









MANOR HOUSE, BAMPTON, OXON

My  
The Post Office, Bampton, Oxon.  
2057  
Published by Rob M.

M. O. F  
B. O

# POST CARD.

Dear Lizzie

Just to acknowledge the  
receipt of parcel thank Mrs Y,  
a thousand times what a  
surprise. glad you  
Well. we are better  
you will spend a  
Thanks for  
to night.   
is will do a  
comes into man  
a little less work for Sunday,  
half a day off to morrow.  
fondest love to you and Mrs Y  
from F & M

The ADDRESS ONLY to be here.



Miss E. Hemmings  
17 - West End  
Witney  
Oxon



This photograph must, almost certainly, be the oldest one of Bampton in existence. The fact that the ground floor of the Town Hall is still not enclosed dates the photograph as before the eighteen nineties. On the extreme right is the original shop established by the Dutton family in 1751.











MEAT ROBINSON

ROBINSON  
MEAT  
BUTCHER

## MARKET SQUARE - North Side

The cottage on the extreme left of the top photograph became the Lamb Inn between the wars, but was demolished after the war to make way for the garage showroom. Separated from the Lamb by a yard was the butcher's shop kept by Charley Robinson. By all accounts he was inoffensive enough, but his wife Matilda was a 'regular Tartar! Coarse and raucous, she took an active part in the Rough Music incident of 1900, and was one of the twenty-two defendants who appeared before the Witney magistrates.

Next door to the shop was the Bell Inn. In 1923 it was converted into the W.I. Hall. The inn is not completely forgotten. The narrow lane behind the Hall is still called 'Back of the Bell by the older folk.

Adjoining the inn were two cottages, in one of which old Mrs. Ward used to sell fried fish on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The cottages were demolished after the 1914-18 War to make way for the War Memorial.



J Beard printer

George & Dragon Goodmans

The Lamb

Town Hall



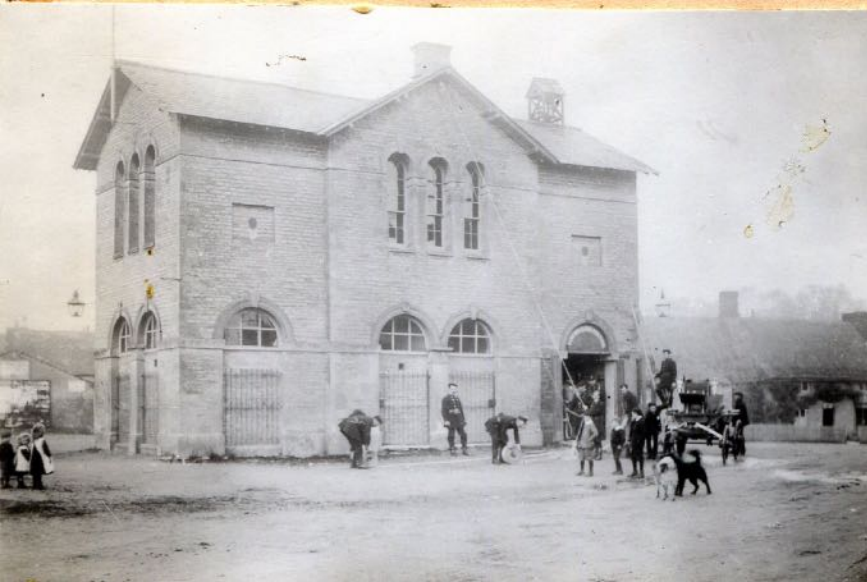


MARKET SQUARE - Looking N.W.

The building with dormer windows on the left housed the Bampton Printing Press owned by a man called Beard. The quaint thatched cottage at the bottom of Broad Street ~~were~~ was pulled down in 1906 to make way for Eton Villas. A greater loss was the picturesque block on the right of the lower picture.







## CHEAPSIDE

The two shops opposite were typical of the many small businesses which existed in Bampton in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They did very little trade, and were usually kept by women whose husbands followed some occupation. But what a pity that the block should have been demolished before the First World War; especially when we see what took its place - Quebec Cottage and Melita. I am sure that nowadays some contemporary architect would have converted it into a very attractive residence.

These cottages were demolished in about 1903 for what a carriage drive for Little Place.

## THE TOWN HALL

The turret on the east end of the roof housed the fire bell. It was superseded by a siren in the Second World War. On the right of the picture is the thatched cottage which stood on the site of the War Memorial.





Market Place and Town Hall, Bampton, Oxon.

## THE TOWN HALL

This photograph of the Town Hall was taken in 1971 to show how it looked before the restoration of 1972. The clock was a memorial to 'Squire' Southby of Bampton House: he died in 1907. Sometime between the two wars the west end of the building was adapted to become a bus shelter. Now, of course, it is the Council Chamber. It was a great pity that the clock was removed in the 1972 restoration. The clock was bought by Mr. John Taylor and placed above the showroom belonging to his garage

## MARKET SQUARE - looking E.

The tall three-storeyed building in the centre of the photograph housed the Bampton Commercial Academy in the early years of this century. The owner was a remarkable character popularly known as Alfie Bryant. In addition to caring for his school he was also an insurance agent, but these were not the least of his activities. He appears to have had a finger in the pie in every organisation in the village.. On the right of the photograph is the shop belonging to the London Cash Drapery Stores. It closed down after the First World War, and became Bampton's first garage. The shop front was removed to reveal the two pillars which are so familiar today







## MARKET SQUARE

These photographs are very old, indeed. By calculation they almost certainly date from the late 1880's. At the time these photographs were taken the two shops on the *Right* left in the lower photograph were occupied by Viner, a draper on the left and by Joyner the baker on the right. Following the Joyner's the bakery was taken over by a man named Shepherd, and in 1898 Tom Constable came over from Lechlade, and took the bakery. Tom eventually moved into Viner's shop, and the baker's shop became part of his sitting room.



# G.W. DUTTON.

*Choice and*  
**CRISP**  
**SPECIAL**

*Selected*  
**CRISP**  
The Pick of the

AGENT - GILBEY'S  
WINES & SPIRITS,  
BACCH'S PALE ALE  
AND GUINNESS'S  
DUBLIN STOUT.

WHEATSOLE

WHEATSOLE



G. & R.  
LESTER



LONDON CITY & MIDLAND BANK

G.W. DUTTON.

## THE TALBOT

It is almost certain that the Talbot is the oldest of Bampton's inns, and it could well be that an inn has existed on the site since the Middle Ages. The present building probably dates from the early 17th Century. The first documentary reference to the inn is to be found in Thomas Bainbridge's survey of the Shrewsbury estates in Bampton in 1789, when it is stated 'the Talbot public house is situated in Bampton street. The house is very old and the rooms small and inconvenient but...in tolerable repair.'

In the late 1940's the old wooden porch in the photograph was replaced by the present stone one.

The girl on the right of the group was Iria Taylor, daughter of the landlord of that time. After leaving Witney Grammar School she became a teacher. Later on she joined the staff of the local school, and served several generations of Bampton pupils who knew her as Mrs. Pratt.

## DUTTON'S STORES

About the turn of the century old George Dutton had it in mind to do something about improving the amenities of his premises. His shop had served the family well for one hundred and fifty years, but he felt that the time had come to replace it. The new shop was typical of its period. Bampton approved of it highly, and spoke of it as another instance of how the town was moving with the times, and facing up to the challenge of the new century.

George Dutton was an interesting character. He was born in 1854 of a family noted for its connection with the Baptist Church. He was a man of the profoundest religious convictions, yet to his family he was a martinet. He refused to allow his children to marry. One daughter did kick over the traces, and married. She was never forgiven, and I am told was omitted from his will.

It was a proud moment for George when the London, City and Midland Bank agreed to establish a branch on his premises. His only son Arthur was appointed clerk in charge.

George died shortly after the First World War, and Arthur was left in charge of the shop, but he had no head for business, and sold the shop to Billy Mathews who had worked for the Dutton's as a youth. He is seen standing outside the shop in the company of George.

About this time the bank - now the Midland - opened a branch in the same block, but farther down Bridge Street. Arthur Dutton continued as clerk in charge.

Up to the time of his death in 1951 Arthur claimed to be the last surviving Old Boy of the ill-fated grammar school.





POST OFFICE

T.W. PEMBERTON  
HATRY AND BASKETS

### BRIDGE STREET

A sight that will probably never be repeated in our time or the future; horses walking up Bridge Street unattended. On the right of the photograph is the block of buildings as it was before the Midland Bank and the butcher's shop was opened.

### HIGH STREET

Over Pembry's shop in High Street hung the delightful sign of 'Milliner and Mantle Maker'. Pembry was also the village postmaster, and was very conscious of his importance as such. In the unsophisticated days of before 1914 Bampton folk worthy of the name always marked a national day by wearing a favour; a daffodil on St. David's Day, a piece of shamrock on St. Patrick's Day and so on. On Boat Race Day most Bamptonians wore a dark blue favour in honour of Oxford, and the result of the race was always anxiously awaited. Some of the shops were decorated with dark blue bunting, but Pembry went one better: he decorated the post office with light blue bunting as well as dark blue. Whenever was was taxed with disloyalty to our own university he would reply, rather pompously, that as a 'government official' he must not favour either side. In those days no one in Bampton possessed a telephone, so on the race day a number of residents would assemble outside the post office to await the coming of a telegram with the result of the race.





The Village.



BRIDGE STREET

The 'old world' appearance of the Elephant and Castle before the disastrous fire in the 1950's when it lost its thatched roof.

BRIDGE STREET.

As late as the 1960's winter flooding occurred in Bridge Street, but the situation was much worse in the early years of the century. Tom Constable, the baker, told me how as young man he often delivered bread to the residents of Mill Green in a boat. In the 1970's Thames Conservancy carried out a lot of improvements to the Highmoor Brook, and there has been no flooding since.





Bridge Street, Bampton

5515

## THE ARCHES

Before the First World War the most notorious spot in the parish was 'The Arches'; the popular name for the bridge in Bridge Street. It was the rendez-vous of as unholy a gang of scamps as could be found in any village in the county. On any day from early morning to dusk the village layabouts lounged against the parapet of the bridge, content to let life slip by as long as it demanded no great effort on their part.

Unemployed as these men were for most of the time, it was a village mystery as to how they managed to eke out an existence, for there was no 'dole' in those days. Occasionally, when things became too desperate they would obtain temporary work with Thames Conservancy, but that never lasted for long. As soon as they had a few 'bob' in their pocket they resumed their normal way of life.

They were, of course, poachers to a man, and only after dark did they bestir themselves to any activity. They were master craftsmen at the only kind of work they viewed with favour. It was the ambition of many a local landowner to lay the rascals by the heels, but they never succeeded.

For long the undisputed leader of the gang was an individual known as 'Tinker' Hunt. He was ably supported and abetted by another member of the same family upon whom the village had bestowed the nick-name of 'Powderbrain'. And there were others of like kidney.

Parson Rodwell, who became Vicar of Bampton in 1905, was much exercised over these men's negative way of life: he would liked to have done something for them. One afternoon, returning from a pastoral visit to Weald Manor he found the gang in residence. Thinking that it was an opportune time to tackle the fellows he got off his bicycle, and approached them. "Why don't you men find something useful to do?" he challenged. "You are a disgrace to the parish!" Voluble enough in the company of their fellows, they were singularly inarticulate in the presence of their elders. They eyed the Vicar in silence. Seeing that he was going to evoke no response from them, Rodwell mounted his bicycle, and rode off in disgust. As soon as he was out of earshot Powderbrain turned to Tinker and said "Why didn't you answer Passon back?" Tinker transferred the straw, which he habitually sucked, from one side of his mouth to the other, and after a few moments reflection replied. "If I had told the old bugger what I thought of him all the bloody sheep in the parish would have jumped their hedges." A reply which earned for him the rapturous approval of his mates.







revealed - a magnificent fireplace fireplace of the 17th Century.

As soon as Bill showed it to me I was determined that here was something that must be preserved at all costs. I offered to buy it on the spot, but Bill told me it was already bespoken ~~already~~. Knowing the identity of the provisional buyer I was confident that it would be in safe hands, and I left it that. Imagine my chagrin when a few weeks later Bill told me that the person in question had changed her mind on the grounds of expense, and further to that, the owner of the cottage had told Bill to demolish the fireplace.

### 'WORKHOUSE ROW'

By an Act of Elisabeth I the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of a parish were required to provide and maintain a Poorhouse for the relief of the destitute in the place. When Bampton had its first poorhouse is not known.

In all my research into Bampton's past history nothing has given me more headaches than the curious relationship between Bampton and Weald. Sometimes the latter is regarded as a separate entity, at others it is considered part of Bampton. The cottages in the lower photograph were once the poorhouse in Weald, but whether or not it served the whole parish one cannot tell. In 1768 the Bampton Vestry recommended that a poorhouse should be built in Rosemary Lane for no less than sixty people a very large number for a place the size of Bampton. Whether it ever materialised is again not known: I have found no references to it, and one would have expected the Weald poorhouse to be sufficient for the whole parish.

Again we do not know if the Weald poorhouse consisted of single units, or if it was converted into cottages after it became redundant and the paupers were transferred to the Witney Union workhouse.

Older folk in Bampton still refer to it as 'Workhouse Row'

After the Second World War the cottages underwent a wholesale reconstruction.









### CHURCH VIEW

This street was largely rebuilt in the last quarter of the 19th Century, and has changed very little since.

### ROSEMARY SQUARE

Until the present century Bampton had two slum areas. They were Kerwood's Yard, behind what are now the International Stores and Barclay's Bank and Rosemary Square leading off Rosemary Lane. Kerwood's Yard disappeared completely towards the end of the 19th Century, but some of the cottages lingered on in Rosemary Square until after the Second World War. The two lower photographs give some idea of what they were like. The two cottages in the coloured photograph were demolished, in the 1970's, and in their place now stands Rosemary Cottage. About 1950 the cottages in the lowest photograph were demolished leaving only the cottage with the T.V. aerial still standing.









### CHURCH STREET

When I came to Bampton in 1944 Church Street consisted of more or less derelict cottages. They were gradually replaced by the present modern houses.

### 'BACK OF THE BELL'

\* The lane behind the Women's Institute is still known as 'Back of the Bell', a reminder of the Bell Inn which formerly stood in Market Square. The old cottage in the lowest photograph is typical of so many cottages in Bampton which existed in the place up to the end of the 19th Century. As I write these notes in 1983 the cottage is being reconstructed, and with it will go one of the few remaining reminders of old time Bampton.





### THE GRANGE

The Grange is of no great antiquity. It occupies the site of the mews mentioned in the Enclosure Award of 1812. In those days the Morris Clown Inn was called the George, and was a posting house where where one could hire horses and postchaises. The horses were kept in the mews farther down High Street.

The photographs were taken about 1903 when the Grange had been owned by the Lindup family for several years. Between the wars it was bought by a Captain Gough who spent a small fortune on the place, giving it its present appearance.

The late Ken Knibbs, who lived across the road in Oathurst, told me that the villagers followed an infallible rule for telling whether the owners of the house were moneyed people or not: they always looked to see if the rooks built in the trees in the grounds. There was, apparently, an ancient belief that rooks only build where there is money, and Knibbs told me that in the case of successive owners of the Grange it was fully substantiated.





## HIGH STREET

These two photographs were taken in the first decade of the present century: the upper one in 1901, and the lower one in 1907. Just imagine trying to carry two buckets down the middle of the street nowadays.





THE  
NEW  
INN



LE BUSBY



THE  
NEW  
INN  
CLACK

WILLIAM C. SMITH  
LIVERY & HAYSTACKS

### HIGH STREET LOOKING W.

These three photographs were taken roughly from the same spot, but at different times. The top photograph dates from the first decade of this century. One sees the 'gingerbread house' with its steeply pitched thatched roof and the buildings which stood on the site now occupied by the war memorial.

The bottom picture, I am told, was taken about 1913. The two thatched cottages next to Pembry's establishment had been bought by a man called Smith, and converted into a shop which sold a variety of goods, from boots and shoes to carpets and mattresses.

The middle picture shows the street between the wars. Both Pembry's and Smith's premises were taken over by Ivor Busby who sold men's and women's clothes. After his death about 1970 the shop was sold but the new owner decided to close it, and convert the premises into two private dwellings.





HIGH STREET LOOKING E.

Except for the Grange little has changed over the years. The grocer's shop is now a fishmonger's, and the New Inn has changed its name to the Morris Clown in honour of the Bampton Morris Dancers.

HIGH STREET LOOKING W.

Taken between the two wars the photograph shows the buildings which stood on the site of the war memorial.







### BUSHEY ROW

Bushey Row was formerly called New Inn Lane, and before that, Pound Lane. The village pound in which stray animals were impounded was situated on the eastern side of the road, where the cows are grazing in the photograph. Nowadays the housing complex known as The Pieces occupies the site.

### CHAPEL IN BUCKLAND ROAD

Every effort on my part to discover something about the history of the tiny chapel in Buckland Road was defeated. Only one person could tell me anything at all about it. My informant told me that between the wars an 'old man' used to come over from Standlake to take the services, and that there were never more than half a dozen people present. He was unable to tell me to what religious denomination it belonged.

Sometime after the Second World War the chapel was bought by Miss Pollard of The Deanery, and had it converted to a private dwelling.





### THE DEANERY IN 1907

There is an atmosphere about the photographs of The Deanery taken in 1907. Standing there amidst the tranquillity of its surroundings, the most gracious and oldest of Bampton's houses is but a reflection of Britain's own place in the world eighty years ago. Those were the days when one quarter of the earth's surface was printed in red upon the maps. Britannia still ruled the waves, and the sight of a British gunboat steaming into a foreign harbour was sufficient to bring the most recalcitrant of states to heel. Yet it is sobering to remember that by the time the little girl reached womanhood holocaust had descended upon the world, and a new Britain born; a Britain which old Mr. and Mrs Douglas wouldn't have liked one little bit.

Croquet on the lawn. tea on the terrace and all the cosy bric-a-bac of an Edwardian drawing room. Halcyon days - for the few.





### BROAD STREET

The house on the left of the photograph, still called The Elms, took its name from the trees which stood before it. When Fred Staples-Brown bought the house in the 1890's the trees were cut down.

The pile of stones by the roadside is a reminder of that long forgotten figure of the countryside - the stonebreaker. In the days before tar macadam roads were repaired by using small stones, liberally watered, and rolled in by a hefty steam roller.

The stones were delivered straight from the quarry, and were of different sizes. Then the stonebreaker would come along with his hammer, and break them up into an uniform size.

### BROAD STREET

This photograph was taken about 1910\*, just a few years after the trees were planted.

On the right is the Plough Inn where the Bampton Pig Club used to hold its annual supper in the autumn, ~~and before that~~ It is now No.7 Broad Street.

The house on the left with the lattice porch was a boarding house at the beginning of the century, and in my book 'The Bampton we have lost' I tell the story of a ghostly visitor one night in August, 1898. Since then the house has been divided into The Priory and The Hermitage.

\* This date is palpably wrong. Almost certainly, it was taken about 1905.





## BAMPTON FAIR

This splendid photograph shows the Fair in its heyday before the First World War. Apart from the fair the photograph is interesting because it shows the old Horse Shoe before it was almost completely rebuilt. Prudent householders were careful to barricade their windows for the horses were no respecters of property. One old lady told me how when she was a girl a horse pushed its head through her kitchen window, and devoured a pot plant which was the pride of her mother's heart.





WHEAT  
SHEEP

FAIR HAMILTON, OXF

1873

## BAMPTON FAIR

"Us girls used to go round together in groups," the elderly lady told me, "and we used to make eyes at the young chaps from Aston and Clanfield and suchlike. We might pass the same chaps a dozen times before they would have enough courage to speak to us." "Then they would say 'What about a go on the roundabouts?'" "Then the ice would be broken, and we would have a real good time together."

"Of course, some parents were stricter than others. Once I went up in the swinging boats with a young fella from Kencot. Some busybody told my mother, and she was real waxy. 'Mark my words,' she said, 'no nice gal does a thing like that. It only leads to trouble.' But it didn't. I married the chap two years later, and we was husband and wife for close on forty years, and hardly ever had a cross word."

In the foreground of the top photograph are two splendid specimens of that defunct race of men - the horse drovers. They were as tough a bunch of individuals as could be found anywhere. Some of the drovers had been coming to the fair for years, and were well-known to the locals. Many of them had an intimate knowledge of all the horse markets of Britain, and spoke casually of such far away places as Cambridge, Bridgwater or even the Devonshire Bampton. To the parochial Bamptonians it seemed that these men carried about with them a breath of the outside world. For the most part they kept to themselves, but if one condescended to accept the offer of a pint from a local man, the latter felt no end of a dog, and spoke about it for days afterwards.

Much beer was consumed at the fair as may be seen by the crowd outside the old Wheatsheaf (now the Post Office). The group of lads with a handcart and wheelbarrow in the foreground reminds us that most young lads were expected to work outside of school hours, and glad they were to add a few coppers thus earned to the family exchequer.





## BAMPTON FAIR

At Fair time the horse was king in Bampton. If anyone were knocked down by a horse being put through its paces, there would be no semblance of an apology; merely a raucous admonition to 'get out of the bloody way!'

Many people looked forward to Bampton Fair as it gave them the opportunity to meet old friends and acquaintances from neighbouring villages whom they may not have seen for a twelvemonth.







## BAMPTON FAIR

A very old photograph of the horses in Church Close taken at the very beginning of the century. The men in the foreground were familiar figures at the Fair every year. They bore flags of white or pink material, and it was their job to control refractory horses. When a horse was sold a strip of material would be torn from a flag, and tied around the animal's tail.

The buyers, too, were characters. Very popular with the local folk were the Brothers Morgan, David and Rhys from South Wales. Both the men had a wonderful eye for a horse, and I have been told that to hear them driving a bargain was in the nature of a liberal education!

Some years ago I met an old Bamptonian who had been living in Canada for a long time. In the course of our conversation, he told me that, apart from the absence of any horses, there was a mysterious 'something' lacking in the present day fair, and that he had only just realised what it was. It was the smell of horse-droppings in the street. "On a hot day at fair time," he told me, "the stench reached to high heaven." When I suggested that this was no bad loss he replied, 'I don't know: it was a homely smell, and folks did not mind.' In those days horse and cow droppings were a common feature of the streets. Boys would collect it and sell it for one halfpenny a bucket.





### BAMPTON FAIR

It was customary for women and girls to keep out of harm's way by gathering in the churchyard where they could watch the proceedings in safety.

The lower photograph is the older of the two, and taken before the trees were planted in Church Close, This fact dates the photograph as some time before 1910. An informant told me he believed that was the year in which the two trees were planted. They are shown in the upper photograph so it must have been taken after that date.

in 1983, when these notes were written, only one tree remains.

No 5.







## BAMPTON FAIR

The <sup>upper</sup> ~~upper~~ photograph was taken at the same time as the lower one on the preceding page. The lower photograph must be much later as the trees have grown to a fair size.

It is interesting to note that none of the yew trees which lined the south wall of the churchyard, and which were cut down at the end of 1982, had yet been planted.







## BAMPTON FAIR

A horse for sale in Church Close. At the end of the last century the Close was reserved for the sale of ponies destined to work in the coal mines, and dealers came over from South Wales to buy them.



## BAMPTON FAIR

For some years after the Fair was revived following the end of the Second World War aged parishioners persisted in trying to impress upon me how the fairs at the beginning of the century were far more splendid affairs than the present day ones. It is a case of distance lends enchantment:one only has to look at this photograph and those overleaf to see that the amusements were pretty inferior compared with those which come to Bampton nowadays. So too, were were the horse-drawn caravans in which the showmen lived when compared with the luxurious motor trailers they occupy today.

In only one aspect are the old-time fairs superior to these of today:the crowds which attend the fair nowadays are much thinner than those of seventy years ago.









## BAMPTON FAIR

These photographs were taken sometime before 1908 for there is no clock tower on the Town Hall.

In the early years of this century the Fair was often the occasion for stormy scenes. Stallholders were not allowed in before six o'clock on the eve of the Fair. When the church clock struck six that was the signal for a headlong rush into the Square, each stallholder anxious to secure one of the more favourable sites. Fisticuffs were a commonplace, and it was not unknown for knives to be drawn.

The Fair of 1901 was a long-remembered event, because that year many Bamptonians had their first experience of electric light. The great roundabout was for the first time illuminated by several hundred electric bulbs. One of our aged residents remembered the event well. A small girl at the time, she was taking her grandmother around the fair, and, of course, they joined the admiring throng. After standing there in rapt silence for a while Grandma was heard to say, "Well, now I reckons I know what Heaven be like."







## BAMPTON FAIR

These photographs were taken in 1922, when the horse fair was still holding its own.





## THE FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

In the days before Lloyd George introduced a national scheme of health insurance the working classes were dependent on the Friendly or Provident Societies for sick benefit. The Order of Foresters was very strong in Bampton; its membership being around the 100 mark. There were two local societies known respectively as the Self Help and the Victoria.

The local branch of the Foresters was known as the 'Bush Court'. Its great day in the year was Hospital Sunday which was usually the Sunday before August Bank Holiday. On that day the members assembled outside its court room in the New Inn (Morris Clown). Then, preceded by a band, they marched to the Parish Church to attend a special service. Afterwards, they returned in procession to the New Inn where they partook of their annual dinner.

Sunday, August 6th, 1900 was a memorable day for the Foresters, for on that day a magnificent green and gold banner was unfurled and carried in procession for the first time. The banner is still preserved, and it is really imposing. It bears a picture of the Good Samaritan with the admonition 'Go thou and do likewise.'

When I was a boy growing up in the country it struck me as very odd that when a working man was convalescing after an illness he invariably wore his best clothes. Indeed, if you were to meet a villager wearing his best suit on a weekday, you could be certain of one of two things: he was either going to a funeral or he was getting over an illness. An elderly Bampton man told me that there was a good reason for this habit.

"You see, 'twas like this," he said to me, "there was always the crafty chap who would try to slip back to work without signing off from 'the Club' as he should have done. By doing that he would be getting his wages and drawing sick pay at the same time. The Club secretary was always on the look-out for chaps up to that there dodge. But if he saw you wearing your best suit, he knew it were alright. Stands to reason, a chap wouldn't be working if he were wearing his best suit."

The photograph opposite was, I believe, taken in 1901 when for the first time the procession of Foresters was headed by its own brass band.







The Meet of the Old Berks Hunt in Market Square was always a great attraction for the villagers.





## THE 1906 GENERAL ELECTION

In the early years of the century parliamentary elections were much more lively affairs than they are today, and those held in Bampton were no exception to the rule. Bampton was strongly Conservative in politics, although there was a sprinkling of Liberals. Socialism was suspect, and if there were any members of the Labour Party in Bampton, they kept pretty quiet about it. The up and coming politician David Lloyd George was the bete noir of many Bamptonians, but Joseph Chamberlain was thoroughly approved of.

The photograph shows a group of Tory supporters who spent Election Day, 1906 driving round the village in a trailer pulled by a traction engine. The poster so enthusiastically displayed in the background bore a likeness of 'good old Joe.'

The photograph was taken in front of the Talbot, so it is appropriate that Landlord Norman should occupy a prominent position. He is standing by the chimney stack of the engine, with his hands in his pocket. He was a tragic figure for only a year or two before his little daughter, aged 13 months, died to be followed in less than a year by his wife Louisa, a young woman of only 27 years.

The wearing of rosettes is mainly confined to football supporters nowadays, but in 1906 no loyal Tory, man woman or child would think of being without a blue favour on Election Day.

## THE GARLANDS

The custom of children carrying garlands around the village on Whit Monday, and soliciting largesse from the householders is of very ancient origin. Some folk believe it goes back to pagan times when it formed part of the rites which greeted the arrival of spring. Oddly enough, Giles does not mention the custom, but then he had no interest in children. In 1947 an old lady of eighty told me that she remembered her grandfather telling how as a boy he used to go round the village with a garland on Whit Monday, and glad his parents were for the odd penny or ha'penny that came his way. That would have been in the mid-19th Century when Giles was still a curate here.

Nowadays, only a handful of children carry on the custom in spite of a competition for the best garlands organised by lovers of the past. It only shows how much better off the working classes are today.







### FORCED LANDING

There was great excitement in Bampton one summer's day in 1914:an aeroplane crash landed in a field down at Weald. An aeroplane was a pretty rare sight even in the sky in those days:for one to deposit itself almost in the very midst of Bampton really did give Bampton something to talk about.

The authorities were not so security-minded in the years before the war,and no objection appears to have been raised to the villagers making a close inspection of the plane.

The pilot was fortunate in escaping with only a few bruises. Not so fortunate was the crew of a Wellington bomber which crashed in 1945. In flames as it passed over the village,it crashed in the fields between Weald and the river. All the members of the crew were killed.

George Smith remembers the earlier incident very well.It appears that the pilot was courting the daughter of one of Bampton's principal residents,and was showing off before her and her family. He overdid things,and came a nasty cropper as a result.

Undeterred by the mishap,the pilot visited the village a second time. He landed his plane in a field to the north of the village,and persuaded his girl-friend's father to join him in a flight. But once again,luck was against him. The plane refused to take off,and crashed into a hedge.

### CONPRENEMPS!

Coming round the corner from Church Close into Church Street far too fast,the baker's cart came a nasty purler. Tom Constable was not pleased,and said a few choice words to the driver.





**Dedication of the War Memorial on September 20th 1920**

### OXEN PLOUGHING

It is difficult to believe that farmers in these parts were still using oxen on their farms ~~as~~ recently as 1913, but I was assured that this photograph was taken in that year in the fields just outside Bampton.

### THE WAR MEMORIAL

While perhaps not exciting in terms of artistic merit the War Memorial is most impressively sited. Two old houses including Baker Wenman's shop were pulled down after the 14/18 war. The village was quick to select the spot as the ideal site for their memorial to the fifty-one Bampton men who returned not from the war.

On the left of this picture of the Dedication of the Memorial can be seen the end wall of the Bell Inn. In a few years it was to be displaced by the Women's Institute Hall.







Agricultural wages were so poor in the early years of this century that it was a common sight to see women working in the hayfields, and glad they were for the money. A Bampton woman told me that all she received for six full days working in the hayfield was 5/-(25p). When she protested that she had worked as hard as any man the farmer gave her a curt 'Take it or leave it.' and walked away.

During the Fair of 1912 Rowland Buckland, aged 12 and a member of a well-known showman's family died in Bampton. It was decided that he should be buried in Bampton Cemetery. The hearts of the Bampton folk were touched, and putting aside for once their traditional mistrust of the show families, they turned out in force for the funeral. Even the church choir was in attendance.

It says much for the strength of family ties among the show people that up to a few years ago the family paid a Bampton woman to look after the grave. Then she died, and the family seem to forgotten about it. Knowing how show people set great store by such things I often wondered why the grave had no headstone. Just before Christmas, 1982 a nephew and niece of the lad called on me to invite my help in finding the grave as rather belatedly the family wished to erect a headstone.

The remaining photographs are really outside the terms of reference of the album, but I have included them as they are records of events that deserve to be remembered.

### THE GREAT SNOW, 1962-3

Bampton folk were securely confident that the grim conditions which they experienced in the early months of 1947 would never be repeated in their lifetime, but they were to be sadly disillusioned.

As the year 1962 drew to its close more than one old-timer expressed their belief that there was some hard weather in the offing. The first hint of things to come was a shrewd frost on Sunday, December 23rd, and this was followed by as cold a Christmas Day as most people could remember. Throughout Boxing Day ominous looking clouds were massing in the western sky, and revellers returning home late encountered blinding snow. Next morning Bampton awoke to find the ground covered by four or five inches of snow. The early morning traffic soon made the roads unpleasant. Deep ruts and hard-packed snow made driving difficult and hazardous. But worse was to come.

On December 29th a blizzard struck the south west of England, and Bampton waited for it to move eastwards. On the morning of the 30th the village was completely isolated for a while. Then traffic forced its way through from Witney, and Bampton was not denied its mail or newspapers.

Buckland Road was impassable, and was to remain so for nearly a week, while the road to Faringdon was opened to single-line traffic, only. For more than a week the Swindon buses did not attempt to reach Bampton.

It very soon became apparent that the authorities had been caught totally unprepared to deal with such weather. The demands made upon the Witney R.D.C. for snow dispersal were just impossible to meet, so improvisation became the order of the day. The villages were given permission to organise local labour to deal with the emergency. In Bampton Bill Lock's firm of builders and the Wilkins Brother of Coalpit Farm joined forces to bring some order out of the chaos. A mechanical shovel together with tractors and lorries moved into action, but the photographs taken on January 3rd, 1963 show what an immense task confronted them.

A slight thaw on January 4th and 5th gave rise to the hope that the worst was over. It is true that in some places one drove along the roads between miniature cliffs of snow, but nevertheless we all hoped that things were on the mend. But it was not to be.

On January 16th we were mightily depressed by another heavy fall of snow, and worse was to follow. Three days later an easterly gale of considerable force caused severe drifting. My wife and I struggled to Faringdon to do some shopping, but conditions were so bad, and even more threatening, that when we reached there we decided to return home immediately. And not too soon, either. At Thrupp corner just beyond Radcot a very nasty looking drift was already assuming threatening proportions. Reports of shocking conditions up on A.40 reached Bampton. The road was completely blocked in some places, and near Northleach a long line of lorries from South Wales was marooned. Thanks to the efforts of Messrs Lock and Wilkins it was becoming

more easy to walk about the streets of Bampton, but one had still to 'gang warily'. To add to our general discomfiture that night there was so severe a frost that the fuel-oil tank at the baker's was frozen.

A few days later a genuine thaw set in, and as the snow receded so did everybody's hopes rise, but on January 30th there was another fall of snow. By this time we were all becoming philosophical about the weather, and just making the best of things. As late as February 23rd snow fell, but that was a final effort, and by the second week in March the last vestige of snow had disappeared.

After all that the knowing ones confidently prophesied a grand summer, but, alas, it did not turn out like that. The summer of 1963 was a typical British one.

One good result of the weather was that the Highway authorities learnt a lesson. Nowadays, the least hint of snow finds the roads being salted, and although we had an exceptionally heavy snowfall early in ~~XXXX~~ traffic was in no way incommoded.

1982

January 3rd, 1963: My daughter Meredith and young friend Sally forth to see the fun.

Hughes's motor coaches marooned by the Town Hall.











## THE GREAT SNOW

These photographs show how bad conditions were  
in the Square.





THE GREAT SNOW

Cheapside and Church View.



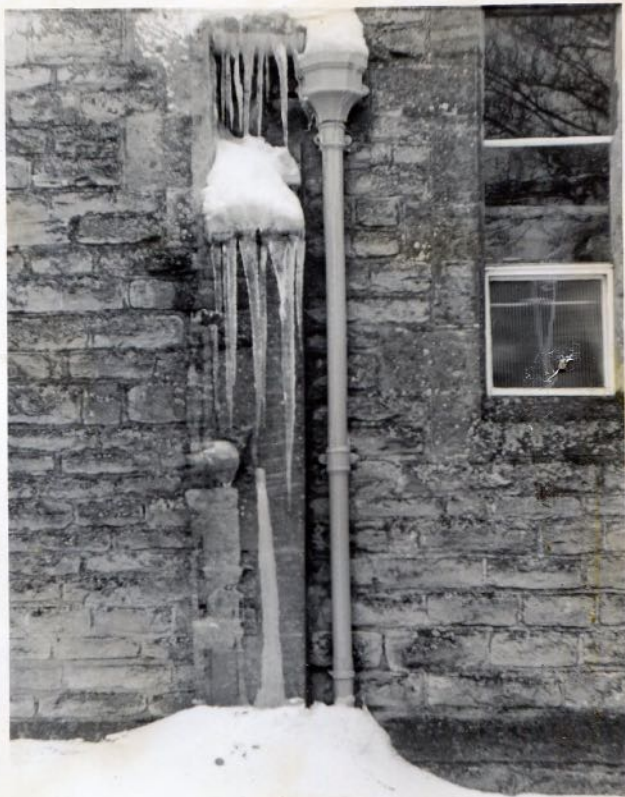


THE GREAT SNOW

Conditions in Church Street were exceptionally bad.







THE GREAT SNOW

Snow and ice made things very difficult at the School for weeks. Water was supplied by the Fire Brigade.



Rosemary  
House



## THE GREAT SNOW

It was several weeks before the streets became reasonably clear, and then one had to walk carefully on the hard-packed snow.



## THE GREAT SNOW

The Church and Church Close looked very beautiful, but Bampton folk were not aesthetically minded at that time.







PRICE WATER & DAMPTON SIGNAL BOX



## BAMPTON STATION

Within a few months of the Oxford-Fairford Line being closed Nature moved in and so did the vandals. Grass and herbs sprang up everywhere, and the vandals smashed everything that could be smashed, both inside and outside.



## THE TOWN HALL

### OPENING CEREMONY AFTER RESTORATION

On August 12th, 1972 the Official Opening of the lately restored Town Hall took place.



## THE TOWN HALL

Mrs F. Davey of the Elms, Broad Street was invited to unlock the door at the opening ceremony after the restoration of the Town Hall. She was the daughter of Fred Staples-Brown who was so active in the social life of the village around the turn of the century.

In the photograph she is supported by J.L. Hughes-Owens (Chairman of the Parish Council) and Ray Carter (ex-chairman).









## BAMPTON IN AMERICA

Sometimes, I think that there must have been a mass exodus from Bampton to America and the colonies in the last quarter of the the 19th Century and the early years of this one. It is rare, indeed, for a year to pass in which I do not receive a number of visitors from overseas, anxious to learn something of their ancestors who once lived in Bampton. One day in May, 1979 a Mr. & Mrs. Alan Doe from Bellevue on the west coast of America called on me. Mr. Doe is the great grandson of the Rev. E. G. Hunt who was Vicar of Bampton from 1870 to 1895.

In the last years of his life Parson Hunt wrote his biography - The Music of a Merry Heart. Unfortunately, I know the whereabouts of only two copies: one in my possession and the other belonging to Mr. Doe. It contains a most valuable account of Bampton and its church in the last quarter of the 19th Century.

Hunt had no less than seventeen children, most of whom emigrated to the New World. Oddly enough, there are very few descendants of this huge family. Most of them are living in America: I know of only one living in England in 1983. Alan Doe is the grandson of Reginald Hunt (d. in N.Y. City in 1958) the thirteenth child of Parson Hunt.

The old vicar was a very talented water colourist, and Alan Doe has three of his paintings hanging in his house at Bellevue. He most kindly sent me photographic copies. It gives one a great deal of pleasure to know that these paintings are proudly displayed on the walls of an American home some seven thousand miles away.

Parson Hunt lies buried in a grave in the N.W. corner of the old part of the Cemetery. His wife outlived him by twenty five years, and is buried in the same grave. There are several old-timers who remember her as an aged lady.