

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Introduction

## Preserving the Past for the Future



*Aerial view of Woolstone – date unknown*



*Great Linford Manor House*



*Woughton on the Green – date unknown*

### Do you recognise anywhere on these old photos?

Preserving the past for the future doesn't mean that nothing can change. Sometimes buildings come to the end of their useful life for their original purpose, but often can be sympathetically brought back into use for other things. What is important is to record how things were and the changes that happen.

“Then and Now” photos, repeating the “Now” from time to time, is a good way of doing this. Interviewing people who have lived in an area for a long time and have seen changes means memories and often dialects and accents are preserved.

There are many towns and villages in the area with heritage groups but we are aware of many gaps. We'd love to hear from anyone who'd be interested in doing something in any not currently covered. Please get in touch via the Heritage Association website or Living Archive.



**MKHA**

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



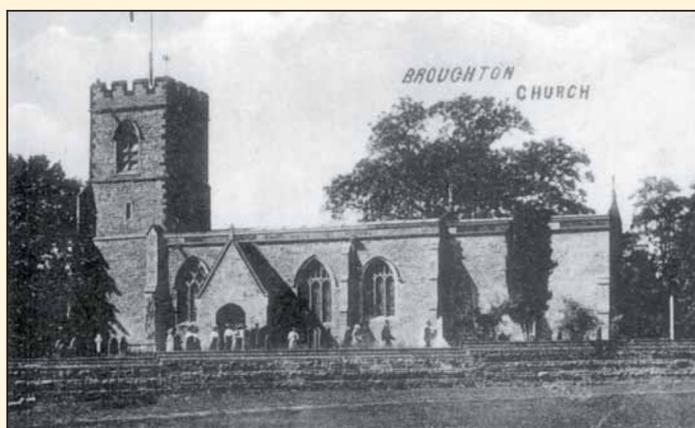
**Living Archive**

[www.livingarchive.org.uk](http://www.livingarchive.org.uk)

# Historic Towns & Villages

## Broughton

### The Village on the Turnpike to London



Until about 2004, Broughton was only a street of houses with a couple of outlying farms and a small church but that street, London Road, had been part of an important route from Northampton to London. In the early eighteenth century it had been a turnpike road with a tollgate close to the site of the Broughton Hotel.

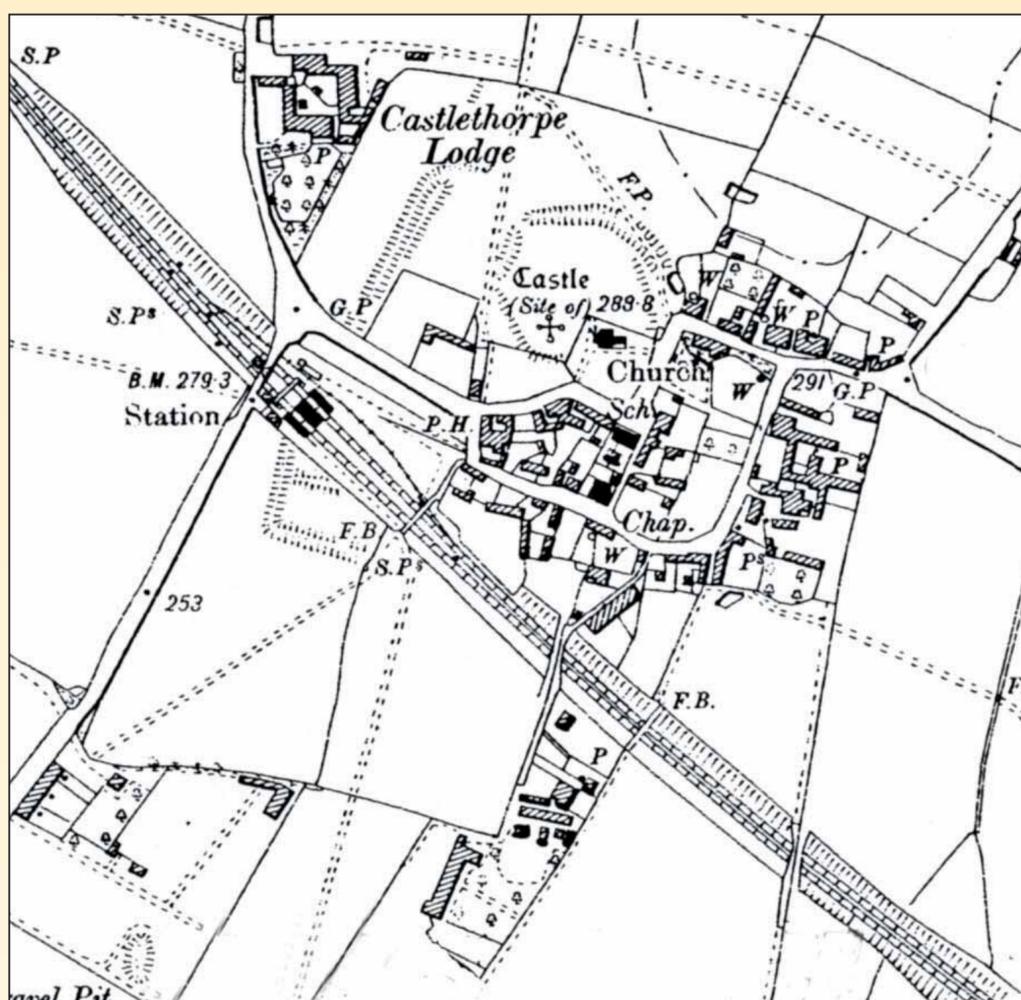
In the early twentieth century it was safe to pose for a photograph in the road outside the school because by then there was so little traffic – stage coaches had gone and motor transport had not arrived. A hundred years later children were able to pose in the same place because London Road had become a quiet dead end.

St Lawrence's Church is no longer a parish church but since 1987 the Churches Conservation Trust has maintained it and cared for its magnificent wall paintings. These are probably fifteenth century and were originally teaching aids for the poor and uneducated. Obliterated at the Reformation, they were rediscovered during mid-19th century restoration. The Pieta shows the mutilated body of Christ in his mother's arms. Note the elegant young men in fashionable hats and hose.

# Historic Towns & Villages

## Castlethorpe

### The Little Settlement with the Castle

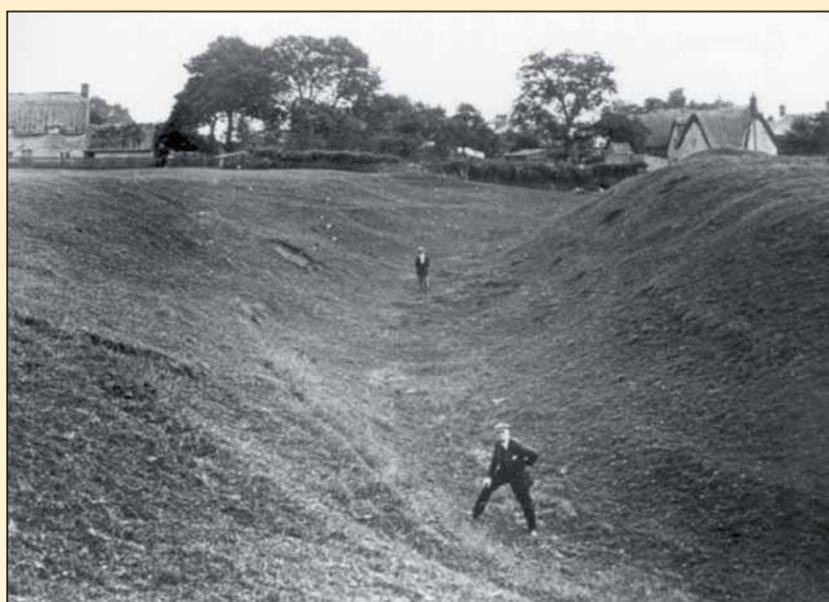


Map showing site of castle

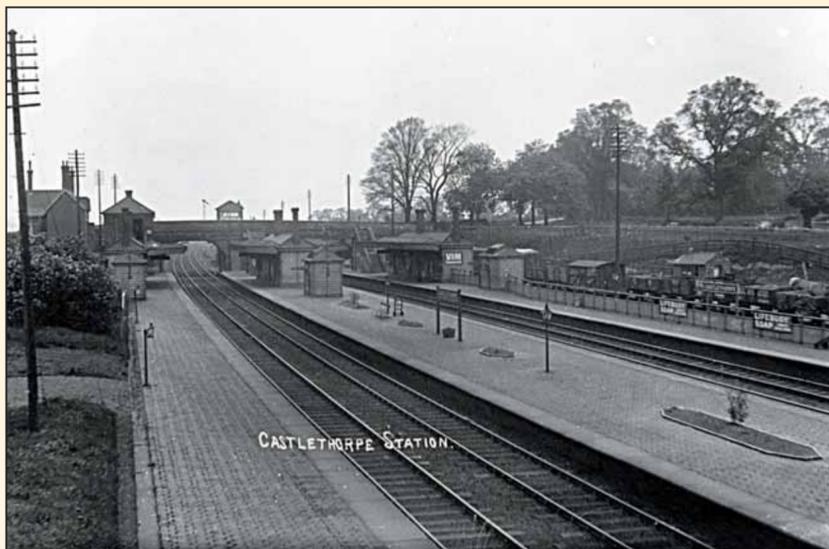
The impressive humps and hollows around the village, and especially near the church, hint at the “castle” in the village’s name.

The settlement is not mentioned by name in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as the area which is now the civil parish of Castlethorpe was part of the larger manor of Hanslope during the mediaeval period.

The castle belonging to the lord of Hanslope was certainly in existence by the mid 12th century and may have been constructed at the end of the previous century originally as a manor house (hall) defended by a high bank topped with a stout palisade and a deep ditch, the remains of which we can still see today.



The inner bailey c1900



During 1138-1153 the existing fortification may have been strengthened by adding a large outer bailey and ditch. South Street probably developed later along the line of the outer ditch. In the autumn of 1215 Faulkes de Breaute totally destroyed the castle and gained possession of Hanslope manor but did not choose to live here and the castle was never rebuilt.

Castlethorpe also had a railway station, used by workers from Castlethorpe and Hanslope to get to Wolverton Railway Works. The station was closed in the “Beeching cuts” of the 1960s.

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Grafton Regis

## A Royal Village



*The Church*

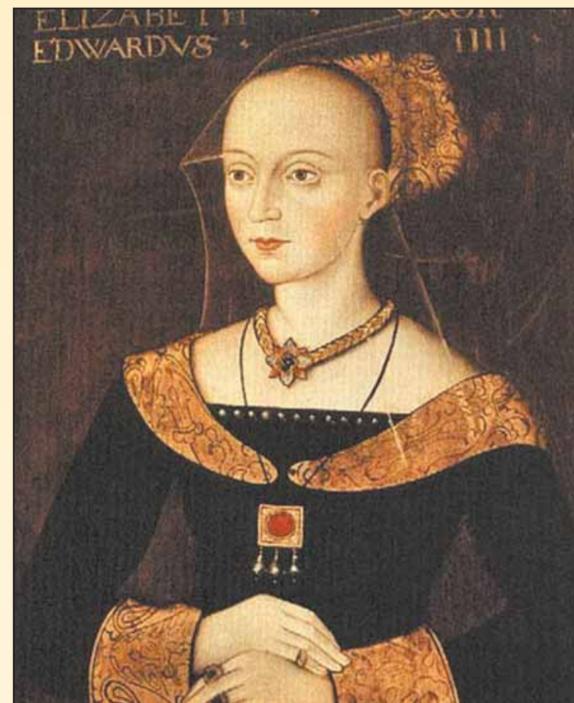
The story begins with the Wydville (Woodville) family replacing the Norman Abbey of Grestain as owners in the 13th century. The most famous of the Woodvilles was Elizabeth, who became Edward IV's Queen on their secret marriage in Grafton in 1464. She was the mother of the Princes in the Tower.

Henry VIII loved hunting in Grafton Regis, as he renamed it. He expanded Grafton House, visiting in 1529 with Anne Boleyn when his fateful meeting with Cardinal Wolsey resulted in the Cardinal's downfall and the establishment of the Church of England.

Elizabeth I and James I also visited Grafton with their courts, and Elizabeth leased the house to her most powerful nobles, including her favourites, the Earls of Leicester and Essex. The Grafton Portrait is locally believed to be of Shakespeare.

Other notable people with village connections are Lady Crane who was tenant of the house when it was destroyed by parliamentary forces during the Civil War in 1643; Isabella Sams, the rector's daughter who painted the rural quietness of 19th century Grafton; and Robert FitzRoy, captain of the Beagle and pioneering weather forecaster, who is commemorated in the Church.

[www.grafton-regis.co.uk](http://www.grafton-regis.co.uk)



*Elizabeth Woodville*



*The Grafton portrait*

# Historic Towns & Villages

## Lavendon

### A Castle and a Mill

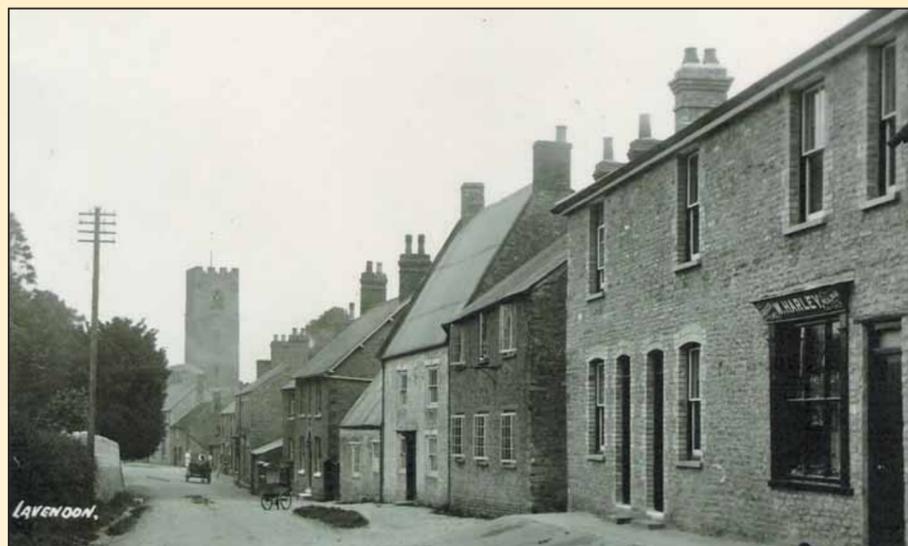


*Part of Lavendon Castle mound and moat constructed in the late 11th century*

Lavendon, or “Lauundene”, was recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086. In more recent times the River Great Ouse powered Lavendon Mill to grind corn. The mill building was demolished in the 1960s and only the 18th century Mill House now remains beside the modern-day Three Shire Way.

Lavendon also had a castle which was constructed in the late 11th century by the Bidun family. There are no remnants of the castle left to be seen above ground, apart from some striking earthworks, including the mound, some moats and also three baileys which can still be readily traced.

St Michael’s Church stands proudly in the centre of the village with a churchyard that was cut back in one corner in order to ease a sharp bend on the modern Bedford-Northampton main road. This fact is recorded with a plaque on the churchyard wall dated 1955, together with another commemorating the Jarrow Crusade that passed by in 1936 on its way to London. Lavendon was originally



*Looking down the un-widened Northampton Road with Harley’s general store visible on the right.*



*Lavendon Mill and Mill House from a postcard dated before 1911. The mill was demolished in the 1960s.*

served by no less than four turnpike roads in the 19th century. The further widening of these roads through the village centre occurred in the 1950s by demolishing several projecting roadside buildings.

[www.lavendonconnection.com/Historical/Lavendon\\_History.htm](http://www.lavendonconnection.com/Historical/Lavendon_History.htm)

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Milton Keynes

## The Village that gave its name to a City



*Birds Cottage c1900*



*Birds Cottage 2000*



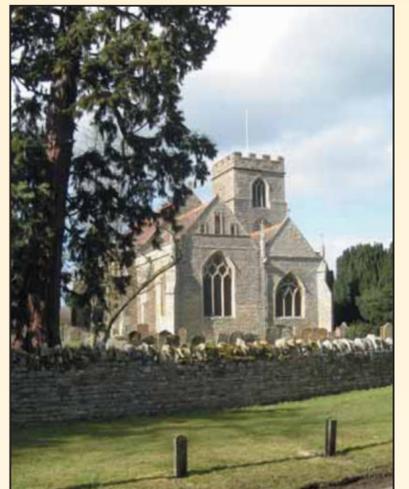
*All Saints Church pre-1875*



*The Swan 1914-18*



*The Swan today*



*All Saints Church today*

In the Domesday Book of 1086 Milton Keynes was called Middleton. By the twelfth century it had acquired the affix Cahaigues from the name of one of the Lords of the Manor and gradually became Milton Keynes. MK Development Corporation reverted to Middleton for the new grid square to distinguish it from the city.

The centre of the village still looks rural, but these children pictured when the new town was announced, would find that the surrounding countryside they knew is now completely covered by houses.

Parts of All Saints Church date from about 1200 and some rebuilding and the addition of a chapel including expensive carved stonework took place about 1330.

Some would argue that The Swan Inn, at the junction of three roads, is the most important building in the village! It probably dates from the late seventeenth century and has suffered several fires, most recently in 2011, but has always been sympathetically restored.

Bird's Cottage, the Bird family's builders' yard where estate maintenance work was done, may have been a mediaeval hall house, possibly a manor house and is one of the oldest domestic buildings in the area.



# Historic Towns & Villages

# Olney

## A Town of Traditions



*Gilpin Ride 1925*



*Floral Fiesta 1986*



*Olney Raft Race*



*Olney Pageant 1926*



*Pancake Race 1956*

Throughout the past 100 years the community of Olney, sited in the relatively isolated region of North Bucks, has always come together to re-enact local traditions and events.

Two 'Great Pageants' involving hundreds of Olney residents took place in 1925 and 1926, the former to celebrate the Sexcentenary of the SS Peter and Paul Church and the latter to raise funds in aid of the church roof. The crowds at these events numbered several thousand as evidenced in the above photograph of the re-enactment of William Cowper's famous work 'John Gilpin'.

The Olney Pancake Race held every year on Shrove Tuesday was revived in 1948 (although it is thought to have originated in 1445). It has been an international event since 1950 when Liberal in Kansas, USA challenged Olney to an annual competition. It has been 'going strong' with faster times ever since.

The Olney Floral Fiesta was a very successful event which started in the mid 1960s. At its peak the event lasted for eight days each June. The highlight was a carnival procession around the town followed by entertainment in the East Street Recreation Ground. Sadly the cost of insurance for the vehicles used as floats hastened its demise after some 40 years. However, the Olney Raft Race on the Great Ouse between the A509 road bridge and the 'Old Bathing Place' survived and is very much 'ongoing'.

Olney also now has its extremely successful 'Dickens of a Christmas' event, held annually on a Sunday in early December. Its main aim is to raise funds for charity and which, in true Olney fashion, again attracts thousands of visitors.

[www.olneyhistory.org.uk](http://www.olneyhistory.org.uk)

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Shenley Brook End

## A Remote Midland Country Hamlet



*Dovecote Cottages 1927*



*The village hall and Dovecote Cottages*



*Steam machines 1906*



*The Rose & Crown and the Whaddon Chase hunt*

The hamlet of Shenley Brook End is intrinsically linked with Shenley Church End. It is the lower end of the Shenleys and unlike other old villages in Milton Keynes had the characteristics of a remoter midland country hamlet with the three roads meeting at a point where hedges recede leaving a large irregular unkempt green, next to a local pub.

The hamlet was focused around four farms and cottages most of which were built or refurbished in the 18th century with some additional farmers workers cottages being built during the course of the 19th century. Some of the farms date back to the 17th century. Following this period of growth little took place until early to 1920s with construction of Dovecote cottages giving farm labourers improved living conditions

Village life centred around the village hall which was funded and built by the residents. Today it is still well used and provides the focus for the annual village fete which takes place in July.

The Whaddon Chase hunt met outside the former Rose and Crown Inn in the 1930s. The famous codebreaker Alan Turing stayed here during the war whilst working at Bletchley Park.

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Shenley Church End

## Home of the Sacred Tree



*Alms Houses*



*St Mary's Church*



*The famous Holy Thorn tree*



*The Toot*

Shenley Church End is closely linked with Shenley Brook End, lying about a mile to the north. Whilst Brook End was a farming community, Church End provided the educational and pastoral care with a school and the Church of St Mary which dates back to the 12th century. Close to the church are six almshouses, built in 1654 in memory of Thomas Stafford, whose effigy can be found in the church.

The village claims a history linked to Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph, who buried the body of Jesus Christ after his Crucifixion is claimed whilst spreading the word of God stuck this staff in the ground at Glastonbury which took

root and a hawthorn grew. The tree that can be seen by the play area near Holy Thorn Lane is thought to be a branch from it. It was seen as sacred and only blossoms at Christmas.

The ancient Toot, a lookout hill built for defensive purposes at the time when the Empress Matilda was trying to take the English throne from King Stephen, is located within the area bounded by Oakhill Road and Holy Thorn Lane.

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Stoke Goldington

## An Historic Living and Thriving Community



Two SG villagers making lace  
c.1910



Villagers assembled for the  
Whitsun walk 1894



Steam at Stoke c.1989

The first record of Stoke (from Old English 'stoc' meaning a place) is in the Domesday Book when Drogo held land from William de Peverel. William fell foul of Henry II and as a result Stoke was given by Henry to Peter de Goldington

The village sits astride the Newport Pagnell-Northampton road where it climbs to the Northamptonshire uplands. There are no less than thirty Grade II listed buildings in the village. The oldest, apart from the church, is in Dag Lane and is partially late-14th or early-15th century.

Bobbin lace-making was a major cottage industry, the 1841 census recording 247 women in the village as lace makers.

In 1906 Henry Armstrong, a native of Stoke, set up the Bucks Cottage Workers Agency to collect and market the lace.

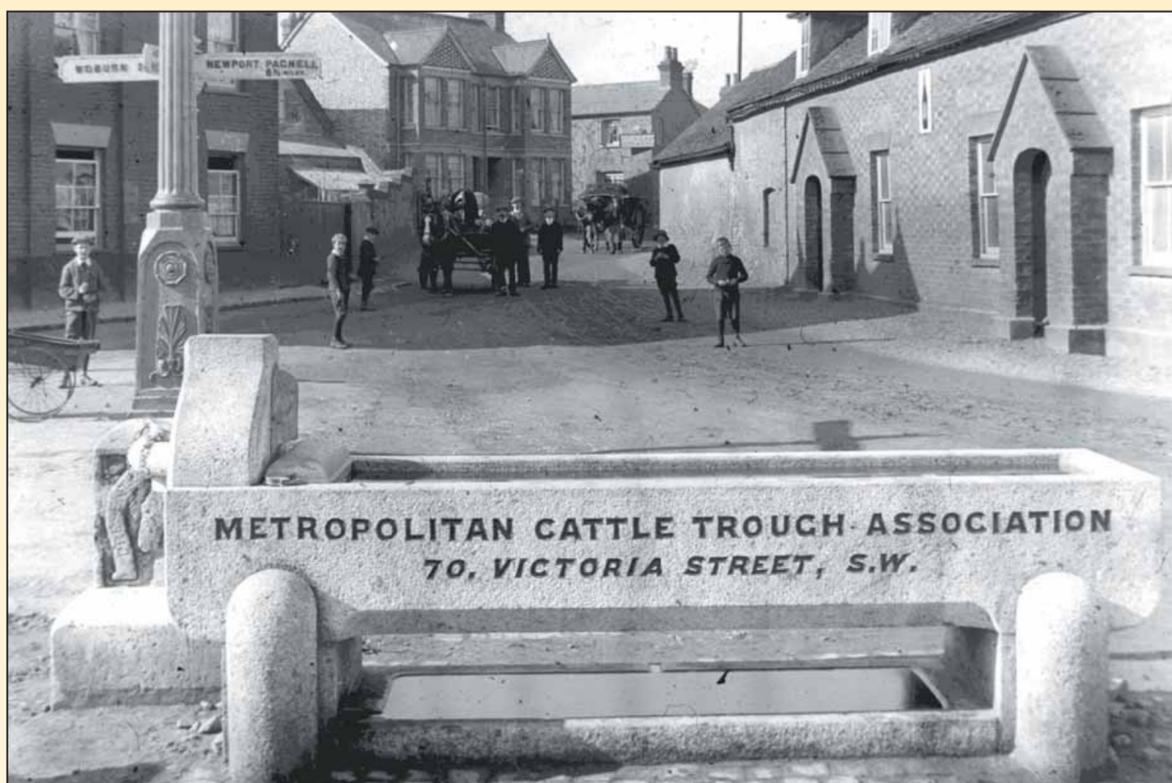
Many of the men worked in the local brickfield. The Whiting's steam ploughs were well known in the area in the late-19th and early-20th centuries and between 1925 and 1979 the Wesley family ran a coach company from the village. The village is probably best-known today for its annual May Steam Rally. Villagers live in an historic environment but are very much part of a living and thriving community.

[www.mkheritage.co.uk/sga/](http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/sga/)

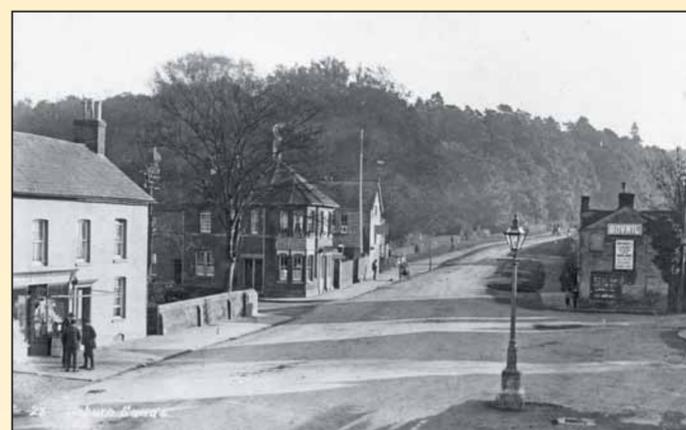
# Historic Towns & Villages

# Woburn Sands

## Friends and Piggeries



*The horse trough at the junction of the High Street and Hardwick Road*



*View from the Swan Hotel*



*The Friends Meeting House*

Woburn Sands did not exist by that name until relatively recently. “Hogsty End” was the term covering the area of what we know as present day Woburn Sands. This unattractive sounding “End” was one of several which formed the village of Wavendon; others included Cross, Church and Lower End. Wavendon can be found in the Domesday Book, a tiny group of farms and peasants. Obviously swine were farmed, and probably the main piggeries were away from the church and centre of Wavendon.

Roads from Woburn, turnpiked in 1706 and extended through Hogsty End to Kingston Bridge in 1727, Bow Brickhill, Aspley Guise and Wavendon meet here.

This good accessibility meant that it became an important meeting place for religious non-conformists. The Friends Meeting House until recently housed the town’s Library.

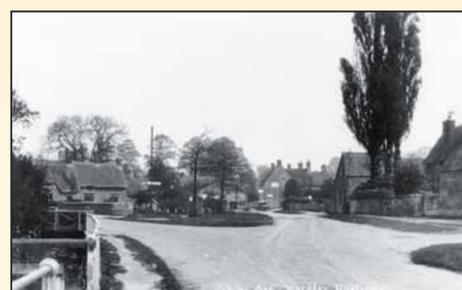
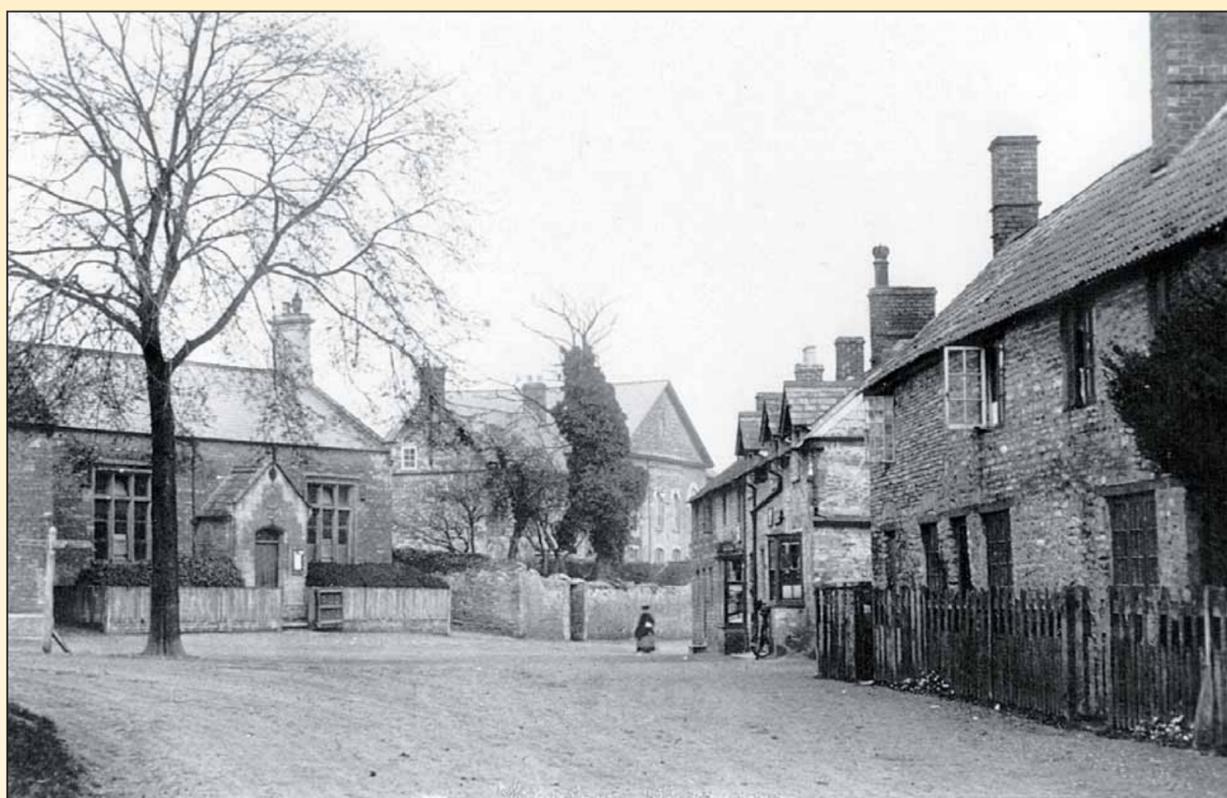
In the Second World War many staff from Bletchley Park lived in the town.

In the late 1960s, a new city began on the horizon and a huge population started moving into an area which had been predominantly farmland, and the latest plans bring it right up to the outskirts of Woburn Sands, the pretty little countryside piggery.

# Historic Towns & Villages

## Yardley Hastings

### A Village of Two Parts



Yardley Hastings, just east of Northampton, is divided into two parts by the A428 road from Bedford to Northampton. A small stream meanders through the village.

The main part of the village is centred along High Street and two small squares with St Andrew's Church set back on higher ground. Adjacent to the church stands The Court Parlour, part of a medieval manor house which stood here.

The village retains an early 19th Century Non-conformist chapel and manse, and an old school building along with

some thatched properties. Many buildings are of pale buff/grey limestone and some of the older buildings were tied cottages for workers on the nearby Castle Ashby estate, the seat of the Marquess of Northampton.

The name of Chase Park Road, to the south of the A428, reflects the village's connection with the large ancient hunting ground of Yardley Chase.

The "Hastings" in the village name is from the Hastings family who became Lords of the manor in the 13th Century.

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Yardley Gobion

## A Small Village with a Big Heart



*The workhouse from the front c1910.  
The tramps' entrance is the small-door*



*The wall that had the doorway made in it to enter  
the school yard can be seen behind the people*



*Seat for Tramps to wait for opening  
time at the workhouse*

Hidden away in this village from early in the 19th century to early in the 20th century was accommodation for up to 200 people who had fallen upon hard times from 14 villages in the locality which all made a financial contribution.

It seems strange that the nearby towns of Wolverton or Stony Stratford were not chosen but the Duke of Grafton, at that time living nearby at Wakefield Lodge, was insistent that this Union Workhouse should be in the centre of the areas where he had land holdings and although called the Potterspury Union Workhouse it was situated in Yardley Gobion, then part of the Parish of Potterspury.

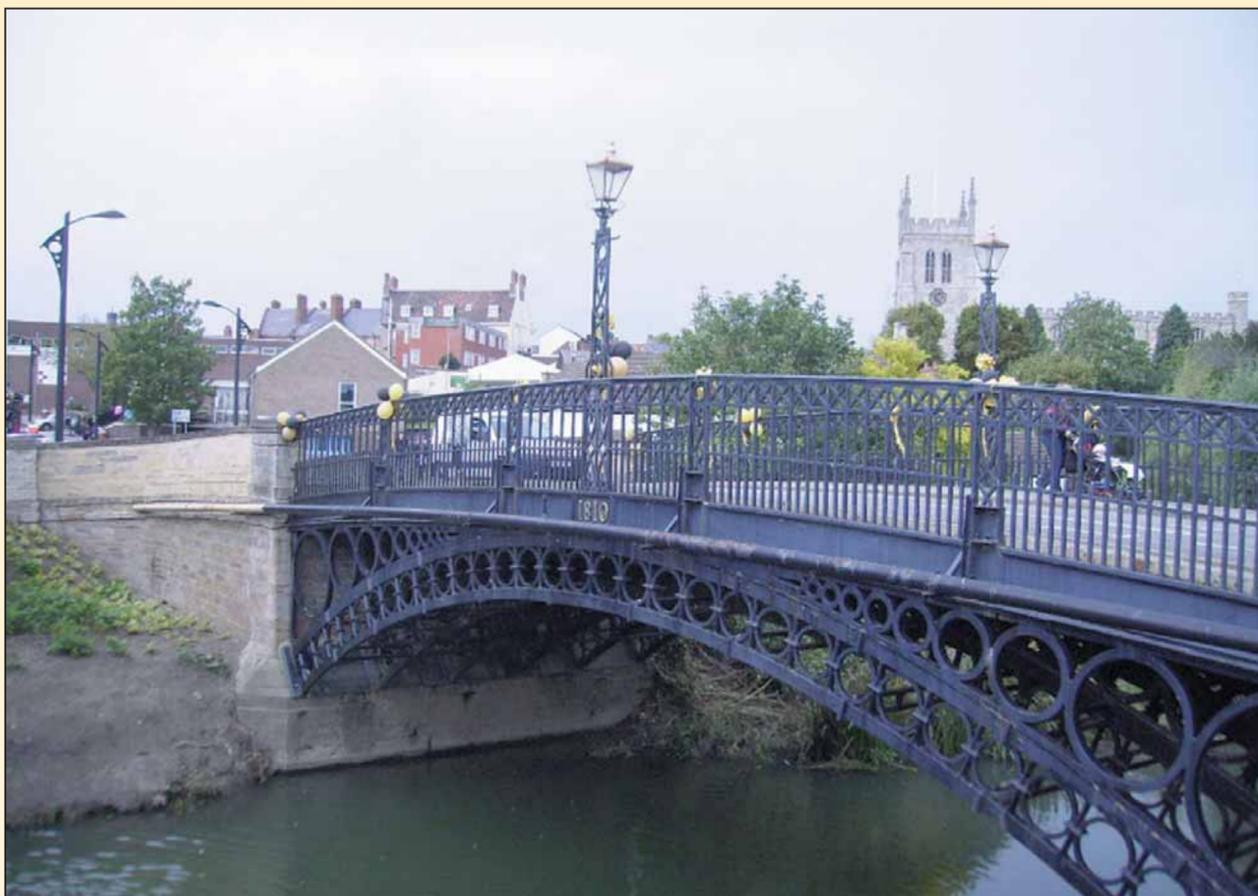
The Duke of Grafton had a seat built around the large elm tree on Elm Green where tramps would wait until the specified time when they were allowed to enter for a bed and a meal, to leave again next morning after the stipulated amount of work.

The children were initially educated in the Workhouse but towards the 20th century a doorway was cut in the wall between the workhouse and the school yard, the village children then mixed with the workhouse children for the first time.

# Historic Towns & Villages

# Newport Pagnell

## The 'New Market Town'



Probably most famous for the oldest iron bridge in the country still in daily use for traffic.

The name Newport implies 'new market town' and still has an area known as Market Hill. Newport appears in the Domesday Book as a manor and later passed into the Paynel family which gives us Pagnell.

The manor passed down through various families until in 1819 the manor was split up and major enclosures took place. Fortunately one of the town's major assets Bury Field escaped this fate and today many older properties in the town still hold Common Rights.

The medieval town ran along the High Street joined roughly midway by the London-Woburn-Northampton road known as St Johns Street. Other important streets at this time and still in existence were Mill Street, Union



Street, Silver Street, Church Passage and Ousebank/Riverside, once known as Dungeon Lane. Because of its location Newport featured in the English Civil War.

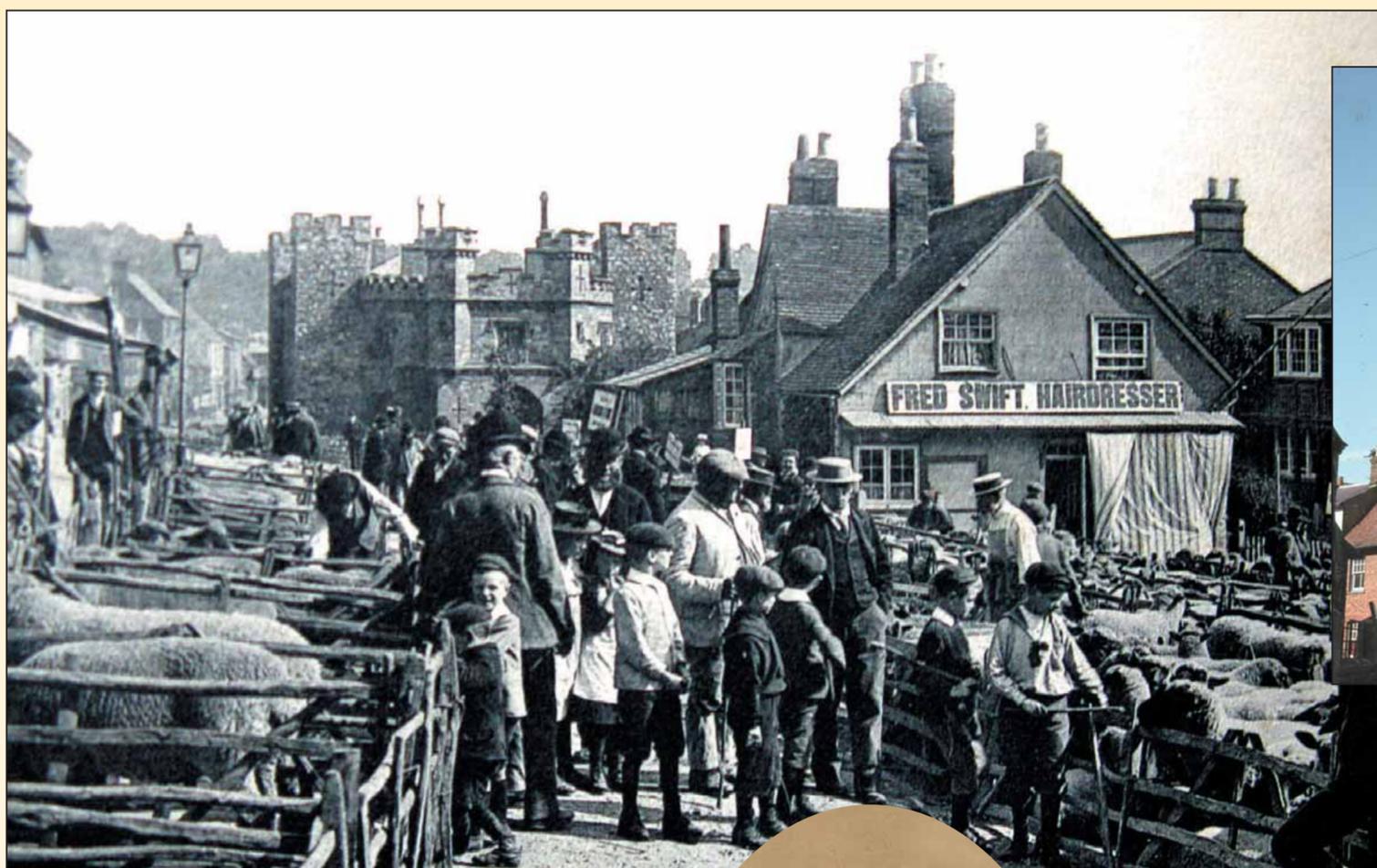
Newport had a canal and a railway as well as being a coaching town. It is famous for lace and parchment-making, and until recently the making of Aston Martins and Taylor's mustard, as well as the M1 services!



# Historic Towns & Villages

# Buckingham

## “Lark Rise” and an Old Gaol



Buckingham Old Gaol was built in 1748. Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham of Stowe, was persuaded to pay for it as he was keen to have a secure Gaol in which to “lodge” poachers caught on his estates. The building served as the Buckingham Borough Gaol until 1890 and is now a Museum and Tourist Office.

The museum tells the story of the Market Town of Buckingham, although the markets now sell fruit and veg instead of sheep and cattle.

Flora Thompson’s “Larkrise to Candleford” draws a vivid picture of rural life across the area around Buckingham in the 1890s.



*Flora Thompson*

The present parish church was built on Castle Hill in the late 1770s. Its foundations, built on unstable ground, failed and Sir George Gilbert Scott, the prolific Victorian architect who was born and raised in Gawcott, just outside of Buckingham, was sent for in 1864 to rescue the situation. Out went the old-fashioned “classical style” and in came a new gothic interior supported by a series of massive external buttresses.

Early in his career, Gilbert Scott had also designed the semi-circular extension on the front of the Gaol as a “cottage” for the Gaoler and his family.