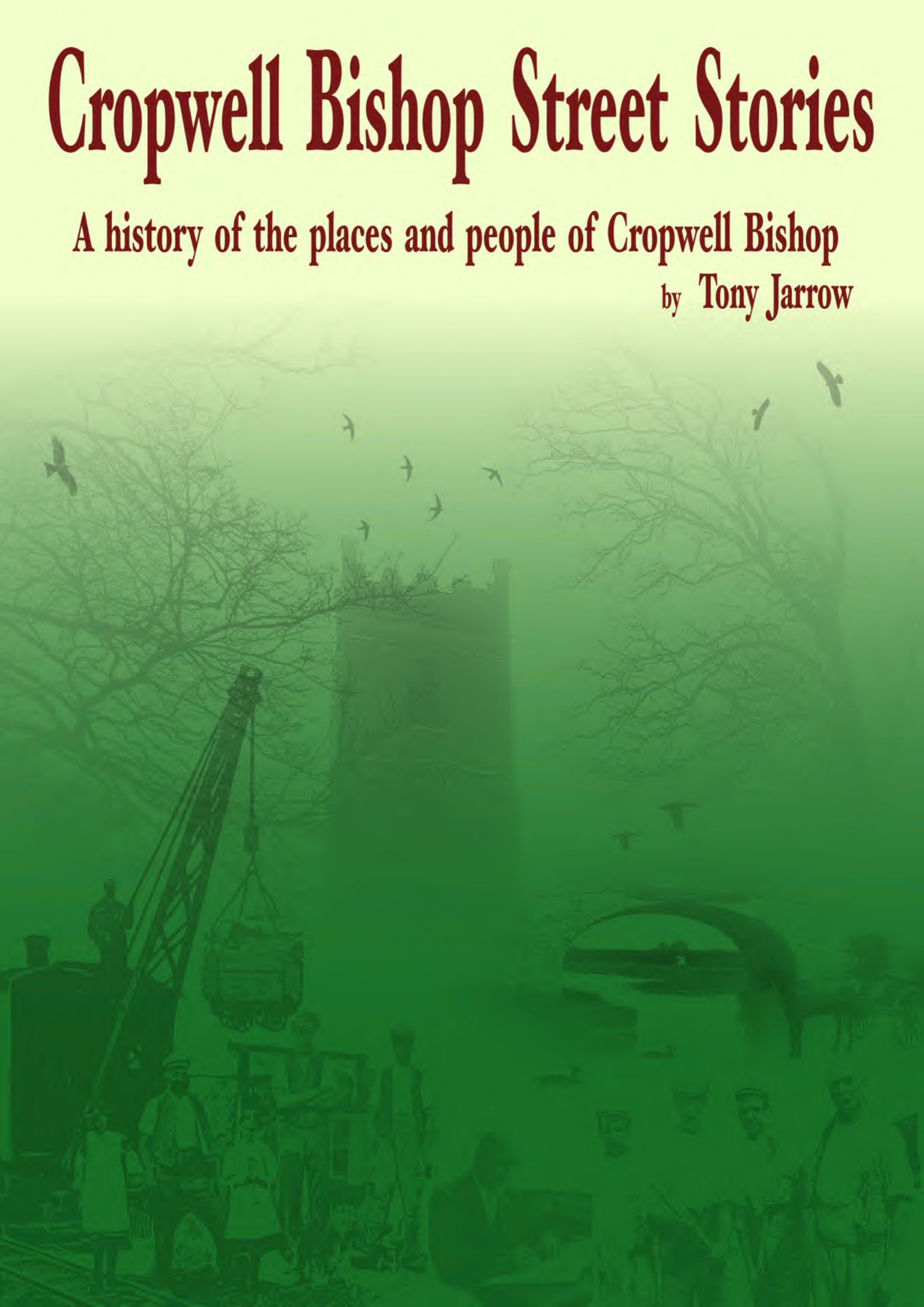
Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

A history of the places and people of Cropwell Bishop

by Tony Jarrow



Introduction

How Street Stories came to be

These Street Stories of Cropwell Bishop were never planned to be; they only happened in response to the Covid pandemic in 2020.
It was in the middle of March 2020 that measures started to be implemented to try and restrict the spread of the deadly virus that began in China.

In Cropwell Bishop, on the 17th March, the Saturday Café, Cropwell Cinema and the Gardening Club all cancelled planned events and the Parish Council published advice on how to reduce the risk of infection. A list of villagers who were willing to give support and advice was published online and a foodbank was established at the Old School. Two days later The Old School itself was closed for all events and classes.

The Cropwell Bishop Plan website was established by myself in 2008 and there had always been a regular supply of news items, reports and photographs to put online. By the end of March 2020 this supply abruptly stopped. There were no events to report on and no adverts for future events. The website's diary page was blank; there was nothing to look forward to.

The news items that did appear on the website were about restrictions, cancellations and home deliveries by supermarkets. Individuals were sending me quiz questions, quiz photos, a bird quiz and even a football quiz. Hilary (my wife) published recipes. I also began publishing a daily article, Lockdown Notes, to make up for the absent news reports of activities.

By day 39 of these notes, I did start getting a supply of articles on things that were happening in the village. There was Billie the Bear, which centred on the front lawn of Pam Wakefield on Brownhill Close. It had a range of stuffed animals (toy ones!) for children to view and mugs for sale, with all the proceeds and donations going to the NHS. In November, Pam presented a £1000 cheque to the Cropwell Bishop Surgery.

In May 2020, BBC TV was outside Cropwell Bishop Creamery to film the long line of people (well apart from each other) queuing to buy cheese at bargain prices. For example, a 3.5kg wheel of Shropshire Blue was £10. At that time, this was advertised as £52 on the Creamery's website. Cropwell Bishop Stilton has long been popular on luxury cruise ships, at airports, and and in upmarket holiday resorts. But everyone was staying at home. Nevertheless, the stock of cheese in the warehouse had to be shifted and we in Crowell Bishop benefitted. So did people living much further afield because the sale prices were advertised online. The Allotments were allowed to stay open, which was a relief to many. And, in May, there were street parties to celebrate VE Day, but we all sat far apart. Even the parish council began to meet again, but only online via "Zoom" software.

Being responsible for the Cropwell Bishop Plan website, I started looking for ways to fill its pages with meaningful articles. And, to be honest, I wanted something to do with all my spare time. That was when the idea of Street Stories came to me.

I have long had an interest in the history of Cropwell Bishop. Shortly after moving to the village in the 1970s, I joined the local history group which, apart from me and two neighbours, consisted of a group of characters who had always lived here and whose families had lived here for generations before. Those older members had a wealth of knowledge and could tell many a story but, as far as I am aware, none of it was written down for posterity.

In 1988 that I discovered much more village history after purchasing a copy of 'The Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop' by Cropwell resident, Aubrey Harper. I referred to this booklet many times when writing the Street Stories.

Back to 2020. I decided that writing stories about the people and places of Cropwell Bishop using its streets as starting points would make an interesting project, and it would enable me to fill the pages of the website. It would allow me to indulge in my hobby of photography.

I had always been intrigued by the names used for most of the streets here, no mundane names like Lavender Crescent, Sunset Close or Westside Way here, but, nevertheless, I had little idea of where their names came from. Since my prime objective was simply to write interesting stories to fill the website pages, I initially thought the actual name would deserve little more than a line or two of text. However, as soon as I became immersed in the first Story, I realised that the names would be of great significance and well worth the focus of the Story.

The Support of Technology

I had not appreciated how much online search tools had developed by 2020. Or, the immensity of online databanks that I could access from my home computer.

This project simply could not have been attempted 10 years earlier. Digital photography, image enhancement, Ancestry.com, and powerful search engines enabled me to discover family connections, births deaths and marriage files, and census data. And old photographs posted online by anyone who had them.

I bought a compact disk, 'Memories of Cropwell Bishop' from the Cropwell Bishop Heritage Group. The hundreds of photos, along with dates and descriptions, proved invaluable.

But it was not just modern technology that provided me with the facts, it was the people of Cropwell Bishop and beyond who told me their stories, showed me their photographs and their documents. And the St Giles gravestones proved valuable, but needed the 'Churchyard Survey' carried out by Denis and Edith Smith in 1998 to discover it.

The first Street Story appeared online on 6th July 2020 and others appeared in, no particular order, on an almost weekly basis.

Within weeks it became clear that that this project would be much more intensive, complex and puzzling than I had anticipated. But, as a result it would be more surprising, revealing and fascinating than any Cropwell history project before it.

The Support of People

It is only because I had the active support of so many people with knowledge of Cropwell Bishop that these stories have been completed.

Whilst most help came from people living in the village, there were times when I would get an email, from out of the blue, from someone far away. They must have stumbled across the project, maybe during a late-night session roaming the internet, and then would send me photos, maps, recollections, or online-links, all of which might go on to enhance a Story.

At the end of each Story in the book, I name the people who in some way contributed to that Story. Most were providing information on a Street because they had lived there a long time (and had a good memory) or because they knew something about the characters in the Story.

And then there was (the now late) Pam Barlow who, through her family contacts and her prodigious memory was able to supply help in a number of Stories.
However, above all, I have to thank Anne Terzza for her help with the project.

Not only is she a lifetime resident of Cropwell Bishop with a superb memory for the events that she personally remembers, she has family links to numerous characters who lived here in past times.

What has made Anne's contribution so great is her immense enthusiasm for the history of Cropwell Bishop.
This has resulted in her building a stack of information over the years. Added to that, she enjoys the challenge of uncovering obscure links and facts through searching the internet.
As you will see, she is thanked personally in the majority of Stories. Even when I thought I had finished the final draft of the book, the book, Anne proved herself an excellent proof-reader and found numerous little factual, spelling and typing errors.
Rest assured, artificial intelligence had no hand in these Street Stories, they are all the result of the efforts of local people. And if there are indeed some factual errors, it will be human error and I accept full responsibility.

I hope you enjoy reading this history of Cropwell Bishop.

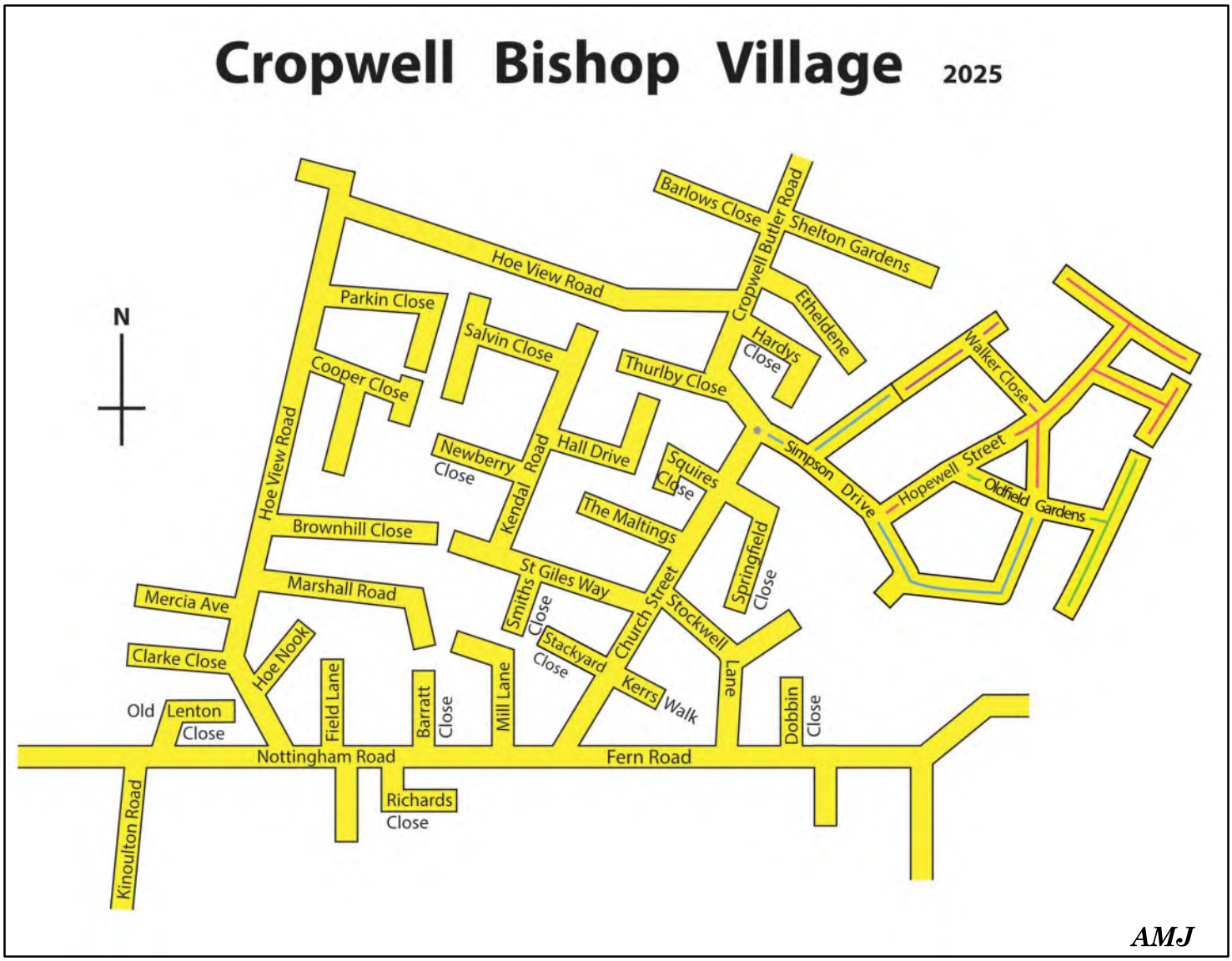
Tony Jarrow – January 2026
amjarrow@mac.com

Tony and Hilary Jarrow
Stamford 2024

The Streets Of Cropwell Bishop

1. Barlows Close 8
2. Barratt Close 13
3. Brownhill Close 21
4. Church Street 26
5. Clarke Close 45
6. Colston Road 50
7. Cooper Close 60
8. Cropwell Butler Road 67
9. Dobbin Close 72
10. Etheldene 75
11. Fern Road 80
12. Field Lane 100
13. Hall Drive 107
14. Hardy's Close 113
15. Hoe Nook 118
16. Hoe View Road 121
17. Hopewell Street 134
18. Kendal Road 142
19. Kerrs Walk 148
20. Kinoulton Road 150
21. Marshall Road 160
22. Mercia Avenue 167
23. Mill Lane 169
24. Newberry Close 175
25. Nottingham Road 179
26. Old Lenton Close 236
27. Oldfield Gardens 243
28. Parkin Close 246
29. Richards Close 254
30. Salvin Close 260
31. Shelton Gardens 266
32. Simpson Drive 272
33. Smiths Close 276
34. Springfield Close 280
35. Squires Close 286
36. St Giles Way 289
37. Stackyard Close 308
38. Stockwell Lane 310
39. Swab's Lane 321
40. The Maltings 325
41. Thurlby Close 330
42. Walker Close 334

Street Map


Cropwell Bishop Village 2025
N
Barlows Close
Shelton Gardens
Cropwell Butler Road
Hoe View Road
Parkin Close
Salvin Close
Cooper Close
Hoe View Road
Thurlby Close
Hardys Close
Etheldene
Walker Close
Newberry Close
Kendal Road
Hall Drive
Squires Close
Simpson Drive
Hopewell Street
Oldfield Gardens
The Maltings
Brownhill Close
Springfield Close
St Giles Way
Marshall Road
Mercia Ave
Smiths Close
Church Street
Stockwell Lane
Stackyard Close
Clarke Close
Hoe Nook
Old Lenton Close
Field Lane
Barratt Close
Mill Lane
Kerrs Walk
Dobbin Close
Nottingham Road
Fern Road
Richards Close
Kinoulton Road
AMJ

Cropwell Bishop 1944

Cropwell Bishop 2018

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The naming of streets in Cropwell Bishop after local people is popular. Marshall, Brownhill, Clarke – all the names of people who had an impact on our village.

With that in mind, what are we to make of Barlows Close?
I am not aware of a Mr, Miss or Mrs Barlows (with an 's' on the end) ever making their mark on Cropwell Bishop life – and neither is St Giles Churchyard.

Rushcliffe Borough Council have the final say on street names and they make their decision with reference to their published guidelines:

Section 5.1, "General naming Convention":

- it should reflect the history or geography of the site,
- it should not be difficult to pronounce or spell,
- it should not be named after living people (except Royalty),
- if named after a deceased person, the individual should have been dead for 20 years or be over 100 years old,
- permission must be obtained from the person's family.

Are these rules set in stone? I feel sure that if you had discovered the vaccine for Covid-19, the Council would have been only too happy to celebrate your name locally.

Other councils named streets after the 1966 World Cup Winners in the 1960s and Nottingham City named streets after skaters Jane Torvill and Christopher Dean.

Closer to home, Kerrs Walk in the village, was named after Margaret Kerr – just a year after she died!

Getting back to Barlows Close, where does the name come from? Does it refer to several members of the Barlow family perhaps?

Over the last 100 years many members of the Barlow family have been involved in the life of Cropwell Bishop.
So, the secret is out, Barlow is the name source for Barlows Close. But which Barlow?

Search the graves in St Giles churchyard and you will find 8 with the name Barlow engraved – and the first arrived little more than a century ago. So, the Barlow family entered the Cropwell Bishop spotlight, relatively recently. How did it all come about?

Thomas Barnet Barlow started his working life as a butcher in the village where he was born, Keyworth.

He learnt his trade with a local butcher and by the time he was 30, he had the savings and confidence to bring his wife and 5 children to Cropwell Bishop and start his own butchery business.

Barlow children and parents behind The Old House in 1910. From left: Violet, Tom, John, mother Sarah Ann Barlow, father Thomas Barnet Barlow, Nell, Ethel, Ernest, Harold and Ida. (no 7 year old Arthur; was he holding the camera?)

By 1911, when he and his wife, Sarah Ann, were 45 years old, Thomas was not only an established butcher, but also a farmer. They had been busy since their arrival: they now had another 5 children making a total of 10 - about average for those times.

Of these, the two youngest are of particular interest here; Arthur (born 1903) and Harold (born 1908).

In 1928, when Arthur was 25, he married Gladys May Salvin. Gladys' father, David Leavis Salvin, was an established, principal land owner in Cropwell Bishop - and was wealthy.

Arthur and Gladys had their first child, David (full name: Thomas David Salvin Barlow) in 1930 followed by a second boy, John, a few years later.

In 1938 they were living in Lenton House on Nottingham Road when they had their third child, a girl, Edith.

The children grew up, as they do, and when Arthur's eldest son, David, was 28, he married Audrey Starling from Cropwell Bishop. They had their first child Patrick and then, some years later, a girl, Sara.

Sadly, Audrey died during childbirth when she was just 40 years old.

In 1968 David married Pamela Gould and they had a son, Mark.

David and Pam were living at the top of Mill Lane but in 1970 they moved into his grandmother's house, The Manor, on Fern Road.

For decades, David served as a Cropwell Bishop Councillor and for a long time was chairman. He also became a Rushcliffe Borough Councillor and in 2001 he served as its leader.

Meanwhile, Pam committed herself

The Manor in 1983

David Barlow (2nd from right) at a ceremony around 1980

David at the turf cutting ceremony for the Harry Carlton Comprehensive School's new building at East Leake in 2002

David at the launch of the 'Cropwell Bishop Plan' at the Old School in 2009

to the organisation and running of the Memorial Hall and it was only in 2018 that she stood back from her role as chair.
David died in 2010 and Pam died in 2023.

What of the other local Barlows?

David's brother, John, became a professor at Glasgow University while his sister, Edith, married local builder Denis Smith and they lived on Fern Road.

Then there was Harold Barlow, Thomas Barnet Barlow's youngest son.

As Harold grew up, he worked to develop the butchery and farming businesses of the family whilst his older brother Arthur was no doubt devoting much of his time developing the farming interests of his farther-in-law, David Leavis Salvin.

Never-the-less, Harold and Arthur worked side-by-side to develop their businesses and, when the time came, went on to share their father's estate. But there was only one 'Barlow Butcher Shop' in the village, and that was Harold's.

Harold was married to Rose and they lived their whole life at the 'Old House' on Nottingham Road – the building that is now occupied by Nyce, Wildflower Hair and Heavenly Beauty.

Harold and Rose had 3 children but

Old Harold Barlow (1970s)

Old Harold in Butchers Shop in 1970s.

Butchers shop in 1970s. The building dates back to the 1930s but the front was added in the 1950s

Young Harold Barlow takes charge of the horse and cart (1950s)

Butchers Shop (1970s)

it was the 2 boys who eventually took over Harold's two business interests. Older son, Tom, worked on the farming side whilst his much younger son, 'young Harold', worked on the butchery side.

Tom married Kate and they had three boys: Richard is now running Home Farm on Fern Road, Matthew runs his veterinary practice, also at Home Farm, and Simon has developed a Fencing business elsewhere.

Tom's brother, 'young Harold', married Lesley and they worked to develop the butchery business at the shop on Nottingham Road.

This was in the early 1970s when hundreds of new homes were being built in Cropwell Bishop.

When old Harold died in 1983 his wife, Rose, stayed at their bungalow (built 8 years earlier) on 'Barlow land' next door to the shop. She lived there until her death at 98 in 2006.

Lesley helped in the shop and also worked in the back to provide a range of prepared meals for sale. She also raised their 2 children, Kerry and Tina.

Sadly, Young Harold died in 2001 when he was just 51.

The Butchers Shop is now run by Gary Jowett but Lesley still lives nearby and her daughter, Tina, and her family occupy the home built for Rose – now converted from bungalow to a house.

So now we face the dilemma we began with: who is Barlows Close named after?

Well, the answer is, all of them. The death of David Barlow in 2010 raised the prospect of naming a road after him but his widow, Pam Barlow, suggested 'Barlows' and this found favour with both the parish council and the borough council.

As you can see, naming a street can be a complicated business. Now you know why some less adventurous parish councils name their new streets after flowers: shame on them.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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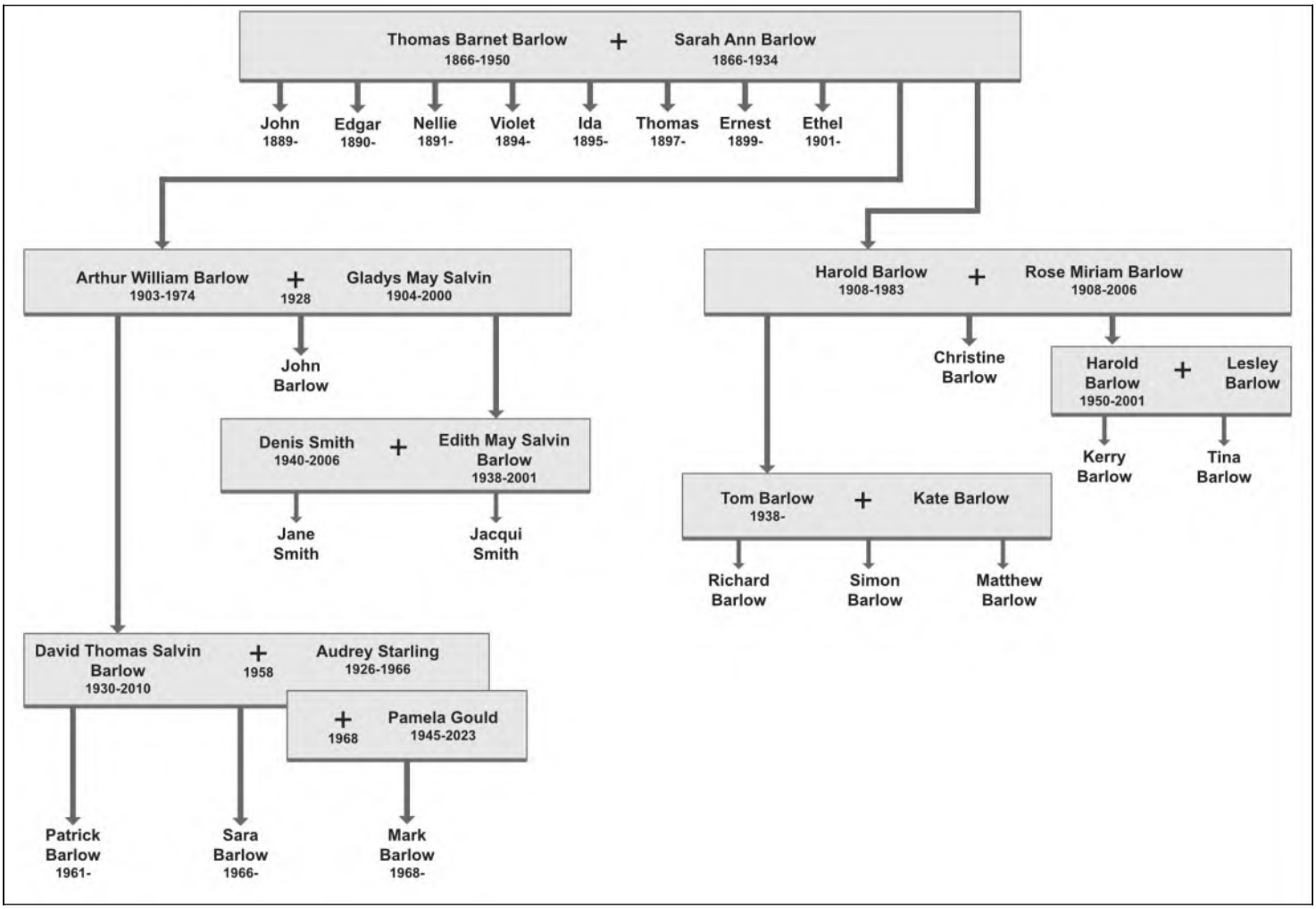
Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow and Lesley Barlow for their help with this article.

Pam & David Barlow (1995)



Barlow Family Tree

Barlows Close in 2020, ten years after it was built.

Walk up the footpath alongside Barlows Close and you will be rewarded with views of Belvoir Castle (top left) and Plungar (middle distance)

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Imagine living in a world where a deadly disease is spread by droplets in the coughs and sneezes of infected people. One which commonly damages the lungs but can affect almost any part of the body.

And one that is responsible for killing around one seventh the population – and has continued doing so for thousands of years. And for which there is no known cure.

That was the real-world situation facing humanity 130 years ago. That disease was tuberculosis (TB), usually called consumption in those days: even today it kills over 2 million people every year.

I imagine that virtually all of you have had a BCG jab – a single injection that protects you from TB bacteria for life (although not every form of the TB bacteria). BCG vaccination of schoolchildren began in 1953 in the UK.

Tom Barratt was born in Cropwell Bishop in 1894. He was the first-born son of Thomas Barratt and Minnie Sanders who had married in the village the year before. Baby Tom was a healthy child – until he was 4 years old.

You need to know that, whilst most forms of TB bacteria enter a victim's body via their lungs, there is another form of the bacteria which enters a different way – through a drink of milk.

Cows can be infected with bovine TB and it causes them to cough. Inhaling bacteria breathed out by them will infect humans too, but a much more common route is through the milk produced by the cow. However, in the 1890s this was not fully understood.

This form of TB was more likely to result in bone TB in humans and affect weight-bearing joints like the knees, hips and spine – particularly the soft bones of children.

In the 1890s, and for many decades afterwards, tens of thousands of children in the UK were infected with bovine TB every year.

Improved care during long stays in hospital kept death rates of children low, but most suffered life-changing physical damage.

Tom Barratt repairing shoes in his workshop in the 1970s

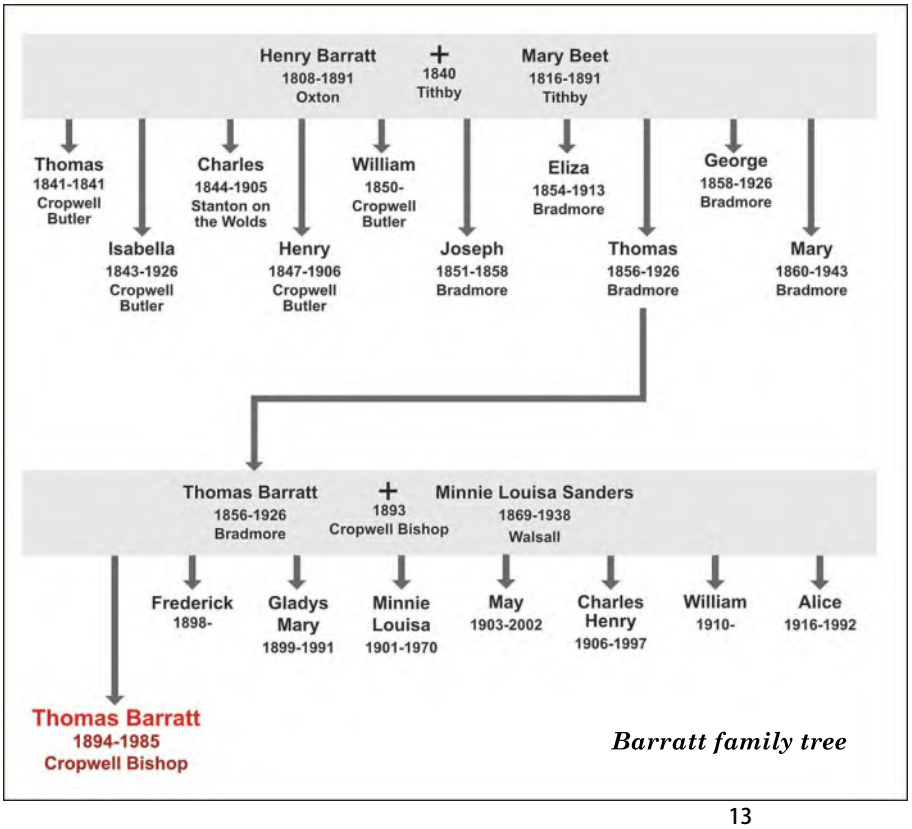
When Tom Barratt was 4 years old, he became ill. In retrospect, it is clear that he contracted the human form of bovine TB as a result of drinking milk from an infected cow.

Nowadays, we know that it is easy to kill this and other harmful microbes by briefly heating milk – a process called pasteurisation after the French scientist Louis Pasteur who made this discovery in the 1880s. But in the 1890s, the link between cows and human TB was unproven.

Tom's symptoms would have taken weeks or even months to show themselves. Limping was typically one of the first visible signs of the disease. At first, this would have been due to muscular stiffness but later, limps would become more pronounced due to shortening of the leg.

In 1908, when Tom was 14 years old, he was treated at Guys Hospital in London. At that time over 800 children a year were treated for TB at Guys. Every child's problems were different, but the doctors decided that surgery on one knee was the best option in Tom's case.

It is believed that this treatment shortened his leg by 7cm (3 inches). For the rest of his life, he walked with



Barratt family tree

Inside Tom's workshop

a limp. A raised boot did help him cope with the problem.

This did not prevent Tom riding a bicycle and when he was 15 years old, he was working as a telegram messenger.

This probably meant him taking messages to and from the old telegraph office at Cropwell Butler. It opened in 1893 and, even in its first year, it was handling over a thousand messages a year.

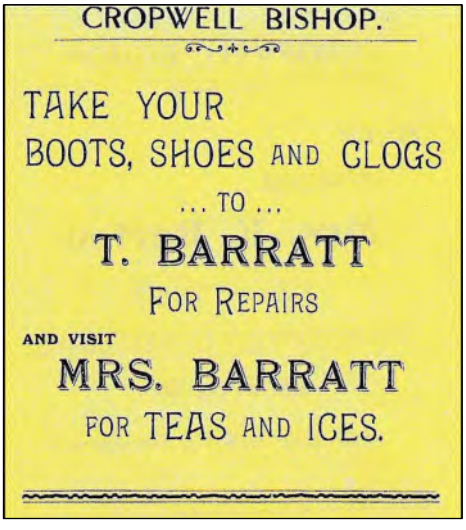
But Tom already had his sights on a very different future. A Mr Parnham was the cobbler at Whatton and Tom became his apprentice.

He must have been a fast learner and ambitious, because by the time he was 16 years old, he had set up his own business on Church Street. His aim was be Cropwell Bishop's cobbler, the man to go to for the repair of boots or shoes, and the making of clogs.

For that he would need a workshop, so he bought one for £13. In fact, it was little more than a wooden shed, and he had it transported from Colston Bassett on a horse drawn dray.

The shed was to be his workshop and turned out to be an amazingly cost-effective investment. It served him for all 70 years of his business in Cropwell Bishop.

Advert for Tom's Shoe repairs and his mother's Teas and Ices (1931)



It was set up in the front garden of his parent's house, The Rosary, on Church Street.

Later on, an additional shed was added and it became a shop for things other than footwear: ice creams and sweets for example, particularly for the children who were regular visitors on their way to and from school.

He used to call the little girls, "Missy", and was still doing so 60 years later.

As a cobbler, he needed a regular supply of leather. In those days, shoes and boots had soles made of leather – and they needed repairing regularly.

Tom could buy leather squares from Turney Brothers, Leather Works, at Trent Bridge but had to collect them himself – so, ever resourceful, he bought himself a pony and trap. He kept the pony on land behind The Rosary.

When Tom was 20 years old, he was called up to serve in the First World War, but his short leg inevitably meant that he could not take part. Whilst he could not serve the nation, he was able serve the population of Cropwell Bishop.

For much of his adult life, many villagers knew Tom by his nick-name, 'Honky Barratt'. This had nothing to do with his limp, but all to do with ice-cream.

Tom's mother, Minnie, made ice-cream and sold it from The Rosary.

But if there was an event taking place at the Memorial Hall or on the field, Tom would go up there on his motorbike.

He would take an ice chest, with a supply of ice-cream to sell, and would announce his arrival with a 'honk' of his horn: and that is how he got the nickname,

Turney Brothers Leather Works at Trent Bridge in 1981. Since converted to flats.

"Honky Barratt".

To make the ice-cream, Minnie needed ice, because there were no fridges or freezers in the village in those days. Her ice-cream making was only made possible by Tom fetching blocks of ice from Nottingham.

He would go on his motorbike and sidecar and buy big blocks of ice that he would carry in a chest mounted on his sidecar. We have a photograph of his motorbike. It is at the front of a photograph of schoolchildren standing outside the school on Fern Road. Tom is not in the picture. You can see the cool box on top of the sidecar.

Why his bike was there, we don't know, but it appears to have a flat tyre so maybe it was awaiting repair. Or maybe it was to show the children, we will never know.

Not even the children in the photo can tell us – unless they are 110 years old.

Few people knew it, but Tom did marry and he fathered a son. This was when he was a young man but, sadly, the marriage did not work out.

His wife came from Sheffield and, after a short married life in Cropwell Bishop, she went back there.

Even so, Tom would sometimes travel up to Sheffield to visit his son.

His career as the village cobbler was long indeed. It is sobering to think that even though he worked continuously through two World Wars, in 1945 he was still not half-way through his working life in the little workshop on Church Street.

Tom's motorbike in front of the School (1920s)

It was during the Second World War that a bomb was offloaded on Cropwell Bishop, not far from The Rosary. No one was injured but the blast was strong enough to move a haystack. Shrapnel from it also damaged a Ford car at The Rosary, the one owned by Tom.

Having a car become important to him for his business and, in later years, for travel to the east coast.

By the 1960s, he had a Rover car and used it to reach the two caravans that he then owned at Mablethorpe. He named them, The Rosary and Peter Pan, and would let them out for holidays – even transporting people to and fro in his car.

As we can see, Tom was not just the cobbler in the village; he was fully involved in village life.

You have to remember that in the

The envy of the street in early 1950s. Showing a 'test card' to enable you to adjust picture

years before the 1960s, everyday life took place in a social space that was tiny compared with today.

In 1953, most people watched the broadcast of the Queen's Coronation on a friend's TV set. This event did start a rise in the proportion of households having a TV: in 1954, 31% had one.

But it was not the TV we know of today: broadcasts were in black and white; TVs displayed just 405 lines (i.e. 405 pixels high); screens were typically 12 inches (30cm) across, and they were expensive – around £1500 in today's money.

And you couldn't watch a great deal. The BBC broadcast programmes for 2 hours before 1pm and none at all between 6pm & 7pm. This period was used by parents to trick children into thinking that television had finished so they would go to bed without complaint.

On Sunday, the television shown between 2pm and 4pm was intended for adults – the children were meant to be at Sunday School!

In 1955, TV viewing became more exciting: a second channel, ITV, arrived (most people called it commercial TV).

To view it, you had to buy a little box - with thick cables attached, that would sit on top of the TV.

Even the adverts were an exciting arrival with their comedy and jingles.

Also, in the 1950s, most people did not have a phone at home, they were an expensive luxury. You went to the red telephone phone box on Church Street or at the bottom of Hoe View Road to make a call. Or, if you had arranged for someone to call you, you waited outside listening for its ring.

So, life was very different. Betting on the horses, the boat-race or the FA Cup, was the limit of most people's gambling habits – not counting the weekly shilling or two (5p or 10p) that most people spent on the Football Pools.

In Cropwell Bishop, the person you could turn to when you fancied placing a little bet, was Tom Barratt. Apparently, his shop was where you could place your bet and then, if you were lucky, collect your winnings.

In 1984, when Tom was 90 years old, he met the Queen. The meeting was at Southwell Minster when Queen Elizabeth presented Maundy money.

The Rosary and the shop

Tom Barratt's shop and workshop on Church Street (1960s)

Each year on Maundy Thursday, which is the day before Good Friday, the Queen attends the service at a church somewhere in Britain.

This particular service is then called 'Royal' Maundy and this tradition, in one form or another, has continued since the 13th Century.

The people awarded the solid silver coins are older ones from the local area. They are chosen for their service to church or community on the recommendation of local clergymen: Tom must have been thrilled to be one of those selected.

This was a crowning moment in Tom Barratt's long and active life serving the Cropwell Bishop community.

Just a year later, in April 1985, he died.

Tom is buried in Cropwell Bishop Churchyard – only 100m from the site of The Rosary and his shop on Church Street.

Before the end of that year, plans were afoot for a small housing development off Nottingham Road.

When the homes were completed in 1987, the Parish Councillors awarded Tom Barratt another honour: they named the street Barratt Close.

From 'The Yews' to Barratt Close

The building of homes on Barratt Close was not straight forward.

The site was an old farmyard and the plan was to covert some of the old out-buildings into two homes and then build chalet bungalows on the remaining land.

At the entrance to the Close stands the original farmhouse, The Yews. This house has since been renamed, Yew Tree House because only one yew tree remains.

The Yews faced Nottingham Road and was not part of this development, but it was linked to Barratt Close by its location and history.

In years to come, I wonder how many of the residents on Barratt Close will know the history of the site and the source of its name: will there still be a way for them to access this street story?

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Philip Johnson (son of Tom's sister, May), John Greenwood, Anne Mansfield, Jane Jones and Stephen Reader for their help with this Story.

'The Yews' farmyard in 1970

'The Yews' farmyard in 1975-80

'The Yews' in 1965 (white building)

The roadside barn (1983)

'The Yews' farm buildings (1983)

From Yews to Mill Lane before houses built

Barn prior to conversion to homes (1983)

'The Yews' farm buildings being demolished (1983)

Tom Barratt shop and workshop on Church Street (1980s)

Eastwood's
GROCERY STORE
Retailer of
High-class Groceries
Provisions, Confectionery and Tobacco
Cropwell Bishop

Margaret Brown
Ladies' Hairdresser
PERMANENT WAVING A SPECIALITY
at moderate prices
"Wheatsheaf Inn"
CROPWELL BISHOP
Tel.: 37Y3 Radcliffe

T. BARRATT
Boot and Shoe Repairer
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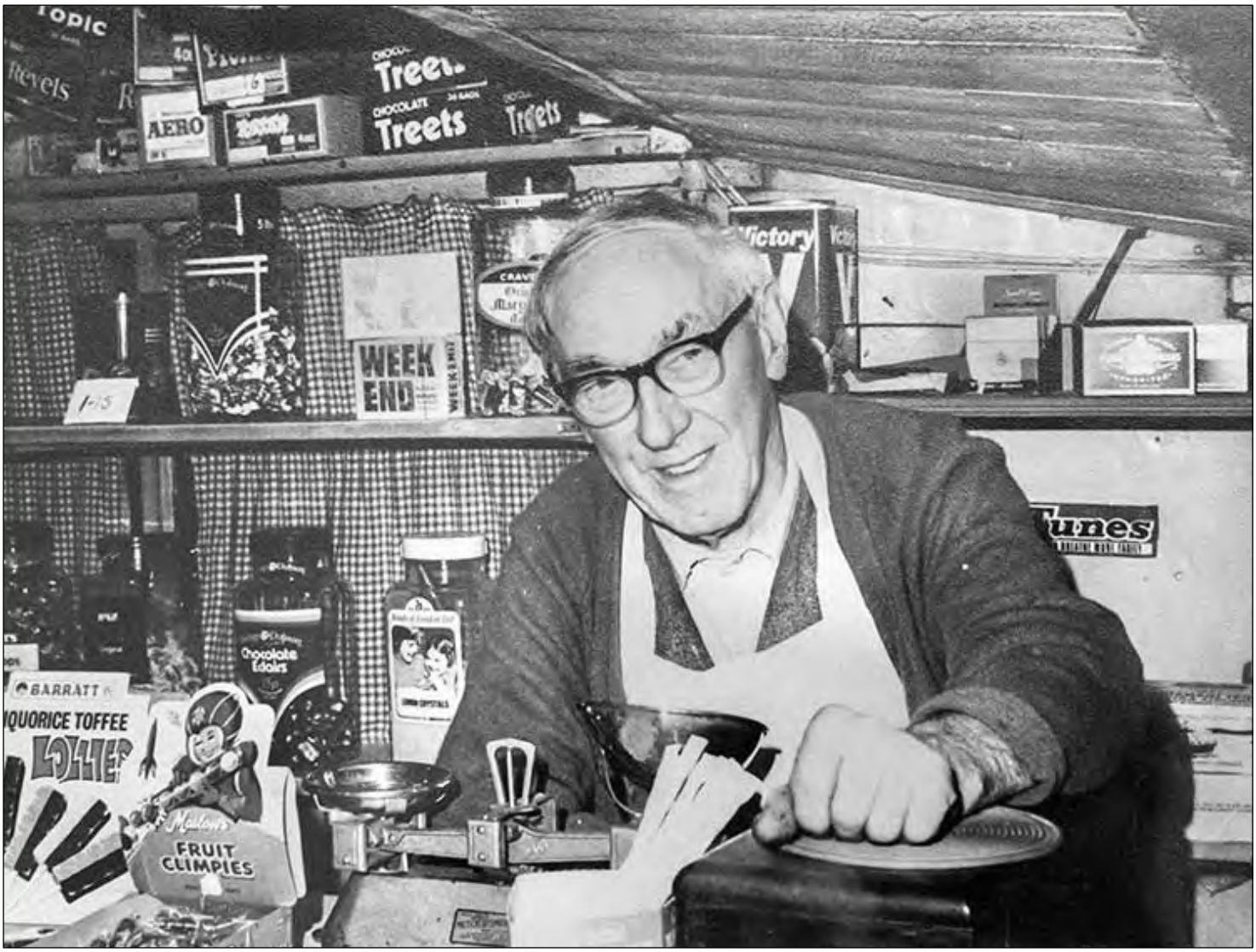
Village advertising in 1950s



Tom Barratt in his sweets-shop (1970s)

Barratt Close in 1990.

It is interesting to note that the end wall of the barn conversion which faces Nottingham road (middle, LH side on photo above) cannot be the original wall. If you look at the 1983 photos you will see that before the conversion work there was a window in that end wall, and during the work that wall does no longer stands. It appears to have the same dimensions but a chimney has been added. Also, the end window has not been included and the plaque has a slightly different position.

Barratt Close in 2016

Barratt Close in September 2020...

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Brownhill Close; how did it get its name. If you are looking around for mounds of brown soil then you clearly don't know how the Parish Councillors of the 1970s operated when choosing a name for a new street.

They referred to the map that accompanied the 1804 Enclosure Act. They looked at the names of landowners on the parish map and, time and again, would pick one. Where possible, the street name would be a reflection of the person who owned the land it stands on.

With that in mind, let's look at the map in the region of Brownhill Close.

George Brownhill owned 3 fields in Cropwell Bishop in 1804. The one closest to Brownhill Close is of interest to us.

Compare its location with a street map of Cropwell Bishop and you see the problem faced by Parish Councillors.

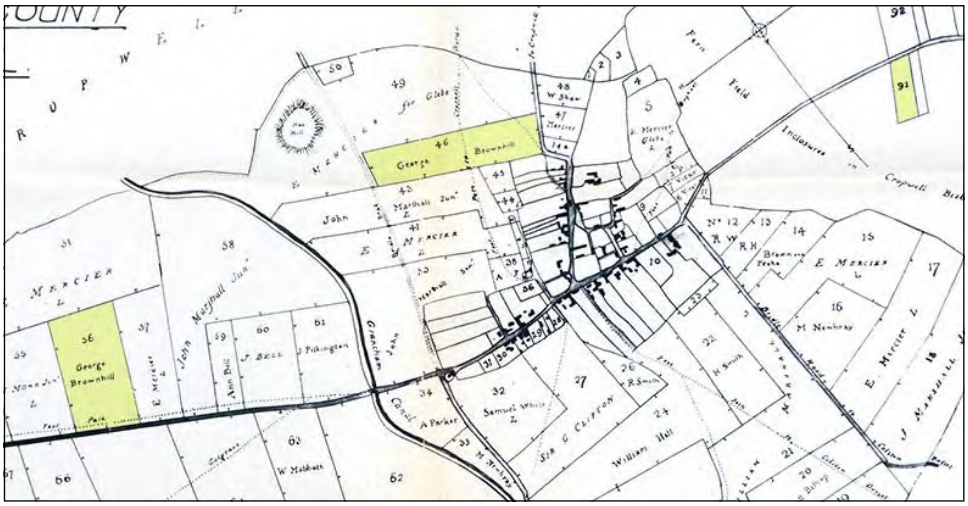
Just four people owned the land now occupied by over a dozen streets: there are not enough names to go around. Also, the land that George Brownhill owned is where Hoe View Road now is.

Brownhill Close appears to occupy land owned by Mercier or Marshall, but their names had already been allocated to other streets, so the name of Brownhill was dragged from its Hoe View Road spot and given to Brownhill Close.

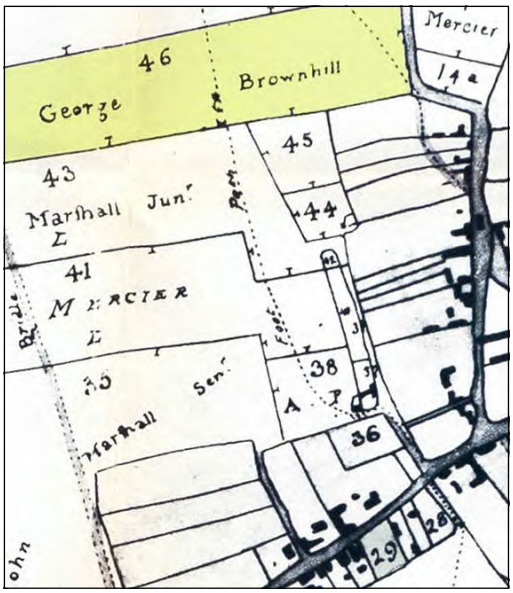
So, now we know the person who Brownhill Close was named after. Well, yes and no.

When trying to trace ancestors, the national census is a wonderful source of information. It is essentially, a count of the population of the country, but usually lists every home, its occupants, their ages and their relationship to the 'head' of the household.

The first was held in 1801 and has been held every 10 years thereafter — except 1941 during the second World War.



Land owned by George Brownhill in 1804 (shaded yellow)



Ownership of fields near the village centre in 1804

Cropwell Bishop streets (2020)

The earliest one available online is 1841, and the most recent is 1911. Individual records are kept secret for 100 year – the 1921 census will be released in 2022.

From 1801 to 1831 the names were collected locally and, probably as a result, are not currently available online. This makes it more difficult to collect information prior to 1841, but not impossible.

I have constructed the family tree for the Brownhills of Cropwell Bishop. Online birth and death records proved useful, but the most telling details were revealed by real-world records in Cropwell Bishop: the graves in St Giles Churchyard.

At this point, I must express my gratitude to Denis and Edith Smith, late of Cropwell Bishop (their daughter, Jane Jones, lived on Fern Road until recently).

In the days before the internet existed, they published the 'St Giles Churchyard Survey for Cropwell Bishop'. Maybe not a booklet for everyday reading, but invaluable for research. They even used church records to correct some errors made by stonemasons. Apparently, it was not unusual for gravestones to be cut years after a death, and so errors became inevitable.

The family tree reveals three

George Brownhills but, in 1804, one was three years old – a bit young to own land. The older George Brownhill was born in 1744 and was 60 years old in 1804. His son, George, was 29 years old. Which one owned the land on the map, I wonder.

Tax documents show that a George Brownhill in Cropwell Bishop was a farmer and landowner in 1798. In that year older George was 54 and younger George was just 21. This convinces me that the older George was the landowner shown on the 1804 map.

As far as Brownhill Close is concerned, it makes no difference, the name is the same, but maybe we can decide which was the most deserving to have a street named after him.

Older George was born in 1744, and married Elizabeth Pilkington in 1772. They were both from Cropwell Bishop. George was a farmer here but we have no idea where his farmhouse was.

As you read this in your home in Cropwell Bishop, ask yourself, could George have passed nearby, could he have walked through your garden. During his 68 years as a farmer, he must have trod every blade of grass in the parish, so he must have passed through your home.

Could it be that George and Elizabeth lived on the very land you are now living on. Well, if you are living on one of the old roads here, then they could have done. One person in Cropwell Bishop will certainly be living over the foundations of their house – maybe you.

Did they have a hard life: most certainly – just look at the family tree. George and Elizabeth's first and third son lived past middle age, but during one 11-year period, Elizabeth lost 5 children at birth.

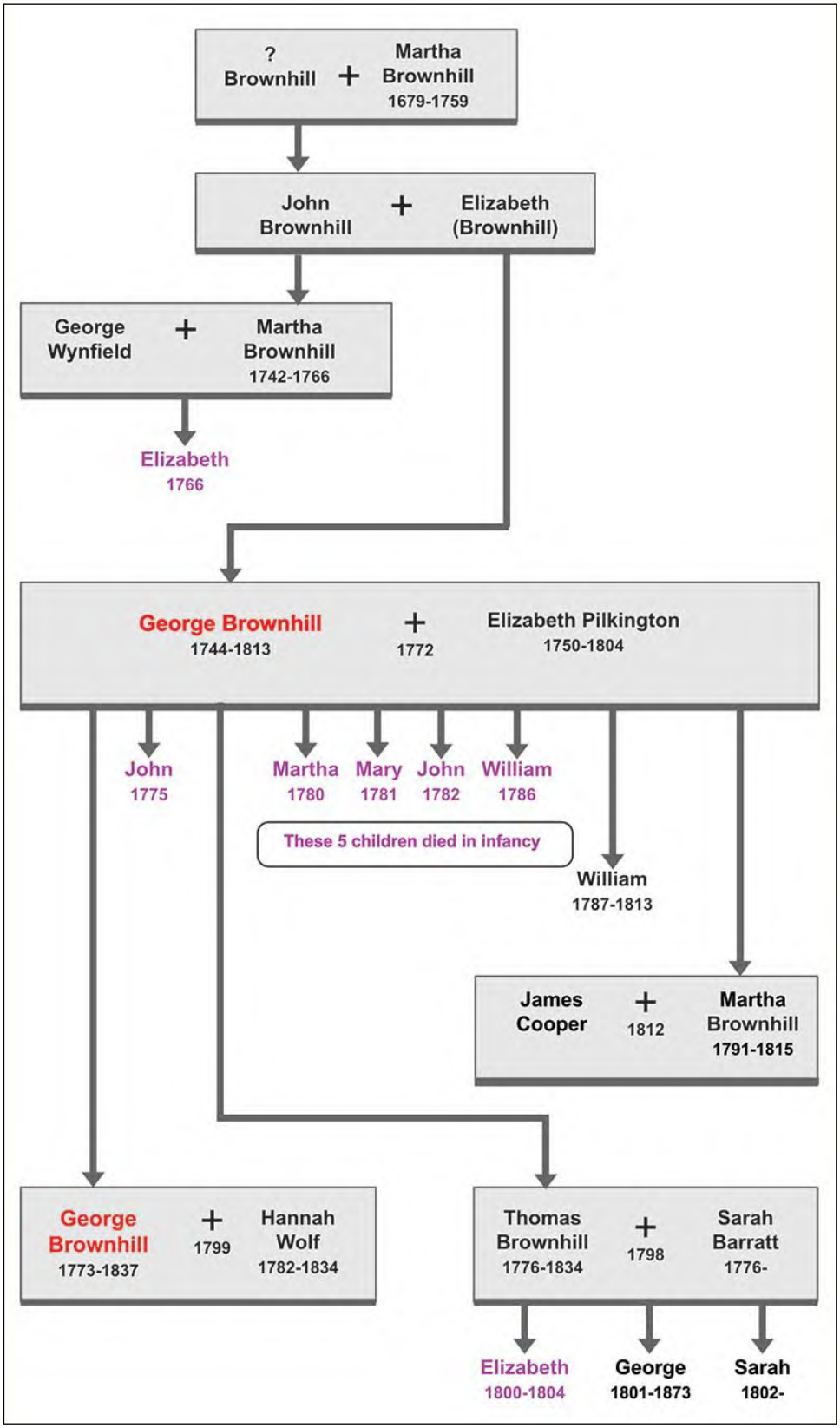
George had already experienced sorrow as a teenager, when his older sister, 24-year-old Martha, had died giving birth to her baby – who also died.

Elizabeth died in 1804 when she was 52 years old.

In spite of all this sadness, it seems he made a success of his farming. He also appears to have made a substantial contribution to the smooth running of the village.

He was church warden for a year and also took on the role of village constable for 10 years.

George died in 1813 and his eldest son, George, inherited the farm and continued as the Brownhill farmer of the village.



Brownhill Family Tree

However, he seems to have also inherited the poor luck of the Brownhill family. His youngest brother, William, died just 9 months afterwards at the age of 26. And two years later, his youngest sister, Martha, died at the age of 23, after only three years of married life.

George had married his wife Hannah in 1799. There is no evidence of them having children but, like his father, George took on the job of church warden and continued in the role for 8 years.

He also served on a Grand Jury at Nottingham County Sessions in 1830. Apparently, a grand jury generally consisted of 'gentlemen of high standing in the county'. So, George had achieved high standing, but his good fortune would not last.

In 1834, his wife Hannah died: she was only 52 years old. That same year, his younger brother, Thomas, also died. Thomas had been living in Birmingham where he had moved to

with his wife, Sarah Barratt of Colston Bassett.

Three years later, George died at the age of 64, and his farm, along with all his possessions, were auctioned off. It was the end of the line for the Brownhills in the village.

The auction in 1837 was advertised in a Nottingham newspaper. As well as the farmhouse and its furniture, there were farming machines, implements, sheep, pigs, horses – and also supplies of wheat, barley and hay.

The auction was held at the farmhouse, but, as I have already mentioned, we don't know where that was in Cropwell Bishop.

During the last two years of his life, George would have reflected on the fact that, in spite of being the eldest of 9 brothers and sisters, he was now the only one alive.

However, he did have a nephew who would carry forward the Brownhill name in Birmingham – another George Brownhill.

Now that we know the history of the George Brownhills of Cropwell Bishop, who do we think is the most deserving of having a street named after him. I think it has to be the Older George who died in 1813.

But if history had been different, and the Enclosure Act had happened in 1814 instead of 1804, then it would have been younger George.

If anyone asks you, just say Brownhill Close was named after George Brownhill, farmer, and leave it at that.

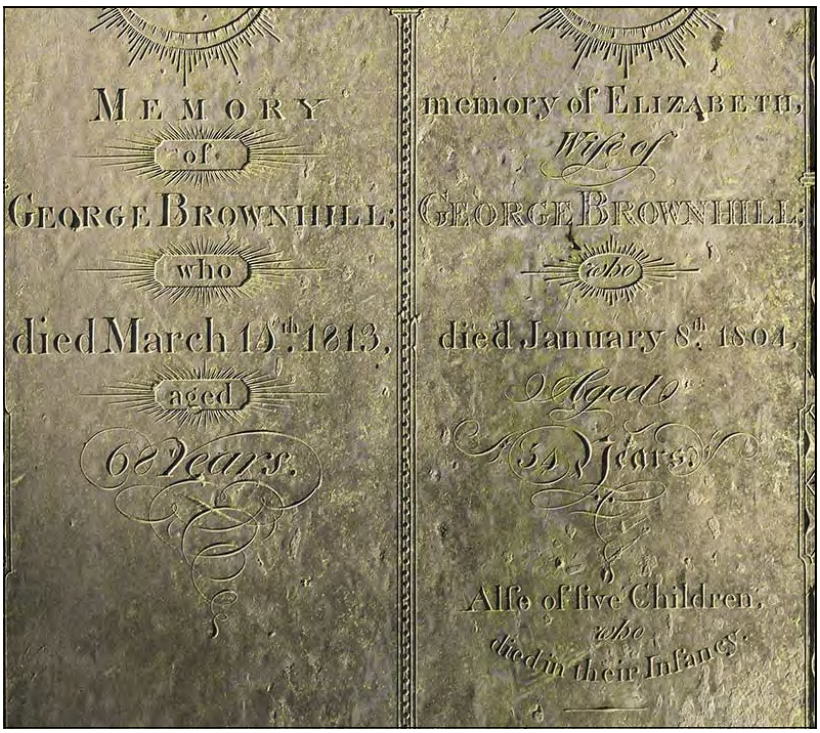
It is intriguing to think that there may be Brownhill family members in Birmingham today, totally unaware that a street is named after one of their ancestors. If they search the internet, will Google lead them to this page, I wonder.

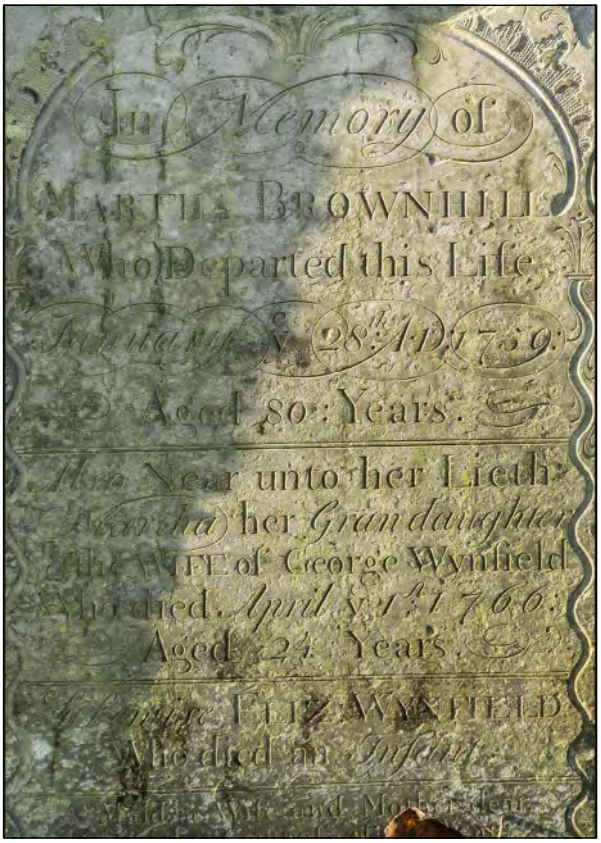
Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help with this Story.

The row of Brownhill family graves present the bare facts of their lives and are a sad reminder of the struggle to live a life – and keep it – 200 years ago.

The 5 gravestones at the back of St Giles Churchyard are a memorial to 14 members of the Brownhill family

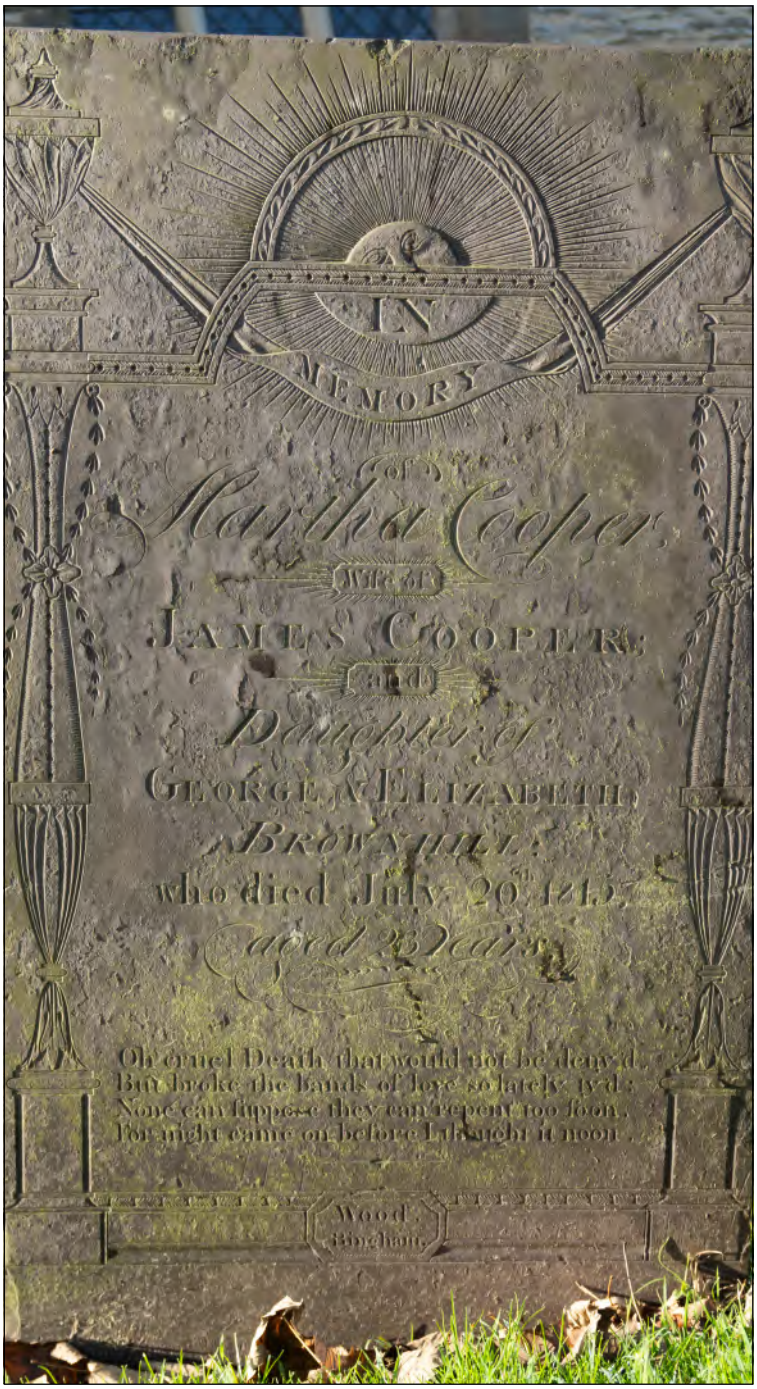




Martha Brownhill (1759), her 24-year-old granddaughter Martha (1766), and her baby, Elizabeth (1766)

George Brownhill (1813),
his wife Elizabeth (1804).
Also, their 5 children who died in infancy:
John (1775),
Martha (1780),
Mary (1781),
John (1782) and
William (1786)

George and Elizabeth's 26-year-old son, William (1813)



George and Elizabeth's daughter, Martha, who died when 23 years old (1815)

The son of George and Elizabeth, George (1837) and his wife Hannah (1834)

Brownhill Close in September 2020 ....

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

The names of some roads in Cropwell Bishop were not chosen by Councillors; they evolved from everyday conversations between people who used them at a time when they were little more than dirt paths.

St Giles Church was built in 1215 and it must have been only natural for people to refer to a street next to it as Church Street.

So, no secrets to reveal about the name of the street but lots to tell about the buildings – past and present, that line it.

Let's explore it, starting at The Turn.

The Turn

The space in front of the Church, where Church Street, Nottingham Road and Fern Road meet, was for centuries called The Turn.

2020

The 2020 photograph offers no explanation for the name but the 1920s photograph does. It was the site of a grassy roundabout where horse-drawn carts, and then carriages and bicycles, could easily turn around.

The name stuck, even after the roundabout was replaced with tarmac and the pavement in front of the church wall was extended. Whilst the name is less well known nowadays, there is no better name for this spot.

It is interesting to compare later photographs of Church Street taken from The Turn.

Inspect the vehicles, the pavement on the right-hand side, the number of telegraph poles (and wires), the gap after the cottage on the left, the telephone box, and the power lines.

The Turn in 1989

1920s

1930s

1950s

In 2018, The Turn was as crowded as it has probably ever been when the Tour of Britain cycle race swept through Cropwell Bishop for the first time ever.

The Tour of Britain came to Cropwell Bishop on Saturday 8th September 2018

Crowds awaiting the racing cyclists, many of whom had recently completed the Tour de France (2018)

Just 4 years later, on Thursday the 8th September 2022, the Tour of Britain returned to Cropwell Bishop and villagers turned out in force to cheer on the riders.

Being a weekday rather than a Saturday like last time, there were fewer cycling enthusiast from afar lining the streets.

Nevertheless, it was a fine day and, whilst we did not know it at the time, it would become an historic day for the world. Later that afternoon, at Balmoral Castle in Scotland, after 70 years on the throne, Queen Elizabeth died; she was 96 years old.

As a mark of respect, the remaining stages of the Tour of Britain were cancelled. So, it turned out, we had witnessed the final day of the race.

Cheering on the riders during a hectic few minutes (2018)

It is 2022 and, once again, Tour of Britain riders speed by The Turn

Seconds later, and they are racing down Church Street heading towards Cropwell Butler (2022)

The Turn to the Post Box

The white cottage at The Turn is well over 200 years old. The house next to it, No.5, is a modern home. It replaced the old cottage that was still standing in 1970: it can be seen in the photograph of the Easter Parade in 1919 (on the next page).

After the twitchel or, to use its old name, Little Lane, stands Ebenezer House which was built for Sam Heaselden in 1904.

He was the founder of the Heaselden Company that employed over 80 men to mine gypsum in the village during the first half of the 20th Century.

3 Church Street (2020)

5 Church Street (2020)

Ebenezer House (2020)

The house was built on the foundations of the previous building, Fillingham Farmhouse which, in later years, became Shelton Farmhouse.

Some of the farm buildings were left standing and remained a colourful view in summer until their demolition for the building of Stackyard Close in 2018.

Partial remains of the Fillingham / Shelton Farm (2015)

The demolition of Fillingham/Shelton Farmhouse was accompanied by the demolition of Cropwell Bishop's original Post Office. The small white thatched cottage stood in, what is now, the front garden of Ebenezer House. The path on its left still exists – it is the twitchel, Little Lane.

Easter Parade on Church Street in 1919. The black and white photo includes the old cottage that was demolished in 1972. In this image, the 1919 photo has been merged with a colour 2020 photgraph.

Fillingham / Shelton Farm (1890s)

Original thatched post office with its Post Mistress, Ann Shelton (1890s)

The Post Box to Stackyard Close

Where the bus stop, phone box and post box stand, was, until fairly recently, one of the busiest spots in the village.

At that time, the bus service to Nottingham was regular and reliable and the phone box had a phone. Beside it was The Cabin (a newsagent, general store and post office) where, it seemed, everyone called in at least once a day.

A Bartons bus on Church Street. 2008

The Cabin shop and Post Office (2006)

Over a period of 50 years, I recall just four different teams running the shop – with the help of local part-timers and paper-boys and girls.

It started with Ken and Enid, followed by Lesley and Norman, Michelle Woodward, and, lastly, Chantelle and Mark — who continued to provide a newspaper delivery service to Cropwell Bishop and local villages until 2024.

Ken Patrick and Enid's shop in 1978

Michelle was in charge in 1999

Woody's Cabin in 1999

The Cabin in snow (2012)

The Cabin being demolished to enable the creation of Stackyard Close (February 2018)

Chantelle serving at the Post Office in The Cabin (2007)

Before The Cabin was built in the 1970s, the Post Office was on Nottingham Road at The Turn. The site where The Cabin would be built, was occupied by other businesses.

Firstly, there was a fish & chip shop: it was next to the post box and you had to climb steps to its door. In years to come, it became part of The Cabin and was used for the sale of cards, stationery and diy items.

As well as the fish & chip shop, there was a black hut. We don't know its original purpose but at one time it was a Barbers, run by a Benny Snowden.

Then it became a shoe Repair Shop as well as a hairdresser. A man named Ernie Parnham did the shoe repairs and his father did haircuts.

In 2019 Stackyard Close was completed. The phone box remains as a reference point for comparing the view with old photographs.

Entrance to Stackyard Close. The house wall behind the letterbox is reminiscent of the Cabin wall before it. And the black garage on the Close is so like the black Hairdresser & Cobbler hut of long ago. (2020)

In the 1970s, the building across the road from The Cabin was the Mace grocery store.

In those days it was run by Val and Wilf Bellamy. In the distant past is was run by other families and, long ago, by a John Eastwood. On the right is an old photo showing his shop in the background.

Side of John Eastwood's shop, looking towards the road. In the background on the right, is the Cart Shed that is now a barn-conversion on Stackyard Close. On the left is the hut that was a Hairdresser and Cobblers. (1930s)

The Hairdresser & Cobbler hut on Church Street (1950s)

Mrs Edith Allen and daughter in front of Eastwood's shop (1930s)

The building is still there but the shop space has been incorporated into a family home.

To the right of the old Mace shop is a house that has been greatly modified in recent decades. It is an old house that was once called The Homestead, and then Hyson Cottage.

Once the Mace shop, now a home. (2020)

House called The Homestead in past times (2020)

To its right is a building, which is effectively in the churchyard, that we now call the Parish School Room.

This building was the first school for village children. Built in 1850, it was then called the National School.

However, education was not yet compulsory and many poor children would leave school as soon as they were able to work – at 10 or 12 years of age.

Attendance declined for another reason. The Vicar had a strong influence on the curriculum whereas many local people felt the school should be non-denominational.

In 1875 the school closed but by 1878 children had a big, new school to go to on Fern Road. We now refer to that building as The Old School. Its history is described in the Parkin Close Street Story.

The Parish School Room was, in recent years, used by the Cropwell Bishop Heritage Group.

Parish School Room (2020)

Views from the Church Tower

Over the years, photographers have made use of the tower of St Giles Church to capture views of the village. In the photos here, we can see the changes that have occurred on Church Street over the last 80 years.

If only cameras had been invented 800 years ago, we would now have an even more complete history of the street.

Maybe an artist sketched the scene in earlier times; could a drawing be hidden in the attic of a Cropwell Bishop cottage, I wonder.

1940s

1940s — close-up view

1949 — close-up view

1949

1970s

2020

Stackyard Close to St Giles Way

The Stackyard Close Street Story describes how the Cart Shed came to be built. The high quality of its brickwork, even after 130 years, does not look out of place beside new buildings.

After the Cart Shed is a narrow lane at 90° to the road. The houses are numbered from 19 to 13, with number 19 being the first one.

Interestingly, whilst there is a gate to number 13 at the top of the lane, there is also a vehicle entrance to it on St Giles Way.

This explains why there is a house sign for "13 Church Street" on St Giles Way.

The house number that appears on St Giles Way

From the top end of the lane, you can only see the side of number 15, but from St Giles Way you can see that number 13 occupies the far end of the building.

This innocuous looking building has an interesting history. Research suggests that it was built in 1895. At that time, the stackyard area was part of the farm owned by the Shelton family.

The Cart Shed on Church Street was built by David Salvin in 1890, just 5 years earlier, so there is the possibility that he built 15 and 13 Church Street too.

Whilst it may be difficult to know who the original builder was, there is evidence that another builder did major work 35 years later.

The original building had just a ground floor, but in 1931 an upstairs floor was added to the building. This might explain why the present homes have steep staircases; reminiscent of a staircase leading to an attic, maybe?

This story shows you that there is often an interesting story behind many an old home.

Cart Shed – built in 1890 (2020)

15 Church Street as seen from the lane (2020)

15 & 13 Church Street as seen from St Giles Way (2020)

The owner of the village slaughter house once lived at number 17 and adjacent to it was the slaughter house itself. It doesn't look like one nowadays.

17 Church Street (2020)

17 Church Street with slaughter house on its right (1970)

17 Church Street (1970)

19 Church Street (2020)

Back to the road and we come to two semi-detached houses, 21 and 23 Church Street.

The building looked quite different 30 years ago: it had a flat roof.

21 and 23 Church Street with flat roof (1989)

19 and 17 Church Street in 1970

21 and 23 Church Street with pitched roof (2020)

Number 21 was once occupied by Tom Simpson who was a baker and a member of the Simpson family that ran the Corn Merchants, 'H, Simpson & Son', further down the road.

Looking further down Church Street (1960s)

The Chequers

The Chequers is one of the two oldest Inns in the village. The history of both The Chequers and The Wheatsheaf go back centuries, and even before the current buildings were built, there were almost certainly earlier ale houses on their sites.

There were once five pubs in the village but now only these two remain.

Photographs taken from the Church Tower illustrate the effects of transport on The Chequers during the 1900s. In 1949, the pub car park was a ploughed field and the tiny space for parking is occupied by a 3-wheel car.

No doubt, it was very much a local village pub thenadays.

1949 view of The Chequers

A year later, in February 1950, the Inn was the starting point for a village bus trip – see photo on the right.

From the 1960s onwards, increasingly more people had their own car and the popularity of a drive out into the country for a drink, or two, was a boon to country pubs like The Chequers.

Pubs would be heaving at the weekends and nearby fields would be the place for a hog-roast, BBQ or disco with loud music and flashing coloured lights.

This was all before the nation faced up to the deathly link between alcohol and driving.

Chequers in 2007

Isaac Taylor and family on dray outside the Chequers (1920s)

Bus trip setting off from Chequers Inn (1950)

Chequers in 2004

The picture of The Chequers in 2007 shows the extent of its large car park, a necessity in the 1980s but not so much in the 2000s.

Chequers under snow (2012)

Chequers Inn (1930s)

Over the years, many issues have contrived to dim the attraction of pubs; warm comfortable homes, big TV screens with multiple channels, drink-driving restrictions, and health concerns over alcohol and cigarette smoke.

Digging up part of the car park to build Kerrs Walk was just one consequence of these effects.

In the 1930 photograph of The Chequers, you will notice that the little extension on the left-hand side was just single storey. At that time, it was a shop for selling meat – not a full-time shop as such, but a local butcher, Jack Tomlinson, would bring in the meat and sell it from there.

Later, in the 1960s, Harry Wilson made use of this little shop to sell clothes.

Since those days, a second storey has been added to the extension and there is now an upstairs flat.

2020

Around St Giles Way

Creating the entrance to St Giles Way during the estate building of the 1970s, probably caused the most destructive effect on the old buildings of Cropwell Bishop.

The 1949 photo from the Church tower clearly shows the area opposite The Chequers.

You can see a large grey house with, what appear to be, two extensions of declining height. This house was called The Yews and was owned by Johnny and Connie Starbuck.

Next came a yard known as Starbucks Yard and then a passageway.

The passageway led to another yard where Kate Allsop sold groceries from a wooden hut. The blacksmith's workshop was also in this yard.

Two current residents of Cropwell Bishop, Alan Wilson of the Parish Council, and Anne Terzza, once of Cropwell Bishop Heritage Group, had a grandfather who was the blacksmith here in the early 1900s.

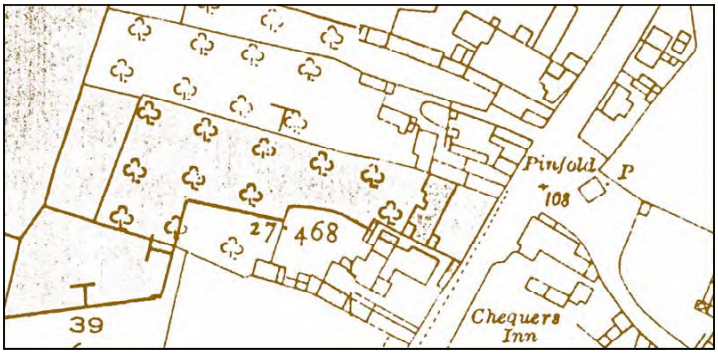
On Church Street, after the passageway, there was another building which appears to have consisted of three terrace cottages. These were called Stockwell houses.

Then, there was another passageway and a building which is still there today; 41 Church Street.

Across the road is the Pinfold which is fully described in the Stockwell Lane Street Story.

1949 view of street where St Giles Way would be built

Passageway that led to the Blacksmith's shop (in the centre of the 1949 church tower view above)



1960s map of Church Street where St Giles way would be built

1977 view of St Giles Way

41 Church Street

Number 41 Church Street, with its attachments, stretches westwards. In the mid 1900s each part of the building housed a different business but these days they are all individual homes.

The homes on this terrace all share the same address, 41 Church Street, but with the addition of a letter; a, b, c or d.

The furthest, 41d, was once the village bakehouse. It was owned by the Simpson family which eventually come to own the whole terrace, from the bakehouse to Church Street.

Number 41a was the Village Co-operative Shop prior to the arrival of the Simpson family.

The shop was founded by a group of Methodists in the 1870s, and we know that in the late 1800s, it was run by George Squires and his wife Miriam. George was a member of the Squires family, several of whom lived at 47 Church Street.

Number 41 was the office for the Simpson grain business up until the late 1990s.

You can discover more about the history of the Simpson family in the Simpson Drive Street Story.

Number 39. Bungalow that Les Simpson had built for himself (2020)

Number 41 (2020)

The Old Bakery (2020)

41a: the Village Co-op Store from about 1870 and for many decades afterwards (2020)

Simpsons once owned the whole terrace of buildings (2020)

Milk and Honey

You may be surprised to discover that the building which, until recently, housed the hairdresser, Snips, was once a farmhouse.

And you may be even more surprised to discover that it was once just one of four farmhouses on Church Street.

We have already identified the site of Fillingham Farm (later called Shelton Farm) as being opposite the Church, where Ebenezer House now stands, but in past times there were another three farms beyond The Chequers.

The thought of 4 farms close by on a short village street may seem odd to you: we are used to seeing massive farms deep in the countryside.

However, whereas nowadays large farms with lots of machinery can be run by just a few workers, in olden times farms were much smaller and all the power came from humans and horses.

In those days, farming was the biggest industry and the biggest employer in the village; it made sense for the farm to be located centrally – where the workers lived. It is a similar story on Nottingham Road and Fern Road.

It was number 43 Church Street that was the farmhouse and The Snips building was the farm's dairy.

The farm was called Stockwell Farm and the most recent farmer to live there was George Clarke, who died in 1955, and his wife Helen.

On the right-hand side of Snips, a path led to the milking parlour and malt houses; beyond them was farmland. At that time, the street named The Maltings did not exist and there was a gap between the farmhouse and the next house, The Rosary.

There was once a malt house up here (1998)

George Clarke was well prepared for the hard work of being a farmer. When he was 15, he was working underground at the gypsum mine in the village. Then, at 25 he was living in Nottingham and working as a railway porter. Read The Maltings Street Story for more about Stockwell Farm.

10 Church Street (2020)

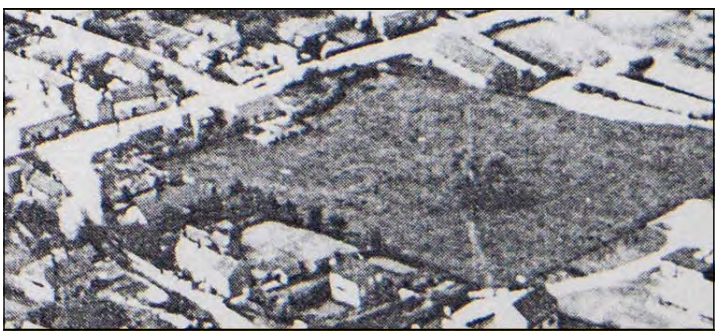
43 Church Street: it hides its history well (2020)
(It ceased being a hairdresser in 2021)

Snips (1978)

Snips (1998)

On the opposite side of the road is No 10 Church Street. Back in the 1930s a man named Harold Smith lived there and he kept bees in his back garden. His love of bees no doubt influenced him when he chose to name his house, The Nest.

Nowadays, it goes by the name, Springfield House. This makes reference to the field that once stretched from the back of the house and up the hill. In it, was a spring that was still being used by villagers in the 1930s.



A field with a spring that was behind Springfield House. (1960s)

On the left of number 10 Church Street is a new house built in a Victorian style that suits this ancient street. In the early 1900s, on the same plot, stood two, very old, linked houses, 12 and 14 Church Street.

These houses were demolished in the early 1960s and a bungalow was built in its place, but it was not destined to stay there for long.

The bungalow was demolished and the present house built in the early 2000s.

This house replaced 12 and 14 Church Street

12 & 14 Church Street (1950s)

Shoes and Doctors

The Rosary was bought by retired farmer, Henry Barratt, in the late 1800s and was occupied by the Barratt family until it was demolished in 1998. It is probably best remembered as the home of Tom Barratt.

Tom was born in The Rosary in 1894 and lived there until his death in 1985. Even more familiar than The Rosary was the shed that sat in the front garden for over 80 years. It was the shed where Tom Barratt worked as the village cobbler.

Tom was a well known and loved village character and deserved to have a street named after him. Find out all about his life in the Barratt Close Street Story.

Tom Barratt's workshop

The Rosary 1998

Doctor Leadley (right) with Vic Hall in 1965

The Rosary was a place visited many folk in Cropwell Bishop in the 1950s — not to have their shoes repaired, but to have their bodies taken care of: the local doctor had his surgery there.

Tom Barratt's young sister, Alice, who was a school teacher, also lived in the house. Later, her husband, Josiah Reader and their son Peter were there too.

It was in 1956 that a young Doctor Leadley came to the village and, initially, he lived on Hoe View Road. However, there wasn't a surgery in Cropwell Bishop – so he rented the front room of the Rosary.

Later, a single storey building with a flat roof was built on right of The Rosary and, for decades, it was the village surgery where both Doctor Leadley and Doctor Hindley could be found in times of medical need.

In 1982, the surgery was enlarged by the addition of an upstairs floor and a pitched roof. The surgery was closed in 1993 following the opening of the new Health Centre on Fern Road.

2020

The Rosary demolished 1998

On the left-hand side of the surgery building, there used to be a culvert, down which rain-water often flowed from the fields behind.

It was one of several that drained onto Church Street before drains were designed to cope with the occasional flooding.

Following the demolition of The Rosary in 1998, two new houses were built on the site of The Rosary.

1 Church View (2020)

2 Church View (2020)

Squires House and Knights Farm

The big house, number 49, that comes after the ‘old surgery’, was once a farmhouse.

49 Church Street

It was originally known as Squires House after the Squires family that lived there during the 1800s. But in 1921 the house, and the land behind it, were sold to William Knight. He was just 23 years old at the time and had fought in the First World War.

I suspect the house was put in his name for convenience, because both his mother and father, Henry Knight, also lived in the house and, later on, so did William’s wife and family. In reality, Henry was in charge and William assisted him in the running of the farm.

The house and land cost the Knight family £350 in 1921. After taking account of inflation, that is equivalent to about £18,000 today. Don’t you just yearn for some aspects of life a century ago.

William Knight (1917)

The Knight family at Squires Farm (1930s)

Behind the house, where Squires Close now is, used to be the stackyard. We can see from old photographs that this yard was often a hive of activity.

Building a haystack in Squires Farm stackyard (1930s)

Threshing machine in stackyard (1930s)

Henry and Alice Knight (1930s)

Henry Knight at Squires Farm (1920s)

Henry and Alice Knight with son William (1920s)

Mrs Alice Knight with cat (1930s)

Alice Knight died in 1936. In 1939, the National Register (like a census) lists Henry as the farmer and William as his assistant even though Henry was 70 years old.

William and his wife, Hettie, finally took charge of everything in 1950 when Henry died.

William died in 1967, at the age of 69, leaving Hettie to plan for her future. She sold the house in 1970 but kept the attached house, number 49, for herself to live in. Hettie died in 1979 when she was 79.

49 Church Street (2020)

The Old Co-op

The Co-operative food shop has stood on its site on Church Street for over 50 years. During that time the shop changed from having separate counters and being served, to self-service. There were several periodic modernisations of the shop over the years, with it getting roomier each time.

The Co-op has gone from Church Street but a new shop has replaced it on the same site. A small business also operates from a building behind.

Of course, the Co-op has only moved just round the corner onto Nottingham Road so the 150year history of co-operative shops in Cropwell Bishop continues.

Co-op (1999)

A burst water pipe on Church Street makes shopping difficult for a short time (1986)

Co-op shopping following a makeover of the store (2008)

Free car washes? (1986)

Service with a smile (2008)

Refurbishing the building for its new use (2020)

Springfield to the Bend

Number 51 is set back from the road. The space in front of it was, at one time, called Squires Yard.

Number 51 (2020)

A hundred year ago, number 59 was called The Croft. At that time, it was occupied by one of the village's most respected citizens, William Parkin, the School Master at the Village School from 1878 to 1920.

William Parkin moved into the house on his retirement from teaching.

The Croft on Church Street a hundred years ago

At that time, there was another home behind The Croft, called The Croft Bungalow and William Parkin's brother lived there.

Number 61 was once owned by Michael Thurlby who also had a street named after him. Sometime after his death in 1925, the house was occupied by the Farnsworth family.

61 Church Street (2020)

Number 53 (2020)

The entrance to Squires Close is just before number 59 (2020)

The Croft on Church Street in 2020

Number 59 (2020)

Eddie Farnsworth was a grocer who stood out from the competition by taking the shop to his customers: he towed a mobile grocery shop around to their home.

He was also a poultry farmer and his sister, Hilda, worked for an electrical manufacturer as a shorthand typist.

As recently as 35 years ago, shorthand was an essential skill for office secretaries, journalists, and others. How quickly times have changed.

Just beyond Number 61, where the road turns sharply left, there was once a large open ditch. There were times in the past when the volume of water that flowed down this ditch from the fields, was so great that the road was flooded at this corner. Better drains have now overcome the problem.

Across the road are two houses; one either side of the entrance to Springfield Close.

The fourth of Church Street's farms was also on the other side of the road. It was called Old Hall Farm and was still there in the 1980s – but its days were numbered.

On the right of Springfield Close (2020)

On the left of Springfield Close (2020)

Looking up Church Street in 1989

Looking up Church Street in 2014

Old Hall Farm was demolished to make way for the building of Springfield Close and Rawlings Court. Its name comes from the old "Hall", or maybe we should say, old "Manor House", that stood there long ago.

The view east, across fields in 2020. It would very soon become the entrance to Simpson Drive and a new housing estate.

Old Hall Farm in 1972

Round the Bend

When you go around the bend at the foot of Church Street what confronts you is a bit of a shock.

After being surrounded on both sides by buildings with a wide variety of designs and history, we round the bend and see none – except the white houses on the next bend.

You then realise that there are, in fact, houses on the right but they are hiding behind a tall hedge.

2020

The truth is that these houses are confused; they don't know if they belong to Church Street or to the street on the other side of them.

In fact, their postal address says 'Hardy Close', the street on the other side. That is where the residents park their cars and where they usually enter their homes – so that makes sense.

It wasn't always this way. There was once a row of homes along this stretch and they were in no doubt that they belonged to Church Street – they faced it full on.

A row of terraced houses faced the Street – as did a lone detached cottage, from an earlier time, called Springfield Cottage.

They were built in the mid 1800s and behind them were just fields and orchards. Also behind them were their back yards with a wash house, coal house and outdoor toilet.

It was called Salvin's Row. The name comes from the Salvin family of Cropwell Bishop —probably David Salvin who lived from 1830 to 1919.

He was a master builder and built the Cart Shed at the entrance to Stackyard Close. Whether Salvin's Row got its name because he built the houses or because he owned them, we don't know.

Either way, the name had competition: most villagers commonly referred to it as Bottom Row. Just to be clear, it got this name because it was at the bottom end of the village. There was another row of cottages, Top Row, that was at the top end of the village.

Unlike humans, buildings have no say if someone wants to change their name.

Early in the 1900s, Salvin's Row was bought by Herbert Heaselden who owned the gypsum mine in the village. He renamed the row, Etheldene Cottages. Was this name derived from his wife's name, Ethel Heasleden? I feel sure it was.

This may have confused the postman but not the villagers; they still called it Bottom Row.

Springfield Cottage and Etheldene Cottages were all demolished around 1970 to make way for the detached houses that now belong to Hardys Close.

After the second bend the road becomes Cropwell Butler Road – but that's another Story.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Pam Wregg, Jane Jones, Andy Trevers, Martyn Smith, Lynda Hatton and Pat Onions for their help with this Story.

At the bend (2020)

Etheldene Cottages

Wedding of Samuel Simpson and Nellie Smalley. Outside Etheldene Cottages

A 'J. Lewis bus' stops outside Springfield Cottage (1930s)

J. Lewis himself with two of his buses (1930s)

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Clarke Close was built in the early 1970s when the final extension of Hoe View Road was completed. Like all the other side-roads built at the time, Clarke Close was named after people associated with Cropwell Bishop.

Finding a character named Clarke, who made their mark in Cropwell Bishop, was not difficult. The problem was in picking the right one because dozens of Clarkes once lived here and several might deserve a street name.

So, the question became, which of these Clarkes did parish councillors have in mind when they named Clarke Close?

Who owned Clarke Close land?

When investigating the history of other village streets, I found it helpful to start with the map for the 1804 Enclosure Act. In the 1970s parish councillors often chose names from it.

Below, is the portion of the map in the region of Clarke Close. Nottingham Road sweeps from left to right and is first crossed by the Grantham Canal and then joined by Kinoulton Road.

1804 Enclosure Map

According to the map, the field which corresponds to the Memorial Hall field of today (coloured brown) was owned by John Marshall. Next to it are four horizontal fields in white: the second one up corresponds to Clarke Close.

This field has no name on it, which means it was not part of the Enclosure Act agreement. Consequently, it doesn't name its owner. So, our parish councillors were denied their usual method for choosing a street name.

Maybe they found a more recent owner of this land had the name Clarke.

In 1930, there was an auction of land and properties in Cropwell Bishop that included this same field. One of the people who attended that auction was local farmer, Arthur Barlow.

Here are copies of the auction leaflet and a map that went with it. These were his personal copies and they show the pencilled notes he made at the auction.

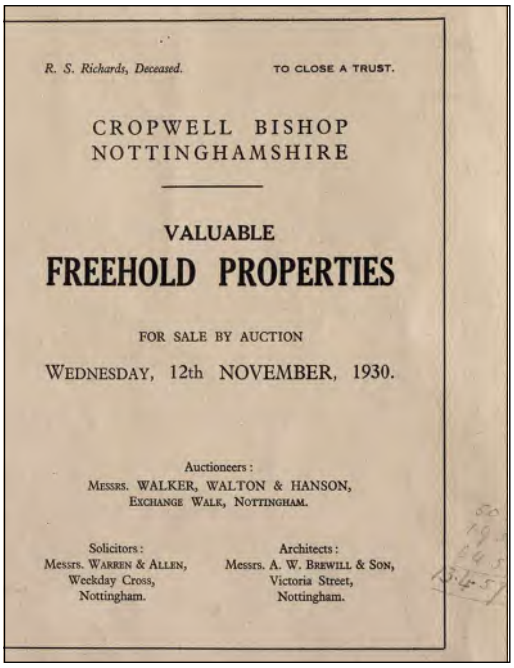
Lot 3 at the 1930 auction is shaded green on this map

As we can see, field 44 was being sold as part of Lot 3. The note at the side suggests that it was indeed, Arthur Barlow who bought Lot 3 for £450.

However, its significance for us, is that it wasn't a person named Clarke.

So, the evidence suggests that the street was not named after someone with a direct connection to the land on which it stands. There had to be a different reason for choosing the name Clarke.

I wondered if this Clarke character might have owned land elsewhere in Cropwell Bishop.


R. S. Richards, Deceased. TO CLOSE A TRUST.

CROPWELL BISHOP
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

VALUABLE
FREEHOLD PROPERTIES

FOR SALE BY AUCTION

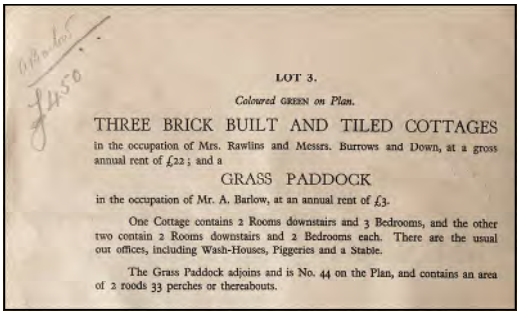
WEDNESDAY, 12th NOVEMBER, 1930.

Auctioneers:
Messrs. WALKER, WALTON & HANSON,
Exchange Walk, Nottingham.

Solicitors:
Messrs. Warren & Allen,
Weekday Cross,
Nottingham.

Architects:
Messrs. A. W. Brewill & Son,
Victoria Street,
Nottingham.

The front cover of a booklet printed for the sale of a number of village properties and land in 1930 – including the field on which Clarke Close is built (Field 44 on the map).


LOT 3.

Coloured GREEN *on Plan.*

THREE BRICK BUILT AND TILED COTTAGES
in the occupation of Mrs. Rawlins and Messrs. Burrows and Down, at a gross annual rent of £22; and a

GRASS PADDOCK
in the occupation of Mr. A. Barlow, at an annual rent of £3.

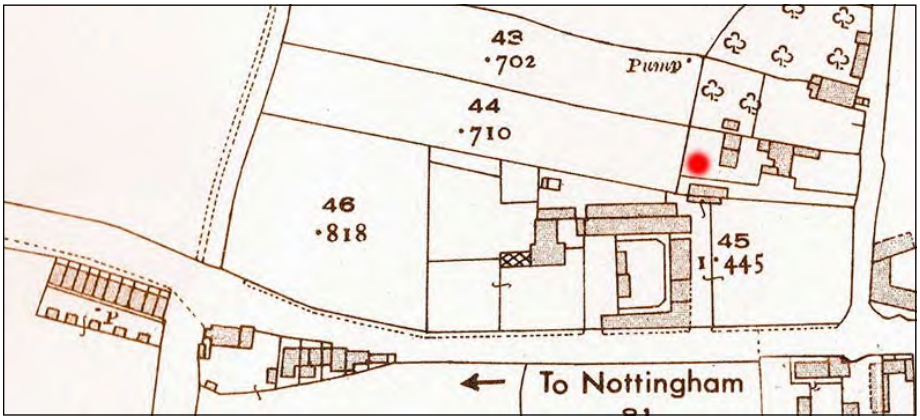
One Cottage contains 2 Rooms downstairs and 3 Bedrooms, and the other two contain 2 Rooms downstairs and 2 Bedrooms each. There are the usual out offices, including Wash-Houses, Piggeries and a Stable.

The Grass Paddock adjoins and is No. 44 on the Plan, and contains an area of 2 roods 33 perches or thereabouts.

Lot 3 included the grass paddock, Field 44. The booklet belonged to Arthur Barlow and his hand-written note on the left suggests that he bought this paddock for £450.

Behind Lenton House is the field that would eventually be the site of Clarke Close (1965)

View of the Memorial Hall from a spot that is now the front garden of 127A Hoe View Road (see red dot on the 1960s map on the right). This field of cows is where Clarke Close now is.
On the left, behind the hedge, is the back garden of Lenton House.



A 1960s map of the area now occupied by Clarke Close. The red dot is where the photographer stood when he took his photo of the Memorial Hall.

A overlay of the 1960s map on a satellite image. Clarke Close was built on Fields 43 and 44.

The Clarke family

All I needed to do was investigate all the Clarke families who lived in Cropwell Bishop during the last 200 years. Sounded straight forward — until I discovered that Clarke families liked to have lots of children.

Just think about it, if a Mr and Mrs Clarke had 10 children in the early 1800s, and each of these children had 10 of their own, by 1850, that would result in 100 descendants. If this pattern repeated itself, then by 1900 there would be 1000 Clarke descendants.

Of course, this didn't happen in practice. Some parents did not have that many children, some children did not survive infancy, and all girls would lose the Clarke name in marriage. Nevertheless, it did leave a lot of Clarkes to consider.

I decided to concentrate on the most promising branches of the family.

Back in 1806, William Clarke of Hickling, married Mary Shelton of Cropwell Bishop and they went on to live their life here, having 9 children along the way. The most interesting child in our search is the youngest one, Thomas Clarke.

Thomas was born in Cropwell Bishop in 1821 and married Ann Wilford of Cropwell Bishop. They had 11 children. Their fourth, Samuel, was born in 1848. He was an agricultural labourer and when he was 27 years old, he married Eliza Harrison of Cropwell Bishop.

They had 5 children and their eldest was George — and he would prove an interesting person in our search for a 'significant' Clarke.

Eliza Clarke

George did not achieve "his significance" until late in his working life when he became a farmer. He was not a rich landowner but he did run a small dairy-farm, called Stockwell Farm, on Church Street.

We came across George Clarke in the Church Street Story that described the milking parlour that he had near the corner of The Maltings.

Since George was both a farmer and a landowner, whose land was later used for house building, he appeared qualified for having a street named after him.

However, when the land he left behind (he died in 1955) was built on in the 1960s, it was not named Clarke Close but The Maltings. The name derived from the malt houses that George had owned.

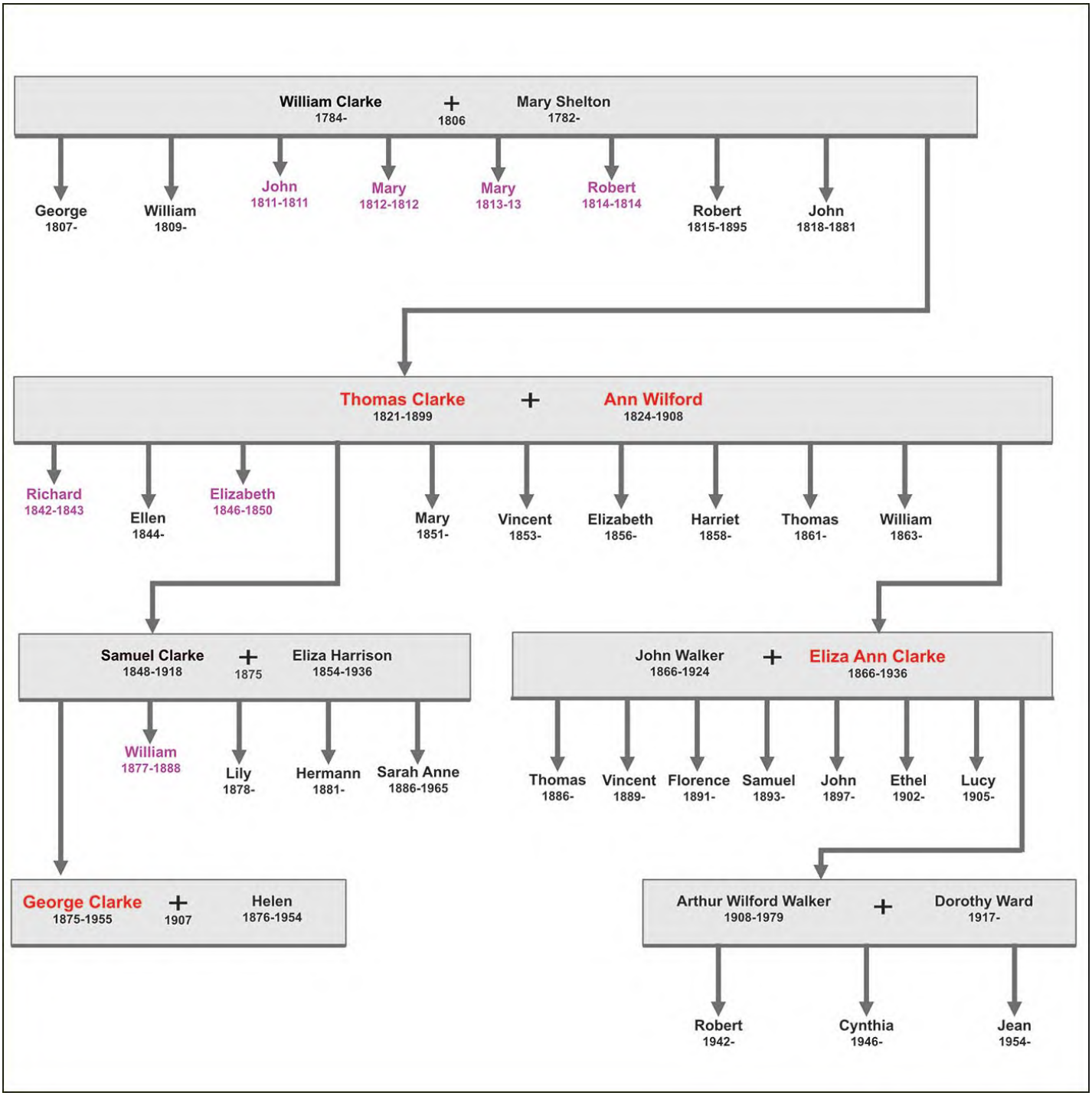
When parish councillors had the task of naming more new streets in the 1970s, they may have decided to make amends for not naming that street after George Clarke, by choosing to name Clarke Close after him.

On the other hand, maybe they had in mind a very different Clarke character: George's own grandfather, Thomas Clarke.

The Post Office Clarkes

In the decades that Thomas and his wife, Ann, were raising their large family during the mid 1800s, Thomas worked as a "plaster-getter". But in the 1880s, when they were in their 60s, a new opportunity came their way — one that may have earned them the honour to have a street named after them.

Up until the mid 1880s, the village



The Clarke Family Tree. Those members of particular interest are shown in red.

post office was in a cottage on Church Street and run by Ann Shelton. When, at about this time, Ann died, the post office was taken over by a newcomer to the village, a Mr Porter. However, he quickly found the task too demanding for him.

It is said that it was the vicar, Reverend Dobbin, who recommended that Thomas Clarke and Ann take over the post office.

Thomas and Ann accepted the challenge, and adapted their house at The Turn, 1 Nottingham Road, to make it a post office and small shop.

About 10 years later, Thomas died, but Ann Clarke continued as post-mistress until her own death in 1908.

Thomas Clarke, Ann Clarke and a grandson (1890s)

She was helped by her youngest daughter, Eliza, who lived at the house together with her husband, John Walker, and their growing family. John was foreman at the gypsum mine.

John died when he was just 59 years old, but Eliza carried on her job as post-mistress.

Eliza's youngest son, Wilf, helped her in the shop and became the village postman when he was 16 years old.

Wilf Walker and his family would become well known in Cropwell Bishop and you can find out more about them in the Walker Close Street Story.

Ann Clarke with granddaughter Ethel (1907)

Which Clarke was it?

So, where does this leave us in our search for the "Clarke" of Clarke Close: do we have an answer? Let's look at the options.

Local farmer, George Clarke, who was denied the honour when The Maltings was given its name, appears to have been deserving – as was his grandfather, Thomas Clarke, who stepped forward to provide a village post office when he might have dreamed of having an easy retirement.

Then there was his wife, Ann Clarke, who did most of the work in the post office – and kept it going when her husband died.

Also, Ann's daughter, Eliza Clarke, who took over the post office after her mother — wasn't she just as deserving as the other three?

Which one would you pick? I don't have the confidence to pick one ahead of the others.

Of course, it isn't for us to choose; that was the parish councillors' job and I doubt we will ever find out for sure who they had in mind. Anyway, does it really matter?

The Clarke family certainly seeded a large number of later generations in Cropwell Bishop and it seems to me reasonable to have a street name to remind us of that.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow and Ricky James for their help with this Story.

9 Clarke Close in the early 1980s.
Behind it, you can see the garage on Nottingham Road being rebuilt.

Clarke Close in 2021

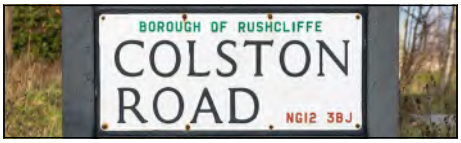
Clarke Close in 2020

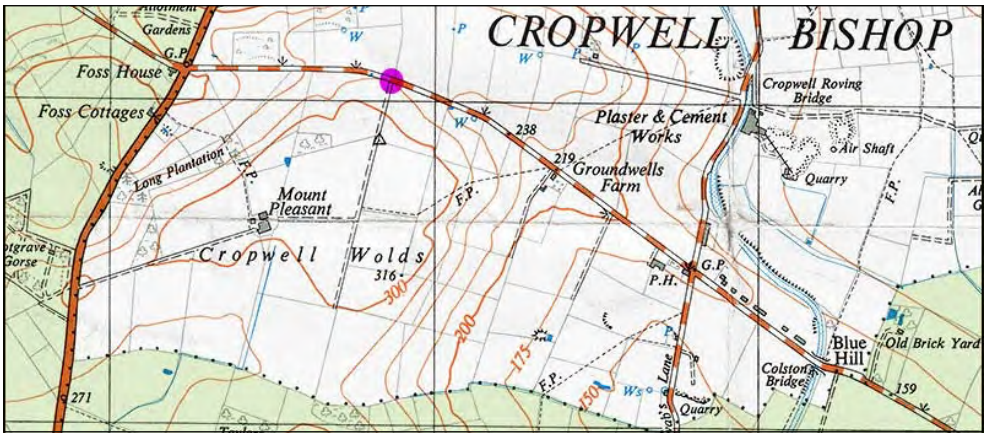
Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop





Colston Road in 1940s. The extent of Cropwell Bishop Parish is shown in white.

Colston Road is a 15-minute walk from the centre of the village and at the top of a hill. Its name obviously comes from being the road that leads to Colston Bassett and it wasn't so long ago that its full name was Colston Bassett Road.

Villagers commonly refer to it as 'Top Road' and to those who have walked up there, it feels an appropriate name.

Until 1840 there were no houses on this stretch of road. It was in that year that Richard Smith of Cropwell Bishop had the Lime Kiln Inn built on a corner of the crossroads.

Since that time, more houses have been built and new developments continue to this day.

The Western End of Colston Road

Let's start by looking to the top end of the road. If you turn right at the Lime Kiln Crossroads, you will be going steadily uphill and heading towards Cotgrave.

On the brow of the hill, you will be 48m higher than The Turn in the centre of the village.

This region is the highest in the parish but to reach the top spot you will have to walk up the public footpath that rises from Groundwells Farm to Cropwell Wolds where you will be 55m higher than the village centre.

Looking eastwards from there, the next highest point is Belvoir Castle, 15 km (9 miles) away.

Colston Road

If you walk to the northern edge of Cropwell Wolds, you can see Nottingham city centre in the distance, beyond the roofs of Cotgrave homes. This is a glorious spot: no wonder Nottingham Astronomical Society has an observatory up here.

View towards Belvoir Castle (2005)

Along this high stretch of Colston Road, behind a hedge on the southern side of the road, there is a sloping grassy field with bushes – you can see it through the gated entrance.

This field belongs to our Parish Council and its history began in 1804 with the passing of the Enclosure Act in Cropwell Bishop.

In that Act, land was re-allocated to existing local landowners. It also laid down rules for establishing roads, bridlepaths, hedges, etc. It also recognised the need for space where building materials could be stored.

View of Nottingham City from Cropwell Wolds (2014)

One such area is shown on the 1804 Enclosure Map, the 3-acre field numbered 78, which is allocated to the "Surveyor of Highways for the maintenance of roads". This is the field that Cropwell Bishop Parish Council inherited and it has long been referred to as, Van Diemen's Land.

This name, Van Diemen's Land, was once used to describe the large island that lies off South Australia, now called Tasmania. But how did a small parcel of land in Cropwell Bishop come to share the same name, I wonder.

The best answer that I can come up with comes from Tasmania's history.

The first sighting of the island by a European was by a Dutch explorer in 1642. He named it Van Diemen's Land after the Governor of the Dutch East Indies (actually, this is an anglicised version of the Dutch name he used).

The first settlement by Europeans was a small British party that arrived in 1803. In 1804 another British party landed in Storm Bay and their settlement has since grown to become Hobart, the capital of Tasmania.

Note the year, 1804. This is the same year that the Cropwell Bishop Enclosure Act was passed. Does this explain (in some way that I can't fathom) how our little field got its name. I don't know.

An alternative explanation, that a villager has put forward, is that the name could derive from the activities that may have taken place on the land.

This land was allocated for road maintenance and maybe the reason it was chosen was because there was suitable limestone rock exposed. Old maps suggest a 'stone pit' and also a lime kiln were there at one time.

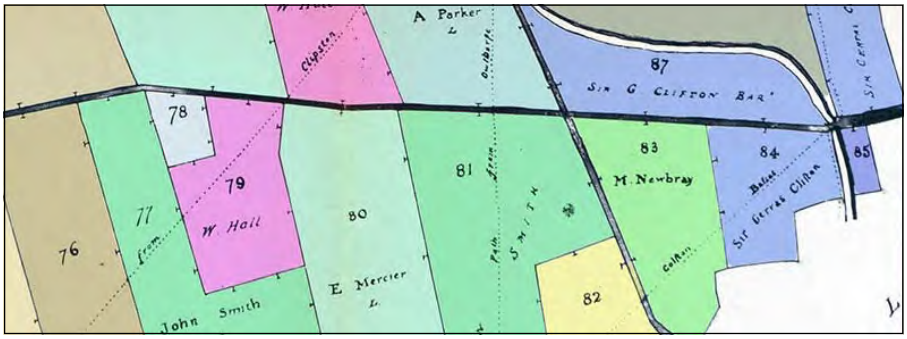
In which case, could it be that men spent days breaking up stones on the site. Whether or not they were paid or forced (a punishment for wrong-doers?) doesn't matter, such work could have been looked upon as being as bad as transportation to Van Diemen's Land in Australia.

It sounds plausible.

There are only three homes at this western end of Colston Road, the two on the private, rather unwelcoming, Skylark Hill Road and the older Groundwells Farmhouse. The farm is named after the 'Ground Well Spring' that is marked on 1835 maps.

The footpath to Cropwell Wolds begins just west of the farmhouse.

If you are daunted by the prospect of reaching this place on foot, given that there is no path alongside the road from Cropwell Bishop to this point, fear not.



1804 land map

The field known as Van Dieman's Land is easily identifiable even 200 years after the 1804 Act. So are many of the boundaries of surrounding fields.

Skylark Hill Road (2020)

House built in 2008 for a goatkeeper (2020)

Groundswell Farm says the name plate, but all the maps say Groundwells Farm. An unsettled 's'. (2020)

There is an excellent path, but it is hidden behind the hedge.

The path starts opposite the Canalside Industrial Park on Kinoulton Road. From there you can walk all the way to Groundwells Farm with a thick hedge between you and the road. There is an alternative route across the fields which can be very pleasant in dry sunny weather.

Cropwell Bishop Walking Club climb up from Groundwells Farm to Cropwell Wolds (2005)

The Walking Club use the path alongside Kinoulton Road (2014)

Views

Lime Kiln Inn (now 'Small People Nursery') and Vale of Belvoir from Cropwell Wolds (2005)

Canalside Industial Park as seen from Colston Road (2008)

Cows grazing in field opposite Lime Kiln Inn (2005)

Walking Club looking towards Canalside Industrial Park (2013)

Lime Kiln Inn

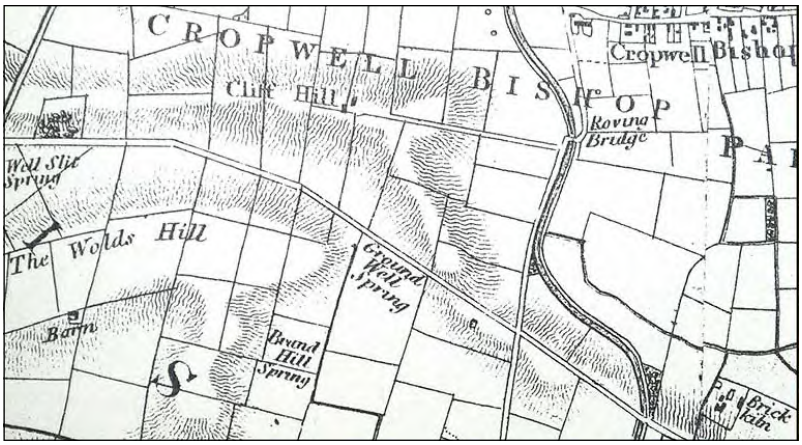
Where the Cropwell Bishop to Kinoulton Road crosses Colston Road, is called the Lime Kiln crossroad. At least, it has been called for 180 years, but its name may eventually change to Small People crossroad; we will have to wait and see.

When the Lime Kiln Inn was built by Cropwell Bishop builder, John Smith, in 1840 – he used fancy brickwork on the west wall to commemorate the year.

When you look at the 1835 map of this area, you may think it odd to have built a large inn in, what would seem to have been, a remote place.

Lime Kiln Crossroad (2020)

Lime Kiln Inn built in 1840



Map from 1835

Lime Kiln on Swab's Lane: demolished in the 1980s.

However, bear in mind that at that time, the Grantham Canal was operating and thriving – this being the time before railways would take trade away from canals.

Also, the mining and refining of gypsum in Cropwell Bishop was a growing business. Just 100m away on Swab's Lane was a working Lime Kiln, and 100m in the other direction was the canal.

Heavy, manual work needed men, and men needed food and drink. The Lime Kiln Inn would have been a popular drinking hole for them, being much closer than the other village pubs.

Also, the inn would have had its fair share of travellers to-and-from Nottingham, who would have boosted trade.

So, in retrospect, Richard Smith's decision to build the Lime Kiln Inn in that spot was a shrewd one. The inn traded successfully for over 170 years.

Gypsum miners going rabbiting when the mine was flooded. Clearly, they could still enjoy a drink at the Lime Kiln. (1905)

It was only about five years ago that it finally closed its doors, despite still being popular with local people for its home cooked food and for being nearby for having family gatherings.

Lime Kiln Inn (2010)

Delivering beer to the Lime Kiln Inn by horse and dray (1920s)

Lime Kiln Inn (1970s)

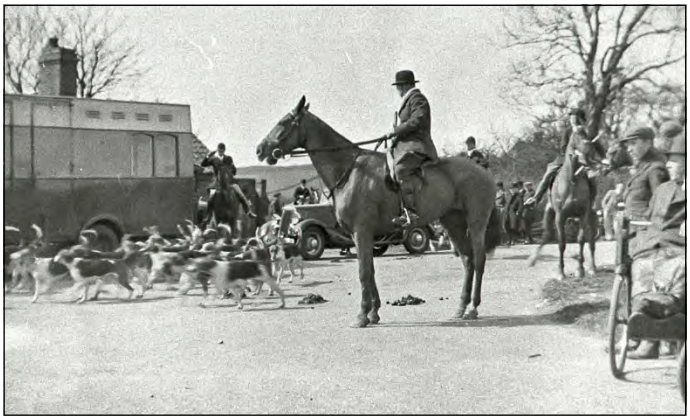
Over the years, its location and large car park enabled it to support local activities as well as stage big gatherings.

For example, there was a large range of easily accessible recycling bins in the car park that many villagers made use of.

Also, once a week during the summer months, racing cyclists would park their cars in the car park during the early evening whilst they took part in time trials that started across the road. These and other small conveniences came to be taken for granted, but are now missed.

Over many decades, it also served as a meeting place and starting point of the South Notts Hunt.

The Jubilee Cycle Race finishing on Colston Road (2012)



South Notts Hunt (1930s)

After the Bike Race at The Lime Kiln (2012)

Up until 1975, it was also the focus of a point-to-point horse race.

These races can be thought of as steeple chasing for amateurs, organised at a local level. They date back to 1836 when men used to race their horses from church steeple to church steeple – hence the name “point-to-point”.

When they took place, you could stand on the verge of Colston Road (west of the Lime Kiln) and look southwards over the fields to see horses and riders, race over a route that was a giant square with a perimeter about a mile long.

They would jump existing hedges and fences along the way. This was made possible because the land was owned by the pub's brewery. The event was held each Easter Bank Holiday Monday.

Since those days, the event has been held at Thorpe Lodge, just south of Newark.

Some of the world’s greatest racing cyclists have travelled down Colston road, before turning down Kinoulton Road into Cropwell Bishop. That was in 2018 when the Tour of Britain Cycle Race came through the village.

In 2012, amateur cyclists raced in front of the houses as they lapped a circuit, that can best be described as; ride away from the Lime Kiln along Swab’s Lane and take the first left. Keep taking the next left until you arrive back at the Lime Kiln. The finish was on Colston Road, near the Lime Kiln.

In recent years, the route of the annual Stilton Stumble Run has included a left turn at the Lime Kiln and then down Colston Road to Colston Bassett.

A great deal of effort has gone into making the old Lime Kiln Inn into a new, and very different business, one that can prosper in the 21st century.

2016 Stilton Stumble

Small People Nursery

It is wonderful to see a building with a long history being preserved, yet transformed, when the alternative elsewhere is so often demolition followed by an eyesore.

The facilities we need in 2020 are a world away from what was wanted in 1840 or even 1980. It is to be hoped that "Small People" prospers.

In offering an outdoor nursery where young children spend 80% of their day outside, it is giving children a wonderful holistic approach during their pre-school years. If I was 3 years old, I would be begging my Mum to take me there!

In time, we might be referring to the Small People crossroad, or maybe I should say, Robin House crossroads because that is the name of the building now.

However, it often takes a long time for people to change their thinking. I still refer to a traffic island in Nottingham as "Raleigh Island" and it is many decades since the Raleigh building disappeared.

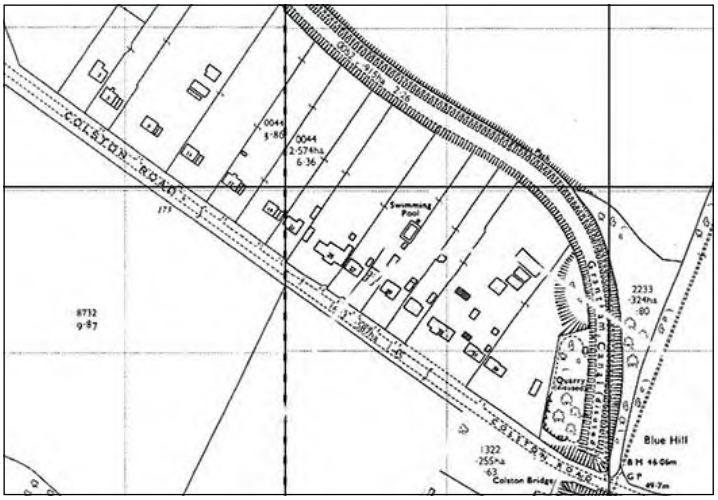
Houses

The houses that line Colston Road, or Top Road, to use its popular, easier-to-say name, were built around 1934.

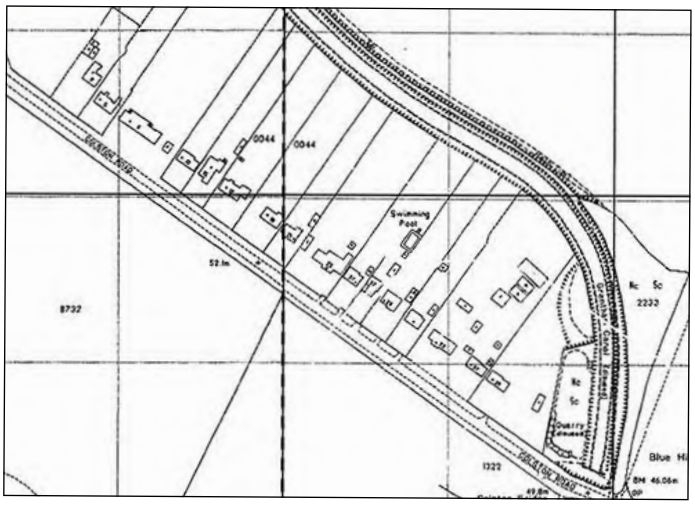
A long-term resident of one of the houses, who has only recently moved away, told me that his father bought number 37 and, because he was one of the first residents, he had the keys to the other houses so that he could show them to interested buyers.

Almost all the houses have been modified since they were built. Number 5 is the only one that, from the road, has, essentially, the appearance of the original house design.

Once you know that, then it is not difficult to spot the shape of the original house in many of the other homes, in spite of major modifications. However, that is no longer possible for a growing number: they have been demolished and completely rebuilt.



Map of the housing in 1971



Map of the housing in 1993

This part of the village is known by older villagers as ‘China Town’. How it got this name is uncertain.

Some say it is because the original buildings are reminiscent of Chinese houses (like those on Willow pattern plates?) whilst others say the name had more to do with the high speed at which they were built.

Another possible explanation that has been passed to me is that, the people who lived there drank from china cups, whereas people down in the village drank from mugs. Maybe we will never discover which is the correct explanation.

One thing that cannot be argued with is that house numbering is a nightmare. Delivery people and emergency services must dread making visits.

The house numbers on many houses are tiny, distant, or non-existent. The usual technique of counting-back from a house number that you can read, will not work: the sequence of numbers is mostly illogical.

In the space of just 16 homes there are four missing numbers (7, 11, 23 & 35) and a pair of numbers (27 & 27a). High gates add to the difficulty of identifying a house.

The haphazard numbering may well be the result of the way the first houses were sold. Apparently, plots of land of varying size were sold and then the houses were built upon them. Prospective owners may have changed their mind about how many houses they would have on their plot, or may have subsequently sold parts of their plot, or even bought neighbouring plots. Current owners are living with the consequences.

A clearly visible number at the drive entrance would alleviate all concerns – and satisfy Rushcliffe Borough Council, which points out that a clearly displayed house number is an enforceable requirement under the Towns Improvements Clauses Act of 1847.

The southerly view from these houses has changed little since the demolition of the old lime kiln (not the pub) in the 1980s, but it is likely to change in the next year or two.

A planning application for a change in use of fields from agricultural to equestrian will result in cows being replaced by horses – which at least will provide new sounds for residents.

The plan is to construct a new riding centre for the disabled. New buildings are restricted to the area beside the canal where buildings have stood for decades.

Over the last 80 years, there have probably been fewer changes to the appearance of this side of the village than anywhere else. A 90-year-old who left Cropwell Bishop the village when they were 10-years-old, would probably be least shocked by changes if they approached from the Colston Road direction.

Is this a good or bad thing, I wonder. Well, if you consider how much the world has changed since 1940 in terms of industry, energy, communications and education, then you might say it is amazing that things can look the same.

Of course, outside appearance is only skin deep (can we say that about a building?) and on the inside everything has changed, both inside buildings and in our heads.

Colston Road itself, will be here for ever – or until its name is changed again.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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2021 Plan for Paddocks and Riding Centre for Disabled

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Leon Terzza, Joan Terzza, Dot Wood and Jonathan Good for their help with this Story.

The Eastern End of Colston Road

Man fishing near Colston Bridge (1912 approx)

View of Colston Bridge from the towpath (1920s)

The Hunt near Colston Bridge (1940s)

Canal towpath leading from Colston Bridge to Cropwell Bishop (2020)

In 2020

Colston Road leading to Colston Bassett (2020)

3 Colston Road (2020)

5 Colston Road (2020)

9 Colston Road (2020)

13 Colston Road (2020)

15 Colston Road (2020)

17 Colston (2020)

19 Colston Road (2020)

21 Colston Road (2020)

25 Colston Road (2020)

27 Colston Road (2020)

27a Colston Road (2020)

29 Colston Road (2020)

31 Colston Road (2020)

33 Colston Road (2020)

37 Colston Road (2020)

39 Colston Road (2020)

Site of proposed Riding Centre for the Disabled (2020)

Growing up on Colston Road in 1947

Visiting Colston Road in the 1960s

One of the original houses built on Colston Road in 1935. They had wooden pergolas built over their driveway.

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

A cooper is a person trained to make wooden casks; is that the origin of the name for Cooper Close, I wondered.

Well, based on the method used to name neighbouring streets, the answer has to be a definite no.

Nevertheless, unlike nearly all other streets named by parish councillors, the name of Cooper does not appear on the 1804 Enclosure map that the councillors probably tucked under their pillows each night.

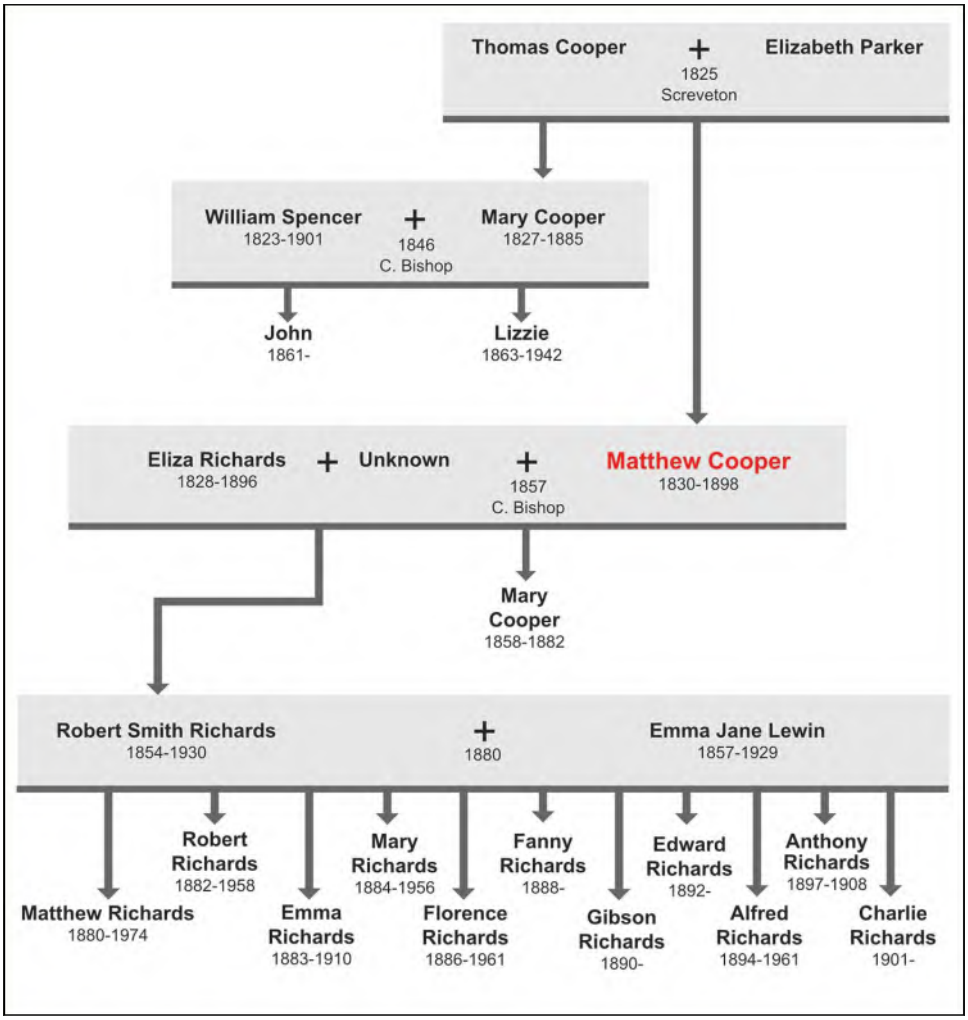
Maybe it was after the 1804 map was drawn that an influential Cooper appeared in the village. It didn't take much effort to find such a name, but uncovering their personal history proved more demanding.

The Cooper of Cooper Close

Families of Coopers have lived in Cropwell Bishop and Cropwell Butler for centuries, but it was clear that the one that had by far the greatest impact on our village during the 1800s, came from further afield – 6 miles away.

Matthew Cooper was born in Screveton, a tiny village just north of Bingham. How he came to live in Cropwell Bishop is interesting.

Matthew Cooper



Cooper Family Tree

His parents were Thomas Cooper and Elizabeth Parker of Screveton and he was born in 1830. He was their second child; his sister, Mary, was born three years earlier.

It was because of his sister that Matthew ended up in Cropwell Bishop.

Mary married William Spencer in Cropwell Bishop in 1846. She was 19 years old and he was 23 – the second eldest of a large family at Owthorpe.

How they came to be married at St Giles is uncertain, but maybe Mary was working and living in the village at the time. What we are certain of is that four years later they were living on Mill Lane (then called Saxtons Row) and William was a master-tailor and Mary a dressmaker.

In later years he was a publican – 3 years in Cropwell Bishop and then at the White Lion in Bingham – before finally returning to being a tailor in Nottingham where the family remained.

Let's get back to our main character, Matthew Cooper.

In 1857 he married Eliza Richards in Cropwell Bishop. Because his sister, Mary, had been living in the village for over 10 years, I assume it was through her that he got to know Eliza.

Matthew was 27 years old and Eliza was 29 – and an unmarried mother.

Her son, who she had named Robert Smith Richards, was only two years old at the time, so would naturally come to look upon Matthew as his father.

A year later, Matthew and Eliza had a child of their own. Mary was born in 1858 but nothing is known of her childhood. Sadly, she would die at the age of 24. They had no other children.

Three years after they were married, the family moved into 49 Nottingham Road which, at that time, was very much a working farmhouse. They continued living there for the next 30 years whilst Matthew greatly expanded his farming business.

The rear of 49 Nottingham Road in 1968

The location of 49 Nottingham Road is shown on this Indenture from 1817. In the centre of the picture; the brown line is Nottingham Road.

A Growing Business

Matthew Cooper appears to have been as much a business man as farmer, and he gradually expanded his farm by acquiring land as it became available.

He still made time for other things though. In 1877, the new Village School opened (we now call it the Old School) and Matthew was elected to the School Board.

Twenty-one years later he was still there. Only one other person had been on it as long, and that was Vincent Parker, who was Eliza's half-brother (see Richards Close Street Story for details of her family).

As the decades passed, Matthew became one of the largest farmers and employer of labour in Cropwell Bishop and beyond.

Even as he grew older, he showed his enthusiasm for new ideas by being one of the first farmers in the area to use a steam-powered threshing machine.

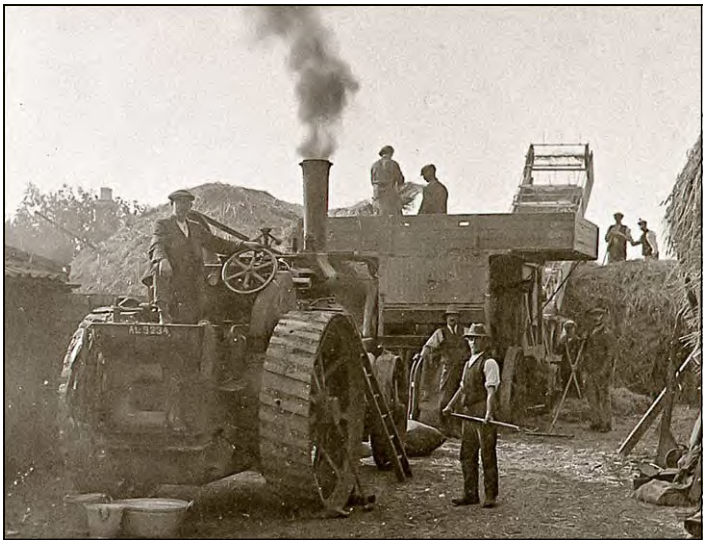
Farming was not his only interest. He also owned brickyards, plaster works and stone quarries.

In 1890, when he was 60, he and Eliza moved to The Yews, another old farmhouse 100m down the road. This would be their last house-move.

In spite of all his work commitments, Matthew continued to find time for voluntary work to the village.

1880s. A Church Cricket Party in the field that was where the Health Centre now stands. Is the 50-odd-year-old Matthew Cooper there, I wonder. He was Church Warden at the time.

An enlargement of the above photo. Could that be Matthew Cooper in the middle at the top?



A steam powered threshing machine in Knight's stack yard on Church Street (1930s)

The Yews in 1926

Life in his Sixties

In 1892, Matthew took on the role of Church Warden and a year later, as a Guardian on the Bingham Poor Law Union.

As a Guardian, he represented our village, which was one of 41 in the Bingham area (which roughly equates to Rushcliffe), on matters connected with the Workhouse and Children's Home at Bingham.

In spite of his apparent concern for the poor, it is curious to note that in 1891 he accused a villager of stealing 3 stone (19 kg) of potatoes from a pile in one of his fields.

The man pleaded guilty but said he was, "induced to commit the theft through poverty". He was sent to prison for a month. The man's name was William Cooper (not related to Matthew) and he was 48 years old. He was an agricultural labourer and he and his wife had two children at home, the four older ones having already left home.

This prison sentence may have caused long-term animosity between the men because in 1898 Matthew took William Cooper to court again.

This time his gamekeeper stated that William damaged two hedges ("to the extent of 1 shilling") in getting over them.

However, William would not accept this and, "subjected the gamekeeper to a long cross-examination, with a view to showing that the path along which he went was constantly used by other people and that he only went along it the same as others did".

William asked for an adjournment so that he might bring evidence to support his case. The Magistrates agreed to the application.

This court case took place in February 1898 and, assuming the adjournment was for several months, I doubt the court ever resumed. As we shall see, 6 months can sometimes be long time in a person's life.

Nevertheless, there was a softer side to Matthew Cooper's personality.

In 1892 he provided waggons, horses and a driver to take school children to Owthorpe. This was for a picnic in a field that was owned by his son, Robert Smith Richards.

Robert had married Emma Jane Lewin of Cotgrave in 1880 and they raised 11 children. At the same time, he became a very successful farmer in Cropwell Bishop: Richards Close is named after him and other family members.

Matthew gradually gave Robert more and more responsibility for the running of his farms.

Robert Smith's eldest son, Matthew, was born in 1880, and as he grew up, he became very close to his grandparents, Matthew and Eliza, and for a time, he lived with them at The Yews.

Young Matthew was attending Cropwell Bishop School but his family were living at Owthorpe, where Robert Smith's farm was located. Whilst it was common for children to walk to and fro from Owthorpe, it must have been an unappealing trek in winter or on a wet day.

Cropwell Bishop School Photo 1893. Matthew Richards (aged 13) is top left, and to the right of him is his brother, Robert Richards (aged 12). Head Teacher William Parkin is seated right.

You may be thinking that their years at The Yews corresponded with a more restful time for Matthew and Eliza. This may have been their hope, but it wasn't to be.

As we have seen, Matthew's actions during the 1890s were becoming erratic but this may have been the result of the stress he had to endure.

One day in the early 1890s, while driving his trap (a two-wheel cart pulled by a horse), he had a stroke and fell heavily to the ground. His injuries were severe and he never thoroughly recovered from them. From then on, he was described as being in "failing health" – and this continued for several years.

Yet, as we have seen, he was still pushing himself to achieve things.

In 1896, Eliza died. Even after this time, in spite of poor health, he was still on the School Board and, in February 1898, still pursuing William Cooper in court.

In March 1898, he put himself forward, and was elected, as a District Councillor.

Having goals in life, being positive, and always looking to the future are, without doubt, wonderful personal attributes, but there comes a time when the body can take no more. And for Matthew Cooper, that time came on July 1st 1898.

There followed a grand funeral at St Giles Church.

The Cooper family grave

Representatives of the School Board, and his many farms, brickyards, and stone-quarries were in attendance, along with those from businesses he dealt with.

His son and his grandchildren placed beautiful wreaths on the grave where he was buried alongside his deceased wife and daughter.

In his will, he left the bulk of his estate to Robert Smith Cooper, but he also left part to his grandson, Matthew Richards who inherited 49 Nottingham Road, the earlier long-time home of Matthew and Eliza.

It is sobering to think, that at the start of the 1800s, the genes of Matthew Cooper's family were nowhere to be found in Cropwell Bishop and, in spite of his influence on the village throughout the century, they had disappeared with his passing.

Genes are of overwhelming importance for the continuation of life on Earth yet, individually, we have no influence over the ones we inherit. Likewise, any plans we make for passing them on can so easily be dashed.

Maybe the story of Matthew Cooper will remind us to concentrate on making the most of the life we live, rather than dwelling unduly on dreams in the distant future.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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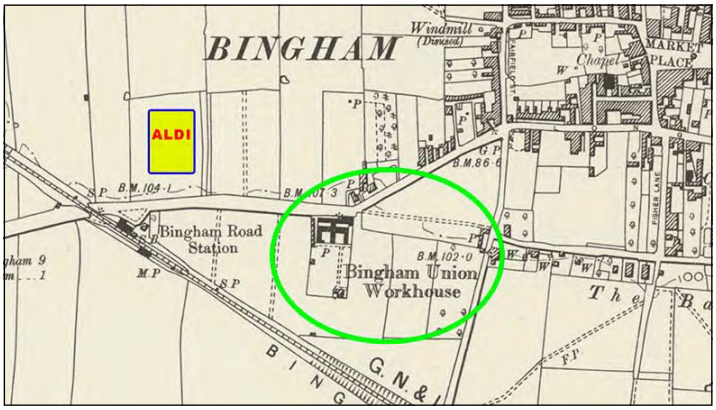
Thanks to Anne Terzza, Tony Carter and John Greenwood for their help with this Story.

49 Nottingham Road in 2001

The Yews in 2020

Bingham Workhouse in early 1900s. View from Nottingham Road, Bingham. Demolished in 1967.



The site of the Bingham Workhouse on Nottingham Road, Bingham, before it was demolished and before the old railway line was closed. NB: Aldi arrived a century later!

Cooper Close in 2020

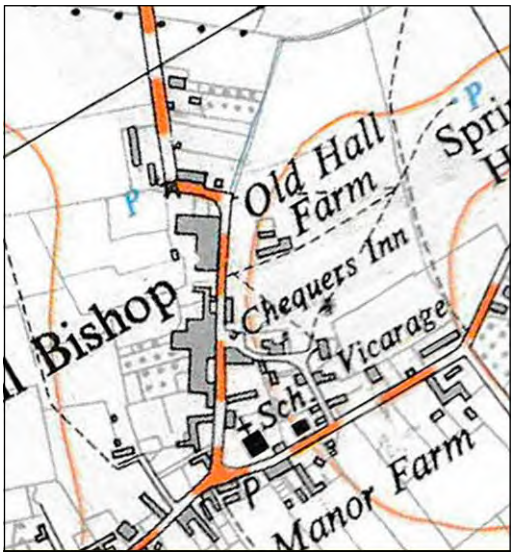
Why the Double Bend?

Almost all streets start and end at a road junction. It might be a T-junction, cross-road or roundabout for example, but there are always exceptions – even in Cropwell Bishop.

Driving round the bend at the foot of St Giles Way, feels like a continuation of the street, but no, you have entered Kendal Road.

A more heavily disguised name change occurs on Church Street. You drive happily down Church Street heading away from The Turn, then you come to a 90° left-hand bend: no worries, you are still on Church Street. Then a 90° right-hand bend – but this time the street name changes to Cropwell Butler Road.

There is a logic to this after all; most roads leading out of a village have the name of the place they are leading to. Nevertheless, it could easily be missed by an unwary visitor or delivery driver.



Church Street in a 1940s map: the double bend is just the same.

I have long been mystified by the path of the road at this point, a sharp double bend for no apparent reason.

Since first reading the book, "The Making of the English Landscape" by W.G. Hoskins, I have understood that every bend and every junction of an old road is there for reason.

It may be following the route of an ancient bridlepath, which itself followed the boundary of some field or boundary. A bend may have originally been to avoid a hill, a ditch, a big rock or a building – but there is always a reason.

So, there must be a reason for the double bend at the end of Church Street but, in spite of searching, asking and thinking, I can't unearth it.

The bend appears in the 1804 map, where no obstacle is apparent, and has been perpetuated ever since.

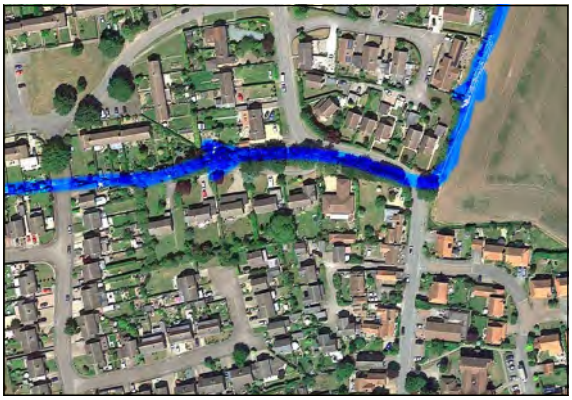
My best guess is that a stream or dyke was the obstruction. As recently as 60 years ago, there were several small streams flowing seasonally onto Church Street from the sloping fields on the western side.

One of them flowed down the path of Thurlby Close and then onwards to the bend (where the access road to the new housing estate was added in 2022).

It could be that at this point on Church Street, a bridge, of sorts, was built and so became the safe place to cross this ditch. In which case, it is easy to imagine travellers coming from Cropwell Butler and, on reaching this ditch, turning sharp left down to the bridge and hence onto Church Street. This would explain the double bend.

But there are holes in this argument.

Imagine going in the opposite direction, crossing over the bridge from Church Street and heading to Cropwell Butler.

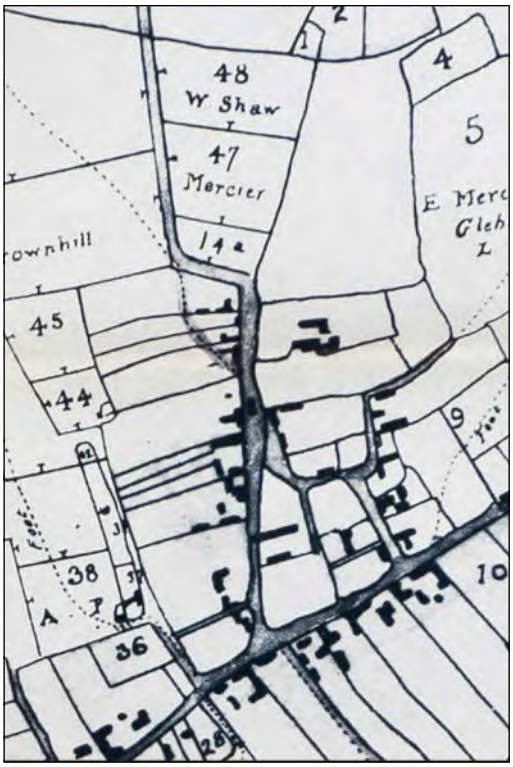


The path of an ancient stream (from left to right)

Once you had crossed the bridge, with open land ahead, the most sensible route would be a straight line: why on earth would you turn left, then right? And this would be just as true for farmers and carters as for individuals.

Remember, we are talking about a time when roads were often little more than wide tracks and there were no gas, electricity, sewage, or telephone supplies underground: rerouting a road would have been a relatively simple task.

So, it seems, the mystery of the double bend remains.



Church Street as it appeared in the 1804 Enclosure Map of Cropwell Bishop. The route of the footpath to Cropwell Butler pays no heed to the bends in the road": I wonder why.

The Houses on Cropwell Butler Road

The naming of Crowell Butler Road is no mystery; it leads to our neighbouring village, Cropwell Butler.

As you join it from Church Street, the line of substantial, white houses on the left stand well back from the road.

These six homes were built in the late 1940s for agricultural workers and are surprisingly large houses, set well back from the road, and on large plots. They were built at a similar time to the white houses on Fern Road.

At that time, they were the last buildings on this side of the road: Hoe View Road did not appear until several years later.

On the right-hand side of the road (after the house that belongs to Hardy's Close) is a pair of semi-detached cottages that have been much enlarged and modernised during the 2010s.

They are numbers 2 and 4 Cropwell Butler Road and ever since the original house was built in the 1900s, they have been known as Rose Cottages.

These white houses were originally built for agricultural workers (2020)

The houses can be clearly seen in the top left-hand corner of this 1949 photo taken from the top of St Giles church

Rose Cottages, 2 & 4 Cropwell Butler Road (2020)

This photo taken in 2006 shows the extent of the original building.

On Cropwell Butler Road yet not part of it: 10 Hardy's Close (2020)

Looking ahead towards the open countryside, there appear to be quite a number of additional houses lining the road. However, most of the ones in view belong to the side roads: only three have a Cropwell Butler Road address. There are also some new ones that are out of view.

On the right is number 8. It is a bungalow on the corner of Hardy's Close. At first glance, it appears to belong to Hardy's Close but, the giveaway is its entrance which is onto Cropwell Butler Road.

In fact, it was built before the other houses on Hardy's Close and a 1982 aerial photo shows it standing alone. It looks like it then had a long back garden which, now, is occupied by two newer bungalows, 12 and 13 Hardy's Close.

8 Cropwell Butler Road (2020)

8 Cropwell Butler Road in 1982 (on right). It had a long back garden in those days.

8 Cropwell Butler Road (2021).
There is no longer a number 6. It used to be near here, together with an orchard, but not any longer; see map on page 69.

18 Cropwell Butler Road (2021)

The next is a fine-looking Victorian house, number 12, which goes by the name, Rose Villa, as it has done for over a century. It was built around 1900 and first occupied by the Clarke family who were there for many years after. Its front garden blends perfectly with the house.

Rose Villa, 12 Cropwell Butler Road (2020)

In addition to its back garden, Rose Villa originally had an orchard that went down to the stream that flows north – as shown in the earlier map.

It was in the 1990s that the long garden and orchard were gradually turned into building plots. There are now two houses standing there, the first is 14 Cropwell Butler Road and the further one is 16.

Up to 2010, Rose Villa and these new houses, were the last houses in the village along this stretch of road and the 30mph speed sign was close by. Then, in the 2010s, Barlows Close and then Shelton Gardens were built.

This effectively extended the village building boundary and the 30mph sign was moved further up the hill and lamposts were erected up to them.

The building of Shelton Gardens left a gap between it and Rose Villa – enough for a small house: this is where 18 Cropwell Butler Road was built in 2019.

The private road, largely unsurfaced, which has its entrance between 18 and Rose Villa has no name, but the house numbers indicate that they all belong to Cropwell Butler Road.

This was the site of 18 Cropwell Butler Road in the 1970s; Rose Villa is on the right.

The offshoot of Cropwell Butler Road that leads to numbers 14 to 18 (2021)

14 Cropwell Butler Road (2021)

16 Cropwell Butler Road (2021)

Cropwell Butler Road is one of the shorter ones leading into Cropwell Bishop but what it lacks in size it seems to make up for in variety.

There are no mines to talk of, or mills to imagine, but the houses do have character. One that has stood for 120 years is next to one that has stood for just 2.

Even the agricultural houses look grander than others in the village that were also built during the 1930s. All the other homes are "one-offs".

Driving down the hill from Cropwell Butler may force you to apply the brakes earlier than in the past, but that isn't such a bad thing. It leaves you with more time to look aside and appreciate the continually changing scene.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, David Talbot and Pat Onions for their help with this Story.

The Tour of Britain visits Cropwell Bishop in 2018

Cropwell Butler Road in 2008. The 30mph sign can just be seen before Hoe View Road, opposite the lampost and bus stop.

Barny the Owl escapes from the tree trunk he has been growing inside for decades (May 2018)

Waiting for the arrival of the Tour of Britain cycle race on the morning of Saturday 8th September 2018

Rose Villa awaits the riders (2018)

There is always time for a cup of tea before the race comes through (2018)

It's a prize-winning cup of tea (2018)

Barny the Owl joins in the fun (2018)

It is not just people who want to enjoy this special day (2018)

Cropwell Butler Road in 2020

1 Cropwell Butler Road

3 Cropwell Butler Road

5 Cropwell Butler Road

7 Cropwell Butler Road

9 Cropwell Butler Road

11 Cropwell Butler Road

11 Cropwell Butler Road

Cropwell Butler Road leading into Cropwell Bishop. The 30mph sign and lamposts are now much higher up the hill.

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

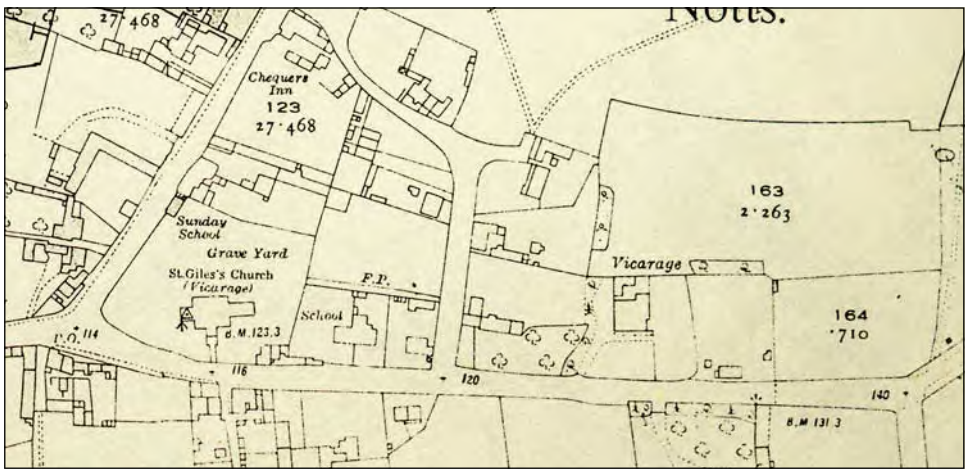
A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

The homes on Dobbin Close were built in the late 1970s. The purchase price for the first occupants was upwards of £24,000 – which might sound a bargain today, but was well beyond the reach of most local people at the time.

They were built on land that previously had a large house and extensive land around it – see the old aerial photograph on the right that was taken in the late 1960s. The large house was the vicarage and the site retains a link with the church because one of the houses on Dobbin Close is effectively today's vicarage.

Many people will associate a name like Dobbin with a friendly horse but Dobbin Close gets its name from someone who lived in Cropwell Bishop around 130 years ago: Reverend Abraham Joseph Lockett Dobbin.

The top photo was taken about 2015 and the one below it, in the 1960s



This old map shows the location of the vicarage.

He was born in Ireland in 1836. His father was a Methodist minister who regularly moved home to wherever he was needed: Cork, Limerick and Armagh to name but a few.

When Abraham was 28, he married Mary Milne - a young widow in Lancashire where he was a curate.

Within a year they were living in Ruddington (Notts) where Abraham had become the curate. While living there, their first child, Lillian May, was born but, sadly, died within weeks.

Two years later, in 1867, Mary gave birth to Lucy Maud and the year after to Ernest Harold Dobbin who would grow up to become a commander in the Royal Navy. The following year, 1869, she gave birth to Ethel May.

The family then moved to Nottingham where Abraham had been made curate of St James Church on Standard Hill, near Nottingham Castle: the church was demolished in 1936 to make way for an extension to Nottingham General Hospital. It was in Nottingham that their second son, Charles Herbert, was born in 1872 when Mary was 41.

In 1877, when Abraham was 41, he became vicar of Cropwell Bishop and Owthorpe and the family settled into their new life in Cropwell Bishop at the vicarage on Fern Road.

Four babies in five years must have been hard work. However, whilst we don't know details of their home life in Ruddington and Nottingham, we do know that in Cropwell Bishop there were four servants living in the home with them. No doubt modern parents will appreciate the advantages of such help!

For the next 23 years he and his family appear to have been fully involved with the people of Cropwell Bishop. As well as being the vicar, he also served as treasurer for the Parish Council and took an interest in the Cricket Team.

Revd Dobbin surrounded by the cricket team and villagers in the 1890s.

The photograph above, shows him (centre, wearing hat and with hands on cane) surrounded by the cricket team and villagers. This was probably taken in the 1890s. His wife, Mary, played the harmonium alongside him in church services.

At various times he was on the committee of a number of local organisations including the Board of Education and the Freemasons: he had also been president of the Thoroton Society.

He took an active part in the restoration of St Giles and, under his superintendence, a partial restoration was carried out in 1893 in which the Organ Loft and Singers Gallery over the screen in the Tower Arch were removed when the, comparatively modern, pews toward the east end of the Nave were installed.

Nevertheless, in 1900, at the age of 64, he suddenly collapsed and died. His health "was known to be in a precarious condition" but, even so, he had conducted a funeral at Cropwell Butler just a few days before.

Front of the Vicarage prior to demolition in 1970s

Back of Vicarage

His wife died just 6 years later and is buried alongside him in St Giles Graveyard. She was living in Castle Donington at the time.

His eldest son (and his family) and both his daughters are also buried in the St Giles graveyard. Lucy died in 1934 and both Ethel and Charles died just weeks apart in 1955: they were both in their 80s.

It is not known if any of them lived in Cropwell Bishop at the time of their deaths although we know that Lucy was living in the Nottingham area when she died.

Ethel was a keen artist and was also chair of the Nottingham Society of Artists in the 1930s. Some of her etchings and painting are still in the hands of the Dobbin family.

So, when you next pass Dobbin Close on your way to the Health Centre or the Allotments, think not of a horse, but of Abraham Dobbin and his family.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Jane Jones, Janet Dobbin and Anne Terzza for their help with this Story.

Janet Dobbin (right) visits Dobbin Close with her mother and niece (1980 approx)

The Dobbin family graves

Dobbin Close in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

The vast majority of the 42 streets in Cropwell Bishop are named after people. Most of the rest are named after places. Just three have names that fit into neither category, they being Fern Road, Swab's Lane and Etheldene.

The first two can be linked to land but the origin of the name, Etheldene, is a fascinating human story.

Just to be clear, there was never a Mr, Mrs or Miss Etheldene, and there is no local village, stream or hill of that name. Even so, members of the Parish Council would have had a fairly simple task in choosing the name – particularly the older members with a good memory.

We need to look at the history of Church Street.

At the northern end of the street, where there is a double bend before it becomes Cropwell Butler Road, there was once a row of cottages. On the right is a photo of them not long before they were demolished.

Row of cottages on Church Street (1960s)

In this 1949 view from the church tower, you can see the row of cottages in the centre

There were 10 homes in total. They were all the same size with a kitchen, sitting room and 2-bedrooms. Room heating was from open coal-fires downstairs and upstairs but since coal was expensive, lighting a fire in a bedroom would have been a rare event indeed.

With that in mind, it is interesting to note that in 1911, whilst most homes had 4 or less people living in them, two homes had 5 and one house was home to a family with 7 children under the age of 12. This family had, in addition, also lost 2 children in infancy.

This row of cottages was built in the mid 1800s. At that time there would have been fields and orchards behind the houses – although their view might have been obscured by the wash-house, coal-house and outside toilet.

They were probably built by the Cropwell Bishop builder, David Salvin, who lived in the village from 1830 to 1919, and were initially known as Salvin's Row, being so named in census reports up to 1911.

The name may have derived from the builder, but it seems more likely it was from other members of the Salvin family because they owned the cottages. The houses were also known as Bottom Row by local people.

But you may wonder, what is the connection between these cottages the street named Etheldene.

The 1911 census is still the most recent one available: the "100-year rule" means that the 1921 census will not be released until 2022.

However, in 1939, an "English and Wales Register" was compiled – a sort of mini-census listing all homes and occupants. In this list, the cottages were referred to as "Etheldene Cottages": they had been renamed.

This name change suggests that at some point between 1911 and 1939, the cottages were acquired by the Heaselden family. It would have been only natural for them to want to dispose of the previous name, Salvin's Row.

From the evidence we have, we can hazard a guess of the date of the change.

During most of those years, Samuel Heaselden was the senior member of the family and, I assume, most

acquisitions would have been in his name. Yet I have seen no evidence that the cottages were ever called Heaselden Cottages.

In 1935, Samuel Heaselden died and his son Herbert took over, and I think that was when Herbert bought the cottages and renamed them.

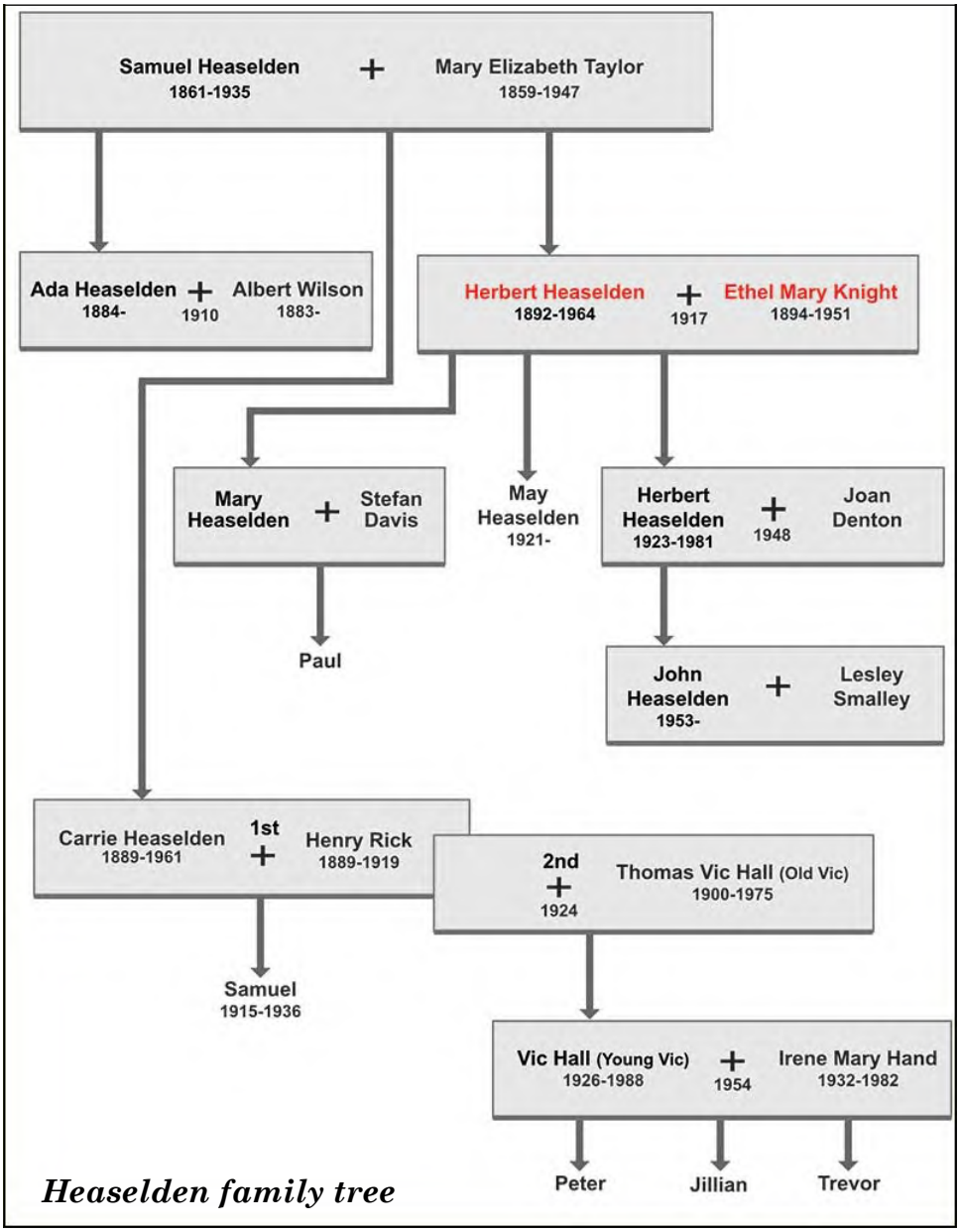
The name he chose is clearly associated with his family, in particular his wife: her name being Ethel Heaselden. Etheldene is undoubtedly derived by merging Ethel and Heaselden.

So, we have a good understanding of where the name Etheldene came from, but now you will be wondering how it became associated with a street 100m away.

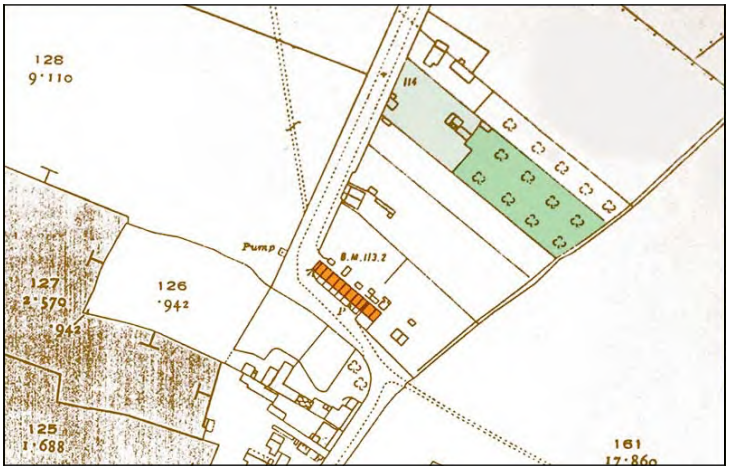
The early 1970s was a time of rapid growth in Cropwell Bishop and hundreds of new houses were built. It was also a time when people realised that the days of "2-up and 2-down plus an outside toilet" had come to an end – and this applied Etheldene Cottages.

So, in the early 1970s Etheldene Cottages were demolished and the name of Etheldene disappeared from the village – at least for a while.

If you compare a map of this part of Cropwell Bishop in the 1960s with a satellite view today, you will see that the land now occupied by Etheldene (street) was partly woodland. In fact,



Heaselden family tree



1960s map of the north side of Cropwell Bishop. The cottages are shown in red and the eventual site of Etheldene (street) is shown in green.

2016 aerial view of the same area

the eastern end was an orchard.

In the 1920s, this land (all the green areas on the map) was owned by a man named Harry Mitchell. Harry was a "pan man". In other words, his job was to empty the waste from outside toilets.

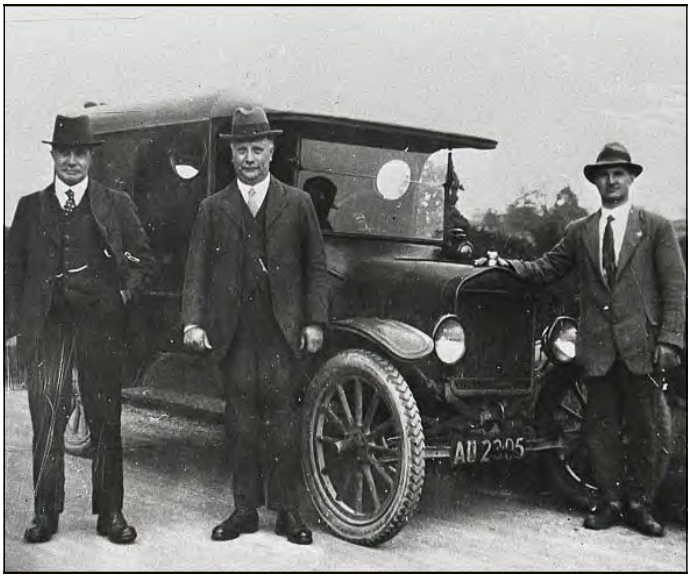
If ever you find yourself yearning for the slower pace of life of a century ago, it is worth remembering that there were many aspects of everyday life that were far less attractive than today.

By the 1930s, Harry's skills became less in demand as more and more people installed WCs in their homes.

It was in 1936 that the Truswell family took over this land and established a woodyard there. You can see two buildings that were part of the business in the photo on the next page.

In the mid 1970s the Truswell family moved on but it was not until the late 1980s that the land was given a new lease of life – as the site for new bungalows.

Aerial view of Rose Villa (12 Cropwell Butler Road) and surrounding land before Etheldene was built to the right of the house. In the upper-right you can see buildings that were part of the woodyard run by the Truswell family. (1970s)



Herbert Heaselden on the right (1920s)

By 1989 people were moving into the homes and the street needed a name.

It is easy to imagine an older councillor at a Parish Council Meeting, proposing Etheldene as a suitable name. For the previous 20 years they had been happily choosing the names of past landowners for new streets in the village, and this would blend in well with that policy.

Whilst Etheldene is not strictly the name of someone, to those in-the-know, it does commemorate the contribution of the Heaselden family to the prosperity of Cropwell Bishop throughout the 20th Century.

Etheldene is one of a handful of streets in Cropwell Bishop with names that a visitor might not associate with a street. Roads, Lanes and Closes are obviously streets, but Hoe Nook, The Maltings and Etheldene may initially leave them puzzled.

Then again, their name add interest to the addresses in our village – a bit of spice you might say.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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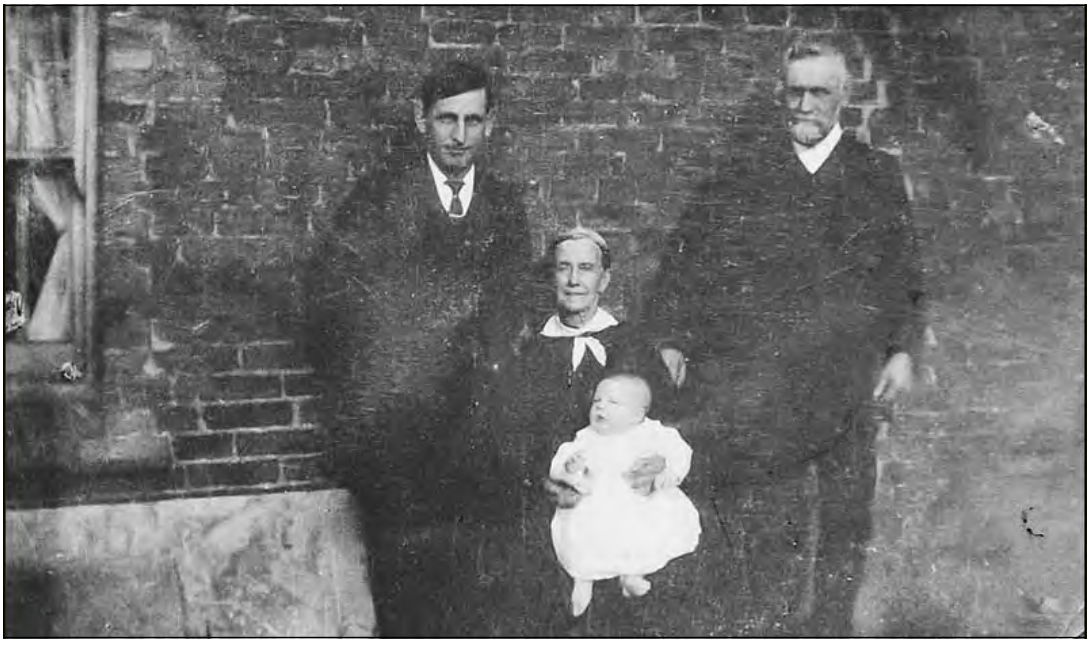
Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Alan Hemsley, Godfrey Allison, Trish Allison, Sonny Truswell and Lol Simpson for their help with this Story.

Herbert Heaselden with Samuel Heaselden in wheelchair. Herbert's wife, Ethel, stands behind (1930s)

Herbert's two daughters, Edith May (left) and Mary (middle) (1930s)

Herbert & Ethel with baby Mary (1919)



Herbert with his parents, Samuel and Mary Heaselden, and his daughter Mary (1919)

Herbert & Ethel Heaselden with Edith May, Mary & Herbert (1924)

Etheldene in 2020

Etheldene

1 Etheldene

Barny the Owl was trapped inside a living tree until he was revealed by a skilled carver in 2018. Now he stands guard over Number 1

2 Etheldene

Etheldene

3 Etheldene

5 & 4 Etheldene

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Why is it called Fern Road? An obvious answer would be that there are ferns growing all over the place. But there aren't – it is not like the Derbyshire hills around here.

Two hundred years ago it wasn't called Fern Road but Mill Hill – for good reason: there was a windmill at the top of the hill. All very logical.

So why Fern Road.

Well, in the early 1900s, the house at the top of the hill, set back on the left, was the home of a man who was a nurseryman (he sold plants etc: he didn't look after young children). He called his business, Fern Hill Nursery.

Now, did he call it that because his house was on top of Fern Hill, or was the road called Fern Hill because a nursery called Fern Hill Nursery was at the top? (Answers to me on a postcard please).

And, even if we did find the answer, we would still have to explain why, nowadays, it is called Fern Road rather than Fern Hill.

It is interesting to note that beyond the top of the hill is Fern Cottage and Fernhill Farm but it doesn't help us to solve the mystery.

Maybe we should just accept the name as it is, and just move on. That sounds a good idea.

Onwards we go ...

The Turn

The space in front of the Church, where Church Street, Nottingham Road and Fern Road meet, was for centuries called The Turn. To discover how it got this name and for photos of how it looked at different times over the last 100 years, see the Church Street Story.

Have you noticed that on streets with odd and even numbered houses, number 1 always starts on the left, and number 2 on the right.

When you look at old photographs of the village, you may notice the lack of pavements on many streets.

One early paved stretch of pavement was between the old post office and the lane opposite the church entrance. It was made with rough, limestone flags. You can see some in the photograph of the old post office.

Cars wait for cows at The Turn (1950s)

This is the same scene in 2020, 70 years later. Take away the cars and the cows and the differences are not as great as you might expect – even the tree has the same shape – just a bit thicker (most people would be very happy with that description after 70 years of life!)

St Giles Church (1989)

Looking up Fern Road from The Turn (2020)

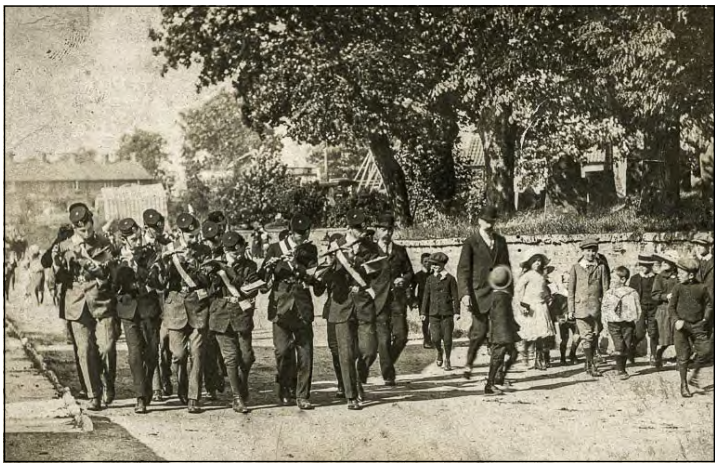
This is where Nottingham Road becomes Fern Road. (2020)
The nearest home is 1 Nottingham Road. Fifty years ago, it was the village post office.
The homes beyond it are on Fern Road, starting with number 2.

Ann Clarke with granddaughter, Ethel, outside the Post Office at No.1 Nottingham Road in 1905.
Ann's late husband, Thomas, had been the sub-postmaster and on his death her son-in-law, John Walker, took over.
When John died in 1924, his wife, Eliza, took over and their 16-year-old son, Wilf Walker, became the postman.
In 1930, when Wilf was 22, he took over as sub-postmaster and continued in the job for the next 43 years. He retired in 1973.

Fern Road bus stop (2020)

16 Fern Road (2020)

Around St Giles Church



Boys Brigade Band marching by the churchyard in 1910

Boys Brigade Band at the same spot, 102 year later, as part of the village Celebration Weekend of 2012.
That was the wonderful summer of the Queen's Silver Jubilee and the London Olympics.

Villagers, William and Fanny Hopkinson arriving for a wedding at the Church (1950s)

Few will have used the same path for ceremonies of any kind during 2020, the year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The building on the right was demolished in the 1960s. Its shop window belonged to the fish & chip shop there. (1950)

Apart from the chip shop, what else has changed in 70 years? (2020)

St Giles Church (2020)

12 Fern Road (2020)

Poorhouses

Two small houses were built in front of the church in 1816. The land they occupied was described as waste land.

At that time every parish had to take responsibility for its poor people living there. Monies were collected from a Poor Rate imposed on land owners in the parish.

The two homes were built to house two poor families in need of a home. Such houses were often referred to as Poorhouses.

The first occupants were Thomas Morrel and Ann Hicks and, as a result, the houses were often referred to as, Morrels Cottage and Hicks Cottage.

The larger house, Morrels Cottage, was built from 1600 bricks and Hicks Cottage from 500 bricks. The total cost of bricks and the lime was under £4.

They were demolished in the 1960s.

(1910s)

(1920s)

(1920s)

(2020)

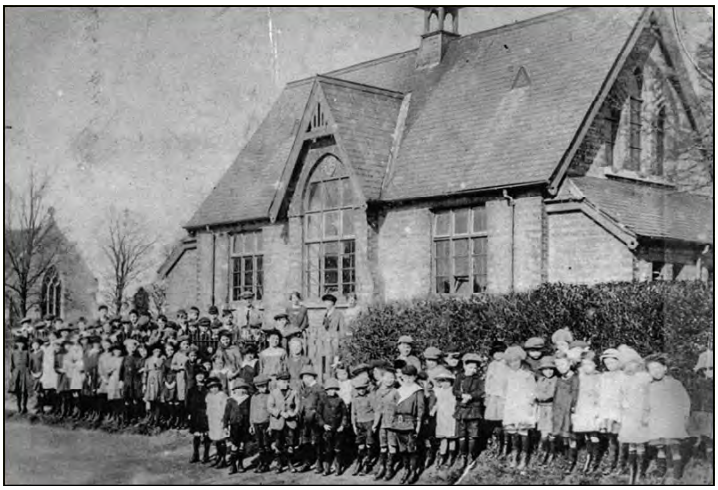
Morrel cottage (1920s)

Joe Parnham, road-sweeper, outside Hicks cottage (1949)

Outside Hicks cottage (1920s)

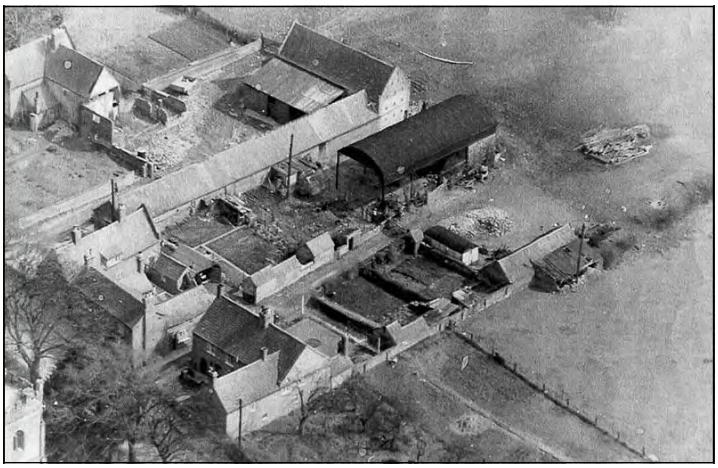
Where Morrel's cottage once stood (2017)

By the School



Children posing for a photograph in front of their school (1930s)

This dray has been dressed with flags and crepe and is taking children on a Hayride to Handbury's Farm on Fern Road, where they will have a day of races, cakes and bran tubs.



An early birds-eye view of Home Farm showing the fish and chip shop and the Old Manor (top left). The shop and Manor were demolished in the 1960s.

Fern Road from the church tower (1970s)

The Old School 1983

The Old School 1989

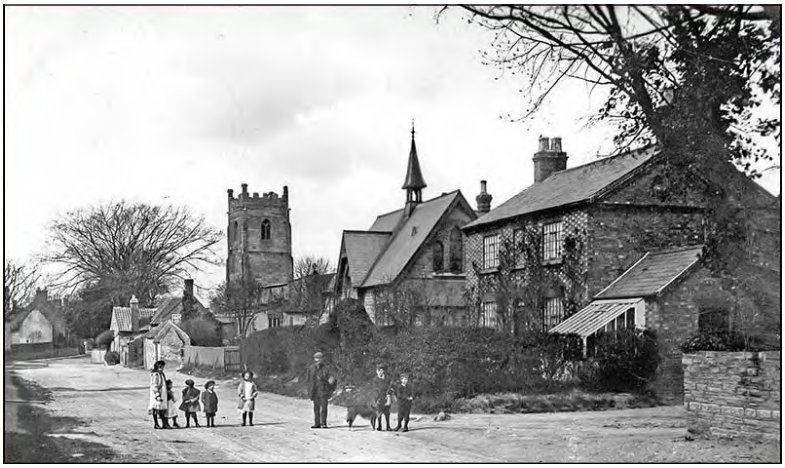
The Old School 2004

The Old School 2014

The Old School 2020

The Old School 2020

Near Stockwell Lane



At first glance, this 1920s photo and the three that follow, appear to have been taken at about the same time. Look closer, and you will see subtle differences that prove they were not.
I think they were taken in the order shown – but probably years apart.

1920s

1920s

1920s

The same view in 2020

Home Farm (2020)

This is one of the oldest buildings in the village.
Notice how the end walls project high above the roof tiles. This is a sure sign that the tiles have replaced a thatched roof. The thatching, being much thicker than tiles, would have reached the top of the walls.
This photo was probably taken in the 1950s.

White Cottage (2020)

The Old School House. It was built in around 1882 for William Parkin, the first schoolmaster of Cropwell Bishop School, next door.
Parkin Close is named after him. (2020)

22 Fern Road (2020)

This photo was taken in 1989 and shows a number of modifications since the 1950s

The Old School and the Old School House (2020)

5A Fern Road. This house was built at the same time as the other homes, of a similar style, on Stockwell Lane.
Because its front door faces Fern Road, its postal address is Fern Road rather than Stockwell Lane.
This is the general rule – but doesn't always hold true. There are homes in Cropwell Bishop that break it. (2020)

Dovecote House: 28 Fern Road.
This house looks new – and it is – but, unusually, it was built around the walls of the former house, revamped, and then extended.
Modern, yet building on the foundations of an older home. The transformation took about two years to complete but progress was obviously hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic.
The front garden was established in just a few months.

Beyond the Zebra Crossing

After Stockwell Lane, the road begins to rise and the end of Pasture Lane at the bend is in sight (2020)

This is the same view long ago – probably in the 1920s.

Cropwell Bishop's Surgery opened in 1993. (2020)

Cropwell Bishop Surgery (2020)

A cool picture of the Surgery (2012)

7 Fern Road (2020)

A short history of Number 9

9 Fern Road – the home of the Fogg family (1968)

9 and 9A Fern Road (2020)

The above photograph was taken in 1968. The parents of Frank Fogg had lived there but by 1953 both had died and Frank inherited the property.

However, in 1967 Frank decided to have the old house demolished and have a bungalow for himself built in its place.

You can see the newly built bungalow standing behind the old house. The house was demolished later that year.

Then, in 2009, the bungalow was sold and was itself demolished to make way for the two homes that were built in 2010.

Whilst the site looks so different today, not all traces of the past have been erased. Look carefully at the photo of the new houses taken in 2020, and you will notice the dropped kerbstone (near the lamp-post) remains from the time when there was a driveway to the bungalow.

Frank Fogg when he worked at the Gypsum Mine (1930s)

The Manor House and Farm

The Manor in 2004

The Manor was built in 1880 and was the Farmhouse of Manor Farm. It was bought by David Salvin in 1915.

By 1970, it had been was passed through the family to David and Pam Barlow who lived there the until the barn-conversions at their Manor Farm had been completed.

In 2020, planning permission was granted for the building of houses alongside the the house.

The Manor in 2020

This photo was taken in the early 1960s. In the bottom-right, you can see the old house (number 9) that was demolished in 1968

Another view of Manor Farm taken at the same time as the one above (the animals haven't moved!)

Across the top of the photo is Pasture Lane. If you walk to the bottom of the lane, you can then follow footpaths to the old church at Colston Bassett.

Manor Farm, in the early 1980s.

Manor Farm in the late 1980s.
The old house (number 9) visible in the 1960s picture is no longer there, but the driveway to the bungalow that replaced it, is just visible in the bottom right.

The Manor – taken from the back garden.
The house was occupied by David and Pam Barlow who also owned, and ran, Manor Farm.

The Manor in 2020

9 Fern Road (2020)

9A Fern Road (2020)

Manor Cottage (2020)

Manor Cottage: 44 Fern Road (2020)

Manor Cottage became the home of Pam and David Barlow (ex Rushcliffe Councillor and Mayor) after it, and other homes, were created from the old farm buildings in their Manor Farm's courtyard in the 1990s. David died in 2010. Pam died on 25th July 2023.

Most people knew Pam through her association with the Memorial Hall where, for decades, she was involved with everything that happened inside and around it.

Cropwell Manor Court (2020)

Cropwell Manor Court (2020)

7 Cropwell Manor Court (2020)

11 & 13 Fern Road.

15 to 21 Fern Road

The 8 white houses on this stretch of Fern Road were built in 1930. They were originally known as 1—8 Council Houses but, at a later date, then became 11—25 Fern Road. (2020)

Fern Road – looking towards the village centre (2020)

23 & 25 Fern Road (2020)

In this photograph taken in the 1980s, you can see Frank Fogg's bungalow across the road from The Manor.

This photograph was taken in the 2010s and shows several new buildings since the 1980s photo.
Frank Fogg's bungalow has been replaced by two houses, barn-conversions (Cropwell Manor Court) have replaced the barn at Manor Farm, and the new Cropwell Bishop Surgery has been built.

Pasture Lane. The lane leads to footpaths that continue directly to the old church at Colston Bassett (2020)

Fern Road (2020)

The view down Fern Road in 1983

Fern Road 37 years later; what has changed? (2020)

Compare these photos. The barn at Manor Farm has been replaced by the homes of Cropwell Manor Court; some trees have grown and some have gone; new lamp-posts; and the spoil heap (middle distance, left) has gone. Bicycles have evolved and so has cyclist's clothing. Also, look at the contours of the distant hills on the right-hand side. This is where the giant open-cast mine was dug after 1983 and the field has a sunken appearance.

The white houses are now 90 years old (2020)

The view of Fern Hill from the bottom (2020)

Strictly speaking, Fern Hill is no longer an official road-name, but because some maps and houses still retain the name, it is not surprising that many people still refer to the road at the top of the hill as Fern Hill.

Number 46: Owthorpe Cottage

Once the home of George and Dorothy Wright who lived here during the mid-20th Century when the house was called Owthorpe Cottage.

Their daughter, Jean, was born in 1925 and grew up there. In 1951 Jean married and moved to Keyworth where she had a son, Richard.

Richard has fond memories of the times he visited his grandparents at Owthorpe Cottage. He recalls them in an article he wrote, "My Grandparents – a Memory of Cropwell Bishop".

View of 46 Fern Road from the paddock beside Pasture Lane (2020)

Here is what he had to say:

"They moved there before the Second World War and had two children, Dick and Jean.

Dick was based at Wick and died in the war. Jean, my mum, married and had me and my sister.

I have wonderful memories of Cropwell Bishop as a child. Exploring the countryside towards the gypsum tip. The Barlow's butchers shop on a Saturday mornings. Wilf, the postman, the bread man from the next village, the Barton bus into Nottingham coming down the hill.

There was the man who repaired the shoes in the village in a wonderful hut, and I remember all the excitement of the Point-to-Point races at Easter.

My grandfather worked in the Lace Trade in Nottingham and then at Cotgrave Colliery. My grandmother looked after the garden and the hens and my mum had a job as a girl in a bank in Nottingham.

She has now died, although my dad is still alive and lives in Tollerton. I now live with my family in Huddersfield. I always think back to those wonderful summer days of my childhood.

Cropwell Bishop was such a lovely place and Barlow's cows coming down the hill to be milked in the afternoon summed up its glorious tranquillity.

The front entrance of 46 Fern Road – named Owthorpe Cottage (2020)

My mum spoke of planes from Langar flying so low over the village and all the American airmen and the village dances. I think my grandparents had lots of airmen stay with them and I also remember stories of the pig they kept and eventually had slaughtered to provide a feast of meat in war-rationed England.

When my grandmother died, my grandfather, George, went to live in Keyworth near to my mum and dad.

When in Nottingham I always have a drive past the old house, I would love to go in but perhaps the memories suffice. I remember the lady who lived in the cottage near to the house called Mrs Atter. Those cottages still survive, as does a bit of the orchard where so many apples and pears were collected.

Fond, beautiful memories."

Richard Booth

Up the hill

48 Fern Road (2020)

Owthorpe Cottage back entrance (2020)

This photo of 52 Fern Road and its occupants was taken in the 1930s.

The people in the photo are: James Rick, his wife Charlotte and, on the right, their daughter Mary – commonly known as Polly.

James Rick died in 1941 at the age of 79 and Charlotte in 1950 at the age of 88.

Polly had been married to John Hampson but he was killed in the First World War. Polly died in 1979 at the age of 86.

52 Fern Road in 2020 – modernised and enlarged

56 Fern Road

54 Fern Road

Fern Hill (2020)

The Windmill

Like most old villages, Cropwell Bishop once had its own windmill.

The best place for one is on top of a hill and so the top of Fern Road was the spot chosen for our windmill.

Once the windmill was built, it was only natural for people to call the place (and road), Mill Hill.

We don't know when a windmill first appeared here, but one is mentioned in records for 1686. However, since a mill between Tythby and Cropwell Butler is mentioned in records as far back as 1553, it seems likely there was also one in Cropwell Bishop in those days.

We know that in 1849, the latest version was spinning here (is 'spinning' the right word?).

That year, the miller, a man named Johnson, was very lucky not to be killed! On that day a gale wrecked the windmill around him.

The incident may well have given Mr Johnson a fright, because by the time the mill was repaired and working again, the miller was a George Bonser. He had moved from Colston Bassett and brought along an apprentice, 14-year-old Silas North, to assist him.

That was in 1851, but in 1860 the windmill was once again making headlines. A gale blew the mill down and an apprentice miller was very lucky not to be blown to heaven with it.

Later that same year, a new corn mill opened in Cropwell Bishop, but it wasn't on the hill, but down in the village. This was because it didn't need the wind: it was powered by steam.

The windmill on top of the hill was never repaired. That January gale on 1860 had brought over 300 years of windmilling in Cropwell Bishop to a sudden end. But if that gale hadn't stopped the windmill, it seems likely that the power of steam would have done so anyway.

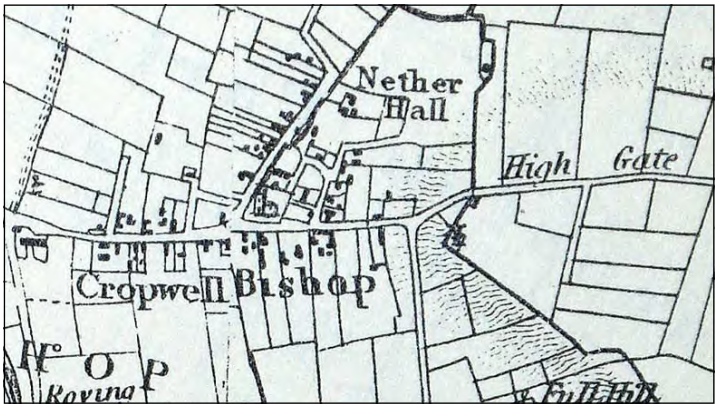
In addition, local young men were probably discussing the health and safety record of the windmill during the 1850s and concluding that there were probably safer ways of earning a living – coal mining maybe.

As they sat around their pints in the Wheatsheaf, their language would, no doubt, have been rather more colourful, but their conclusion the same.

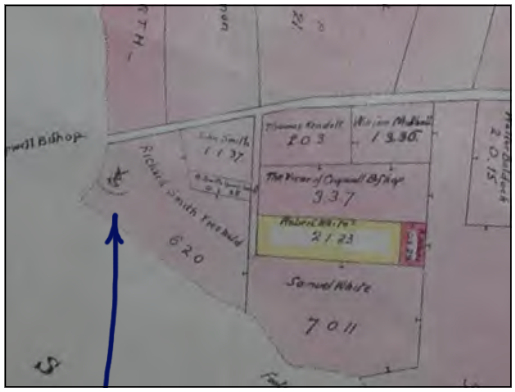
Would it be safer working in the new steam powered cornmill, they may have wondered. If you have read the street story for Mill Lane, you will know the answer to that.

The end result of this sequence of events was that "Mill Hill" would become history, and "Mill Lane" would take over its name – but it would take a long time.

The windmill stood at the far end of this field, somewhere behind 46 Fern Road. It is a high spot and there is small level mound there.



This 1835 map shows the location of the windmill as being where the present mound is.



This 1788 map confirms the location of the windmill.

In this 2010 Google Earth photo, there is the hint of a circular foundation where the windmill once stood

Fern Hill

This house was the home of Fern Hill Nursery during the 20th Century and, during Second Word War, the Robinson family live here.

There were two daughters and the eldest was Jean Robinson, who was nine years old when the war started. Jean wrote down her memories of those days: here is her story,

"Memories of Cropwell Bishop in War-time".

Fern Hill Nursery

"I was 9 years old when the war started in 1939.

One of my first memories is seeing my mother sticking strips of brown paper on our living room window, this was to prevent splinters of glass being blown into the room in the event of a bomb exploding nearby, she also made curtains into blackout material to stop any light showing, she stitched some brightly coloured braid near the hem to make them look a little less dreary.

A big impact on our school lives was the arrival of the evacuees. Some came from Nottingham and some from Great Yarmouth. Our little school was overcrowded so for a short while some pupils had their lessons in the Memorial Hall.

I remember two teachers who came with the children from Great Yarmouth but later there was a shortage of teachers which made the situation difficult for Mr Kirk (Headmaster) and Miss Towle (Infant Teacher) who were the main staff.

Equipment was in short supply. Every inch of our exercise books (including the covers) had to be used and pencils worn down to the last half inch before we could ask for a replacement.

We had to carry our gas masks with us to school and occasionally had to wear them while we did lessons.

When the air raid warning sounded, the children who lived near the school were sent home. Those of us who lived further away went to a friend's house. I went to Mrs Allen who lived opposite the Church.

In 1941 several bombs were dropped at Cropwell Bishop but they landed in fields so there was no damage to houses or people. However, in the same year, Cropwell Butler was bombed killing three people.

Soon after the war started an Army Searchlight Camp was established in the field on the South side of Fern Road, just over the top of what was then known as Mill Hill.

My Dad dug out an air raid shelter but we didn't use it much as it was so cold and damp, so we took refuge under the table during air raids.

Men from the village rallied to the call for Local Defence Volunteers (later called the Home Guard). My Dad joined and had to attend training

sessions and manoeuvres.

There was also a band of people who acted as Air Raid Wardens and Fire Watchers. They would take turns to fire watch at night and make sure there were no lights showing.

In these days of good street lighting and brightly lit windows it is difficult to picture the village in complete darkness on a Winters evening. The 'Dig for Victory' Campaign meant that flower gardens were dug up to plant vegetables and fruit.

Word got around that all the roses were being discarded at a Nursery on the Fosse so my dad went on his bike to collect as many as he could carry and they flowered well in our garden for years.

Living in the country was a big advantage where food was concerned. Most people grew vegetables and fruit in their gardens or on an allotment. Some people were able to keep hens or a pig. When a pig was killed basins of 'fry' would be given away.

The fields and hedgerows provided mushrooms and blackberries. Sticks would be collected for firewood and gleanings from the cornfields for feeding the hens".

Jean Robinson

Jean Robinson, at the age of 84, performing at a Variety Show at The Old School in 2014.
Jean died in October 2019.

Number 58

58 Fern Road

This fine house, in a commanding position on top of the hill, played a role in the defence of the village during the Second World War.

Jean Robinson, in her story (above) about life during that War, mentioned an Army Searchlight Camp.

A large searchlight was installed on Fern Hill, in one of the fields near number 58 Fern Road, and it is understood that the Government sequestered this garage beside the house.

It seems likely, they needed somewhere safe and dry for soldiers to store tools and equipment associated with the searchlight and so the garage became part of the 'Searchlight Camp'.

The house has always been occupied by the Heaselden family. It was Sam Heaselden who owned gypsum mines and the 'Heaselden Works' on Nottingham Road in the days when gypsum could be transported to Nottingham by canal boat. A long time ago.

Cropwell Bishop Allotments

Over the top of Fern Hill, the pavement on the right comes to an end at a bridlepath. This bridlepath leads to open fields but it is not a public right-of-way.

In the 1930s it led to village allotments, but in the following decades it eventually returned to farmland.

Apparently, a field further down the bridlepath was made good use of during the Second World War. A large tent was pitched there and the Territorial Army soldiers, who were in charge of the 'Searchlight Camp', used it for their dining.

In 2009, the Cropwell Bishop Village Plan was launched and it included a proposal to establish an Allotment Site in the parish.

Because the parish council did not own any open land, it was necessary to approach local landowners for a suitable site.

In the end, it was village farmer, Richard Barlow, who offered to let out some of his land and it turned out that it was the same field that had been used as an allotment in 1930 - at the top of Fern Hill.

The Cropwell Bishop Allotment Association was established in May 2010 and has maintained a healthy number of members ever since.

The lockdown of 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in an increase in interest in allotment growing. The few vacant plots were quickly filled and the site has been fully occupied ever since.

Sarah Gladman-Bell and Sally Orgill enrolling members. 2010-04-28

These were the 'Founding' Plot Holders when the Allotments opened in 2010

B	A			A	B
Ryan Emans		19	20	Jill Barnes	
		18	21	Phillip Price	
Lucy Flux		17	22	Alison Fletcher	Jo Wroughton
Chris Syrett		16	23	Joanne Barlow	Toby Littlechild
Maria Carter		15	24	June Campbell	
James Armstrong		14	25	Jonathan Good	
James Finch	Chris Dawn	13	26	Mike Noton	
Matthew Wright	Ian Beresford	12	27	Tim Hiskens	Tim Nixon
Mandy Warwick		11	28	Kevin Edwards	John Hallam
Mick Beazley		10	29	Emma Johnson	
Sandra Cox		9	30	Mel Westmoreland	
Jan Walker		8	31	Mark Fulford	
Tony Jarrow		7	32	Amanda Parkinson	
John Field		6	33	Sally Orgill	
James Passmore	Stephen Coe	5	34	Sarah Gladman-Bell	Carolyn Herrington
Martin Barrett	Nick Clark	4	35	Gary Williamson	
Diane Thompson		3	36	Jim Quinn	
Leigh Litchfield		2	37	Catrin Styles	
Philip Burghart		1	38	Janet Riddle	

In 2010 the 38 plots were occupied by 46 people. Some had a half-plot but the majority had a full size plot; 25m x 10m. In 2024, 14 years later, 15 of these founder plot holders are still there!

The Allotment Committee marked out the site. 1/5/2010

Within 10 days of marking out the site, plot holders were preparing the land for their first crops. 11/5/2010

There was work for everyone! 11/5/2010

16/5/2010

3/6/2010

A year later, the site was opened to visitors to celebrate both its official opening and its first 'birthday'. 2/5/2011

Alan Wilson (Chair of Parish Council) and Tony Jarrow (Chair of CB Allotment) enjoy the event. 2/5/2011

2/5/2011

2/5/2011

2/5/2011

Fern Cottage

Fern Cottage – the first house on the left as you leave the village and head towards Langar (2020)

Fern Cottage (2020)

Once the Home of a Footballing Legend

A Nottingham Forest and England footballer once lived in this house

No doubt most Forest fans are well aware of who it was.

Stuart Pearce played 401 games for Nottingham Forest over a 12-year period and, for most of that time, he lived in this house.

Brian Clough signed him from Coventry City in 1985 and he soon showed his grit determination as a Forest defender. Few opponents got past him with the ball.

He established himself as the Forest captain and it was clear to both spectators and fellow players that he did not like losing matches and demanded the same mindset of his team mates.

In spite of his 'iron man' image on the pitch (Psycho was his nickname), Stuart Pearce showed a very different side of his personality away from football.

He would generally avoid attracting attention to himself and I once saw him politely allow a person to move ahead of him in the queue at Asda without even a frown. I can only assume that the young woman did not recognise Psycho.

When a recycling lorry overturned onto the roof of his car as he drove along the Stragglethorpe Road, he was lucky to avoid death. That he escaped with only minor hand injuries and a stiff back only added to his reputation as a hard-man.

Nevertheless, it was his uncompromising defensive play, scoring ability from free kicks, and his leadership qualities on the pitch that won him praise, 78 England caps and eventually captaincy of the England team.

I believe he and his wife, Elizabeth, and their daughter moved out in 1997 when he left Nottingham Forest. I am not aware of the state of the house at the time, but I expect all the electrics were in good condition. Before he became a professional footballer, Stuart was an electrician.

Even after Brian Clough signed him, he was not confident that he would be able to make a living from football. So unsure was he, that he actually included a commercial advert for his work as an electrician in the Forest match-day programme!

In those days, football was not awash with money in the way it is today.

Doctor in the house – at one time

"Fern Hill" – once the home, for several decades, of Doctor Hindley who worked at the Cropwell Bishop Surgery on Church Street from 1966 to 1993. (2020)

A view from the parish boundary of Cropwell Bishop (2020)

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Jean Robinson, Richard Booth, Philip Johnson, Jonathan Good and Jane Jones for their help with this Story.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Field Lane is one of the oldest streets in Cropwell Bishop. It existed in 1800 and probably much earlier than that and yet, hardly anyone has ever lived on it.

Even though the same is true today, its importance as a transport link is greater than ever. Early, every morning, lorries deliver the essential ingredient for one of the village's biggest companies; milk.

Cropwell Bishop Creamery is one of the handful of dairies allowed to make Stilton Cheese. A Creamery has been on the site for at least a century.

So, why is the street called Field Lane – wouldn't something like, Cheese Way or Stilton Round, have been more appropriate, I wondered. Well, it hasn't always been called Field Lane.

Field Lane in the 1930s

Field Lane in 2020.
Much has changed, but the white house at the far end looks familiar and the leaning telegraph pole of the 1930s appears to have been sympathetically replaced by a leaning lampost!

Field Lane (2020)

Old village records can be very revealing of its inhabitants but, unfortunately, in the early 1800s they rarely included street names.

Nevertheless, we do know that from at least 1871 up to 1911, Field Lane was called Wilson's Lane. There were members of the Wilson family living in the village in those days, and it is highly likely that one lived on the street, which is how it got the name.

From the early 1900s, there were no longer any Wilsons on the lane and we know that some people referred to it as Duffin's Lane because a family of that name lived there. As so often happened in our village, a street was named after a family living on it.

I have searched for a Field family in Cropwell Bishop and found one – and it is living here now. However, Mr Field assures me that his family has no long-term connection with the village so cannot be the source of the Lane's name.

So, just as I had anticipated, the street was almost certainly called Field Lane because it led towards a field. With so few inhabitants living on the street to care whether it was called Field Lane, Dandelion Close or Gypsum View, the name stuck.

These days, only the Beresford family lives on Field Lane; all the other buildings are used by Cropwell Bishop Creamery. I wonder if the Beresfords could claim some ancient right to have it called Beresford Lane; there would certainly be no objections from other street residents.

With photos that are a hundred years old and maps going back over two hundred years, we can piece together some of its history. Let's start with the maps.

Maps

The Enclosure Map of 1804 shows Field Lane which, at first glance, appears much as it does today. At that time the village was much smaller and had far fewer houses. There were around 300 inhabitants: today, there are over 7x as many.

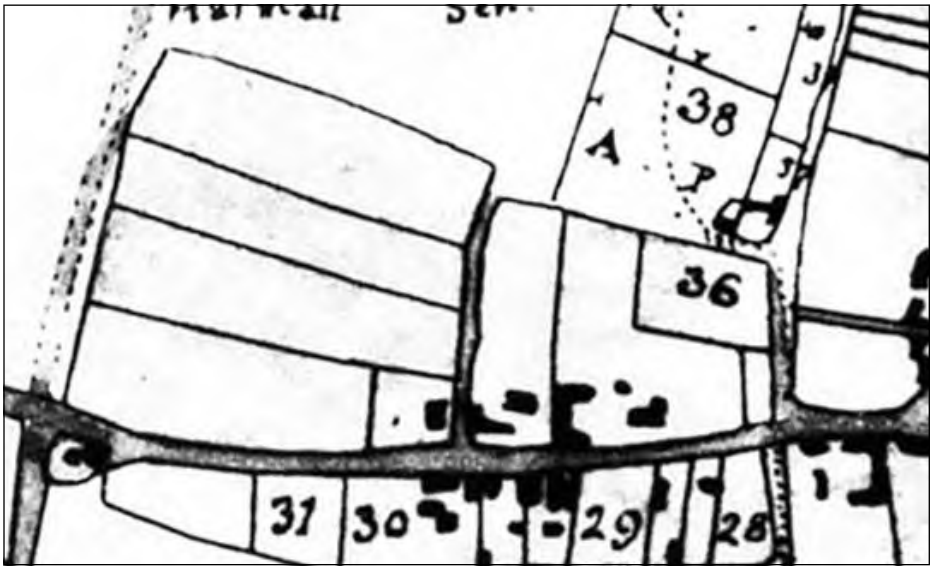
If we look at a 1960s map, we see that Field Lane was still about the same length as in 1804, but with an extra lane on the left.

We know that there were four homes, numbered 1 to 7 (all on the left, so all odd numbered). There don't seem to have ever been any homes on the right-hand side (we treat the Creamery as belonging to Nottingham Road).

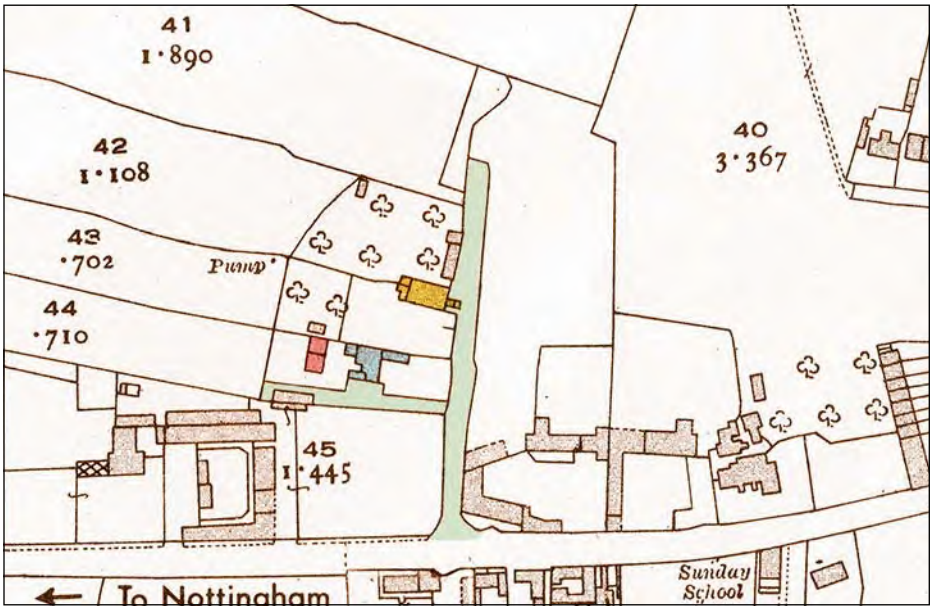
Since those days, 60 years ago, a great deal has changed. Buildings have been demolished and buildings have been built, but a few of the old one still stand. They have been modernised, but are still recognisable.

I have overlaid the 1960s map onto an up-to-date aerial view of the street so that the location of each building can be related to the layout today.

Let's take a detailed look at each home in turn.



1804 Field Lane



1960s ***Field Lane (green)***
House numbers: ***1 & 3 (red), 5 (blue) and 7 (yellow)***

2020 view of Field Lane overlaid with the 1960s map

Numbers 1 and 3

Number 1 and 3 were semi-detached cottages. In the 1960s map I coloured them red.

In the early 1950s, number 1 was occupied by Mary Wallace, her husband Amos and their three children, Myra (b 1942), Peter (b 1944) and Clive (b 1949).

Mary had grown up just around the corner, at number 5 Field Lane; her mother was Lucy Downs, wife of Arthur Downs. You can read more about them in the story about number 5 Field Lane, just below.

Field Lane: 1960s

Mary's youngest child, Clive, has contacted me to say that the family left number 1 in 1952 and went to live at 32 Hoe View Road. They left Cropwell Bishop altogether in 1957 when Clive's father became landlord of a village pub in Lincolnshire.

In spite of the upheaval of building work in the 1970s and 1980s, the house still stands, but has been modernised and converted into a single detached home.

You can see the unmodernised cottages at top left of the 1960s photo and again in the1965 photo.

Field Lane: 1965

We can also see one (the white building) in the background of the 1965 photo on the right. It was taken in the 1980s when new houses were being built on Field Lane.

The white building on the left is number 1 and the building being demolished is number 5. In the foreground are foundations for the houses being built on Field Lane. (1980s)

The 2020 photo below, shows the cottage today – it has moved from Field Lane to Hoe View Road! It hasn't actually moved, of course, but once Hoe View Road was built, it became the closest accessible road. The house is now called Willow Cottage.

House number 5 has now gone; it was demolished in the 1980s. It is coloured blue in the 1960s map.

This is the same building that was once 1 and 3 Field Lane. The two homes have been combined to make a detached house and it now belongs to Hoe View Road. (2020)

Number 5

We can see from the two aerial photos on the previous page, that it was a large house with a good-sized garden at the front.

The 1980s photo on the right, shows the rear of the building.

In the 1930s, the Downs family lived at number 5. Arthur Downs was born in Owthorpe.

Number 5 is on the right (1980s). The end wall of the house is the same one as that in the photo of Arthur and his mother at the bottom of this page

Arthur's wife, Lucy Downs, with their two daughters, Lucy on the left and Mary on the right (1930s)

After moving to Cropwell Bishop, Arthur worked in the gypsum mine and then, in the 1930s, as a lorry driver.

As well as his wife, Lucy, and their two daughters, Lucy and Mary, his mother also lived at the house.

When daughter Mary married, she moved to number 1 Field Lane – as described in the story of number 1.

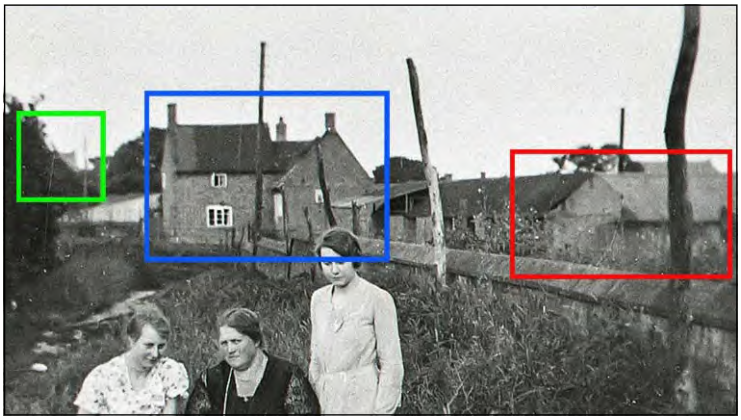
Daughter Lucy married a man who worked at AVRO-Langar and moved to live in Nottingham. However, in the 1960s, they moved backed to Cropwell Bishop and lived on Hoe View Road. Her married name was Lucy Ely.

Arthur Downs with his mother, Jane Mountain. Jane had remarried after the birth of Arthur, hence the different surname

Where was that photo taken from?

The photo of Lucy Downs and her two daughters is a good quality photograph with lots of detail. It was included on the Cropwell Bishop Heritage Group's DVD. It included their names, but not the location of the photograph.

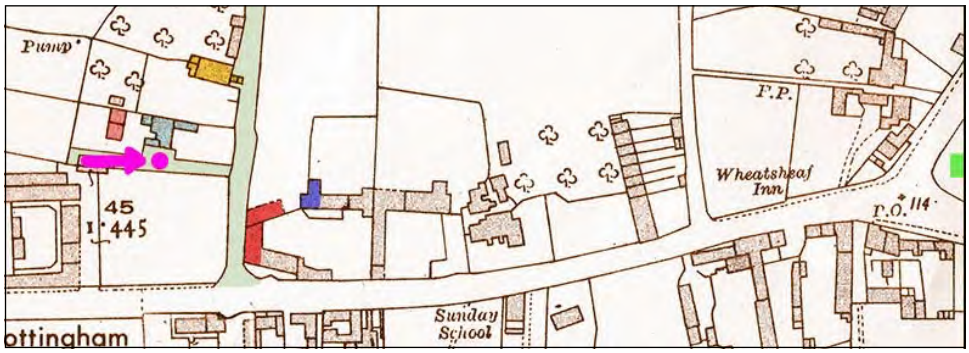
Once I discovered that the family had lived on Field Lane, I tried to work out the location of the picture by examining the background features – but, at first, couldn't make any sense of it.



Where was the photo taken? Look inside the green box: isn't that the tower of St Giles?

When I started researching the story of Field Lane, I only knew of Field Lane as it is now – I hadn't realised there was once an additional small lane off it.

The 1960s map opened my eyes to it but I still struggled to identify the spot where the people in the photo were sitting.



The lilac arrow shows where the camera must have been located and pointing

Then I was given the photo of house number 5 from the 1980s and the photo of Arthur and his mother standing next to a house and guessed they were the same house: Arthur was standing outside number 5.

Studying the path, hedge, treeline and distant buildings in the photo of Arthur and his mother, convinced me that they were the same as those in the photo of Lucy Downs and the girls.

Clearly, both photos were taken outside number 5, in virtually the same spot.

The sharpness, exposure and focal length of the camera lens are different for each photo – which suggests a different photographer on a different day. However, the profile of the trees suggests that they may well have been taken the same year.

Partially hidden by modern buildings and equipment, the ancient Creamery building still stands (2021)

Side of Creamery building on Field Lane (2021)

Even though it was 90 years ago and number 5 no longer exists, I wondered if surviving buildings could provide evidence that I was right.

It is no longer possible to take a photo from the same viewpoint as those taken in the 1930s, but I am in no doubt that these are the same buildings. (2021)

First, I spotted a distant faint profile in the Lucy Downs photo: a tall building, possibly St Giles Church Tower. See green box on the annotated photo above at the top of the page.

After studying the 1960s map, I plotted the spot where I thought they were sitting (a lilac spot on the map above) and looked for buildings that should have been in the photographer's view.

This was not very easy to do because new buildings block the view, and most old buildings have been modified.

Nevertheless, the profile of the Creamery building on Field Lane (see photo with red border) can be recognised as being the same as that (in the red box) on the 1930s photo.

Also, the location and profile of the Creamery building (see photo with blue border) matches the 1930s farmhouse (in the blue box on the 1930s photo).

There has been some building work in the corner between the adjoining buildings but it is clearly the farmhouse in the 1930s photo.

It was very satisfying to be able to pinpoint a place from the past by walking around the village, taking photos and trying to fit it all together. Makes a change from doing a jigsaw puzzle – and no need to take it all apart afterwards.

Number 7

If someone who had lived at number 7 a hundred years ago were to return to Field Lane today, I doubt they would have any difficulty finding their old home.

The Lane has changed in almost every way, except for number 7, which has the same distinctive shape and style it had in the 1940s.

Look more closely, and you will see that the roof on the main house appears to have been raised, and the side extension has a lower, but steeper, roof. But it is still painted white and recognisable – and the current house sign confirms its number, and its present owner.

The building has been owned by the Creamery for many decades and is its "office block".

It used to be where the cheese shop was located – in the 'front room'. In those days it consisted of little more than a couple of cool display cabinets with a small selection of cheeses.

The arrival of the Cheesemaker's Shop on Nottingham Road in December 2015, was a giant leap forward and gave the Creamery a 'public face' and a great place to stop for coffee, eats and, most of all, its cheese.

Back in the 1940s, number 7 was referred to as Harry Ing's farm. You can see from the colour aerial photo from 1965 (on page 3) that there was a good-sized garden alongside the house and long greenhouses too. Behind the house there was an orchard.

Number 7 in 2006 when the front door led into the Cheese Shop

Number 7 in 2020. It has become the Creamery "office block" and the Cheese Shop is now on Nottingham Road

Still Number 7 Field Lane (2021)

Number 7 in the 1940s, with its owner, Harry Ing.
It was then referred to as either, 'The Cottage' or Harry Ing's Farm

Field Lane Today

How does a little street in a village survive when the number of families living on it declines to just one? In this case, it is when a business on the street thrives.

Cropwell Bishop Creamery produces Stilton Cheese, and by identifying the right markets for its products and supplying them in the right quantities, it has managed to keep its head above water even in difficult economic times.

Early morning lorries arrive with milk from Derbyshire farms, and it wasn't so long ago that they had to turn into the front entrance of the Creamery on Nottingham Road, sometimes struggling to do it with so many cars parked opposite.

Nowadays, they drive up Field Lane instead and have ample room to make their deliveries and turn around safely.

The Company has also made available something that anyone can use, but everybody hopes they never have to: a defibrillator.

It is mounted on a wall of the new building at the top of the Lane – on the right-hand side just after the lorry turning area (see the photos).

It is important to realise that you cannot just walk up to it and remove the, potentially life-saving, apparatus: the cabinet is locked. You must first call 999 on your own phone.

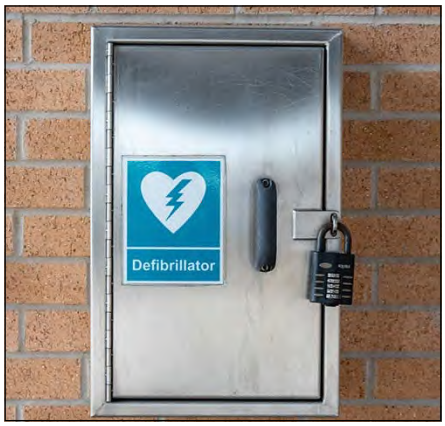
Whilst Field Lane no longer leads to a field, and few people live on it, it is a very important access road and, it is hoped, will continue to be so for a long time to come.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza for her help with this Story.

One house for a resident and one for the Creamery (2020)

A defibrillator is mounted on the wall of the Creamery building (2020)



The defibrillator is available to all, but only via a 999 phone call. (2020)

The Cheesemaker's Shop (2020)

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

We lived on Hall Drive for 40 years and in all that time I thought that the street got its name from the farm that used to be in the field where Springfield Close now is. It was called Old Hall Farm and Hall Drive pointed towards it – it seemed obvious.

It will not surprise you when I say I was totally wrong. As you are probably aware, Cropwell Bishop streets are, by and large, named after people.

So, with that in mind, I knew I had to search for a notable person named Hall. Surely, that wouldn't prove difficult.

I had heard of Vic Hall, who had lived at The Yews farmhouse on Nottingham Road. I discovered that he had done a lot for the village community and so seemed a deserving character to have a street named after him.

Whilst gathering information on him, alarm bells began to sound.

First, he died in 1975 which was 2 years after Hall Drive was built: no other street had been named after a living person.

Second, he was a Parish Councillor himself during the time they would have been choosing the street names.

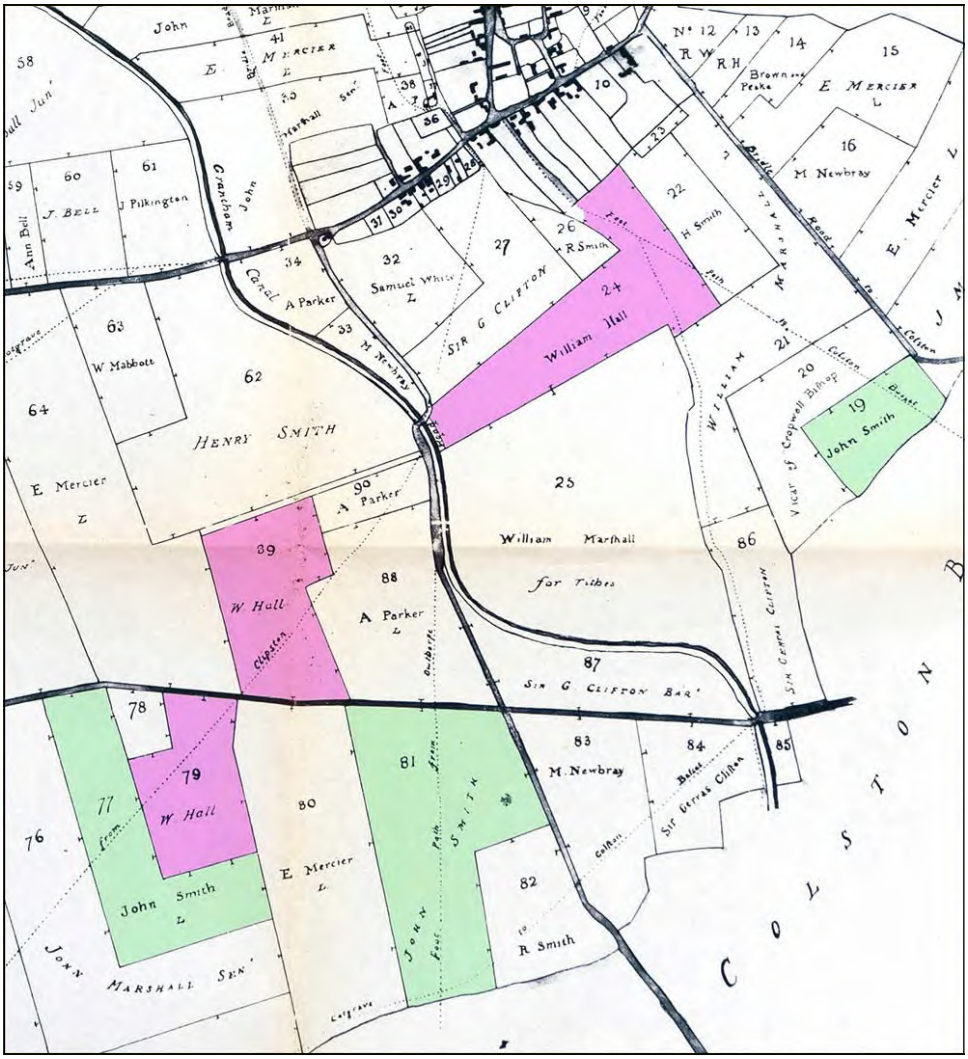
Third, he hadn't been born, let alone own farmland, in 1804 unlike most other people with streets named after them.

I had to start my search again. I needed to look again at the 1804 map of the village which shows the owners of all the fields in the Parish. I have gained the impression that the Parish Councillors of the 1970s did exactly the same thing when faced with giving names to the tens of new roads being built in the village at that time.

There are 3 fields labelled W. Hall – a promising start. Now I only had to find out something about him.

For tasks like this, the resources I find most useful are: 'The Chronicles

Old Hall Farm 1983.
The farmhouse is in the foreground on the left; just above its roof are the tops of houses on Hall Drive. But Hall Drive wasn't named after it.



1804 map showing land owned by William Hall in pink

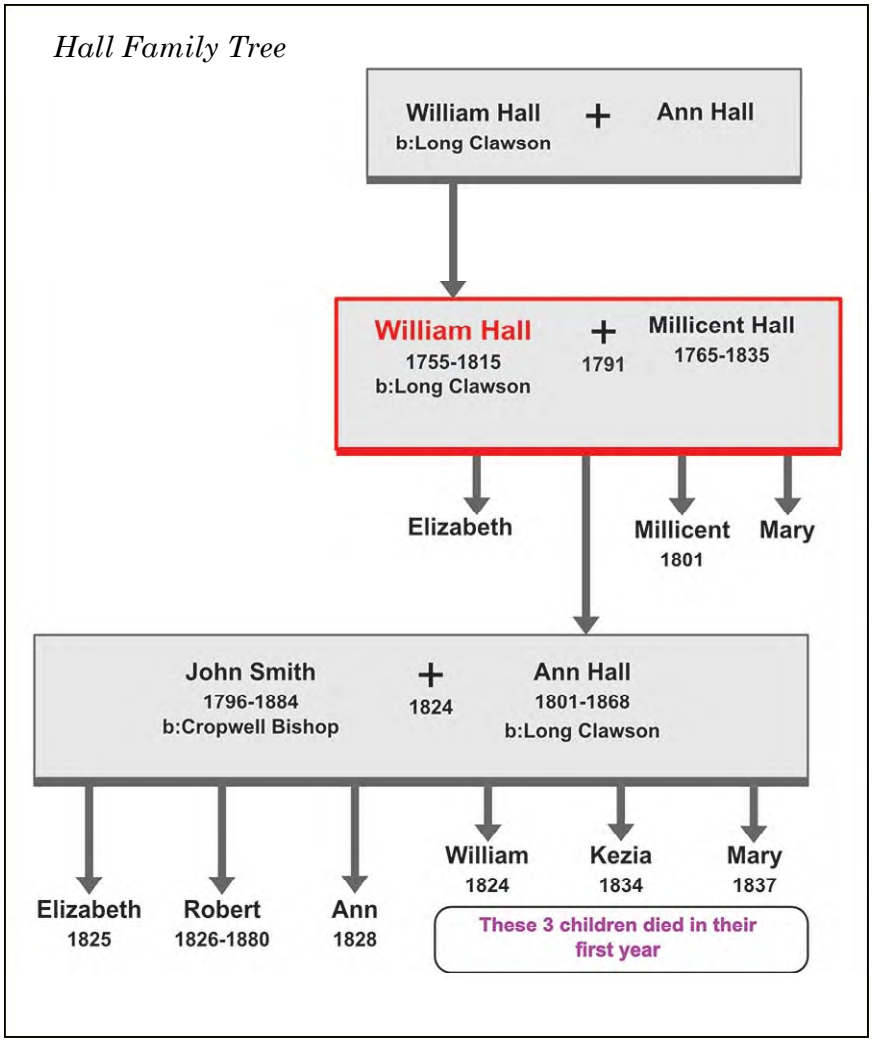
of Cropwell Bishop' booklet by Aubrey Harper, 'Our Local History' booklet by Anne Terzza, 'St Giles Churchyard Survey' by Denis and Edith Smith, 'Ancestry' online, and the people who live in Cropwell Bishop today.

I often find it useful to start by constructing a family tree. Once you start linking the people, dates, and information in, say, Census documents (if you can read the fancy writing!), many things become clearer.

On the other hand, some things become more confusing. When that happens, you have to search contemporary Trade Directories, take photographs of gravestones, study history books, and so on. Only then do things start coming together – helped by a bit of imagination or guesswork.

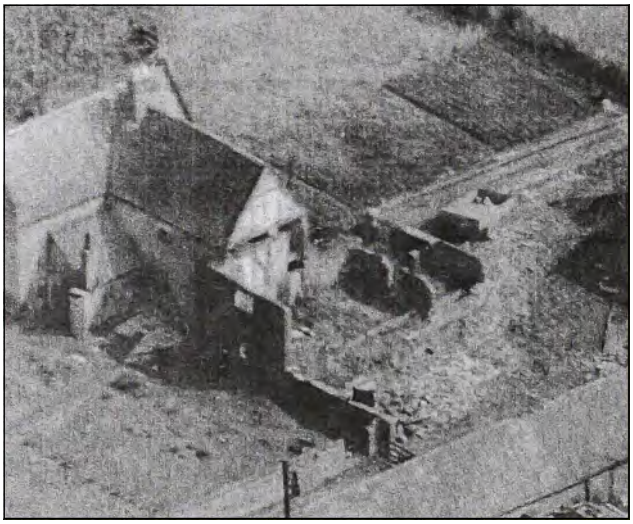
The 'W. Hall' on the 1804 map stands for William Hall. He was a farmer and lived in a house on Fern Road. The house no longer exists but another stands in its place.

The farmhouse was located opposite where the Old School now stands and was probably already over 100 years old in 1804. It was demolished in the 1960s and replaced with a new house by farmers Tom and Kate Barlow. It had become known as 'Crumbling Towers' and was in need of replacement.



Tenants, Sarah and Henry Cumberland in front of the Old Manor (1930s approx)

Old Manor ('Crumbling Towers') being demolished



House on right was built by Tom Barlow and is where William Hall's farmhouse (the Old Manor) once stood

The map on the next page shows, in yellow, the plot that the farmhouse occupied. It also shows, in pink, one of the fields that William Hall was allocated in the 1804 Enclosure Act. Being allocated some land that butted up to his farmyard was not a matter of luck.

William Hall's farmhouse (its location is in yellow) adjoins the land he owned in 1804 (shown in pink)

Old picture of The Yews farmhouse

When the Enclosure Commissioners made land allocations, one aim was to ensure that some of a farmer's land adjoined their farmyard.

At that time, it was normal for farmhouses and their outbuildings to be located near the village centre; isolated farmsteads only appeared after Enclosure. It made sense to enable farmers to travel from farmyard to land without going on public roads.

So much for William Hall's farmhouse, what about his background and family.

He was born in Long Clawson in 1755. Before we examine his life, let's just absorb how long ago 1755 is.

The English Colonies in North America were prospering, 1½ million people lived there and it would be another 20 years before they fought for independence. Richard Arkwright invented a machine to spin cotton and a condensing steam engine was invented in Scotland.

Meanwhile, in nearby village Long Clawson, William and Ann Hall had a child, William Hall, the person we are interested in.

William grew up in Long Clawson and when he was 36, he married Millicent (maiden name unknown) in 1791. They married in Long Clawson and continued living there until 1801 when we know their 3rd daughter was born there.

William owned a house and bakehouse at Long Clawson but moved to the farmhouse on Fern Road in Cropwell Bishop around 1801. Imagining a character who lived over 200 years ago is not easy, but the footprints of his life can be detected with a bit of effort.

He made his will in 1815 when he was 70 years old. He died just a few months later, all of which suggests he knew he had a terminal illness.

From the items in his will, we know that he had become a very wealthy man. To each of his 4 daughters he left both a house and over 20 acres of land.

To his wife he left a house and bakehouse at Long Clawson, and a farm at Colston Bassett. Both were to be held in trust by fellow farmers until Millicent decided otherwise. Millicent also inherited their current house and property.

At the time of his death, his daughters were teenagers so probably continued living at home with their mother, Millicent.

Of the 4 girls, we know most about the second eldest, Ann.

Nine years later, in 1824, she married Cropwell Bishop man John Smith and they began their married life together at The Yews farmhouse on Nottingham Road.

John was also wealthy and, in time, both he and Ann would inherit more land and property and move on to another grand house. In 1850 they were the biggest land owners in the village. But that is another story and will be covered in another Street Story.

Millicent Hall was only 50 at the time of William's death and she continued to farm for the next 20 years until her death at the age of 70. As a lady farmer, she became known as 'Madam Hall'.

Hall Drive was built by Wimpey in 1973-74 and as each housing plot was sold "off the map", the builders would concentrate their resources on completing that house – not just to please the buyer, but also to get their money.

This often resulted in the haphazard completion of houses, and sometimes occupied homes would be surrounded for months by

The building of 11 Hall drive in 1973.
Hilary Jarrow inspects the back garden of her and Tony's first home

the mere foundations of neighbouring ones. As a result, there were at least 12 months between the first and last families arriving on Hall Drive.

Ian and Rita Smith were the first to move in and by 2020 they had lived in the same house for 47 years. Rita is still there in 2024.

In 1977 it was Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee and people all around the country celebrated with street parties. Hall Drive residents made banners and stretched them across the road from upstairs windows. At the bottom of the street tables of food and drinks were laid out for an evening of partying and dancing in the street.

In the coming years, more new roads will be built in Cropwell Bishop. I am optimistic that Parish Councillors will continue the tradition of naming our streets after interesting local characters. It would, after all, give me the opportunity to write yet more Street Stories!

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, John Greenwood and Kate Barlow for their help with this Story.

All ready for dancing in the street on Hall Drive. 1977

Preparing for Hall Drive's celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.

Bottom of Hall Drive in 2020

Hall Drive in September 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Most of the homes on Hardy's Close were built around 1976: the remaining ones in the 1980s. Prior to this, much of the land had been occupied by Etheldene Cottages (see Etheldene Street Story).

The name of the street implies a connection to a member of the Hardy family but it is unusual in that it does not refer to a major landowner from earlier times.

Thankfully, research does reveal a connection between a Hardy family and the land now occupied by Hardy's Close.

Hardy's Close in 1982

Hardy's Close in 1982

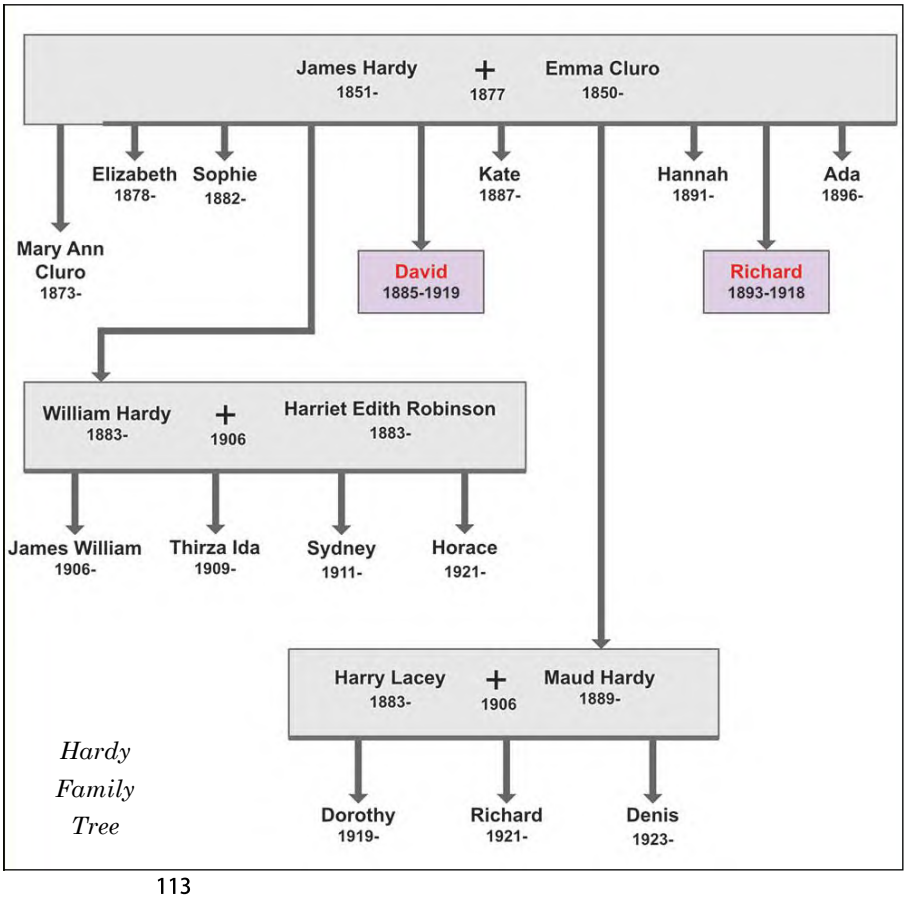
Etheldene Cottages were not always called that, before the 1930s they were known as Salvin's Row. We know that in 1881, James Hardy, who was from Norwich, was living on Salvin's Row with his wife Emma and their daughter Elizabeth. James and Emma had married in 1877. James worked as an agricultural labourer.

A second, older, daughter was part of the family, 7-year-old Mary Cluro who was born in 1873 – 4 years before Emma married. Emma's maiden name was Cluro which implies that young Mary was born to Emma and had a different, unknown, father.

Over the following decades the Hardy family grew in size and by 1901 there were 10 children.

The family home was still on Salvin's Row but the older children had left home and 14-year-old Kate was living with her Grandmother Cluro, three doors away on Salvin's Row.

That meant that James and Emma were sharing their home with just 5 of their children, aged from 5 to 18. For a house with just two bedrooms, that seems scandalous by today's standards, but in 1901, it was probably deemed acceptable, and was far from unusual in "2 up and 2 down" cottages.



Hardy Family Tree

Ten years later, in 1911, James and Emma only had two of their sons living with them; 24-year-old David and 18-year-old Richard. The two boys were working in the “Gypsum Pit” in Cropwell Bishop. Their father, James, was still working as an agricultural labourer.

Jimmy Hardy, father of David and Richard, is sitting 4th from the right on the front row – holding ferrets.
The photo has the title: "Gypsum miners going rabbiting when the mine was flooded" (1908)

Their oldest son, 27-year-old William, had married Edith from South Normanton and they had 3 children. If ever they needed a babysitter, they shouldn't have had a problem; they lived next door to William's parents, James and Emma.

So, we can see that the Hardy’s had a dominant presence on Salvin’s Row during the late 1800s and early 1900s, but that, surely, wasn’t reason enough for Parish Councillors to name a road after one of them 60 years later. Especially when the National Register of 1939, shows no-one with the name of Hardy living in Cropwell Bishop.

The choice of “Hardy” looks baffling, but it can be explained.

In 1911, David and Richard may have looked forward to many years of work in the thriving Cropwell Bishop Gypsum Mines but, just 3 years later, world events would change everything, for everyone: World War One began.

In 1915, 21-year-old Richard joined the Army. He joined the South Notts Hussars but later transferred to the Machine Gun Corps.

His brother David was 9 years older than him and he also joined the Army but there is no record of when that was. He was in the Army Service Corps. Richard and David would not see each other again – ever.

In 1918, on the 30th October, Richard died of disease at the hospital in Alexandria – just 12 days before 11th November and the end of the War. He is listed as having died in the “Egyptian Theatre of War”: he was 25 years old.

David Hardy survived the Great War (as the 1914-18 War was called until 1939), and in February 1919 he was demobilised and returned to Nottingham. However, just 3 weeks later, he died of pneumonia.

He was 34 years old and is buried at New Basford cemetery.

Richard Hardy is sitting on the right.
The title of this photo is: "Young men going for a Sunday walk" (1912)

David Hardy is standing 3rd from the right on the back row.
The photo is of the Cropwell Bishop Cricket Team in 1910.

Although David Hardy did not die during the Great War or whilst he was in the Army, he did die as a consequence of his War Service.

His name appears on the memorial plaque in the Old School as one who "Died After Discharge".

I had been baffled by the choice of name for Hardy's Close, but now I understand the thinking of Parish Councillors.

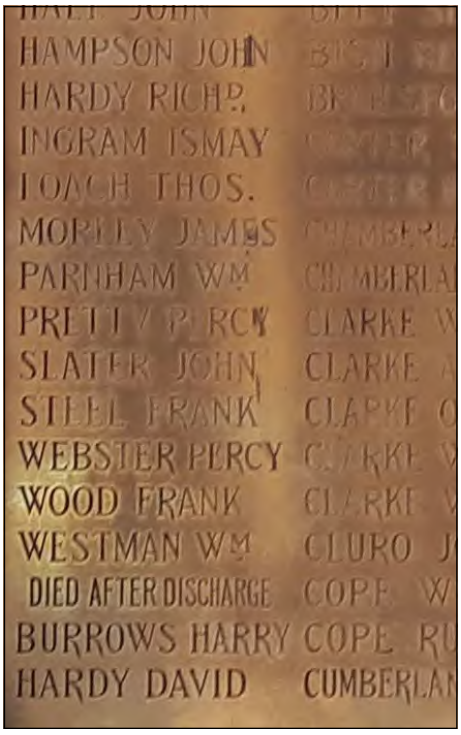
The extended Hardy family had multiple connections with Etheldene Cottages which stood on the land now occupied by the Close, and two of their young men had died as a result of volunteering for the Army in the Great War of 1914-18. They would not have wanted to die but the fact is they did.

The apostrophe in "Hardy's Close" is significant. Had there been no apostrophe, I would have said the street name referred to the two sons, Richard and David. But the street name refers to one Hardy member and I have little doubt that it is dedicated, primarily, to the memory of Richard Hardy.

This Memorial was in the Methodist Chapel until 2024 when, with the impending sale of the Chapel, it was moved to the back room of the Memorial Hall. Richard Hardy's name is included

Memorial in St Giles Church with Richard Hardy's name

Memorial in The Old School



Enlarged view of the plaque on the left showing the names of both Richard and David Hardy

I had wondered why there were no Hardys living in Cropwell Bishop in 1939 – more so when I discovered how big the family was in 1911. However, the explanation is quite simple.

Of Emma Hardy's 10 children, 7 were girls. When a woman marries, she gives up her maiden name – illogical, maybe, but true in Britain.

So, those Hardy women who married, abandoned their family name, and those who didn't marry, wouldn't pass it on – unless they did so by having children out of wedlock which, even in those days, was not as rare as you might think. Emma Cluro's daughter is an example and there are more in other Cropwell Bishop Street Stories.

As for the 3 boys of Emma Hardy, well as we have seen, two died from the Great War and had not married. However, the eldest, William did marry and have children and the family lived next door to his parents.

In 1911, William was 28-years-old and a blacksmith's striker. As the name implies, he wielded the hammer for the village blacksmith – a task that was often performed by the apprentice to a blacksmith.

William was probably looking to become a blacksmith himself, and on the look-out for a workshop of his own. This would explain why he and his family were no longer in Cropwell Bishop in 1939: they had moved to another village.

Hardy's Close is neither a long street or an old one but, like all the streets in Cropwell Bishop, there lies an interesting story behind its name.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Jacques Lacey and Pat Onions for their help with this Story.

Maud Hardy, daughter of James and Emma Hardy. Maud married Harry Lacey from Cotgrave in 1915 when she was 26 years old. (1914 approx). Maud's grandson is Jacques Lacey – the Chair of Cropwell Bishop Parish Council in 2024.

This is a drinking cup made from horn - probably a cow's. It is 115mm high and belonged to Maud Hardy who probably used it when working outdoors. Around 100 years old. Photo by Jacques Lacey.

The snow in 1985 gave villagers the opportunity to test their sledging skills on the hill behind Hardy's Close

The same view on a warmer day in 2020

Hardy's Close in 2020

13 Hardy's Close

1-3 Hardy's Close

12 Hardy's Close

11 Hardy's Close

5 Hardy's Close

6-9 Hardy's Close

4 Hardy's Close as seen from Church Street

10 Hardy's Close as seen from Cropwell Butler Road

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

I once lived on a street called Violet Road. Nearby was Heather Road and Lavender Crescent. The housing estate was built on land that had been a garden nursery, hence the names of the roads. The council naming policy was logical, but not very imaginative.

In Cropwell Bishop the approach has been more thoughtful and interesting – even if, as I have found, it can take a bit more effort to make sense of street names. Hoe Nook is an example. To fully appreciate its name, we need to delve into the history of our village.

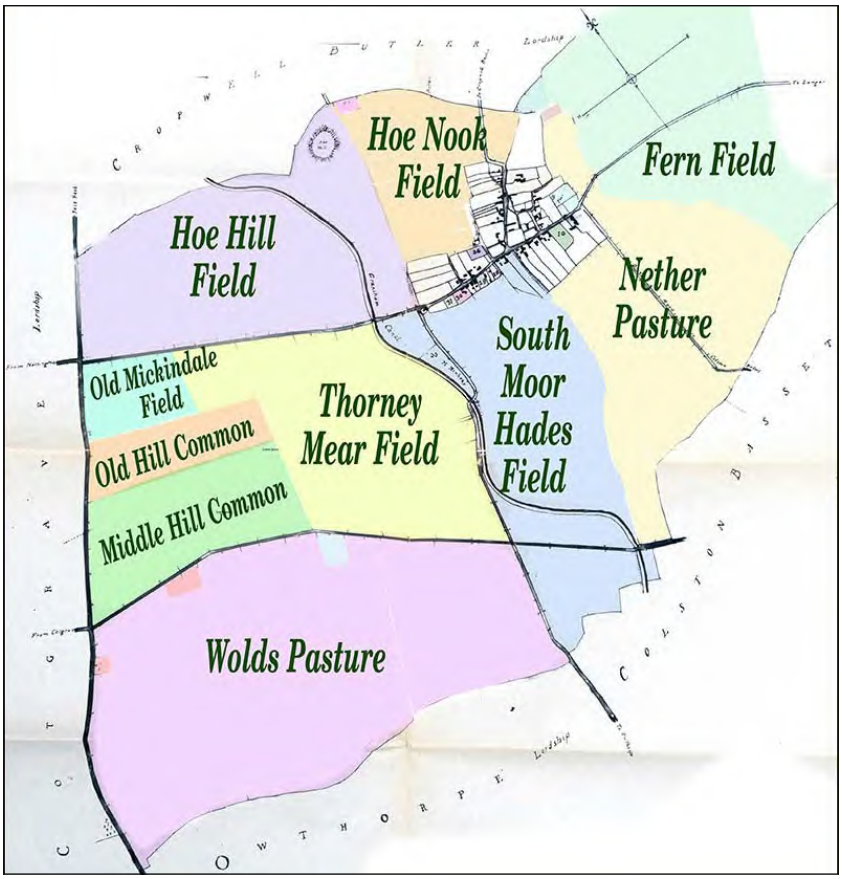
Imagine you are 20 years old and living in Cropwell Bishop in 1800. There are nearly 500 people living here in 90 houses.

You have played and walked on every patch of the parish since you could stand. You know the surrounding land by heart. Your Dad tills a strip of common land where he grows much of the potatoes and veg that your family eats. You know the names of all the fields. It has been like this for centuries.

Then you leave the village for 5 years. Maybe you go into service at some country home or possibly join the navy. Whatever, on your return you are shocked by the changes in the village of your childhood.

The strip of land that your parents had grown food on was no longer there; one of the village farmers now owned the land along with that of your neighbours. It meant that your family could no longer grow food for themselves – they had to work full-time to earn money to buy food from shops.

It was the same for almost everyone you knew – except the bigger landowners. How could this be: what had happened while you were away?



Fields around Cropwell Bishop in 1800.
The only enclosed fields are around the centre of the village.

In previous centuries, villages like Cropwell Bishop were fairly self-sufficient for the essentials in life. In fact, they had to be because transport links between populations were slow and difficult. But by 1780, the Industrial Revolution was taking off and the factory workers needed feeding.

The building of canals and better roads had improved transport links with cities and villages: Cropwell Bishop was no exception.

In 1797 the Grantham Canal was completed and connected the village with both Grantham and Nottingham. The British Government decided that, like manufacturing, farming would have to change.

During the 1700s, most villages had continued the trend of enclosing fields using hedges and fences. This helped to control animal feeding and also stopped them eating other crops.

But fields were usually small, typically 1 acre, and the rate of enclosure was slow – and it was only happening where the soil was good. Surrounding marginal land went to waste.

The Government wanted to speed up the trend for enclosure and it wanted farmers to make use of the poorer land too because, if they didn't, there might not be enough food for the growing populations in the cities.

To ensure this happened, they introduced Parliamentary Enclosure Acts. These were acts of parliament which pushed villages into legally allocating ownership of all the land in its parish. In the years that followed there were over 5 thousand such Acts passed by Parliament: there was one for Cropwell Bishop in 1804.

To start the process, at least ¾ of the village had to agree to the enclosures. A farm labourer was not likely to go against a farmer's wishes if he wanted to keep his job. As elsewhere, agreement was achieved in Cropwell Bishop.

Following this agreement, a small committee came to Cropwell Bishop to hear objections. Then Parliament passed the Act in 1804 and commissioners were appointed to observe the enclosure of the land.

A map of existing land holdings was drawn up and landowners had to prove their legal entitlement. Then a new map was drawn giving landowners their share. These landowners then had to build fences and roads on their land. There were even regulations on how wide roads had to be.

All these changes did result in much more scrub land being cultivated. And, having cultivated fields butting up to each other, did mean the spread of weeds from waste land was much reduced. Overall, it did enable farmers to be more productive.

Generally speaking, this process proved good for the wealthy but not so good for the poor who were often deprived of making a good living.

Any land that poor people were awarded under the Act, tended to be smaller and of poorer quality, most times not having water or wood supplies (for fencing and heating).

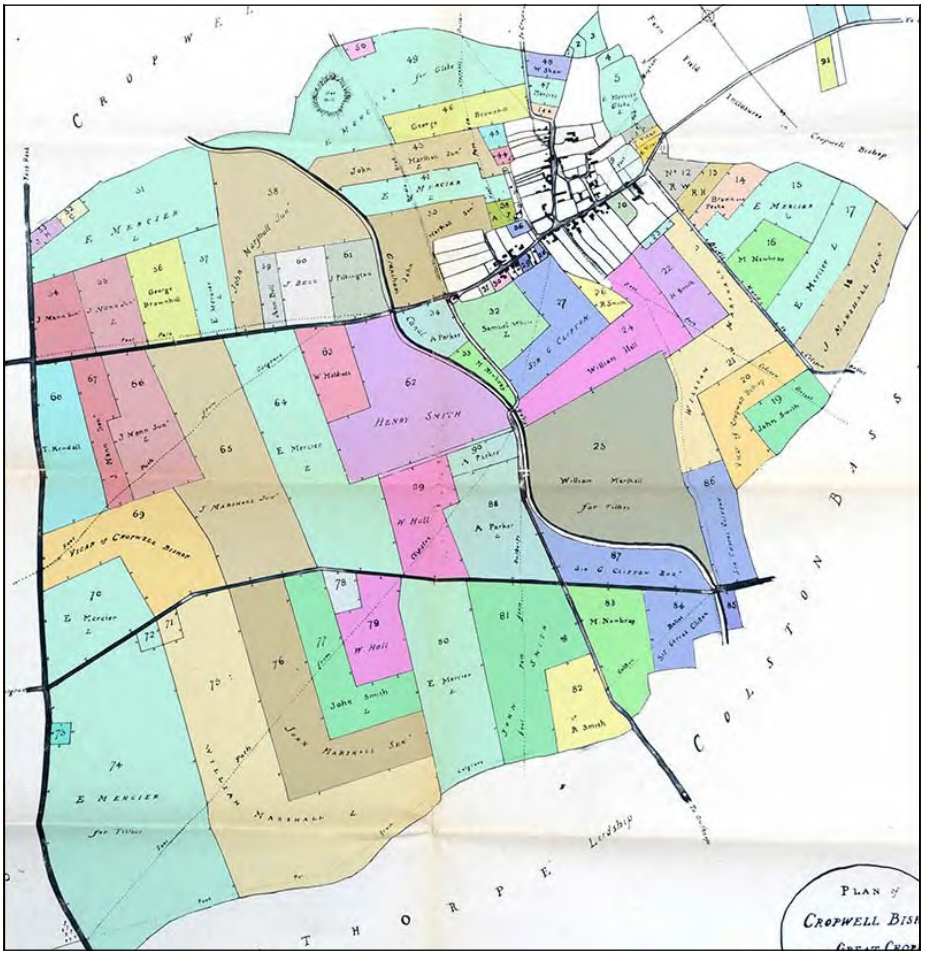
The names of some Pre-Enclosure small owners did not appear in the Award. They were bought out by the bigger landowners, as were most of the cottagers who previously had "rights of Common" (which meant they had been entitled to use Common land in the parish to grow crops, etc).

There is little doubt that the better-off farmers (particularly those who were openly supportive of the Government) did well out of the Act. They were better able to influence the commissioners who decided the location and size of fields.

Following the Act, many small woodlands started appearing in the farmlands of the East Midlands, variously called a spinney, holt, copse or covert. Hoe Hill is an example.

Was this because the landowners were environmentalists? Far from it, the woods were there to protect foxes and game birds – so they could later be hunted for pleasure. Fifty years ago, fox hunting was still a common sight in our parish (a young Prince Charles was once seen with the Hunt at Harby).

Sad to think that the Enclosure Act deprived poor folk of the opportunity to gather firewood, yet resulted in woods being planted to breed foxes.



The 'Award Map' of Cropwell Bishop following the Enclosure Act in 1804. Each colour represents a farmer/tenant.

Field pattern in parish of Cropwell Bishop in 2018. Most field boundaries from 1804 are recognisable.

Bad news for poor folk but good news for foxes (sort of).

You can understand why many people opposed Enclosure Acts, but it was all to no avail.

When you compare the map of Cropwell Bishop before the Act with the one after, it is clear that there must have been a great deal of upheaval in the years after 1804.

Nevertheless, looking back from the 21st Century, such changes were inevitable; the Industrial Revolution could not be stopped and agriculture had to adapt.

Let's return to Hoe Nook, the street. Look again at the map of the village in 1800 and you will see that Hoe Nook Field covered the north side of the village – including the land on which Hoe Nook now stands.

So, in naming the street, Parish Councillors were keeping alive a bit of village history. This is far more satisfactory than resorting to a Violet Road or Lavender Crescent!

The bungalows and chalet-bungalows were built around 1976 by a builder called Smedley from Hucknall. This was to be Smedley's third build in the village: he had already built the homes on Dobbin Close and the town houses on Stockwell Lane.

At least one owner has lived on Hoe Nook since that time. Its open southernly aspect certainly has long-lasting appeal.

So, Hoe Nook is, unusually, a Cropwell Bishop street that is not named after a person.

Nevertheless, it does have a name linked to times long before 1804 and that makes it as deserving as other street names – maybe even more so.

Now we know the street's story, we can fully appreciate that link with the past.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help with this Story.

Hoe Nook in September 2020.

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Ask someone who lives at the top end of Hoe View Road what they can see from their back window and they will likely tell you, “a view of Hoe Hill”. And that explains how Hoe View Road got its name.

The naming of the road is straight forward but the history of the building of Hoe View Road is not so obvious and a lot more interesting.

Before the 1950s none of Hoe View Road existed: by the early 1970s it was all there. But the road wasn’t built in one go, it took 20 years from start to finish. The first question that comes to mind is, why was it built?

Before it, the village road plan was very basic, so much so that census reports usually list only “Main Street” (the Nottingham Road - Church Street continuum), Fern Road and Stockwell Lane (or one of its earlier names) – little else existed. Maps showed the layout hardly changed for 100 years.

What brought about the building of Hoe View Road – was it the mining of gypsum or maybe the making of cheese? Neither; it was aircraft.

Not seen the village air strip? – that’s because it is 5 miles away, at Langar.

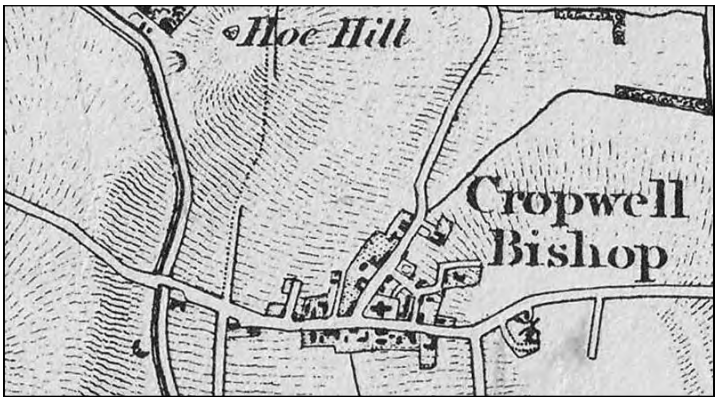
Langar Airfield in 1947

It was during the Second World War in 1942 that the airfield at Langar was constructed. By 1944 the Royal Airforce Bomber Command was flying from it, 32 Lancaster Bombers or, I should say, 32 AVRO Lancaster Bombers.

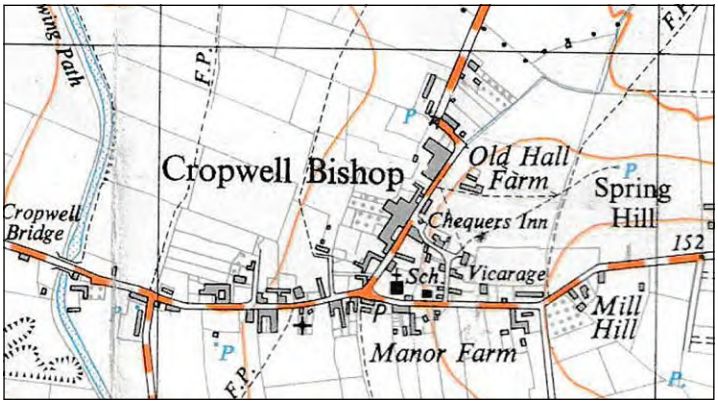
The AVRO company was founded by Alliott Verdon Roe in 1910 and was eventually merged into the Hawker Siddeley Company in 1963.

During the war over 7000 of the highly successful Lancaster Bombers were built at AVRO's factories in Manchester.

But aircraft damaged in the War needed repairing and that is what AVRO workers did in the giant sheds at Langar.



Map of Cropwell Bishop in 1830s



Map of Cropwell Bishop in 1940s

Lancaster Bomber at Langar in 1948

They were able to quickly rebuild wrecked planes so that they could return to action.

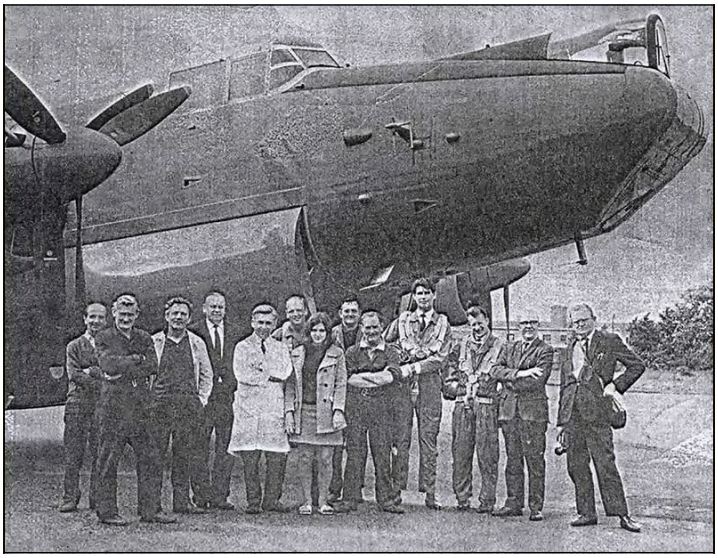
After the war, they used their skills to rebuild, repair and maintain the peacetime version of the Lancaster, the AVRO Shackleton which was used for maritime reconnaissance.

Workers need somewhere to live and the local council, Bingham Rural District Council in those days, chose Cropwell Bishop as the best place to build homes for them.

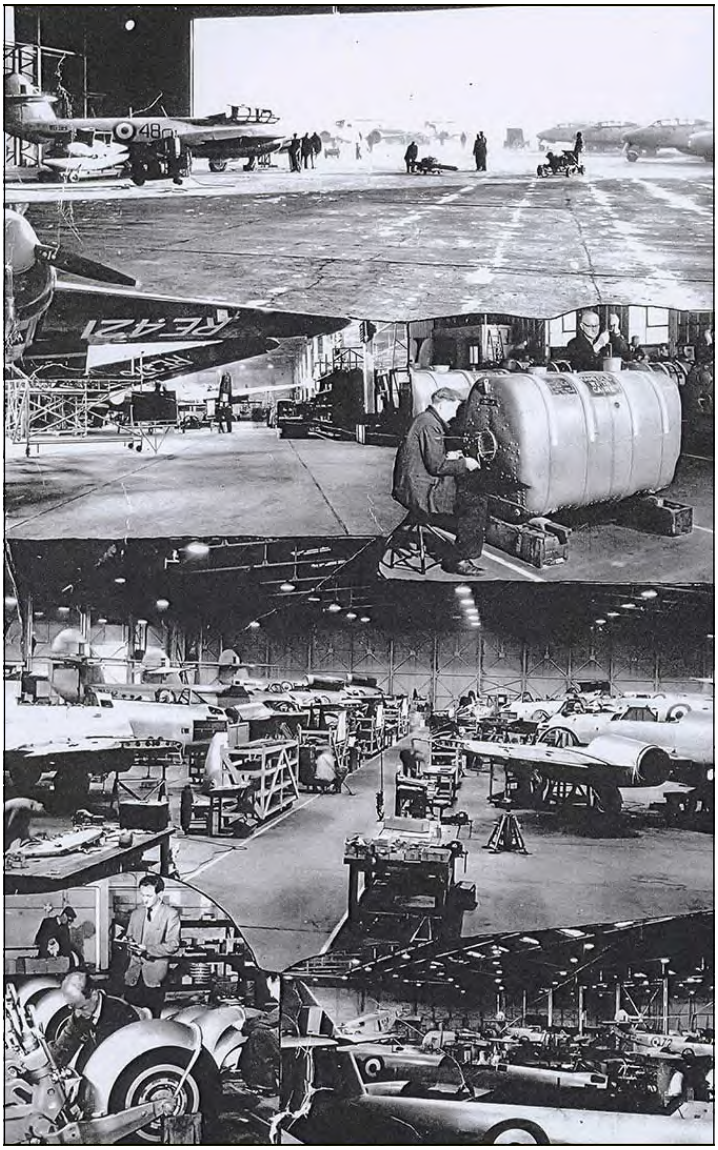
The first stretch of Hoe View Road was built in 1952 and about half of the 102 new homes were occupied by AVRO workers and their families. Two families that moved in then, are still living there.

At its peak, over 800 people were working at AVRO in Langar. In 1965 it was still fully operational but in 1968 it was finally closed.

Last modified Shackleton and Control Tower in 1968.
I recall standing in that Tower in 1965 when I spent 3 days at AVRO as part of a "work experience" scheme from college.



All ready for this last flight in 1968



From 1952 to 1963 the Canadian Royal Airforce was stationed at Langar Airfield. This picture shows the AVRO Langar Sheds at this time.

Why was Cropwell Bishop chosen for the needed homes rather than Langar or Barnstone or Harby? I don't know: does anyone?

The houses built in this first phase of building are numbers 1 to 63 and 2 to 140.

All the other homes on Hoe View Road were built many years later.

We will find out how that came about in a moment, but first, let's look at the homes from the first phase as they appeared in 2020.

Hoe View Road in 1989.

Cubs on parade on Hoe View Road in 1989

Scouts on parade on Hoe View Road in 1989

Hoe View Road (1st Build) in 2020

Hoe View Road (2nd Build) in 2020

After the completion of the first phase of building Hoe View Road in the early 1950s, the planners left a wide gap at the top of the street — between the end houses, numbers 63 and 140.

This suggests that, whilst not aware of future housing plans for the village, they were at least making provision for extending the road. They also left gaps in two places on the left-hand side, wide enough for a new road if needed.

Bingham Rural District Council was responsible for the building of council houses at that time and 16 years later the decision was made to enlarge Cropwell Bishop. The end of Hoe View Road was opened up and Parkin Close built (see Street Story — Parkin Close).

At this stage, the planners would have had sight of proposed plans for a new housing estate in the Village and known that Hoe View Road would eventually stretch to Nottingham Road.

They would also have appreciated that new access roads to the estate would necessitate a number of homes being demolished. The people living in them would need re-housing. So would another section of the community — those living in old, substandard houses.

Consequently, the Council not only built the homes on Parkin Close, but also a variety of homes on the extension of Hoe View Road up to Parkin Close. They included houses, flats and bungalows.

Being merely an extension of the existing Hoe View Road, there was no need for a new street name. House numbering simply continued on from the 1st Build houses.

After the homes were completed, there existed a fence across the end of the road. There it would remain until the completion of the third, and final, build of Hoe View Road, one which would finally make it a true road, instead of a cul-de-sac, and with access to Nottingham Road.

2nd Build Homes highlighted in red

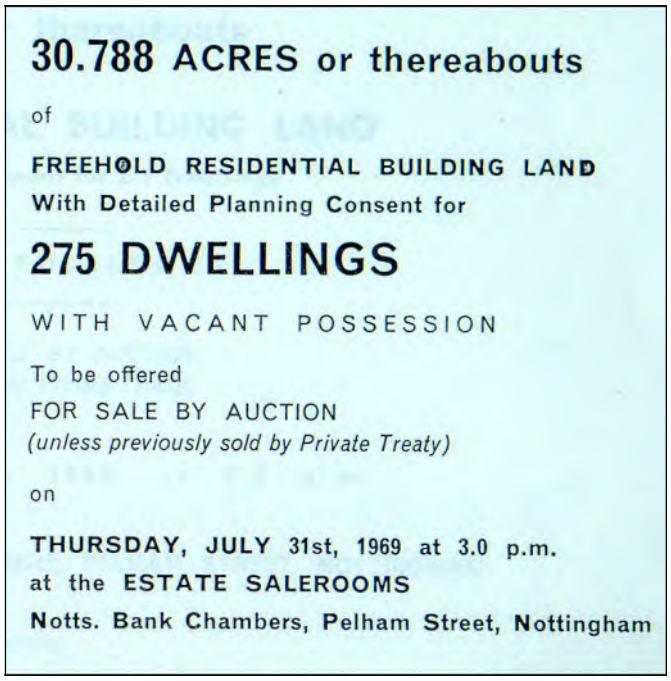
Starting point of the Parade on the day of the Annual Village Fete (1978 approx)

Hoe View Road homes (2nd Build) in 2020 (see Parkin Close Story for those built on Parkin Close)

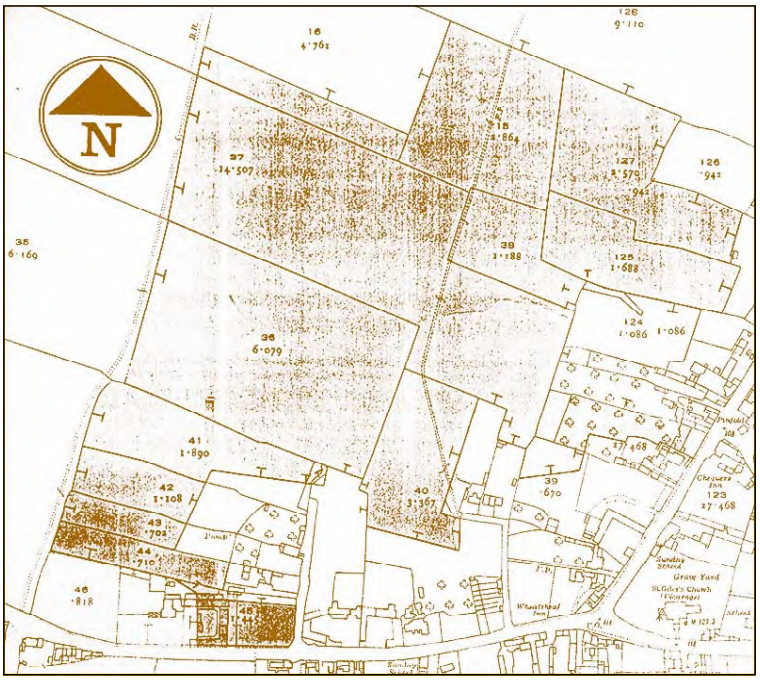
Hoe View Road (3rd Build) in 2020

On the 21st July 1969, man first stepped on the Moon. Ten days later came a step (an auction) that had Cropwell Bishop bracing itself for a very different arrival: the Baby Boomers were coming to the village!

In the late 1940s, after the end of the Second World War, times were hard economically, but people could at least see a more secure future ahead of them and were keen to get married and start a family.



Auction of Cropwell Bishop building land in 1969



Map of the west side of Cropwell Bishop in the 1960s

The dream of many was to rent a brand-new council house – and the English Councils were building them in their millions. Housing estates were springing up in cities and urban areas everywhere.

The result was a population boom. People born from 1946 to 1964 are generally described as baby boomers.

As they grew up, they would endure lows and enjoy highs. From the age of 5 they would walk up to a mile to school, sit in classes of 36+ inside Victorian school buildings, face being caned, and dread the 11+ exam that would send the "top 20%" or so (the percentage depended on the council's school building programme) to a Grammar school where bus travel, new buildings and text books were the norm.

The other 80% were consigned to the nearest Secondary Modern school. These schools would have to accommodate the population bulge. For the ever-increasing numbers of pupils arriving, classes being taught in the school hall, dining room or prefabricated rooms were common place.

But they would also be taught practical skills like woodwork, cooking and metalwork that, in the long run, would serve them well.

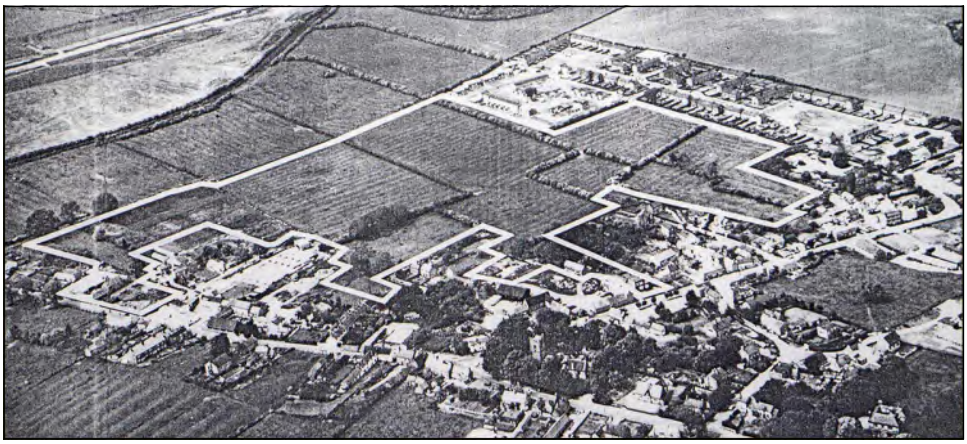
Those who qualified for higher education could get a grant that paid all their living expenses while at university – and tuition was free.

Whether youngsters finished their education 15, or at 21 with a university degree, they at least shared one common prospect. All of them, irrespective of academic success, would be able to find a job (of some kind) that put money in their pockets.

By the end of the 1960s these baby boomers wanted a home of their own. But, unlike their parents, they didn't want to rent a house – they wanted to buy one.

This time around, new housing estates were of private houses, with good reason; the majority of young couples could afford to buy one. In those days, getting married and moving straight into a new house was a real possibility for many.

So, 1969 was the year that Cropwell Bishop joined the housing boom that would eventually result in nearly 300 new homes. During the next 7 years people of all ages joined the village community – and they were predominantly baby boomers looking to start a family.



A white border indicates the boundary of the building land being auctioned for the new homes (1969)

As you can imagine, the influx of so many 'outsiders' was not a welcome sight for some of the older residents, but the majority saw as it as an opportunity to breathe new life into the community.

The plan for the new estate was drawn up and builders bid for the contract. It consisted of 174 houses, 97 bungalows and 6 flats.

It included a road that joined the top end of pre-1970 Hoe View Road with Nottingham Road and, logically, it was also called Hoe View Road.

House building does not always go to plan. The company that built the houses on, and around, Hoe View Road was John Thomas Bell & Sons Ltd based in Doncaster. The company was founded in 1946 so, I suppose, you could call it a baby boomer company.

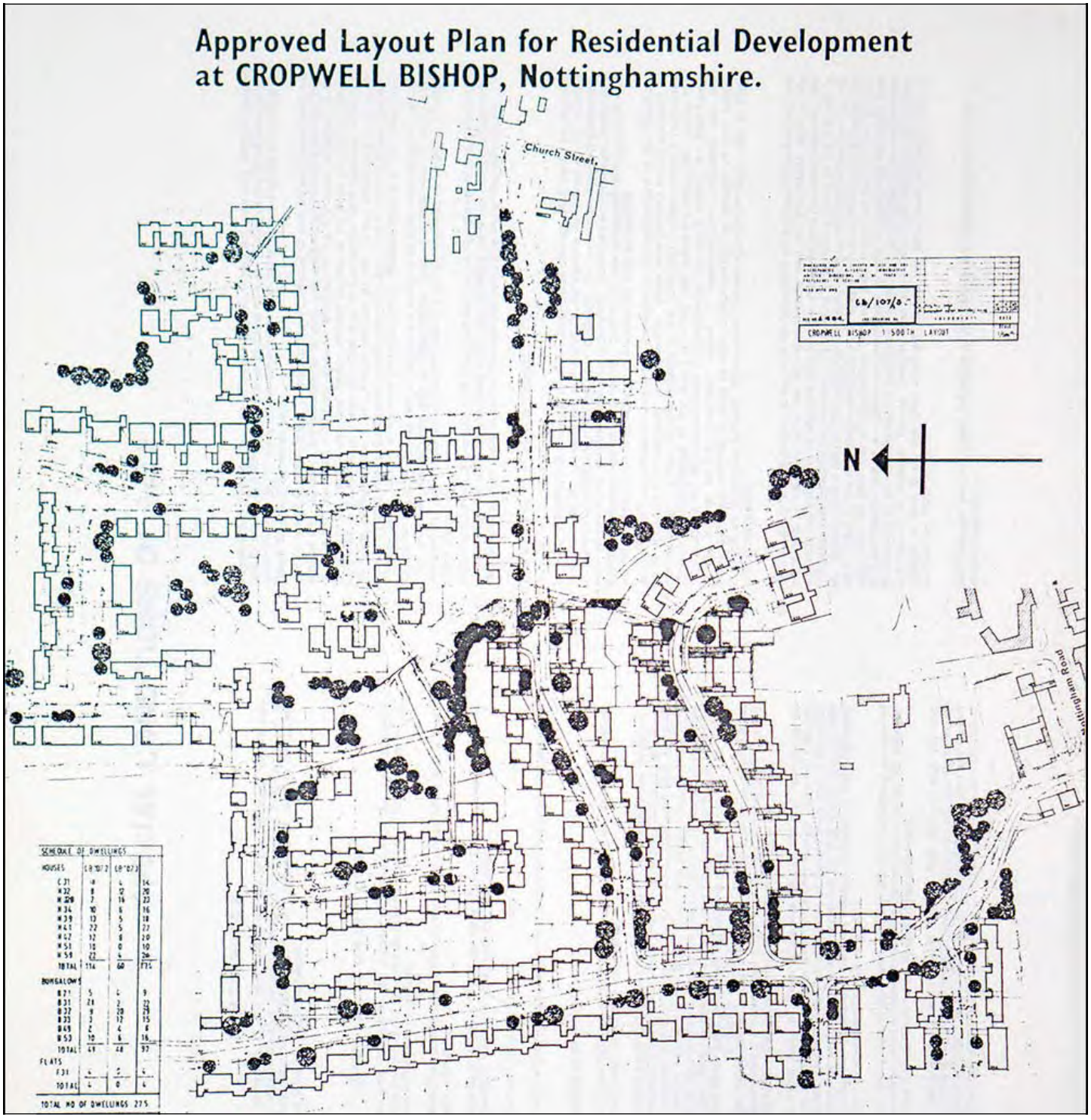
The company began by building homes on Hoe View Road and the cul-de-sacs off it (except Cooper Close). It built over 100 fine homes – about half were bungalows and the rest, large detached houses.

At this point the Bell Company had a change of heart. It decided to sell the remaining land and building contract to George Wimpey Ltd. At the time (1972) Wimpey was the largest private house builder in the country.

Now, over 50 years later, it is difficult to explain Bell's decision. Maybe the time and cost of regular travel from its base in Doncaster was having a negative effect on its profits.

Cropwell Bishop Brownies march down Hoe View Road. 1983

Wimpey built show houses at the top of St Giles Way and set up its sales office next door. But the house designs were their own, not those of Bell.



The original plan approved in 1969

Wimpey stuck with the road layout of the original plan but not the size and placement of houses: they had their own ideas, and they knew that customers would not be difficult to find.

This was a time in Britain of extremely high price inflation and, belatedly, wage inflation. You could buy a 4-bedroom detached house for about £7000 in 1971 but, a year later, it would cost you £8000 to buy a 3-bedroom semi.

Compare the original plan of the estate with the aerial photograph of 2016. The houses built by Bell appear to match the plan, but those built by Wimpey deviate quite a bit.

Building continued for about 5 years, and noise, dust and unmade roads became a way of life until, suddenly, it came to an end.

Cropwell Bishop was no longer the little village it had been and its character would change for ever.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Linda Field and Lol Simpson for their help with this Story.

PRICE LIST

CROPWELL PARK ESTATE, CROPWELL BISHOP, NOTTINGHAM.

Type	Description	Price
GW.151.S/B	2-Bedroomed semi-detached house.	£8,250
GW.151.S/C	2-Bedroomed semi-detached house.	£8,250
GW.112.S/C	3-Bedroomed semi-detached house.	£9,150
GW.130.S	3-Bedroomed semi-detached Swiss Chalet style house.	£9,375
~~GW.130.S/A/Cor~~	3-Bedroomed semi-detached Swiss Chalet style house with corner treatment on corner plot.	~~£9,475~~
GW.70.D/C	3-Bedroomed detached house.	£10,375
~~GW.72.B/C~~	4-Bedroomed detached house with gas-fired central heating. (Ex Show House - Plot No.1)	~~£12,250~~

The above prices are subject to variations to meet fluctuations in labour or materials costs, but are firm for any property on which a price has been agreed and a deposit paid.

Although every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of all information given in this complete brochure, the contents do not form part of, or constitute a warranty, or part of, any contract.

These properties are available, subject to remaining unsold.

Estate Office
George Wimpey & Company Limited
Cropwell Park Estate
Church Street
Cropwell Bishop
Nottingham
Telephone: Nottingham 893062

Regional Office
George Wimpey & Company Limited
Beechdale Road
Aspley
Nottingham NG8 3LX
Telephone: Nottingham 291171

6.

Wimpey price list in 1974 when the building project was coming to an end

The actual build (2016)

The new homes in 1977

Hoe View Road: 1978 merges ..... into 2020

Hoe View Road (3rd Build) in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2025

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

It the 1740s, John Wesley started preaching his alternative approach to the Christian religion; Methodism.

His ideas gradually attracted a growing number of followers who would regularly meet in whatever meeting place they could find.

However, it was not until 1802 that the seeds of Methodism appear to have been sown in Cropwell Bishop.

Robert Hopewell, a farmer living opposite the Chequers on Church Street, registered his house with the Archbishop of York, as a place of public worship.

The number of villagers who joined him was small at first, but it steadily grew, until his house was no longer big enough for the congregation. No matter, he had a solution.

In 1817, he converted a barn into a chapel and registered that with the Archbishop of York.

Methodist ministers would include this makeshift chapel on their Preaching Circuit and over the next twenty years, the congregation continued to grow.

The need for a more worthy place of worship led to the opening of a 'subscription list' – a list of people willing to invest their money in a scheme to build a chapel.

There were 250 subscribers on the list and it included several prominent local names like: Hopewell, Shelton, Squires and Clifton, who gave up to £20 each. The smallest amount a person offered was 3 pence.

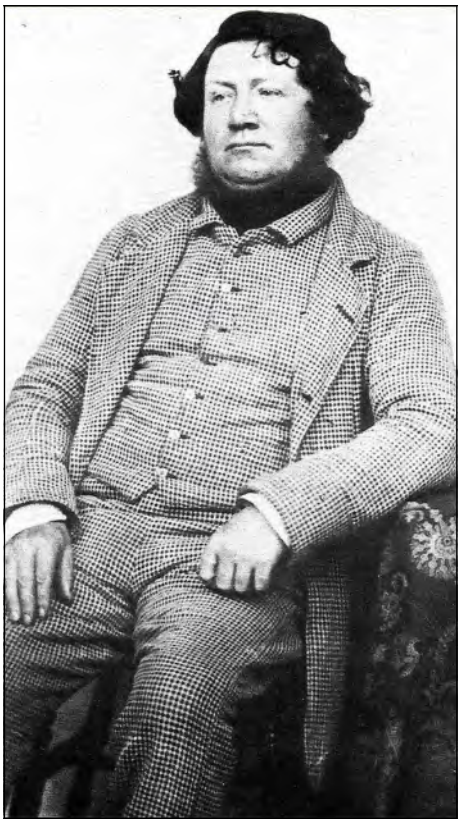
They soon had the money to build their Chapel and in early 1842, they paid £156 to Mr J. Bell of Hickling for a plot of land on Nottingham Road; Mr Bell was one of the subscribers.

Within months, a Chapel was built and on 8th September 1842 the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel held its opening service. It was fast work, but the workmanship was sound: even after nearly 200 years the Chapel building still looks good.

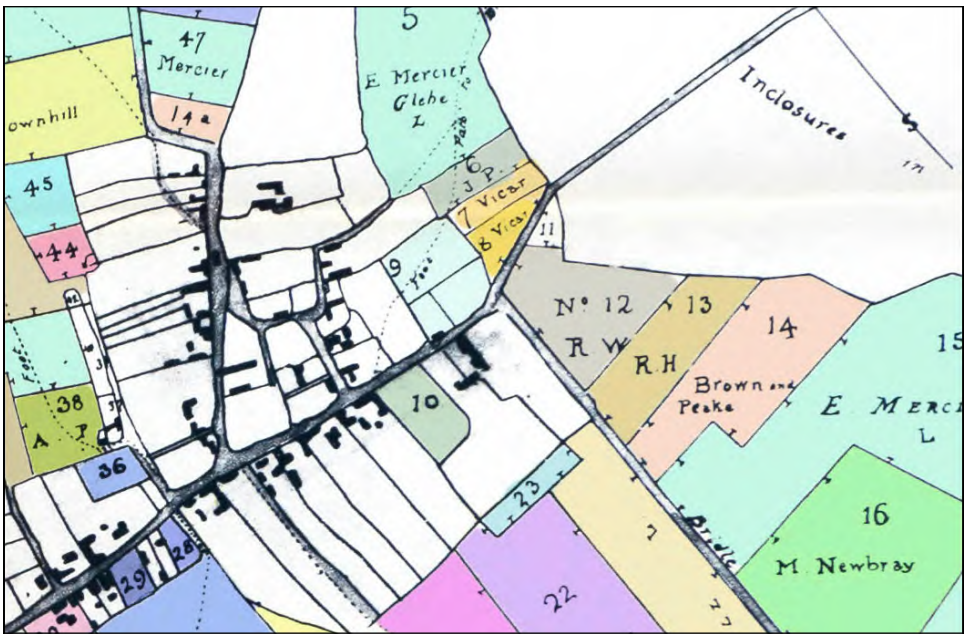
The total cost, including the land, was £516. This included the building of two cottages in front of the Chapel.

In later years, these were converted into a School Room but the brickwork still shows evidence of the cottages.

You can discover much more about the history of the Methodist Chapel, in the Nottingham Road Street Story.



John Bell (1815-1876) of Hickling who sold the land on which the Chapel was built. Photo provided by Rev. Owain Bell, an ancestor.



In this view of the 1804 map, Nottingham Raod stretches at 45° from the bottom LH corner. At the T-junction with Church Street (going upwards) the road continues as Fern Road. At the first kink is a Bridle Road (now called Pasture Lane) on the right. The field labelled, "13 R H", was owned by Robert Hopewell.

It appears to me that Robert Hopewell was the person who did most to encourage the growth of Methodism in Cropwell Bishop and the leading member of the group of villagers responsible for the building of its Methodist Chapel.

I have not been able to find a photo of him and it may well be that none exists. Having your photo taken in the mid-1800s would have been expensive and I don't think Hopewell was a particularly wealthy man.

We know that he was a farmer and he had a barn, and the 1804 Enclosure Map shows that he owned a strip of land down Pasture Lane. Its area was 4 acres; that is the same area as 16 plots on the Cropwell Bishop Allotment site.

Whilst historic documents refer to

him as a farmer, in reality, he seems to have been more of a smallholder.

In writing a history of our village, you can only use what evidence is available, whether it be photographs, family trees, printed documents or maps. Two hundred years ago, the wealthy could afford to have their photo taken, framed and hung in a house that might stay in the family for the next 200 years.

For most folk, this was beyond them; they would probably have been deprived of any schooling and be unable to even write down a family history.

So, no matter how hard working, honest and honourable they were in life, when they died, knowledge of their achievements would linger only in the heads of those who knew them in life, and those heads would not be around for very long.

If a family could not afford a headstone for the churchyard, even their name might be lost to future generations – and to my story writing!

There are headstones for four Robert Hopewells in the churchyard but none of their dates match the Robert Hopewell in our story.

Nevertheless, we still remember him because he created something for every person living in the village. The Methodist Chapel was a meeting place for all, where ideas could be shared, supported and developed. He is not remembered because he built a big expensive house for himself.

Then again, for all we know, there might have been a 'John Smith' or a 'Mary Smith' who, at the time, was an even greater driving force in the village; we will never know.

As I write this in 2025, the Methodist Chapel building is no longer a chapel. It has been sold to a private buyer whose intentions for the building are currently unknown to me.

If it is allowed to stand and retain its appearance as an old chapel building, then then we will have something to remember Robert Hopewell by. Whatever happens to the building, we now have another memorial to his life in Cropwell Bishop; Hopewell Street.

The Chapel entrance in 2020

Tony Jarrow – September 2025 *amjarrow@mac.com*

Thanks to the villagers who helped with this Story.

Celebration Weekend 2009, 4th July

Celebration Weekend 2010, 4th July

Cropwell Singers in the Chapel. 2011, 26th November

25th July 2021

27th November 2022. The last time a service was held at the Chapel.

The Beginnings of Hopewell Street

September 2021

October 2021

October 2021

May 2023

October 2023

Hopewell Street in 2025

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Kendal Road is named after a man. Like many streets in the village, the name comes from the 1804 Field Enclosure map which shows the landowners in Cropwell Bishop at that time.

However, that farmer's name was not Kendal but Kendall.

There are other streets in the village which appear to be mis-spelt, Mercia Avenue and Newberry Close being other examples, but I am inclined to think that the Councillors or Planners were deliberately choosing 'easier' names rather than aiming to maintain historical accuracy.

If we look at the 1804 map, we see that some of the land on which Kendal Road is built, was owned by Thomas Kendall. The field he owned was not large, only big enough to cover the bottom third of Kendal Road.

The only other land he owned in Cropwell Bishop, was a field beside the old Fosse Way (A46) – where the garage now is.

In 1804, field 45 was the field owned by Thomas Kendall

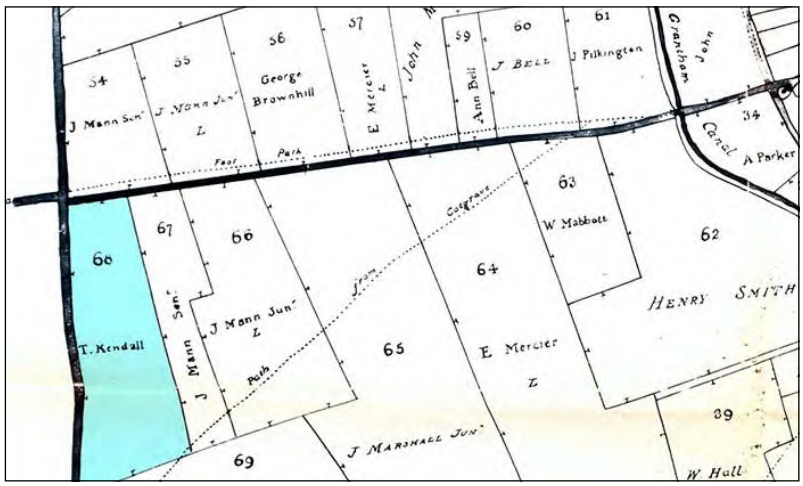
Outlines of the fields on the 1804 map are shown in white on top of a satellite image of Kendal Road. The field owned by Thomas Kendall (45) is coloured pink.

Finding no history of Kendall families in Cropwell Bishop, led me to think that he might have been a cottager who happened to have inherited a bit of land, and did not go on to have sons – hence the name died out. A reasonable assumption maybe, but totally wrong.

The clue lies in the location of his field beside the Fosse Way, a border of Cropwell Bishop Parish.

Thomas Kendall never lived in Cropwell Bishop; he lived in Cotgrave – more specifically, Stragglethorpe. Nor was he a lucky individual with a few acres of grass for his sheep and a couple of cows. He was a major landholder in Cotgrave owning hundreds of acres – and his family connections were powerful and extensive.

Let's look at Tom Kendall's family history.



The other field owned by Thomas Kendall in 1804

Thomas Kendall's family

Thomas Kendall was born in Long Clawson, which is quite a way from Cropwell Bishop – as far as Nottingham or Bottesford. It must have seemed even further in 1764, the year he married Cotgrave girl, Elizabeth Sanday.

Was it a love that flowered at some May-Day Dance at a village mid-way between their two homes – maybe Hickling or Kinoulton: I would like to think so, but I doubt it.

Tom Kendall's father was probably a landowner and farmer in Long Clawson and the family of Elizabeth Sanday certainly was.

I am inclined to think that the coming together of the two families was more likely the result of comfortable farming families looking to the future. That is not to say that the couple were not thrilled with the outcome – their life together appears to have been fruitful in many respects.

The home of the Sanday family, and the now Tom and Liz Kendall, was Cotgrave, but all the historical evidence points to them all belonging on one side of Cotgrave; that known as Stragglethorpe.

Stragglethorpe was, and still is, the part of the parish north of the Stragglethorpe Road. In those days it accounted for about 20% of the area of Cotgrave Parish.

It was 'fully enclosed' in 1742 which is 50 years before Cotgrave itself was enclosed. In other words, its land was allocated to named landowners. Interestingly, that was just two years after Tom and Liz established themselves in Stragglethorpe.

Once Tom and Liz were married, they lived the rest of their lives in Stragglethorpe: they had 5 children – all girls.

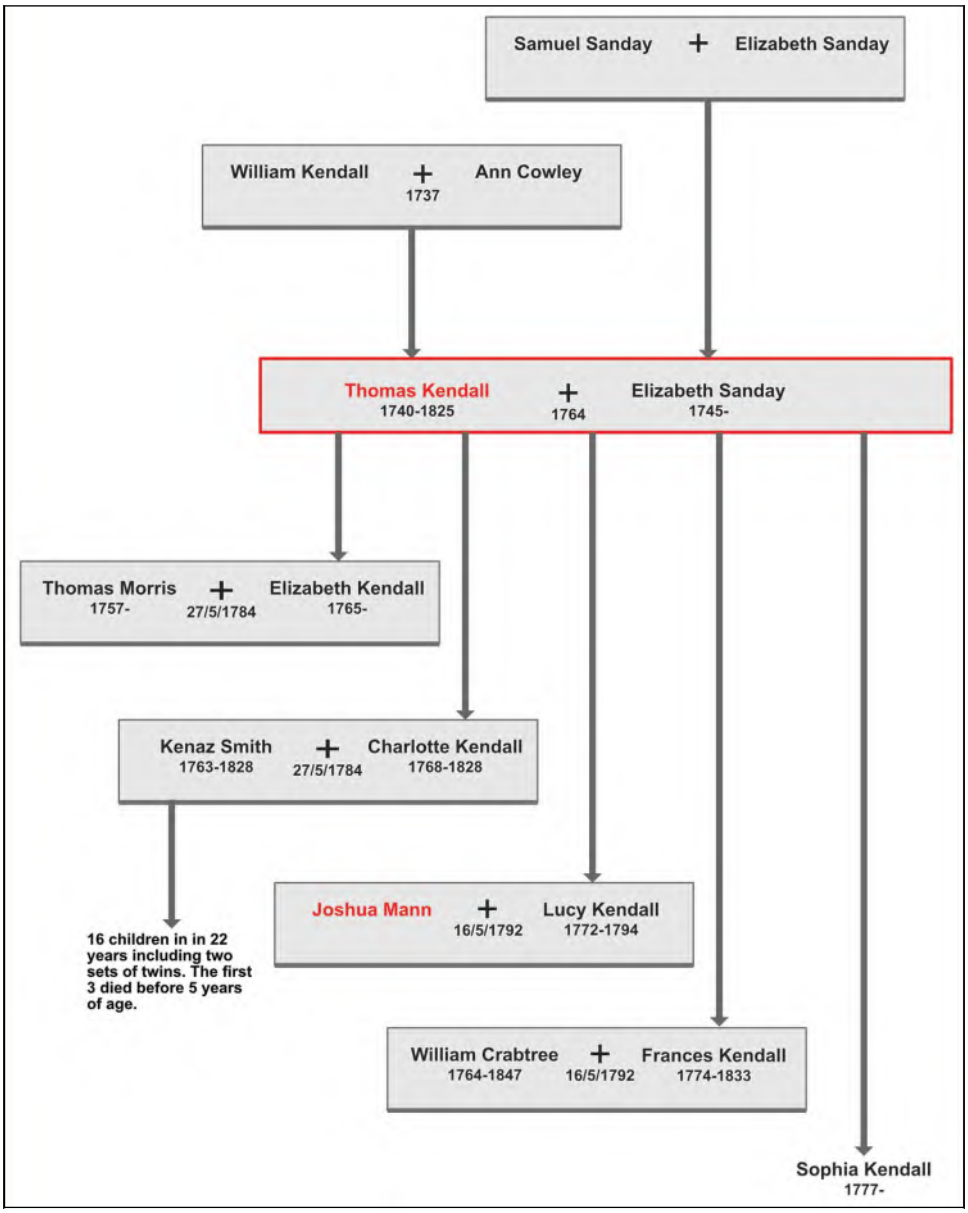
In 1784, their eldest girl, 19-year-old Elizabeth, was married at Cotgrave Church. So was their second eldest, 16-year-old Charlotte – at the same church on the same day.

Elizabeth married 27-year-old Thomas Morris, whose father owned 75 acres in Cotgrave: Thomas would go on to own land of his own in Cotgrave.

Charlotte married 21-year-old Kenaz Smith from Collingham, near Newark. They went to live at Kelham, near Collingham.

Charlotte had 16 children within 22 years – including two sets of twins.

Kendal Road in 1978



Kendall Family Tree

Most survived childhood and lived to old age.

Sadly, Charlotte died in 1828 when she was only 60. Kenaz, who was 65, died just 6 months later.

The May double-wedding that Thomas had arranged for his daughters must have been a success,

because 8 years later he arranged another one on 16th May 1792. This time, for 20-year-old Lucy and 18-year-old Frances.

Lucy married Joshua Mann whose father owned 25 acres in Cotgrave. In later years, Joshua would own land of his own there – and a great deal more than his father.

Eighteen-year-old Frances, married William Crabtree on that same day. William was from a farming family at Colston Bassett. The married couple returned to Colston Bassett and lived the rest of their lives there. They had 3 children.

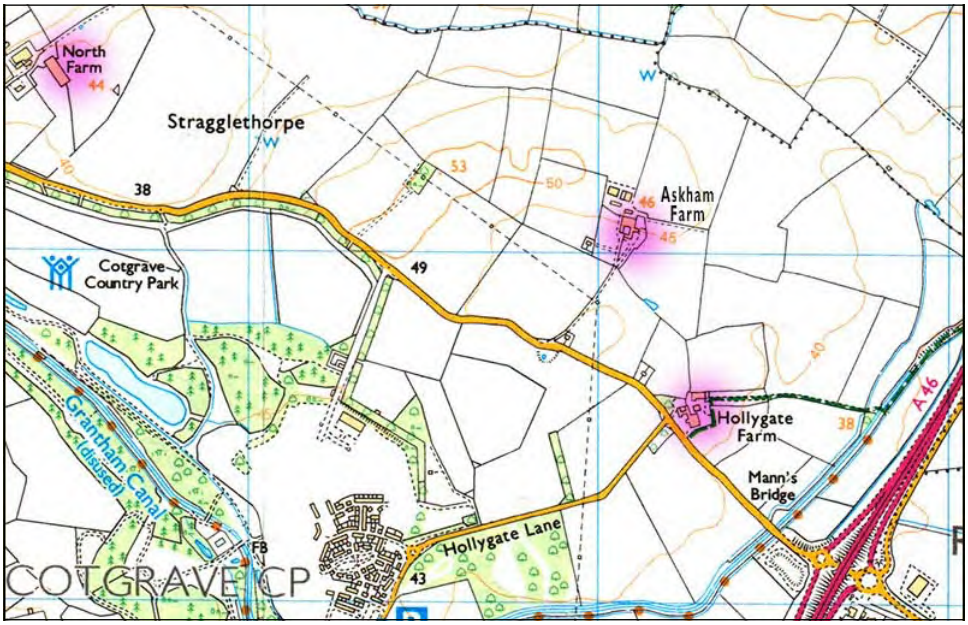
One wonders how those double marriages took place; did both couples walk down the aisle together, or did the weddings take place one after the other. I imagine they must have had one big wedding reception because Thomas could not have attended two at once.

It is worth noting that most of these farmers that we have identified, also farmed land owned by others – often very wealthy absent landlords, or the Church. For example, in 1790, it is estimated that there were 3600 acres of farmland in Cotgrave and 2450 were owned by Viscount Newark who, I doubt, ever dug a spade-full of earth in his life.

All the land in Stragglethorpe was owned by Viscount Newark (later called Earl Manvers) and it was divided into 4 farms. In 1790, we know that 3 of them were being farmed by members of the extended Kendall family. Joshua Mann lived at Hollygate Farm (then called Fosse Farm), Thomas Kendall at Askham Farm and the Sanday family at Dove Acres.

Hollygate Farm is the well-known house at the junction of Stragglethorpe Road and Hollygate Lane, and Askham Farm is a little further north of it, set far back from the Stragglethorpe Road. Dove Acres Farm no longer exists.

By the 1900s, Stragglethorpe was defined to include additional land south of Stragglethorpe Road, including the stretch alongside the Fosse Way that is on the boundary with Cropwell Bishop. As a result, Stragglethorpe is now 50% bigger than it was 250 years ago – not that this has any political significance today.



Stragglethorpe Farms

Hollygate Farm

Askham Farm

In 1801, after Cotgrave had been enclosed and the Grantham Canal newly completed, Viscount Newark published a survey of Stragglethorpe.

It revealed that two of Thomas Kendall's son-in-law's ran the two largest farms there; Joshua Mann 163 acres, and Thomas Morris 103 acres.

Interestingly, Thomas Kendall no longer farmed there, even though he had once farmed over a hundred acres. The impression is that he passed the farm to his son-in-law.

Nevertheless, he did continue farming in Cropwell Bishop.

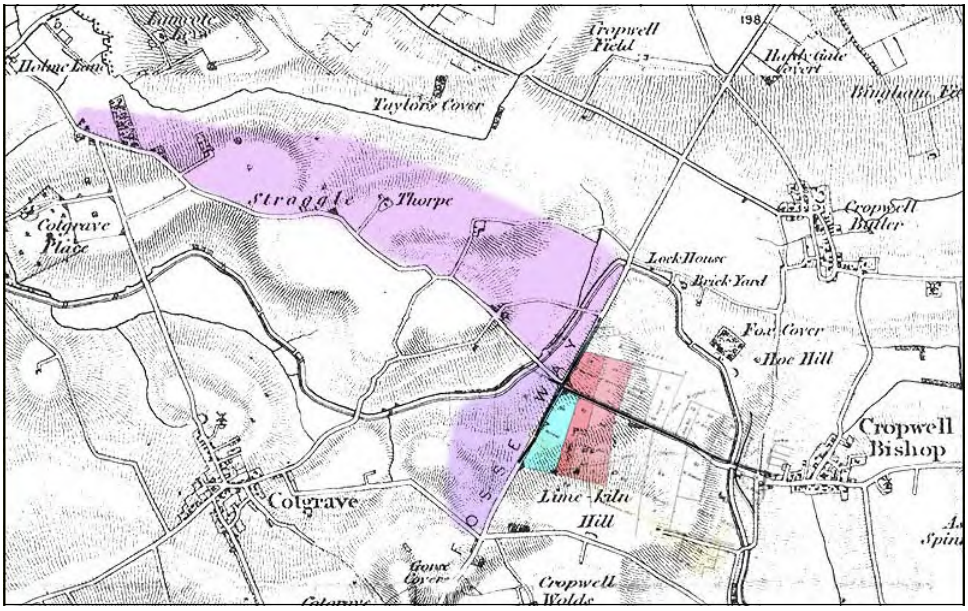
Thomas Kendall and Cropwell Bishop

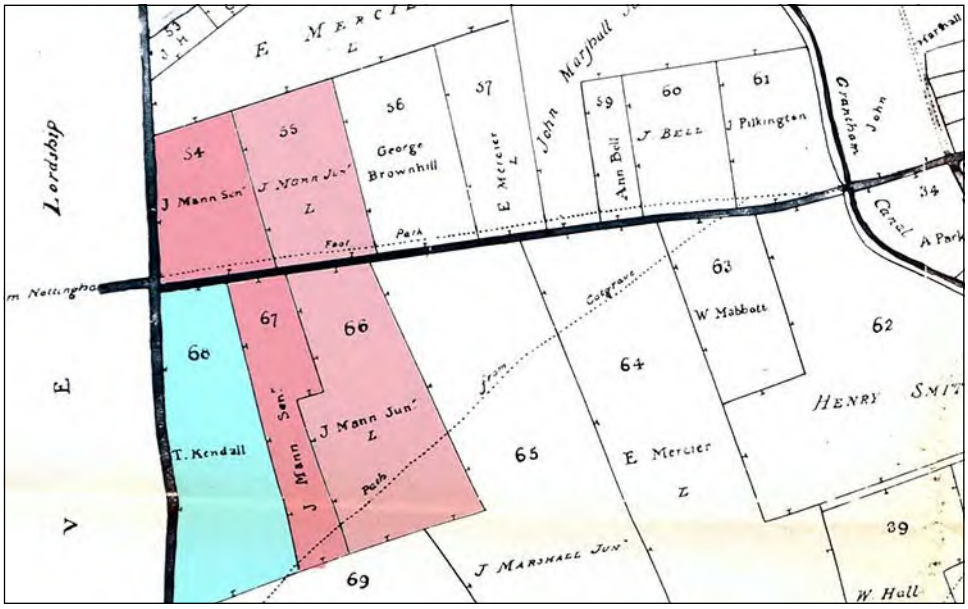
If we look at the 1804 map of Cropwell Bishop, we see that Thomas Kendall and Joshua Mann owned fields on the western edge of the parish. To them, it would have been simply an extension of their lands in Stragglethorpe: it was just across the road.

Stragglethorpe is part of Cotgrave Parish and lies north of Stragglethorpe Road (shaded lilac above).

The Fosse Way (A46) is the boundary with Cropwell Bishop.

About a hundred years ago, Stragglethorpe increased in area to include the fields between the Grantham Canal and the Fosse Way.





Land owned by Thomas Kendall, Joshua Mann and Joshua Mann's father (1804)

Crossing the Fosse Way (A46) in those days would have been no problem: more chance of being knocked over by a badger than a stage coach.

We must remember that, at times, Thomas Kendall would also have had to travel through Cropwell Bishop to get to his other land, Field 45, where Kendal Road now is.

The survey of 1801 makes a telling point about Joshua Mann's farm, saying: "this farm is extremely injured by the canal": it cut right through the middle of it.

Precisely which stretch of canal is being referred to is unknown, but there are clues. The canal bridge on the Stragglethorpe Road, 100m west of the A46, is still known as "Joshua Mann's Bridge".

Also, between this bridge and the Fosse Bridge, there is another bridge which is known as "Mann's Swing Bridge" which is for farm access.

Discovering a link between these bridge names and the people we have been investigating, makes the 200 years gap feel smaller.

Now, there is a mystery about Thomas Kendall's life that I have not been able to resolve.

I came across a copy of his 'last will and testament'. In it, he makes several references to his wife. But he calls her Mary (not Elizabeth) and refers to her family in Derbyshire (not Cotgrave).

And there is another mystery. Records show that Elizabeth gave birth to her 5th daughter, Sophia, in 1777, but I have been unable to discover any trace of Sophia after that year: or Elizabeth.

I strongly suspect that Elizabeth Kendall died in 1777 giving birth to Sophia, and that she too died shortly afterwards.

Thomas would have been just 37 years old then, and with 4 daughters under 12, he would never have coped. I think he probably married very soon afterwards: it would have been in everyone's interest for him to do so.

And I think Mary must have been that woman – in spite of me not finding any trace of her either – except in Thomas Kendall's will. Thomas died in 1825 at the age of 85.

As we have seen, Kendal Road is named after a local man with lots of connections with Cropwell Bishop.

Thomas Kendall was born in Long Clawson, had family connections with Colston Bassett, and lived just over the Fosse Way.

If he was able to return here today, he would not recognise Kendal Road, but he would be able to find his way here; the old roads, buildings and landmarks can still be recognised.

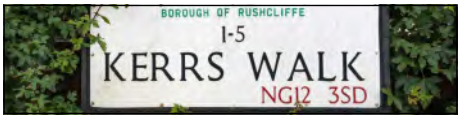
I wonder how we would fare if we were to return in 200 years' time.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza for her help with this Story.

Kendal Road in 2020

The rule, that a house belongs to the street onto which its front door opens, is broken several times in Cropwell Bishop. Here is another example which initially fooled me into thinking it belonged to St Giles Way.
Although its front door faces St Giles Way, its postal address is, I now realise, 1 Kendal Road.
Notice the newer brickwork on the ground floor wall: that is where the front door used to be, facing Kendal Road.
(2021)



The homes on Kerrs Walk were built in 2009 on land that was formerly owned by the Chequers Pub.

Before that time, the Chequers car park extended to the wall of the building on the right, making it a very large space for patrons of the pub.

Why so big a car park? Well, not so long ago it was definitely needed.

On Saturday nights 40 years ago, the car park would be packed, and the music from the organ and the voices of people singing along, could be easily heard a 100m away (100 yards in those days), even after the 11pm closing time.

The breathalyser test for alcohol, and the public's acceptance that drink-driving was unacceptable, helped put a stop to that. So did the arrival of alternative forms of entertainment in an evening - such as colour TV and video cassette players.

These days, householders on Kerrs Walk are never going to be disturbed by pub singing like that - unless England should ever win the World Cup, and then they would probably join in.

Margaret Kerr

So how did Kerrs Walk get its name?

It comes from the name of a lady who was an active member of the Cropwell Bishop Parish Council for many years in the 1970s: Margaret Kerr. Her name, Kerr, is pronounced "Car".

She had recently retired but still had the drive and energy to make full use of her newly found spare time. She put herself forward for election to the Parish Council and was duly elected.

When her councillor duties were not enough to fill her days, she made herself useful at the Day Centre when it was held at the Memorial Hall and, on occasion, could even be found calling out the Bingo numbers!

She lived in her house on Stockwell Lane until 2003 when, at 92 years of age, she went into 'Care'. She died in 2008, the same year that her house was demolished and replaced by a very similar new one (there will be more about that in the Street Article on Stockwell Lane).

Her daughter, Fiona, grew up in the village but now lives in the north-east of England. She has fond memories of those times and still enjoys visiting this website to find out what is happening here.

One thing that does puzzle me is why Kerrs Walk wasn't called Kerr Walk. I must admit though, that it doesn't roll of the tongue quite so easily: maybe that is the reason.

I still have things to learn about street naming!

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow and Fiona Stephenson for her help with this Story.

Clearing the site: 2008

Building the homes: 2008

Kerrs Walk (2009)

Kerrs Walk (2020)

Kerrs Walk (2009)

Kerrs Walk (2020)

Kerrs Walk (2009)

Kerrs Walk (2020)

Image used in sales literature (2008)

Plan used in sales literature (2008)

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Kinoulton Road is so named because it leads to Kinoulton.

Whilst everyone today will see the logic in this, it is interesting to note that old writings about the village usually refer to the "Cropwell to Owthorpe Road".

Owthorpe is much closer to us than Kinoulton, especially if you take the direct route across fields, and for centuries has had close links with Cropwell Bishop — children even walked from Owthorpe to the school here in the early 1900s.

Nevertheless, whilst history might support the "Owthorpe Road" name, sign-post makers, car-drivers and Amazon-drivers are probably happier with "Kinoulton Road".

And, today, the road sign says Kinoulton Road, so that is what it is.

With that out of the way, let's examine what we know of its history over the last 230 years — starting from its northern end.

From Nottingham Road to the Canal

At the start of Kinoulton Road, there are 6 homes on the right-hand side – and they account for the majority of homes along its whole length, there being just 5 at the far end.

The original 6 homes were let as Council Houses and numbered 1-6, but in 1949 they became 2 to 12 Kinoulton Road.

Numbers 2 and 4 were built around 1931 and numbers 6 to 12 were built in 1944 for farm workers.

Numbers 10 and 12, were then demolished and replaced by two new detached houses in 2007.

Many village sporting events have made good use of this stretch of road over the years.

Built in 1931

Originally built for farm workers

Built in 1944 for farm workers

The two houses built in 2007, replaced the original ones

Tony Jarrow starts the first Cropwell Bishop 10 mile Run in 1984. For over 10 years the race was an annual fixture in Cropwell Bishop and raised money for the Memorial Hall. Hilary Jarrow presents the prizes on the Memorial Hall Field in 1985.

The start of the Cropwell Bishop 10 mile Run in 1985

Runners on Kinoulton Road after the start of the Stilton Stumble Run in 2015.
This annual event raises money for Friends of Cropwell Bishop School and Cropwell Bishop Scouts.

Riders taking part in the 2015 'Cropwell Bishop 24-hr Bike Ride. Here, they are celebrating its completion by all riding a final lap of the circuit. During the previous 24 hours, teams of riders took it in turn to complete a lap.
The event took place every other year during the 2000s and 2010s, raising money for Air Ambulance and Memorial Hall.

Stilton Stumble Run leaving the village in 2013

A visitor entering the village and seeing this sign might be confused. It will be the second such sign they have seen because there are similar signs on Colston Road and Swabs Lane. Is this a leftover from times when houses did not exist on and around Colston Road?

Canal Bridge 22

The Grantham Canal was officially abandoned in 1936 and since then, most of its bridges have been demolished and replaced with ones that prioritise cars, not canal barges. That is why, on Kinoulton Road, Bridge 22 is now nothing more than a painted label on a concrete lintel.

It was the only bridge over the whole length of the Grantham Canal that was a Roving Bridge. For the early barge men who used horse power, they were a blessing whenever the tow path changed from one side of the canal to the other — as it does here, at Bridge 22.

At the bridge, the tow path followed a route that enabled the barge men to continue their journey without even having to unhitch their horse.

There do not seem to be any surviving photographs showing how this was achieved at Bridge 22, only pictures taken from the other side – see next page.

That view shows nothing out of the ordinary so the special features that made it a Roving Bridge must have been on its north side.

To be able to appreciate the beauty of a Roving Bridge, I have included a photo of one that exists elsewhere on another canal.

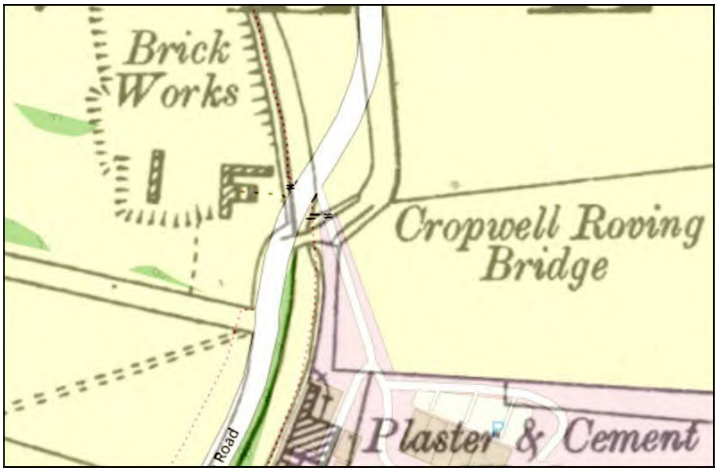
A Roving Bridge was once here

Not our Roving Bridge but this photo shows how Bridge 22 might have looked to barges approaching it from the North. A horse would have been able to cross to the path on the other side without having to be unhitched from the barge.

South side of Roving Bridge 22 (1930s)

South side of Roving Bridge 22 from the Canal (1930s)

By referring to old maps, we can see how much the route of the road changed following the demolition of the bridge.



This 1930s map shows the bridge and road when the Canal was in use. Overlaid, in white, is the route of the road now.

In this aerial view, the path of the road (and its eastern hedgerow) at the time of the Roving Bridge, can still be clearly seen (2020)

This view of Cropwell Bishop was taken from the top of the Roving Bridge in the 1930s.

This photo was taken from a similar spot – maybe 10m nearer the village.
The path of this stretch of old road seems little different to how it must have been in 1930. It rises towards the road, just as it would have done when the bridge was there. (2020)

Skylark Hill

About 30m south of Bridge 22, there is gap in the hedge on the west side of the road. It is the entrance to a path that goes up the hill alongside the road.

Follow it for 10m, or so, and try looking through the hedge on the right. With luck, you will see a hill on the horizon: in winter you may be able to see a houses on it. The hill is Skylark Hill.

Skylark Hill (2020)

A clearer view of Skylark Hill from Nottingham Road, near the Creamery Storage Unit. (2020)

The access road to these houses is on Colston Road — but it wasn't always so. Originally, the road to Skylark Hill was from Kinoulton Road — just about where you are standing.

At the time of the Enclosure Act in 1804, this road was constructed to allow access to fields that were not next to a public road.

Such roads were very common when fields were smaller and more numerous. Some were given the name, Occupation Road, meaning, a road needed by people to get to their occupation (ie. their work).

This particular road was called Thorpe-in-Gate, meaning, 'entrance to'.

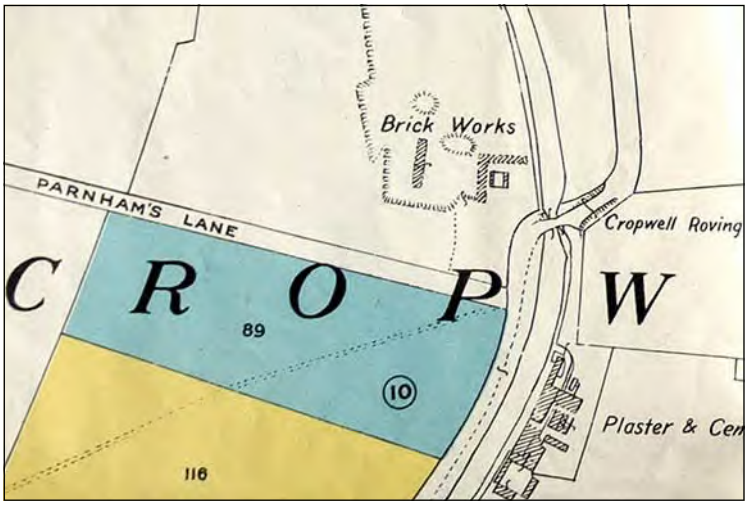
In 1851, cottages were built on Skylark Hill and were known as "Hills Houses". Later, a man named Parnham lived there, and so the roadway became known as Parnham's Lane — and it continued to be called that until the 1970s.

Once it was decided to dig an open cast gypsum mine west of Kinoulton Road (covered later in this street story), it became necessary to create a new road to Skylark Hill. This new road joins up Skylark Hill to Colston Road and it is called, 'Skylark Hill'.

It is understood the occupants of the houses were compensated with offers of extra land around their homes.

This 1944 photo shows Parnham's Lane leading to Skylark Hill

Skylark Houses (1960s approx)



Parnham's Lane (1930 map)

Gypsum

These days, we think of Cropwell Bishop as a quiet place, where agricultural products and cheese are the main industrial outputs. A century ago, it was a very different.

Men were digging out gypsum in mines, clay was being dug up and made into bricks in the brickyards, mills were grinding the gypsum and, all the time, barges were travelling between here and Nottingham.

Gypsum has been part of Cropwell Bishop for centuries – even before its name had been coined. Yet, it is a relatively rare mineral: even today, there are only 6 gypsum mines in the UK, and they are all within 30 miles of Cropwell Bishop.

Cropwell Mill and the Heaselden Works

The fine looking 'Old Mill', that stands proudly on the west bank of the Grantham Canal was once the focus of the gypsum business in Cropwell Bishop. Then, it was called 'Cropwell Mill'.

It was the place where lumps of gypsum were brought from the mines and quarries; the place where they could be heated in a kiln to remove water; and the place where they were ground to a powder between steam-driven grinding stones.

And it was where barges would line up alongside the wharf to be loaded with the bagged gypsum and then taken to Nottingham.

And it would continue like this for over 50 years until the Grantham Canal was abandoned. Even then, it would carry on with lorries doing the transporting for another 50 years.

So how did this all come about?

Lumps of white, calcium sulfate hydrate (gypsum) have always littered the fields around Cropwell Bishop; they still do.

It was long known that these rocks could be heated, and then ground into a powder which could be mixed with water to make plaster.

As long ago as 1832, it was a profitable business and Cropwell Bishop farmer, George Shelton, was listed as both a Farmer and a Plaster Merchant. He was still in the plaster trade 50 years later.

Even though there have been few gypsum mines in the UK and they have all been in the south Notts area, their seams have varied greatly in thickness and purity.

Cropwell Bishop seams have been thin, but they have been of very high purity; a great selling feature.

It was in 1878 that the plaster business really took off here. Some 408 acres of land — which included the site of the Old Mill, was offered for sale with the promise of "having valuable beds of gypsum".

The land was purchased and the "Cropwell Bishop Brick, Cement and Plaster Company" was formed.

Within 2 years, an inclined open quarry had been excavated and gypsum seams suitable for tunnelling had been located. This would have been the signal to go ahead with the building of Cropwell Mill and start production. That was in 1880.

Men would work in gangs of 3. A gypsum seam 30cm thick was considered good, and they would work in tunnels just 1.4m high.

As the workings progressed, additional shafts would be sunk, typically 10m deep. Tubs would be used to lift up the gypsum — and to transport the miners up and down.

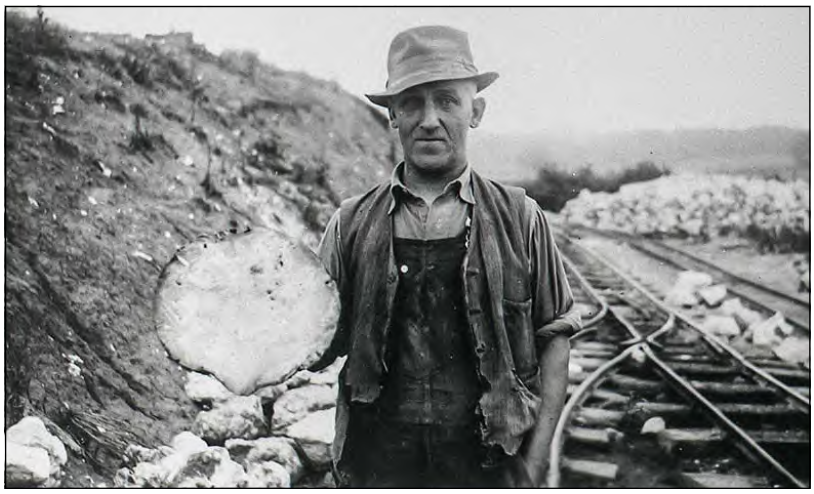
By creating new shafts, the slow and hard work of manually moving rocks along underground tracks, was reduced.

It resulted in a large number of deep shafts in the fields around — a hazard for both animals and humans.

After the lumps of gypsum had been lifted to the surface, they were loaded onto railway trucks and taken to the Mill.

Once there, they were cleaned in the "dressing shed" using hand chisels or, decades later, air chisels.

What happened next depended on its final use. If it was simply to be added to soil to reduce its acidity, or as a fire preventative in a coal mine, it would be immediately ground into a powder.



Worker, Frank Fogg, surrounded by gypsum at the side of Gotham Company railway lines (1930s)

Cropwell Bishop Mill with barge on canal (1920s)

Gotham Company lorry (1950s)

On the other hand, if it was to be used to make Plaster of Paris (for model making) or plaster casts in hospitals, it would first be broken into smaller lumps, then heated in a kiln to expel its water content, before finally being ground into a powder.

It all depended on sales demand.

The mill stones were like those in a windmill used to grind corn — but they were driven by steam, not wind.

The gypsum was then transported by canal barges to Nottingham – a 10 hour journey, before being forwarded by train to customers.

Records show that in 1905 the mine and Cropwell Mill were being operated by a new company, "The Phillips Company (Notts) Ltd". Then, in 1909, the Mine and Mill closed down.

We don't know why, but maybe it had something to do with a wealthy man named Sam Heaselden, who had come to live in Cropwell Bishop about 8 years earlier.

He had had a house built, Ebenezer house on Church Street, and moved in with his family. He then bought land around the village — including land south of where the Creamery Storage Unit now stands on Nottingham Road.

He sunk a shaft at a spot between Skylark Hill and where the Creamery's Storage Building now stands. When the shaft was about 25m deep, he found what he was hoping for: gypsum of high purity.

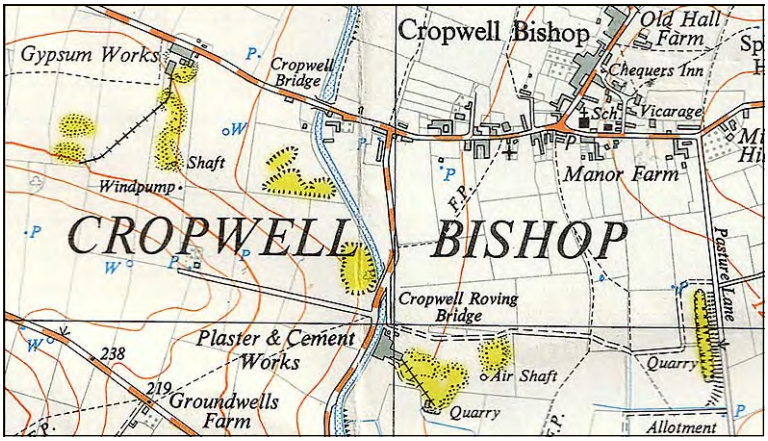
Gangs of miners would tunnel into the seams of gypsum to remove it – using explosives when necessary. It was hard work and dangerous: men died underground.

He built the "Heaselden Works" (just where the Creamery Storage Unit now stands), and started processing gypsum in a similar way to the Cropwell Mill on Kinoulton Road — except he did not have a kiln to make anhydrous gypsum.

And all this was in 1909 — the year that the Phillips Company stopped production at Cropwell Mill. Was this a coincidence, or was Phillips unable to compete profitably?

Heaselden also used canal barges to move his gypsum, but he loaded them at a wharf near to his Works — beside Town End Canal Bridge (where Nottingham Road Crosses the Canal).

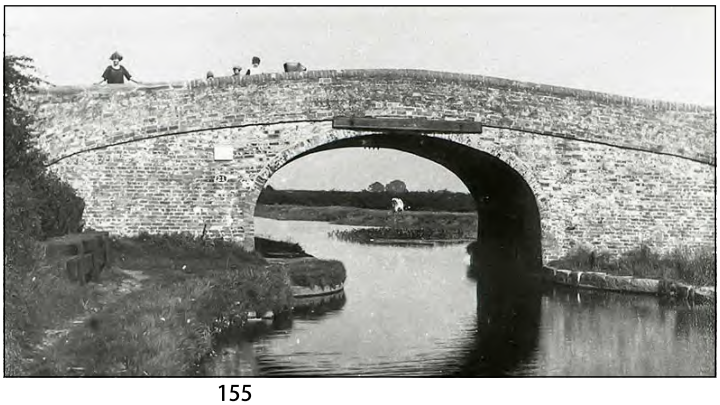
The basin on the north side of Town End Bridge was wide enough for barges to turn around — essential for return trips.



The sites of mines and quarries at various times is shown in yellow on this 1950s map

Photo taken from Skylark Hill looking towards the end of Kinoulton Road where it joins Nottingham Road (1930s).
Under these fields were men mining gypsum.

Herbert Heaselden with 2 children and 8 workmen (1930s).
They are standing near the shaft that was behind the Heaselden Works on Nottingham Road.
The crane in the picture is shown lifting a load of gypsum from the bottom of the shaft.



Town End Bridge (1930s)

The gypsum from the Heaselden Mine was of high quality – as good as any in the country, and much of it was used in paper making. Other uses included; bleaching, brewing, and toothpaste.

Within 15 years, output was over 150 tons a week — enough to send a full barge to Nottingham every day of the week.

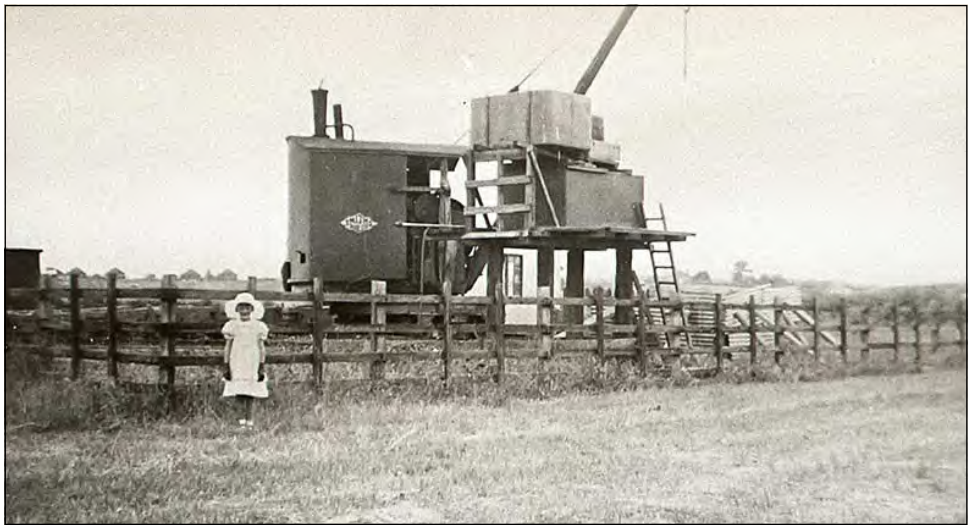
Even the 'waste' clay found ready buyers. It was used as a top dressing on cricket pitches and tennis courts.

Meanwhile, the Cropwell Mill on Kinoulton Road, had been taken over by "Cropwell Gypsum Mines Company Ltd." and started production again.

Just 2 years later, in 1913, it was itself taken over by "The Gotham Company Ltd".

About 30 years later, it became part of the British Plaster Board Company which had its headquarters at East Leake.

Frank Fogg on Gotham Company locomotive (1930s)



Gotham Company steam crane at the bottom of Pasture Lane (1930s)

Gotham Company Works (1920s)

Old Mill buildings (2020)

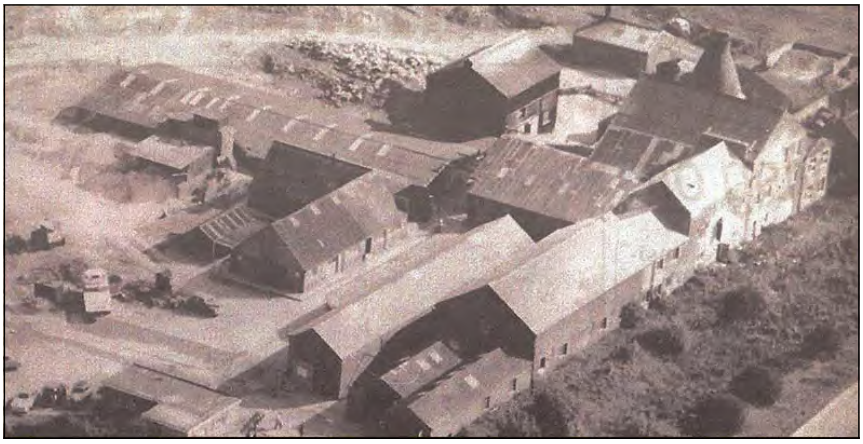
Gotham Company Works (1920s)

Old Mill (2020)

The Mill buildings in 1992

The Mill buildings today (2020)

The old Gypsum Works being dismantled in 1999.



In 1999, local businessman, Chris Allsop, was contracted to use his cranes to clear the buildings of old machinery, but he realised that the site offered a great development opportunity – so he bought it.

He converted the buildings it into industrial units and offices and then added further buildings.

Now the 'Canalside Industrial Park' is home to a multitude of small and medium businesses. They can service your car, install a heat pump in your home, make outdoor signs, supply medical equipment, etc.

This time around, the canal is not there to transport your goods, just a very pleasant feature. A nice place to work.

Old Mill (2020)

Old Mill (2020)

A wide range of businesses in old and new buildings at Canalside Industrial Park (2020)

The Last Gypsum Mine in Cropwell Bishop

It was in the 1980s that the next stage of gypsum mining in Cropwell Bishop occurred — and it would be the final stage.

No shafts or tunnels, just one giant hole in the ground: an open cast gypsum mine. It was dug in the fields west of Kinoulton Road.

When mining in the quarry ended, there were suggestions that this giant hole could be used for the dumping of rubbish.

Unsurprisingly, this idea did not go down well with the people of Cropwell Bishop. Following a protest meeting at the Memorial Hall — which was packed, the idea was eventually dropped.

In 1997, on one evening in August, a live theatrical production of 'Quatermass and the Pit' was staged outdoors in this gypsum quarry. Fortunately, the weather was dry.

Quatermass and the Pit was first released as a BBC television serial in 1958. It was a science fiction horror serial which had children hiding behind the settee, too scared to see what happened next (or was that just me?).

It was in black and white on TV and, if you saw it today, you would laugh. But in 1958 it was terrifying: rather less so in 1997.

The open cast gypsum mine in 1992

The quarry at its deepest (1990s)

An entrance beside the canal on Kinoulton Road (1992)

It is now over 20 years since gypsum was last mined in Cropwell Bishop.

Up the Hill to Colston Road

Kinoulton Road drops down after the Old Mill before rising to up to Colston Road crossroads. On the left as you go up the hill, are the 5 remaining houses on Kinoulton Road.

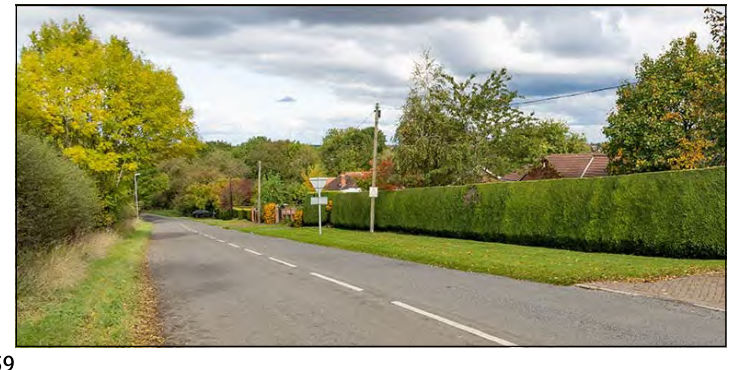
Near the foot of the hill, the canal is very near, and also very wide. This wide section of the canal was called 'Willow Holt' and it is where barges were able to turn around.

The first 4 houses are built on the site of older houses built in the 1930s. The last one is much newer and is built on land that was once part of the surrounding paddock.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Tony Carter and Lance Thorpe for their help with this Story.

Willow Holt (1920s)



Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

What do you call a short street with a dead end?

In Cropwell Bishop it will most likely be called a Close, but it might be named a Lane, Drive, Avenue or Road.

For me, the odd one out is Road because this is generally used to describe a street that is not dead-ended. A 'through-road', in other words.

It's no big deal, so the residents on Marshall Road need not lose any sleep over the name of their street and it is not likely to attract more visitors or dog-walkers than the other streets in the village, one would hope.

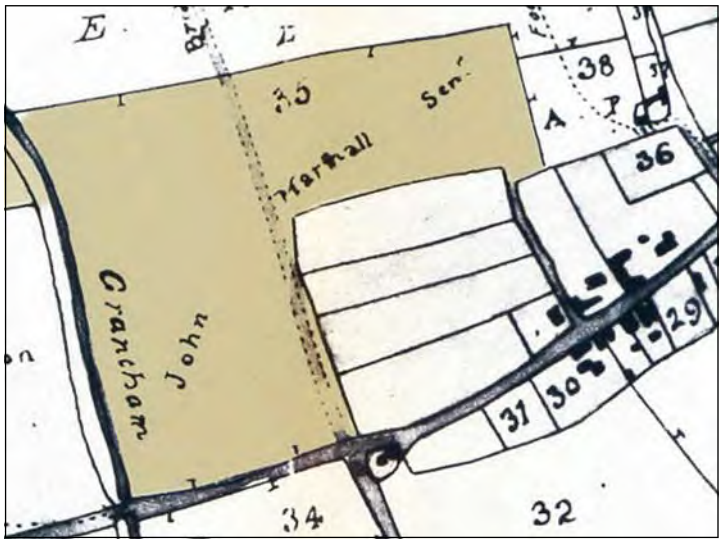
Finding a reason for the Marshall in its name is more interesting.

The fields that have been coloured in on this 1804 map, where owned by members of the Marshall family. They include; William Marshall, John Marshall (Senior) and John Marshall (Junior)

Maps

As seasoned Street-Story readers will know, the parish councillors of the early 1970s, who had the task of allocating names to the many new streets being built, loved looking at the 1804 map of the parish. The map showed who owned the land at that time.

So, that has to be the place we must look for evidence of a Marshall.



The fields around the site of Marshall Road in 1804

It is encouraging to find a number of the fields have "Marshall" printed on them, but a little disheartening to realise that there are three different Marshall characters on the map – a William and two Johns.

The street is called, Marshall, not Marshalls, so we are going to have to pick the one that our councillors most likely had in mind. Let's start by looking at the land on which Marshall Road is built: does that provide a clue?

An overlay of the 1804 map on a satellite image of Marshall Road and its surroundings in 2020

Comparing today's village with the one in 1804 is not always easy but the ever-present Grantham Canal, Nottingham Road and Field Lane makes it possible.

A close-up of this area does show two fields owned by a John Marshall, which is promising. However, one is owned by John Marshall Senior, and the other is owned by John Marshall Junior. We will need to look more closely.

By overlaying this map on a recent satellite image of the streets should help us.

Well, it helps but it is not clear cut. The land of John Marshall Senior, clearly overlaps almost the whole length of a street. An initial reaction is to say, “job done”, but look again at the map.

The road it overlaps is not Marshall Road, but Brownhill Close. In fact, you wonder why Brownhill Close was not given the Marshall name. Well, it wasn’t so we have to move on.

The bottom right-hand corner of the Marshall field does indeed overlap the middle portion of Marshall Road; so that is something to celebrate.

Can we, I wonder, stop our search now and forget about any other possible Marshall connections. We could, but we would never know if a different Marshall had a better claim to the street name: the only way we can resolve this is to probe the history of all the Marshalls of Cropwell Bishop during the 1700s and 1800s.

The Marshall Family

As soon as people start talking about, “2nd cousin, twice removed”, or whatever, my eyes glaze over and my brain stops working. I have to have a picture in front of me, which, in this investigation, means a family tree.

Even after constructing the tree, it becomes necessary to look carefully at the dates and links to see how it might relate to the street name. Before we do, it is worth pausing to wonder how much detail our councillors really did go into when selecting this street name.

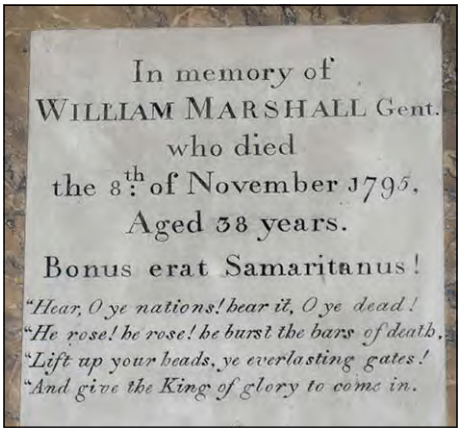
Modern technology makes searching and analysis far easier than it was in their day. They probably had to be more free-thinking and less analytical than we might be in 2021.

Ultimately, there is no right or wrong about street naming, only maybe, a preference for some sort of pleasing consistency. Our street-namers of old appear to have done their best, so let’s go back to our search.

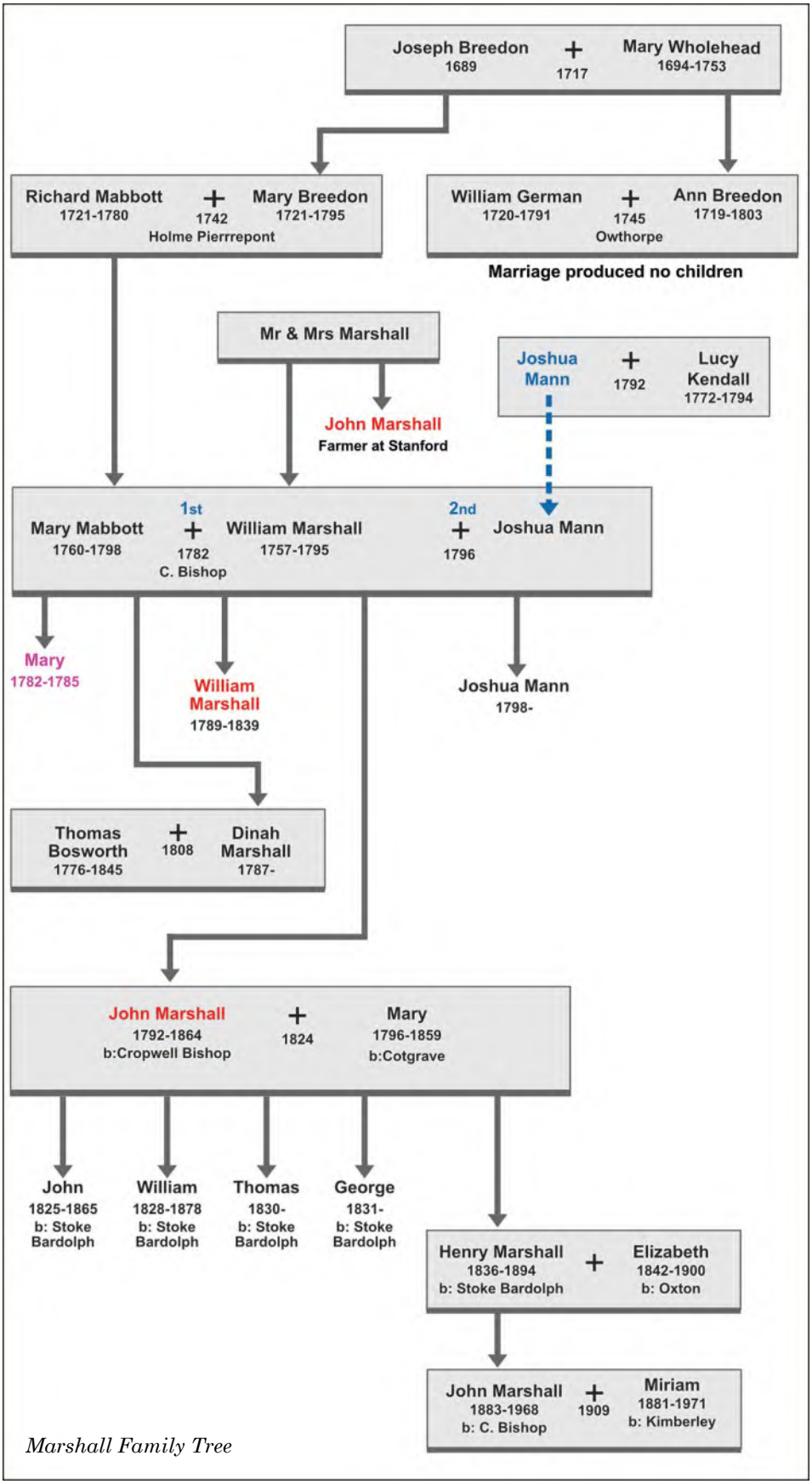
In the family tree, let’s first focus on the middle part which includes Mary Mabbott (1760-1798). We can then relate to her, all the relevant characters as the story unfolds.

Mary Mabbott was from an established land-owning family in Cropwell Bishop. She married William Marshall when she was 22 and over the next 10 years, they had 4 children.

Life for them must have felt good. Then, Mary’s husband, William died at the age of 38. He made his will just 6 days before his death.



Memorial tablet to William Marshall in St Giles Church (2021)



Marshall Family Tree

Most of his wealth was promised to his three children (a fourth child died in infancy). He left his daughter, Dinah, £1000 (£150k in today's money) and £500 to each of his sons. Nearly all the rest of his wealth was to be divided equally between the three of them. In every case, they would not actually inherit anything until they reached 21 years of age.

It might seem strange that little was left to his wife but Mary was already a rich woman in her own right. She had inherited a great deal, not from her parents, but from her Uncle William German. Look at the family tree.

Uncle William German was a well-to-do farmer who had married her mother's sister, Ann Breedon. He was described as "a substantial farmer in Cropwell Bishop and lord of the Manor-Netherall".

He is thought to have benefitted financially from the shortage of grain and other foodstuffs brought about by the French Wars in the late 1700s. He died in 1791 at the age of 70.

Headstone for William German in St Giles Church (2021)

However, Uncle William and Ann had no children – so who could he leave all his land, cottages, properties and money too?

In the will he wrote a year before his death, his nephews, nieces and servants all inherited money. The amounts ranged from £10 to £400 and totalled over £1,500 (£225k in today's money).

Nevertheless, in addition to his money, much of his wealth consisted of land, cottages, investments and properties – including his home, Old Hall Farm. All of this, he left to be shared equally between his wife and his niece, Mary Mabbott (who became Mary Marshall after her marriage to William Marshall). Thus, Mary became a wealthy woman.

Mary Mabbott had been living with her Uncle William and Aunt Ann before her marriage to William Marshall. They may well have treated her as the child they never had. Mary was clearly his favourite niece and probably the reason he left her half of everything in his will.

William German's wife, Ann, lived another 12 years after his death and, for a time, carried on with the farming business. She died in 1803.

Headstone for Ann German in St Giles Church (2021)

So, thanks to Uncle William German, Mary Mabbott was very wealthy even before she married William. But money isn't everything, and now William was gone.

Mary was only 35, still young, but with three children under the age of 8, in need of support. Within a year, she had a new husband, Joshua Mann.

Joshua was originally from Hickling, and probably younger than Mary. He would have appreciated her need for a partner, because he too had recently lost his wife.

He had married Lucy Kendall in 1792 but by 1794 she was dead. They had no children.

Mary and Joshua married in 1796 and two years later they had a son who they named Joshua. He was therefore the half-brother of Mary's three Marshall children.

In the previous four years they had both lost their partners and now they must have thought they were set for a bright future together. But there was more tragedy to come.

Within 6 months of giving birth to Joshua, Mary died. She was 38, the same age that her first husband, William, had been when he died.

Memorial to Mary Mann (/Mabbott /Marshall) in St Giles Church (2021)

In her will, she left all that she had inherited from her Uncle William German to her three sons.

Her daughter, Dinah, appears to have been neglected but we must remember that Dinah had inherited over £150k (equivalent) from her father. Ten years later, Dinah would be married to a farmer and soon have children herself. The couple lived in various Leicestershire villages until eventually settling down at a 200acre farm in Shelford.

Getting back to the naming of Marshall Road, we have to consider which of the Johns and Williams on the family tree were around in 1804, the year of the Enclosure Map.

Let's first consider the Williams.

Mary's husband, William Marshall, died 9 years before 1804 so is out of the reckoning. Then there is a William Marshall on the family tree who was born in 1828 – long after 1804.

The only viable William Marshall is Mary's 15-year-old son, born in 1789. You may think him too young, but documents that accompanied the 1804 map listed the tenant of field 71 as, "the trustees of William Marshall, a minor".

This is convincing evidence for saying that 15-year-old William Marshall was one of the three Marshall characters on the map and has to be a candidate for the naming of Marshall Road. What of the Johns? There are three John Marshall's on the tree, and Mary's second son, John, has to be is a prime candidate for the street name. He was only 12 in 1804 but, as we have seen, that is no bar to being a land owner.

I think we can safely assume that he was the "Junior" John Marshall on the 1804 map: so who was John Marshall Senior?

Usually, when you see 'senior' and 'junior' applied to a name, you automatically think of father and son, but that is not the case here.

It was only by re-reading William Marshall's will that the mystery was solved.

In the will, he leaves £10 to his brother for being one of the 'Trustees and Executors' of his will, and his brother's name was John Marshall. He has to be the 'John Marshall Senior' on the 1804 map.

On the family tree, I have highlighted, in red, the three Marshalls on the 1804 map.

So, now we have to guess which one of these three the parish councillors in mind, if any, when they named Marshall Road. Let's look at them in more detail

Who is the Marshall of Marshall Road?

Memorial tablets to some members of the Marshall family in St Giles Church (2021)

John Marshall Senior was a farmer living at Stanford-on-Soar, near Loughborough, and his only contact with Cropwell Bishop was through his brother – and the land he inherited. An unlikely person to have a street named after him, I think.

William Marshall (born: 1789) was the eldest son of William Marshall (born: 1757) so looks a promising candidate – at least, at first glance. The trouble is, he didn't stay here for long.

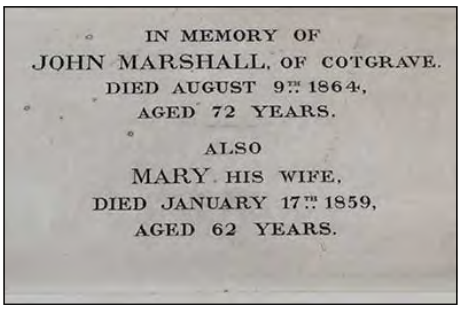
In 1818, when he was 29, he was married and farming in the village: he had 3 servants. But then he went to live in Shelford and, not long after, moved across the Trent to Stoke Bardolph where he died in 1839 at the age of 49. He doesn't appear to have had much affinity for Cropwell Bishop.

Finally, there is John Marshall Junior, younger brother of William. He married Cotgrave girl, Mary, when he was 32 and they promptly moved to Stoke Bardolph where he was a farmer (I wonder if that is why his brother, William, moved to Stoke Bardolph).

Memorial tablet to William Marshall in St Giles Church (2021)

It was around 1839 (which just happens to be when William died), that the family moved to Mary's birthplace, Cotgrave. They lived there until his death in 1864.

So, another Marshall who appears to have been only too eager to leave Cropwell Bishop!



Memorial tablet to John Marshall and his wife, Mary, in St Giles Church (2021)

It is reassuring to discover that one of John's sons did return to Cropwell in later years. Henry Marshall (born in 1836) moved to Cropwell Bishop with his wife Elizabeth – and their son, John, was born here.

When this son, John, was 26, he married Miriam from Kimberley and they went to live at the 'The Laurels' in Cropwell Butler where they had a small-holding.

All four in this branch of the family are buried in St Giles churchyard.

If our parish councillors were to meet today and wanted to name a street Marshall Road, I don't think they would let the 1804 map restrict their search for a memorable Marshall character.

Nevertheless, in the 1970s access to historical evidence was difficult and time consuming. I suspect that once they saw the name of Marshall on many fields of the 1804 map, they simply decided that the family name was worth using for a street name. They may not even have got as far as having a particular member in mind.

Clever really, because we can all choose whichever Marshall we like when thinking of Marshall Road

If I were asked by a visitor today who the street was named after and had to pick just one, I think I would say Mary Marshall (1760-1798). After all, it was her inheritances and marriages that seem to have had the biggest influence on the history of Cropwell Bishop.
I wonder who the current residents of Marshall Road would pick.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza for her help with this Story.

In Memory of the Marshall family

Headstone for Mary Marshall (infant daughter of William and Mary Marshall) in St Giles Church. (2021))

The Marshall graves are together in a corner of the churchyard. (2021)

The grave of William Marshall (1828-1878), son of John and Mary Marshall. Also, his wife, Frances (1832-1877). (2021)

Memorial tablet to John Marshall (son of John and Mary Marshall) in St Giles Church. (2021)

The grave of Henry Marshall (1836-1894), son of John and Mary Marshall. Also, his wife Elizabeth (1842-1900). (2021)

The grave of John Marshall (1883-1968), son of Henry and Elizabeth Marshall. Also, his wife Miriam (1881-1971). (2021)

Marshall Road in 2020

Marshall Road in 1978

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Have you ever wondered how the name of your street was chosen: No? Well, I have to agree that there are more pressing concerns in life but, never the less, I'm going to let you into the secrets of street naming.

In 2020 Stackyard Close was opened and before that there was Kerrs Close, Shelton Gardens and Barlows Close. In the coming years more new streets will have to be named; so what is the process?

Our Parish Council is central to street naming. No doubt you have attended recent monthly meetings online using Zoom and recognise your councillors – and you have watched them discuss matters and reach decisions: No? Not to worry, you are not alone.

CBPC Meeting online - 7th July 2020

Back to street naming. The Parish Council put forward their suggestion for a street name to Rushcliffe Borough Council who, almost invariably, approve it, although they may make modifications to ensure consistency within the Borough.

For example, they asked for "The Stackyard" to be named "Stackyard Close" and they would have alerted us if there was a similar name in the vicinity. Also, I believe, apostrophes are not allowed in names (usually).

But how does the Parish Council choose a name? Well sometimes they don't; Cropwell Village residents do. They put forward their suggestions for consideration.

However, before you think of putting forward the name of your dog, favourite holiday resort or much-loved food, be aware that the Councillors will certainly exercise their own judgement.

Names like, Tinkerbell Way, Benidorm Close and Spaghetti Avenue are not likely to stand the test of time or be popular with some owners. Imagine selling your house and trying to attract viewers to 8 Spaghetti Avenue!

Would you like this street name?

Let's consider the history of street naming in Cropwell Bishop – there are patterns to be found.

Look at a map of Cropwell Bishop streets and one thing we discover is that many are named after people, although many of us do not recognise the names. Also, these people are all dead – another apparent restriction on street name choice.

The oldest streets follow a different pattern - their names were never chosen, they just evolved naturally. Nottingham Road, Cropwell Butler Road, Kinoulton Road and Colston Road all lead to a place; do you know the one outgoing road that does not?

Some roads within the Village also evolved naturally, Mill Lane for example.

Let's look at the streets near the southern end of Hoe View Road and also a map from 1804. These streets were named in the 1970s: can you see where the Parish Councillors got their inspiration from?

Present-day street map

1804 map

Marshall Road is on land that John Marshall Senior owned in 1804, Brownhill Close is (approximately) on land that George Brownhill owned, and Mercia Avenue is on land owned by …

Oh, there isn't a landowner named 'Mercia' but there is one called 'E. Mercier'. So, Mercia Avenue was named after E. Mercier.

The councillors who named these roads are no longer here, but I think it is safe to assume that there was a good reason for the change - or maybe somebody made a mistake: we shall never know.

All the other landowners on the map were local people but Mercier was different. E. Mercier was a woman and an extremely wealthy one but she never lived in Cropwell Bishop.

She was born as Everilda Wordsworth in 1739 to rich parents in Hemsworth, Yorkshire. By the time she was 5 years old, she had 3 sisters and a brother but then her father suddenly died when he was just 35 years old.

Her mother quickly remarried and had 3 more children with Thomas Sunderland but then in August 1749 she and her husband died just 2 days apart. She was 38 and he was 32. Everilda was only 10 years old and had already lost 3 parents.

By the time she was 30, she was married to William Stainforth in Yorkshire. Records show they were a wealthy couple but they had no children. In 1784, when Everilda was 45, William died.

In 1790 Everilda married wealthy Frenchman, Francois Mercier, and they lived in Southwell. In 1803 Francois died.

Everilda held in trust substantial land, leasehold and freehold in Cropwell Bishop which, after her death, would go to other members of the family.

Everilda eventually went to live in Soissons, France where she inherited her late husband's real and personal estate and she died there in 1815 at the age of 76.

It is ironic to think that a woman as rich as Everilda Mercier is remembered in name by one of the smallest streets in Cropwell Bishop – and even then, her name is spelt wrongly.

Her wealth may have bought her comforts, but she seems to have experienced more than her fair share of sorrow.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help with this Story.

Mercia Avenue in 2020

I wonder if current residents would prefer the more accurate, French sounding name, Mercier Avenue.

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Mill Lane is one of the old streets of Cropwell Bishop and like all the old streets, it didn't need anyone to decide on its name, it just evolved.

Nottingham Road leads to Nottingham, Kinoulton Road to Kinoulton, so you would assume that Mill Lane once led to the village windmill: it's not that simple.

The Mill

Cropwell Bishop did once have a windmill but it was built on a windy hill-top rather than on lowly Mill Lane, but more about that in another street story.

Nevertheless, there was once a mill on Mill Lane, but it was powered by steam rather than wind.

The steam-powered mill was built in 1860 by a man named William Saxton. He was a wheelwright and had moved to the village ten years earlier.

He lived at a house that already existed (number 6 Nottingham Road) and built the mill onto the side of it. He even included a bake house in the building.

Inevitably, the house became known as Mill House and the cottages as Mill Cottages.

This old photograph shows the corn-mill butting out from the house with its chimney at the rear. The house is easily recognisable as being, essentially, the same building that stands there today. Since being painted, it it has been called, The White House.

Saxton was described as a 'maker of agricultural implements' in the 1861 census, but this venture shows that he was far more skilled and daring than the average maker of cart-wheels. At the time, his steam mill was the only one within 10 miles of the village.

Nevertheless, in April 1861, we find him selling by auction, all of his wheelwright business.

BY MR. SIMPSON.

TO be SOLD BY AUCTION, by MR. J. SIMPSON, on the premises of Mr. Wm. Saxton, Cropwell Bishop, wheelwright (who is declining business), on Thursday, April 11th, 1861, the STOCK-IN-TRADE, consisting of wood, about two tons of new and old iron, chains, backbands, and various other iron work (suitable for farming purposes), good turner's lathe, &c. Harvest dray, narrow-wheel Scotch cart (nearly new), a good water cart, 4½ inch timber drug, suitable for harvest dray; also, a quantity of HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, a 7-horse STEAM ENGINE, and single blast combined to ditto.

☞ Sale to commence at Eleven o'clock in the Forenoon.

N.B.—Half the purchase money of the steam engine can remain on approved security for six months.

For particulars see catalogues. 2151

Advert for auction of Saxton's wheelwright business and a steam engine in 1861

This is puzzling. However, I notice that the auction does not include the house or the corn mill. I wonder if he was selling his earlier wheelwright business to enable him to concentrate on corn milling. He was selling a steam engine, but maybe this was a prototype than he no longer needed.

The steam powered corn mill in the late 1800s

What we do know, is that 10 years later the mill was taken over by an Edward Wileman who came from Long Clawson.

Some 30 years after this, in the late 1890s, the mill was taken over again, this time by John Billings. He was assisted in the mill by his nephews, George Johnson and Ernest Johnson.

By 1904, the steam-mill had been working for over 40 years and the technology had proved itself safe – or so it seemed.

On Tuesday 2nd February 1904 its boiler exploded. This is how the event was described in the Grantham Journal:

"On Tuesday morning, about half-past ten, a serious accident occurred at the Steam Mill, occupied by Mr Billings. The boiler of the engine burst and wrecked the engine-house and premises.

Mr Billings and his nephew, Ernest Johnson, were in the mill at the time, and both were scalded and hurt by the debris.

Mr William Harrison, however, received the most serious injury. He was in front of the boiler, and was badly hurt by the falling bricks and scalded by the steam. How he escaped death is miraculous. Bricks and tiles were hurled great distances, but, fortunately, fell without doing further damage."

It is thought that the explosion was the result of a 'weak boiler plate'. All three men eventually recovered from their injuries.

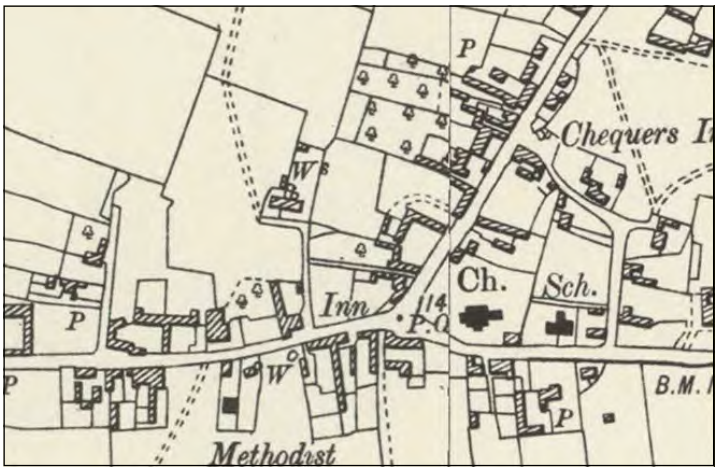
For a time, John Billings and his wife, Ellen, lived at a crook cottage (details, later) further up Mill Lane.

In the 1911 census, when he was 76 years old, he classed himself as an 'old age pensioner' and was living with his wife and nephew, George, at Ivy Cottage near the canal bridge on Nottingham Road.

Following the explosion, the mill was never repaired. In 1918 a Mr Thompson took over the house. He was a newcomer to the village – an officer returning from the First World War – and had the mill's ruins cleared away.

He also had the bake house and rear part of the mill repaired with a new façade, and incorporated it into Mill House.

The old Mill House, now called The White House (2020)



1804 map showing Mill Lane

The loft of The White House today.
The lower gable suggests that the original house was much older than the adjoining terrace.
In the front garden there is still an underground cistern which would have held about 4000 gallons of rainwater for the steam engine.

A past resident of The White House that many people will recall the sight of, if not the name, was Noelle Gullick.

She and her husband bought the house in the 1950s when he started work as a mining engineer at the newly opened Cotgrave Coal Mine.

Decades later, when an elderly widow, she would be regularly seen driving in or out of Mill Lane in her low-down, Triumph Spitfire sports car.

The brick garage, at the end of Laurel Cottages, was small, but big enough for her pride and joy. The garage is still there, but not the car – or Noelle.

Street Name Changes

Now that you know about the corn-mill, you might think it only natural to call the street, Mill Lane. But events in villages are not always natural: the influence of people is much stronger than that of steam-engines.

The oldest known name of the street is Hallams Lane. We can trace the Hallam family back to 1751 and they have lived in Cropwell Bishop ever since – plus Hallems and Hallums, which were probably misspellings.

I think it is safe to assume that members of the Hallam family lived on the street and so it became known as the, ‘lane where the Hallams live’, or simply, Hallams Lane.

By the late 1890s, Hallams were no longer living on the street but John Billings was operating the corn-mill. Just a few years later, in the 1901 census, the row of terrace cottages adjoining the corn-mill were referred to as, 'Billings Row', but the far end of the street was called Mill Lane.

Mill Lane (2020)

Ten years later in the 1911 census, Billings Row is still mentioned, but now the far end of the street is called Billings Lane.

This demonstrates how, in olden days, street names were often the result of local-knowledge and preferences, and could easily change.

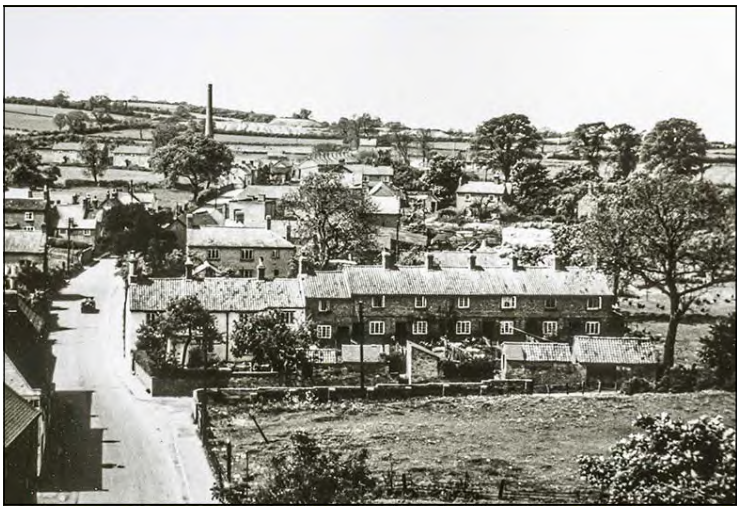
Today, we all know it as Mill Lane, a name that began to be used after the Second World War. I can't see this name going out of fashion, in spite of there being no mill in sight, Postal workers, sign-makers, map-makers, TomTom and Google can all sleep easy.As for the terrace cottages, well, if they are referred to by name at all, it tends to be Laurel Cottages.

An interesting fact about the seven Cottages is their numbers. At one time they were numbered from 1 to 7 but then, as more homes were built on Mill Lane, they were given the odd numbers from 1 to 13.

The owner of 13 thought it an unlucky number, so simply changed it to 15. The home beyond accepted the change and became 17. This leaves everyone happy as long as there are no parcels for number 13 – that would be unlucky, or would it?

The photograph below shows Mill Lane and its cottages in 1949; not so different from today really.

One resident of Billings Row in 1911 was a nine-year-old



A view of Mill Lane from the church tower in 1949. Looking beyond, you can see the chimney of the Cotton Brickworks that lay beyond Kinoulton Road

Laurel Cottages (2020)

boy named Aubrey Harper. I am not sure which house he lived in but the 1911 census shows that he was there with his parents and older brother and sister.

He is known to many local people as the author, along

1970s photo of cottages 9 and 11

View from the church tower in 2019

Mill Lane (2020)

with his wife Ethel, of the booklet, 'Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop'. It is a book I regularly referred to when preparing these street stories.

Beyond the Cottages

At the top of Mill Lane are three more old homes.

The two adjoining cottages, numbers 8 and 6, were once three. Until the 1960s there was another one on the right, described as a crook cottage.

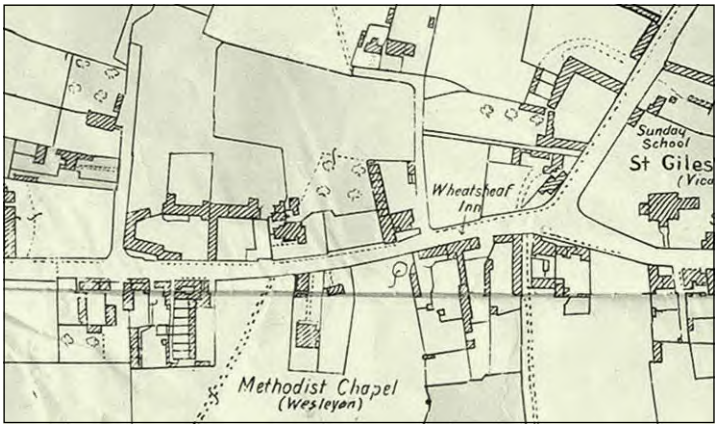
The crook cottage, on the right of number 6, was demolished around 1960. In this image, I have merged an old photo of the crook cottage with a present-day photo.

The crook house can be seen on the right, at the back of this photo taken from Nottingham Road in the 1950s.
It was called a 'crook' cottage because its roof was supported by pairs of curved timbers, plus a cross beam to hold them together.
The word, crooked, is derived from crook: so too, is hook.

The top-end of Mill Lane in the 1970s. On the right-hand side, note the long, black, wooden bungalow that once stood where the end of Smiths Close is now.

Number 10 (currently named Orchard Farm) stands at the far end of Mill Lane. Before the 1970s, the view beyond here was of open fields and Hoe Hill: see photo on the right.

View from the church tower in 1949. In the middle distance, on the left, are the out-buildings at the bottom of the garden of number 6 Mill Lane.



1930 map of Cropwell Bishop; Mill Lane is in the middle.

The top end of Mill Lane in 1960s. Photo taken from where Barratt Close now is.

Cropwell Bishop Feast

Where the Co-Op and its car park now stand, was once a large patch of flat grassy land. It was once useful for staging occasional village events – such as the annual Village Feast.

In Medieval times, it was custom for the parishioners to commemorate the founding of their parish church each year by having a feast or festival.

This custom lapsed but was then revived in the 20th Century and took place on the first Sunday after the 12th September.

View of the Feast fairground from the Wheatsheaf (1950s)

Festivities would begin on the Saturday and continue over Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

Visiting showmen brought roundabouts, swing-boats, coconut shies, cakewalk and hoopla. Magnificent traction engines set up in the paddock opposite the Wheatsheaf and also on the paddock near the Chequers.

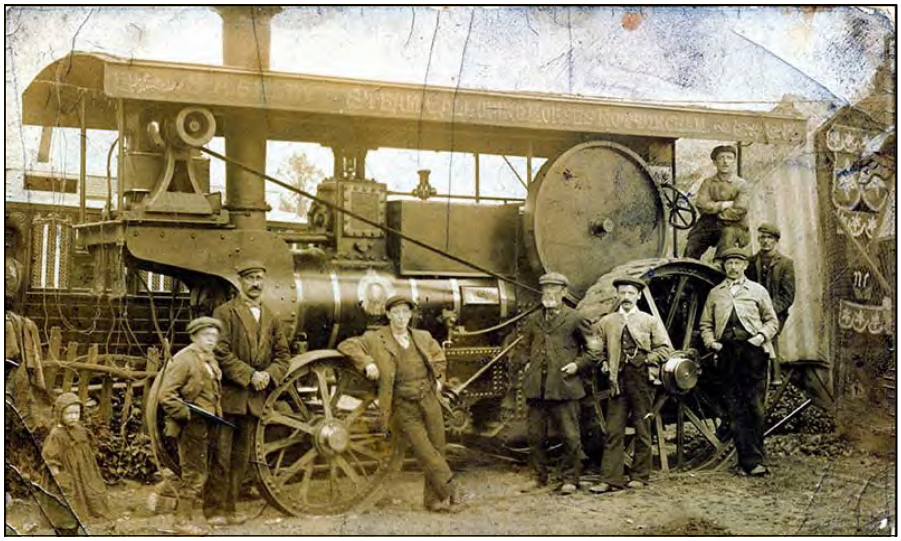
The roundabout was illuminated by electricity from a dynamo driven by a traction engine, but a separate small engine powered the roundabout itself as well as an organ that blared out music. Paraffin flare lamps lit the side shows.

Cropwell Feast was brought to the village by the Ashley family in latter years. For more about the Ashley family, see the Nottingham Road Street Story.

The Feast moved from this site to the Memorial Hall field in 1958. The reason for the move was that a Co-Op shop was to be built on the land. This last sentence has probably confused you: let me explain.

The current Co-Op store was opened in 2019. But in 1960, the same thing happened, a new Co-Op was opened on the same spot. It was there for only a couple of years before moving to Church Street where it stayed until 2019 when the present Co-Op was opened.

During the 1960s, mass entertainment, TV, foreign travel and cars had a profound effect on everyone's life and traditional village entertainment struggled to survive.



Feast in the early 20th Century

Feast in the 20th Century

The 'new' Co-Op being opened in 1960. In the background are Laurel cottages on Mill Lane.

By the early 1970s the traditional Cropwell Feast was no more.

Mill Lane, in spite of being a short street with just a handful of homes, has enjoyed a colourful history. It remains at the centre of the village and always will do.

Anyone living there hardly needs to remove their slippers if they want to pop out for food, drink, prayer, snack, hair-cut, or beauty treatment. Can't be bad.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Jonathan Good and Jane Jones for their help with this Story.

The field used for the Feast and the Wheatsheaf (1958)

More photos of Mill Lane

Mill Lane from above (2016)

Little Lane, which connects Mill Lane with Church Street (2020)

17 Mill Lane (2020)

Looking down Mill Lane (2020)

19 Mill Lane (2020)

Laurel Cottages (2020)

2 Mill Lane (2020)

Laurel Cottages (2020)

4 Mill Lane (2020)

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Whenever I see the street name, Newberry Close, I imagine a small, sunny, Close with mountain ash trees clothed in red berries. I had always assumed this was what the people who named the street had in mind too. How wrong I was.

Look at a map of the village and you will see that, more or less, Newberry Close is at the centre of Cropwell Bishop. All the other streets around it were named at the same time and they are named after people or places.

It stands to reason, when you think about it, that Newberry Close was also probably named after someone. But if you don't think about it – then it was named after trees with berries!

Where does the name Newberry come from?

Many of the street names can, with a bit of research, be quite easily associated with at least a family if not a person.

They were people who lived in Cropwell Bishop – often for many generations. They worked here, they owned land or ran businesses here: they had history and it was written down – somewhere.

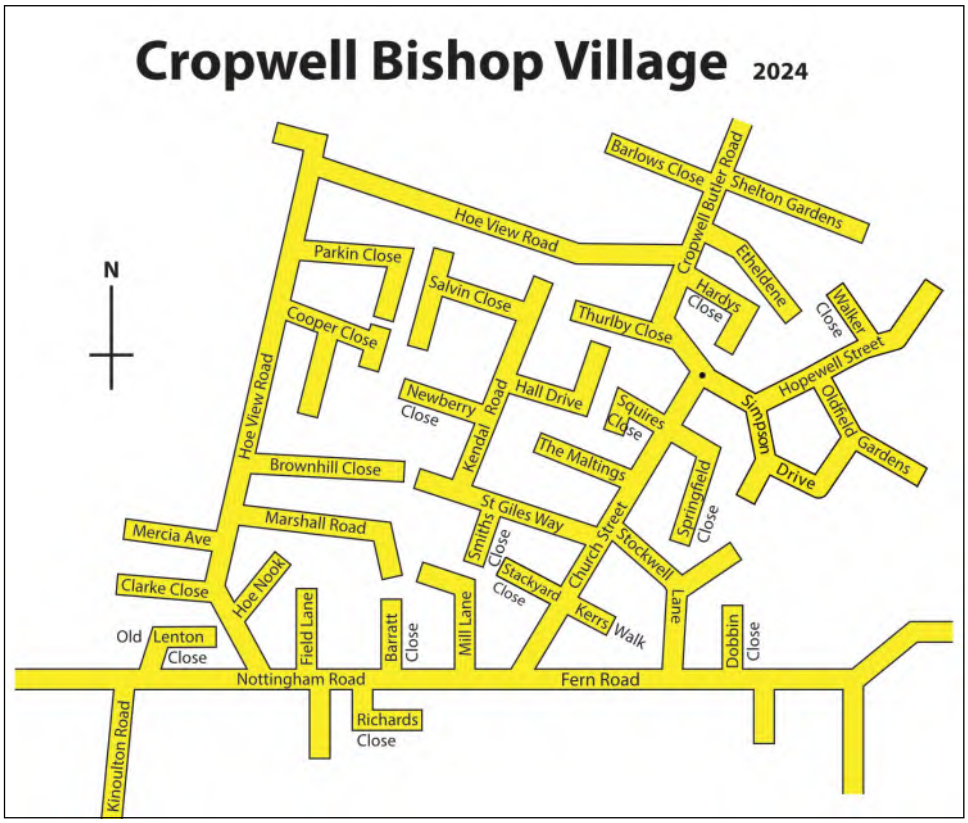
All, it seemed, except Mr/Mrs/Miss Newberry.

Ask the Parish Councillors who made the decision, you are probably thinking. I thought the same, but none are living in this village – or, in all probability, 'in this world'. The decision was made nearly 50 years ago.

Ask other people who might know – but none did.

Parish Councillors would very likely have referred to the names of past landowners in Cropwell Bishop.

Did the councillors get the names from a map? There exists an 1804 map that shows the landowners in Cropwell Bishop at that time. I have studied it in recent months but not, it seems, closely enough. It is shown on the right.



1804 Landowners Map

You may not be able to read the names but you can see the outlines of many fields in the parish. All but the smallest contain the name of the person who owned or farmed it.

Many street names are associated with those names but the name of Newberry is not there. But 3 fields do contain the name 'Newbray' – I have coloured them in on the 1804 map.

On the right is an enlargement of the biggest of the three.

But 'Newbray' is not 'Newberry': more research was needed.

Online searches did reveal a man named Martin Newbray who lived near Granby 300 years ago but he appeared to have no link with Cropwell Bishop.

Other searches listed a Martin Newberry being married at Tythby at this time but the listing was not backed up with evidence.

After a great deal of searching, ultimately on a 17-year-old CD of Church records, the original listing of the marriage at Tythby was found.

It proved the man's surname in the online listing had been copied in error: it was not 'Newberry' but 'Newbray'. This fitted in with our 1804 map if not our street name.

So, while Martin Newbray may not have lived in Cropwell Bishop, in 1763 he did travel to Tythby to marry a girl from Cropwell Butler, Alice Fillingham. Interestingly, Fillingham is a name that crops up in our village history.

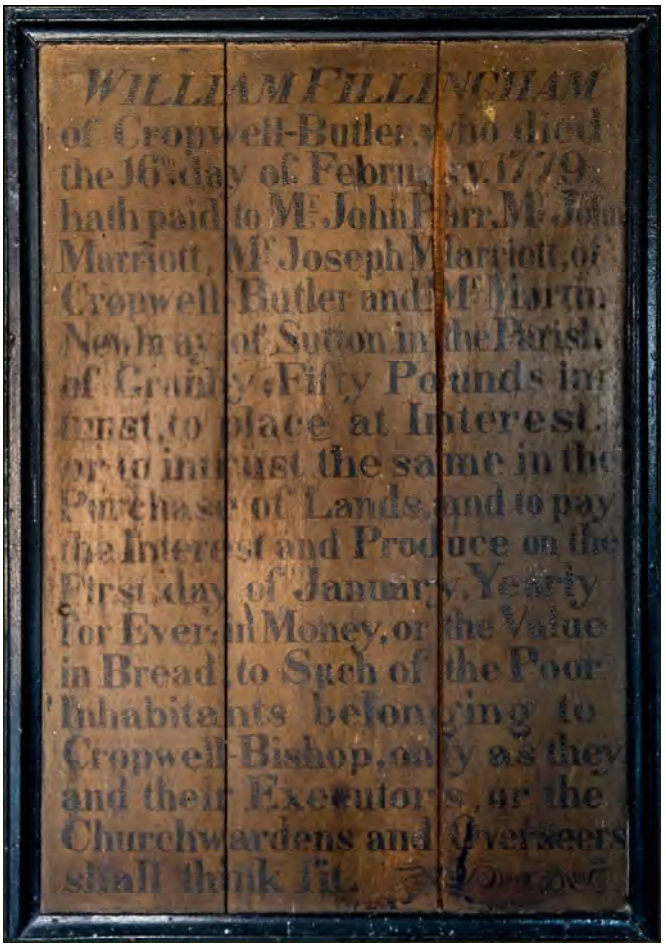
Field owned by M. Newbray

Thomas Beecroft & Elizth. Threaves	...	29 Dec.	,,
Thomas Beet & Ellen Morris	... ...	4 Jan.	1763
Thomas Simson & Elizabeth Winfield, *lic.*	...	3 May	,,
Martin Newbray, of Granby, & Alice Fillingham		16 Aug.	,,
Thomas Attenborough & Martha Briggs, *lic.*	...	15 Jan.	1765
John Rayner & Anne Sansom	... ...	9 Apr.	,,
William Swinburn, of Farnton, & Elizth. Plowright	... ...	7 Jan.	1766

Record of Martin Newbray's marriage to Alice Fillingham in 1763

In the Parish School Room on Church Street there hangs an original wooden plaque that is 240 years old and once hung in the church. It reads:

"William Fillingham of Cropwell Butler who died the 16th day of February 1779 hath paid to Mr John Parr, Mr John Marriott, Mr Joseph Marriott of Cropwell Butler, and ***Mr Martin Newbray*** *in Sutton in the Parish of Granby; Fifty Pounds in trust to place at interest, or to intrust the same in the purchase of Lands, and to pay the Interest and Produce on the First day of January, Yearly for Ever; in Money or the Value in Bread to such of the Poor Inhabitants belonging to Cropwell Bishop, only as they and their Executors or the Church wardens and Overseers shall think fit".*



1779 Wooden Plaque mentions M. Newbray

This plaque proves a link between the Fillingham family to M. Newbray on the map.

In Tythby church there are two plaques which are almost identical to ours (pictured on the right) except they are for the Poor of Cropwell Butler. One is in the name of William Fillingham and the other is on behalf of his daughter, Mary, who died 2 years before William.

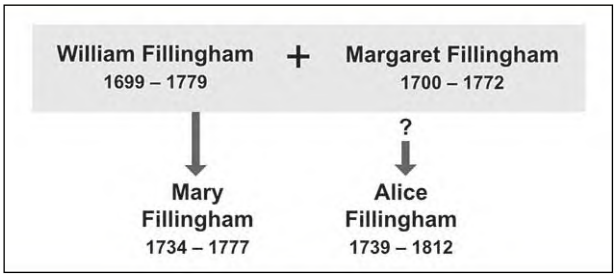
William's wife had already died so, as he approached his 80th year, with his unmarried daughter dead, maybe he saw this as a useful way of distributing his wealth.

This leaves one question unanswered: was Alice Fillingham the daughter of William Fillingham? I think they must have been related and, in all likelihood, Alice was his daughter.

Census records did not begin until the 1800s but gravestones

go back much further.

The gravestones in St Giles Churchyard show that William Fillingham had closer links to Cropwell Bishop than the plaque suggests: he,



Fillingham Family Tree

his wife and a daughters were all buried here.

So, we have identified the M. Newbray on the 1804 map as Martin Newbray who married Alice Fillingham from Cropwell Butler.

Although Martin Newbray doesn't appear to have been a 'big name' in Cropwell Bishop, his association with the Fillingham family, who did support 'the poor' here, does raise his status. High enough to be remembered by a street name?

Maybe, but we are forgetting; we don't have a 'Newbray' Close, we have a 'Newberry' Close!

Did the Parish Councillors in 1970 make a mistake with the spelling or did they intentionally use a different spelling?

Could such a thing have happened: we know it could.

The Street Story for Mercia Avenue revealed a similar happening. Mercia Avenue was named after another landowner on the 1804 map, E. Mercier (sounds the same, but different spelling).

Maybe the Councillors wanted to simplify/update the spelling of names.

To sum up, we can confidently say that Newberry Close is named after Martin Newbray who was born in 1734 and died in 1809 at the age of 75.

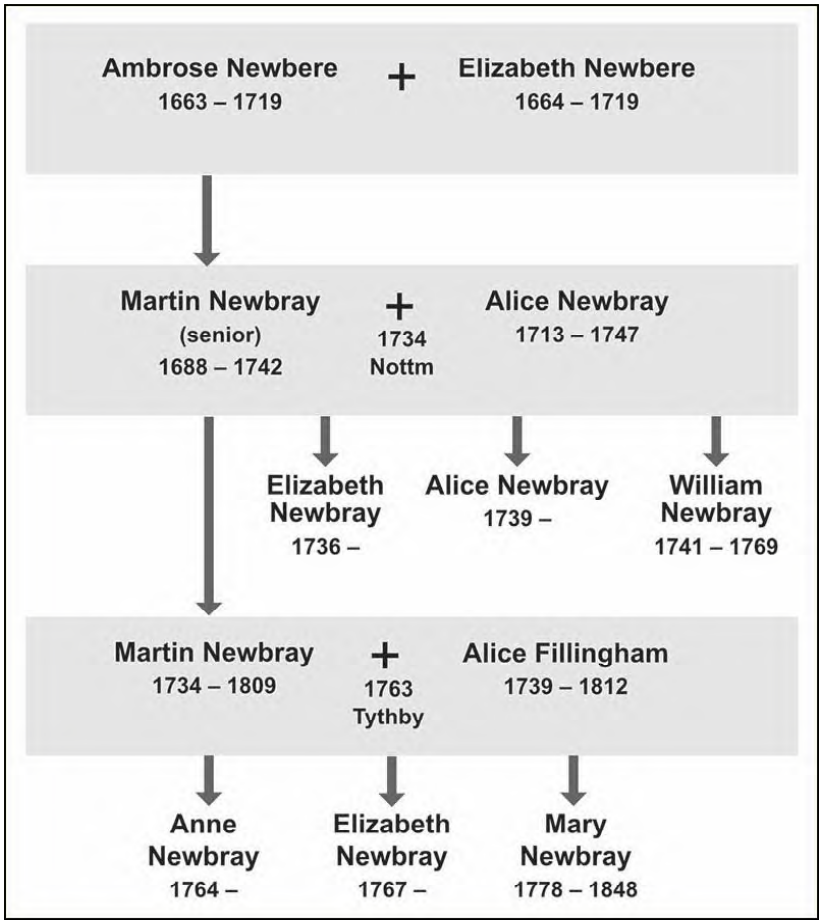
He lived his whole life in the tiny village of Sutton which is near Granby.

He owned three small fields in Cropwell Bishop as a result of a gift to the 'Poor of Cropwell Bishop' by William Fillingham. William was from Cropwell Butler but lived his final years in Cropwell Bishop.

You could argue that Fillingham Close might have been a more fitting name for Newberry Close but then you wouldn't have visualised ‘trees with berries’ as you walked down it!

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Rachel Mitchell (Rev), John Spence and Hilary Jarrow for their help with this Story.



Newbray Family Tree

Headstone of Martin Newbray, 1809, in Granby

Headstone of William Fillingham, 1779, in Cropwell Bishop

Newberry Close in 1999

Newberry Close in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Nottingham Road must always have been the most heavily used road in Cropwell Bishop: you had to travel down it to reach the Fosse Way (A46), a Roman Road, and to reach Nottingham, our nearest city.

Going in the other direction was your route to the many villages in the Vale of Belvoir.

The road must be as old as any in the area and the buildings along it some of the oldest. Even so, what we now see are only the latest versions of numerous forerunners that stood in their place.

This street story will cover the many and varied aspects of the road, and will be quite long. We will start at its western end, at the top of the hill, where it begins its long gradual descent to the centre if the village and the church.

Gypsum

Gypsum and the Grantham Canal. There can be no doubt that these two had the biggest influence on the growth and expansion of Cropwell Bishop over the last 250 years.

Gypsum has been here, mostly hidden, for millions of years but it needed the machinery of the Industrial Revolution to mine large quantities. And it needed the Canal to easily transport it to customers for Cropwell Bishop to profit it.

Gypsum is a rare and valuable resource. Few sites in Europe could compete with the high-quality gypsum in Cropwell Bishop, and a hundred years ago, the demand from new, expanding industries for this super quality gypsum was growing – and so was its value.

But what is gypsum?

Until about 30 years ago, large, white lumps of gypsum rock could be seen everywhere around the village. They were evidence of our industrial past, but many people probably saw them as no more attractive than lumps of coal in a pit village.

Small lumps were scattered in every ploughed field, and large rocks revealed the boundaries of old mine sites. Some people had them in their garden rockery.

But these rocks don't last, they are not hard and they weather quickly.

Gypsum is hydrated calcium sulfate: it is calcium sulfate that contains water. Heat it up to 200°C and it gives off 75% of this water. It is then called anhydrous calcium sulfate. Grind this 'dry' rock up and you get a fine white powder.

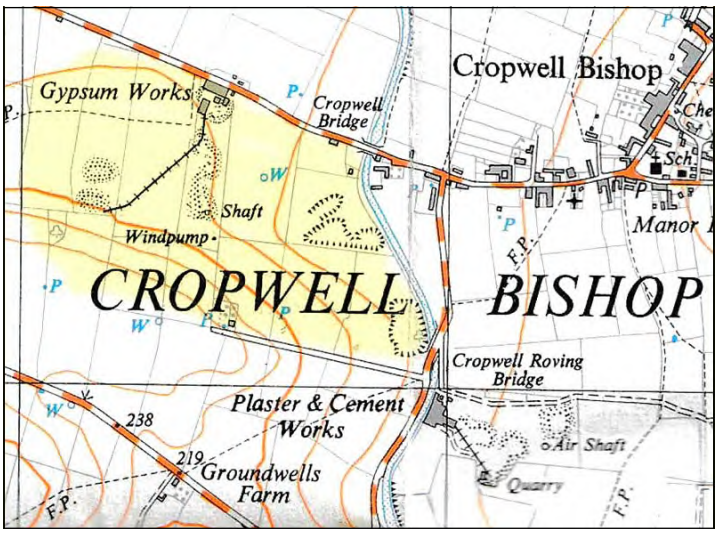
Older villager may remember this powder from their childhood: it was called plaster of Paris. Mix it with water, pour it into a flexible rubber mould, and half-an-hour later you had a small, sharply defined little animal, house or Micky Mouse. Next day, paint and varnish it and put it on the windowsill for the whole world to see.

These days, there is far more competition for the interests of children. Older folk, eager to relive their childhood, can buy complete kits online for just £14.

Any left-over plaster of Paris could, I suppose, be offered to a hospital; it has long been used with bandages to make plaster-casts for broken bones.

If this was the only use for gypsum, Cropwell Bishop would not have become as famous as it did 100 years ago.

Cropwell Bishop gypsum rock – not so easy to spot these days



1940 map showing gypsum workings. The area tinted yellow was mined by Heaselden and Son Ltd.

Since the 14th Century, large lumps of gypsum were described as gypsum alabaster and used to make vases and ornaments. It is a soft rock and easy to carve – you can scratch it with your finger nail. But it will eventually dissolve in water so is no good for outdoor use. Even so, when polished, it can look like marble. It is highly likely that you have seen alabaster carvings in churches.

A century ago, the demand for ground gypsum – including the ‘undried’ form – rapidly increased as it started to play an important part in the manufacture of paper, cement, beer, paint, pottery, manures, medicines and other products.

Gypsum was formed at a time when much of the Earth was covered by seas – over 250 million years ago.

When seas dried out, they left behind the minerals dissolved in the water, including calcium sulfate, which forms gypsum.

During the hundreds of millions of years since then, continual movement of the Earth’s plates, has forced these layers underground.

Seams of gypsum exist in relatively few places in the world, but one such place is Paris (France) – hence the name, “plaster of Paris”.

In England, layers have been mined in Cumbria and Sussex, but, amazingly, there have been 6 gypsum mines within 30 miles of Cropwell Bishop

Whilst gypsum had been dug up in Cropwell Bishop for centuries, it was in the late 1800s that large-scale mining began. The initial site was down by the canal on Kinoulton Road.

In the early 1900s, mining began on sites alongside Nottingham Road. It all started when a wealthy man named Samuel Heaselden, came to live in Cropwell Bishop.

He had had a house built on Church Street, Ebenezer House, and then began buying land around the village — including fields south of where the Creamery Storage Unit now stands on Nottingham Road.

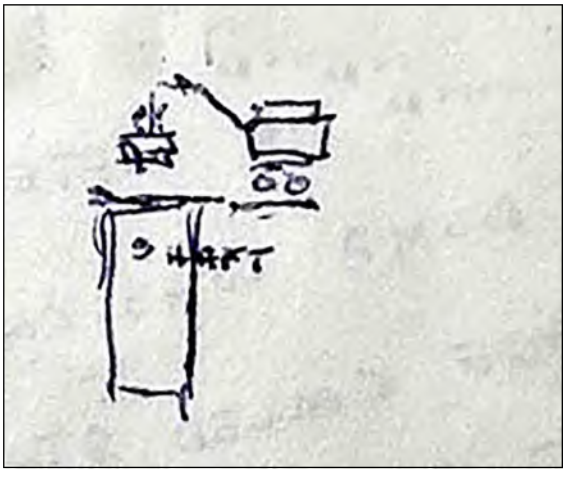
In 1905 he sunk a shaft at a spot between Skylark Hill and where the Creamery’s Storage Building now stands. When the shaft was about 25m deep, he found what he was hoping for: gypsum.

In some parts of the world, gypsum seams are several metres thick, but in Cropwell Bishop they were relatively thin. Nevertheless, the gypsum that Heaselden mined was very pure — probably the finest in England.

This made the gypsum mined by Heaselden particularly valuable to the medical, paint and paper industries and the resulting high demand made it highly profitable.

The mining of gypsum was hard manual work – and dangerous. Gangs of miners would tunnel into the seams of gypsum to remove it – using explosives when necessary.

A Cropwell Bishop miner, Harold Lacey, wrote a description of his experiences at the Heaselden mine: “Workers were lowered down the shaft in a small wooden tub (2 men at a time) by a crane”.
He left a sketch of the arrangement:



Cropwell Bishop gypsum rock – probably the finest in the country

More shafts were sunk and eventually there were a total of six.

From each one radiated workings down to a depth, ranging from 14 to 30 metres, with a slope of 1 in 60 running south.

The gypsum was found in three layers, each about 25 cm thick. About 90% was of the best quality – a higher proportion than anywhere else in the country.

During the 1920s, over 70% of output was for the paper trade.

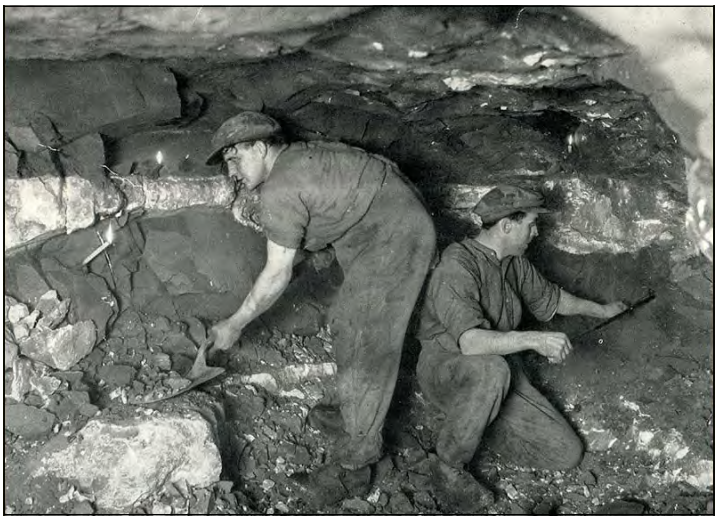
As a commercial operation, it was not enough just to mine the rocks, they had to be ‘processed’ to make the gypsum useful.

In 1909, Samuel Heaselden had a large, black, iron shed built: it acquired the name, "Heaselden Works", or just “the Works”. It stood just where the Creamery Storage Unit now stands.

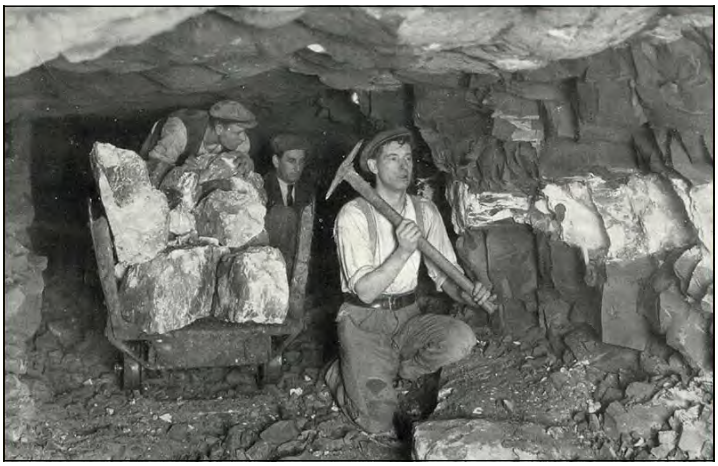
In the Works, gypsum was processed in the same way as at the Cropwell Mill on Kinoulton Road — except there was no kiln for making anhydrous calcium sulfate. To find out more about Cropwell Mill, see the Kinoulton Road Street Story.

Now, everything was in place for full production.

Digging out the rocks



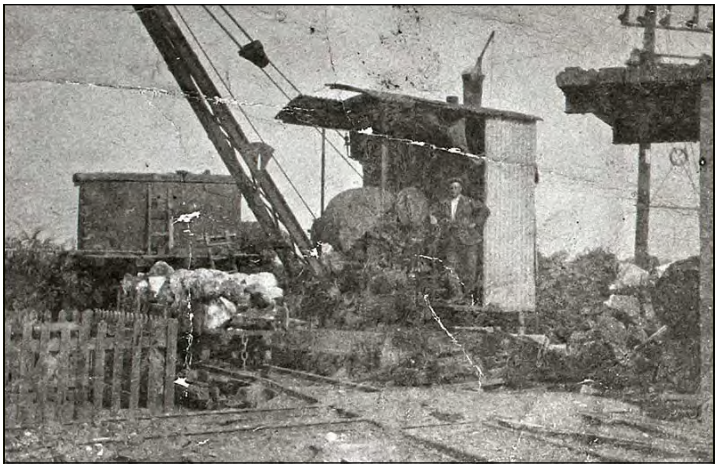
Cropwell Bishop miners, Walter Scott and Percy Dutton (1933)



Miners, Bill Parnham and Len Taylor, with the Company owner, Herbert Heaselden, behind. Herbert was the son of founder, Samuel Heaselden. (1933)

Getting rocks to the surface

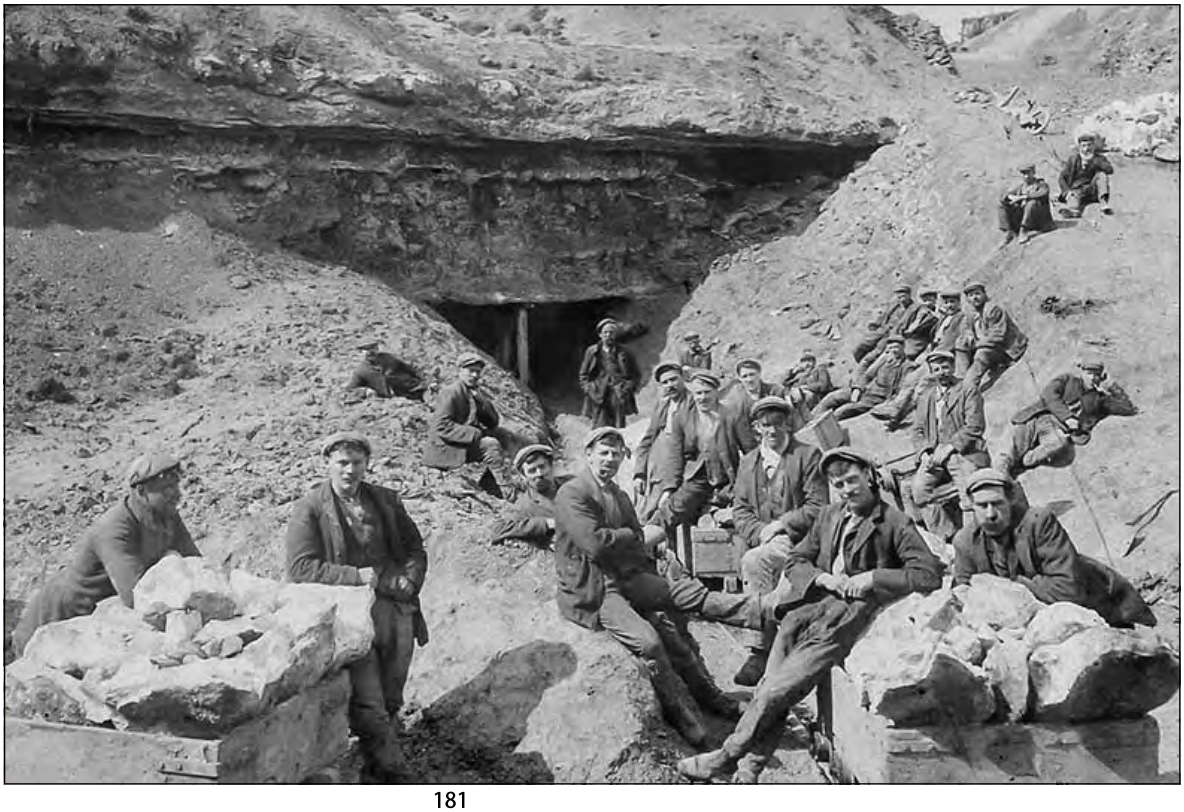
In the low tunnels underground, miners used axes and explosives to remove the white rock.



Steam navvy used at Heaselden's mine to lift trucks out of the mine (1930s)

Steam shovel at Heaselden's quarry with 6 men (1930s)

Lumps were transported in pit tubs to the shafts, where they were lifted to the surface by cranes.



Entrance to a Cropwell Bishop gypsum mine (1910)

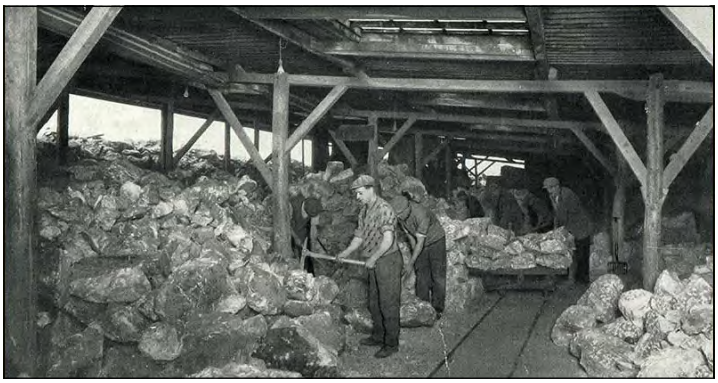
Herbert Heaselden with two children and workmen at Heaselden's Works (1930s)

The man on the left is holding a wooden Yard Stick. This indicates that he is a pit deputy – an underground supervisor (1930)

Processing the Gypsum

Shallow seams could be accessed by a sloping track instead of a shaft. From the mine, the tubs were pushed on rail tracks all the way into the Works.

Outside and inside the Works, the rocks were processed. This involved them being sorted, trimmed, cleaned and washed in hot water. Once they were dry, the final step was to grind them to a powder.



Men using pick-axes in the Sorting and Cleaning Shed (1933)

Men outside the dressing shed (1920s)

Men 'dressing' gypsum outside the Works (1920s)

Getting gypsum to customers

Most of the Company's output was transported by barges on the Grantham Canal. There was a wharf near to the Works – next to 'Town End Canal Bridge' where Nottingham Road crossed the Canal.

The basin on the north side of the bridge was wide enough for barges to turn around — essential for return trips.

Within 15 years, output was over 150 tons a week — enough to send a full barge to Nottingham every day of the week.

S. HEASELDEN & SON,

Mine Owners, Cropwell Bishop, Notts.

Telegrams : Heaselden, Radcliffe-on-Trent, 37Y4

Telephone—Works : - - 37Y4

Residence : - - 37Y1

Town End Bridge (1950)

Marl

After the mine had been working for some years, it was discovered that the material that had been removed as waste from between the layers of gypsum rock, could also be marketed.

This marl (a mixture of clay and fine grains of calcium carbonate) was found to be exceptionally good as a top dressing for cricket pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens and golf courses.

In 1925 a mill was erected specially for handling the marl and output soon reached 50 tons per week.

Grey clay

A third useful material was also mined at the site: grey clay. This proved to be a good heat insulator and was sold for the insulation of steam boilers and pipes.

In this photo, taken from the church tower in 1949, you can see clay tips from the Heaselden mine in the far distance.

Lorries

The Company also operated a separate haulage business and had 13 lorries in the early 1930s, including, “the latest type of diesel and steam lorries”.

This is a photo of a Heaselden steam lorry in the 1930s.

The Heaseldens

The expanding business of Heaselden & Son became a big employer in Cropwell Bishop: over 80 men were employed by the Company during the early decades of the 1900s.

The business became a limited company in 1927 when Samuel Heaselden's son, Herbert, became the owner and managing director. He carried on developing all aspects of the business in the decades that followed.

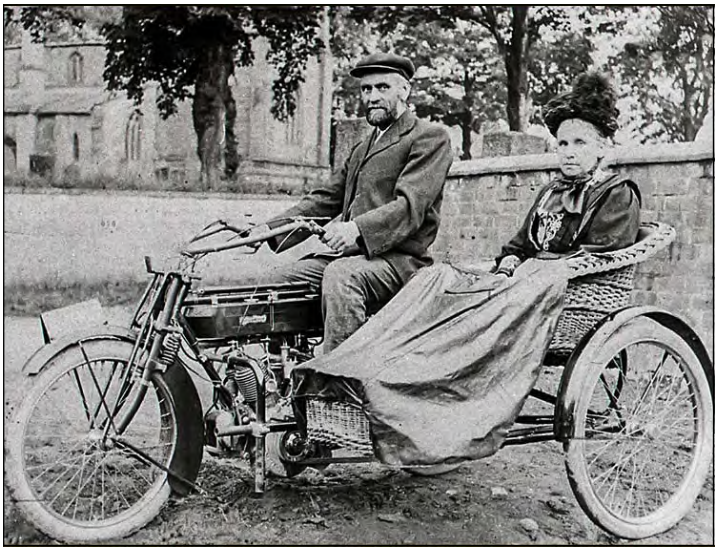
Samuel Heaselden suffered ill health during his early 70s, and in 1935 he died at the age of 74.

Herbert Heaselden continued developing his mining and other businesses throughout the first half of the 20th Century.

Gradually, open cast mining took over from underground working and the Heaselden mining business came to an end.

Deep, open cast mining by British Gypsum continued until the late 1990's but, by the end of the century, the mining of gypsum in Cropwell Bishop finally came to an end.

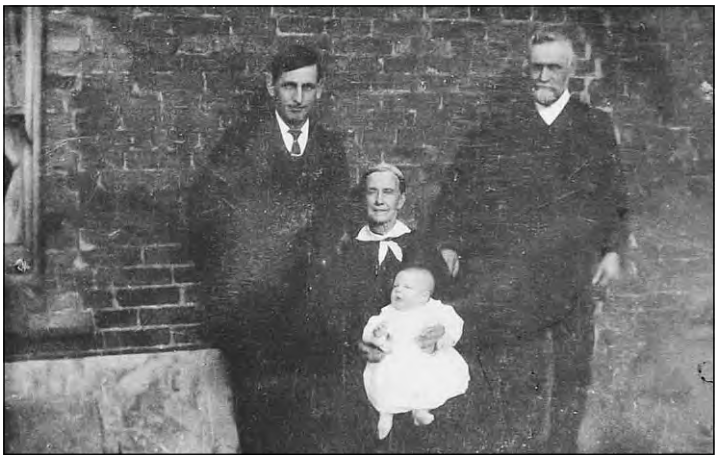
Herbert Heaselden died in 1964 at the age of 72.



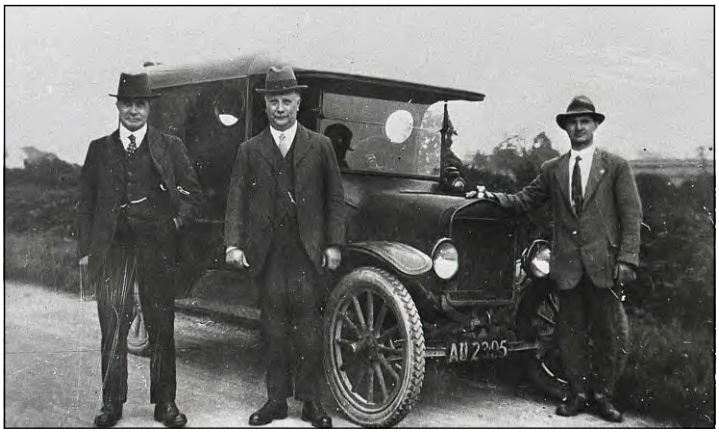
Samuel Heaselden and his wife, Mary, with motorcycle and wicker sidecar (1920s)

You can find out more about gypsum mining in Cropwell Bishop by reading the Kinoulton Road Street Story.

You can also discover more about the Heaselden family in the Etheldene Street Story, and about their home, Ebenezer House, in the Church Street Story.



Herbert, Mary (with baby Mary) and Samuel Heaselden (1919)



Herbert Heaselden on the right (1920s)

The graves of Samuel Heaselden and Mary (left) and Herbert Heaselden and Ethel (right). Behind is Ebenezer House, the family home.

Gypsum from across the road

Even when the Heaselden mine closed and the Works shut its doors to gypsum, only to became a grain storage shed, it was not the end of gypsum mining on this side of the village.

In the 1960s, The Gotham Company dug an open-cast mine on the other side of Nottingham Road.

These photos show the view from Nottingham Road looking towards Hoe Hill. The mine was on the land between the Canal and Smalley's Farm.

Gotham Company's open cast mine in the 1960s

Open cast mining in the 1960s

Walking down Nottingham Road

When you drive into the village from the A46, at what point on Nottingham Road do you think of yourself as having entered the village? Is it when you reach the 30mph sign, pass the Cropwell Bishop sign – or maybe not until you reach the Memorial Hall?

A hundred years ago, by the time you reached this point on a summer's evening, you would have already passed through the busiest part of the village.

Walking down that dusty road in the early decades of the 1900s, you would witness a hive of activity ahead.

You might brush shoulders with chattering gypsum workers on their way home, ghostlike with their covering of white dust. And be passed by Heaselden's carts loaded with ground gypsum. And all this before you reached the Town End Canal Bridge.

You would pass by the black wooden bungalow opposite Heaselden's Works.

Wind forward 100 years and it all looks so different but somehow retains that feeling of being an entry zone – not somewhere to stop on your way to the village

First on the left are modern industrial units and storage facilities (2020)

And then the entrance to Smalley's Farm (2020)

The black wooden bungalow that stood here for over 70 years opposite the black Works Shed (a photo of the old bungalow has been overlaid onto the 2020 background)

The wooden bungalow in later years – now with TV (1960s)

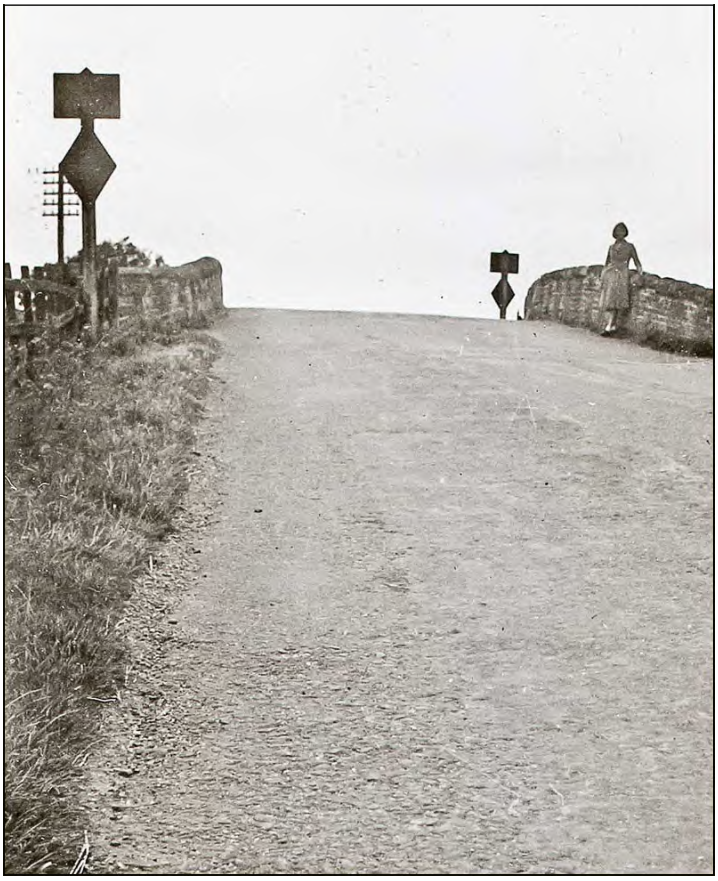
The brick bungalow that replaced it (2020)

On the other side if the road, in place of Heaselden's metal Works Shed, stands the Creamery Store. It looks more attractive and is no doubt a safer and more pleasant place to work than the Works Shed on a winter's day.

Creamery Store (2020)

Continuing with our walk: to reach the village centre we have to cross the Grantham Canal. No need to get our feet wet, the Town End Bridge takes us up and over: see photo on the right.

The same stretch of road today – but without the bridge (2020)



Approaching the Town End Bridge (1930s)

Once you reach the top of the humpback bridge, you pause and look to your right. Looking along the canal and beyond its curve – the scene is tremendously busy, and mostly red. What is happening?

A Red Revolution in Cropwell Bishop

The view from Town End Bridge would not have been obstructed by greenery as it is today. You would have faced more red than green.

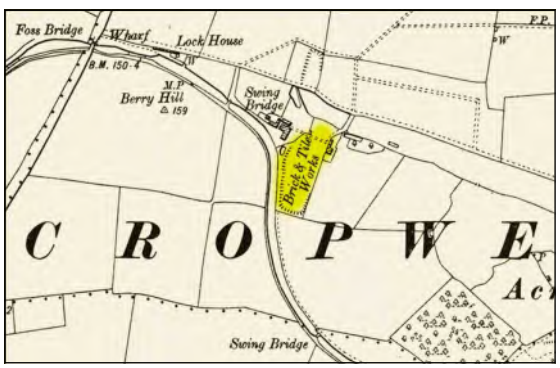
Gypsum was certainly the dominant mineral output from Cropwell Bishop during the 1900s. Even in the 1800s its output was important, but it was outstripped by another mineral.

Long before the start of large-scale mining of gypsum began near the Old Mill on Kinoulton Road in 1880, there had been big factories in, and around, Cropwell Bishop.

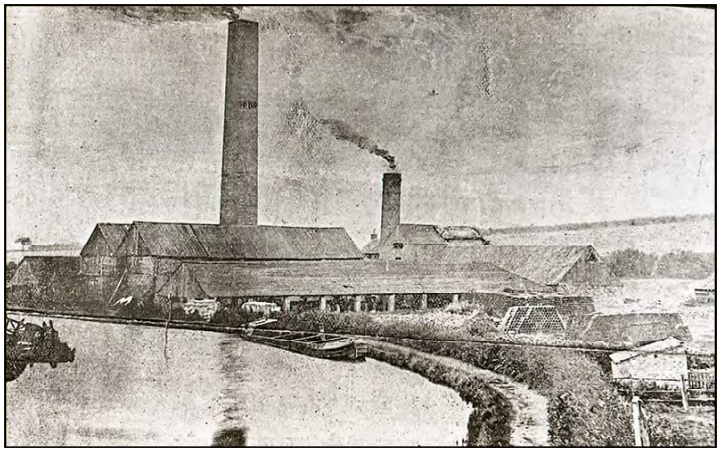
Those factories employed miners too, but they weren't digging for white lumps of rock, they were scooping up clay – red clay to make bricks, tiles and pipes.

It was the Grantham Canal that made these enterprises worthwhile. For the first time in local history, heavy loads could be transported to the centre of large populations easily, quickly and profitably.

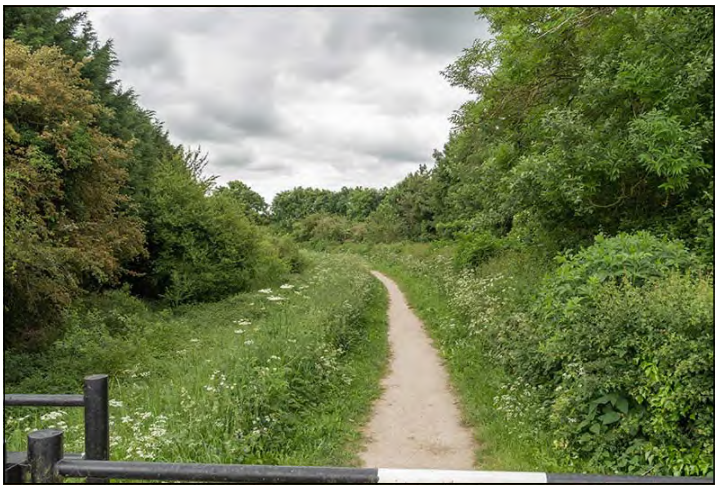
Small brickworks had existed on the outskirts of Cropwell Bishop in the early 1800s. There was one alongside the canal near the Fosse Way, the Hoe-Hill Brick and Tile Works.



Hoe-Hill Brickworks in the 1840s (1880s map)



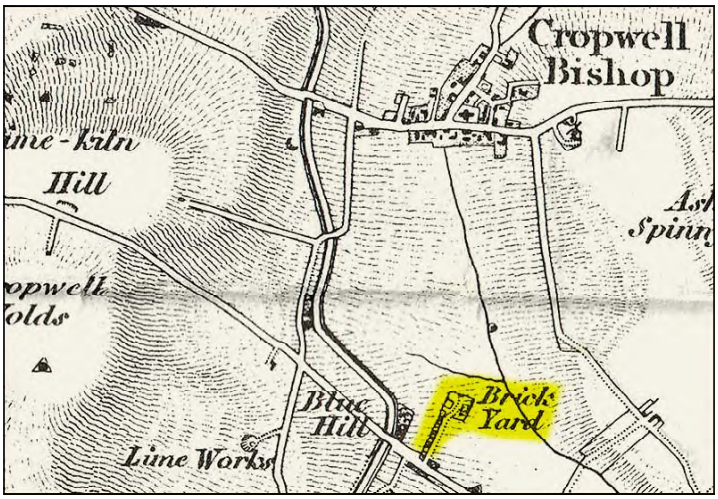
The view from Town End Bridge in 1898: what is going on?



That same view today. No longer from the top of the Town End Bridge, but a very different scene from 100 years ago (2020)

The Hoe-Hill Brickworks was just outside the parish of Cropwell Bishop but it was certainly supplying bricks to our village builders in the 1840s.

Also, there was once a brickyard at the other end of the village, where the canal leaves Cropwell Bishop – near the Colston Bassett Road and Blue Hill. Maps show it was a working brickyard in the 1830s but it seems to have ceased not long after.



A brickyard was near the canal on the Colston Bassett Road (1836 map)

In addition, there were brickyards that were in the centre of Cropwell Bishop – beside the canal, naturally.

There was once a small one near the Roving Bridge on Kinoulton Road, but the biggest, and most recent, brickworks, was the 'Brick, Tile and Pipe Works' opposite Canal Farm near Nottingham Road.

These were the Works that can be seen in the 1898 photo taken from the top of Town End Bridge (on previous page).

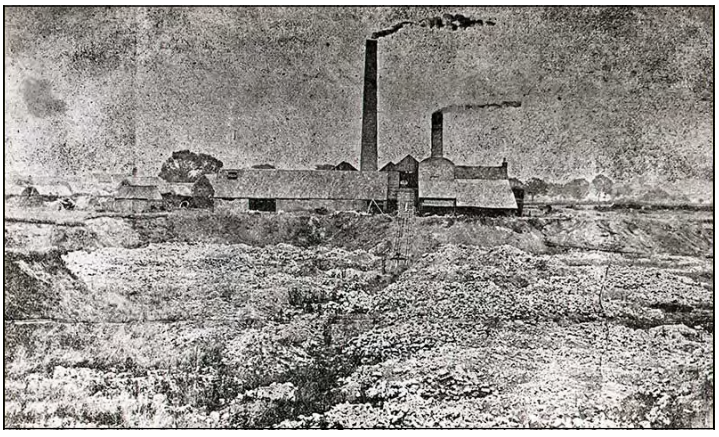
It was owned by the Midland Brick and Mineral Company, but everyone referred to it as the Cotton Brickworks because it was owned by a William Cotton.

In the 1890s, the Cotton Brickworks was a thriving business and in 1898 it planned to go public. The prospectus printed for this step reveals interesting facts.

It was turning out 45,000 bricks a week and it was stated that, “an additional £500 could increase output to 75,000.” The clay reserves were thought to be sufficient for 50 years.

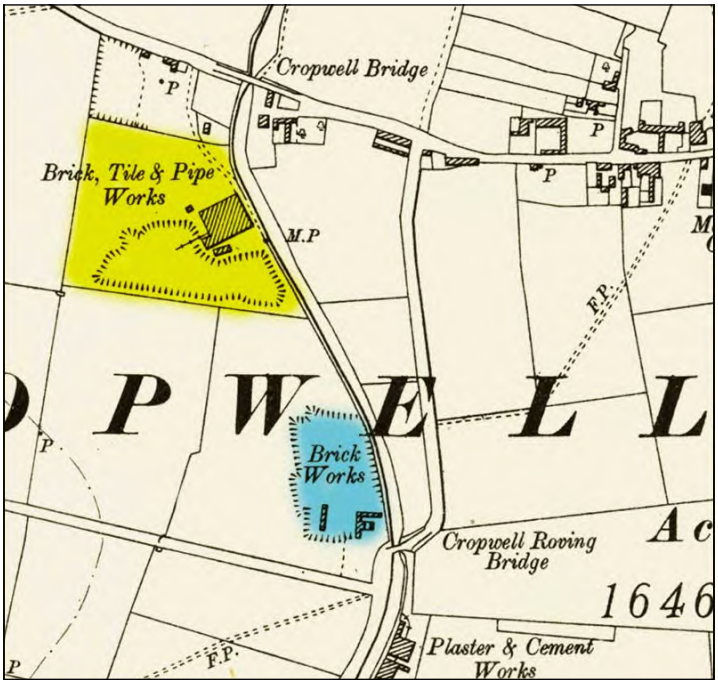
It is amusing to note that at these brickworks they were mining red clay and discarding the white gypsum as waste whilst, 500 metres away, over the Kinoulton Road, they were mining gypsum and discarding the clay.

Apparently, the brickworks had a great pile of "waste"; “several thousand tons of gypsum ready for grinding.”



The view from behind the Cotton brickworks. Are those the piles of "gypsum waste", I wonder. (1898)

Hoe-Hill Brickworks. In the 1840s, demand for bricks was so great that carts would turn up in the middle of the night to ensure they got fresh bricks, sometimes burning their hands as they loaded them fresh from the kiln. It closed in the 1850s. (1870s photo)



The yellow tinted, 'Brick, Tile and Pipe Works' was the William Cotton Brickworks.
The blue tinted brickworks was an older, smaller yard. (1898)

According to the prospectus, the Brickworks was up for sale for £23,000. It was making a profit of £3,500 p.a., which means you would get your money back in 7 years: that sounds like a good investment for someone with the cash.

We don’t know if the Brickworks sold for this price, but we do know that it had a life much shorter than anticipated.

Just 7 years later, Samuel Heaselden had purchased land next to the brickworks and was sinking shafts in his search for gypsum seams.

By the 1930s, the high chimney is all that remains of the Cotton brickworks. This is the view from Skylark Hill, looking towards Cropwell Bishop.

Town End Bridge

Samuel Heaselden appears to have been a smarter businessman than William Cotton: he not only sold the gypsum he mined, but also the clay (marl) that lay between the seams.

Descending from the brow of Town End Canal Bridge on our imaginary walk, we might well have been faced, not by buildings, but by hordes of people.

A crowd of village folk, waiting outside Canal Farm for the arrival of its farmer, Joe Blades.

It was not Joe they were after, but what he might bring them. Joe Blades, not only looked after the farm, but also the village bus.

Twice a week he drove to Nottingham, and when he returned to Canal Farm at dusk, he would unload his passengers, and also any packages that village folk had arranged to be collected from the city.

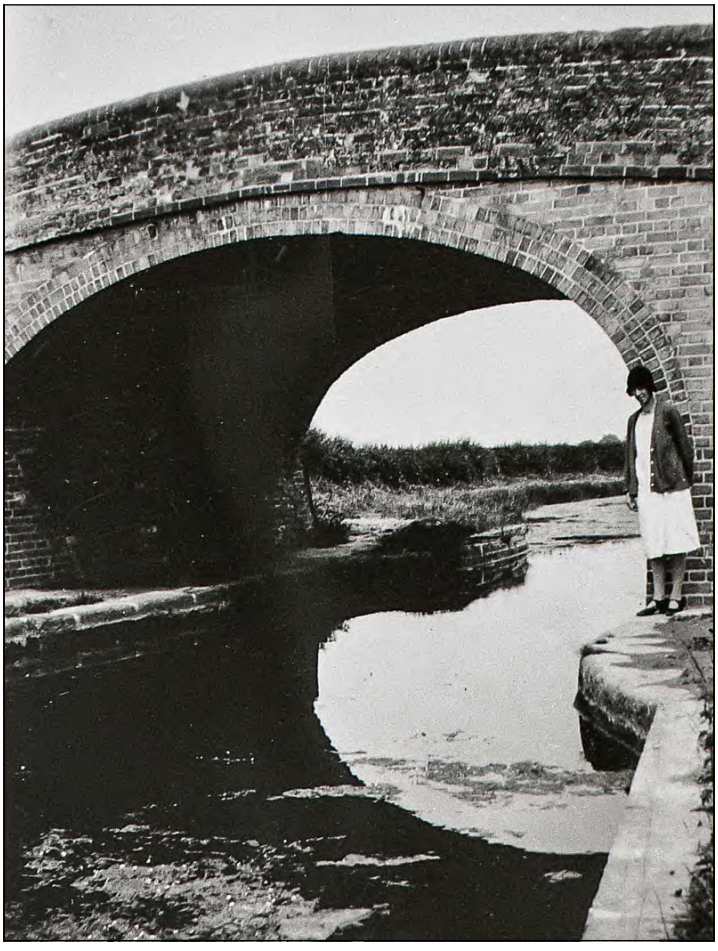
Joe enjoyed a long working day. As well as looking after village folk, he also took care of canal barges. They moored up outside his farm or in the Cropwell Basin on the other side of the bridge.

He carried out any repairs that needed doing. Even the barge horses were not forgotten – they could bed down in his stables. Joe was said to be a happy character with his fingers into everything.

He would use his motor bus for day trips, but this new form of transport had yet to be perfected.

When horses had pulled the carriages, they always managed to haul their full load up every hill, but the motorbus couldn't cope; the passengers had to get out and walk up the steep ones.

We have to thank villager and gypsum worker, Norman Sheppard, for these recollections. He recounted them to his son, Colin, in 1981.

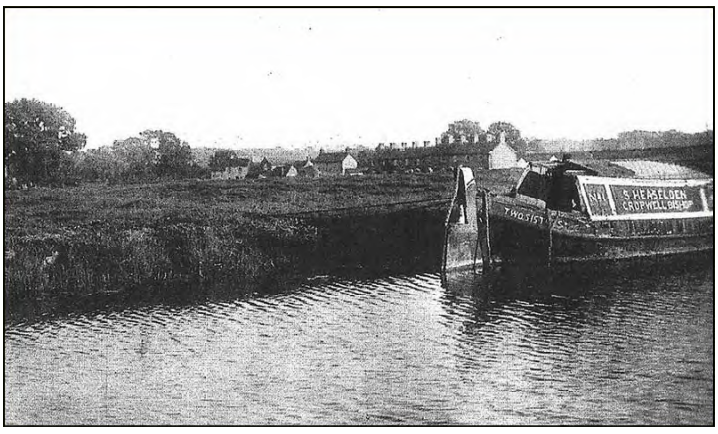


Town End Bridge (1930s)

Old Canal Farm (2020)

Nottingham Road as it drops down from Town End Bridge (1920s)

The same stretch of road today (2020)



A Heaselden barge. Behind, you can see the houses at the junction of Nottingham Road, including the houses known as Parkers Row (1920s)

Norman also recalled the remarkable feat of two Cropwell Bishop men, Bill Fogg and Gershom Hampson, one winter when the Grantham Canal was frozen over. They skated all the way to Grantham – and back again on the same day.

Town End Bridge: 1920 map overlay on a 2020 satellite image

Grantham Canal with Hoe Hill in the background (2020)

Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall is a familiar part of Cropwell Bishop's heritage but, compared to many many of our old buildings, it is relatively new.

In the early 1910s when the gypsum mines and brickworks were in full swing, the Memorial Hall hadn't been imagined: neither had the First World War.

Eleven Cropwell Bishop men died in that War.

In March 1919, there was a public meeting to discuss proposals for a suitable memorial within the village. By the end of 1920, a Memorial Window had been installed inside St Giles Church and a Roll of Honour inside the school (now the Old School building).

Even so, there was still a band of villagers who wished to see a hut or hall built within the village.

Encouraged by the moral and financial support of Mr J. N. Derbyshire, owner of the Gotham Company that mined gypsum east of Kinoulton Road, a building committee was formed in 1924. Herbert Heaselden also gave valuable financial support

Initial plans were drawn up in 1925 and fundraising for its completion began.

As part of this effort, the first Village Fete was held on 1st August 1925. The charges for admission and afternoon teas made it a successful event. A Fete, or similar event, has been held in the village most years ever since – usually at the end of July.

At that first Fete, skittles was especially popular with the prize of a pig for the winning man and a Stilton cheese for the winning woman.

Nevertheless, before they could move forward with the project, a site first had to be found for the building.

Their search ended when the present 4 acres site was bought from the Ministry of Health. The decision to build the Hall there seemed sensible: it was already an area of intense human activity.

It was on Friday 6th July 1928 that the project was given the go-ahead.

It would cost £1220 and over half of this total was raised by the people of Cropwell Bishop. They also helped keep costs down by doing a lot of the hard work themselves. Men, wives and children devoted their spare evenings to getting the job done.

Just 12 months later, in the summer of 1929, it was finished and, on the 3rd August 1929, Mrs J.N. Derbyshire officially opened the Memorial Hall.

In October 1929, the Charity Commissioners were asked to become Trustees, and all organisations which were involved with or used the Hall were asked to appoint representatives to serve on the Memorial Hall Committee.

Memorial Hall (2020)

Men helping to build the Memorial Hall

Boys helped too

Memorial Hall shortly after it was built (1930s)

The first trustees were: Mary Elnor, Thomas Barlow, Mr Duncalf, Herbert Heaselden and William Parkin.

Tennis courts were laid out on the playing field in 1932, and electric lighting was also installed – but it would be 1938 before mains water arrived.

The most important date in the history of the Cropwell Bishop Memorial Hall was Wednesday 29th June 1932 when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales visited the Hall.

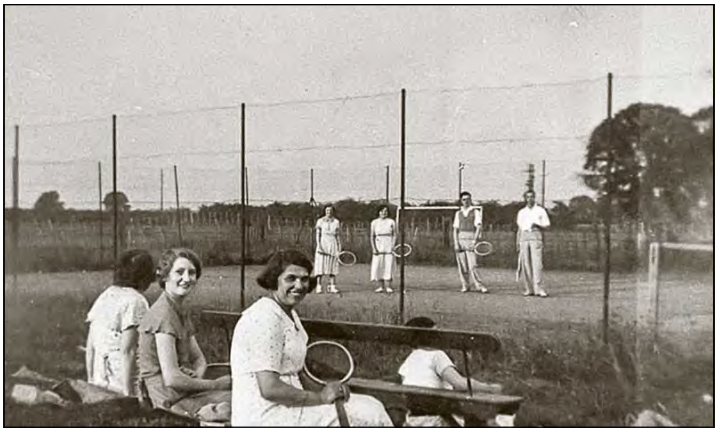
There was a report of the visit in the Nottingham Guardian Newspaper, in which stated:

> It was a hard struggle and in the last stage the Notts Rural Community Council obtained a free grant of £190 from the Carnegie Trustees, and a loan of £150 for five years free of interest. Largely through the efforts of Alderman J. N. Derbyshire, a site was secured for a playing field as well as for the Hall.
>
> The latter is admirably adapted to its object, and it is an asset to the village. Movable partitions enable it to be used for teas, dances, meetings, and a variety of other purposes.
> A condition of the grant is that the Hall will be managed in perpetuity by a committee representative of all organised interests in the parish – social, religious and sporting.

For more information on this visit, including photographs, see the Parkin Close Street Story.

Developments continued, and 1934 saw the introduction of a cricket pitch for boys, and swings and a see-saw for the younger children of the village.

Cropwell Bishop Football Team (1933)



Anyone for tennis? (1930s)

Edward Prince of Wales inspects Ex-Service Men (June 1932)

Prince Edward meets the people of Cropwell Bishop (June 1932)

Women's Institute 21st birthday party at Memorial Hall (21st July 1937)

The wrought iron gates installed in 1948 are still there (2020)

By 1935 the Memorial Hall was being used for weekly cinema shows. Then a bowling green was proposed and it was completed in August 1936

In October 1935 Mr Derbyshire generously offered to pay half of the outstanding £ 275 which was owed to the Gotham Co, if the remainder could be raised by April 30th 1936: and it was.

The next major change didn't occur until 1948 when Notts County Council announced it was to flatten Town Bridge and widen and re-align the road.

The widening and re-alignment of the road lead to the loss of a significant portion of land, so the Committee negotiated with the Council to have a double entry drive with wrought iron gates, and a stone wall with a stone tablet in the centre.

The Memorial Hall Today

It is now almost 100 years since the Memorial Hall was built. It was built on a tight budget and is now showing its age.

For many years the Parish Council hired the Memorial Hall for its meetings and, for a brief period, had a tiny office there.

In 2006 the Parish Council decided to take out a 25-year lease on the playing field to ensure that the refurbished play equipment would be maintained to a high standard. Costs have been met from public funds.

It was at this time that the Parish Council decided to have a structural survey of the Hall carried out.

The alarming findings of the survey led to the Parish Council offering to take over the Memorial Hall with a view to demolishing it and replacing it with a larger, more sustainable building whilst retaining the iconic frontage.

The plan was to include office space for the Parish Council but leave the Memorial Hall Committee to run the new building as before.

The Memorial Hall Committee voted to reject this offer.

A few years later, when Rushcliffe Borough Council threatened to demolish the Old School building and sell the land it stood on, the Parish Council decided to buy the building. It saw it as an opportunity to save this, basically sound, building for the benefit of the community and to provide office space for itself.

It felt secure in the knowledge that such a move had the support of 82% of the residents of Cropwell Bishop (as indicated by the Parish Plan Survey of 2008).

Sadly, the Memorial Hall structure has since deteriorated further to the point where, in 2021, it was declared unsafe to enter. This is why it is now closed and fenced off.

Its future remains uncertain.

According to the Charity Commission, the declared Objective of the Memorial Hall's Trustees is the:

"Provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the parish of Cropwell Bishop without distinction of political religious or other opinions, including the use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation with the

The Memorial Hall in June 2021: fenced off

object of improving the conditions of life of the inhabitants."

It is to be hoped that a way will be found to build the facilities expected in the 21st Century so that the committee's noble objectives can be achieved for both current and future generations in Cropwell Bishop.

Some people will be reluctant to see the Hall, that was built (with the help of village folk) in memory of those who didn't return from the Great War of 1914-18, being demolished

In this Street Story we have seen how invigorated people were both during and after the building of the Hall. In the first 6 years they built tennis courts and bowling greens, they established clubs and put on plays, they started a cinema and a football team, and they continued having a village fete every year.

Yes, a Hall was built, which was a satisfying achievement, but, I wonder, did the feeling of optimism stem more from the spirit of togetherness brought on by working together on a great project with real meaning.

Maybe this feeling was as valuable as the building itself in helping families face up to the sorrow brought on by a terrible war.

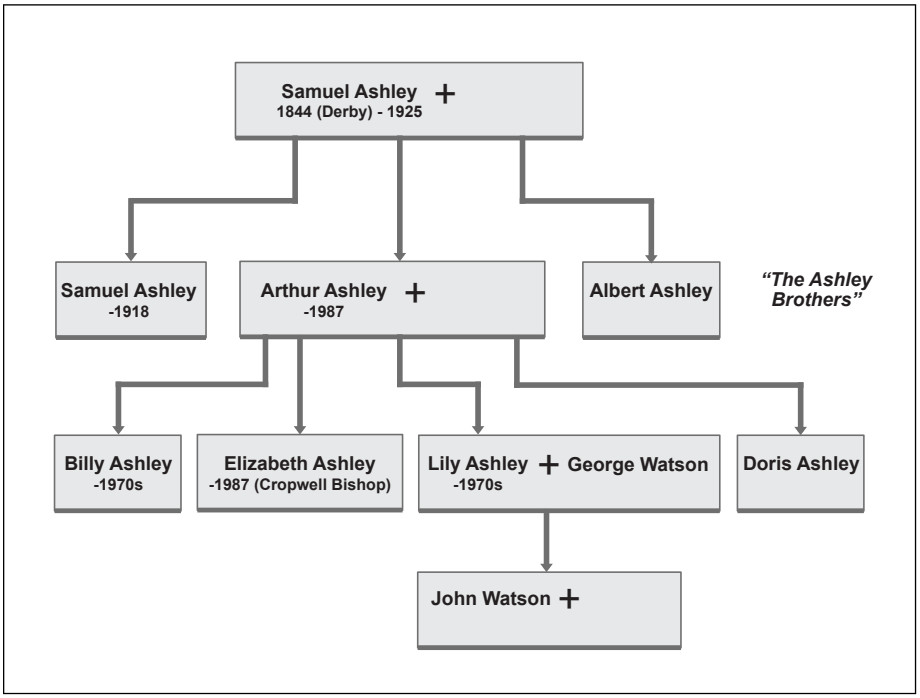
Villagers who visited the Memorial Hall Field in the 1980s may remember seeing a kind of gypsy caravan, or two, permanently parked on the field – in the space between the Memorial Hall and where there is now a car park close to the canal.

One was, in fact, a "living wagon", the home of a lady whose family were Fair People. Her name was Lily Ashley and her family have a close connection with Cropwell Bishop. Her son, John Watson, lives just a stones throw away on Nottingham Road.

John's great grandfather (Lily's grandfather) was Samuel Ashley and it was he who brought a traction engine and fairground rides to Cropwell Bishop in the early 1900s.

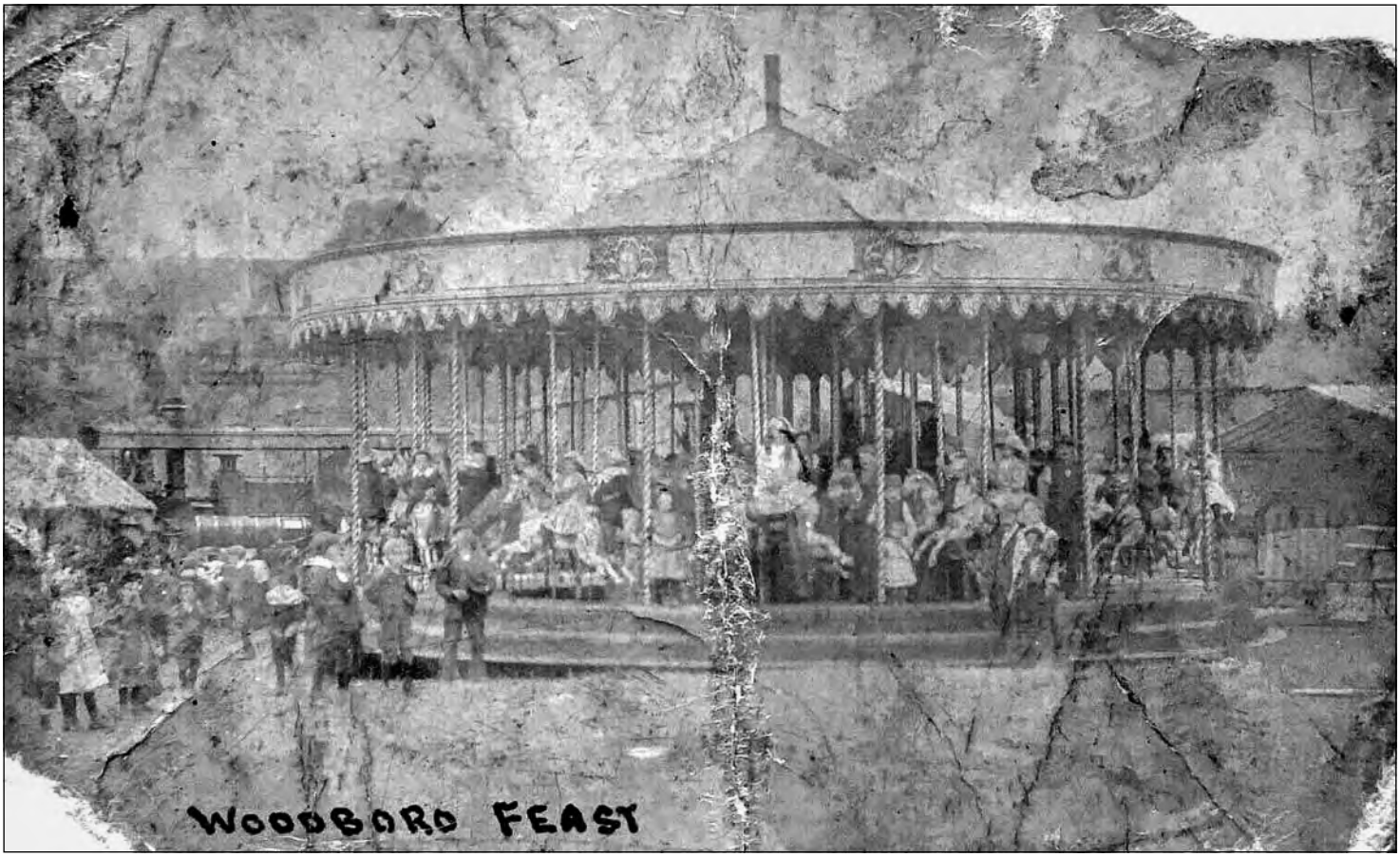
The photograph below show him (with white beard) and other family members and helpers at the Cropwell Feast when it was held in a field opposite The Wheatsheaf. For more about the Feast, see the Mill Lane Story.

Traction engine at the Cropwell Feast that was held on the field that used to be opposite the Wheatsheaf (now the Coop car park). The bearded man, 5th man from the right, is Samuel Ashley.
Taken in early 20th Century. See the Mill Lane Story for more details of the Cropwell Feast.



The Ashley "Galloping Horses" roundabout

The bearded man, 5th man from the left, is Samuel Ashley. He had this roundabout, "Galloping Horses", built in the 1890s. Samuel is also present in a photo of the a traction engine at the Cropwell Feast in the early 20th Century. Most of the other characters are also present in both photos.



The Ashley "Galloping Horses" roundabout

This is like the live-in caravans that were on the Memorial Hall field as recently as the 1970s

The Ashley sisters, Elizabeth, Lily and Doris

Elizabeth Ashley is buried in St Giles churchyard

Feast Day & Celebration Weekends

Feast Day on the Memorial Hall field in 2011

Feast Day in 2011

"Frog Racing" in the Memorial Hall 2009

Celebration Weekend on the Memorial Hall field 2012

Memorial Hall in the 1980s

The Fete Band march past the garage on Nottm Road 1980s

The finish of the first Cropwell Bishop 10mile Run in 1984

Derek Beeby (Chair of Memorial Hall) with Radio Trent DJ, John Peters, on the Memorial Hall field (1982 approx)

Derek Beeby (1982 approx)

Floats parading along Hoe View Road for the Annual Village Fete (1980s)

The Future of the Memorial Hall

A century later and villagers are having to make decisions about the future of the Memorial Hall. Could it be that, once again, the process will be just as important as the bricks and mortar.

The young men who had their future stolen by the Great War, are surely best remembered by something that supports a safer, more stable future for new future generations of our village.

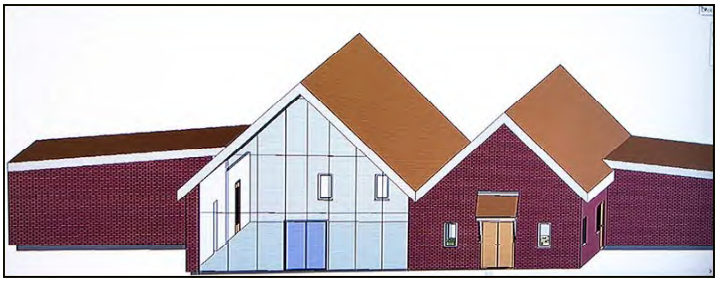
Over the past decade, Chris Keast has, on several occasions, asked teams of university students to put forward their ideas for a replacement Hall. Even from the few examples on the right, you can see that by careful design it is possible to maintain a link with the original design.

Following the closure of the Hall in 2021, villagers have formed a new committee and, by the end of 2024, managed to stabilise the situation.

The kitchen and back room, are being used to support village events like Picnic in the Park and they have also enabled a weekly football coaching event to take place on Saturday mornings. Both have secured a small income for the Hall while the Committee work hard to draw up a long-term plan.

This plan may well develop into to a 'whole village' plan to include the future of The Old School. This step might well be considered a necessity for any funding applications to be successful.

The Memorial Hall Committee is working hard but completing a plan for a new building will be just the first step: it will require the strong unwavering support of villagers to bring it to fruition.



A student design that reflects some features of the original Hall (2016)

The model of a design idea (2016)

At the time this design was submitted, it was thought that the repair and refurbishment of the Hall might be a feasible option (2016)

Town End Bridge to Kinoulton Road

Continuing our imaginary walk from Town End Bridge to the junction with Kinoulton Road takes us past a row of terrace houses that was known as Parkers Row.

These homes were built in the 1860s and were occupied by workers of all kinds and their families.

Nottingham Road when the Town End Bridge stood but the Memorial Hall didn't (1910s)

The row of houses was named after the owner, Vincent Parker, who was a wealthy farmer/publican at Canal Farm. He died in 1897.

The Row was demolished in the 1960s.

Parkers Row (1950s)

The bungalow on the corner of Kinoulton Road where Parkers Row once stood (2020)

The top end of Parkers Row was where this modern bungalow now stands (2020)

This E-Type Jaguar was built 60 years ago, but that was only 40 years after our imaginary walk down Nottingham Road (2020)

Looking towards the village with Kinoulton Road on the right. (2020)

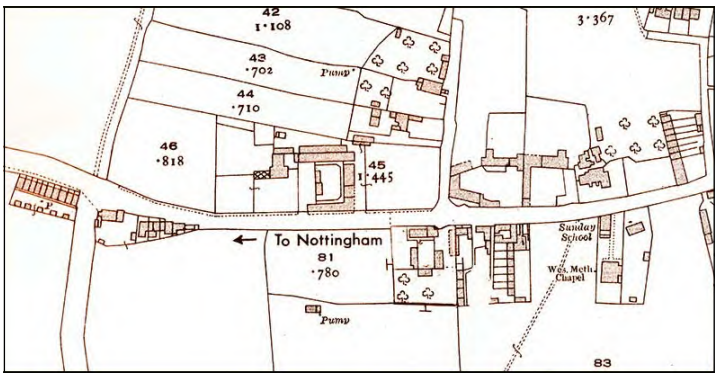
Kinoulton Road to Lenton Close

On our journey down Nottingham Road into the village centre, we have reached its junction with Kinoulton Road.

The houses on the opposite corner look a jumbled assortment of homes but maybe they are merely a reflection of Town and Country Planning 200 years ago.

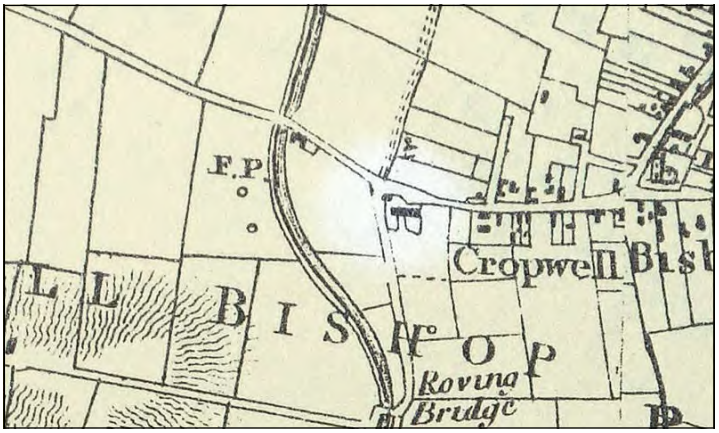
Maps going back to 1835 show buildings on this spot and it is highly likely that they are the same ones.

Did they have a bigger back garden in those days – it is hard to say, but the fact that owners have never been able to buy extra land at the rear does reflect badly on the priorities of many absent land-owners in the 21st century.



1960s: the basic pattern of buildings on this stretch of Nottm Road is still easily recognisable 60 years later. Parkers Row has gone, some others have been 'trimmed', and new homes have filled the gaps. Hoe View Road has been the biggest addition.

The early history of these three homes is probably an interesting story but, alas, one apparently lost in time. (2020)



1835: the present houses were almost certainly standing 200 years ago.

This 2008 picture shows the homes looking much the same as today.

In fact, little appears to have changed since the 1950s.

2020

2020

Lenton and Hoe View

Next on the left is Old Lenton Close. Not so long ago, a garage and filling station was here – and a small paddock and a vegetable garden.

You can find out all about them in the Old Lenton Close Street Story.

Old Lenton Close: for decades, a filling station stood here. (2020)

1930s: you can see Parkers Row and, in the distance on the right, the roof of the newly completed Memorial Hall. In the foreground on the right is Tinsley's Garage.

After Old Lenton Close, comes Lenton House (2020)

Lenton House (2020)

Hoe View Road: to make way for its building, outbuildings at Lenton House farm were demolished. See the Hoe View Road Street Story to discover its history. (2020)

1930s: the view down Nottingham Road. The brick barn at Lenton House was much longer then.

1983: the distant view has changed little, although the long barn has been shortened to make room for Hoe View Road.

2020: hedges and trees grow, as do the number of cars, but otherwise little has changed in the last 40 years.

51 to Quixhill

The old houses on Nottingham Road have stood up well to the ravages of the British weather, but home owners have had to find their own ways of dealing with the shortcomings of 19th Century buildings lacking cavity walls, plastic damp-proof layers and central heating. Come to think of it, the first half of the 20th Century was no better.

1930s: sisters Sarah, Florrie, Ethel and Edith Knight outside 49 Nottingham Road.

49 Nottingham Road has a long history. In 1817 it was the home of Reverend Richard Sutton and in 1824 of Reverend Cleaver who stayed for 32 years.
From then on, for many decades, the building was owned by Matthew Cooper and then Matthew Richards who were members of a powerful farming family in the village.
In 1968, Tony Carter bought the house and lived there until 2001.
Its outward appearance has changed little in all those years. (2020)

First, we come to 51 Nottingham Road which sits behind 49. It was built in, what was once, the back garden of number 49. (2020)

Number 51 is behind 49

Quixhill Cottage, as it was called, in 1973.
In the 1880s, a Mr Porter moved into the village and lived here. A short time after, the job of village post-master became available and he took on the job. This is still celebrated by the private red post-box. However, Mr Porter soon found the task too demanding and resigned.
For more about the history of the village post office, see the Shelton Gardens Street Story.

Outside Quixhill Cottage: Mrs Hand, Mrs Parnham and Eleanor Parnham. (1905)

Quixhill Cottage in 2020

Across the road, new and old buildings are kept apart by Field Lane (2020)

1905: Quixhill Cottage and, beyond, number 49.
On the right, starting with the most distant; the brick barn at Lenton House, a haystack where Hoe View Road now starts, Field Lane and then the Creamery.

The view is still recognisable, 115 years later. (2020)

Out of Sight

Number 41 on the left and number 47 (Quixhill Cottage) on the right. Where are 43 and 45?

The narrow road between 41 and 47. (2020)

At the top, 43 and 45. (2020)

Beyond the houses, open fields. (2020)

A Shop

These days, there is only one shop on this stretch of Nottingham Road and that is the one at the Creamery, but long before it opened, there was another shop – just across the road. It is not there now, but the building it occupied is.

Numbers 25 and 25A are homes today but, until about 10 years ago, it was a meeting place with tables, chairs and a small kitchen at the back. It was known as the Friendship Centre.

It was run by a group called, Cropwell Care, which was made up of volunteers from the village who regularly provided coffee mornings, lunches, etc, for elderly village folk in the village.

Other villagers could book it cheaply on an ad hoc basis. Those were the days before the Old School had been converted for community use. But, as you can see by its appearance, the place wasn't originally built to be a community centre, but to be a shop.

And it was a shop for over 40 years. In the early 1960s, it was run by Betty and George Dooley. However, over the years, family illness took its toll, and it gradually became less commercially active.

Eventually, it was left empty for several years until the premises were converted into the Friendship Centre.

Nevertheless, previous to that, in the 1950s, it was a popular and busy shop owned and run by the Starbucks – a family long established in Cropwell Bishop. They lived in the house that was at the back of the shop.

In the 1950s it was run by Hannah and Billy Starbuck. Hannah Starbuck took charge of the grocery shop, helped by her daughter Dorothy, and husband Billy sold second-hand bicycles and did bike repairs next door. At one time, Hannah sold fish & chips.

In 2007, 25A was the Friendship Centre.

25 & 25A Nottingham Road (2020)

Outside Starbuck's shop in 1958
The metal sign over the door advertises Eldorado Ice Cream. Apparently, you could order an Eldorado ice cream cake for Christmas Day: you would go and collect it at 4pm.
In the middle of the picture is teenager, Lol Simpson, who, years later, became Chairman of Cropwell Bishop Parish Council. Either side of him are his cousins, Michael on the left and Tony on the right. On the extreme right is John Thornton. The younger boy on the left is unknown.
The bicycle is outside Billy Starbuck's half of the shop.

The photograph on the right shows Starbuck's shop in the 1950s. It is clear from the advertising that cigarettes were being sold.
On the extreme right, you can make-out the doors to Billy Starbuck's garage which was at the end of the building.
The brick barn on the opposite side of the road was part of The Yews farmyard.

The Yews Farm

It is worth looking at that brick barn in more detail. You would normally imagine that a high brick wall like that would stay that way for decades, but the following photos reveal a different story.

Photographic evidence suggests that the barn was built with a solid brick wall in the 1930s but in the 1960s this was demolished and replaced with a 2m high wall, plus pillars to support the roof – which may well have been preserved from the original version.

This barn, and the buildings around it, were part of The Yews Farm. Its farmhouse, The Yews, is next door.

In 2020 there is only a wall where the barn once stood – but the Yew tree has kept its shape over the last 90 years.

Before the barn. (1930s)
In this picture, a Mr Hone is pushing his decorated cart along Nottingham Road for a (unknown) celebration.

The Yews has been occupied by several notable Cropwell Bishop characters and the house crops up in several Street Stories.

References to it are in records and maps as far back as 200 years ago.

However, a book written by a William Baldock (1829-1905) of Cropwell Butler, suggests that the house standing today is not the same one as in those early days.

Yew Tree House (2020)

He wrote: " in my earliest days, and for a long time after, there was an old thatched farmhouse with a huge thatched barn and other buildings near to it standing on the west side of the central part of the village (Cropwell Bishop)".

He refers to it being occupied by a Johnny Parr and then, later on, by Mr (Matthew) Cooper — which fits the documented history of The Yews.

He goes on to say that during the early part of Matthew Cooper's residency: "the owner, Clifton Esqr. built a good new farmhouse on the site of the old one, and also new farm premises near to it."

Research in 2020 confirmed that new farm buildings were indeed added by Henry Robert Clifton in 1880 – and the plaque on the end of the present building confirms this date.

What William Baldock's account claims, is that The Yews farmhouse was built at the same time, replacing an earlier version.

The 1835 map shows that a building did exist then, although with a slightly different shape and further from the road than today. This gives support to the idea of a rebuild.

More importantly, the present building does not display the irregular brickwork, low upstairs windows, or high gable walls that are present in known old buildings – like the nearby Old Dairy and Quixhill Cottage.

Whatever the precise facts about The Yews farmhouse, there is no doubt that it has been a pivotal building in the history of Cropwell Bishop.

The wall facing Nottingham Road.
HRC stands for Henry Robert Clifton

1965: the barn has a solid brick wall, just like it did in the earlier photo of Starbuck's shop in the 1950s

1970: the barn now has a wall with the top-third open

1983: just prior to being demolished to make way for Barratt Close, it still had the open walls seen in 1970

The Yews in 1926

Dairy

The Creamery building does look old, but when the brickwork is hidden by layers of white paint it is difficult to be sure it really is.

Fortunately, we do have photos taken before the walls were painted and they show that the brickwork looked old, even 80 years ago.

Also, we can see that the gable walls are higher than the level of the tiled roof, which indicates that the roof was originally thatched.

Maps from 1830 show buildings at the same location and I think it is safe to assume that they are the same ones standing today.

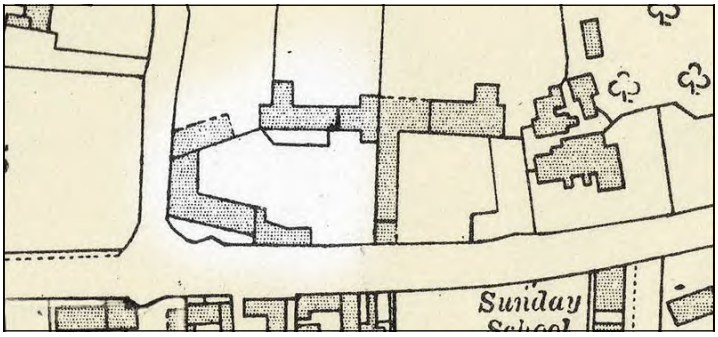
So, a Dairy has been here for a long time, although nowadays it is referred to as The Creamery.

The making of Stilton Cheese has also been happening for a long time in Cropwell Bishop.

The Old Dairy (2021)

1835: two buildings occupied the site of the present Creamery

1965: behind the Dairy were just fields; the big cheese-factory building had not yet been planned – neither had Barratt Close.



1960s: a more precise map but, in general, the shape and position of the buildings is the same as in 1835

Stilton cheese was awarded as a prize in the Village Fete in 1925 and we have photos of Stilton Cheeses being loaded onto a lorry in 1939.

In the years leading up to the Second World War, the family of a young Brian Howell lived at the Old Dairy.

Their home was Dairy Cottage, which, in reality, was the back of the Old Dairy building. He lived there with his parents, Claude and Minnie Howell, and his older brother, James.

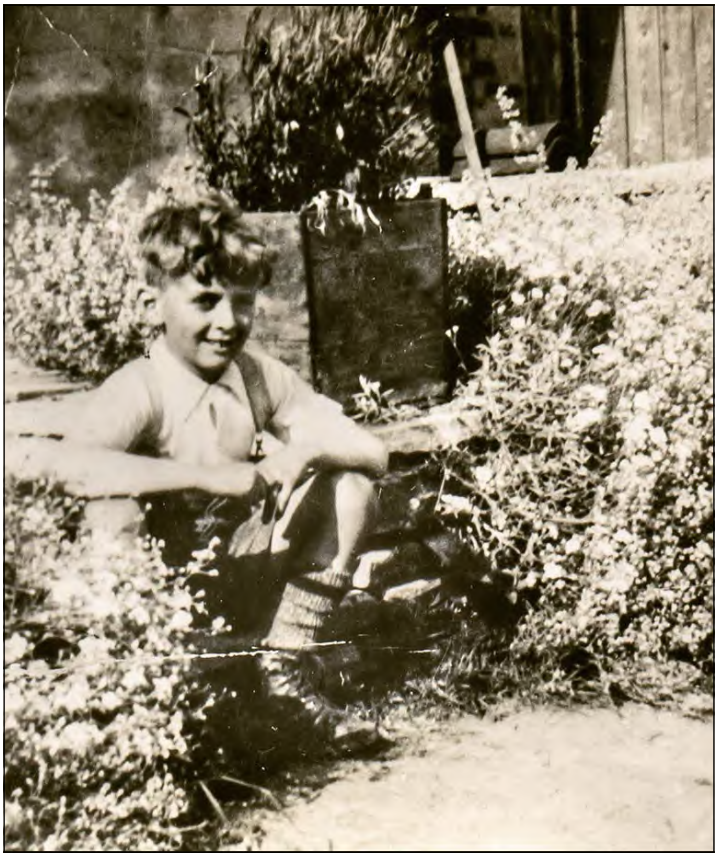
At the start of the War, in 1939, he was only 6 years old but he had learned to use his parent's Kodak Brownie camera – and we have the photos to prove it.

Brian's father, Claude Howell, worked at the Dairy and had a variety of tasks, but his main job was looking after the pigs that lived in a field at the back of the Dairy.

It was profitable for the Dairy to have pigs because they could be fed for free with the whey that was a by-product of cheese making.

Loading Stilton Cheeses in 1939

The same view in 2021



Brian Howell in 1939

Claude with his pigs (1939)

The cottage at the back of the Dairy (1939)

The owner of the Dairy did not live in Cropwell Bishop, but in St Ann's in Nottingham. This may be why he called the Dairy building, "Ann's Farmhouse" (see photos right).

Brian, with brother James, and their cousin and her mother (1939)

A photo taken from the same spot in 2021

The Dairy loading bay in 1939.
In the top right-hand corner, you can see the first part of the name plaque with, "Ann's Farmhouse", on it.

After the start of the War, workers would be ‘called up’ one by one, and eventually cheese production came to a halt.

Tony Carter recalls joining a Rabbit Club that Claude set up for children during the War years.

Claude taught them how to look after their pet rabbits. Later on, he also showed them how to kill them, skin them, and make gloves from their fur. Tony made a pair for his auntie one Christmas.

Claude with his wife, Minnie and a Mrs Woodhouse (1939)

James was two years older than Brian and both went to Cropwell Bishop School. (1939)
Tony Carter (who lives in Cropwell Bishop) was at School with Brian Howell.

Claude, on the left, with his brother Ernest (1939)

The corner, in which the photo above was taken, is hidden by a large tank these days (2021)

Claude with James and Brian in their garden behind the Dairy (1939)

Not sure a Rabbit Club like that would go down well today, but there can be no denying that those children were learning some practical skills, and also some facts about 'real-life' – especially relevant during those War years.

In the 1940s and 1950s, rabbits were a common source of meat, and butchers would often have a row of furry rabbits (dead) hanging outside their shop.

The Old Dairy (2021)

The Creamery Shop (2020)

The Creamery Cafe (2024)

Brian Howell in later years

The Old Dairy (2021)

Jubilee Drive

The old Cropwell Bishop photo on the right, was taken in in the 1950s – but where was it taken, you may be wondering.

Even the sign is of little help – unless you have lived in Cropwell Bishop for many decades and have a good memory. Does the garage door on the left provide a clue, I wonder.

Well, the brickwork does still exist, and by inserting the picture into a modern photo, the mystery is resolved.

Even the postman has never heard of Jubilee Drive, so we will have to delve deeper into the history of this part of the village.

It's at the corner of 25A Nottingham Road – the building where Billy Starbuck once had his bike shop

The girl in the middle is Lol Simpson's sister, Margaret

If we walk up this same alley today, we see the back of a row of houses. And, if we go up Richards Close and follow the public footpath, we see the front of them.

These are the houses that made up Jubilee Drive. In reality, they still do, it's just that the name has been dropped.

The name came from the year they were built, 1935, which was the Silver Jubilee year of King George V and Queen Mary.

At some point in the past, the name was discarded, and the homes now have a Nottingham Road address. A pity, I think; Jubilee Drive sounds much more interesting.

Previous to Jubilee Drive being built, there was a row of houses on the same spot. It was known as Wests Row.

It got that name after a Benjamin West lived in the first house, and Wests Row was listed in the 1881 census.

They were poor homes: you had to use a ladder to go upstairs and the outside toilets were across the yard. It was in the 1930s that they were condemned and, in 1935, rebuilt as Jubilee Drive.

The naming of Jubilee Drive must have triggered the patriotic emotions of villagers: they also named the house at the end, Jubilee Cottage, and the adjacent field, Jubilee Field. Richards Close was built in Jubilee Field.

The entrance to, what was once, Jubilee Drive, is beside the parked car in this 1978 photo. You can see the garage door that is in the old photo at the top of the page.

"Jubilee Drive" Today

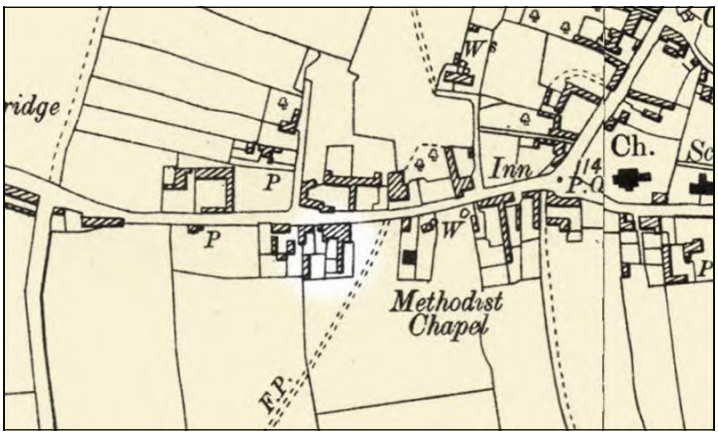
The homes that once belonged on Jubilee Drive but now have a Nottingham Road address (2020)

The end house of "Jubilee Drive" is next to open fields (2020)

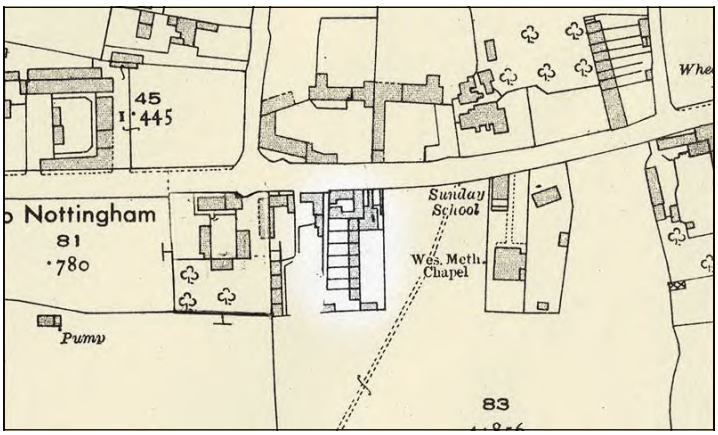
A "Jubilee Drive" front garden (2020)

The house on the right was called Jubilee Cottage (2020)

Jubilee Drive – Past and Future



This 1890s map shows a row of houses behind 25 Nottingham Road: it was called, Wests Row



This 1960s map shows a similar row, but they are newer houses and were originally called Jubilee Drive

The "Jubilee Drive" homes as they appeared in 1983 when Barratt Close was being built

The tiny end house has been replaced by a modern one, built in a style that blends in with the adjacent house (once a shop) (2020)

The replacement house nearing completion (2021)

The old Jubilee Cottage is being updated (2021)

Cropwell Bishop Methodist Chapel

Cropwell Bishop Methodist Chapel

The Methodist Chapel was built in 1842.

A hundred years earlier, there were no Methodist chapels anywhere. John Wesley had only just started preaching his alternative approach to the Christian religion.

Wesley's ideas on Methodism attracted a growing number of people and, in 1802, its seed was sown in Cropwell Bishop.

Robert Hopewell, a farmer living opposite the Chequers on Church Street, registered his house with the Archbishop of York, as a place of public worship.

Hopewell Street in the village has been named after Robert Hopewell and you can find out all about him and the history of Methodism in Cropwell Bishop by going to the Hopewell Street Story.

Here, we will concentrate on the history of the Chapel buildings.

The land for the chapel was bought in early 1842 and on 8th September 1842 the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel held its opening service. That is fast work, and the workmanship was sound: the Chapel still looks good after nearly 180 years. The total cost, including the land, was £516.

It was calculated that the Chapel could accommodate 400 people. That should have been plenty large enough for a small village. Or, at least, you would have thought so.

Much was made of Chapel Anniversaries, and on the second one in 1844, people even came from neighbouring villages to attend the last event of the day, the evening service. There were so many people that only half of the congregation could fit inside the Chapel!

A temporary platform was quickly erected at the chapel door and the preacher used it to address both the people inside the chapel, and those outside on the grass.

In 1859, a harmonium was purchased for the Chapel but 13 years later a pipe organ was bought to replace it. The same organ was still there in 2020 although it was enlarged in 1929 and the blower was electric.

John Bell (1815-1876) of Hickling who sold the land on which the Chapel was built. Photo provided by Rev. Owain Bell, an ancestor.

Preaching to 400 people inside the front door and 400 people outside – at the same time – must have been challenging. I wonder what he chose for his text. (2020)

This building came with the plot of land bought for the Chapel (2021)

Between the two windows, the brick pattern clearly reveals where the doorways to the cottages once were (2021)

Chapel in the 1880s: the pulpit was on the left-hand side (1880s)

There was tiered seating against the right-hand wall (1880s)

In the 1890s, a large number of improvements were made for the benefit of both the congregation and children.

Until then, the Chapel had also been used as a meeting place for the Sunday School and this, it was increasingly being felt, was far from ideal.

In the 1850s, over 100 children attended Sunday School and, for some, this was the only schooling they had, this being the time before free compulsory state education.

In 1893, the decision was made to adapt the two cottages to form a Schoolroom. This was done using voluntary labour at no cost to the Trust funds.

In 1897, the interior of the Chapel was upgraded by members who removed the interior fittings and then created a different layout with new pews and a rostrum – which are still there in 2024.

The cost was £134 and this sum was raised by fundraising efforts so that no debt was incurred by the Trust.

In 1899 the Chapel was licensed for marriages and many marriages have taken place since then.

You will no doubt have noticed that the Schoolroom has an extra bit of building on the south end. It wasn't there when they bought the land, so where did it come from?

It was in 1922 the decision was made to build this extension to accommodate a classroom and a kitchen. Think of it as a modern addition: only 100 years old compared to the Schoolroom which is about twice as old.

The Schoolroom has a 'new' extension (2021)

I wonder what the loft was used for (2021)

Married at the Chapel in 1971: Peter Mason and Marian Robinson of Fern Hill Nursery. On the right, Marian's older sister, Jean Robinson, who served the Chapel her whole life, and lived on Hardys Close until her death in 2019.

The pews and fittings in the Chapel were fitted over 120 years ago. The stained-glass window was given by Herbert Heaselden in 1953, in memory of his wife, Ethel. (2018)

How many children have entered the Schoolroom through that door, I wonder. (2019)

Methodist Chapels were visited by ministers and preachers who called on the chapels on their 'circuit'. Cropwell Bishop was originally on the Newark Circuit.

These people did not, in general, live close to the chapels they served, so were not available to consult members in the same way as, say, a local vicar.

As a consequence, every chapel had its class leaders. These were people who the congregation looked upon as spiritual leaders.

They were not preachers, but facilitators – someone who could organise small meetings of followers and also look after day-to-day practical affairs, including the state of the Chapel, its finances, and the welfare of the congregation.

The marriage of George Hopkinson and Annie Simpson at the Chapel in the 1920s.

The pipe organ was installed almost 150 years ago (2008)

You have to imagine this room full of Sunday School children in the 1890s. The building is now about 200 years old. (2010)

The pews were popular on this open-day in 2018

Class leaders played an important role in Chapels and it is interesting to note who took on the task in Cropwell Bishop during the early days.

Initially, they included Robert Hopewell, who held that first meeting at his home in 1802, and John Squires, who served as a class leader for nearly 50 years.

Then there was: William Knight, Richard Barlow, John Cumberland, William Parkin, Herbert Simpson, Harold Smith, Ernest Smith, Leslie Simpson, plus a host of others over the years. Many of these characters we have come across in other Street Stories.

People who served the Chapel in other ways, include all members of the Heaselden family. Sam Heaselden took an interest following his arrival in the Village in 1903 and his son, Herbert, became its Steward in 1917 – and continued in that role for 35 years.

Most of the class leaders and stewards also gave substantial financial support to the Chapel.

George Smith supported the Chapel in different ways. For 54 years he played the organ. Then, in 1953, he used his wood-carving skills to carve the frame of the War Memorial plaque that hangs in the Chapel.

George's brother, Harold, preached at the unveiling ceremony, and Geoge's son, Harold, who was Sunday-School Teacher, laid a wreath. Quite a family affair, it would seem.

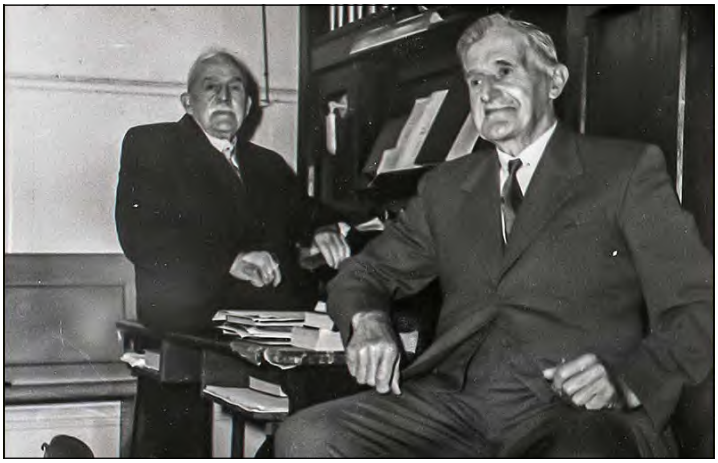
The prime concern of Methodism may well be the souls of its members, but it doesn't neglect their material welfare.

Just a few months after the Chapel was opened in 1842, its officials launched a 'Friendly Society'.

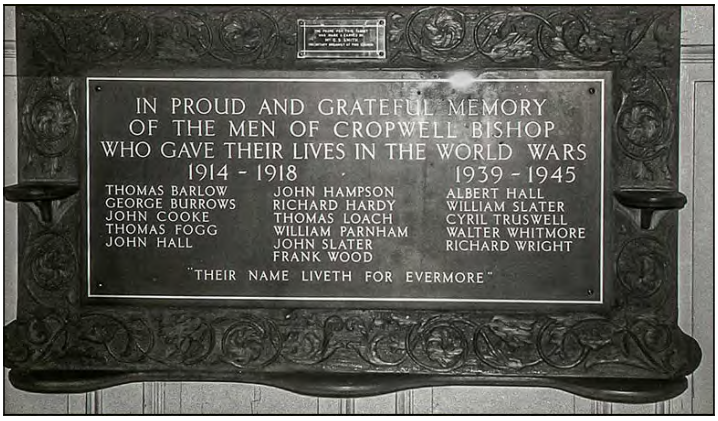
The object of the Society was to give financial assistance to its members in times of sickness, bereavement or death. The entrance fee was 5 shillings (25p) and membership was not limited to Methodists.

This venture clearly filled a need in village life and it prospered. In 1886 there were 120 members and the account had a credit balance of £534.

The Society also owned two fields of allotments which it let to members. One of those fields on Fern Road, is now occupied by the Cropwell Bishop Allotment Society.



George Smith (organist) and, on the right, younger brother, Harold Smith (Class Leader) (1930s)



Memorial Tablet unveiled in 1953 and on display in the Chapel. The frame was made and carved by George Smith (2020)

George Smith in 1920s

George Smith and his wife Winifred in the 1940s

Now, in the 21st Century, the days of large congregations and crowded Sunday Schools, are a distant memory. Nevertheless, there were still occasions when a large number of people went to our Chapel for a wedding or a funeral.

It remained a bright, spacious and attractive building which people enjoyed visiting during Village Celebration Weekends. And the Schoolroom was a handy place for meetings, to sell craft items, or just enjoy tea and cakes.

In 2022 it was used for the final time and was eventually sold to a private buyer in 2025.

At the back of the Chapel is a small allotment plot (2021)

Celebration Weekend 2009 4th July

Cropwell Singers in the Chapel 2011 26th November

August 2020

September 2020

September 2020

July 2021

Prior to the sale of the Chapel, there was a proposal to give the organ to Granby Church but the plan fell through.

It is quite understandable that the new owner has no desire to have such a big instrument in the corner of their lounge (assuming the building is to be a home) so it comes as no surprise that they want to sell it.

However, the organ lacks unique features and, as you can imagine, there is little demand for big organs in the age of electronic music.

Maybe someone will buy it because they want to integrate the organ pipes into a larger instrument. Or maybe an enterprising individual will see it on ebay, buy it, and then sell off the pipes individually. Can you visualise one in the corner of your room? Maybe for an upmarket doorbell?

It will be interesting to see how its future pans out. These photographs were taken in late 2025 after the Chapel was sold.

Did you you really think the back of the organ was just an empty space? (Must confess, I did!) Are these just spare pipes, I wonder; they don't look like working parts.

Approaching The Turn

As we make our way down the final stretch of Nottingham Road, we are getting closer to St Giles Church and the most ancient part of our village. Of course, the buildings that occupied the street a thousand years ago have long gone leaving no trace - except, maybe, the gentle curve of the road. Why is it curved, I wonder.

Could the stones in the walls of buildings and street walls, have come from the home of a 14th century farmer or merchant; we can only guess the answer.

If ever you see the road being dug up (it often is) look closely at the spoil heap and contemplate the cart wheels and feet that once trod those stones and dirt.

Other Street Stories have something to say about some of the buildings ahead, including the Butchers shop, those on Mill Lane, the Church and the houses at The Turn – but what of the others?

We will look first at the homes and then the businesses, before exploring the sites close to The Turn. This space (now a T-junction) in front of the church, earned its name from vehicles turning around there.

Homes before The Turn

(2020)

(2021)

(2020)

(2021)

(2020)

(2021)

(2020)

(2021)

(2020)

(2021)

This is No.3, Nottingham Road. It is named, 'Wheelwrights Cottage' – and with good reason. Back in the early 1900s it was home to Henry Smith - a man who made cart wheels (2021)

The wheelwright's shop at the rear of No.3, Nottingham Road. On the left is Henry Smith with his two sons and, on the right, Charles Harper. It was Charles Harper who made the wrought iron gates at the entrance to the Church on Fern Road. And he was the father of Aubrey Harper, who wrote the book, "Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop" (1900s)

Businesses before The Turn

As we approach The Turn, the first business we come to is the Butchers: you will read more about it in the next section.

Beside it, is the beauty salon, once called Beauty Box, but now Heavenly Beauty.

(2020)

This is how Beauty Box looked in 2008

Beauty Box became Beauty Barn and then Heavenly Beauty. Whether Box, Barn or Heavenly, it has long been the place for Beauty on Nottingham Road (2017)

The back of Harold Barlow's home in the 1970s

The Wheatsheaf and Nyce buildings are joined, but don't appear to have been built at the same time: can we tell which was built first? (2020)

This ancient building, is now home to three modern businesses, but was once the family home of Harold Barlow, the village butcher (2020)

Get your hair done at The Hair Barn, (right), then treat yourself to food at Nyce, next door (2020)

The staff at the Hair Barn have put a smile on the face of these two customers (2008)

It looks like there was once a double window on The Wheatsheaf's gable end; the adjoining roof overlaps it. Also, The Wheatsheaf's gables were originally built for a thatched roof, whilst the gables on the other building were not. There is little doubt that The Wheatsheaf is the older building (2020)

The Co-op shop moved to Nottingham Road from Church Street in early 2019 (2020)

In June 2018, the frame of the building was erected: 6 months later the shop was ready for opening (2020)

Opening Day: January 5th 2019 and the Co-op awaits its first customers

In 1960, a Co-op shop opened on this very same spot! Here is the first customer on its 'opening day'. However, it wasn't there for long: 2 years later it moved to Church Street where it remained until 2018

The Butchers

H. Barlow & Son Butchers in the 1970s. Find out more about Harold Barlow and his son in the Barlows Close Street Story

In 2001, young Harold Barlow died and a few years later Gary Jowett took over the Shop (2015)

Gary Jowett Butchers (2020)
Compare this photo with the earlier 1970s photo: notice that the bungalow next door has been enlarged into a house

Gary Jowett (2019)

Until about 50 years ago, Harold Barlow made use of the slaughterhouse at the back of the shop, but then new regulations forced it to closed. Nevertheless, the building itself is still there (2021)

(1980s)

The Turn

The Turn, is the junction of Fern Road, Church Street and Nottingham Road. It has probably looked the same, more or less, for centuries.

Old documents and maps have enabled us to envisage its appearance centuries ago, but the invention of photography, and its eventual use in Cropwell Bishop about 120 years ago, removed the need for us to try and imagine its appearance.

Now we are able to compare photos taken since that time, and search for changes ourselves. We don't have to rely upon the fallible memory of humans.

Nevertheless, the dating of old photos often relies on some detective work and can be an imprecise art.

St Giles Church towers over the trees in the churchyard and, in the foreground, is a regular field. This field is where the Co-op car park now is (1910s)

Girl with pram (1920s). The trees around the church are now much taller. Notice that the house on the left has had an extension built on the end. The church has a chimney, clearly visible to the left of the tower.

There is a wide pavement on the left, but none at all on the right (1930s)

People with a bicycle outside the Wheatsheaf (1930s) There is scaffolding around the church chimney

Girl Guides and Brownies parade on The Turn in the 1930s.
Is the lady at the top of the steps saluting them?
Are the two standing against the wall backing off from the fearsome guides? We shall never know.

The same spot today (2021)

The bend round to Church Street at The Turn in the 1940s.
The church no longer has a chimney (visible in the 1920s photo) but, if you walk around the church, you will find that there is still a chimney in the same location - it just doesn't have a high stack

A float, created by the Playgroup, rounds the same bend during the Village Parade in 1981

Woman with a pram (1950s)
Good pavements on both sides now and a telegraph pole has appeared on the left: it is still there today

The two daughters of Ann Mansell, who was a teacher at the Primary School, walk down Nottingham Road
(1989)

A peaceful moment (2004)

(2008)

(2006)

(2008)

(2020)

(2008)

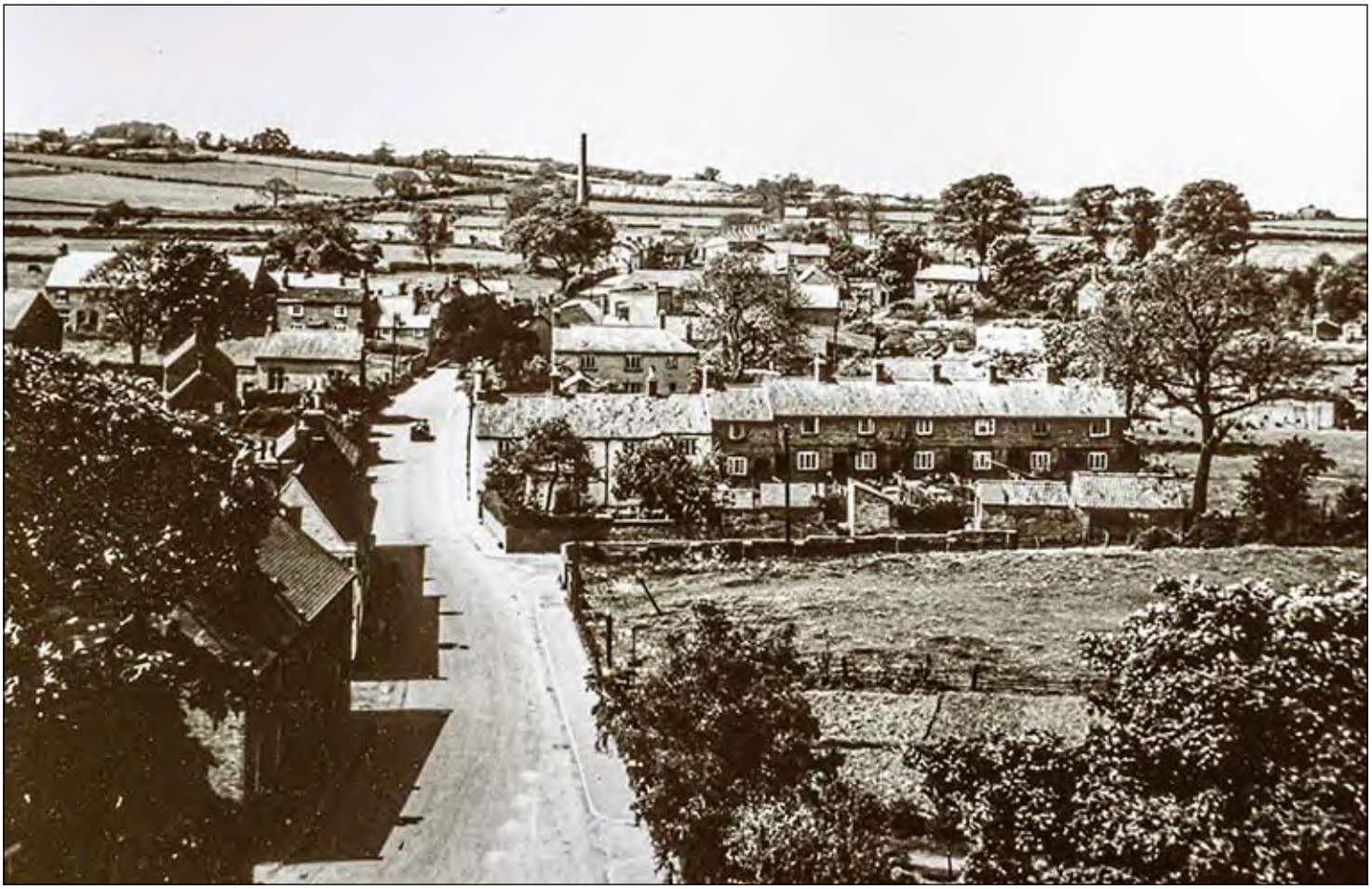
(2020)

Looking up Nottingham Road from The Turn

People gather outside the Wheatsheaf Inn in 1905. On the right, you can see the steam-powered mill on Mill Lane. Discover its history in the Mill Lane Street Story.

Compare this photo with the one above. Taken over a century later, the scene is still instantly recognisable. The vehicles on the road are the biggest difference. Nowadays, it is rare to see the road look like this: it is usually dominated by cars and vans, both moving and parked (2021)

Bus waiting for passengers (1930s)



1949. Taken from Church Tower.
Looking towards the "top end" - Cotton's chimney, Heaselden's clay tips and on the top left Skylark Hill

(1949)

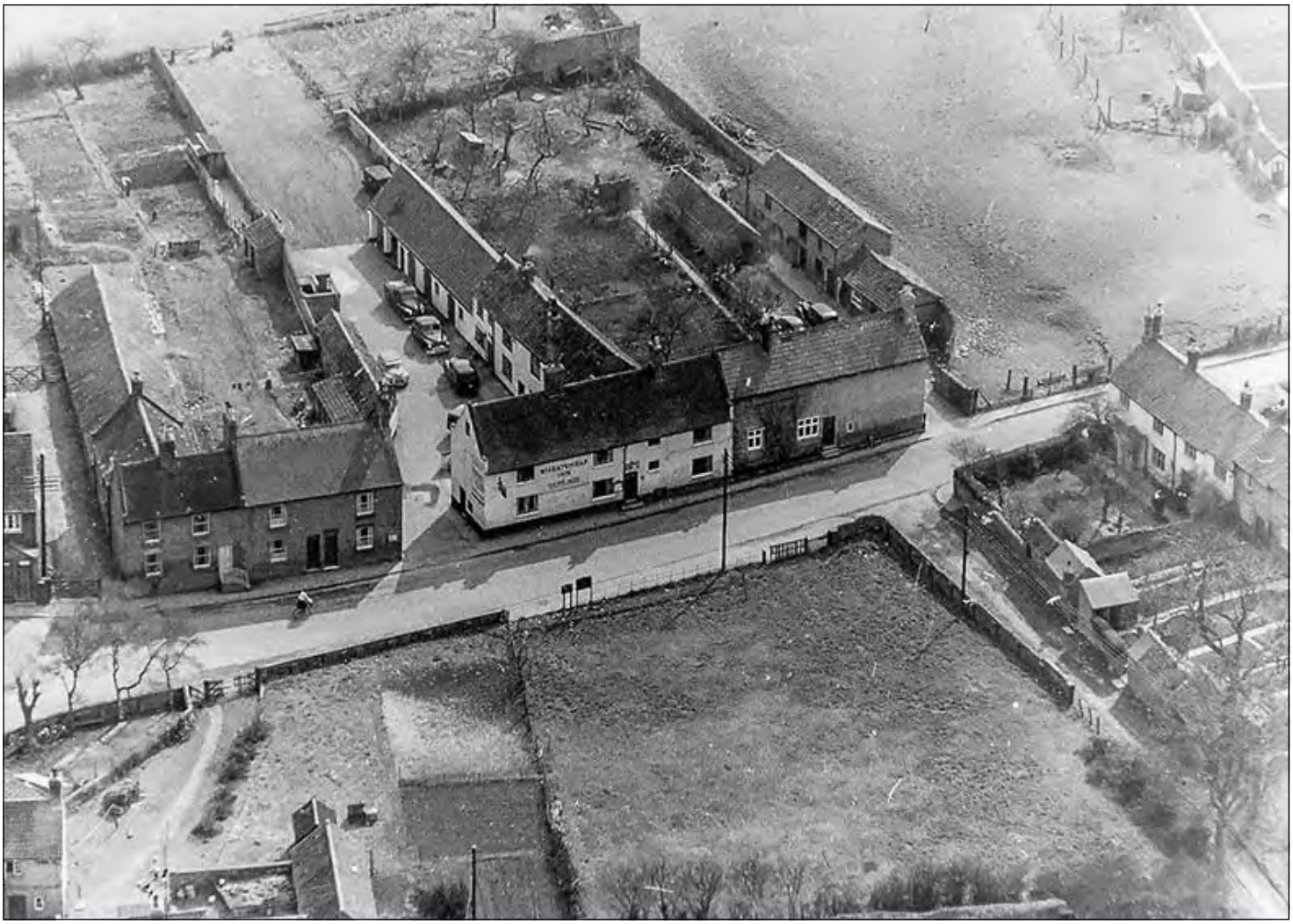
(1978 approx)

(1978 approx)

(2019)

(2021)

The Wheatsheaf Inn's Car Park



(1950s)

The Village Feast was held on the site of the car park in the 1950s. This view from is from The Wheatsheaf Inn. Read all about The Feast in the Mill Lane Street Story.

In June 2012, it was the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and there was a long weekend of events, both nationally and in Cropwell Bishop, to celebrate the occasion. First off, was a 3 mile walk to the top of Hoe Hill and then along the Grantham Canal. Here, in the Wheatsheaf's car park, villagers get in the mood before setting off.

For years it was the starting point for walks with the Cropwell Bishop Walking Group (2008)

The Walking Group were not put off by a sprinkling of snow (2010)

However, sunshine was preferred for those Sunday morning walks (2012)

A last look at the car park before the builders of the new Co-op arrive (2016)

The Wheatsheaf Inn

(2021)

At one time, there were five pubs in Cropwell Bishop and The Chequers Inn and The Wheatsheaf Inn are the oldest. The Wheatsheaf is many centuries old, and the present building was almost certainly built on the site of a previous one.

Nowadays, we call it a pub, but before the days of motorised transport, it would have been a genuine inn – somewhere for you and your horse to rest overnight.

It would also have been an important meeting place for village folk. To appreciate why, you have to imagine what life was like for working families a hundred years ago.

You and your partner lived in a two-up, two-down house with as many as 8 children. Your cooking range was fired by wood, or maybe coal, and the only other heat in the house came from a single open fire in the living room. Your toilet (in some form) and wash-house were out back, and you fetched fresh water from a spring or the canal.

Imagine a long, dark, cold evening in winter when your only lighting is from candles and the flames of a coal fire. Putting a fresh lump of coal on the fire could be distressing: it was like burning money. I recall my own grandfather putting a brick or two in the fire-grate to make the fire smaller and burn more slowly - and so save coal. And he was an ex-coal miner who received a free coal allowance!

As for home entertainment, there would have been none, unless you made the effort to create it. But then, you were tired after 10 hours hoeing the fields, mining gypsum, or making bricks. Or tired from doing the housework, mending clothes, and cooking for everyone in the house.

For men, at least, the attraction of escaping to a pub with heating, lighting, drinks and the company of others must have been irresistible. For housewives, it was not an option.

The Wheatsheaf is a stones-throw from St Giles, and so was the go-to place after church events, like funerals. And not just funerals. A newspaper report of a hundred years ago describes an inquest being held at The Wheatsheaf.

Then there were the Hunts, with horses, dogs, riders and followers who would gather in the field opposite (now a car park). All good trade for the landlord.

Indeed, being the landlord of a pub could be an attractive and profitable occupation. The photos we have from the 1930s when a Percy Brown was landlord, appear to support this idea.

Similarly, wealthy farmer Robert Smith had the Lime Kiln Inn built in 1840 and appears to have made it highly profitable.

More recently, successful footballers were also attracted to the idea of running a country pub after retirement.

Tommy Lawton, a star international player with Notts

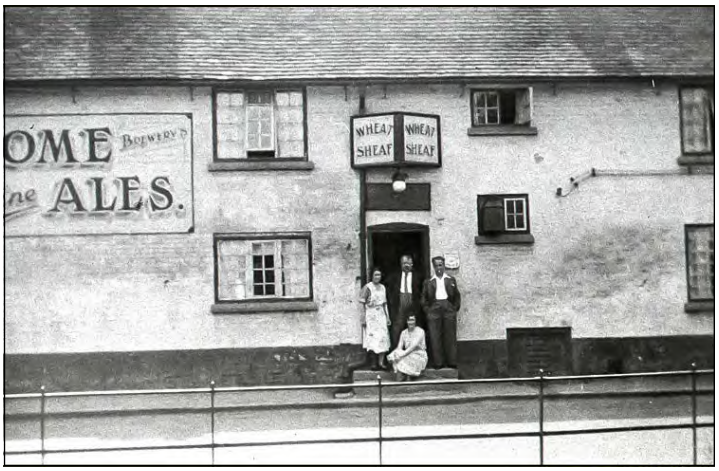
County in the 1940s, took over the Magna Carta pub, in Lowdham, in the 1960s.

Pubs, everywhere, face a challenging time. Life has changed in every respect since their heyday, and it will need imagination, courage and investment to ensure their future. Our two surviving pubs are no exception.

Percy Brown watches horse and cart outside The Wheatsheaf Inn (1930s)

The Hunt, meeting outside The Wheatsheaf Inn (1930s)

The Wheatsheaf Inn during the 1930s



Landlord, Percy Brown and his wife at The Wheatsheaf (1930s)

Percy looks out from the cellar trapdoor of The Wheatsheaf (1930s)

Percy, Lucy Guy, Margaret Brown, Marjorie Knight and Barbara Hall with a water cart.
The cart was used for carrying water from the canal before piped water came to the village in the early 1930s. Water from wells in the village was very hard because of the gypsum. The canal water was used for washing and also for brewing beer. The carts were hired for a copper (penny) or two.
(1930s)

Percy with daughter, Margaret, outside The Wheatsheaf. Standing in front of the brewery lorry. (1930s)

Men drinking in the backyard of The Wheatsheaf (1930s)

The backyard of The Wheatsheaf with landlord, Percy Brown (1930s)

Percy on a tricycle; he doesn't look a regular cyclist (1930s)

Percy and daughter Margaret with their pig (1930s)

Mrs Brown with dog outside The Wheatsheaf (1930s)

Lucy Guy and Margaret Brown in Wheatsheaf backyard (1930s)

Mrs Brown (1930s)

Mrs Brown and daughter Margaret (1930s)

Brewery delivery man at The Wheatsheaf. (1930s)

Young lady in the backyard of The Wheatsheaf. (1930s)

The Wheatsheaf Inn – from 1960s to 2021

Backyard of The Wheatsheaf (1960s)

The Wheatsheaf Inn (1978)

The Wheatsheaf Inn at night (2013)

View of The Wheatsheaf from the fields behind (2015)

(2021)

(2021)

The Village parade prior to the Annual Fete (1980s)

Tony Jarrow – June 2025
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Jacques Lacey, Tony Carter, Norman Sheppard, Pam Barlow, Chris Keast, the Sheppard family, the late Rick Hickman, Brian Howell, Lol Simpson, John Greenwood, Sue Ward, Sue Rickells, Jane Jones, Steve Smith and Kevin Mason for their help and information for this Story.

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

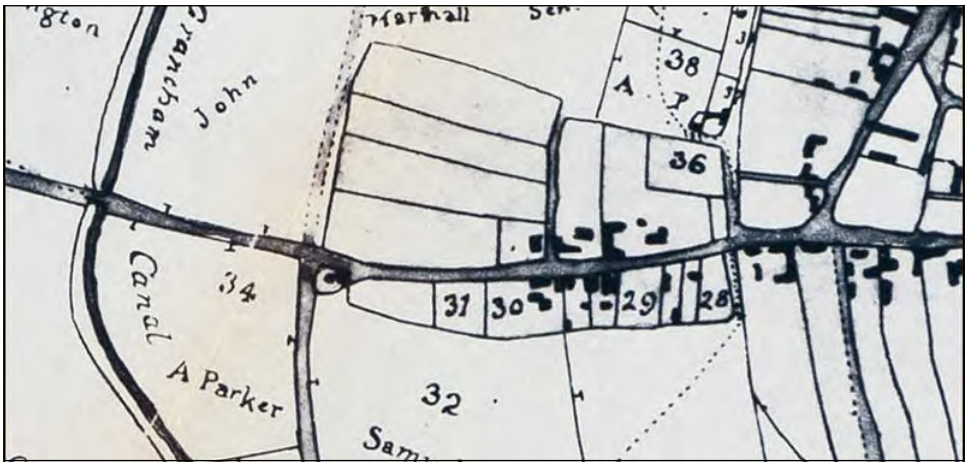
by Tony Jarrow

2025

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

The homes on Old Lenton Close have a unique style. The name of the street is unusual too; it is not derived from a person but from the house next door.

In fact, the naming of Old Lenton Close cannot be understood without some knowledge of the history of that house next door: Lenton House. It goes back a long way, but evidence of its past is all around.



1804 Enclosure map – but it does not show Lenton House

Old Lenton Close in the snow (2021)

Lenton House is at the far end of the Close.

I suppose you could think about the story of Lenton House as one of growth and decline. That, at least, might be how a farmer would look at it. Its residents would see it as one of continual growth, right up to the present day.

A hundred years ago, on a journey along Nottingham Road and then out of the village (in either direction), you would have passed by six or more farmhouses – most of them part of fully working farms.

Before the days of motorised transport and tractors it made sense to have a farmhouse and buildings close to the village centre where transport and labourers were based. Lenton House was part of that farming community.

There is anecdotal evidence that the original farmhouse was built around 1790 but finding hard facts to support this view has proved impossible. Nevertheless, I decided to search Census data and old maps to try and disprove the idea – or not.

The map drawn up for the Enclosure Act of 1804 shows how the land in the parish was allocated to its landowners. It also appears to show the buildings in the village at that time.

If Lenton House was supposedly built 14 years before 1804, it should be on the map – but it isn't. So, does this mean, I wonder, that the 1790 date is wrong. Not necessarily.

If you look at the small print on any map, whether it be an OS map, an ancient one, or even Google Earth, you will almost certainly find that it is based on an older version that has been updated several times over.

The buildings on the 1804 Enclosure map may well have been based on surveys conducted some time before 1790, which could explain why Lenton House does not appear on it.

What we can be certain of, is that Lenton House was built in two phases – decades apart. There is ample evidence to support this.

The rear-half and front-half of the house differ in brickwork, construction, floor levels and ceiling height: they also have their own staircase. The rear-half does appear to be older and it is where the kitchen is located.

Any new house has to have a kitchen and only the rear-half of Lenton House has a kitchen (an old one) so it must have been part of the original farmhouse.

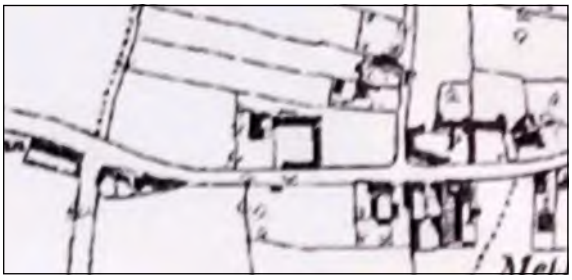
Finding evidence for the age of the original farmhouse proved difficult, but finding the date of its enlargement and the building of many new farm buildings was easy: the builder put it on an outside wall in numbers 2m high using coloured bricks.

Lenton House underwent a great deal of building work in 1842 – the year is on the end of the barn

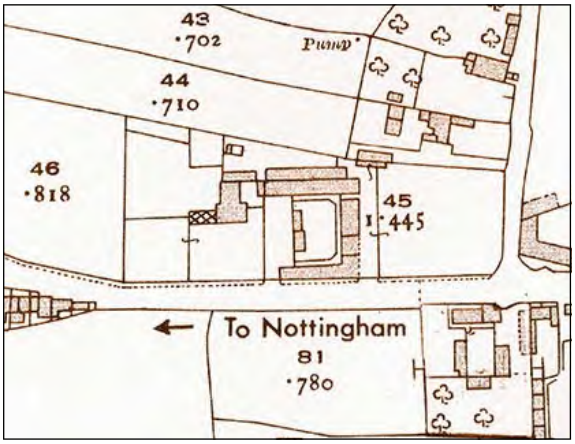
This was when John Smith took over the farm and the house. He is thought to have bought them in 1841 but he did not move in until 1844, together with his wife, Ann, and two children. Up until that time they were living at The Yews farmhouse further down Nottingham Road (on the corner of Barratt Close).

Although there is no date plaque on the newer, front-half of the house, there is every reason to believe that it was built at the same time as the outbuildings. John Smith was a wealthy farmer and it is hard to imagine him moving from The Yews farmhouse into a smaller one when he clearly had the money to build a better one.

A map from the 1890s shows the house with its newer front half.



Old Lenton House in the 1890s. The outline of the house and outbuildings is the same in later maps.



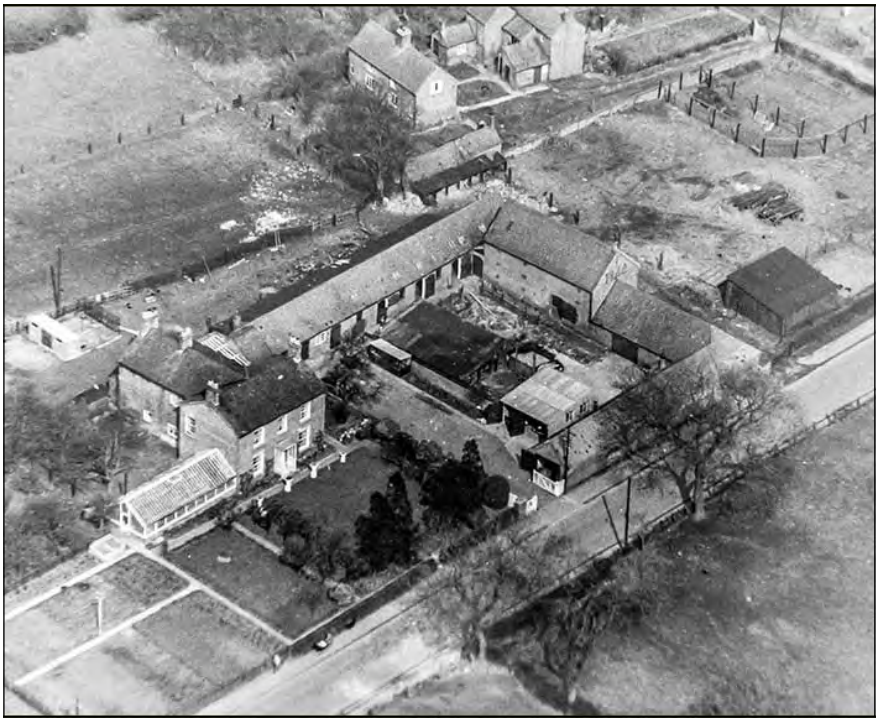
Plan of Old Lenton House in the 1960s

John Smith was still living there but he was now an old man: it is not likely that he would have embarked on major building work at this stage of his life.

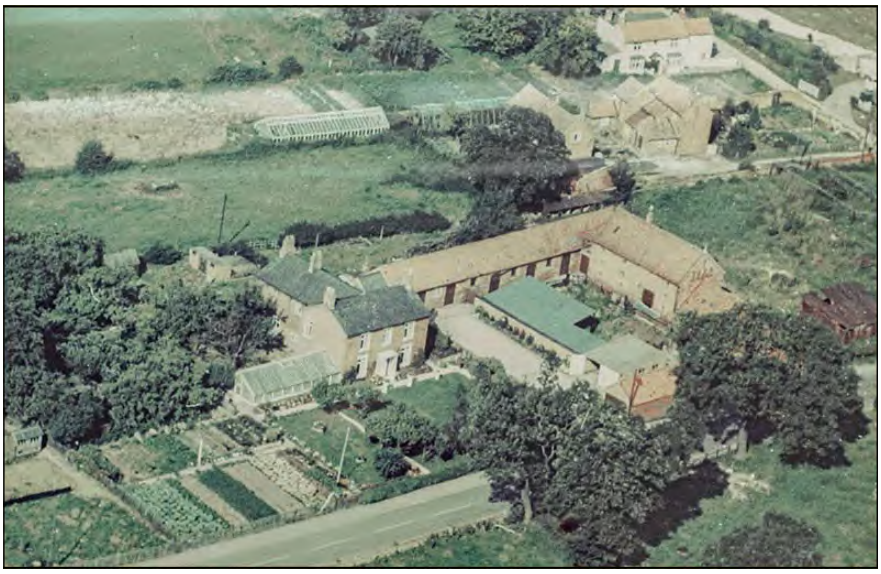
The front of the house today looks the same (more or less) as it did in 1842 – that is what all the available evidence suggests.

The outbuildings have not fared so well. When Hoe View Road (newer end) was joined up to Nottingham Road in the 1970s, much of the farmyard had to be trimmed back.

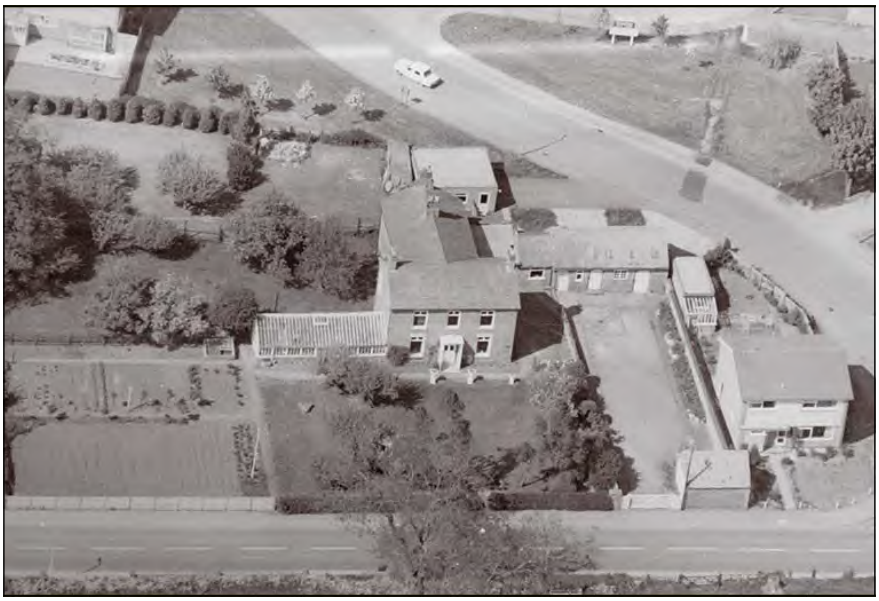
Lenton House in 2021



Lenton House and farm buildings (1960 approx)



House and farm buildings in 1965



1977. The farmyard has been much reduced in size to make way for Hoe View Road and its new houses

Lenton House timeline

Over the past two hundred years, several families have lived in the farmhouse and run the farm. Two farming families have been responsible for over half of those years: the Smiths and the Barlows.

Nonetheless, all the occupants have played a part in maintaining and enhancing the house and its surroundings.

Here is a summary of dates and characters in the story:

1790

It seems quite likely that the oldest part of the house was built around this time, but there is a lack of supporting evidence. The occupants are unknown.

However, there is ample evidence that the house was built in two phases, decades apart, and that the second phase began in 1841.

1841

John and Ann Smith took over the farm and farmhouse in 1841. They had been living at The Yews farmhouse since 1824.

John Smith, who was 45, invested a lot of time and money in the farm and house even before moving in. The "1842" on the end of a barn confirms the year it was built, and their still exists a water pump with the year, 1842, on it.

The earlier farmhouse was end-on to the road but the extension he added, faces the road.

This front-half has higher ceilings and other features that differ from the back-half.

John Smith was the biggest landowner in Cropwell Bishop at the time and the farm became known as 'Smith's Farm'.

1881

John Smith died in 1881. His wife, Ann, had already died 13 years earlier.

Their daughter, Elizabeth, moved into the house with her husband, William Briggs, and for a while they lived at the farm. However, William was not a farmer, but a grocer who had lived and worked in Old Lenton in Nottingham – and he was 55 years old.

A short time later, Elizabeth and William's daughter, Elizabeth Ann, moved in with her husband, 39-year-old George Cheetham.

They had been living in the Old Lenton area of Nottingham where, most importantly, George had been a farmer.

1890s

Fifty years of ownership by the Smith family, came to an end when the farm was bought by 45-year-old farmer, Henry Alwyne Tinsley. This happened sometime in the 1890s and is confirmed by the 1891 Census. He moved in with his wife and ever-growing family.

Not only was he a farmer, but also a representative of the Home Brewery Company.

1926

In 1926 Henry Tinsley was 60-years-old and he sold the farm to 23-year-old farmer, Arthur William Barlow. Arthur was the son of Thomas Barnet Barlow who was a major Cropwell Bishop landowner.

In 1928, young Arthur married Gladys May Salvin and their first child, David Barlow, was born in 1930. Son John and daughter Edith May followed in the next few years.

1974

In 1974, Arthur and Gladys Barlow had lived at Lenton House for nearly 50 years, and had successfully coped with several years of disruption while their farm was trimmed to allow a new entrance to Hoe View Road to be created.

But then, at the age of 71, Arthur died following a short illness.

His wife, Gladys, went on to have a bungalow built near the centre of the village – opposite the Wheatsheaf Pub. She lived there until her death, at the age of 96, in the year 2000.

1975

Lenton House was taken over by Arthur and Glady's daughter, Edith, and her husband, Denis Smith.

Denis was a builder, and spent time modernising the house.

Edith and Denis then let the house to Peter and Margaret Cole for a number of years.

1988

Lenton House was bought by Simon and Jane Jackson.

2006

In 2006, the house was bought by Ken and Theresa Davis who, over the years, sympathetically modernised the house and outbuildings.

An ancient well was tastefully restored and brought into working order. The water level is very low and has, no doubt, been that way since gypsum mining disrupted natural water supplies 80 years ago.

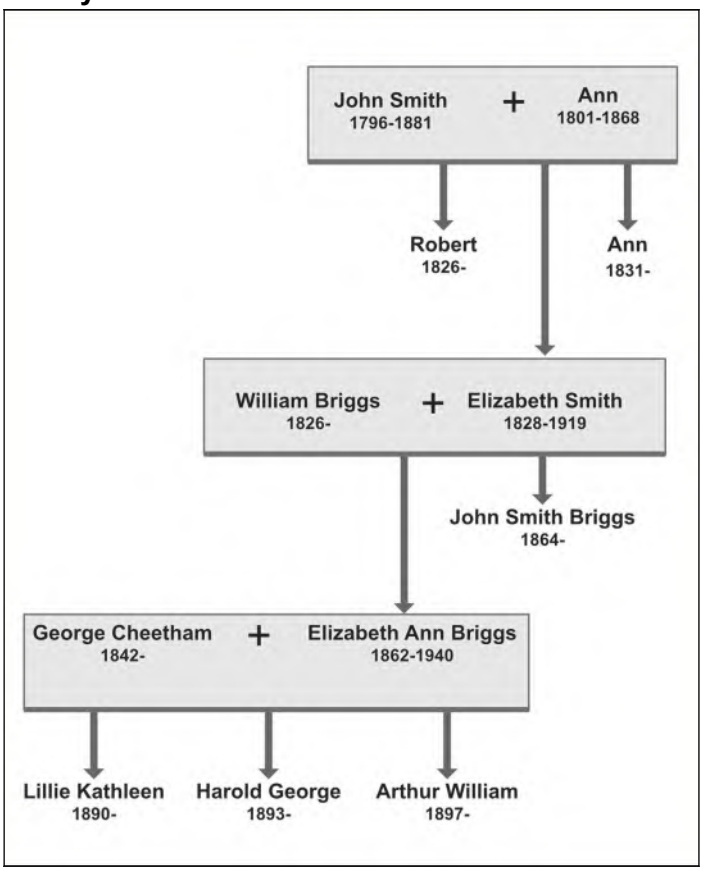
Nevertheless, with the help of electricity, water can be pumped through the original 1842 hand pump.

The house was sold by Ken and Theresa in 2022.

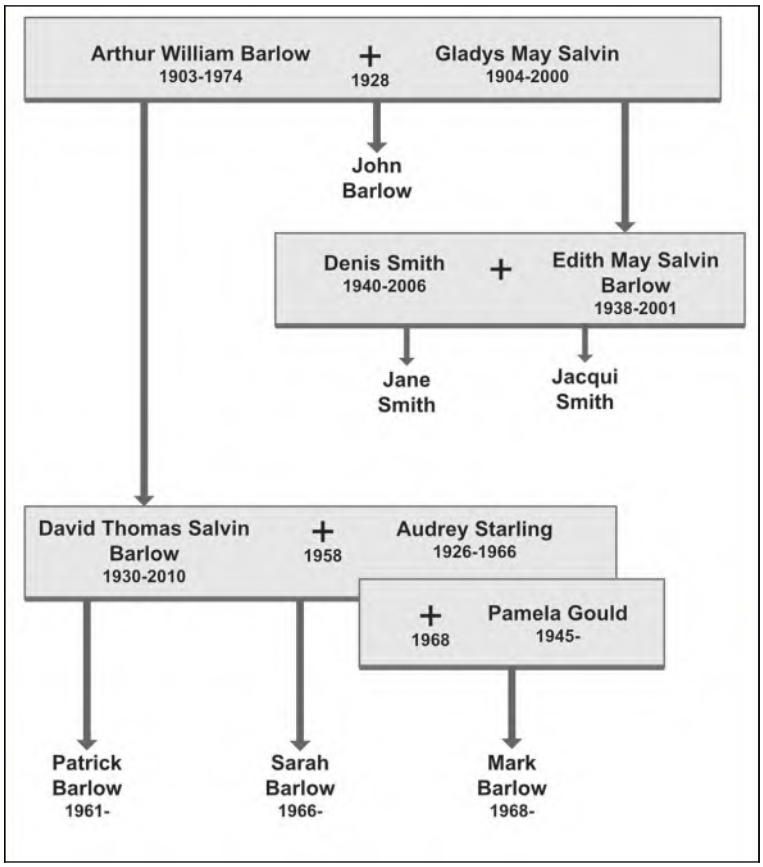
Looking up Nottingham Road in 1905 with, on the right with a haystack, Lenton House Farm (although not called that then)

Lenton House is decorated for the celebration of King George 5th Silver Jubilee in 1935

Family trees



John Smith Family Tree



Arthur Barlow Family Tree

Old Lenton Close: its building and its name

This story is about Old Lenton Close and yet, so far, I haven't explained where the name comes from: time to make amends.

The naming of Old Lenton Close follows from the name of Lenton House so we must first find out where that name, "Lenton House", comes from.

For, at least, the first 100 years of its existence, the house was not called Lenton House. When it was taken over by John Smith in the 1840s, it became known as Smith's Farm, but I doubt it had a name plaque on its gate.

In those days, the main roads through the village were all referred to as 'Main Street'. The few other streets that existed, acquired their name through popular usage, most often from the name of someone living there.

Examples include Billings Lane, Thraves Lane and Starbucks Yard. If those people moved from the street or died, the name would eventually change. Street names were not cast in stone.

The same was true of houses. Examples include rows of houses like Parkers Row and Etheldene Cottages. Similarly, individual houses like School House and Shelton Farm.

So, once John Smith built his farm, it wouldn't have been long before it became known as Smith's Farm. When Henry Tinsley took over in the 1890s, it would have been known as Tinsley's Farm.

When Arthur Barlow took over in 1926 you might assume that it became known as Barlow's Farm – and maybe it did, but there is good reason for it not to have been.

Arthur's father, Thomas Barnet Barlow, was also a farmer in Cropwell Bishop and having two farms being called Barlow's Farm needed to be avoided.

Whatever the timing, we know for certain that by 1939 it was called Lenton House because it is listed as such in the 1939 National Register. But you may wonder, where did this name come from.

I have not discovered a document that provides the answer, but there are clues in the family's history.

Whilst Arthur was born in Cropwell Bishop, Gladys was born on Albert Grove, Nottingham – or, to be more precise, in Lenton. She also spent her childhood there.

I believe that this is why Lenton House was so named.

This is all very well, but now we need to understand how Old Lenton Close got its name. To do that, we need to delve into the history of the land that the street occupies.

By the 1980s, Denis and Edith Smith owned Lenton House and all the land between it and the Memorial Hall Field (or, at least, up to the bridlepath beside it). In 1988 they sold Lenton House but retained much of the garden on its left.

They, no doubt, recognised the potential of the remaining land for housing but knew that before this could happen, they would have to deal with a building at the western end of the plot: a large commercial Garage with a DIY wood shop at the rear. Fortunately, they owned both.

A Garage had stood on the site for over 50 years. Photographs taken after 1929 show a smart efficient looking garage and filling station. The first filling station in the UK appeared in 1920 so to have one like this in Cropwell Bishop just 10 or so years later was quite an achievement.

This Garage was referred to as Tinsley's Garage. It was Henry Tinsley who owned Lenton House before Arthur Barlow, but Henry died in 1934. It seems to me, more likely that it was

Henry's son, Harold, who ran the Garage.

He was married to Violet Barlow, sister of Arthur Barlow – an example of the many links between village families in those days, which was typical of most old English villages before the First World War.

In 1939, the Garage was being run by Francis Kent who described himself as a "motorcycle and general engineer". His wife, Edith, was a "shopkeeper" and 18-year-old, Robert, was a "motor mechanic". And according to the 1939 Register, they were living at the Garage.

Francis Kent's shop (left) and home (right) in the late 1930s. The Garage is not shown but was to the right.
Compare this photo with the 'Garage in the 1960s' photo where you can identify the home as being the left-hand end of the Garage itself.

On the left is the shop, and on the right a “small bungalow” – which was actually part of the Garage building. The Garage was probably the same as it was during Henry Tinsley's tenure.

The Garage and filling station were still fully operational in the 1970s but once large supermarkets began selling discounted fuel, the petrol pumps of Cropwell Bishop disappeared.

The Garage mechanics remained until the 1980s when everything disappeared to make way for Old Lenton Close.

The homes on Old Lenton Close were all built at the same time but four of them face onto Nottingham Road. For this reason, they are classed as being on Nottingham Road and their house numbers reflect this. However, for this Street Story, I decided that it was only logical to consider all the houses as being part of Old Lenton Close. Let's now consider the choice of name.

Parish Councillors may have thought to call it Lenton Close but then rejected the idea because it was too similar to Lenton House next door.

Assuming there was a desire to maintain the connection with Gladys Barlow's childhood district of Lenton, they may have been inspired by earlier occupants of Lenton House.

Garage in the 1960s

Modernised Garage in the 1980s with a DIY shop at the rear which Denis Smith ran. On the right is a small paddock which sometimes held ponies.

Tinsley's Garage in the 1930s

1930s. Zooming in on previous photo: could that be Harold Tinsley on the right?

John and Ann Smith had been the original long-term occupants of the house and in the 1890s the families of both of their daughters successively lived there. Both of these families had been living and working in Nottingham – in Old Lenton.

The street name, Old Lenton Close, links nicely with the Smith and Barlow families. Maybe this was how it came to be chosen.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Ken & Theresa Davis, Ricky James, Debbie Brookes, Lesley Shuttlewood and Tony Carter for their help with this Story.

Tinsley's Garage, on the right, in the 1930s. The roof of the Memorial Hall in the distance proves the photo was taken after 1929

More photos of Lenton House

A centuries old well is sited next to the farmhouse. The brickwork has been restored and a grid installed to make it safe.
The well hole is deep but the water at the bottom is shallow. Ever since deep gypsum mining disrupted water supplies, the well is no longer able to supply a regular water supply to the house – but at least Severn Trent Water can.

For effect, an electric pump can deliver water from the well through the nozzle of the original manual water pump

The year, 1842, is cast onto the nozzle backplate.

The water that flows from the nozzle, is returned to the well for recycling

Old Lenton Close in 2020

These houses were built as part of the Old Lenton Close development but they have a Nottingham Road address

Houses with a Nottingham Road address

Lenton House

Lenton House

Many of the old farm buildings beside Lenton House were demolished in 1970 to make way for the entrance to a newly built extension of Hoe View Road

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2025

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Oldfield Gardens is the most easterly street in Cropwell Bishop. It is also, at the time of writing, the newest.

Many of the homes have views of Spring Hill where there was once a water spring. Beyond the hill, but out of sight, lies the Vale of Belvoir.

The land on which they, and those of the other streets on this estate, are built, was once owned by Terry Oldfield.

The Oldfield family once had links to the eastern side of the village. Up until the early 1980s, there had been a farmhouse on Church Street and this house was, for a time, Terry Oldfield's family home.

The house was Old Hall Farm and it was over a hundred years old. Its history was unusual in that it had once been a manor house. That meant that the owner had partial responsibility (along with the other manor house owner in the village) for the maintenance of the chancel in St Giles Church, that is the area containing the altar.

This was a liability passed from owner to owner of the land that the house occupied – land that had once been owned by the Church.

However, in 1936, when the house was owned by John Sheldon of Cropwell Butler, he paid the Church £1500 to free himself of the responsibility. That was a lot of money in those days; there would be much left over even after buying new goblets, carpet, kneeling cushions and maybe a bigger collection box.

Terry Oldfield's parents were Henry Oldfield and Dora Sheldon who was from Stragglethorpe. They married in Cotgrave in 1913 but went to live in Cheadle in Cheshire where they had 5 children, the youngest being Terry.

Dora's family, the Sheldons, was well-established in Cropwell Butler and in 1954 Terry came back to Cropwell to live at Old Hall Farm. He married Veronica Cox in 1967 and they had 2 children. He farmed the land on the east side of the village including the field below Spring Hill.

In 1974 he moved to Cropwell Butler where he lived until his death in 2006.

Whilst his move from the village broke the link between the Oldfield family and Old Hall Farm, the link between the family and Cropwell Bishop remains; Terry's son, William, now lives here with his family.

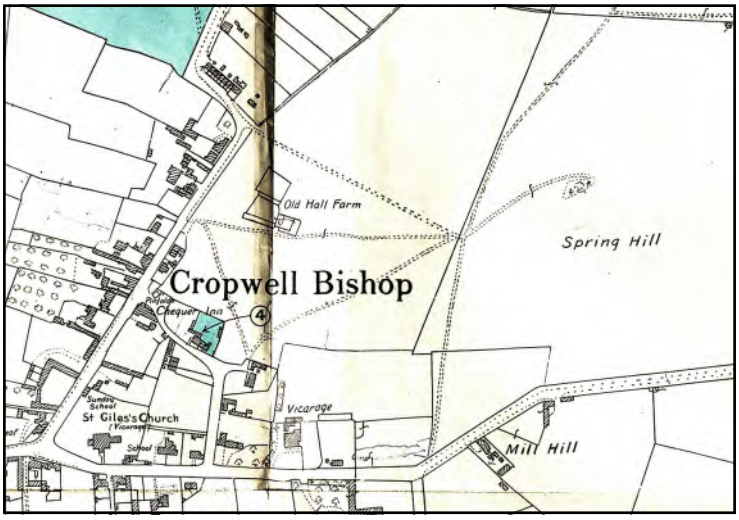
It was in the late 1980s that the farmhouse was demolished to make way for the homes of Springfield Close and Rawlings Court.

Then, in 2021, Bloor Homes began building the houses of Simpson Drive, Hopewell Street, Walker Close and then, last of all, Oldfield Gardens. By the end of 2025 the job was finished.

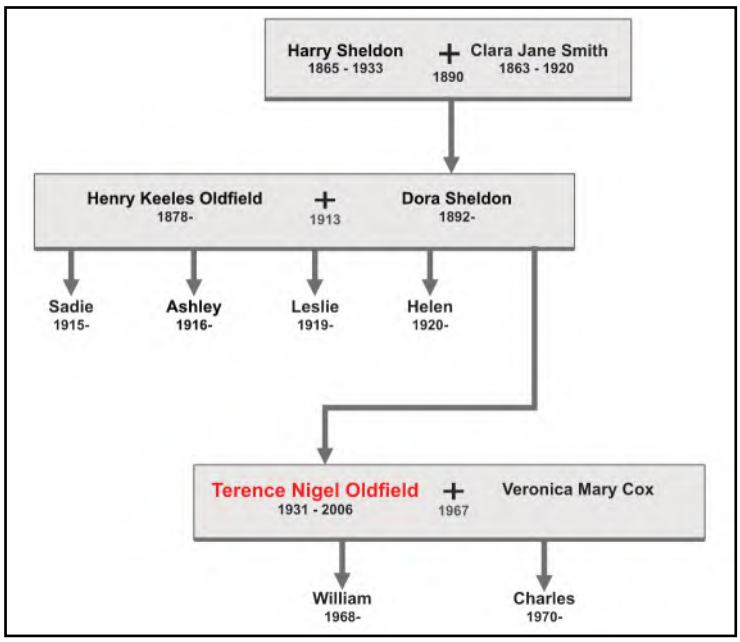
Tony Jarrow – November 2025
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza for her help with this Story.

Old Hall Farm in 1972



1930s map showing Old Hall Farm and Spring Hill



Oldfield family tree

Building Oldfield Gardens

Aug 2021

Nov 2021

March 2023

Feb 2025

Feb 2025

Oldfield Gardens in 2025

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Parkin Close was named after William Parkin; no argument, no discussion. To paraphrase the chants from football terraces, “there is only one William Parkin”.

William didn’t inherit lots of land or money from his parents, nor did he make loads of money by farming hundreds of acres. He didn’t own a big house; he didn’t have a grand title and he wasn’t the leader of an army or The Hunt. And yet, William Parkin had a bigger, positive effect on the lives of more people in Cropwell Bishop than anyone else in its history.

William Parkin was the School Master at the village School on Fern Road from 1878. This was not a time when a school leader sat in an office doing endless paperwork punctuated by morning assembly and the odd cover lesson. He was very much a hands-on teacher. He would have had one or two assistant teachers but, never-the-less, he would have known every child and probably the rest of his or her family.

The catchment area was “walking distance” for a child of 5 and upwards. That would have included Owthorpe, Colston Bassett and Cropwell Butler – plus the Cropwell Bishop kids. They would have been taught at the school until they were 10 years old (11 from 1893) and then left. Not to go to the “big school” in a nearby town, but to go to work – or to war.

As we grow older, we look back and recognise that of all the people we cross paths with in life, only a small number leave a lasting impression. We are inspired by those who show us how to think, teach us practical skills or open a window on places and people way beyond family and local life.

Then there are people who inspire us by their actions, the way they live their life and the things they achieve.

I think William Parkin inspired the people of Cropwell Bishop a century ago in all these ways.

Parkin Close in early 1970s

Parkin Close was named before the fashion of naming streets after people was the habit of Parish councillors. It was built in 1968 – about 14 years after the building of the northern end of Hoe View Road – and the homes were built for a different purpose.

The late 1960s and early 1970s heralded a great expansion in Cropwell Bishop’s population. This growth was worrying for some of the resident population who were apprehensive about the changes ahead.

Providing access roads to the new homes necessitated the demolition of a number of old cottages and houses in the village. At the same time, there were other old houses that were in need of replacement.

The homes on Parkin Close, together with other homes on Hoe View Road near its entrance, were built by Bingham Rural District Council in 1968 to house those village families in need of a new home. Most are now privately owned and one is still being lived in by the same family that moved in from new.

So, what of the man who gave his name to the street?

William Parkin was born in Attercliffe, Yorkshire in 1855.

He became School Master at Cropwell Bishop Elementary School (the building we now call ‘The Old School’) on Fern Road in 1878 when he was 23 years old. He continued living in the village up to his death in 1944 when he was 89.

During his 67 years in Cropwell Bishop, his influence on villagers was immense. No other person has had such a massive, beneficial effect on the lives of the people of Cropwell Bishop. He was so much more than a dedicated teacher: he became the leader of life in the village.

William and Elizabeth Parkin (1910s)

Before his arrival, Cropwell Bishop had the National school on Church Street – the small building we now call the Parish schoolroom. That was built in 1850 when education was not compulsory. School attendance was poor.

Even after 1870, when education became compulsory, attendance declined. It didn't help that the vicar 'kept an eye on the curriculum' which particularly annoyed Methodists who had a strong following in the village. Eventually, in 1875, because so few children were turning up, the school closed.

In 1877, a tender from local builder David Salvin for a "School and School House" for £774 was accepted by the Board of Education.

In 1878 the school was completed and the post of 'Master' was advertised. The School Board, which comprised of Cropwell Bishop men, chose 23-year-old William Parkin and he began teaching in September 1878. He was an ardent Methodist.

We know that in 1881, when he was 26, he was still boarding at one of the cottages at The Turn (the junction of Nottingham Road and Church Street). Maybe the School House was still being built.

Living nearby was the large Wright family and the eldest daughter, 19-year-old Elizabeth, was a school teacher. She probably taught alongside William:

The School (1920s)

School and School House in the 1920s

William (behind the bat) after a cricket match on the field where the Health Centre now stands (1880s)

she certainly made an impression on him.

A few years later, the whole of the Wright family emigrated to New Zealand. However, it wasn't long before Elizabeth returned and in 1889, she and William were married at St Giles Church and moved into their home - the School House.

Previously, in 1882, William's older brother George who was also a qualified teacher, had moved to Cropwell Bishop and taught alongside William at the School. He went on to board with William and Elizabeth at the School House and worked at the school for at least 10 years. In 1901 he was no longer boarding at the house and no longer appears in School photos.

Elizabeth taught needlework to the older girls on Tuesday and Friday afternoons and continued doing so for the next 35 years. William and Elizabeth had no children of their own.

To quote Aubrey Harper, author of Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop, who knew the Parkins; "William's advice was sought on the making of wills, on how to deal with official letters and on all domestic issues. He took a very active part in the life of the village and was greatly respected."

He was a keen supporter of the Cropwell Cricket Club and secretary of both the Angling Club and Cropwell Sick Club.

He filled many positions in the village including; Chapel Steward, Superintendent of the Sunday School, Local Preacher, occasional organist, and Parish Overseer.

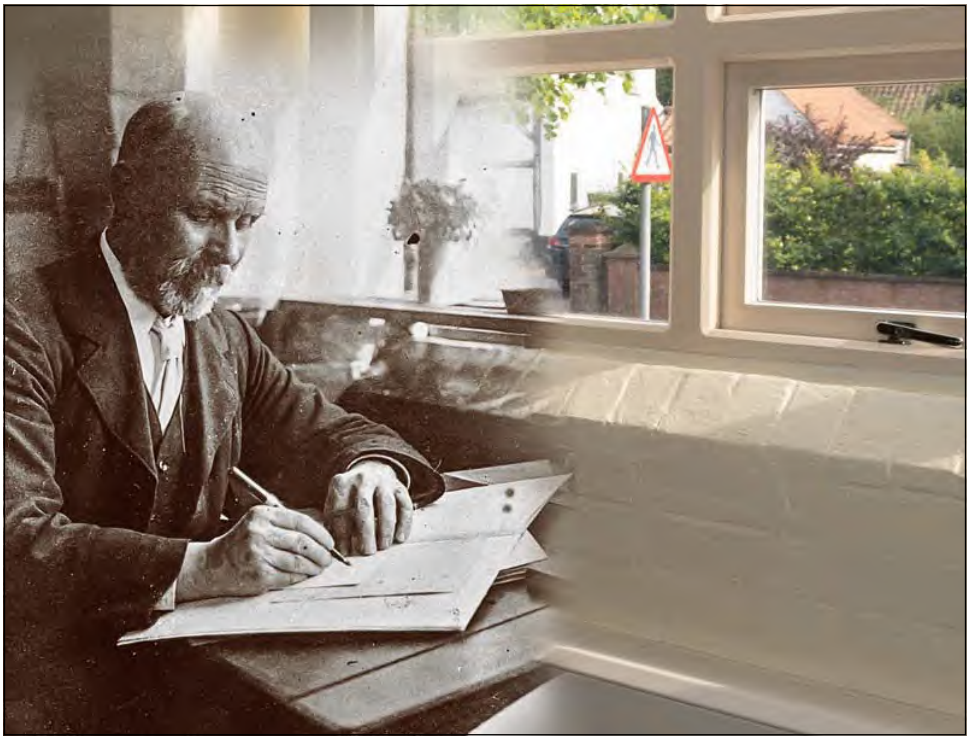
When the very first Parish Council was elected in 1894, he received the most votes. Brother George became Clerk. Later, William also became a Bingham Rural Councillor.

When he retired from teaching in 1920, he had been Head Teacher at the School since its beginning 42 years earlier. And yet, a project for which he is most remembered by many, did not begin until 4 years later.

Both William and Elizabeth had devoted themselves to the people of the village. Maybe, because they had no children of their own, they looked upon the village children as their extended family. Imagine their feelings during the 4 long years of the World War from 1914 to 1918 when children they had taught were enduring horrific experiences, injuries and even death on the other side of the English

School Photo 1893. William Parkin with his brother George behind

Cropwell Bishop Cricket Team (1910) – William Parkin holding the bat



William Parkin sat here, in the School , in the 1910s

William Parkin with a class in 1900s

Class photo in 1910 - merged with same wall today

Channel. Eleven Cropwell Bishop men died in that War.

Following the War, villagers were determined to establish a lasting memorial to those who had died. The biggest idea was for a village Memorial Hall. Encouraged by the moral and financial support of Mr J. N. Derbyshire, owner of the Gotham Company that mined gypsum in the village, a building committee was formed in 1924 and William Parkin was its secretary.

The Hall would cost £1220 and over half was raised by the people of Cropwell Bishop. Villagers also helped keep costs down by doing a lot of the hard work themselves. Men, wives and children devoted their spare evenings to get the job done.

The final go-ahead to build the Hall came in 1928 and by the summer of 1929 it was finished.

On the 3rd August 1929, Mrs J.N. Derbyshire officially opened the Hall alongside William and Elizabeth Parkin.

Three years later there was an even bigger event in the history of the

Awaiting the official opening of the Memorial Hall by Mrs J. N. Derbyshire (3rd August 1929)

Memorial Hall and the village: Royalty paid us a visit.

On the 29th June 1932, the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) visited Cropwell Bishop as part of his 'Social Services Tour' of the country. Fittingly, it was William Parkin who welcomed him and accompanied him on his whistle-stop tour of the Memorial Hall. He flew into Tollerton airfield and arrived at the Hall at 2.20pm.

He was there for only 15 minutes but photographs suggest that villagers saw the occasion as being equivalent to a wedding and so dressed accordingly. I imagine they also spent that evening as they might after a wedding: good business for the village pubs!

Since his retirement, William and Elizabeth had occupied a house on Church Street - number 59 which, at that time, was called 'The Croft'. Behind it was, 'The Croft Bungalow', where his brother George lived.

William died in 1944 at the age of 87 and Elizabeth in 1949 at the age of 89. A humble man with big ideas and the resolve to see them fulfilled for the good of ordinary people.

If he were living in Cropwell Bishop today, would he be respected and admired as much as he was a century ago? I think so.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Jane Jones and Alan Wilson for their help with this Story.

William and Elizabeth await the arrival of Prince Edward on the steps of the Memorial Hall (29th June 1932)

Edward, Prince of Wales, is greeted by William Parkin and Alderman Derbyshire

Prince Edward inspects Ex-Service Men

The Prince meets the people of Cropwell Bishop

The past merged with the present: Prince Edward and William talking as they leave the Memorial Hall.

Two children stand outside The Croft on Church Street

William, Elizabeth and George Parkin are all buried in Cropwell Bishop Churchyard

Parkin Close in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Designing the layout of houses and roads for a new housing development must be a dream job: to look upon open land and imagine the route of roads that are safe yet offer glimpses of beautiful views; to have pedestrian twitchells that provide exciting short-cuts to play areas, parks and allotments. However, the reality for most builders is very different.

A parcel of land squeezed between existing buildings, a right of way through it, and narrow openings and slopes that make it difficult to even get the builders on site.

The builder certainly needs imagination, not for designing sweeping roads, but to make homes fit in the most efficient way that leaves house-buyers happy and the builder with enough profit to build another day. That brings us to Richards Close.

Until 40 years ago, the space it occupies opposite Barratt Close on Nottingham Road was a small, sloping field occupied by the occasional wandering sheep.

Wandering sheep - and the end house on Jubilee Drive (1960s)

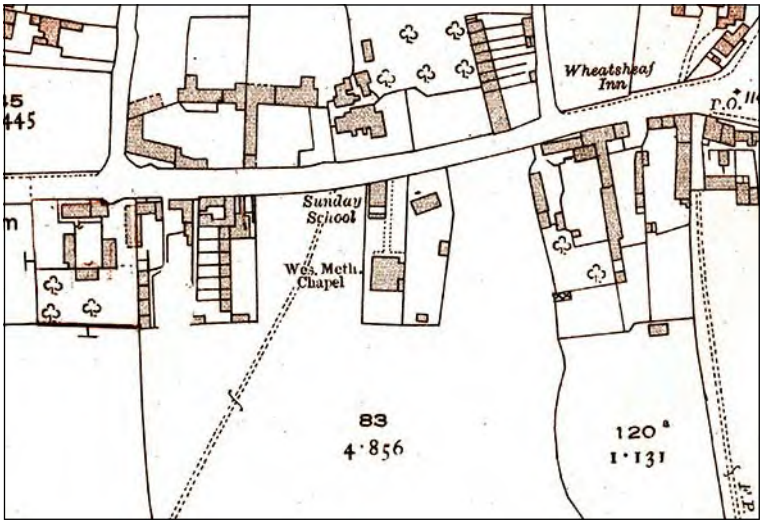
On the left was the Methodist Chapel and its Sunday School, and on the right were joined-up houses known as Jubilee Drive Houses. Those homes were built in 1935, the Silver Jubilee year of King George V and Queen Mary. The field was known as Jubilee Field.

The field was owned by Harold Barlow ("young Harold", the village Butcher) and he sold it to Hamilton Knight, the Cropwell Bishop building company. The slope up from Nottingham Road and the Public Footpath across it would provide a challenge for the architect.

Richards Close is the smallest street in Cropwell Bishop: it has just 4 homes.

Jubilee Field, the site of Richards Close. Jubilee Drive Houses are on the right and the Sunday School Room is on the left. (1960s)

Jubilee Drive Houses are on the right in this photo from the 1960s



1960s map showing a public footpath through the gap between the Chapel (right) and Jubilee Drive (left)

How local Buzzards and Swifts see Richards Close

When the Parish Council had the task of giving it a name, they decided it would be appropriate to recognise the impact that the Richards family had had on Cropwell Bishop. Its chairman at that time, David Barlow, contacted Edward Matthews to ask for his permission to use the name. He happily agreed.

So, which member is the Close named after, or does it refer to the family name?

Let's start in the early 1800s with James Richards.

He was born in Granby in 1801 to father Anthony Richards and mother Elizabeth and was the first of their four children. To follow were; Anthony (1803), Mary (1805) and brother Gibson (1809).

In 1826, when 25, James married Elizabeth Parker at Granby Church. Elizabeth was 11 years older than James and had already been married: she also had four young children. Her maiden name was Porter and she was born in 1790 at Tythby.

She had married Thomas Parker of Cropwell Butler in 1814. They had their first child, Vincent, in 1820 and the following year they had both Alice and Thomas – probably twins, but we don't know for sure.

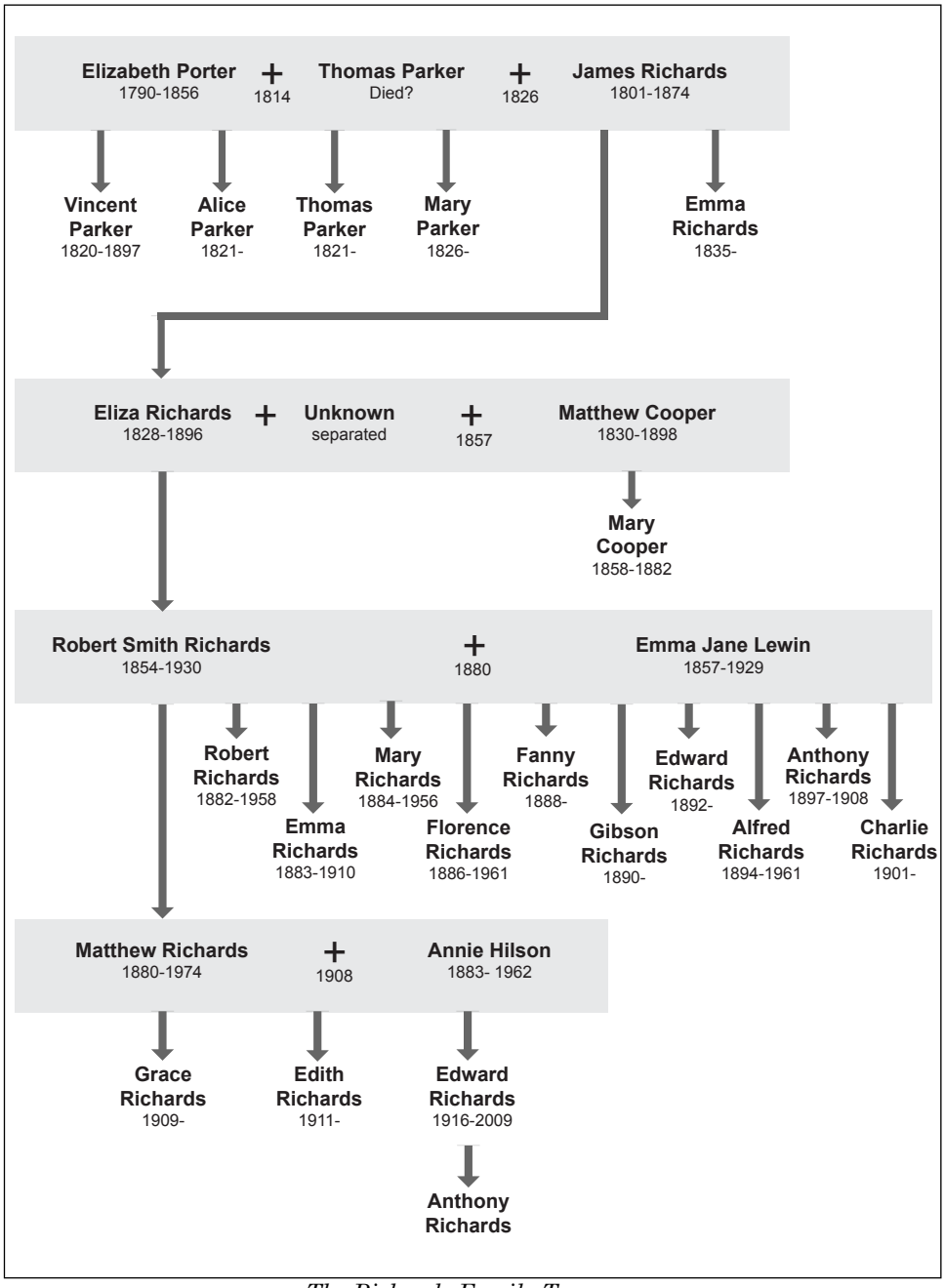
The fourth child, Mary was born in 1825 (or 1826, records conflict). Oddly, in less than a year of giving birth to Mary, she was marrying James Richards.

I cannot discover the reason for this sudden change in Elizabeth's circumstances but it could be explained by Thomas Parker, suddenly dying.

Shortly after James and Elizabeth married, they moved to Cropwell Bishop where James became Innkeeper at the Wheatsheaf on Nottingham Road and Elizabeth gave birth to their child Eliza in 1828. A second child, Emma, would follow in 1835.

James and Elizabeth had a long and stable marriage together and two children went on to establish important families of their own in Cropwell Bishop: Vincent (the eldest child from Elizabeth's her first marriage) and Eliza (the eldest child from her second marriage).

Vincent Parker became a farmer and he eventually owned 119 acres in Cropwell Bishop. He also followed the path of his step-father and became a Publican at the Canal House Pub next to the Canal Bridge on Nottingham Road.



The Richards Family Tree

Vincent Parker

Parkers Row (also known as Top Row) on Nottingham Road (1950s)

He was also involved with the mining of Gypsum in Cropwell Bishop and went on to own 10 houses just a 100m from his home: they became known as Parkers Row.

Meanwhile, Eliza Richards had a son in 1854 but the father remains a mystery. She named the boy, Robert Smith Richards.

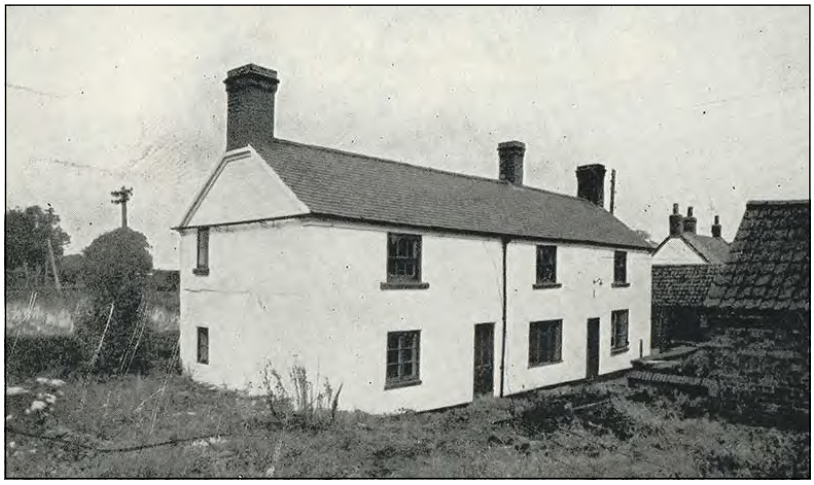
Within two years, in 1857, she married farmer Matthew Cooper of Screveton and they had a child of their own, Mary.

Matthew appears to have been the "business brains" of the family and over the next 40 years built up his farm by acquiring land as it became available.

It is interesting to note that in 1885 he advertised himself as a brickmaker as well as a farmer.

The family lived at 49 Nottingham Road in the early years and when Matthew was 60, they moved to The Yews (100m down the road – opposite where Richards Close now is). They were there until his death in 1898 when he was 68. He had given his step-son, Robert Smith Richards, increasingly more responsibility for the running of the farm and it was he who took the business forward for the next generation.

Robert Smith Richards married Emma Jane Lewin, from Cotgrave, in 1880 and they moved to Barton-in-Fabis where he farmed 115 acres. Their first two children, Matthew and Robert were born there.



49 Nottingham Road in 1968 (back of house)

After 3 years the family moved to Owthorpe Village where he farmed for the next 17 years. Robert Smith Richards and Emma had 8 more children while living there. (Note to modern parents: they had 3 servants!)

Owthorpe children could easily walk the road to Cropwell Bishop School. On the right is a School Photo showing the two eldest boys, Matthew and Robert, in 1893.

Cropwell Bishop School Photo 1893. Matthew Richards (aged 13) is top left, and to the right of him is his brother, Robert Richards (aged 12). Head Teacher William Parkin is seated right. The full class photo is in the Parkin Close Story.

Once again, it was the oldest child who took forward the family farming business. I suppose that was the normal pattern in those days.

As a schoolboy, Matthew had been close to his grandparents, Matthew and Eliza Cooper. For a time, he even lived with them.

Surrounded by a growing number of brothers and sisters at home, finding a quiet corner to do his homework each evening must have been a challenge (OK, I don't suppose they had homework in those days).

Anyway, his grandparents lived at The Yews in Cropwell Bishop so he could avoid the morning, lunchtime, and afternoon walks to and from Owthorpe (school dinners didn't exist, I am sure).

When Matthew Cooper died in 1898 (his wife, Eliza, had died 2 years earlier), Robert Smith, and his ever-growing family, moved into The Yews on Nottingham Road. He was still there in 1902 when Emma, now 44 years old, gave birth to their 11th (and final) child, Charlie.

Matthew Cooper had left the bulk of his estate to stepson Robert Smith but he also left part to his grandson, Matthew Richards. This included 49 Nottingham Road, a farmhouse. The will stipulated that until Matthew reached the age of 26, the house must be held by his father.

Cropwell Bishop School Photo 1898 approx. Florence (Florrie) Richards is on the 2nd row down from the back. At left end is a teacher; Florence is next to her.

In 1908 he reached the age of 26 and he married Annie Hilson (of Bottesford). I can't confirm if they did indeed move into number 49, but I do know that in 1911 they were living at The Yews.

This was where his father and family had been living, but in 1911 they were all living at Sutton, a tiny hamlet near Granby. Robert Smith always had been one for regularly moving house.

Matthew and Annie already had a daughter, Grace, and before the year was out, they had a second, Edith. Their son, Edward, was born in 1916.

Matthew Richards and family: Edith, Annie and Matthew with Edward and Grace kneeling (1926)

Robert Smith Richards and Emma Jane Richards (1920s)

In his later years, Edward recalled growing up in Cropwell Bishop. Shortly after the photograph above was taken, he was awarded an Art Scholarship to attend Trent Bridge Central School for Boys in Nottingham from 1928 to 1931. Every day he cycled there from Cropwell Bishop. But when he was 14, he had to leave school to work full-time on his father's farm.

In 1930 Robert Smith Richards died: he was 75. His wife, Emma had died the year before. In his will he requested that all his assets be sold and divided equally between his children except for two who were already provided for.

It was just after this that Mathew decided he wanted to buy a farm of his own. In 1932 he moved his family to Rempstone and stayed there for the rest of his life. He still owned land in Cropwell Bishop and let it out to local farmers.

At the bottom of the page is a photo of him and his family at his 90th birthday in 1970. He died at the age of 93.

Matthew's son Edward must have inherited his father's long-life genes because he too lived to the age of 93. He died in 2009.

His son, Anthony provided details, insights and photographs for the writing of this article.

The colourful history of the Richards family in Cropwell Bishop is enough to fill Richards Close. With just 4 houses you could allocate a key character to each one of the houses.

But there is no need for that. Now we can all look upon Richards Close differently: a place linked to a large energetic family spanning two centuries.

Do you think the Postman, Amazon man, and other delivery people ever wonder at the history of its name? No, I don't think so either. But now, should they ever ask, you will be able to enlighten them.

The Yews on Nottingham Road (1926)

The Yews Today (2020)

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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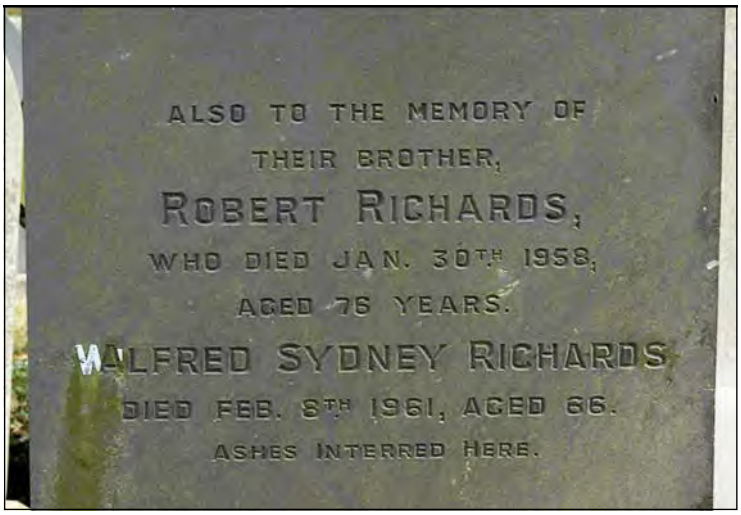
Thanks to Anthony Richards for insights and photographs. Also, thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Tony Carter, John Bradley, John Greenwood and Lesley Shuttlewood for their help with this Story.

Matthew Richards' 90th Birthday with children, grand children and great-grand children. His son Edward is immediate left of him, daughter Grace is 4th from right-hand side, and daughter Edith is 2nd from left-hand side. (1970)

James Richards 1874
Elizabeth Richards 1856

Mary Cooper 1882
Eliza Cooper 1896
Matthew Cooper 1898

Robert Smith Richards 1930
Emma Jane Richards 1929
Anthony Richards 1908
Emma Grace Richards 1910
Mary Richards 1956



Robert Richards 1958
Alfred Richards 1961

Richards Close in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Some people boast that generations of their family can be traced back centuries.

The ability to trace family roots a long way back is quite rare. Ancestors would have had to record their activities on paper but most families did not possess paper and pens – and probably couldn't read or write anyway.

Most of us have a fascinating family history but we don't know it because it was never written down.

Being able to trace ancestors is much easier if you follow the male line. Men don't lose their surname on being married.

Wealth and power can be inherited and having a shared surname helps to prove your claim.

This story is about the Salvin family that lived in Cropwell Bishop.

Salvin Close is named after David Leavis Salvin. He lived in Cropwell Bishop at the end of the 1800s and early 1900s. However, he was not the only Salvin to live in Cropwell Bishop and the story of how the Salvin family came to the village is an interesting one: so is the virtual disappearance of its name.

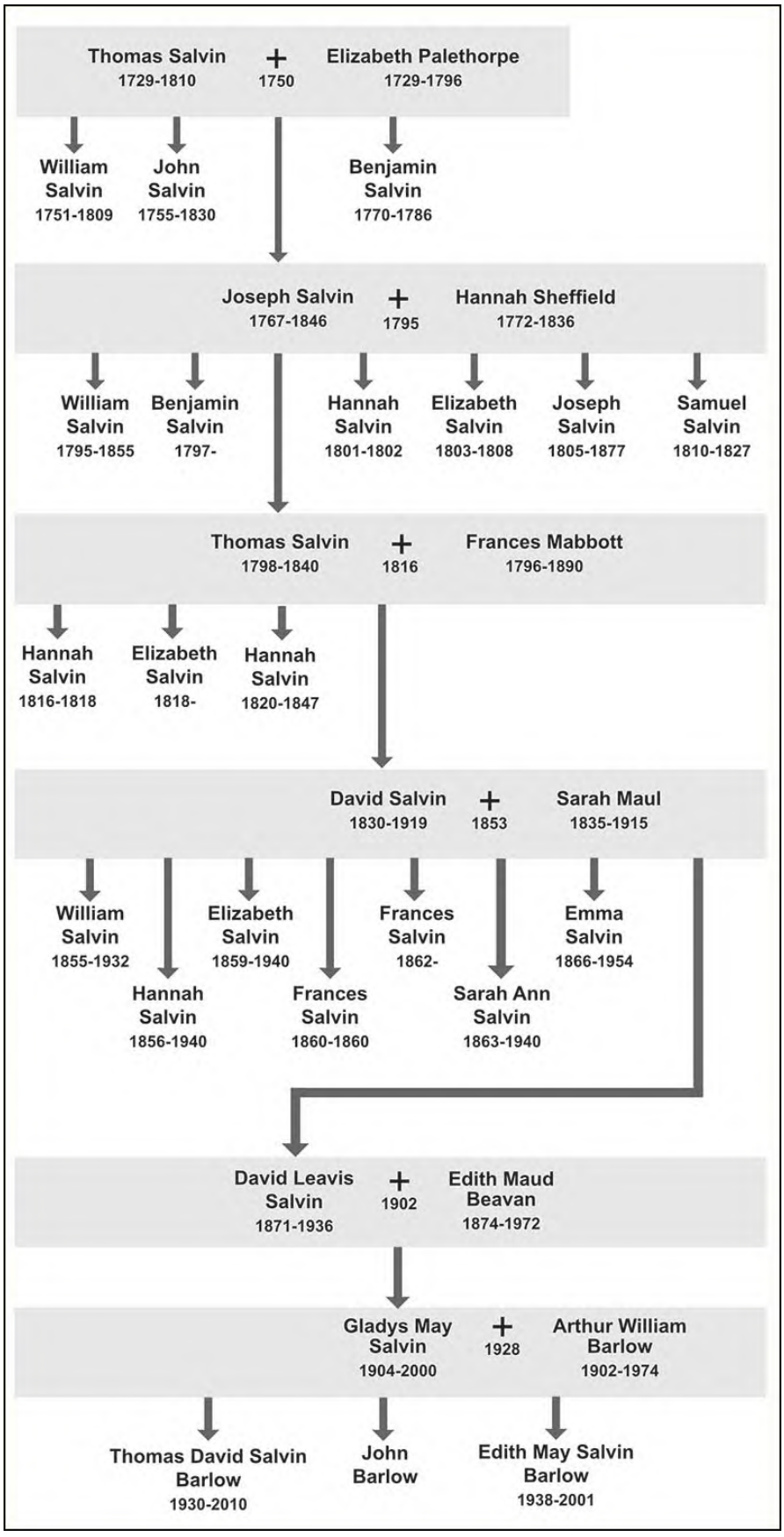
The Salvin family has a long history – it was written down. That means they were a rich family.

We can go back a long way – to 1066. Joceous le Flamangh came over with William the Conqueror and was rewarded with "one third of a knight's fee" in Cuckney in north Nottinghamshire. What he had done to deserve this payment and who got the other two thirds is not recorded.

In those days, north Notts would not have been regarded as a lush part of a conquered country. It didn't even need to be fought for: it became vacant when the previous Saxon owner died without heirs.

Joceous was no leading-light in William's government, but he was here and he owned land. Once established he made his influence felt locally.

His sons married into the aristocracy and a grandson became Sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (before Robin Hood's arrival).



Salvin Family Tree

His second grandson was named as ‘Ralph of Sylvan’ and became heir to the ‘Manor of Woodhouse’.

Within three generations, the family had marriage links with the Earl of Derby and ownership of property that would eventually become Welbeck Abbey.

The family name mutated into Salvin and extended its links in north Nottinghamshire and even into Yorkshire to an area that exists today as the village of Thorpe Salvin. By the 15th Century, family members had even become part of the aristocracy of County Durham.

The Salvin family had established itself but not become a high-profile one – and this would prove a distinct advantage. Their relative anonymity during some turbulent times, enabled them to keep their heads at a time when many fellow Roman Catholics were losing theirs to the executioner.

By the early 1700s, the Salvins had settled as far south as Gedling and Stoke Bardolph. In 1729 in Stoke Bardolph, Thomas Salvin was born. He married a local girl, Elizabeth Palethorpe at Gedling Church in 1750. They were both 21 at the time.

In later years Thomas would be known as ‘The Farmer of Stoke Bardolph’. A grand title but if you have ever visited Stoke Bardolph (or much more likely, ‘passed through’) the you will be forgiven for wondering if there is enough land for more than one farm.

The young love of Tom and Lizzie brought forth children, the first arriving the following year. They had four children, all boys. Their third son, Joseph, was 28 when he married 23-year-old Hannah Sheffield in 1795.

Hannah was born in Castle Donnington but the wedding was at Gedling Church. We know nothing of her parents and can only presume that they moved with her to Gedling or that she was working away from home. We don’t know but it doesn’t matter.

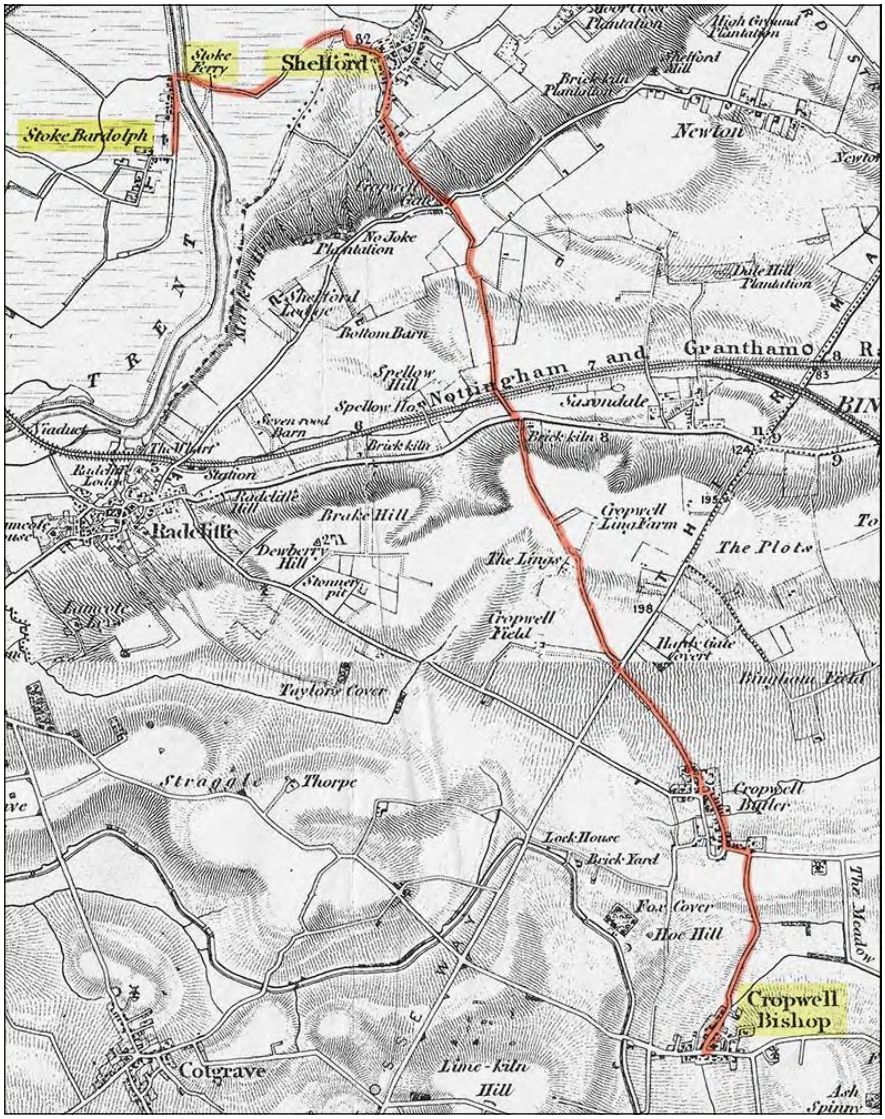
Joe and Hannah were in love – and they had 7 children. There were 5 boys and 2 girls.

There was heartache though: Hannah died when 1 year old, Elizabeth when 5 years old and Samuel when 17.

Their 3rd son, Thomas Salvin, is the one of interest to us. He was born in Stoke Bardolph and married Frances Mabbott of Cropwell Bishop in 1816.

Even today, Stoke Bardolph to Cropwell Bishop would be quite a long bicycle ride to discover your true love – and in 1816 there wasn’t a bridge at Gunthorpe, nor were there any bicycles (they were not invented until the following year). However, there was a ferry over the River Trent at Stoke Bardolph.

Once on the other side of the Trent, a brisk walk and you are soon in Shelford. After climbing the hill out of Shelford, it would have been a straight road to Cropwell Butler and then on to Cropwell Bishop.



The route south from Stoke Bardolph to Cropwell Bishop in 1816

You could follow the same route today, with a detour over the new A46, but you will need a towel for your swim across the Trent.

I am not suggesting that Tom and Frances met at a local sing-along in the Wheatsheaf, I am just pointing out that the two villages and its occupants were not so far apart as it might seem.

Tom was 18 years old and Frances 20 when they married on April 1st 1816 and Cropwell Bishop would be where they would live their life.

Their home was a house at The Turn, that is the area in front of St Giles Church where carts could turn around. We can't identify the actual building from historical records.

Three months after their wedding, on the 21st July 1816, their first child, Hannah, was born. Maybe they did meet at a sing-along of sorts at the Wheatsheaf!

Sadly, Hannah died when just 2 years old in 1818, the same year their second girl, Elizabeth, was born.

A third girl was born to them 2 years later and they decided to name her Hannah too. Sadly, this second Hannah also had a short life: she died when just 27 years old.

There was then a 10-year gap before their next child was born, this time a boy, David Salvin. They had no more children afterwards and in 1840, at the age of 42, Thomas Salvin died.

Frances worked as a housekeeper so she could support 10-year-old David. She continued living with him even after he married and lived to be 94.

David started his working life as a bricklayer’s apprentice and became a very proficient builder in Cropwell Bishop. The Old School on Fern Road is an example of his work; so is the ‘cart shed’ at the entrance to Stackyard Close (on the right).

It was in 1853, when David was 23, that he married Sarah Maul.

Sarah was born and bred in Orston but, on marrying David, moved to Cropwell Bishop.

191 Sherwood Street in 2020

312 Ilkeston Road used to be on the right, where new homes are today

They had 8 children. The first was William and the last was David Leavis. In between were 6 girls.

Their youngest, David Leavis Salvin, was an ambitious and hard-working man from an early age.

By the time he was 20, in 1891, he had left his home in Cropwell Bishop and was lodging with his sister, Elizabeth, and her husband Thomas Clarke and their family at 191 Sherwood Street in Nottingham. Thomas was a "provisions merchant manager".

Just 3 years later, in 1894, David Leavis was advertising himself as a grocer at 312 Ilkeston Road. He continued with this shop for at least 10 years.

Five years after this, in 1899, he also listed himself as, "beer retailer and shopkeeper", at 191A Sherwood Street. Look at the photograph of 191 Sherwood Street. It is easy to imagine the ground floor windows as shop fronts, number 191 for groceries and 191A for beer.

This shop appears to have been a short-lived venture because he did not advertise it again.

Life was not all work for David Leavis. In 1902 he married Edith Maud Beavan. In 1904 their daughter, Gladys May Salvin was born: she was to be their only child.

It was at this time that he was advertising his second grocery shop on Ilkeston Road, number 284. Maybe he was in the process of moving to a bigger shop because after this time he no longer advertised the '312 shop' but continued to trade from the '284 shop' until at least 1925.

By that time, he had been a grocer for over 30 years.

David Leavis was an entrepreneur and his business ventures had proved profitable. He was looking to invest his capital beyond his Nottingham shops – into the Cropwell Bishop area of his childhood.

He bought a farm on the north side of Cropwell Butler and also land around Cropwell Bishop. By 1912 he was already referred to in directories as "a principal land owner and farmer" in Cropwell Bishop.

In 1911, he and his family were living at 31 Albert Grove, Nottingham, but maybe he felt that now was the time to look for somewhere better.

He bought the Manor on Fern Road in Cropwell Bishop and not long after he and his family were living there.

31 Albert Road (2020)

The Manor on Fern Road

In spite of all his energy, David Leavis Salvin did not enjoy a long life. He died in 1936 at the age of 64.

In the five generations of Salvins we have looked at, the swing from being a family with mainly male children to one of females is interesting. For anyone keen to maintain the family name, it was worrying.

Because David Leavis and Edith Maud failed to have a son, the Salvin surname would come to an end in this branch of its family tree.

In times past, the end in line of a family name would have been a great disappointment to some fathers, usually the ones with great wealth to pass on. I don't think this is the case nowadays.

Science has revealed the existence of DNA. We understand how parts of our DNA are passed on to the next generation. Precise parts of it can be identified and they can be screened for: they can even be replaced!

We can identify parents or find long-lost relatives by spitting some saliva into a test tube and posting it for DNA analysis. Within weeks we are sent names of others who have similar DNA.

With all this knowledge, the importance of family names on pieces of paper seems trivial.

As for David Leavis Salvin and Edith, the most important thing was that their child, Gladys, was healthy. A very healthy one it would seem. She certainly inherited her mother's long-life genes.

Edith Maud lived to be 97 and died in 1972. Her daughter, Gladys May died in 2000 at the age of 96.

Gladys May Salvin married Arthur William Barlow in 1928.

Glady and Arthur had 3 children; David Barlow, John Barlow and Edith Barlow. So, had the name of Salvin had disappeared? Not quite.

When you want to keep an earlier surname alive you can either create a double-barrelled surname (e.g. Barlow-Salvin) or keep it as an extra forename. The full names of two of Gladys and Arthur's children were: Thomas David Salvin Barlow and Edith May Salvin Barlow.

So, as you can see, the Salvin family has history in Cropwell Bishop: that is why we have a street named after it.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
amjarrow@mac.com

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Malcolm Dabell and Jane Jones for their help with this Story.

Edith Maud Salvin at 90. With great-grandaughter, Jane, at opening of Village Fete in 1965

Arthur Barlow and Gladys May Salvin on their wedding day in 1928

CROPWELL BISHOP.

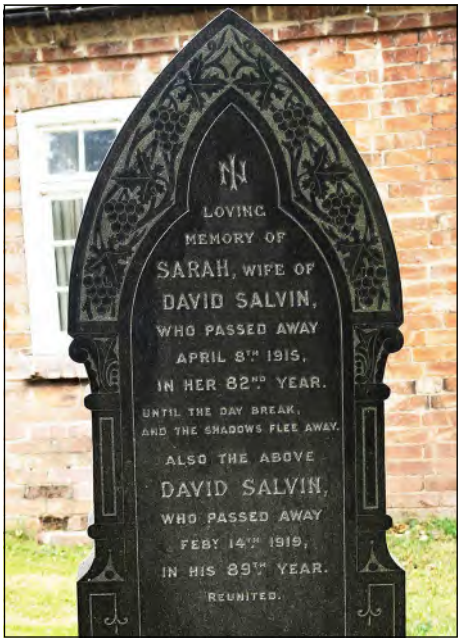
THE WEDDING took place on Thursday at St. Giles Church of Mr. Arthur Wm. Barlow, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Barlow, of Cropwell Bishop, and Miss Gladys May Salvin, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. L. Salvin, of Nottingham and Cropwell Bishop. As the parties are so well known there was a large gathering of friends to witness the ceremony. The Rev. J. E. H. Wood, Vicar, officiated, and Mr. J. T. Shelton presided at the organ. Two hymns were sung. The sacred edifice had been tastefully decorated with palms, flowers, and plants. The bride, who was given away by her father, was beautifully attired in ivory beaded georgette, with veil, train, and bouquet. She was attended by a train bearer, Miss Audrey Barlow (niece of bridegroom) and four bridesmaids, who were dressed in shell pink satin, namely, the Misses Ida Barlow, Marjorie Flavell (nieces of bridegroom), Joan Barlow (cousin), and Kathleen Richards (friend of bride). Mr. Harold Barlow was best man. The reception was held in a marquee at the Manor House, and nearly one hundred guests sat down to the wedding breakfast. There were several short congratulatory speeches by friends of the bride and bridegroom. The presents were numerous and costly, and were on view at the home of the newly-married couple, Lenton House, Cropwell Bishop. The ringers gave merry peals afternoon and evening.

Newspaper report of the wedding. 1928

To the right of Gladys is her father, David Leavis Salvin. 1928

The Men's Institute, 1932. David Leavis Salvin (front row, 3rd from left) and Arthur Barlow (front row, 2nd from right)

St Giles Churchyard



Salvin Close in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Shelton Gardens was built around 2013 was the first “garden” street in the village; the second was Oldfield Gardens in 2025.

The Garden ending is unusual, but of no significance, merely an attractive alternative to Close or Avenue. The Shelton part of the name is interesting.

Over the last 300 years, there have been many people living in Cropwell Bishop with a last name of Shelton. By marriage, the name persisted through several generations.

Let's pause and reflect on this last statement. If you had to explain to a visiting alien the logic of our custom in the UK of giving our offspring the last name of the father, rather than the mother, could you do so? I couldn’t.

Imagine how different the family trees would look if it was the mother’s name that was passed on. Just saying.

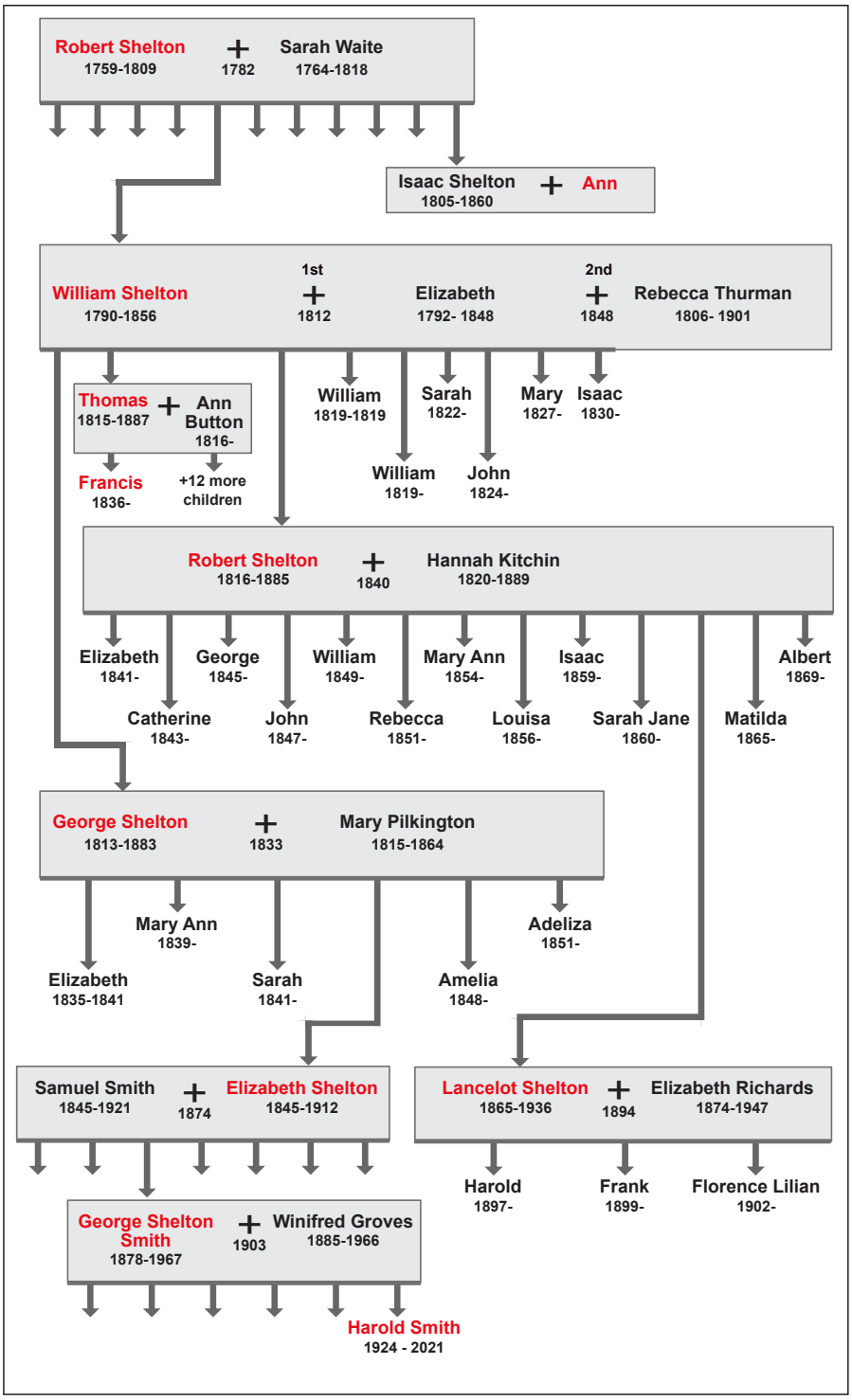
Back to the Shelton name. Unlike Barlows Close, the street across the road, Shelton Gardens appears to refer to a particular Shelton character, not the family. That is fine, most of our street names do the same. The problem we have with Shelton Gardens is that whilst there have been several interesting members of the Shelton family over the years, none stand out as the clear favourite for having a street named after them.

So, in effect, we have to look at the history of the street name in the same way as if it had been “Sheltons” Gardens — a street with a family name.

This is not as easy as it sounds. The Sheltons were, to be blunt, prolific breeders. Many Victorian families were big through necessity: the parents wanted to ensure that there were children around to look after them in their old age.

Since a large percentage of children died during childhood, through disease, malnutrition and accidents on the farm, in a factory or down the coal mine, there was clearly an incentive to produce a large number to start off with.

Nevertheless, the Sheltons generally managed to have large families with few losses.



Shelton Family Tree

As an example, the family of Robert and Hannah Shelton in the mid 1900s was so big that, by the end, the children could have put on a 6-a-side football match (the girls against the boys).

I have decided to describe a handful of family members. Sheltons have been living in Cropwell Bishop for 250 years but I can only write about ones I can find information on. These people are highlighted in red on the family tree.

Robert Shelton

A Shelton first appeared on the Cropwell Bishop scene in the late 1700s when Robert Shelton married Cropwell Bishop girl, Sarah Waite, in 1782.

Robert was from Gedling but after they married, they spent the rest of their lives in Cropwell Bishop. He was a farmer but does not appear to have been a land-owner.

He and Sarah firmly established their family in the village by having 11 children. At that time there were around 300 people living in the village so that is a sizeable contribution to the population – the equivalent to 80 children in today's village.

Sadly, two of the children died at birth but, nevertheless, for a woman to survive 11 home births and then bring up 9 children, suggests a very hardy mother.

Then again, you could argue that these stories only include tough mothers because the weak ones didn't survive to pass on their genes: survival of the fittest, as followers of Charles Darwin would say 60 years later.

In spite of it being a long time ago, we do know something about Robert and Sarah's eldest child, William.

William Shelton

William's history is known because he became a successful farmer and eventually the owner of Shelton Farm. The farm was located in the centre of the village, near The Turn.

In 1804, when William was 14 years old, the Enclosure Act was applied to Cropwell Bishop and a map showing who was allocated land still survives – and none was owned by a Shelton.

If a Shelton had owned land, they would have been rewarded with a street named after them back in the 1970s, just like most of the other 1804 land-owners.

We know that in 1818, when William was 28 years old, he was following in the footsteps of his, then late, father and working in farming. He was married and already had 3 sons with his wife, Elizabeth.

It was in 1840, when he was 50, that he took on the tenancy of Fillingham Farm. The farm was opposite the church, on Church Street, where Ebenezer House now stands.

William appears to have been a sound businessman. As well as farming, he also operated as a timber carrier and probably had other business interests too.

Just 10 years after becoming the tenant of Fillingham Farm, he was able to pay £5,420 to buy it, and the farm became known as Shelton Farm.

However, not everything went well for William. Eight years later his wife, Elizabeth, died: she was just 56 years old and the inscription on her grave suggests that she had suffered a long time.

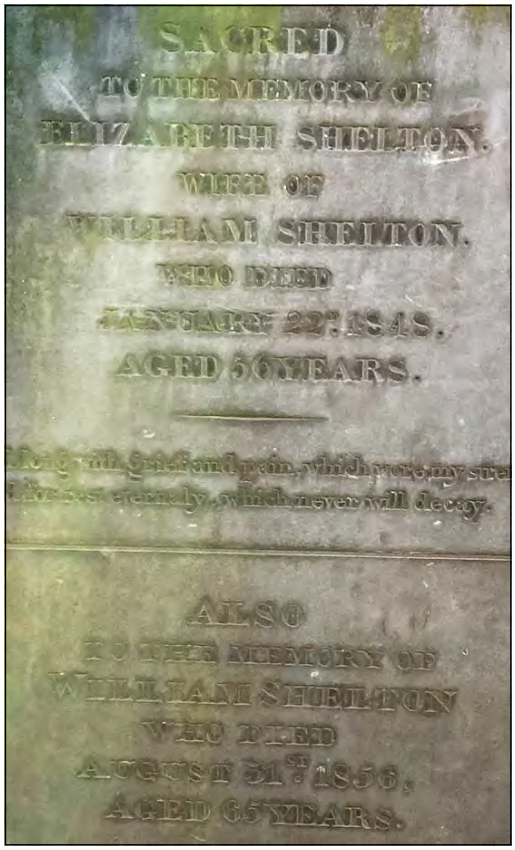
William had 8 children but only 24-year-old John and 18-year-old Isaac, were still living at home, the rest having married. Maybe William was feeling lonely: within 8 months he married 42-year-old Rebecca Thurman from Tollerton.

Unsurprisingly, Rebecca outlived William and it was she who ensured that the Shelton Farm continued to operate when William died in 1856, just 8 years after the death of his first wife, Elizabeth.

Fillingham Farm: later known as Shelton Farm (1890s)

The Shelton graves in the churchyard

Grave of Rebecca Shelton



Grave of William and Elizabeth Shelton

Partial Remains of Shelton Farm in 2015. It has since been demolished and the space is now occupied by the new houses on Stackyard Close.

Ebenezer House (2020)

George Shelton

It was William's eldest son, George, who inherited the farm and continued its development but it seems as though William's widow, Rebecca was a great support.

It 1871 they were farming 206 acres and employed 6 labourers. George was not only a farmer, but also a Plaster Merchant and this necessitated employing more local people. The work must have been demanding. His wife had died in 1864 at the age of 49 and then he himself died in 1883 at the age of 70.

As was the custom in those days, George's eldest son should have inherited the farm – or at least he would have done in normal circumstances.

George and his wife Mary had 6 children – but they were all girls. In the event, it was the fourth eldest daughter, Elizabeth, who took over the Shelton Farm or, I should say, it was her husband Samuel Smith who took it over.

In 1901, Rebecca died at the age of 95. The following year Shelton Farm was sold to village newcomer, Samuel Heaseldean. He demolished the farmhouse and had Ebenezer House built in 1904.

Ann Shelton

Ann was born in the tiny village of Antrobus in Cheshire in 1804 and in about 1828, she married Isaac Shelton, the youngest brother of William Shelton who had bought Shelton Farm. How she and Isaac discovered each other is a mystery.

They had a son, Thomas, in 1830 but, other than that, little is known of their married life. Ann was widowed in 1860 when Isaac died at the age of 55.

It was probably then that she moved to a small cottage that was attached to the front of the Shelton farmhouse. It was beside Little Lane, a narrow lane that connected Mill Lane with Church Street and faced onto Church Street.

Ann Shelton ran a grocery shop from the cottage. Later, Cropwell Bishop got its first post office and it was included in her grocery shop. Ann, therefore, became the first post-mistress of Cropwell Bishop.

The building was demolished at the same time as the farmhouse in 1902 and the post office service moved to a shop at number 1 Nottingham Road at The Turn.

Original thatched post office with its Post Mistress, Ann Shelton (1890s)

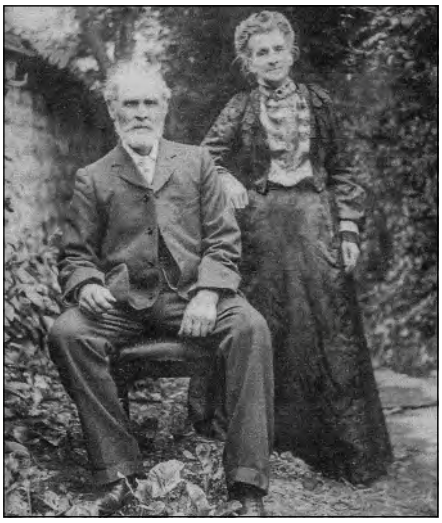
Elizabeth Shelton and Samuel Smith to the present day

In the street story of Stockwell Lane, I cover the history of Groves Cottage.

I describe how it was one of the children of Elizabeth and Samuel Smith (George Shelton Smith) who moved into it with his wife and in-laws.

Their youngest child, Harold Smith, went on to live at Groves Cottage and so maintained the link with Robert Shelton who lived here 240 years ago. The link came to an end with Harold's death in April 2021 at the age of 96.

Of course, in reality, there must be very many living links but to cover them all would take many stories.



Samuel and Elizabeth Smith

Groves Cottage (2020)

Robert Shelton

We have already seen how George Shelton continued the running of Shelton Farm on the death of his father, William. Now we will look at his younger brother, Robert Shelton.

Robert was born in 1816 and, when 24, he married a girl from Hoveringham, 20-year-old Hannah Kitchin. Robert was an agricultural labourer and the couple settled in Cropwell Bishop.

I wonder why they chose to live in Cropwell Bishop rather than Hoveringham. It seems to have been more common for couples to settle near the wife's mother. This would have made sense to a woman who wanted her mother close at hand at the time of child births.

But, they didn't and there does not appear to be any reason for Hannah to regret the decision.

She gave birth to her first child when she was 21 and went on to have a total of 13 children, the last one when she was 49 years old.

Their 11th child, a boy they named Lancelot, went on to marry a girl named Elizabeth Richards who was from Keyworth.

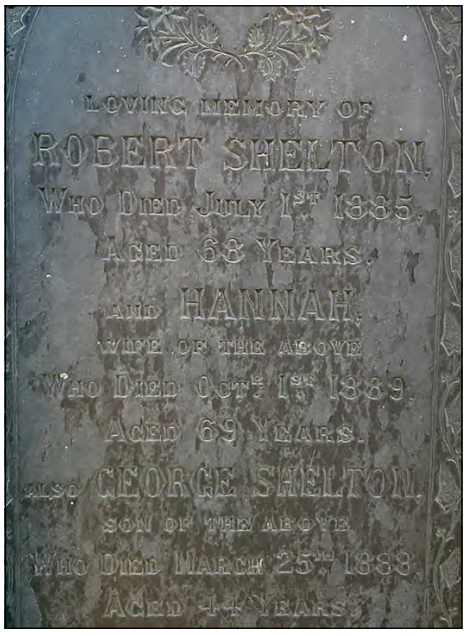
A return trip to Keyworth would have been quite a challenge in those days, but the coming together of Lancelot and Elizabeth is not a mystery.

In the Street Story of Barlows Close, the arrival in the village of butcher, Thomas Barnet Barlow of Keyworth, was described. He had married Sarah Richards in Keyworth and the 1891 Census shows that one of the people living with them was Sarah's 17-year-old sister, Elizabeth.

Thomas moved his business and family to Cropwell Bishop soon after this and I think we can safely assume that young Elizabeth came with them. In 1894 she and Lancelot married and lived in Cropwell Bishop.

They had three children, Harold, Frank, and Florence-Lilian. And, we are fortunate to have an excellent family photograph of them during the First World War (above right).

Lancelot and Elizabeth Shelton with their three children, Harold, Lilian and Frank. World War 1



Grave of Robert and Hannah Shelton

Grave of Lancelot and Elizabeth Shelton

John Thomas Shelton

We must not forget one other Shelton who lived in Cropwell Bishop; John Thomas Shelton, often referred to as J.T. Shelton.

It will come as no surprise when I tell you that he is related to the other Sheltons we have been looking at, and that his branch of the family carried on the tradition of having lots of children.

His grandfather was Thomas Shelton, the second son of William Shelton — the one who established Shelton Farm.

If you look at the family tree, you will see that Thomas married Ann Button and they had 13 children. Their second one was Francis Shelton and he went on to have 9 children with his wife Mary Ann Slater, the 7th of which was John Thomas Shelton. What a family!

Time to leave the past behind (is that possible?) and concentrate on John Thomas Shelton himself.

In the early 1900s he started a bakery business in Cropwell Bishop. It was not the only bakery in the village but his claim to fame was that his bread was made by machine. He used a small oil engine to power the drum that mixed his dough.

His bakehouse was near the church. Opposite the church gates is a small lane and the bakery was up there, on the left-hand side.

He would deliver bread within the village and also to nearby villages using a horse drawn two-wheeled bread-cart. On the sides he advertised his, 'Machine Bakery'. John was assisted by his wife, Annie.

Annie Revill was from Southwell where, as a 7-year-old, she lived with her widowed mother, Mary, who was the inn-keeper of The George and Dragon Inn (now called The Bramley Apple Inn).

By the time she was 17, her mother had married George Bayley, who was a printer, and Annie worked as a dressmaker.

In 1901, when Annie was 27, she married 28 -year-old John Shelton and they moved into The Old Vicarage on Stockwell Lane. They lived there for the next 40 years. In 1911, Annie's widowed mother was also living with them.

During those first years, John became the Churchwarden of the parish. This is a voluntary, unpaid post involving a wide range of responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of the church. He would have been considered the leading lay member of the congregation.

John fought in the First World War. Following the War, there is no record of his bakery business, the only bakery in the village being the one run by Herbert Simpson on Church Street.

What employment John had during those years, we don't know, but he and Annie were very active in Cropwell Bishop.

During John's absence throughout the War, Annie took over his Churchwarden tasks. She was later elected by parishioners to represent them as the "Peoples Warden" – and she continued doing so for the next 24 years.

Meanwhile, John became the organist at the church and continued without absence for 15 years.

In 1939, when he was 66, John listed his employment as 'mental nurse'. We don't know how long he had been a nurse.

We do know that the mental hospital at Saxondale – which is walking distance away, had been opened in 1902 and towards the end of the War, it was being used as a military hospital to treat soldiers with shell shock. Later, it reverted back to being a mental hospital. It was closed in 1988.

Could there be a link between John fighting in the War and working as a mental nurse. Did his experiences inspire him to help mentally ill people: we just don't know.

John died in 1944.

I am fairly certain that Annie had died during the preceding 4 years because, in his will, he left all his money to a Charles John Kirk, Headmaster.

Charles Kirk was, in fact, the Head of Cropwell Bishop School at the time and lived at The School House in Cropwell Bishop – just across the road from where John lived.

I assume he had left his money to the school rather than John Kirk personally. John and Annie did not have any children.

The Old Vicarage on Stockwell Lane in the 1970s. It is near the junction with Fern Road; the photo was taken from the other side of Fern Road.

A variety of characters have been traced in this street story.

What is fascinating is how different they were. Some were fortunate to have wealth and property passed on to them whilst some others had to battle to achieve what they felt was worthwhile.

In our own everyday life, we probably all complain about something or other that hasn't gone to plan, or about someone getting a bigger share than us. But, in terms of material comforts, convenience, freedoms and opportunities, we are today far, far better off than the people in this story.

I am sure that every one of them would have envied our lives. But, are we any happier than they were; do we appreciate what we have?

I can't answer that; maybe you would like have a go.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help with this Story.

Shelton Gardens in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2025

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Throughout the 1900s the name of Simpson had a strong association with Cropwell Bishop.

It started in about 1909 when 22-year-old Herbert Simpson set up a bakery business in the village.

The bakery, and his home, were in the furthest building of this terrace, 41d, which is now named, aptly, The Old Bakery.

Herbert and others in the family continued baking bread but the firm then branched out into buying and selling grain, seeds, feeds and fertiliser, and other agricultural products.

At first the firm used a horse drawn dray but in 1925 it bought its first lorry.

The Old Bakery is off Church Street - opposite the Pinfold. The Simpson Company grew until it owned all of these buildings. (2020)

The Old Bakery (2020)

The Old Bakery is the is at the end of this row of homes - far left (2020)

In 1952 it baked its last loaf and the Simpson family concentrated on being an agricultural merchant.

Two of Herbert Simpson's sons, Tom Simpson and Les Simpson took over the running of the business with the help of the next generation of Simpsons.

By this time, the Simpsons owned the whole of the terrace, and house number 41 was used by Tom Simpson as his office.

Tom's younger brother, Les, lived in the bungalow he had built next to the office.

Even in the late 1990s, the business was still thriving and the big Simpson grain lorries were a familiar sight in the village.

The stackyard, where Stackyard Close now stands, had become known as Simpson's Yard because the firm stored bags of grain in the sheds and parked its lorries there.

However, at the turn of the century, Simpson's found itself amongst the last, privately owned, grain merchants.

Sadly, the gradual disappearance of mixed farming and of small farms that valued a personal service, led to its demise.

Tony Jarrow – November 2025
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Thanks to Anne Terzza for her help with this Story.

Herbert Simpson on Baker' Cart (1920s)

Tom Simpson (Herbert's son) on Bread Cart (1930s)

Office of 'H. Simpson & Sons', Corn and Agricultural Merchants (1970s)

Tom Simpson, Peter Simpson, Paul Simpson and Les Simpson (1985 approx)

Simpson Drive in 2025

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Smiths Close is one of the smallest streets of those built during the village building-boom of the 1970s. It differs in other ways too.

When Wimpey began building the second big village estate (after the Bells Estate on Hoe View Road), St Giles Way was the entrance to it.

The show houses were at the top end of St Giles Way and the Wimpey site office and storage area was on the left-hand side – where Smiths Close is now. Consequently, the houses on Smiths Close were not built until the site office and stores were taken down – which wasn't until all the other homes on that side of the estate had been completed.

Even then, the Close did not have the houses it has now. The far end was a grassy area with a few trees and a wooden bungalow that had been there for decades.

In the right-hand corner was the brick bungalow that was there before Wimpey began building.

It was in 1999 that new homes were built in place of the wooden bungalow, trees and grass.

So we know the history of homes on Smiths Close, but now we need to find out how it got its name.

In this view from the church tower in 1970, the wooden bungalow at the foot of Smiths Close can be seen behind the tree branches on the right-hand side. Also, the brick bungalow just beyond it.

The far end of Smiths Close in 1997

New houses being built at the end of Smiths Close in 1999

The Smiths

Notice that the street name, Smiths is plural, which is a relief, because there is no shortage of candidates for the street name.

As usual, my first step was to look at the 1804 Enclosure map because that is what parish councillors repeatedly did when they had to choose a street name.

Amongst all the names on the map, there are three Smiths: Henry Smith, John Smith and R. Smith (first name, Richard, as revealed in the map's accompanying documents).

First, we need to discover which, if any, of these Smiths might have inspired our councillors to name a street after them.

Henry Smith had the most land of the three, 48 aces, but my research reveals that no Henry Smith lived in Cropwell Bishop at that time, although Cotgrave and Cropwell Butler had, between them, three Henry Smith's. I decided to drop him from my considerations because the other two Smiths were well established

Cropwell Bishop men, so more likely candidates.

In spite of Smith being a very common name in England, only one Smith family appears to have lived here at that time — or, at least, was the dominant one.

To avoid confusion, we must consult the family tree to see where John and Richard Smith fit into the picture. We need to examine it with care, because the Smiths repeatedly named their babies Richard or John.

The 'father' of this sector of the Smith family tree in the 1700s is Richard Smith, born in 1726, and married Ann Morris 27 years later.

Richard was the village baker and owned the corn mill so an interesting character, no doubt. However, he did not own any of the land on the Enclosure map because he died two years before its publication.

Richard and Ann had five children. Eldest son, John Smith, inherited the farming business, second son, William, the corn-milling business and Richard (junior) the bakery business. His daughters were not forgotten; they inherited money.

In 1804, John would have been 53 years old and his brother Richard, 45. Were they, I wondered, the John and Richard Smith, on the Enclosure map. A published copy of their father's 'last will' provides clues.

In the will, it was John who inherited virtually all of his father's land, over 46 acres. William did inherit some land around the windmill on Fern Road, plus a few acres near Hoe Hill, but since his name was not on the 1804 map two years later, he must have sold it.

The third son, Richard, did not inherit any land from his father, so I doubt he was the 'Richard Smith' on the map. But, on the family tree, it is not difficult to locate a more likely Richard Smith.

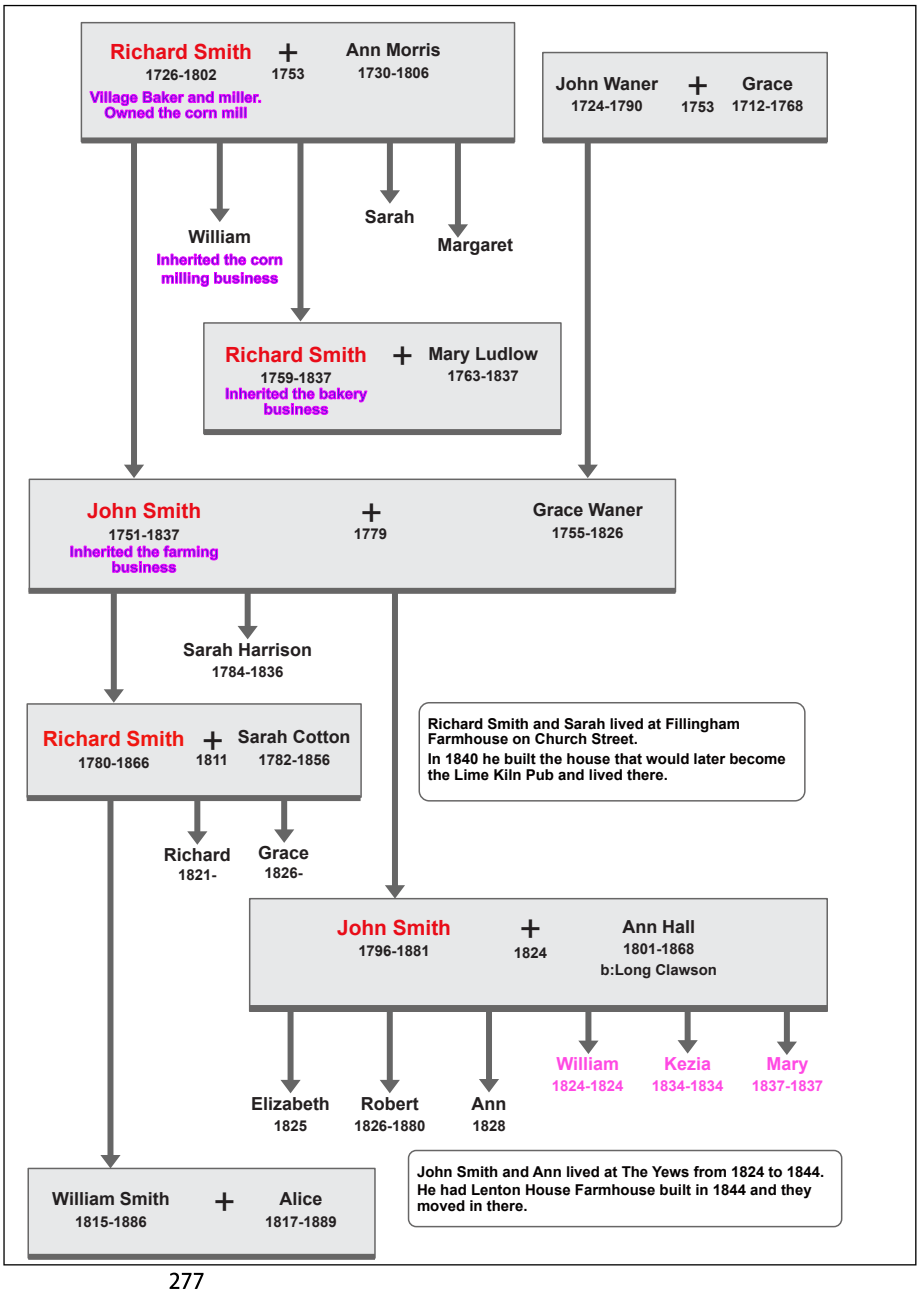
John Smith married Grace Wainer in 1779 and they had three children; Richard, Sarah and John. Richard was the eldest and in 1804 he would have been 24 years old. His brother, John, would have been only 11 years old in 1804.

It is my belief that the landowners on the 1804 map were John Smith (born 1751) and his son, Richard.

I think they would have been at the forefront of the minds of parish councillors when choosing the name for Smiths Close – especially so because they could appreciate how their influence in the village would grow in the coming years.

Let's look at how the careers of the two brothers, Richard (born 1780) and John (born 1796), evolved in the 1800s.

This version of the 1804 Enclosure map shows which fields were owned by Smiths: Henry's are coloured purple, John's green and Richard's yellow.



Smith family tree

The Sons and Daughter of Richard Smith (*b. 1780*)

Richard married Sarah Cotton in 1811 and they became tenants of the Fillingham Farmhouse on Church Street (it was replaced by Ebenezer House in 1904). From there he could farm the land he had inherited from his father.

Richard and Sarah had three children, William, Richard and Grace. Notice how the Smith family loved to recycle family names.

In the coming years Richard took on the lease of more and more land and by 1837 he was farming over 153 acres in Cropwell Bishop. By then he was 57 years old, an age when most men might be looking towards retirement and a quieter life. Not Richard Smith.

In 1840 he had a new house built for him and his family. The building was on Colston Road and it was the Lime Kiln Inn. Nowadays, it is the 'Small People' outdoor nursery.

Richard's wife, Sarah, died after 16 years at the house but he lived a further 10 years and died at the age of 86.

Richard's sister, Sarah, married in 1811 (the same year as him) to a Richard Harrison from the small hamlet of Staunton in the Vale, which is about 5 miles north-east of Cropwell Bishop. Even today, Staunton has little more than a few farm buildings so it is quite likely that Sarah married a farmer.

Nothing more is known of her life there but we do know that she died when she was 52 and is buried alongside her father in Cropwell Bishop.

Meanwhile, Richard's younger brother, John, probably dreamt of increasing his own wealth. His marriage to Ann Hall of Cropwell Bishop in 1821 would help his dreams come true.

John was farming land owned by his father (which he would go on to inherit) and other rented land, but Ann had offered, not only herself at their marriage, but also the promise of land and property.

When her father died 9 years earlier, she was awarded a house and 20 acres of land in his will, but they would not become legally hers until her mother died.

Following their marriage, they moved into The Yews farmhouse on Nottingham Road. As John's wealth and power increased, it is said that he assumed the title of 'lord of the manor' for himself.

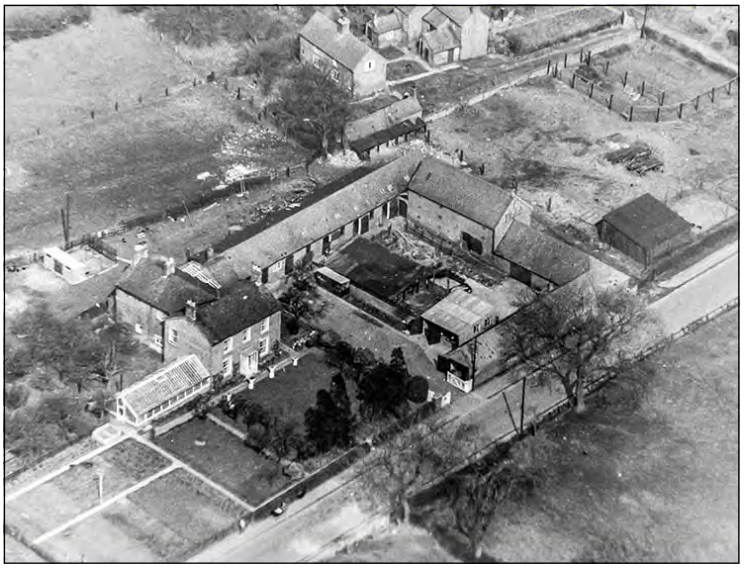
In 1835, Ann's mother died and she finally inherited the house and land promised in her father's will.

In 1841, John bought Lenton House - just 100m up the road. He greatly enlarged and improved the house and its outbuildings before moving in with his family.

It is interesting to note that this building was likely built by the same builders who had just completed the Lime Kiln Inn, Richard's new house.

Fillingham Farm – which was later called Shelton Farm. (1890s)

Small People Nursery in 2020, once the Lime Kiln Inn and originally the home of Richard Smith and his family.



Lenton House and farm buildings just as John and Ann Smith would have known them in the mid 1800s. (1960s photo)

Lenton House in 2021

Both buildings had the year of their build displayed in similar, giant numbers in their brickwork. The Smiths were clearly becoming big players in the village.

By 1850, John owned the largest farm in the Cropwell Bishop with 180 acres of land.

John and Ann live out their lives at Lenton House. Ann died in 1868 at the age of 67 and John lived to be 85. On his death in 1881, his daughter, Elizabeth, and her family moved into Lenton House.

So, when we look at the Smiths Close street sign, who should we think of?

There is no doubt that the Smith family we have studied is the source of the name, and I think it was the intention of our parish councillors to celebrate a number of Smiths for their contribution to Cropwell Bishop life.

If a visitor were to ask you the question, a safe answer would be to say, “John and Richard Smith” — then you will be covering all five of the most influential members of the family in the 1800s.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza for her help with this Story.

Smiths Close in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Springfield Close consists of new houses and flats; forty years ago there wasn't even a street there. Nevertheless, its name commemorates the history of Cropwell Bishop.

However, unlike most other streets, it does not relate to a person but a place.

Where is the spring?

Before the 1930s when piped water arrived in the village, residents relied on springs to supply drinking water. There were several at one time although these days they are effectively dry, mainly the result of the disruption caused by gypsum mining after the 1940s.

For example, when the present Cropwell Bishop Allotment site was established in 2010, the possibility of sinking a well to get water was considered and the British Geological Survey at Keyworth was approached for advice.

It's geologists were of the opinion that, whilst there was a possibility of locating a water source, exploratory bore holes would have to be drilled at least 10m deep. All this would cost several thousand pounds and most likely prove futile.

Makes you realise that paying Severn Trent to supply our water is altogether more convenient, reliable and cheaper.

The bottom end of the village, around the church, was once served by a spring in the field behind where the Primary School now stands. It was up a hill, and that hill was, quite naturally, known as Spring Hill.

There is no longer any trace of where the spring was but its location is shown on a map from the 1930s.

In earlier times the spring was known as Eastwell Spring and then, in the 1800s, as Cock Butt Spring. At that time a hand-pump and brick-surround were added.

The Cock Butt name comes from a small field that was named Cock Butt Close. It has since been absorbed by the field named Spring Hill.

In the image on the right, the 1930 map overlays a recent satellite image of the field, making it possible to visualise where the spring was.

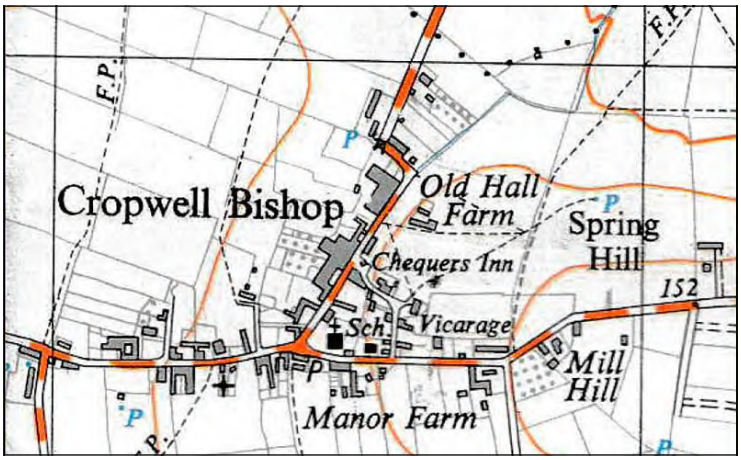
The 1804 overlay image on the next page shows that the field does not quite correspond to the position of the spring, but it is clearly the source of that old name.

Aerial photos do not show hills, but the ground-level photo on the nest page does. It must have been a bit of a climb to fetch your water.

People would collect water in buckets carried on a yoke over their shoulders. Thankfully, the journey with full buckets was downhill.

So, the hill was called Spring Hill and it is easy to imagine people referring to the field as Spring Field.

Once the plan for a new street had been approved, it must have been an easy choice for parish councillors to call the street Springfield Close – and that is just what they did.



Spring Hill on a 1940s map

1930s map showing a path to the spring

1930s map overlay on a satellite image

The spring was near the top of this hill (2021)

The spring was once referred to as Cock Butt Spring. This name came from a small field that was named Cock Butt Close on the 1804 Enclosure Map. On the right, the 1804 map has been added as an extra overlay: Cock Butt Close is the field numbered 4.

Deciding what to build on the street

The decision to build the street was made in the 1980s, but finalising the plan was not straight forward.

For years, the parish council had expressed a need for warden-aided accommodation in Cropwell Bishop, primarily for ageing residents but also for elderly relatives of younger people living here. But during those years, Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) could not be persuaded to go ahead with the project.

Then, out of the blue, a planning application to build large detached houses in the village was submitted to RBC – and it was on the very site that the parish council had in mind to build the warden-aided accommodation.

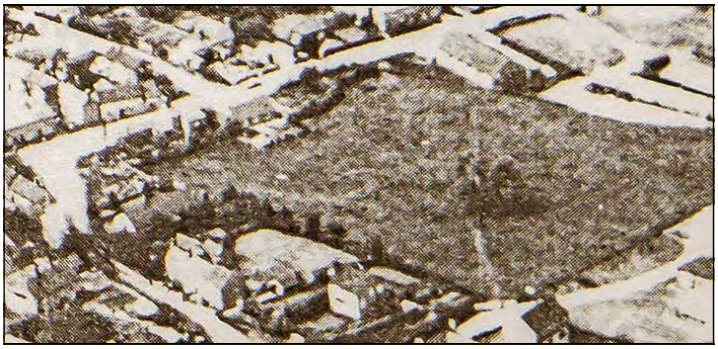
Following negotiations between the two councils and the developer, a compromise was reached.

Cropwell Bishop Councillors would not object to the street planning application as long as the developer included a block of warden-aided flats. Fortunately, everyone agreed and building began in the late 1980s.

Before building could begin, the developer had to clear away the buildings already occupying part of the site – which happened to be an ancient farmhouse and its out-buildings.

Old Hall Farm was over a hundred years old and has been mentioned in several of the village street stories of Cropwell Bishop.

Below are photos from the 1960s and 1970s when it was still a working farm.



1960s aerial view showing the ancient footpath leading from Church Street (at the top) to the school lane (bottom right). Stockwell Lane is on the left. In the top-right corner can be seen the old Co-op shop and farm sheds belonging to Old Hall Farm.

1965. Old Hall Farm. Looking north from above Church Street. Note how small the school was then.

Old Hall Farm viewed from church tower. (1970s)

1972. Old Hall Farm with the Co-op building beyond it. The Co-op moved to Nottingham Road in 2019 and the original building on Church Street is now a shop .

1977. Aerial photo showing the full extent of the land that Springfield close would eventually occupy.

1980. Old Hall Farm with Church Street at top of picture

1983. Old Hall Farm with Church Street beyond

Clearing the site

1986. Old Hall Farm with its barns as the development gets underway.

1986. Back of Old Hall Farm

1986. Old Hall Farm, now without its barns.

1986. The first bricks are laid.

Why Rawlings?

Having named the street Springfield Close, the councillors now had to come up with another name – one for the block of 33 flats. As we all now know, they named it Rawlings Court, but you may wonder where the name came from.

The parish councillors had named the street after a field, so maybe they felt a need to offset this by naming the flats after a person.

They didn't have to look far to find a suitable one, a character that was still fresh in the memory of those sitting around an oak table of the parish council chambers – or rather, the put-up tables in the cold Memorial Hall.

No matter, the unanimous decision was to name the flats after Tom Rawlings.

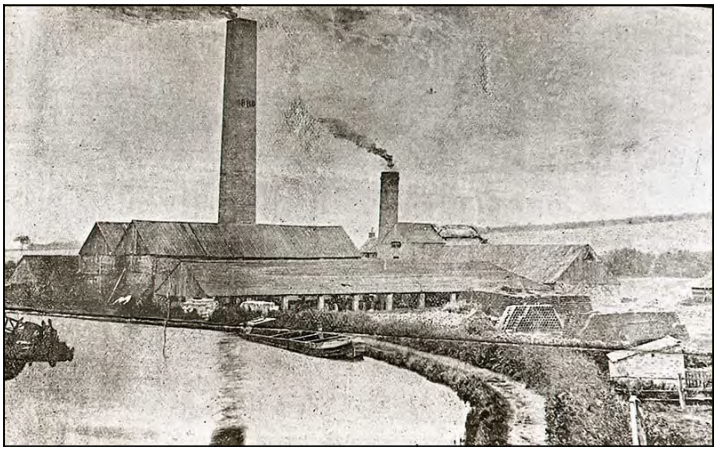
Unlike the naming of streets, they did not need to abide by the same rules. You can't name a street after a person until they have been dead for at least 20 years, but, apparently, this doesn't apply to a block of flats. Which is just as well because Tom had died only 5 years earlier.

This did at least mean that memories of his achievements were fresh in the minds of many living in the village.

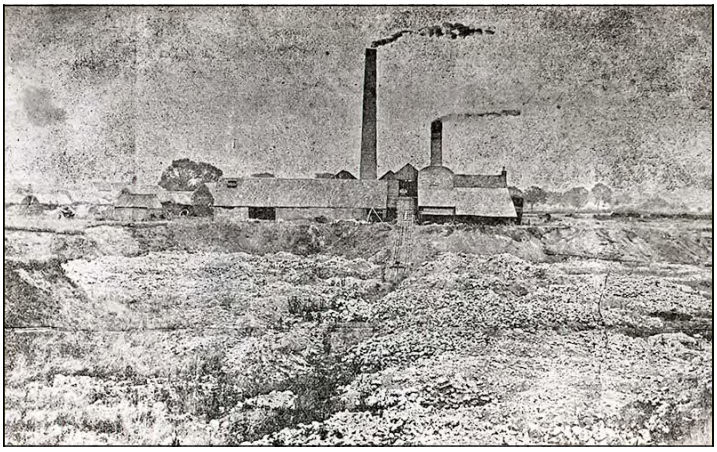
Tom Rawlings was born in Cropwell Bishop in 1902 and died here in 1983. In between, he worked in the village for his wages and, as we shall see, worked for the villagers for free.

His father, Richard Rawlings, came from Downham Market in Norfolk and he married Cropwell Bishop girl, Elizabeth, in 1884. At the time he described himself as a brickmaker and they lived in a house at the Cotton Brickworks where he worked.

In 1901, the growing family were still living at the Brickworks but Richard then described himself as the manager of the Brickworks.



The Cotton Brickworks alongside the Grantham Canal (1890s)



The open clay and gypsum mine behind the Cotton Brickworks (1890s)

By 1911, the circumstances of the Rawlings family appear to have changed, and not for the better.

Richard and Elizabeth, together with their 7 children (another 3 had died in infancy), were now living in a 2-bedroom house on Mill Hill (top of Fern Road) and Richard was a "worker at the Gypsum Mill".

Nothing more is known of the change in the family's fortune but, no matter, life goes on.

Tom Rawlings was the youngest child of the family. His full name was, Thomas Cooper Rawlings. All the children enjoyed at least two Christian names, examples being; Elizabeth Hannah May Rawlings and William Smith Rawlings.

We have a photo of these two at Cropwell Bishop School. By the time he was 15 years old, William was a 'pupil-teacher' at the School.

Tom Rawlings lived his life in Cropwell Bishop and worked at the Gypsum Works. He was deeply involved in a number of village activities: he was a keen bell-ringer, served as the Churchwarden and was a parish councillor.

He was also a founding member of the "Men's Institute" that was set up in the early years of the Memorial Hall. Maybe they envied the activities of the Women's Institute; we don't know.

On the right is a photo of the group in 1932 and it includes Tom Rawlings.

Tom was the first caretaker of the Memorial Hall. It opened in 1929 and Tom was its caretaker for 50 years.

Tom's older sister and brother at School, a couple of years after Tom was born. (1904 approx)

In this photo of members of the 'Men's Institute' outside the Memorial Hall in 1932, Tom Rawlings is standing on the back row, on the extreme right.

To commemorate this achievement, the parish council showed the gratitude of the village, by presenting him with a watch.

In those days, a good watch was an expensive and treasured item and was a popular retirement present.

However, within a few years, ill health prevented him from carrying on with his duties.

Tom died in 1983 at the age of 81. He had lots of relatives; he never married.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Lol Simpson and David Glyn-Jones for their help with this Story.

Tom Rawlings being presented with a watch by the chairman of the parish council, Lawrence (Lol) Simpson, for his 50 years of service (catering etc) at the Memorial Hall.
Behind (left to right): Derek Beeby, Vivienne Ives (clerk), Barry Sheppard, Graham Albery, David Barlow and Alan Lovell. (1979)

Tom Rawlings the bell-ringer

1960s. A meeting of Cropwell Bishop Parish Council with (left to right) Vic Hall, Arthur Barlow, John Foster, David Holmes (clerk), H.G. Smith (chairman), Dennis Baker, John Dean and Tom Rawlings.

Rawlings Court in 2021

Springfield Close in 2020

Squires Close; named after the lord-of-the-manor or a local knight of old? I used to think so - but I was wrong.

The houses in Squires Close were built in the mid 1970s, not long after the completion of the Wimpey housing estate which included Hall Drive “just over the fence”.

At the bottom of Hall Drive, the gap between house number 30 and 32 is about 2m wider than between similar detached houses on the estate. When Wimpey built the houses in 1974 there was every intention of having a public footpath between these houses and onwards to Church Street. For a time, people did indeed use this route as a short-cut to the Co-op which was on Church Street at that time.

However, planners overlooked the fact that the route was through land not owned by them but by the Cropwell Bishop builder, Denis Smith – and he had every intention of building houses on it. That was the end of the footpath idea but the beginning of Squires Close.

The area was quite small; not surprising really because it was effectively the back garden of a house on Church Street. It was only big enough for 5 detached houses - only two other streets in the village have fewer.

On the right is a photo of the house that owned the back garden – taken from Church Street in the 1930s.

That is almost a hundred years ago and, not surprisingly, it has been much modernised since then but, even so, its unusual shape makes it easy to recognise. On the right is a photo of 47 Church Street in 2020: look familiar?

So, how did Squires Close get its name?

Well, we do know that 47 Church Street was for a long time owned by a family named Squires: it was even referred to as Squires House.

But surely, that is not enough to justify naming a street after the owner: no one gets a street named after them when houses are built in their old back garden, do they? There has to be more to it than that.

The Squires family have 12 graves in St Giles Churchyard, ranging from 1839 to 1925. We do know that for over a century, family members involved themselves in a wide range of activities in Cropwell Bishop.

It all began in about 1800 when James Squires, an agricultural labourer in Flintham, married Cropwell girl Mary Mabbot. They decided to live in Flintham, but two of their sons, John and George (no record of a Paul and Ringo!), went on to also marry Cropwell girls (what was it about our village girls?) and they decided to make their homes in Cropwell Bishop.

The older one, John, married Sarah Allcock at St Giles Church in 1832 and they went on to have 8 children, but 4 died in infancy. John was a stone mason and bricklayer, and was also an active Methodist Preacher locally.

1977

47 Church Street (Squires House) in 1930s

47 Church Street: 2020

The family lived at 47 Church Street and over the years, it became known as Squires House.

So, we know that John Squires lived with his family at Squires House and we know that 140 years later, Squires Close was built in its back garden – so presumably, the Close was named after John Squires.

Well, it's not that simple: lots of other Squires characters appeared during those 140 years, might not one of them be the one commemorated?

One of John and Sarah's sons, Samuel, grew up to be a farmer and the owner of 120 acres: he sounds promising. However, he did not live in Squires House, but down the road in the cottages, known then, as Salvins Row.

By the time he was 40, he was married, had 4 children, and was still farming – but not in Cropwell Bishop. He was living in Frisby-on-the-Wreake near Melton Mowbray. So, not the person I would name a Cropwell Bishop street after.

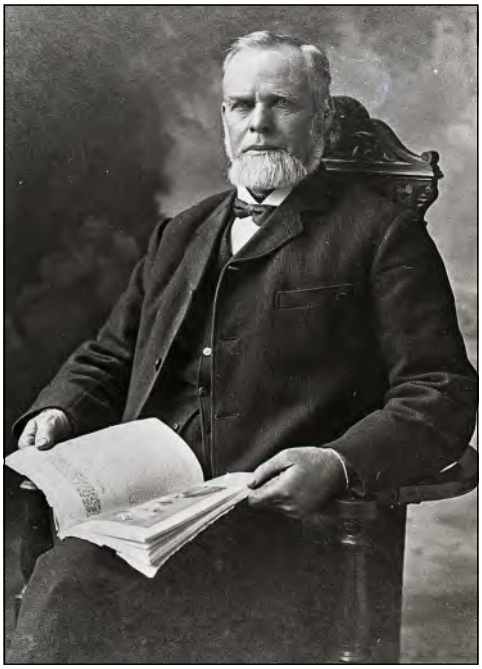
Meanwhile, George (the younger son of James and Mary), had married Sarah Thraves and they lived at Mill Hill Cottages. They must have been on Fern Road because the road was called Mill Hill in those days.

George was a bricklayer and, later on, a 'letter cutter', probably of gravestones. George and Sarah had at least 10 children (no television in those days).

Their son, George, started as a Baker & Grocer and lived with his wife, Miriam, at the Co-operative Store in the village. Within a few years though, he became a Builder and Bricklayer and they lived with their 7 children at Mill Hill Cottages, maybe at his late father's house.

Another son of George and Sarah, Stephen, who had a wife and 6 children, also lived on Mill Hill. Like his father, he was a gravestone mason.

Squires women in front of house: 1930s



George Squires: Baker then Builder. 1910

Miriam Squires. 1910

Squires family in 1910

Three Squires men in front of house. 1920s

His name, "Squires", is engraved on the base of many local gravestones, including some in St Giles Churchyard.

Now, the question is, which of the many members of the Squires family is Squires Close named after? To be honest, I have no idea!

I think the best answer is that Squires Close was named to celebrate all members of the Squires family. Some will have lived in Squires House and have worked and played on the land now occupied by Squires Close so, linking them all to the street, would have been a great decision.

The extended Squires family were involved in many aspects of Cropwell Bishop life and one descendent, Malcolm Dabell, still lives in the village.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks, in particular, to Malcolm Dabell for his help with this Story.

Also, thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help.

Squires Close in 2020

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

St Giles Way was built in 1973 when the house builders, Wimpey, began building the second phase of the giant housing estate started by the Bell company.

The Bell houses could all be accessed from Hoe View Road but the initial ones on the Wimpey estate would be accessed via Church Street – and that resulted in the creation of St Giles Way.

The first houses of the estate were built along St Giles Way. The workmen's site office and material store were where Smiths Close now stands and the sales office was where 5a, 5b and 5c stand. The show houses where at the far end of St Giles Way, numbers 7, 9 and 11.

It was decades before the last houses, 5a-5c, were added following the purchase of the open ground that they now occupy.

As for the name of the street, well it is obviously named after the church in Cropwell Bishop, St Giles. It has been waiting for centuries, but it eventually got its reward, a street name.

St Giles Church – its history

I am sure that everyone considers St Giles Church and The Turn in front of it, as being the centre of the village.

It has been that way since 1215 when the building of the church began. Before that time the centre of the village was where the pinfold is, that is where there was a spring and where people would meet and gossip.

Carrying water is heavy work so, naturally, their homes were sited nearby. The land enclosed by Stockwell Lane, Church Street and Fern Road was the heart of Cropwell Bishop and there would have been a stockade enclosing this area; it was somewhere you could keep your animals safe at night. The church was part of this safe, central area.

St Giles Church is obviously a place of worship for Christians, but its building has always been used for other things too – teddy bears parachuting from the tower during the Celebration Weekend being just one example.

In its early days, it would have been a vital meeting place and, at times, a refuge. In the 1200s it would have been the safest place to shield from severe weather and also a place of safety in an emergency such as a house-fire or flooding.

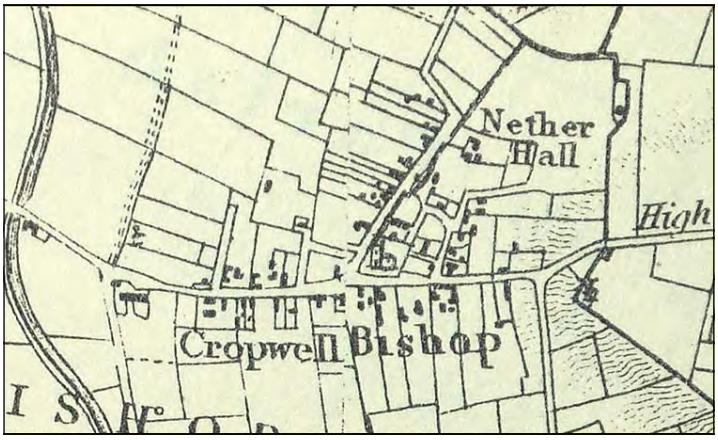
The chancel is the front part of the church, where the altar is, and it would have been separated by a screen, of some kind, from the main body of the building, the nave, which is the 'peoples' part of the building.

The church would have been the only public building in the community and so have been the centre of life and activity. The nave was the place where villagers could come together to meet, do business, feast and play.

Not that the church building would have been a particularly comfortable place in those early days. Initially, the floor was padded-earth where straw or rushes might have been laid on special occasions. And it was probably this way for over 300 years.

It wasn't until around 1640 that it was decreed that the floor of a church should be made of stone.

In the early years, the church would not have had regular seating – people were expected to stand for prayer. Later, there would be benches and wooden pews.



Map of village in 1835

Benches from the 1300s

In the church today, at the western end of the nave, near the tower, there are some benches with poppy heads carved on them. They have been there since the 1300s. In comparison, the pews at the front end of the nave arrived here in 1893. But they were not new; they came from the old church, now in ruins, at Colston Bassett.

St Giles Church – the building

St Giles Church is old – the oldest building in Cropwell Bishop.

It was built in 1215 and villagers celebrated its 800th birthday in 2015 with decorations inside the Church.

But not all of the building is that old, the church was built in stages. The holy part, the chancel, was built in 1215, the history of the other parts is less clear.

From outside, we can see that the limestone blocks in the chancel walls have not been shaped to any great extent. They vary in size and shape but are generally small and narrow. The stone most likely came from limestone deposits on the south side of Cropwell Bishop.

The outside Chancel wall (2021)

A few years ago, repairs to the arch at the open end of the chancel, revealed the underlying stonework.

It certainly looks crude by today's standards, like a rockery wall in your garden, but then, I wonder, how many of our modern buildings will still be around in 800 years-time.

The brickwork of the lower walls of the nave, looks very similar to that of the chancel. This suggests that it was built at the same time as the chancel – or very soon after.

On the left, the chancel wall; on the right, the nave wall. The brickwork is very similar, which suggests they were built at roughly the same time (2021)

The brickwork on the tower, however, looks very different. The stone blocks are larger, neatly shaped (dressed) and have a more regular appearance – they probably came from the same limestone deposits as the chancel's stones.

This superior brickwork must have been completed at a later date, using improved techniques and tools. There is documentary evidence to suggest that the tower was built in the early 1400s and its more refined brickwork supports this.

800th birthday in 2015

Above the arch of the Chancel (2014)

On the left, the nave wall; on the right, the tower wall. Very different brickwork styles (2021)

Prior to the building of the stone tower, the church may have had a wooden tower, although there is no evidence: it is merely a suspicion.

So, does this mean that the St Giles Church we have today was completed by about 1450?

Historians say that at some point in the church's history, the main roof of the nave was raised.

A reason for raising the roof would have been to improve the natural lighting of the interior. The high oak-beamed ceiling and eight clear-glass windows high above the central aisle of the nave, are the result.

The date of this improvement is uncertain, but the habit of craftsmen to leave their initials and the date on their handywork was as prevalent then as it is now. Maybe you have scratched your initials and the date on a freshly concreted path, or on some plastering, or carved your initials on a tree trunk – I know I have.

Some of the roof beams have dates carved on them. This is not something the roof builder would have done – he would have thought a plaque more appropriate. However, it is something a craftsman might have done after making a repair.

This idea is supported by the fact that the dates on the beams are wildly different; 1600, 1764 and 1785.

Carving on a beam in a side aisle (2015)

So, we have evidence that a repair to the roof was completed in 1600, and it is reasonable to assume that the original roof was built many decades earlier. An oak beam should have lasted at least 150 years, which takes us back to 1450 – which is the period when we think the tower was built.

So, the roof could have been raised at the same time that the tower was built – or possibly much earlier.

Once again, it is the brickwork that provides clues.

It is better to view the north side of the church where the upper part of the nave has not been rendered. Compare the brickwork of the lower wall of the nave with that of the upper part where the windows are.

Both the lower and upper walls of the nave look similar in style and weathering whilst the tower's brickwork is different in every way: it looks newer.

The brickwork on lower and upper parts of the nave appear to be similar (2021)

The oak-beamed ceiling of the nave (2015)

The brickwork of the porch (on the left) appears similar to that of the nave (on the right) (2021)

Then there is the porch (photo above). If you compare the eastern wall of the porch with the adjacent nave wall, you will see that their brickworks are similar.

This suggests to me that the porch was also built at the same time as the nave, after all, when you build a nave, you have got to have an entrance somewhere.

It is my belief that the nave was completed – with its raised roof and windows – long before the tower was built.

Assuming the nave was indeed completed much earlier than the tower, then a story-line for St Giles might look something like this:

- 1215 – chancel built. At the same time, or shortly afterwards, the nave was built (but with a lower roof than now). The porch was also built.
- 1300s – the roof was raised and the high clear-glass windows added.
- 1400s – the tower was built.
- 1640s – stone floor laid.

During its 806 years, the church has undergone numerous repairs and modifications and they make the job of deciphering its history difficult.

If you get the chance to see the brickwork yourself, look at the following; maybe you can explain them:

- the brickwork on the south side of the nave looks much newer than that on the north side.
- the bricks at the top of the chancel end-wall are bigger and newer-looking than those at the bottom.
- the newer brickwork on the end wall of the raised-roof part of the nave looks quite new.

Fortunately, we have written evidence of work done on the church building during the 1800s.

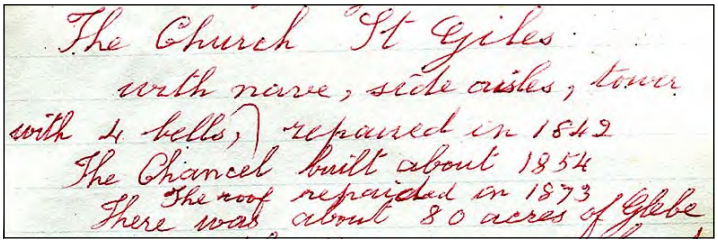
It comes from a book written by a William Baldock who, in later life, wrote down his memories of Cropwell Butler and Cropwell Bishop during the 1830s and 1840s.

He was born in Cropwell Bishop in 1829 and lived most of his life here. His father was a wealthy man who had a large house, The Hollies, still on Back Lane in Cropwell Butler. In later life, William Baldock moved into that house with his family.

On page 97 of his book, he recalls a childhood view of Cropwell Bishop from the top of Hoe Hill – which, at that time, was not capped with trees. He wrote:

> "There is the old Church of St Giles, looking at a distance much the same as when I first remember seeing it, but the Churchyard, which had then several footpaths through it and was used considerably as a playground for children, was shortly afterwards enclosed by a new stone wall and the foot roads closed.
>
> A few years later the old Chancel was taken down and replaced by a substantial new one."

There is evidence of repairs and alterations all over the building. Beware: a modern developer would render it all with concrete at the drop of a hat! (2021)


The Church St Giles
with nave, side aisles, tower
with 4 bells, repaired in 1842
The Chancel built about 1854
The roof repaired in 1873
There was about 80 acres of Glebe

This note was most likely written by David Salvin. He lived in Cropwell Bishop at the same time as William Baldock.

That final sentence is of particular interest. William Baldcock is saying that the chancel was rebuilt around 1840. But we don't have to take just his word for it.

Pam Barlow, of Cropwell Bishop, discovered a hand-written note in her family archives which states;

"The Chancel was built about 1854".

This confirms what William Baldock stated.

So, now we can confidently say that major re-building work was carried out on the chancel in about 1850.

However, I wonder how many parts of the previous chancel were retained and built around: I will leave that for someone else to work out.

The Church Tower

To climb the tower of St Giles back in the 1500s must have been an amazing experience.

To look down on a world where you toiled day after day, and see it from a different viewpoint must have felt heavenly.

We do not have any records of their experiences, or know how common it was for villagers to climb the tower. Was it something that only Church people and privileged friends were invited to do, or did children scamper up to the top whenever they were bored of kicking an inflated pigskin along the street: we just don't know.

The steps are difficult to climb up, and even more difficult to climb down (2019)

It is not likely to become a regular activity for modern villagers. We can get bigger thrills on big wheels at Goose Fair or in airplanes. And we can get better views on TV or with a drone. And modern Health & Safety regulations will say these are all safer things to do.

Climbing a very old spiral stone staircase will put off most people and clambering through a tiny door onto a surprisingly small, uneven floor surrounded by a low wall, and buffeted by strong winds, will put off most of the rest.

Should you make it to the top, then it is not the time to recall that you don't really have a head for heights. However tricky you found the journey up, you will soon discover that climbing down is even harder.

Having said that, bell-ringers do regularly manage the first part of the climb and those responsible for the maintenance of the clock (no, "responsible" is not the right word; "those with a community spirit", is better), will climb as far as the level of the clock face.

Only those who want to see, or capture on camera, a view from the top, have to face the final steps.

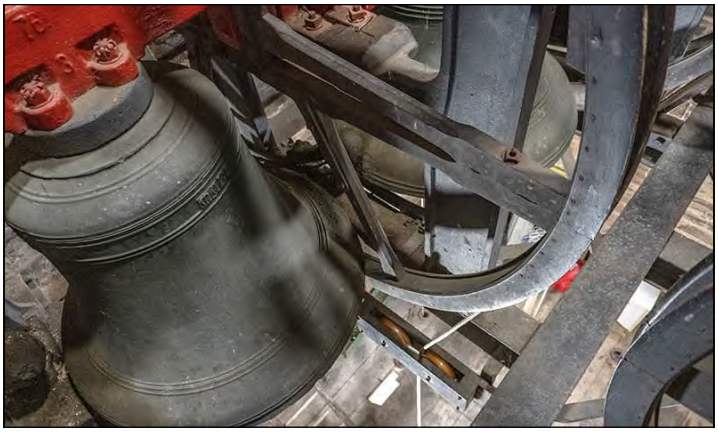
If you have read other Cropwell Bishop Street Stories, you will be familiar with photos taken from the tower over the last 80 years. I am surprised that no artist did the same in earlier centuries; maybe their efforts are hidden in someone's attic.

Church Tower photos

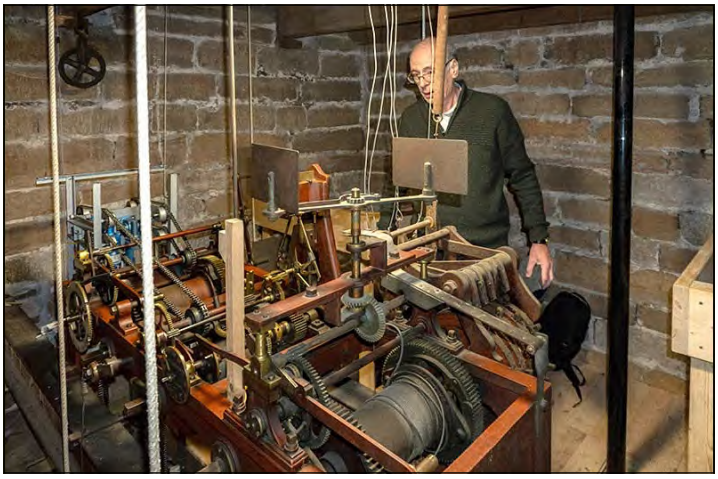
The door to the tower steps: were people shorter in the 1400s? Colin Bryan in 2019

The bell-ringers gallery (2019)

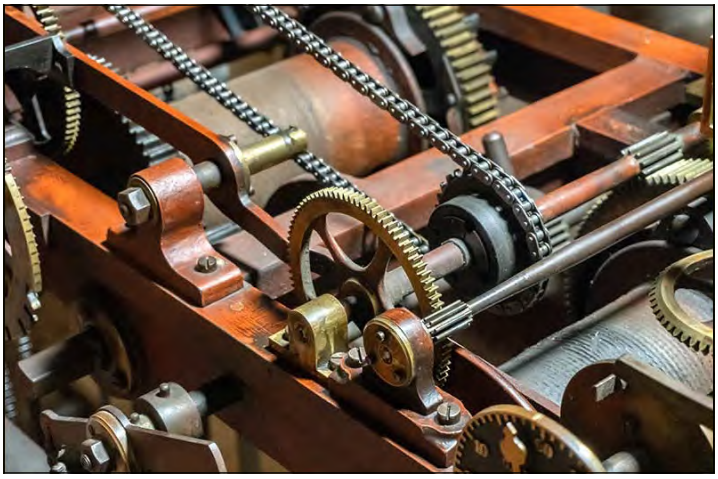
This is where the bells swing (2019)



One of the bells you have no doubt heard but never seen (2019)



The clock's timing and chiming mechanism (2019)



Made in 1906, this mechanical system has served the village well for over a century. Until 2003, it had to be 'wound up' once a week but now electricity does the job. (2019)

A door just big enough to crawl through. The engineers who fitted the lightning conductors must have been slim. (2019)

The tower has stayed the same for 600 years, only the views have changed (2019)

Some light relief on the way down (2019)

Stained glass with a bell theme (2019)

St Giles and the village community – photographic memories

Stories can be told with words or pictures. To complete the Street Story of St Giles Way I have chosen to combine the two. Below are photos with their stories attached.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help with this Story.

A hundred years ago, the church looked very different from today. More like an isolated church in rural Sicily, some might say (1920s)

Another photo taken a few years later. It looks like the builders have been in and many improvements can be seen: it already looks more inviting – even in black and white (1920s)

In 2012, the whole country was busy celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee – and Cropwell Bishop and St Giles Church were not going to miss out on the fun (2012)

Queen's Diamond Jubilee: St Giles (2012)

Queen's Diamond Jubilee: St Giles (2012)

Queen's Diamond Jubilee: St Giles (2012)

Queen's Diamond Jubilee: St Giles (2012)

When structural faults were discovered in the chancel arch, it was necessary to close the church while repairs were carried out. A "Gift Day" was organised to help raise money for the costly work. (2014)

It is said that builders included grotesques in their ceilings to frighten away evil spirits. I imagine these three must have scared away quite a few in their time (2012)

On 3rd March 2015, there was a total eclipse of the Sun and it could be seen from England: a very rare event.

The place to see the total eclipse was Cornwall but, unfortunately, the clouds spoilt the occasion for many viewers down there.

Here in Cropwell Bishop, it was not total (around 90%) but enough to make it darker and cooler while the Sun was partially blocked. And we were lucky not to have it obscured by cloud.

During the eclipse the, now much reduced, sunlight shone through the numerous small gaps in the tree branches outside St Giles. They each projected an image of the sun which could be easily seen in the darkened interior of the church. It is the same effect as produced by a pin-hole camera.

In these photos, you can see hundreds of overlapping images of partial circles of light, each one an image of the Sun while it was partially blocked by the Moon.

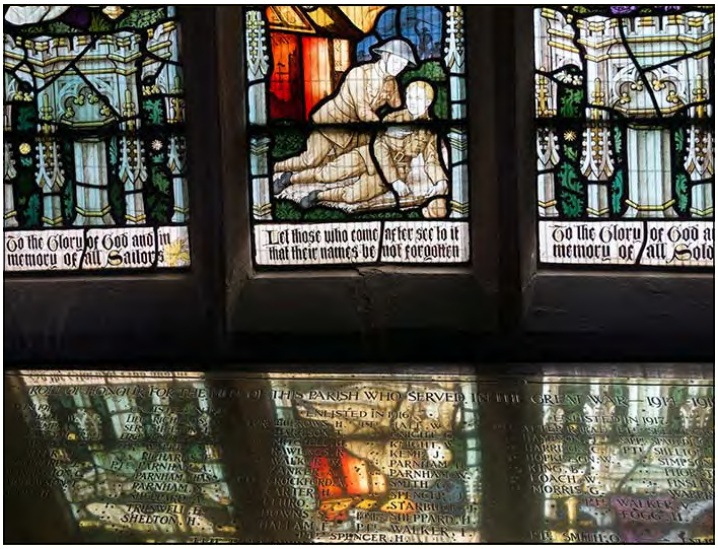
Most appear golden because they are falling on the golden wood of the pews inside St Giles. Some are coloured red by the stained glass in the window.
(9.26am 20/3/2015)

Eternal solid support for St Giles church (2014)

The south window through which the sunlight shone during the Eclipse of the Sun (2015)

Eclipse of the Sun as seen in St Giles (2015)

The eclipsed Sun is behind the church tower (2015)



The stained-glass panels that commemorate those from the parish who died in the World Wars. Here, they are reflected in the polished brass name-plaque below. (2015)

Carvings and grotesques decorate roof beams (2015)

Carved decoration on ceiling beams in St Giles (2015)

Church organ and pulpit of St Giles (2015)

Chancel of St Giles (2015)

A tea-room and serving hatch – a wonderful new addition to the church tower. All is hidden when the doors are closed (2015)

If you have ever travelled for hours to a church wedding (even worse with small children) you will not need to be told the benefits of having a toilet in a church. This new one is in the tower – ground floor of course.
I imagine it is out of bounds during services (2018)

View of the nave from the gallery above the tea-room (2018)

A gallery view of proceedings (2018)

A view through the north doorway of the nave (2018)

Trees, like all occupants of the churchyard, do not live for ever. This one was becoming an increasing hazard and the decision to fell it had to be made (2015)

At Christmas time the churchyard often has a variety of lighting displays. Here is one. (2020)

Bronwen Gamble, the vicar in 2018.
Whilst vicars do have regular Sunday tasks to perform, there is, at times, a calling to carry out others – like supervising Teddybear Parachute Jumps as part of the Village Celebration Weekend (2018)

Brave volunteers preparing a teddy for its jump from the tower (2018)

Is this a brave teddy, undaunted by it being the 13th minute past the hour – or was he pushed?! (2018)

Another teddy drifts down safely (2018)

Making parachutes is a skilled art and demands a lot of attention (2018)

Grave looks from supporters as teddies are hoisted to the top of the tower in a bucket. One teddy stays hanging in a tree's branches and will not get his second chance (2018)

When the Tour of Britain cycle race came through Cropwell Bishop on 8th September 2018, it was a momentous day for villagers and also cycling fans from surrounding areas.

The Turn was considered a great place to view the riders and soak up the atmosphere. The church tower contributed to the glory of the occasion with a yellow bike – one of dozens that lined the route through the parish.

One place that offered an overview (2018)

Waiting for the arrival of the Tour (2018)

The Parish Council presented awards for the best displays

After months of planning, and hours of preparation, there were just minutes of exciting action – but it was all worthwhile (2018)

Weddings at St Giles.

The children who grow up and go to school in Cropwell Bishop will often leave the village to study or work.
But when it comes to getting married, they often return to St Giles. Here are two such events (2004)

St Giles, standing tall whatever the season Winter (2012)

Snow, frost and finally sunshine in just 18 hours (2021)

Cool shade from the summer sun (2008)

St Giles in autumn (2017)

St Giles in February (2015)

St Giles on a late afternoon in January (2015)

St Giles Way in 2020

2 & 4 St Giles Way

6 to 14 St Giles Way

St Giles Way

16 to 22 St Giles Way

The pink house on the left is 13 Church Street. Whilst it can be accessed from Church Street, this entrance from St Giles Way is much wider, which must be useful for the owners.
This does mean that when they want a delivery, they have a choice of two entrances – both with a different post code. Can't be many houses like that (excluding Palaces, Country Houses and National Trust properties).

1 St Giles Way

3 St Giles Way

24 & 26 St Giles Way

5 St Giles Way

28 St Giles Way

5a & 5b St Giles Way

30 St Giles Way

5c St Giles Way

7 & 9 St Giles Way.
These two adjoining homes were show-houses when Wimpey was selling here in the early 1970s.

32 & 34 St Giles Way

11 St Giles Way.
This was also a show-house.

34 St Giles Way

Snow in 2012

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Stackyard Close was the newest housing development in Cropwell Bishop in 2020. Nevertheless, because it is located in the centre of the village, its site has a long history.

All but one of the homes are brand new buildings but the one alongside Church Street is inside the shell of a large, old building.

This was built as a Cart Shed for the Shelton family in 1890. George Shelton was a Farmer and Plaster Merchant in 1832. The family became substantial Cropwell farmers and were still in the plastering trade in the 1890s.

The Cart Shed was built by a Cropwell bricklayer, David Salvin, and is considered an example of some of the finest early brickwork in the village.

Back in 2015, the site of Stackyard Close was, essentially, a storage space. As you can see from the photographs, it had a large empty yard where cars, lorries and buses had ample room to turn around and park. Buildings of various ages and construction held machinery, containers and vehicles: there were also 7 garages for cars.

However, there were times when it was people that filled the yard.

In the mid 20th century, Methodist evangelists Silverwood and Whitehouse sometimes visited the village and set up a marquee in the stackyard.

Some of the garages (2015)

Cart Shed (2020)

Looking towards the church (2015)

A spacious yard where lorries and buses could turn around and park (2015)

These buildings are still there (2015)

Silverwood and Whitehouse; two evangelists who visited Cropwell Bishop

The black corrugated building in the stackyard was at least 70 years old. The black and white photograph on the right was taken in 1949 and you can see it in the middle with fields stretching beyond it as far as Hoe Hill.

Up to 2018, access to the stackyard was restricted by the narrow gap between the Cart Shed and The Cabin, which was also the Village Post Office.

For much of the 20th century, the yard was mainly used to store grain and house lorries owned by Cropwell Bishop's independent Grain Merchant, H. Simpson and Sons Ltd. Consequently, it was known by local people as Simpsons Yard.

The company had its offices on Church Street and there is more about the Simpson family in other Street Stories.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help with this Story.

The black, corrugated iron building was there in 1949 (2015)

Stackyard Close (2020)

View from the church tower (1949)

View from the church tower (2020)

Cabin Store & Post Office: demolished February 2018 (2006)

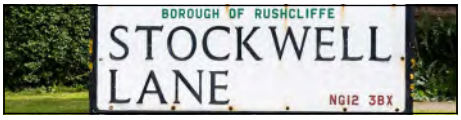
Top of Stackyard Close (2020)

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop



At the bottom of Stockwell Lane is the Pinfold, an ancient part of the village where there was once a pond fed by a spring.

However, once large-scale mining of gypsum occurred around the village in the 1900s, its water supply was disrupted and stopped appearing at the Pinfold.

The Pinfold, being at the centre of the village, was the natural place to put the village stocks: the punishment of miscreants was clearly more local and public in the past.

With stocks, and a fresh supply of spring water, you can see where the name 'Stockwell Lane' came from. But it wasn't always called this.

For a long time – probably centuries – it was called Back Lane, and this is what it was called in the 1871 Census. Nevertheless, from 1881 it became known as Thraves Lane.

At that time, William Thraves, a tailor, and his wife Sarah, a dressmaker, lived on the Lane. Were they the source of the name, I wonder.

But their father had lived on the same lane since 1830, and during his lifetime (as a farm labourer), the lane was always known as Back Lane.

My guess is that because William and Sarah made clothes, people would have been regularly calling at their house and, consequently, their name became a more popular reference to the lane than Back Lane – hence it became known as Thraves Lane.

When Sarah died in 1910, no one with the name, Thraves, lived on the lane but the name persisted until at least 1939.

I don't know when Stockwell Lane became the new name but it is interesting to note that even in 1911 some homes in the village were referred to as Stockwell Cottages.

The road was made one-way in the 1960s.

These days, we see no reason for our street names to change, but that clearly wasn't the case in past times.

Maps

1804 map of Stockwell Lane

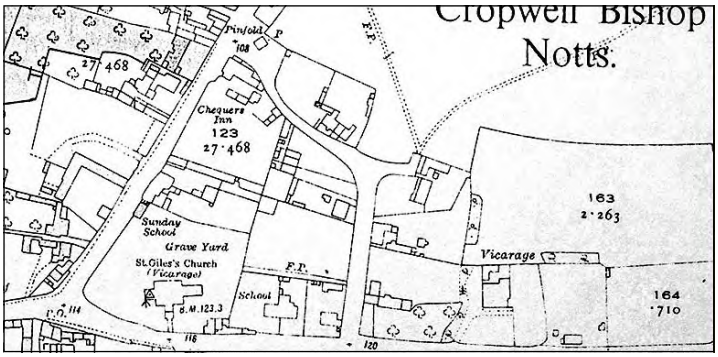
Note the narrow lane that leads south from near the Pinfold. In later years, the present cottages, 2-6 Stockwell Lane, were built along this lane.

Note also, how the short lane that currently leads up to the school gate, was once a much longer one with several buildings along its length. People would have used this lane to collect water from the spring in the field beyond.

Satellite view of Stockwell Lane in 2018

1930 map of Stockwell Lane.

Note the location of the spring on Spring Hill.
The three cottages, 2-6 Stockwell Lane, are shown. The long narrow building that is beside the path to these homes, is the outdoor-toilet and wash-house block for the homes. It is no longer there.



1950s map of Stockwell Lane

Little changed in the twenty years before 1960: a great deal changed in the twenty years that followed. The same was probably true in most of Britain.

Church Views

Before drones were invented to take aerial photos, we had to make use of satellite images, and before that airplane and helicopter photos.

Before all of these, the people of Cropwell Bishop were fortunate in being able to see their village from above by climbing up the church tower (on the inside!) – and it is still a good way to get high resolution photos. Trees are the biggest problem but at least in winter they don't have leaves. The photo on the right was taken in 2019.

It becomes more interesting when you compare it with photos taken many years ago and are able to spot changes that have happened in the interval.

The two black & white photos below were taken, I estimate, in the 1980s. Compare them with the 2020 photo and try to spot differences.

View from the church tower in November 2019

Two photos of Stockwell Lane taken on the same day in the 1980s

The Pinfold

The area we know as the Pinfold would probably be unrecognisable to the villagers who lived here a century or more ago.

Its name, Pinfold, relates to a time when there was a need to lock-up stray farm animals. In the early 1900s it existed as a low-walled pen with a gate, and was about 6m square. There was a lock on the gate.

A parish officer, called a Pinder, would lock stray animals in the Pinfold and only release them on the payment of a fine.

Near to the Pinfold in those days, stood the village stocks and there was also a pond fed by a spring. The pond would reach a depth of 30cm, or so, and then overflow into a nearby dyke.

The Pinfold (2020)

The Pinfold – a place to meet. In this instance, it was a get-together of some of the Steering Committee for the Cropwell Bishop Village Plan in 2009. From left to right: Linda Hatton, Rob Thorpe, Tracie Berridge, Mel Stanley, Tony Jarrow, Elaine Robinson and Judy Thomas.

Once an enclosure for local animals: now a resting place for local folk (2020)

The Pinfold (2020)

Alongside the Pinfold in 1989

A sign for our times (2020)

Up the Lane

Street, Road, Close, Avenue, Drive – all these words are used to describe streets.

With Avenue and Close, I picture a short, dead-end street, although I can't be certain (e.g. 5th Avenue in New York), but none of the rest, stimulate my imagination.

On the other hand, when it comes to Lane, I imagine something old, narrow, curvy, steep sided, with a narrow pavement - or none at all. In fact, to me, these photos of Stockwell Lane looks just how a lane should look.

This is the first house up the Lane. (2020)
In its raised position it looks as though it has the job of keeping an eye on the Pinfold.
One previous owner was Ethel Harper who, together with her husband, Aubrey Harper, wrote and published the local history book, Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop, back in 1988.

Stockwell Lane (2020)

The view round the bend.
This photo was taken in 2014, but nothing much changed between then and 2020: this is a real lane.

The Girls and Boys Brigade Marching Band makes its way to the Primary School as part of the Celebration Weekend in July 2015

A look back towards the Pinfold (2020)

Parents, children and supporters follow the band to the School (2015)

1 Stockwell Lane as it was in October 2008.
It was soon to be demolished and rebuilt. It had been the home of Margaret Kerr who had been a Parish Councillor. Kerrs Walk is named after her.
Number 3, next door, would also be part of the rebuild.

The completed rebuild in June 2009.
The enlarged home is 1 Stockwell Lane: number 3 is now just a memory. A modern, energy-efficient home has replaced old buildings but the style is very much is keeping with both former and nearby homes and enhances the appearance of the Lane.

1 Stockwell Lane in 2020

Numbers 1 and 5 Stockwell Lane (2020)

The house on the right, 5 Stockwell Lane, was once the Coach House for the Old Hall that once stood on land now occupied by Springfield Close. (1950s)

Compare this 1999 photo with the previous one and you will see that the house has been greatly extended and modified at the rear - although you would not know it from the roadside. It looks as though it might have looked this way for centuries. It just shows what is possible when you employ a good architect and builder.

Looking up the Lane towards the bend (2020)

A 2020 photo of number 5 showing the full extent of its improvements

On the Bend

This is number 7 Stockwell Lane in 1998. It was called Stockwell House. As we compare this photo with others, take your bearings from the School sign with its arrow: its position has hardly changed in 20 years, whilst most everything around it has.

Several years later, the owner of Number 7 had a small bungalow built in the garden. Here it is next to number 7. The bungalow was given the number, 5A.

The new owner of number 7, renovated and extended the old house until it looked like a new one. Here it is in 2020. It still goes by the name, Stockwell House. I think the appearance of the two new homes is a big improvement on the original house – and no doubt the insides are more desirable.

9A Stockwell Lane.
For great views down the Lane, and red sunsets over the village, this is the place to live.

Dennis Baker

There is no street called School Lane but, if there was, Stockwell Lane would be it. Or, at least, the little offshoot on the bend that leads to Cropwell Bishop Primary School would be.

The School was built in 1961 and once it opened the School on Fern Road shut its doors to pupils for the last time. Compared with the School today, the 1961 building was small: just look at this early photograph of it in its field behind Old Hall Farm.

The first Head of the School was Dennis Baker. He was able to keep a close eye on his School 24 hours a day: he lived in the house beside the school gates. As well as giving time to his school duties, he also served as a Parish Councillor.

He served as Head Teacher for around 20 years but towards the end of that time, life gradually became more difficult for him after he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Although he retired as Head, he did not retire from work for another 10 years.

The paper-cutting on the right describes his reaction to the diagnosis and how he and his wife, Muriel, took the advice given by doctors: do everything you want to do in the next 10 years. It looks like they did.

Round the world tours, holidays in China, house-swaps in Australia and Canada – Dennis and Muriel made the most of their time together.

I suspect the shock of the MS diagnosis motivated them to do far more than they might have done if Dennis had enjoyed a life of good health. Maybe their reaction is a lesson for all of us.

Muriel, who in her younger years was a teacher at Kinoulton Primary School, can still be seen at Cropwell Bishop events.

Cropwell Bishop Primary School in 1965. In front is Old Hall Farm that was demolished to make way for Springfield Close.

House-swopping is 'ideal holiday'

DENNIS Baker was headteacher at Cropwell Bishop primary school when he was told he had multiple sclerosis.

He took early retirement in 1992.

He said: "I was told to do everything I wanted to do in the next 10 years. Everything after that would be a bonus."

For two years, his wife Muriel continued teaching at Kinoulton. Then they became globe-trotters, ticking off countries as they visited them.

They recently did a house swop with people on Vancouver Island in Canada.

Dennis says he would recommend a house-swop holiday to anyone. All you need to have for one is the price of an air ticket.

"When I first came here as headteacher in 1964 there was a teacher Bill Carter who moved to Australia to be near his daughter," Dennis said.

"He wanted to come back and visit friends in 1992, so we house-swopped with him.

"He lives just outside Brisbane. We were there nine weeks.

"We lived there as if it was our own house and we left cars for each other.

"The best holiday was when we went round the world.

"The most interesting was our trip to China. We started at Beijing and saw the Forgotten Army, made of terracotta in Xian Province."

Dennis Baker with models of China's Forgotten Army. Photo: 2260G10

Springfield House; the home of Dennis and Muriel Baker (2020)

Cropwell Bishop School Football Team 1963/64. Taken at Cotgrave with Head Teacher, Dennis Baker

Cropwell Bishop Parish Council 1970. From left to right: Vic Hall, Arthur Barlow, John Foster, David Holmes (clerk), Harold Smith (chairman), Dennis Baker, John Dean and Tom Rawlings.

Ivy Cottage

Ivy Cottage has been standing near the bend on Stockwell Lane a long time, at least 140 years. It is one of the oldest buildings on the road and has experienced three name changes of the Lane.

Being just off the Lane, and looking like it is on a private drive, must pose problems for delivery people.

At least when they see the bungalow next door is 9A, they will know that number 9 (Ivy Cottage) is not far away.

Delivery people are known to have far greater problems finding Springfield House next door; it hasn't even been granted its own house number.

1890s. Photographer taking pictures of the residents of Ivy Cottage

1950s photo of Ivy Cottage

1970s photo of Ivy Cottage

Ivy Cottage today. 2020

The Cottages, numbers 2, 4 and 6

There is a terrace of three cottages sandwiched between the back of The Chequers and the two flat-roofed garages on Stockwell Lane. It's a shame they are now partly hidden, because they once held a commanding presence on Stockwell Lane.

The garages hide the fronts of the homes, but the photo from the 1940s clearly shows the former extent of their front gardens and the apparent tranquillity they once enjoyed.

Where the garages now are, there would have been a long path from the house to the pavement on Stockwell Lane.

At one time, access to the front of the houses was also possible via steps from the lane – somewhere opposite number 1. A newish wall hides any trace of it in 2020.

Numbers 2 Stockwell Lane is the right-hand cottage, number 4 the middle and number 6 at the left-hand end (2020)

At the foot of the previous page is a composite of 1940s photos of numbers 6, 4 and 2 Stockwell Lane. I have butted the two separate photos together to make it easier to appreciate what it shows.

The left-hand photo was taken from the same spot as the 2020 photo above (cottages 2 and 4 have been excluded). The right-hand photo was taken from near the cream-coloured garage, with the camera pointing towards the Pinfold. On the left is number 2. On the extreme right is the front of number 1 (in its former state: it has since been rebuilt in a similar style).

The Plough and Harrow

Number 11 has an interesting history: it was once an "off-licence". This means it was allowed to sell alcohol.

These days, when it seems like every other shop sells alcohol, the phrase is never heard, but before the 1970s, it was where you bought alcohol for drinking at home. Very often, it was a little shop or just a counter attached to a pub.

So, number 11 was a little pub with an off-licence counter. Or, you can think of it as a public bar with a beer shop. Its name was, The Plough and Harrow, but it was more commonly referred to as The Plough.

The building hides its past well, but then it is over a century since it sold its last pint of beer. During those hundred years it has been a private home and has changed its appearance several times, sometimes by choice and sometimes by accident.

Compare the photographs of it as The Plough in the 1890s (below), with its appearance in 1998 (below-right). The windows are all different in size and position and the door has gone. Not surprising really, who wants to have a front room looking like a public bar (don't answer that).

But what has happened to the roof? Apparently, it was destroyed by fire in 1950. Who decided that a flat roof would look good is unknown, but British architects of the 1950s and 1960s do have a lot to answer for. Thankfully, many of the bleak and ugly buildings they designed were demolished in the decades that followed – although a few can still be seen festering in Nottingham and elsewhere.

Happily, a recent owner, roofed over the eyesore and, no doubt, created a few extra rooms in the process.

11 Stockwell Lane in 1890, when it was The Plough & Harrow. In the photo are the occupants, the Green family.

11 Stockwell Lane in 2020. Few would guess its history.

11 Stockwell Lane in 1998. To think, a someone thought this a good roof design, a second someone passed the plans, and a third someone paid money to have it completed. That's three misguided "someones".

Groves Cottage

It was back in 1874 that Samuel Smith, of Hickling, married Cropwell Bishop girl, Elizabeth Shelton. They lived in a house at The Turn, which is the area in front of the Church.

As was common in Victorian times, they had a big family, seven children in all, but the one of interest in our story is their third, George Shelton Smith.

In 1903, when George was 25, he married 18-year-old Cropwell Bishop girl, Winifred Groves. Winifred's father was William Groves.

William was a Carrier. In the period from 1908 to 1912, he transported goods and people from Cropwell Bishop to Nottingham and back again every Saturday and Wednesday.

He was also an agent for the lace out-work that was done by villagers in their homes. He would do all the transporting between Nottingham and Cropwell Bishop.

Over 40 wives and daughters of the village spent their days doing finishing-work on the machine-made lace items manufactured in Nottingham. The piece rates of pay were low, but the money was welcome – especially for those married to low-paid agricultural labourers.

In 1906, William had a house built on the Lane. That house is number 8 Stockwell Lane and it has a plaque high on its wall: "Groves Cottage 1906". George and Winifred also lived in the house along with their growing family.

Groves Cottage was lived in by members of the Smith family for the whole of its history, from 1906 to 2022 when it was sold.

George and Winifred had six children; Florrie, George, William, Ethel, Harry and Harold. The second youngest, Harry, appears to have been an interesting character.

He worked as an aircraft assembler and we have a picture of him as a young man standing outside the Hairdresser on Church Street alongside his dog, Solomon.

After marrying, he left the family home, Groves Cottage, to live his married life at 14 Stockwell Lane – just next door but one.

It was in 1946 that the nation learnt of Harry's very unusual pet, a badger that he had rescued from a poacher's trap and tamed.

Going on the bus from Cropwell Bishop to Nottingham was nothing out of the ordinary, but going with a pet badger was, and a photograph of him doing just that was printed in the national newspaper, the Daily Mirror.

Another photo showed him walking alongside the Council House, on Cheapside, with Brock pulling him along.
Back home, Brock lived as a member of the family, sleeping at night (wild badgers are nocturnal) and taking walks with the dog.

Harry Smith takes Brock and the family dog for a walk. This photo was colourised by Paul Bellamy of Cropwell Bishop.

In years to come, Grove Cottage became the home of the youngest member of the Smith family, Harold, and following his death in 2021 at the age of 96, the reign of the Smiths at Grove Cottage came to an end.

In 2022 the house was sold.

Harry Smith and Solomon on Church Street – where the entrance to Stackyard Close now is.

"A ticket for one badger and one human, please". Harry Smith and Brock in 1946.

Harry Smith and Brock

Groves Cottage (2020)

Groves Cottage (2020)

Groves Cottage with its paddock/orchard alongside. (2020)
The paddock occupies the space between number 8 and number 12 Stockwell Lane.
A house was never built where the paddock is, but I suspect the houses were so numbered to make room, one day, for a number 10 to be built there.

12 & 14 Stockwell Lane

14 Stockwell Lane (2020)

12 Stockwell Lane (2020)

Top End

If you look back at the old maps of Stockwell Lane, you will be able to link only one building with the ones currently at the top end of the Lane. That will be the building with homes numbered 12 and 14.

The homes opposite 12 and 14 are obviously relatively recent additions: they were built in the late 1970s. As the old maps show, there was a building there before them - and it had to be demolished. It was an old vicarage.

As a home for the village vicar, you might expect all villages to have a long history of their own vicarage, but that is not the case.

In the distant past, a vicar would very often devote most of his time to personal pursuits rather than the well-being of his congregation. So much so, that he would not even live in the village or bother to visit it regularly. He would appoint all his church responsibilities to someone else, that someone being a curate.

Abraham Dobbin became the vicar of Cropwell Bishop in 1877 but, before that, he too had been a curate in Nottingham. The Cropwell Bishop vicarage that became his home, stood on ground where Dobbin Close now is - it is clearly marked on the 1930 map.

But before his vicarage was built, there had previously been another one in the village. It was not demolished but remained for almost a century after being cast aside by the church.

That old vicarage was on Stockwell Lane, opposite 12 and 14 Stockwell Lane. It too is shown on the 1930s map.

It was there until the 1970s and on the next page are photos taken at that time.

The old vicarage on Stockwell Lane in the 1970s. It is near the junction with Fern Road; the photo was taken from the opposite side of Fern Road. As you can see from the sign, "Cottage Style Chalet Houses" will take its place.

This is a view of the back garden of the old vicarage at that time. It is clear from both pictures that the building had suffered from years of neglect.
The two tree trunks belong to the tall trees in the previous picture. You can see 12 Stockwell Lane in the background.

11A Stockwell Lane: one of the "Cottage Style Chalet Houses" (2020)

15 Stockwell Lane (with the red car). It adjoins 11A. This is reminiscent of Mill Lane where there is no number 13. (2020)

Two houses with no number. I would guess they are 17 and 19 Stockwell Lane and, I suppose, delivery people have to do the same.
I imagine it would be a struggle to complain about mis-placed deliveries if you don't have a number on your house. (2020)

A photo of the entrance to Stockwell Lane, taken from the same spot as the photo of the old vicarage – top left of page. (2020)

Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Pam Wregg and Muriel Baker for their help with this Story.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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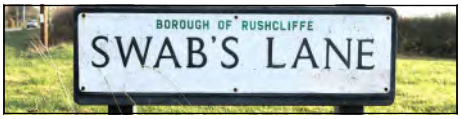
Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop



I imagine a lot of people living in Cropwell Bishop are not even aware that we have a street called Swab's Lane.

The road stretches from the Lime Kiln (Small People) crossroads on the Colston Road, to the Owthorpe crossroads. For only a third of its length is it within Cropwell Bishop.

At the Cropwell Bishop end, there are only two homes, together with a collection of farm buildings.

So, you are probably asking, who is this Swab character that the lane is named after.

Well, these are the facts:

- I have an OS map (on the right) which names the road, Swab's Lane. It was printed in 1971 but was compiled from "sheets last revised in 1919". It does not even show Hoe View Road – and that was built in 1952. So, it is safe to assume that the name has existed for 70 years – and probably much longer.
- I have not found any record of a person named Swab ever having lived in Cropwell Bishop.
- The only historical record that I have found which mentions anything like "Swab" is from 1751.

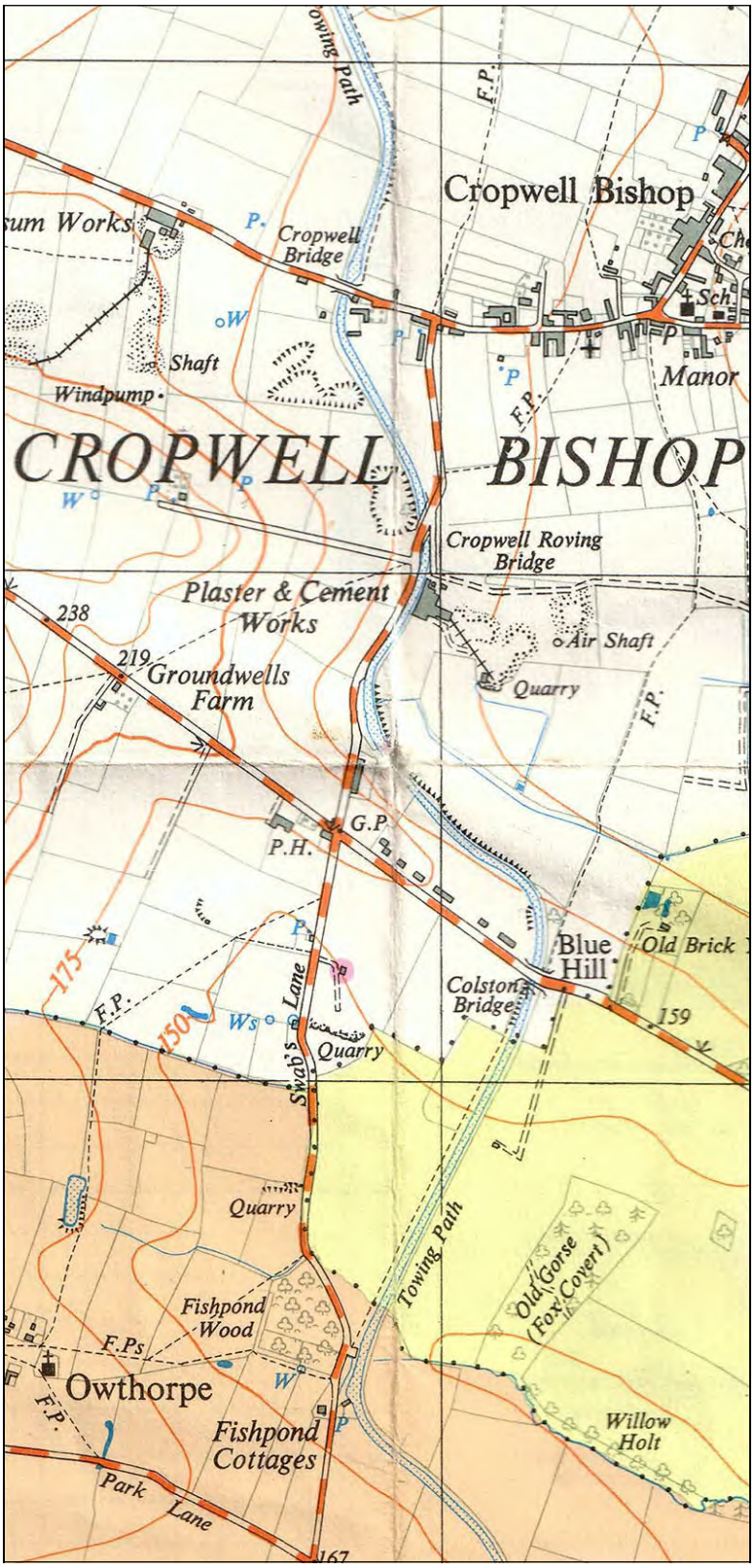
Let's further investigate this last point. In 1751, a man named Christopher Bell, who lived in Cropwell Bishop, died. What makes his death of interest to us is that he was a wealthy man.

Being a wealthy man, he wanted to ensure that his house, land, goods, and everything else of value, was passed on to his family when he died. He did this in exactly the same way that people do today – he made a will. His will is of interest to us because it mentions Swabbs.

Christopher Bell wrote his will on 30th May 1751. It begins:

"This is the last will and Testament of me, Christopher Bell of Cropwell Bishop in the county of Nottingham, Yeoman, being now in bad health of body but of good mind and sound understanding and calling to mind the uncertainty of this life Do give and Devise unto my Mother, Elizabeth Bell and my brother John Bell and to their heirs all that my Moiety or the divided half Part of all those four closes or inclosed grounds lying in the parish of Coulston Bassett in the said county called the Swabbs, now in the possession of myself the said John Bell and Thos. Pine."

Even the legal jargon cannot hide the fact that "Swabbs" refers to land.



Map of Swab's Lane as it was 100 years ago.
The Lane runs from the crossroads at the centre, to the middle of the bottom border.
The white region is the parish of Cropwell Bishop, the yellow, Colston Bassett and the orange, Owthorpe.

Following Christopher Bell's death, an inventory of all his belongings was made by four of his friends. It lists over 100 everyday household items, farming implements and machinery, etc. The items of interest to us are the parcels of land, and in particular, the one described as;

"8 akers of whete on ye SWOBS".....£28".

We can interpret this as "8 acres of wheat on the land called Swobs". This is an area equal to about 5 football pitches.

Notice the different spelling of the name: we have so far encountered Swabbs, Swobs and, the present-day spelling, Swab's.

It is clear from these 270-year-old documents that, The Swabs, (whatever its spelling) refers to land of that name.

The wording in the Will appears to associate The Swabbs with Colston Bassett. But Christopher Bell was very much a member of Cropwell Bishop: his father had been a constable of the village in 1728, and Christopher is buried in St Giles Churchyard.

It is also worth noting that the white farmhouse on the Lane, which is now named 'The Old Farmhouse', was called 'Swobbs Farm' a hundred years ago. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Swobbs name predates any building on this road.

It does seem highly likely, then, that the name of the Lane comes from nearby land called, The Swobbs, and not from a person although, it could be argued that the land had been named Swobbs, after a Mr Swobb who, in some earlier time, had lived nearby – we just don't know.

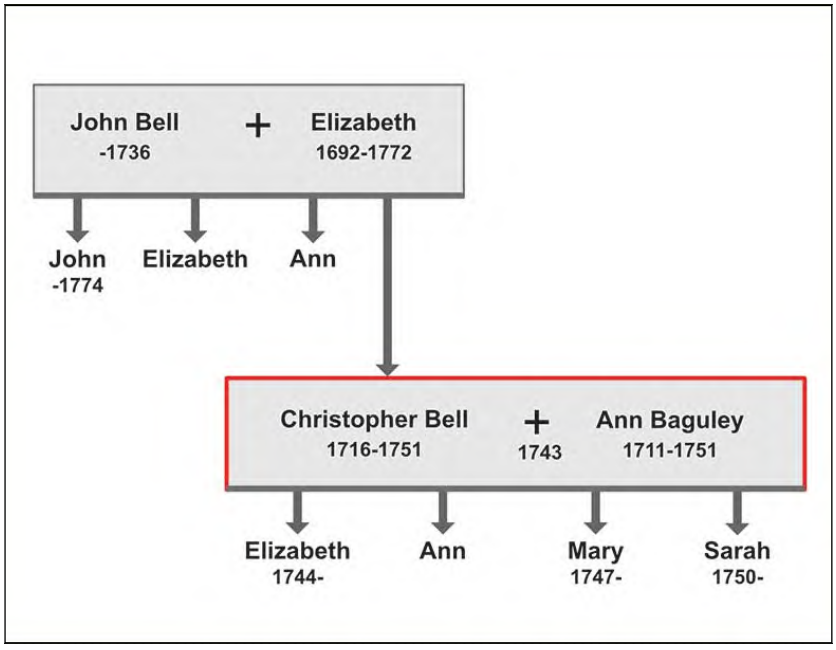
Grave of both Christopher Bell and his wife Ann who died a week apart in 1751

The colouring on the map on the previous page shows that some land on the eastern side of the Lane is in Colston Bassett. Given that Christopher Bell's will associates The Swobbs with Colston Bassett, it might be reasonable to assume that the land once called The Swabbs, was on this eastern side of the Lane.

The variety of spellings for Swabbs comes as no surprise. The spelling of places and people has long been unstable (for example, is it 'Tithby' or Tythby') and comes from a time when spoken, rather than written, English ruled.

Nevertheless, of all the versions unearthed, "Swab's Lane", seems the least appropriate of all. The apostrophe suggests a person's name, but the evidence suggests it was land.

Having exhausted the history of the naming of Swab's Lane, I think it is worth looking in more detail at the history of Christopher Bell and his family.



Bell Family Tree

His will was written on 30th May 1751. In it, he goes into a lot of detail on how he wants his wealth to be used for the education of his four children (all young girls), and how they are to inherit equal parts of his land and property once they are 21 years old.

He names his brother, mother, cousin and friends in the arrangements, but nowhere does he make any mention of his wife, Ann.

In the will he says that he is "in bad health of body but of good mind and understanding". The next day, he died; he was just 35 years old.

He was buried 2 days later on the 2nd June 1751 and on the 5th June the inventory of his house and property was completed by his friends.

But what of his wife, Ann. She was 40 years old and alive and, for all we know, attended her husband's funeral. Was there a sound reason for not mentioning her in the will: I think so.

Bell family graves are some of the oldest in the Churchyard

What we do know is that 7 days after Christopher died, she also died and was buried 2 days later. They share the same headstone in St Giles Churchyard.

Christopher appears to have accepted that he was going to die in the near future. He may have also accepted that Ann was near death too. Maybe he anticipated outliving her which is why she was not mentioned in his will.

A man and wife dying within days of each other because of separate illnesses is not unheard of, such an instance happened in Cropwell Bishop just a few years ago. But these were young people, with four young daughters: their youngest, Sarah, was only one year old.

I wonder, had they both been infected by some terrible disease, or had they both been involved in some kind of accident; I don't suppose we will ever know.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza and Pam Barlow for their help with this Story.

View down Swab's Lane from the Lime Kiln (Small People) crossroad (2020)

View up Swab's Lane towards the Lime Kiln (Small People) crossroad (2020)

Members of the Cropwell Bishop Walking Club making their way up Swab's Lane after a walk to Owthorpe in 2014

Runners heading down Swab's Lane during the Stilton Stumble in 2016

A stile at the start of a public footpath which goes through Lime Kiln Farm yard and then across fields to Owthorpe

Lime Kiln Farm

Barn across the road from Lime Kiln Farm. A lime kiln once stood on a spot just to the right of this barn.

The old lime kiln that once stood at the side of Swabs Lane. In the background is a house on the Colston Bassett Road. Look at the map of Swab's Lane: the kiln is highlighted by a pink spot.

Bungalow on Swab's Lane

The Old Farm on Swab's Lane: it used to be called Swobbs Farm

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

The Maltings is a short cul-de-sac off Church Street. It differs from most streets in the village in that it was built before the 1970s, before house building began in earnest.

However, unlike the buildings on Church Street, its history goes back only 65 years.

What is malting?

As regular readers of Cropwell Bishop Street Stories will know, our parish councillors loved naming streets after the landowners on the 1804 Enclosure Map, so that has to be the place to start our search for a Malting.

But, when we do, we hit a problem: there are no fields with Malting on them.

Nor is there a grave in the churchyard for a Malting: the nearest one I have found is Thomas Malting's in Uppingham – and he died 200 years ago.

No, the street name does not come from a person, but from the making of beer. Malting is the process of preparing grain for making beer, whisky or even malt vinegar.

The grain could be wheat or barley, for example, but first it must be encouraged to germinate. In other words, it has to start growing from its seed – just like cress seeds might.

Before the days of computer control and automation, this task required skill and effort. Get it wrong and fungus will spoil the seed.

The photos below show seed being malted using traditional methods in an old malt room – the kind that might have existed in Cropwell Bishop.

Another name for a malt house is, maltings.

So, The Maltings in Cropwell Bishop is named after a malt house – but where was that malt house?

Barley seeds that have germinated

Where was the maltings?

There is not a malt house in Cropwell Bishop – not even the remains of one. There is an old malt house in Cropwell Butler or, at least, its building is still there; it has been converted onto a home.

The old malt house on Back Lane in Cropwell Butler

The malt house has been converted into a home (2021)

Maybe we can work out where there was one in Cropwell Bishop. Let's focus on the site of the street called The Maltings.

If you look at a 1950s map, you will see that much of the site of The Maltings, was grass and trees, except at the Church Street end.

The two buildings on the boundary with Church Street are still standing.

The first is Number 43 Church Street, which is now a private house, but was once the farmhouse of Stockwell Dairy Farm.

Attached to one end is a single-story building. For 50 years it has been the Snips hair salon, but during the life of Stockwell Farm, it was the farm's dairy.

By overlaying the old map onto a recent satellite image of the street, we can clearly see where changes have occurred.

In the enlarged image (bottom of page), we can see the white outline of a long building behind No.43 and Snips. This was where the cows were milked: a milking parlour. It stood where No.1 The Maltings, now stands and was reached by the path that runs up the side of Snips.

Stockwell Dairy Farm operated during the early 1900s but milked its last cows in the 1950s – or even decades earlier, we don't know for sure. Its last farmer was George Clarke.

George Clarke was born in Cropwell Bishop but in his early working life he lived with his wife Helen in Nottingham where he worked on the railways.

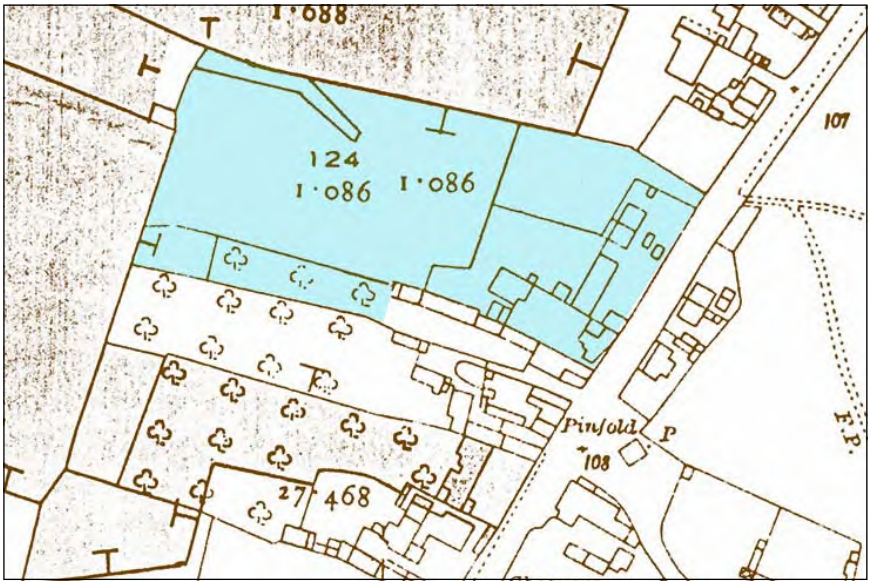
They were certainly living there in 1911, when both were 35 years old, but by 1939 they were running Stockwell Dairy Farm. At that time, George would have been 64 and Helen 63. George died at the age of 80 in 1955, two years after Helen.

You may be thinking; this is all very interesting, but what about the maltings: where was it?

Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that George Clarke ever did any malting, he did inherit a malt house – but he converted it into a milking parlour. Yes, the long building on the old map had been Cropwell Bishop's malt house until George decided that the production of milk was preferable to beer.

We have no pictures of the building, but it must have been similar to the malt house in Cropwell Butler. They usually have two floors for the grain at different stages of its preparation, but the lower floor, with easy access, would have been easy to convert to a milking parlour.

We have to be thankful that the councillors had some knowledge of the history of this building. Without it, this street might have been named, 'The Milking Parlour'. That might not have been so popular with residents.



A 1950s map of Church Street with the area now occupied by The Maltings, coloured blue.

43 Church Street was once Stockwell Farmhouse, and the Snips building housed its dairy (2020)

An overlay of the 1950s map on a satellite image of The Maltings.

An enlarged view of the Church Street end

A view from the church tower in 1949

The entrance to The Maltings in 1978.

Who did the malting?

William Hall Baldock was born in Cropwell Bishop in 1829 but raised in Cropwell Butler where his father, Joseph Baldock, became a wealthy farmer.

In 1841, when William was 13 years old, the family moved into a newly built house, The Hollies, on Back Lane in Cropwell Butler.

In the 1850s, Joseph had a malt room built next to his house — and it still stands on Back Lane (see photos on first page). By the time William was 32, he was its maltster.

In 1871, William was 41 and married to 30-year-old Ann Cumberland, and they had 3 children. They lived, not in Cropwell Butler, but in Cropwell Bishop – at 4 Back Lane (now called Stockwell Lane).

He was working as a maltster in Cropwell Bishop and employed two men. One of these men was William Cope, a maltster, who lived around the corner on Church Street.

The malt house they worked at was the one at Stockwell Farm (43 Church Street).

Sadly, just 4 years later, his wife Ann died at the age of 34, probably giving birth to their daughter Gertrude.

In 1878, William married Ada Heggs, and they would go on to have 6 children. William needed a bigger house for his ever-growing family; fortunately, a solution was not long in coming.

By this time, William's father, Joseph, was well into his 70s and ready to retire. He too had experienced the loss of a young wife – when she was only 37 – and he had also remarried and had more children. Now, though, the children were all grown up and he didn't really need a big house like The Hollies.

Father and son did a house swap. William left Cropwell Bishop and went to live in The Hollies, and his father came to live on Stockwell Lane in Cropwell Bishop supported by two of his daughters and family.

The Hollies on Back Lane in Cropwell Butler

This move brought to an end the malting business in Cropwell Bishop. The man who had worked for William in Cropwell Bishop, William Cope, also moved to Cropwell Butler where he continued working as a maltster.

The Hollies on Back Lane in Cropwell Butler 2021. On the left is the former malt house.

Naming the street

It was in the 1960s that parish councillors had the task of choosing a name for the street. Even though the demise of malting occurred some 60 years earlier, they were clearly eager to maintain a link with its history.

It is worth noting that, whilst the Baldock family were anchored in Cropwell Butler, its ties with Cropwell Bishop were equally strong in the early days. William Baldock's grandfather was the farmer, William Hall.

William's (Baldock) mother had a sister who was married to John Smith. He had lived at The Yews and then Lenton House in the village. And William himself was born in the farmhouse of his widowed grandmother, Millicent Hall, on Fern Road.

I suppose you could say that having a street named, The Maltings, is a celebration of multiple links between the Bishop and Butler Cropwells.

In that sense you might see the choice as an inspiring one: I am sure those councillors would have thought so.

Those first settlers

That is the history of the name of the street, but now a chance to consider the people involved with the street in its early days.

Following the death of farmer, George Clarke, in 1955, the land was sold and plans were submitted for house building. At that time, the land beyond the plot was open fields. In the north-western corner was a gated lane used to drive cows into the fields.

It was local builders, Hills and Little, who took on the job and involved themselves both professionally and personally, as we shall see.

It was in the late 1950s and early 1960s that building took place. After completion, the road was not at first adopted by the District Council, and this resulted in a street with no pavement that could become very muddy. It was referred to as New Road for postal purposes. It was only after adoption, that the name, The Maltings, appeared on a street sign.

Early occupants are still remembered by older village folk and under the recent photographs below, I have penned notes on those 'Maltings pioneers'.

I wonder what those first-occupants would make of the street today. Virtually all the homes have been modified, some massively, but that is something we all like to do if we are able.

Its street name does remain unique in one sense; it is the only one in Cropwell Bishop with “The” at the beginning.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Wregg and Kevin Marshall for their help with this Story.

The Maltings in 2020

150 years ago, the path beside Snips led to a malt house: Cropwell Bishop's maltings.
Snips was run by Diana Thompson for over 50 years until 2022.

The first house on the street was originally occupied by Anne Hinchcliffe who, in the days before Snips, operated a hair dressing salon from the house.
Later on, the Suggett family lived here.

Before adoption, the road was a muddy lane with no pavement

Looking down onto Church Street. The malt house stood where the house on the right now stands.

This bungalow was not built at the same time as the other homes. The land was part of the garden of Tom Barratt, the cobbler, who lived on Church Street.
In later years, it was passed on to his nephew, Peter Reader, who had the bungalow built.

Originally the home of Paul and Sheila Marshall, and their son Kevin. Paul's father, Hedley Marshall was architect for the house and John Hills and Tom Little the builders.

Originally, there was no home where these two semi-detached bungalows stand, just the building yard of the street builders, Hills & Little.

Having your builders yard on the street must have been very convenient for Hills & Little.
It wasn't just the yard that was convenient. John Hills was living at 43 Church Street, the old Stockwell Farmhouse, and Tom Little would soon be living even closer – at a house on The Maltings.

First owned by Bob and Mary Barry

Initially the home of Sid Pidd and his wife. Where the car is parked, was once the entrance to a lane leading to open fields. Farmer, Mr Parnham, would drive his cows down it.

Initially owned by Mrs Simpson and her husband Don, who died shortly after moving into the house.
Don was the youngest son of Herbert Simpson who established the Simpsons grain business in the Village. Its headquarters were just a stones-throw away on Church Street.

The house on the left was once owned by one of the builders, Tom Little, and his wife Bid.
The house on the right was owned by Doctor John and Mary Tweddle.

Cropwell Bishop Street Stories

by Tony Jarrow

2024

A history of the people and places of Cropwell Bishop

Cropwell Bishop has 14 streets that have half a dozen or so houses. Being cul-de-sacs, few people are likely to venture down them apart from their residents.

In fact, I doubt more than a handful of people in the village (or world!) have visited them all – not counting post-men/ladies, Jane and Jo (who deliver Cropwell Bishop News) and Amazon delivery drivers.

Thurlby Close is one such street. On the bend, where Church Street becomes Cropwell Butler Road, you don't notice it. Avoiding cars and buses coming around the corner will be more than enough for your attention.

Its five houses were built in 1971 by the builder, Jacques, of Bingham. The bungalow at the entrance to Thurlby Close, was built more recently, around 2005.

As you probably know, it is Parish councillors who initiate the process of naming a village street, and here in Cropwell Bishop they have long had the habit of naming them after local people. Surely, Thurlby Close is no exception.

After some initial research, I discovered that a Thurlby family did once live in the village. However, I must confess, the little information I unearthed left me looking for hills, woodlands and ponds that might also have been named Thurlby, such was the apparently underwhelming history of the Thurlby family. Was I missing something, I wondered.

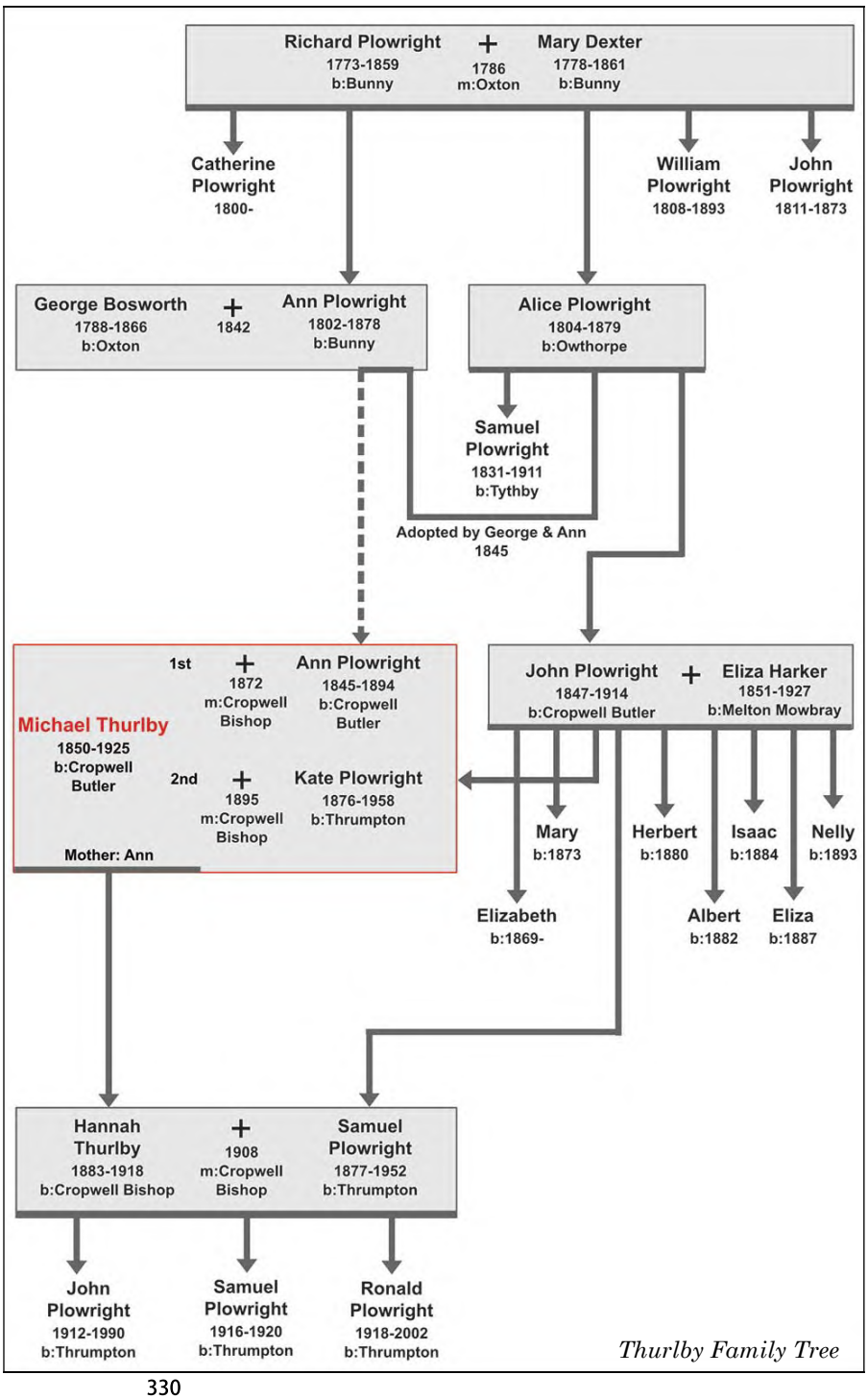
I persisted and was rewarded with a fascinating insight into the ups and downs of several Cropwell families of yesteryear.

Michael Thurlby was born in Cropwell Butler in 1850. In 1872, when he was 22, he married 26-year-old Ann Plowright who was also born there.

Ann had been brought up from birth by her uncle and aunt in Cropwell Butler, George and Ann Bosworth. She was their niece, the child of Ann Bosworth's younger sister, Alice Plowright.

We don't know much about Alice, but we do know that she had 3 children and was listed as unmarried in the 1861 Census. All her children retained her surname, Plowright. See the family tree.

The land on which the bungalow on Thurlby Close was built (2002)



Thurlby Family Tree

George had been a schoolmaster and he and Ann married late in life: he was 54 and she was 40 so, maybe, they welcomed the opportunity to raise a child.

Maybe it was an arrangement that suited all the adults: baby Ann, no doubt, formed her own opinion in later life.

George died at 78 and a few years afterwards, in 1871, we find his (adopted) daughter, Ann Plowright, still living in the house at Cropwell Butler with her adopted mother, Ann Bosworth (aged 68), but also with her birth mother, Alice Plowright (aged 66).

Ann and Alice were, you will recall, sisters. This does suggest that everyone was on good terms with each other.

It was the next year, that young Ann left them to marry Michael Thurlby.

Michael had a variety of jobs in his working life. When he was newly married, the couple lived in Cropwell Butler at the Post Office where he was the sub-postmaster. He was also a baker and ran a grocery shop.

Two young apprentice bakers were living with the family too. No doubt their presence helped pay the rent.

Three bakers in one house – imagine the talk at meal times: How much yeast? Was the oven temperature high enough? Why not this shape of cob? ... and so on.

Within a few years, Michael was also operating a Carriers Cart service to Nottingham on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

When he was 30 years old, he and Ann moved to Cropwell Bishop and 3 years later, in 1883, Ann gave birth to baby Hannah.

They were living at a house on Church Street – referred to as 'The Cottage' in a Census but now, simply, 61 Church Street. It is on the inside of the sharp left-hand bend as you go towards Cropwell Butler.

In 1909 a 'Valuation List' was compiled for Cropwell Bishop and it records Michael Thurlby as having a 'house and land' – it also noted that he was a 'Carrier and small Market Gardener'.

On the right is a 1930 map and also a recent aerial photograph of Thurlby Close. It seems reasonable to assume that he owned the extensive land behind the house and made use of it for his Market Gardening business.

When the land for Thurlby Close was purchased by the builder in 1970, it was sold by the owners of number 61, Michael Thurlby's old house. So, I think it is safe to assume that Michael Thurlby had once owned that land too.

This must have been the thinking of our Parish counsellors. Whilst not a rich owner of hundreds of acres of farmland he, nevertheless, once owned the site of Thurlby Close, and so is entitled to have the street named after him.

House Number 61 – known as 'The Cottage when Michael Thurlby lived there (2020)

Location of the Thurlby's house and land (assumed), on Church Street. (1930 map)

The same location today (2018 approx)

Baby Hannah was to be Michael and Ann's only child. She was a Cropwell Bishop girl but life was going to become very difficult for her – and Michael.

In 1894 when Hannah was 11 years old, her mother died: she was just 49. We have no knowledge of the cause.

In those days, if a man lost his wife, he would lose no time finding a replacement: being a single parent was a frightening prospect, both economically and socially.

Michael did what almost any other man would have done – or did he?

Within a year of the death of his wife, Michael Thurlby (then 45) married a 19-year-old girl. She came from Thrumpton but he had known her a long time: she was his niece, Kate Plowright. See the family tree.

When Kate became his new wife, she was only 7 years older than12-year-old Hannah, Michael's daughter. How difficult it was for everyone, we don't know, but we do know that after the marriage Kate's younger brother also joined the family.

He lived with them and worked for Michael as 'carter and general worker'. He was 18-years-old and his name was Samuel Plowright. Remember that name!

In those days, a person operating as a carrier or carter, would transport people or goods in a horse driven cart. A 4-wheel cart was capable of carrying up to 12 people (sitting very close together).

We know that when Hannah was 18, she worked as a 'telegraph clerk' but in 1908, when she was 25, she was ready to get married and leave home.

She didn't have to look far to find a suitable man. She chose one who had been living in the same house as her since her mother died: Samuel Plowright, now 31 years old.

You will need to refer to the family tree to appreciate this extraordinary match. Samuel was her step-mother's brother. Hannah and Samuel's grandmothers were sisters.

The newly-weds moved 10 miles away to a farm at Barton in Fabis, which is next to Thrumpton, the village where Samuel grew up.

There, Hannah gave birth to 3 boys. The first, John, lived to be 78, but the second, Samuel, died when just 4.

Her third boy, Ronald was born in May 1918 and lived to be 84. However, he was born at great cost: Hannah, died just days after giving birth: she was just 35.

Michael and Kate Thurlby

A Carriers Cart on Fern Road. One like this would transport up to 12 people (sitting very close together!)

Michael Thurlby died in 1925 at the age of 75. He had lived through the death of his wife, his daughter and a grandson.

Now, all that remains of the Thurlby name in Cropwell Bishop is a street, Thurlby Close.

Tony Jarrow – June 2024
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Thanks to Anne Terzza, Pam Barlow, Hilary Jarrow and Lol Simpson for their help with this Story.

Thurlby Close in September 2020...

To have a street named after a family member is a great honour - especially in a small village with less than 50 streets, so the possibility of having 2 streets named after close relations of the same family is hardly possible – or is it?

The story begins 150 years ago and is linked to letters, post offices and postmen.

But first, let's go back to the origin of Post Office in the UK.

It was back in the1650s, when Oliver Cromwell ruled the country, that a General Post Office was established but it would take almost 200 years for the sending of letters, as we know it today, to spread across the nation.

The adhesive postage stamp was invented in 1837 and in 1840 the Penny Black was established. It was the first stamp in the world for sending letters and in 1852 the first Post Office pillar boxes started appearing.

The Penny Black

The Penny Black allowed letters of up to ½ ounce (14 grams) to be delivered at a flat rate of one penny, between any two places in the United Kingdom irrespective of distance.

But what about Cropwell Bishop folk, where did they buy their stamps and post their letters?

The Louth-London Royal Mail in 1820 (by Charles Henderson)

POST OFFICE REGULATIONS.

ON AND AFTER THE 10th JANUARY, a Letter not exceeding HALF AN OUNCE IN WEIGHT, may be sent from any part of the United Kingdom, to any other part, for ONE PENNY, if paid when posted, or for TWO PENCE if paid when delivered.

THE SCALE OF RATES,

If paid when posted, is as follows, for all Letters, whether sent by the General or by any Local Post,

Not exceeding ½ Ounce	.....	**One Penny.**
Exceeding ½ Ounce, but not exceeding 1 Ounce		**Twopence.**
Ditto 1 Ounce	..... 2 Ounces	**Fourpence.**
Ditto 2 Ounces	..... 3 Ounces	**Sixpence.**

and so on; an additional Two-pence for every additional Ounce. With but few exceptions, the WEIGHT is limited to Sixteen Ounces.

If not paid when posted, double the above Rates are charged on Inland Letters.

COLONIAL LETTERS.

If sent by Packet Twelve Times, if by Private Ship Eight Times, the above Rates.

FOREIGN LETTERS.

The Packet Rates which vary, will be seen at the Post Office. The Ship Rates are the same as the Ship Rates for Colonial Letters.

As regards Foreign and Colonial Letters, there is no limitation as to weight. All sent outwards, with a few exceptions, which may be learnt at the Post Office, must be paid when posted as heretofore.

Letters intended to go by Private Ship must be marked "*Ship Letter.*'

Some arrangements of minor importance, which are omitted in this Notice, may be seen in that placarded at the Post Office.

No Articles should be transmitted by Post which are liable to *injury* by being stamped, or by being crushed in the Bags.

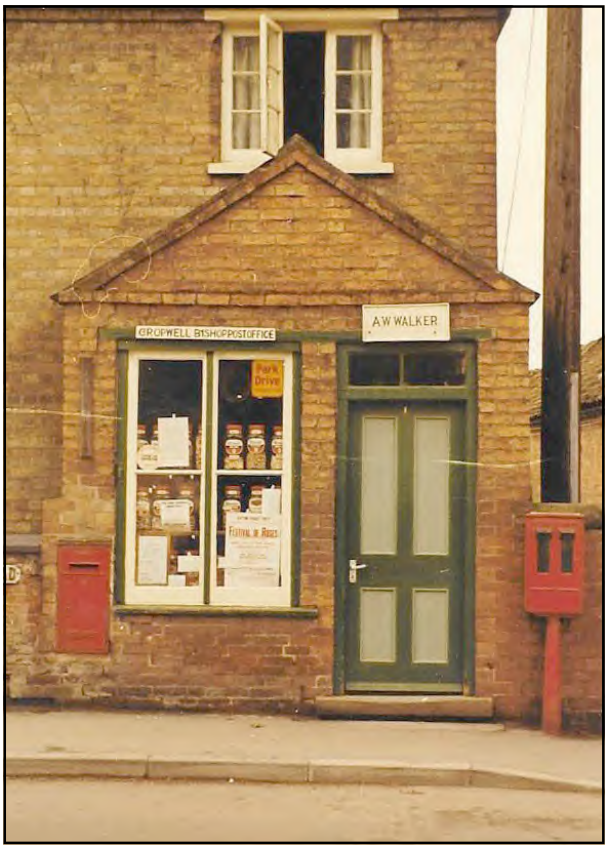
It is particularly requested that all Letters may be *fully* and *legibly addressed*, and *posted as early* as convenient.

January 7th, 1840.

By Authority:—J. Hartnell, London.

Up until the mid 1880s, the village post office was in a cottage on Church Street and run by Ann Shelton. You can find out more about Ann Shelton and how she became the first post mistress in the village in the Shelton Gardens Street Story.

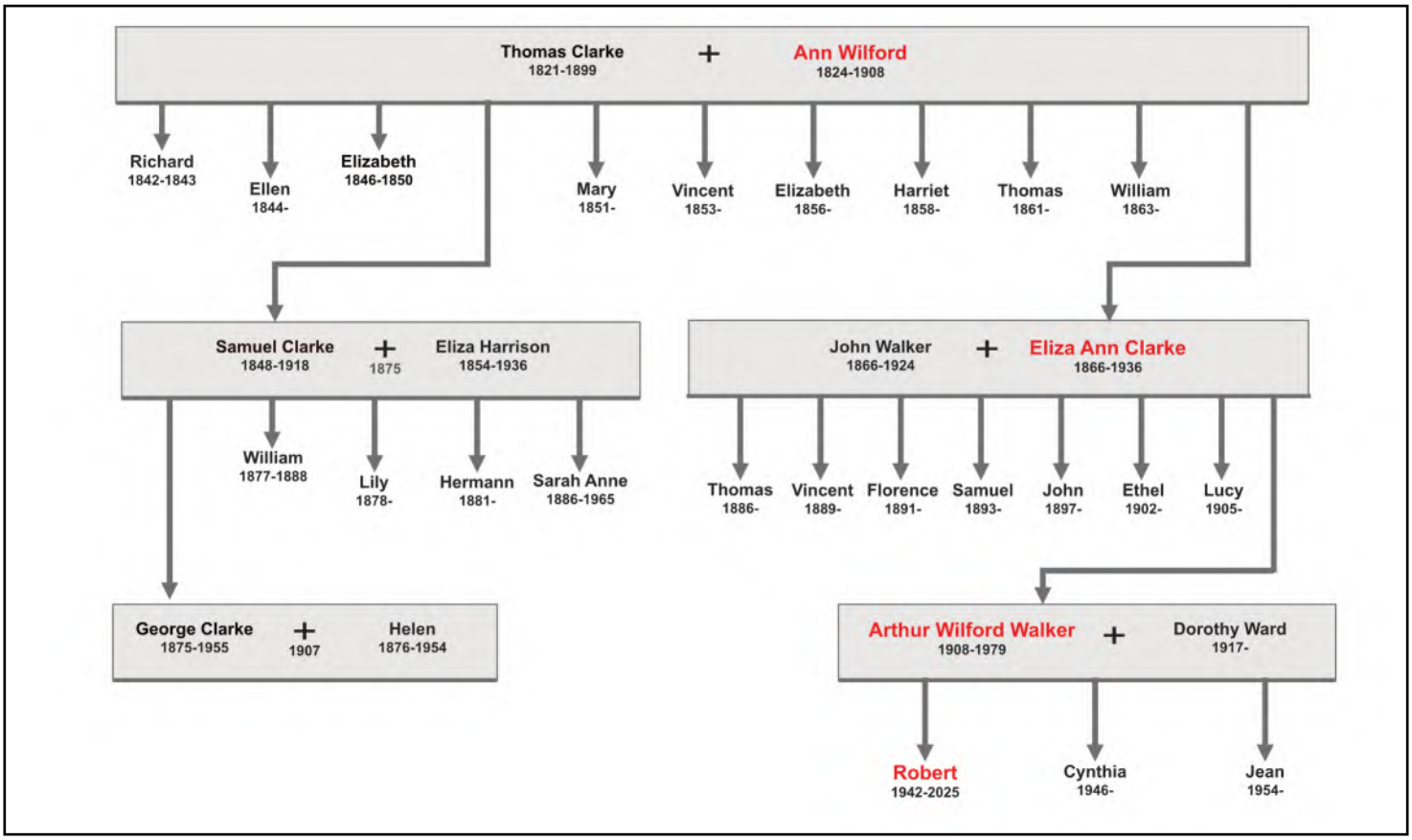
After Ann's death, and a short interval of uncertainty, the job of running the post office was taken over by Thomas and Ann Clarke who lived at 1 Nottingham Road.



Post Offfice in 1971

Ann Clarke with her granddaughter Ethel (1907)

Family Tree



They adapted their house to make it both a post office and small shop and made a success of both businesses.

About 10 years later, in1899, Thomas died. Ann was now 75 years old but, with the help of her youngest daughter Eliza, she continued as the post mistress.

Whilst Eliza was indeed the youngest of Ann's 10 children, she was by now 33 years old, married and mother of 5 children – and within a few years there would be 2 more. The small house must have been a hive of activity.

In 1908, Ann died at the age of 84 and Eliza took over the job of post mistress full-time. It easy to imagine mother and daughter working as a team during those final years, with them sharing the tasks of post mistress, shop keeper and mothering.

The 1907 photo of Ann at the age of 83 suggests she was a tough and spritely woman.

Eliza's husband, John Walker, worked in the village; he was a foreman at the gypsum mine. Sadly, John died when he was just 59 years old.

Eliza's youngest son, Wilf, helped her in the shop and when he was 16 years old, he became the village postman.

Just 6 years later, Wilf took over as sub-postmaster which enabled his mother to retire.

Wilf continued as postmaster of Cropwell Bishop for 43 years until his retirement in 1973. His son, Robert, helped him and was a postman for the village.

It was then that the post office moved into the newly built general store and newsagent on Church Street (now demolished).

The Walker family had represented the Post Office in Cropwell Bishop for almost 80 years. Throughout that time, they also served the community in the shop which was existed alongside the post office desk.

Everyone in the village would have known them and they, in turn would have known everyone else in the village - and some way beyond.

Wilf Walker with his son, Robert Walker.
Bob, as he was known to most people, took over from his father as postman for Cropwell Bishop.

Wilf Walker in front of his Sub-Post Office at Number 1 Nottingham Road (1970s)

Wilf Walker and portrait of his grandfather, Thomas Clarke (1979)

As postmen, they would have known the state of their homes, at least from the outside, and probably stepped inside many for a cup of tea on a cold morning; there was time for such things in those less-hurried days.

They would also have been familiar with their postings of letters and parcels throughout the First World War, the slumps in the 1920s and1930s, and then the Second World War. I imagine there was very little that escaped their notice.

And most of that time it was Wilf Walker who was the face of the Post Office.

He fully deserves to have a street named after him.

Tony Jarrow – November 2025
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Thanks to the villagers who helped with this Story.

Walker Close in 2025

Published January 2026