

Witney Oxfordshire

In 1640 The Witney Blanket Industry was dominated by the Early Marriott & Lister families. The Early Marriotts were connected by marriage on several occasions.
 Ursula Marriott (who died in 1731 at the age of 106) was married to William Townsend. They were Inn Keepers & built St. Peter's Hall in 1688.
 The granddaughters of Ursula & William whose name was Ursula Hill married Thomas Early the First Blanket Maker of Witney. The blanket makers formed the Company of Witney Blanket Weavers so that the Manufacture & Sales of the blankets could be regulated & they held their meetings at the Staple Hall Inn.

Transportation was difficult on the rough roads by packhorses. In the early 1800's the Blanket makers were able to use the canal system at Lechlinton to ship their goods to Birmingham & London and to bring in cloth to power their machinery.
 A Railway was built in 1841 & the last goods train ran in 1970.

Witney is situated on the west bank of the River Windrush in West Oxfordshire. The earliest mention was in Saxon times when it was called Witea's Island.

Witney has six mills in 1400's and the companies running them were Charles Early & Co. James Marriott & Sons. William Smith & Co. and Messrs Phipps & Co. who also had a glove factory.

Witney was a prosperous place during 13th Century because of cloth making industry. The Bishops of Winchester kept large flocks of sheep which accounted for the Woodlands in Witney.
 The master weavers in 13th century used townspeople & people from surrounding villages to card & spin the wool which they then collected & made into blankets. At this stage the cloth was 100% wool & only the top plowing water of the River Windrush provided power for the fulling mills. The cloth was beaten in water & fullers earth which shrank the fabric & removed the grease.
 The blankets were stretched on Teben, & bearger from the river bank were used to raise the nap.
 The finished blankets were taken by Wagon to London & exported to Spain & Portugal. The Hudson Bay Company bought them to sell to North American Indians.

King John came to Witney during 1207-1214 while staying at his Palace in Woodstock & in 1221 Henry III stayed with Bishop des Roches in Witney. He bought a deer from the Duke of Hereford. In 1250-51 King Henry gave him a herd of deer from his Wyckwood Forest.

King Edgar gave some of his land from his estate of Bampton called Wytrango to Clifhelm in AD967 & in 1044 King Edward the Confessor gave land there to Alfwine, the Bishop of Winchester. In the Domesday Book, it says the land belongs to Bishop of Winchester & it is called Witea.

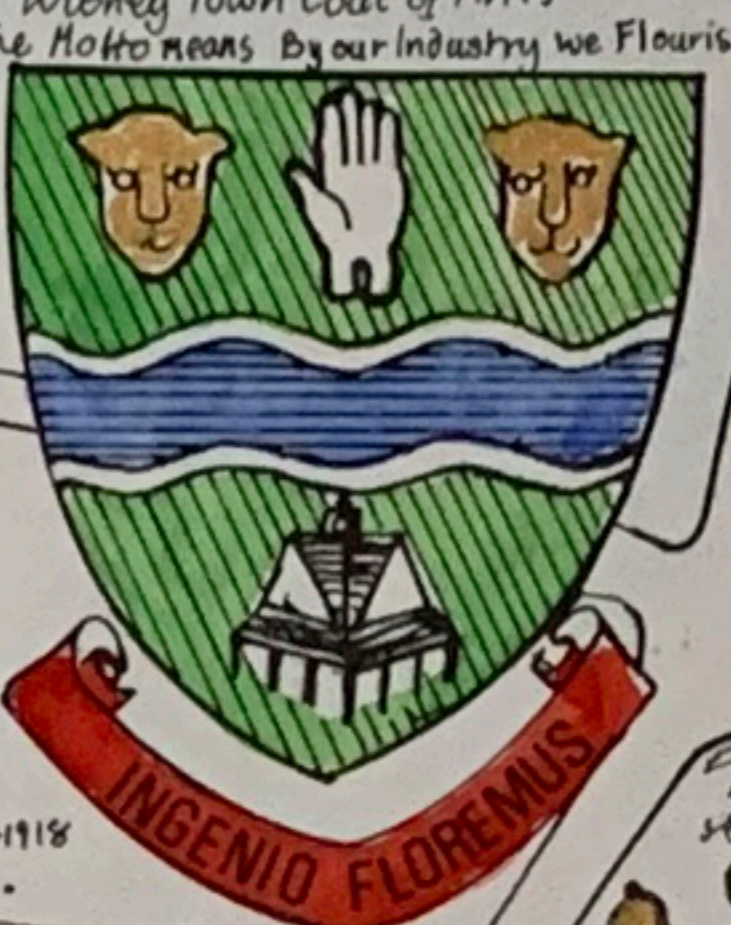
Population: end of 13th Century was 1000
 by 1465 it was 6,000
 in 1880 it was 15,000 and
 in 1911 it is approx 20,000

Witney Town Football Club was founded in 1885 and moved from their grounds at Marrow Hill to Oakley Park in September 1982.

The Corn Exchange was built in 1863 to replace Tudor Corn Returns. Restored in 1979.

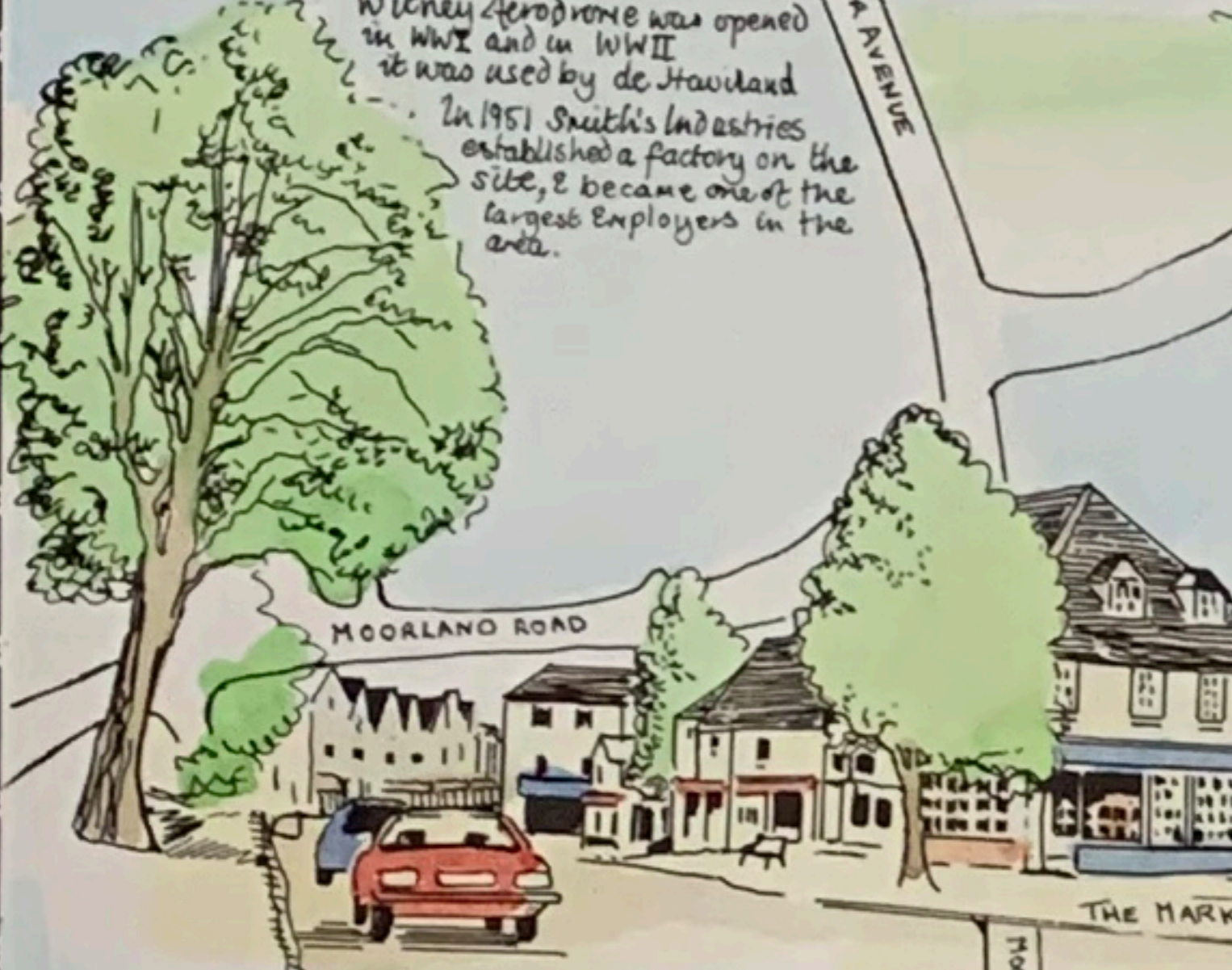
Cadell's Toy Shop & Ranson's Chemist were pulled down in 1994 to allow access to Waterloo. New shops were built in 1987.

Fred Clapper sold clothing & blankets in 1877 at Gange's Shop on Market Square. Later Cde & Grandy Ladies Outfitters ran business in 1912-1918 & Isaac Ousby had it in 1920's.



Witney Town Coat of Arms
 The Motto means 'By our Industry we Flourish'

Witney Aerodrome was opened in WWI and in WWII it was used by de Havilland. In 1951 South's Industries established a factory on the site, & became one of the largest employers in the area.



Crawford College now occupies the site of a workhouse built in 1836 and was partly destroyed in 1977.

All of Victorian building in Witney was designed by the architect John Lubbock. He started the firm in 1852. They employed so many that they had their own gardens & brick works. George Wilkinson designed the workhouse on Vowles Hill and William designed the first Witney Police Station. The shops and Lodge at the Corn Exchange and the St. Mary's Niche.

During the Civil War Charles I stayed in Witney at the Rectory on his way back to Oxford on 19, 21 & 20 June 1645. His army of 6,000 men was reinforced by a further 4,000 during his stay. Further 20,000 to the people of Witney occurred on 19 July when General Waller's troops camped around the town.

James II came to Witney in 1688 & Thomas Early presented him with a pair of government blankets from the Witney Tradesmen.

There were 50 inns in Witney in 14th Century. The ale was originally brewed in the area. Both the major breweries supplied most of the Beer. Church's Eagle Brewery was built in 1830's & in 1847 owned 72 public houses.

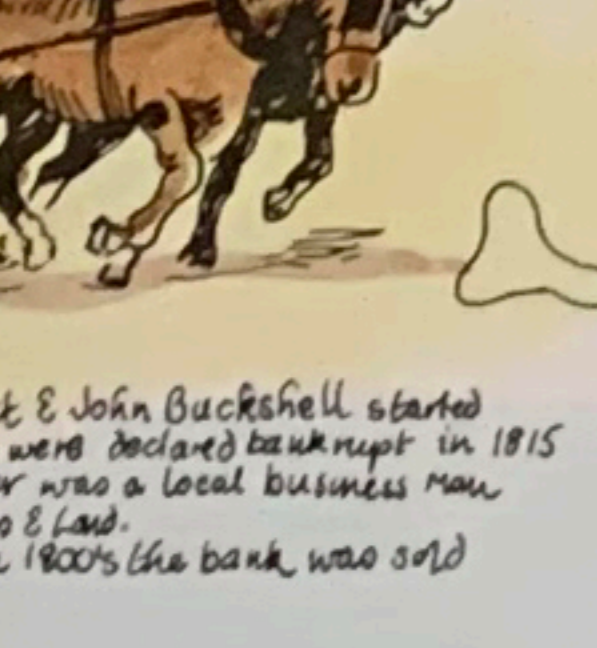
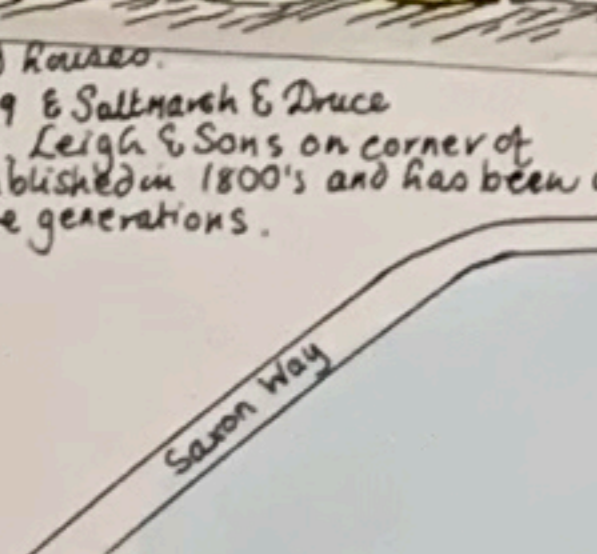
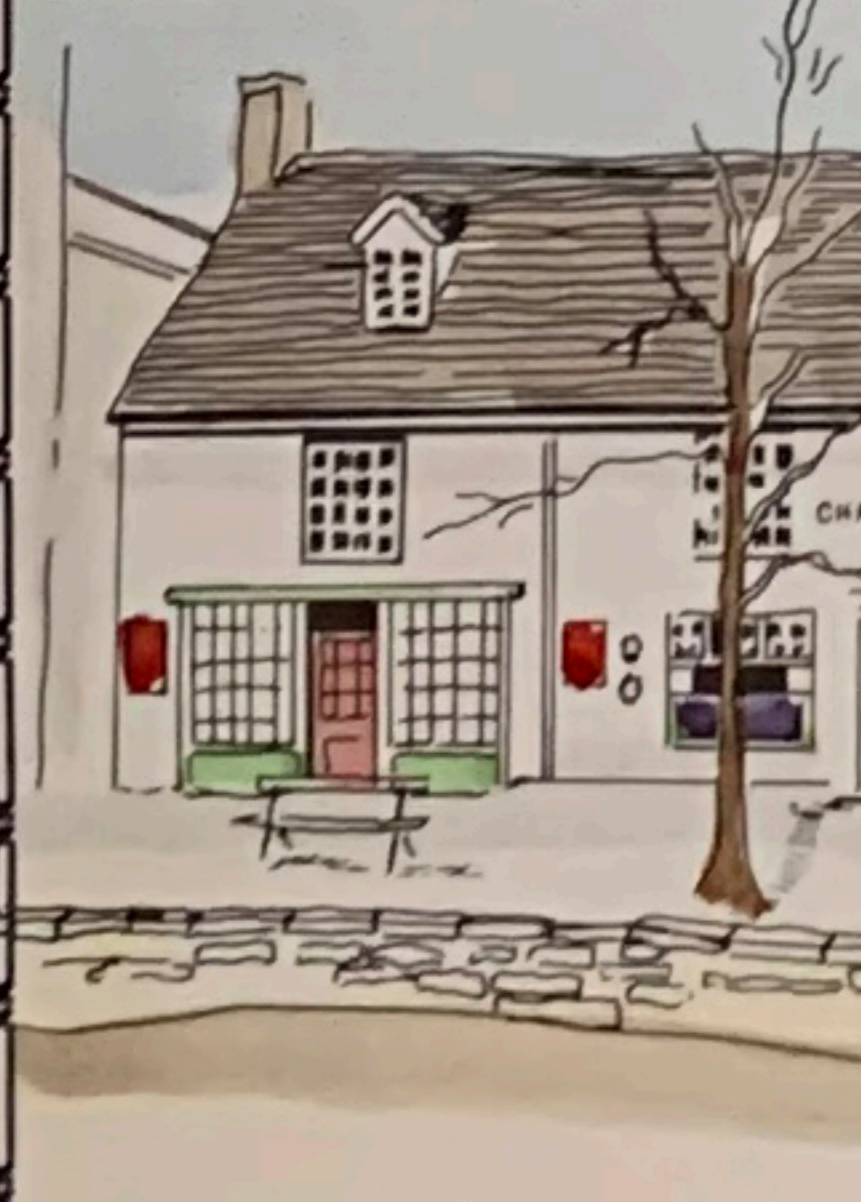
Church's was taken over by George in 1922 and became a strong entity after. In 1992 the Brewery & brewery started up on the premises. William Smith & Joseph Early set up a Brewery in the Old Rectory Hall. The partners fell out & Smith started the White Horse Brewery in Bridge Street. Early continued at the Old Rectory Hall. Brewery was sold to Church's in 1890 with 23 Free Houses.

The Bull Inn closed in 1969 & Saltmarsh & Druce was established in 1815. Saltmarsh & Sons on corner of Corn Street, was established in 1800's and has been in same family for five generations.

Queen Emma was the mother of Edward the Confessor and according to legend had an acquaintance with the Bishop of Winchester.

The Marlborough Hotel provided stabling for country gentry through Witney. Many of the Marlboroughs on Thursday afternoon after the Market.

In 1916 twin brothers Augustine & Edward Ball & John Bucknell started the Witney & Oxfordshire Bank on the Hill. They were declared bankrupt in 1915. John Ballings Bank bought this bank. His father was a local business man who was his money in wool, farming, public houses & land. His brother James became a brewer. In the late 1800's the bank was sold to Gillebert & then to Barclays in 1915.



The Coat of Arms of Henry Box School incorporates the coats of arms of Jean Box, the Lion of Child College & the coat of University of Oxford.
 The Motto means 'By Study we Flourish'



The town hall was built in 18th Century & was used by merchants to sell corn under its arches.



Berrant & Sons was a large Mill & Blanket shop which stood on corner of Market Square & Corn Street. It was owned by George W. Berrant & Sons. One of George's sons owned a shop which was built down in 1816. Percy Berrant made his own sawmills at his shop in Market Square in 1828. The later built factory in Grosvenor Place & High St. Later he sold to R. J. J. & Co. in 1915 who built a factory in Corn Street. This was taken over by Douglas in 1970.

Henry Box founded a Grammar School in 1660 the original building is still in use today. The Queen Mother visited in 1960 to celebrate 400th anniversary. Henry Box was a wealthy grocer, and other wealthy gentlemen. John Holloway also started a school, the Bible Class School on Narrow Hill. This was for education of boys connected with Blanket Trade.

David Bell Deputy Headmaster 1986-2014 Henry Box School
 From 1736 till 1903 there was a number of the Bell family practicing medicine in Witney. They ran a Dispensary at No. 5 High Street.
 In 1920's Dr. Bells lived in Hill House with his large family. The house was left to parish for educational use. The Technical College now was Ball House & a primary school was built in the grounds.



The Buttercross, in 1606, was left by Richard Ashcombe to cover the Old Market with a roof, and the cupola was added in 1683 with a bell cast from William Blake of Cogges. There are 13 pillars.

Witney was granted two fairs in 13th Century. Witney Fair is still held as last fair of September. It was held on Church Green until it was moved to the High St. in early 1900's.

Church Green provides Witney with one of the prettiest squares in Oxfordshire. Five acres of green are bordered with Prosperous 'loam' houses & planted with trees. The 16th Century Hermitage was a retreat for Barton College in times of plague. The Woodhouse was also used for this purpose.

The Bishop of Winchester began building a Church & a Palace at Witney in 1087. During the Civil War between King Stephen & Queen Matilda, the Bishop's Stephen's brother, Henry of Blois, he changed sides to Matilda when his brother failed to make him Archbishop of Canterbury. Knowing the reputation of the King he felt the need to justify his Palace by naming each around the ground floor.

The Bishops of Winchester held the Manor & Borough of Witney until the 19th Century. The manor was held by several families until the Duke of Northampton bought it in 1188.

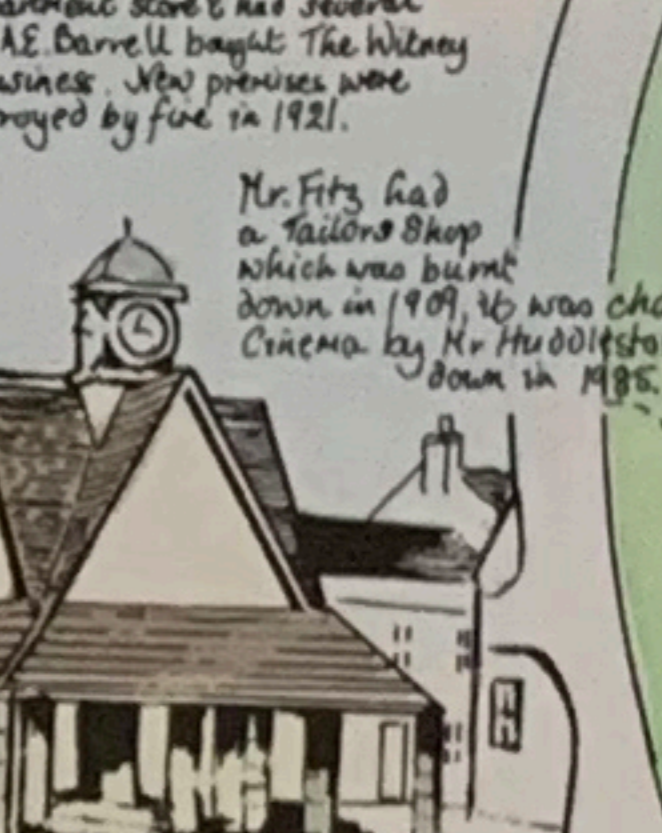
In November 1962, Embury aircraft dropping two bombs on Church Green.

The Weeman coat of arms of Mrs. Sir Richard Weeman, 6th Baronet, was a coat of arms which was the crest of a man in the area in 16th Century when there were several other very rich cloth merchants in Witney.

The Weeman Chapel in the church was used as a school room in 1888.

St. Mary's Church

The Rectory



Mr. Pitts had a Tailors Shop which was burnt down in 1909. It was changed into a Cinema by Mr. Hudson until it was closed down in 1958.

Roots the Chemist used to be The Temperance Hotel, when people could not drink coffee & play games, next door is where you could have a drink!

Witney was granted two fairs in 13th Century. Witney Fair is still held as last fair of September. It was held on Church Green until it was moved to the High St. in early 1900's.

The Weeman coat of arms of Mrs. Sir Richard Weeman, 6th Baronet, was a coat of arms which was the crest of a man in the area in 16th Century when there were several other very rich cloth merchants in Witney.

The Weeman Chapel in the church was used as a school room in 1888.

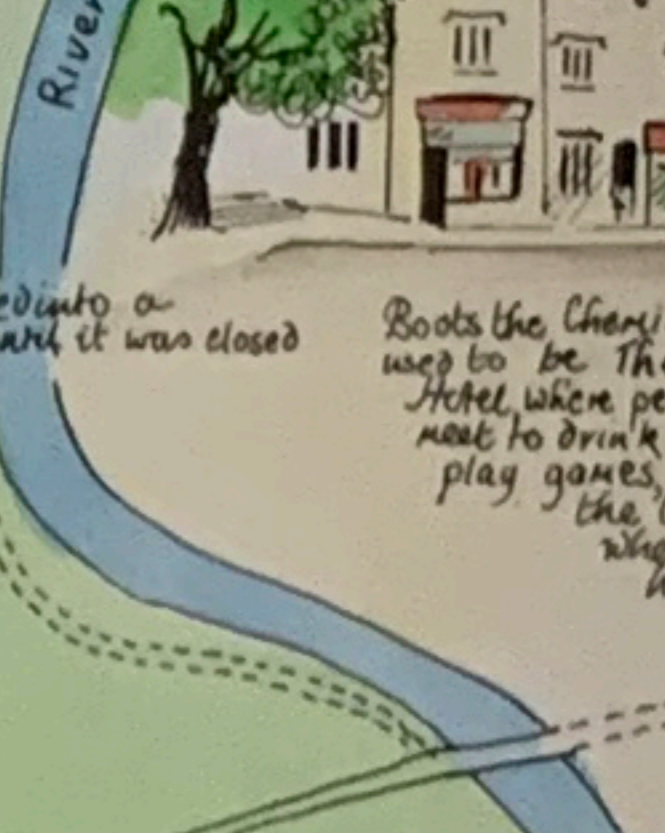
St. Mary's Church

The Rectory

The Rectory

The Rectory

The Rectory



The Coat of Arms of Henry Box School incorporates the coats of arms of Jean Box, the Lion of Child College & the coat of University of Oxford.
 The Motto means 'By Study we Flourish'

Roots the Chemist used to be The Temperance Hotel, when people could not drink coffee & play games, next door is where you could have a drink!

Witney was granted two fairs in 13th Century. Witney Fair is still held as last fair of September. It was held on Church Green until it was moved to the High St. in early 1900's.

The Weeman coat of arms of Mrs. Sir Richard Weeman, 6th Baronet, was a coat of arms which was the crest of a man in the area in 16th Century when there were several other very rich cloth merchants in Witney.

The Weeman Chapel in the church was used as a school room in 1888.

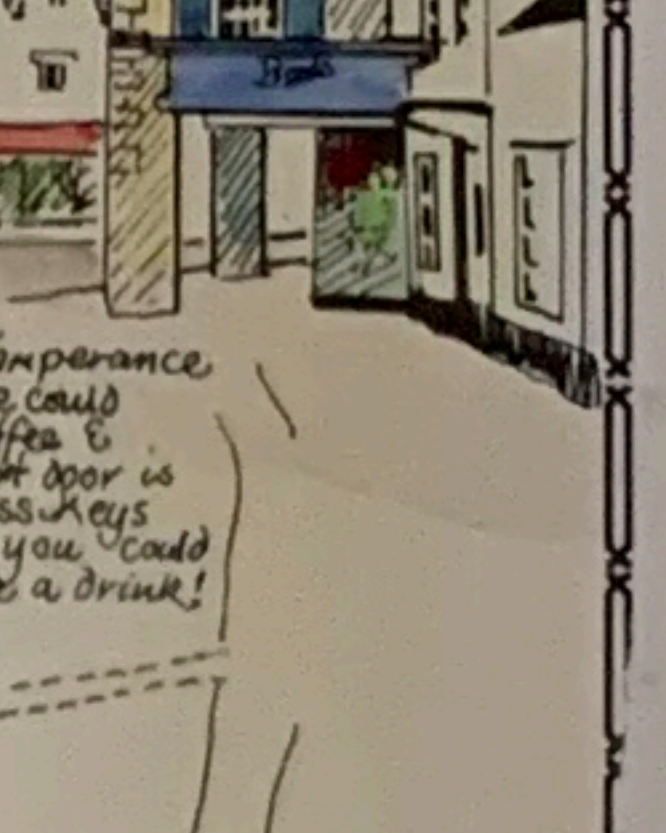
St. Mary's Church

The Rectory

The Rectory

The Rectory

The Rectory



Mr. Pitts had a Tailors Shop which was burnt down in 1909. It was changed into a Cinema by Mr. Hudson until it was closed down in 1958.

Roots the Chemist used to be The Temperance Hotel, when people could not drink coffee & play games, next door is where you could have a drink!

Witney was granted two fairs in 13th Century. Witney Fair is still held as last fair of September. It was held on Church Green until it was moved to the High St. in early 1900's.

The Weeman coat of arms of Mrs. Sir Richard Weeman, 6th Baronet, was a coat of arms which was the crest of a man in the area in 16th Century when there were several other very rich cloth merchants in Witney.

The Weeman Chapel in the church was used as a school room in 1888.

St. Mary's Church

The Rectory

The Rectory

The Rectory

The Rectory