position just behind the front lines, which were enduring the usual 'stalemate' and 'war of attrition' rather than by set piece battles. These had already taken place at Loos, nearby to the north, while at this moment most action was taking place at the Somme area further south.

Today the nearby hill overlooking this cemetery is crowned by the great French memorial and cemetery of Notre Dame de Lorette, which is never short of visitors and is highly visible from the Paris autoroute anyway. Most British tourists are more likely to visit the nearby Canadian memorial at nearby Vimy Ridge.

By contrast, Arthur Henry Bason, who died in October 1918, aged 21, lies in a larger cemetery, but one further from the front near Kassel, into which those who died as prisoners of war have been concentrated from other sites in Germany. He may have been wounded and captured in the German 'Spring Offensive' of March 1918 which saw so many British positions overrun. Like Harry, he could have died from his wounds in spite of medical care. Infected wounds could be a particular problem in those days before the development of penicillin and may have contributed to the excessive death toll of the war. Also, even the best medical facilities could have been overwhelmed at times.

This cemetery, well maintained to the usual 'British and Commonwealth'

standard, shares a small hill with a less well presented Russian plot, near the village of Niederzwehren, now almost absorbed by Kassel. This is a very central location in the Country and for the same reason, the surroundings include a railway and important motorway intersections, while a long distance footpath passes the gate. The equivalent German POW cemetery in this Country is likewise centrally located, but on a much quieter site on Cannock Chase.

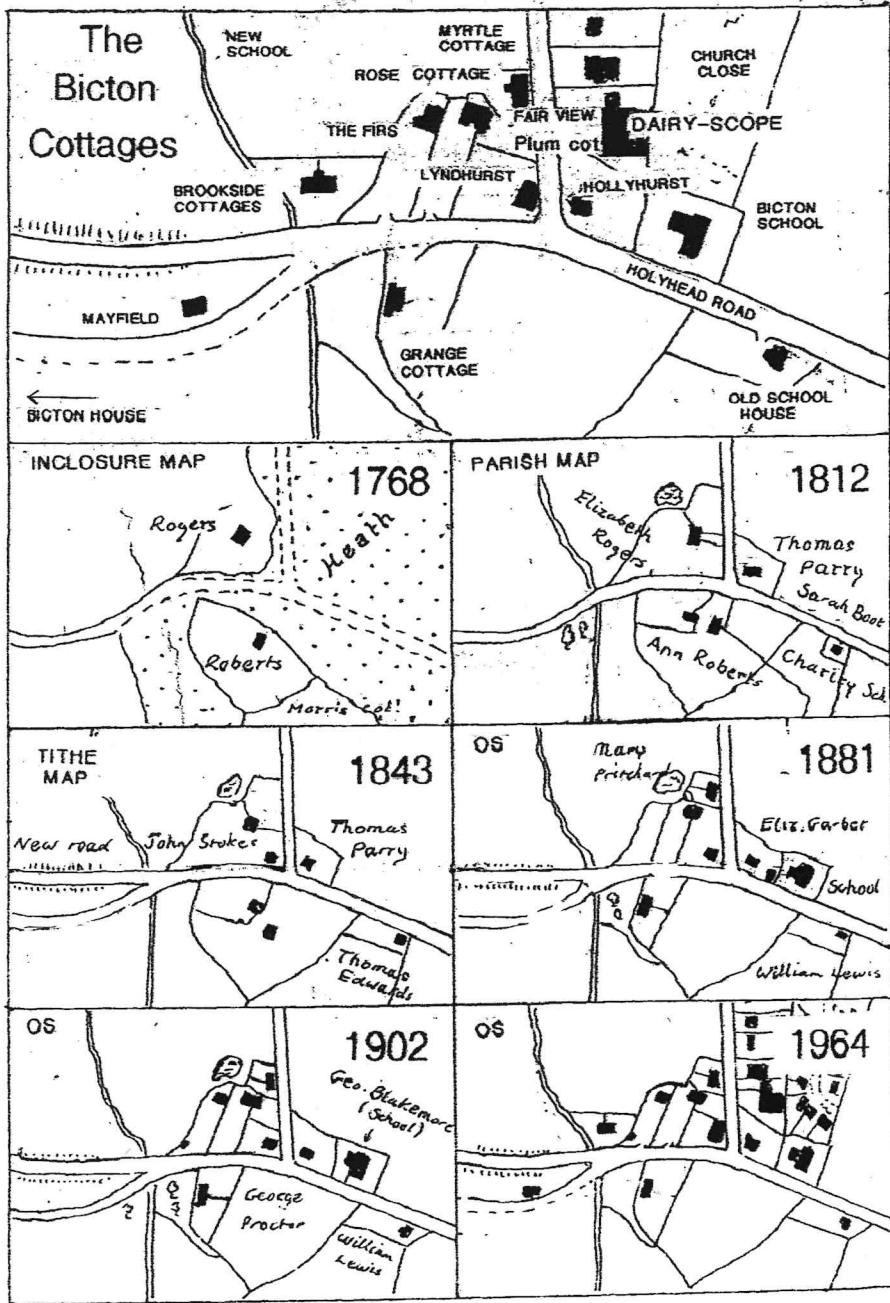
The War Graves Commission recorded Harry as son of William and Mary Yewbery of Grange Cottages, Bicton (opposite end of Bicton Lane) and then Arthur Bason as grandson of Mrs Yewbery, so there must have been a family connection. In fact, Arthur was actually Harry's nephew in spite of their similarity in age!

The explanation of all this involves the typical lifestyle of 'Victorian' agricultural labourers, i.e. moves between different employers, small 'tied' or rented cottages filling up with large families, and the need for the eldest to leave home early in order to make room for younger siblings. In the case of girls this would usually involve 'living in' domestic service, which sometimes left them with unwanted problems.....

The families in question included that of William and Rhoda Bason who moved into Walton near High Ercall in the 1870s and that of William and Mary Yewbery who followed them from Shifnal in the 1890s. Their youngest son, Harry, was born here in 1895, by which time elder sister, Mary Jane had probably already left home. However, in circumstances which are not clear and rarely talked about in families anyway, she gave birth to a son Arthur Henry in 1897, while still single. The child was therefore taken in by her parents in a way not uncommon in those times, when families had to provide their own 'social services'. The alternative would have been the 'workhouse'! Arthur was therefore only slightly younger than 'uncle' Harry, but otherwise just one more 'Yewbery'.

In late 1901, circumstances began to change when mother Mary (26) married neighbour George Bason (30), whom she must have already known for several years. Between them they went on to produce nine more children during the following 20 years. Meanwhile, William and May Yewbery moved to Bicton sometime around 1907, but Arthur may not have joined them. He now took his mother's new name but did not join her new household in High Ercall as far as is known, but instead went into domestic service. In 1911 he was recorded as a fourteen year old 'page boy' at a 'big house' on the London Road in Shrewsbury. Other records suggest he was living at Harlescott, before becoming old enough to 'join up' for the war. This could have been his way of escaping a world in

Extensions and improvements have continued all around here and more recently a new school has appeared adding a 'modern' flavour to the mixture of historical elements nearby.  
 We wonder what will be added next!

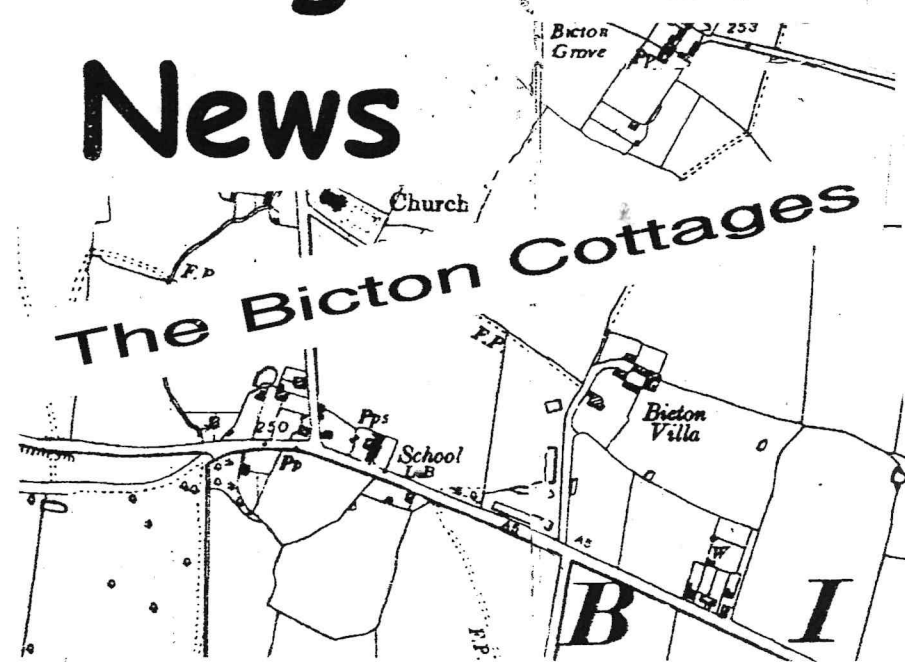


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# Bickton Village News

**HISTORY  
 of BICKTON**  
 by David Pannett

Part 91



website [www.bicktonvillage.co.uk](http://www.bicktonvillage.co.uk)

## David Pannett's History of Bickton part 91

### The Bickton Cottages

The recent wartime story involving the Yewbery family of 'Grange Cottages' drew attention to the fact that this history series has so far neglected this part of Bickton, even though so many readers must pass by it daily. In doing so, they may have noticed a tightly packed cluster of varied properties, partially hidden by trees and which display a mixture of older elements and modern extensions cleverly done to blend them together. Judging their history can therefore be confusing, so we must try to sort out their stories with the aid of records.

Along with other cottage 'clusters' in Bickton, settlement started here as encroachments around the edge of the heath, which once stretched from here to the Welshpool road and beyond. They had probably started in the seventeenth century when the population was rising just at a time when the original small 'village' farms were being amalgamated. Then, in 1768, during the 'Age of Improvement' the local landowners agreed to 'inclose' it and received portions allotted to them. Since John Mytton of Halston claimed to be the 'lord of the manor', he also took over these scattered cottages and encroachments.

Here, 'under new management', the 'Morris' cottage, which was probably of poor construction anyway, was replaced by one nearer the road, which now housed a charity school. Meanwhile Richard Jenkins of Bickton Hall built another new cottage on his allotment across the road ('Hollyhurst'), where Thomas Parry became his tenant. The resulting pattern can be seen on the 1812 parish survey.

Between this and the Tithe Map of 1843 further major changes took place, starting with the sale of Mytton property to pay 'Mad Jack's' debts. In this way, Richard Gittins, owner of 'Red House' farm acquired two 'Roberts' cottages and the school house whose land has remained part of that property ever since. Soon after, this school appears to have closed as the house was then let to Richard Rogers instead. At the sale, Mr Hanmer of Bickton House took part of the original 'Rogers' plot on Bickton Lane, but this was sold on again separately in 1830, when the main farm was sold to John Morris.

While all this was going on here, the 'Westminster' and 'Dublin' parliaments were united, causing the Irish MPs to demand improved communications between these cities. The eventual result was the Government project to

create a new 'Holyhead Road', employing Thomas Telford, who, as County Surveyor, had already rebuilt Montford Bridge in 1792. His new route then included the road through Bickton, where in 1837 it was found necessary to rebuild it across 'Grange Bank' with cuttings and embankments to ease the gradients. One section of old road was however left as part of the drive to Bickton House.

All these changes show up on the Tithe Map of 1843. Was it just coincidence that the new tenant of the old school house was now Thomas Edwards, 'Road Surveyor'? The other 'Gittins' cottages next door were used for farm workers. Across the road there was already a hint that Lyndhurst was being built as a replacement for the original 'Rogers' cottage, now occupied by John Stokes. All these old cottages built before the inclosure must have been ripe for replacement by now!

Between the Tithe Map and the first editions of the large scale Ordnance Survey maps change continued with clues also coming from the census records, although these could not always be related to particular properties with certainty.

Elizabeth Garbet, who was Thomas Parry's married, but widowed, daughter, now continued at 'Hollyhurst', renting extra land for small-scale farming as livelihood. Across the road, the charity school returned with Francis Boulker in charge until the new school was built in the 1860s, when newly-wed William Lewis, 'bricklayer', moved into the old school house.

About the same time, 'Rose Cottage' and its neighbours were built on the site of the original cottage here and new plots were laid out for more. Similar old cottages across the road were likewise replaced by 'Grange Cottages'. Though still small, they represented the improved standards now expected.

Residents now consisted of a mixture of tradesmen, farm workers and Mary Pritchard, a 'gentlewoman's companion'. Then, in the 1880s a builder retired here and built 'The Firs'. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Brookside cottages were added for workers at Bickton House. 'Mayfield' came later to complete the pattern.

After the last war typical 'suburban' housing came to Bickton Lane and later Church Close thus uniting this cluster of cottages with the rest of Bickton. Such development also included a shop and warehouse to support a mobile service. The shop has long gone but the warehouse is now the home of Dairy-scope.