

*I built this house in the year 1824. and
the purchase of the premises and the ex-
pense of building amounted to £1100. 0. 0
W^m Harding*

*1813. Entered in the Spirit trade
1824. Entered in the Malting business. With
1829. Entered in the Auctioneering business. Chapman*

Trade & Crafts

Centuries ago tradesmen and craftsmen played a vital role in rural villages providing essential services for the community. The earliest record we have is in 1542 when there were known to be three millers and a brewer in the parish. There was also an early water mill at Chalford. We know much more about life in the 19th century, as many more records exist. Few shops existed in the early part of that century. Groceries and luxury items, if needed, were brought in by the carrier but most labourers had a simple diet and could get what they needed by self sufficiency or from the farm. The gentry tended to have their own home farm, so like the farmers they lived off their own produce. In Kingston Blount, in 1817, a man named Webb was described as a higgler. This was an itinerant dealer who would go from place to place haggling and making bargains. With few shops there was probably a living to be made this way.

Later in the century there were many more shops, the vast majority being in Kingston

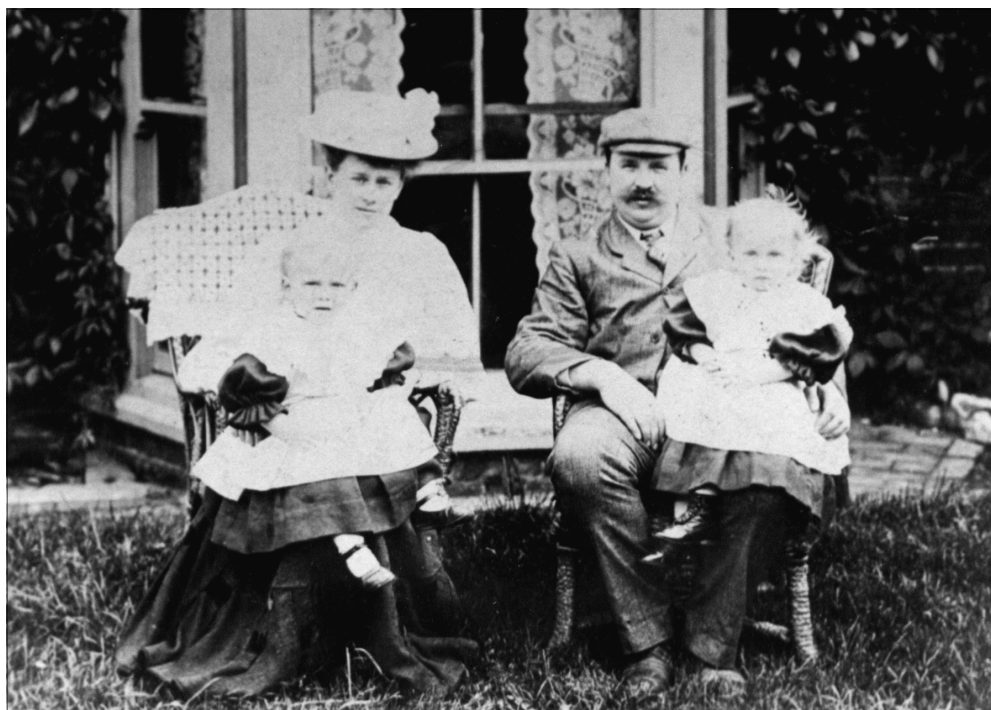


The shop on Aston Green



The Post Office, High Street, Kingston

Blount. Between 1852 and 1870 we know there was a shop in Aston Rowant but its location is unknown. No other shop is known in Aston until the 1930s when Miss Cloke ran the shop on the corner of The Green. It closed around 1960.



Mr & Mrs Brazell at the front (above) and rear of the Post Office in Kingston Blount

The Post Office was on the High St in Kingston Blount until very recent times. The postal service developed during the 1840s and the Post Office probably opened at that time. In 1851 Mrs Hannah Webster was the postmistress and her husband ran the grocers on the same premises. They probably provided your stationery requirements, but before that John Stevens was a stationer. At this time communication with the outside world became much faster and cheaper and probably had a huge impact on the life of the village. By 1864 Henry Hamp was postmaster and a shopkeeper as well. The letters were received from Tetsworth at 8.30 am and dispatched at 5.45 pm. If you needed a money order, a trip to Tetsworth was required. By the turn of the century there were two collections and deliveries a day with one on Sunday. There was also a wall box at Aston. Postal orders could now be cleared at the Post Office run by Hamp, Spriggs and Co. but the nearest place for them to be paid and telegrams dispatched was Lewknor. Soon after this Ambrose Brazell ran the shop and post office. The letters were now received from Wallingford but the service still had more collections and deliveries than today and all the post office services were now provided locally. The shop must have been very well stocked, as it was also a drapers and a boot and shoe dealers. There was a second shop in the late 1800s run by the Loveday family but the premises are unknown. Another grocer's shop was open in the Second World War in Larch Cottage, Brook Street and was run by Jackie Brown. It closed in 1973. Eggs could be obtained from Fred Bennett who was an egg merchant from the 1920s.

The earliest butcher we know of was named East in 1703. The Hill family ran a butch-



Jackie Brown in his shop in Brook St, 1946 Barn on left was once a butcher's shop

er's shop for at least fifty years up until the start of the 20th century. Initially it was at the Shoulder of Mutton Beer House and later in a shop probably along the High Street. The Chapman family ran a butcher's shop for over a hundred years, they lived in the house now called Elderslade. In 1822 there was a cottage, butcher's shop and slaughter house on this site, which is situated near to the Cherry Tree next to the barn, which many people can remember being a butcher's shop in the late 1920s. Brown and Hatton had taken over the business by then and they had a small slaughter house at the rear. They delivered meat all around the local area. At this time there was another butcher's shop in Brook Street at the house now called Hill Crest. The shop, which was in sheds, was kept by Harry Dodwell in 1928 and Harry Gibbs in the 1930s.

The earliest baker we have found was Mr North of Kingston Blount in the early part of the 18th century. After this the Oakley family had a long history in the bakery trade from before 1850 until at least the 1930s; their shop was Oakley House on the Green. It was a real family business as, in 1891, Robert was the master baker, his wife his assistant, his son Walter second hand baker and his son George, third hand baker. The Oakleys were the main suppliers of bread for the poor of the Thame Union. Tenders were submitted to



Baker Oakley's house on the Green at Kingston Blount



Mrs May delivering her bread in a snowy Aston Rowant

the Guardians of the Poor Law Union and it was obviously a lucrative contract to win as they received considerable sums of money. In the 1850s James and then William Hester were journeyman bakers. This meant that although they had finished their apprenticeship they worked for someone else and did not have their own business. There

was also Mr White, a baker at Chalford and Mr Good, baker at Aston in the 1820s. In the 1880s Hubert May was recorded as a journeyman baker. He obviously opened his own shop as the May family had a baker's shop, at Vine House in Park Lane, from the early 1900s onwards. In 1939 there was another baker in the village, called George Brinsden. He was described as a baker, confectioner and pastry cook. It was said that if you got the fat and sugar to the baker by 9 am he would make you a lardy cake by 3 pm. There is some evidence to suggest that there was once a baker's shop at a small cottage almost in front of The Royal Oak in Pleck Lane near where the car repair business is now. Mr Barnett was the blacksmith and his son was the baker.

Another essential for the household was coal and in the 1860s the Hatton family, who were carriers, were also coal dealers. The Croxford family took over the business towards the turn of the century and many of the older people of Kingston could remember them trading from their cottage in Pleck Lane. Late in the 19th century there was also a coal merchant in Aston, near the Lambert Arms, called William Jarman. He collected coal from Aston station and also ran a carriers service to local markets and events.

For all your tin goods you had to look no further than Liberty Buckland, who from the 1870s described himself as a brazier and later a tinsmith. He was a well-known local character who people called 'Baron Rothschild'. He had a shed as a workshop, at the back of his cottage near the Primitive Methodist Chapel on the road to Crowell. He made tin kettles, saucepan lids and 'skimmers', which were long handled draining spoons.

In the 19th century there was a wine and spirit merchant at The Red House on the High Street. William Harding started trading in 1813 and in 1829 he also started in the auctioneering business. William Hatton took over in the 1850s. He was already a busy man running a farm of 650 acres and also acting as a land agent but he became an insurance agent for the Leeds and Yorkshire as well. In addition he was an agent for Her Majesty's Emigration Commissioners. He advertised in the Thame Gazette for female domestic servants to go to Victoria and New South Wales in Australia. Free passage was offered to suitable candidates who already had experience of service and whose character would bear strict investigation. It would be interesting to know if any local girls went. In 1859 William Hatton advertised his wine and spirit business to let, but there were probably no takers as his son Thomas eventually took over and it closed towards the end of the century.

Being a farming community it is not surprising that throughout the 19th century there were corn dealers, the main one being Joseph Hill, who eventually moved to Crowell and had a flourishing business. In 1871 Thomas Hatton was also a chemical manure agent providing a service for the numerous farms.

The Hatton family undertook transport of goods before the railway. They were carriers from at least the turn of the 19th century, as the overseers used them to transport documents and money. It seems it was not a very profitable business, as in 1863 the newspaper reported that Henry Hatton had been discharged from bankruptcy. In 1864 he was still running a service to London, but the coming of the railways made this trip unnecessary and soon after this he was only running a Friday service to Thame. After his death, his wife Mary ran the service for a few more years. The train became the main mode of transport until the motorcar arrived. In 1924 Kingston had a motorcar proprietor, Francis Preston, who promised prompt and personal attention. The Lambert Arms in Aston had a garage in 1928 and in the 1920s a garage opened on Aston Hill run by the Hunt family. It closed in 1977. The Bennett family, who had the egg business in

Kingston Blount, started a transport business. They had a fleet of lorries with a yard next to Christmas Cottage, in Brook Street. The company called Parkers is now on that site. For centuries the parish needed shoemakers and the earliest shoemaker recorded was Thomas Bonnet in 1682. In 1708 Thomas Munday, still very much a local name, was a cobbler. A cobbler could only work with old leather whilst the shoemaker at this time named Hailey, would have made new shoes. There was known to be a shoemaker's shop in Aston at the end of the 1700s. At that time Richard Applebee was the



The Bennett family haulage lorries outside the barn at the end of Brook Street



The garage on Aston Hill in the 1920s



Jane Turner's thatched cottage

shoemaker and a member of the family, William, who lived at the Chequers Inn, was a cordwainer. A cordwainer was a worker in Cordovan leather and did not necessarily make shoes. From the 1860s until the 1880s, Aaron Pearce was a shoemaker and in the early 1900s William Taylor continued this craft in Kingston Blount. Soon, however, cheap factory-made goods replaced the old handcrafted shoes and the village shoemaker was put out of business. There was also another leather worker, William Siarey Turner, who was a saddler in the early 1900s.

In 1629 there was a tailor. Obviously a lot of clothes would need to be made locally because transport was difficult. In 1702, Thomas Hariman made collars. Some cloth was made in the area, as the son of Stephen Day, the vicar, was described as a calenderer and cloth maker. Country tailors would often sit in a farmer's kitchen

repairing old clothes or making new from material provided by the housewife. There were tailors until around 1870, but after this, when transport was better, there was cheaper competition from the towns.

Women continued to be dressmakers and lace makers for a few years after the village tailors had gone but by 1881 this too was in decline. Most of the lace makers lived in Aston Rowant and were usually wives of agricultural workers who needed to supplement their income. In the early 1900s Miss Grace Meeks was listed in the directories as a dressmaker. Presumably she made high-class clothes. A few women would also take in laundry. Jane Turner, who lived in a cottage, now demolished, next to Brookside in Brook Street was a laundress with her daughter. They used the water from the stream, which ran alongside. The sheets used to hang in rows by the barn at the end of Brook Street.

Throughout the centuries there were local craftsmen and the same names occur until recent times. In 1706, Croxford was the blacksmith and Richard Cooper the wheelwright. Wheelwrights and blacksmiths were always in demand right up to the 20th century. Much skill was needed to make a perfect wheel, which would see out many years on a cart or farm wagon. Iron tyres were fitted to the wheels by the blacksmith at



Liberty Buckland the tinsmith 1925



Mr Pullen the blacksmith

his smithy. There was a smithy in Aston Rowant in the early 1800s at the Chequers Inn. In Kingston, the Eustace family were blacksmiths early in the century and by 1871 John Barnett, who had his workshop in the barn at the top of Pleck lane was a master smith and farrier. The lords of the manor had their own smithy and Mr Pullen came to Kingston in the early 1900s to be blacksmith for the Clerke-Browns. Home Farm in Aston also had a smithy presumably for Aston House. With the tractor and the car gradually replacing the horse a village smithy was no longer a necessity. Similarly the skill of the wheelwright was no longer required and by the mid 1920s the Wakelin family who had been wheelwrights for centuries were out of business. Their wheelwrights shop was at Wakelin Cottage, where a barn to the rear had a carved beam, which stated that their



Wakelin Cottage the wheelwright's house



Eustace Cottage, the blacksmith's house



Pleck Lane showing Barnett's blacksmith shop and the public house.

first wagon had been completed in the 1640s.

In early 1700 there were at least three carpenters named Witney, Harding and North. There must have been a great demand for their skills for all houses needed new doors and window frames and the farmer would also need new farm implements. The carpenter would also make some simple furniture; better quality furniture would need the skills of a cabinetmaker. Often the carpenter made the coffins for the village as well. Members of the Wakelin family were also carpenters, obviously the skills of the wheelwright and carpenter being very similar. Mr Clark, the farmer at Town Farm used to receive only one bill a year from Richard Wakelin. In 1921 the bill covered repairs to windows, gates, wagons chairs and farm implements as well as making new ladders. The most expensive item was £2 3s for making a ladder with twenty nine rungs. There were also carpenters in Aston throughout the 19th century. These were all members of the Piddington family and worked mainly on Aston estate. There were also builders and brick-

layers in the parish; the most noted being the Siarey family, a well-known name in the area today. In 1871 William Siarey was a master builder who employed three labourers and three tradesmen; he was also a mason.

The local chairmaking industry was based in Crowell but some chairs were made in Kingston Blount. The local industry resulted from the proximity of the beech woods and of course High Wycombe was the centre of the trade. The Croxford family were skilled in the art and were known to be making chairs up to the 1870s. In 1851, in Aston Rowant, there were two ladies described as chair bottomers. Generally women were employed to do this job. Elizabeth Church of Kingston Stert was a chair woman in 1861.

Mr. E. J. Clark.		L. s. d.
Jan. 25 th	Putting old Handle in fork	1. 0
29 th	Putting pane glass in window &	2. 0
	Fixing up rod & screws, & pulling saw out &	1. 6
Feb. 2 nd	Repairing Chair putting plate on	1. 0
4 th	Making new well Lid & putting on Board on Bridge Shop	5. 6
	Putting Handle in Hay Knife & old Handle in fork	2. 6
4 th	Putting Handle in axe & Hammer & sharpening saw	2. 11

Part of Mr Clark's bill from Richard Wakelin, 1921

Many generations of this family have lived in Kingston Stert and there are still descendents in the parish today. By 1881 there was only one chair woman and no chair makers in the parish. The local industry had declined rapidly but so too had the population. Perhaps the skilled people had left to live in Wycombe or Stokenchurch where the industry continued.

One of the main occupations, particularly for the young girls of the parish was as a domestic servant. The big houses had many servants; for instance in 1871, Kingston House had nine servants including a butler, ladies maid, housekeeper and governess. Often, as was the case in our parish, the lords of the manor employed people who were not local to the area. For instance the butler at Kingston House was born in America and other servants were from Cornwall and Kent. The local girls therefore were usually in service in the smaller houses. In the mid 1870s there were still hiring fairs held at Watlington, where people went to choose their servants. These fairs were said to be in decline perhaps because, by now, adverts for servants were appearing in the newspapers. Obviously the large estates were big employers of men and boys mainly on the farms but also as gardeners, grooms and servants. This was particularly true of Aston, where most of the village worked on the estate and most of the cottages were tied to the job.