

## AYNHO WALKABOUT

### **Start at the Village Hall:**

**THE VILLAGE HALL** was built in 1929 using stones from the demolished pest house at Warren Farm on the border with Croughton. This was known originally as the dog kennel. Villagers took food and left it outside for plague and small pox victims. Later it became the cottage of a Mrs Watts and it appears in *Lili at Aynhoe* painted in Oct 1846. The current farmer's grandfather remembers it as uninhabitable by 1903/4. The hall is a listed building. There were very lively dances here during the war attended by Americans based at Croughton. It has since been completely refurbished.

### ***Cross the road and walk a few yards to the right.***

**THE GRAMMAR HOUSE** was completed in 1671 and paid for by Mary Cartwright. She left £700 to found a grammar school, a goodly sum then; worth about £42,000 in today's money. Very detailed accounts for the building of the school including the names of all the craftsmen involved in its building and also from whence they came are still extant. It was built to a very high specification, witness the elegantly carved diamond shaped label stops on either side of the doors, and the door and window surrounds all speak of high quality workmanship; it was a money-no-object job. See also the sundial. The Grammar School closed in 1893 being replaced by a Victorian National School built behind the Cartwright Arms. Gen Sir Fairfax Cartwright and the Countess Donna Maria, his Italian born wife, took to living at the Grammar School House until he died in 1928; they kept the big house and staff on as a venue for entertaining their friends.

### **Note:**

During the C17th the local gentry were founding grammar schools left right and centre Adderbury in 1689 (endowed **by** the Rev. Christopher Rawlins). Deddington had one as early as 1548.

### **Sybil Stevens remembers:**

As a little girl she often went round to the kitchen where a succession of village women worked. She described it as very basic with stone sinks etc. It remained as the Dower House for the estate until sold off after the double death (and duties) 1954.

### ***Walk back passing***

**THE ROW OF COTTAGES** leading to Cartwright Arms.

They were built circa 1650, making them 350 years old, as were most of the stone cottages in the village. This row appears on James Fish's map of 1696 and they are typical of the time as agricultural labourers tied cottages. The Cartwrights owned every cottage in the village. They, eventually, sold most of them at auction. very early On in the war (in 1941). The stone they are built with is locally quarried and is full of fossils from the Jurassic period (circa one million years old).

One by the pub was a shop on and off for many years during the C19th.

### **Notes**

- Three of the cottages have a third story added. Cottages like this in Oxfordshire usually indicate that they were lived in/used by men in the weaving industry. There is no record of this in Aynho.

- The original apricot trees growing on all the south facing cottages were brought from Italy by Sir Thomas Cartwright, a career diplomat THEY WERE NOT, AS LOCAL LEGEND WOULD HAVE IT, GROWN IN PLACE OF FEUDAL DUES (apricots were not brought to England until the mid sixteenth century and then by Henry VIII 's gardener).

**THE CARTWRIGHT ARMS; ( one of three pubs in the village at one time)**

This was originally known as the Red Lion up until the 1820s. In 1633 when Richard Cartwright (the first of the dynasty) is recorded as being upset about the dilapidated state; its landlady, one of his tenants presented at the Lady Day Court of 1633 (25th May, then New Years Day) when Cartwright wrote a note to his steward 'You must view the Red Lion'. In the late 17th c the landlord was a Thomas Norris — he issued his own tokens (coinage) which meant they could only be used at his pub!.

The pub signpost is topped by a Pope's mitre (Gen Sir Fairfax Cartwright (1859— 1928) married an Italian countess who was related to a pope). The motto on sign means 'take the path to honesty'

There were large wooden gates in the archway. Note the slot on left. These were shut at night. Mail was lowered from the window above by rope if the coach was late.

Note also: Recessed boot scraper on left, Mullioned windows at ground level.

The pub brewed its own beer until 1917.

Note:

The third pub, The Bell inn, was believed to have been sited on the right hand side of the Banbury Road somewhere near the junction to Charlton.

***Continue into***

**THE SQUARE:**

- The old clock shop was once the village butchers. The rings for tying up cattle are still in place.
- The two white garages on right were the Apricot Café up to early the 1980's.
- Yew Tree Cottage, a chocolate box cottage, set back, was probably built early in C18th
- No 6 has a benchmark on wall. 139.22m or 456.75 feet above sea level. It was Post Office in 1940 – 50s. The Post Office moved there from Roundtown 26, then 28. From No 6 the PO moved to 15, and from there to the shop opposite (11A).
- A Market was held every Tuesday until late C17th.

**THE OLD WHITE HART**

- The White Hart pub, the building on the right with a slope up to an archway with outdoor stairs alongside, was also owned by the Cartwrights was opened in the 1740s.
- The first landlord seems to have been Thomas Bygrave. He was originally Thomas Cartwright's footman. But by 1775 he had made such a codswollop of running the pub that he had to hand it over to his two sons.
- The Bygrave family landlarded the White Hart and The Red Lion for generations.
- It was closed in the 1870's due to loss of traffic to the railway.
- The concrete circle in front indicates the old well.
- The insurance sign above indicates protection in case of fire. The original contract shows a cobbler working there. Old coins and leather sewing needles have been found by the current owner.
- The Pig club met in the room above the archway. Members paid subs and got benefits. Many people had pigs to provide meat for much of the year. Slaying the pig was a major event. Everything was used. Head – brawn, trotters etc. Bacon being smoked was hung high over the stove.

- By 1941 it was an off-licence and general store: it must have been in direct competition with the village shop directly opposite; it is now a couple of private dwellings.

**Sybil Stevens remembers:**

The Jug and Bottle door was approached from the back entrance via Skittle Alley. People came with their jugs to fill up with ale, unseen by their neighbours.

The Off licence and general store had a very high counter. Children would sneak in and if the lady was serving they would duck down and creep out. She was very fierce.

Both shops were right opposite and watched each others customers jealously. They would ask what was so special about the opposite shop if they had seen you go in.

When the school nurse visited, the children were led down to the old bakehouse in a crocodile and were weighed on the corn weighing machine. This was the nearest accurate scale to the school. The children enjoyed seeing the mice scampering about.

- The cottage called the Old Malt House was, for many years, the village shop and a very good general store it was too. It appeared on the 1941 sale plan as a general store. It finally closed in 1989.
- The last cottage on the left has a small plaque set in the wall with 'TBS. 1695.
- Catton House (the substantial house next door on the right) first appears on the 1790 plan of Aynho. It was the home of a very successful dairy farmer Mrs. Susan Prowett; the Prowetts were a long standing farming family.

**STREET NAMES:**

William Ralph Cartwright in the 1820's gave all the streets formal names. Blacksmiths Hill and the Butts are self-explanatory and were probably in use long before then but why Hollow Way & Round Town ~a frequent street name in this locality).

Skittle Alley because of games played in back yard of the White Hart.

**Walk through to School End**

**NATIONAL SCHOOL:**

The first National School was held in a barn in 1812 and had 50 boys and one master!! By the 1840s it was in its own building behind the Cartwright Arms (the area is now called School End). The Old School House (the masters house) is still there. The gentry, by and large, disapproved of girls being educated beyond 11 years. They reckoned they would try to go beyond their station in life.

Many older residents attended the school. Ron Bowerman remembers the teacher setting them to read part of the bible between 9.00 and 12.00 and then disappearing. Needless to say the pupils soon became restless and began to mess about. As 12.00 approached Ron climbed up on a chair to keep a look out and found himself staring straight into the teacher's face.

**Sybil Stevens remembers:**

At Christmas a tree was donated and all the children were given a matchbox with 6d in it.

Mrs. Czeppe was a popular headmistress. She had a dog called *Flirt* which came into school and played with the children.

Nancy Shergold was considered bright enough for Grammar School and had to walk to Warren Farm near the Croughton border, and sat the scholarship exam on Farmer Maclaren's dining room table, supervised by the vicar. She passed and went to Banbury School. She caught the train from Aynho Station every morning.

The last Head was David Morgan who now lives in Charlton and runs the Aynho Apricots.

**Cross School End to Butts Close and cross the road into Bowman's Lea. On your left are**

### **THE ALMS HOUSES**

- John Parker, an Oxford glazier, left in his will of 1816 a sum of money to build an almshouse for eight old people (4 men & 4 women).
- They were built in 1822 and opened in 1823.
- The cost of living allowance, they were given, was 8s (40P) for the men and 7s (35P) for the women.
- As can be seen these alms houses were built to a very high standard (at least the exteriors were). Each has two fireplaces an elegant pedimented door and, for the time, very large windows.
- The original tenants contract demanded that tenants attend church twice on Sundays.
- The gate was locked at 8.00PM

**Return to Butts Close turn right and walk down hill. Note the old stile into the black path.**

### **THE BUTTS**

At the top of the hill, immediately opposite was an area set aside for the practice of archery usually dubbed 'the butts'. Most villages locally have an area or a field named the butts. There is certainly a record of men practising their archery in the sixteenth century. The Court records show the following ***To present the particular names of all those which have able bodies and have not within three weeks last past any bows or arrows and have not within the same time shot.***

**Sybil Stevens remembers:**

The Butts were the playing fields until the land was sold off by the estate.

Sybil remembers riding on the cart horse that pulled the mower to cut the grass.

When the new playing field was established people spent many days collecting stones before it was grassed.

**Cross the road into**

### **BLACKSMITH'S HILL**

- The cottages on right at top are the oldest in village. They were known as Pentile Row. No 33 has a 30ft well in the garden which dates from 1500. The road previously went across the backs of the houses.
- Blacksmiths Hill seems to have been the centre of many of the village's tradesmen. Forge Cottage, next to no. 21 and opposite (alongside the entrance to Skittle Alley) is The Old Dairy Cottage.

**Sybil Stevens remembers:**

The well was not in the garden until more recently. It was for public use. Outside taps replaced the village wells in the 1940's with running water in houses coming later. Families collected 2 buckets every night for the whole day's supply. Outside toilets. Young men were paid 1/2d a week to fetch water for the alms houses.

- 21. The tallest old building in village. Built around 1630. Owned by Edward Jarvis, a farmer with 30 acres and an engineer. He dug a well in the road outside the house and was fined by the court. (the little window in the gable end of the three storey house on the right of the picture) can still be seen albeit blocked up. One of three buildings in C17th employing craftsmen from outside the village.
- The Blacksmith's forge opposite.
- Forge cottage is of a similar age – note the tie plates in wall. They are to stop the walls bowing out.
- Dove Cottage – Farriers – doves provided fresh meat in winter. The little dovecote (on the end of the south gable) can still be seen also the little triangular wooden framed owl window set in the apex of gable can, just, be seen. The rest of the building is now very different. Much gentrified
- Appletrees – formerly the home of the carrier who transported goods to and from Banbury. Replaced by the advent of the motor car.

**Pass through SKITTLE ALLEY to Square and down HOLLOW WAY to RAMBLER COTTAGE**

In the garden is the cistern supplying the Park House. Beyond is the remaining wall of the old Pumping house. Water was pumped up to the Park House twice a day. ***This cistern is within a private garden and is not normally on view.***

**Return up B4100 - Roundtown**

**COLLEGE FARM**

This is the site of a tiny hospital founded circa 1180 by Roger FitzRichard. It was a hostel and infirmary for poor travellers. By the later half of the 15th century, possibly due to insufficient income, the aims of the institution had clearly fallen by the wayside. As a result, in 1485 the hospital's patron, the Earl of Arundel, granted the hospital and all its property to Magdalen College, Oxford, and the hospital itself was dissolved.

**THE STOCKS:** Sited on the SE side of the bend on Roundtown were probably built mid-17thC, and last used 1850 ish! About 1700, Willi Knott was paid 4d for repairing the stocks!

**Cross to**

**THE PARK HOUSE** short architectural history:

A Saxon house c1042- c1080

Norman house c1080 ?

Elizabethan/Tudor house purchased by Richard Cartwright: burnt down during the Civil War in 1645.

House rebuilt around the Elizabethan carcass in the Jacobean style c1662 by Edward Marshall. Charles II's master mason (he subsequently worked with Christopher Wren on St Paul's Cathedral.)

1707 – 1714 House enlarged and modernized by Thomas Archer. Groom Porter to Queen Anne — a dilettante gentleman architect.

1799 - 1804 House restyled into an elegant, country gents residence by Sir John Soane.

#### **Cartwrights**

**Richard 1564 – 1637 = Mary Egerton 1579 – 1654**

**John 1614 – 1676 = Katherine Noy – 1644**

**William 1634 – 1674 = Ursula Fairfax (2) – 1702**

**Thomas 1671 – 1748 = Armine Crewe – 1728**

**William ?? – 1768 = Byzantia Lane (1)**

**Thomas 1735 – 1772 = Mary Desaguilliers**

**William Ralph 1771 – 1847 = Hon Emma Maude (1)**

**Sir Thomas 1794 – 1850 = Marie Sandizell (Lili)**

**William Cornwallis 1826 – 1915 = Clementine Gaul**

**Sir Fairfax Leighton 1857 – 1928 = Maria Chigi**

**Richard 1903 – 1954 = Hon Elspeth Weir**

**Edward 1936 –1954.**

References and Thanks to

Aynho, A Northamptonshire Village Nicholas Cooper

Lili At Aynho Elizabeth Carter-Hignett

Aynho Park House

Nick Allen