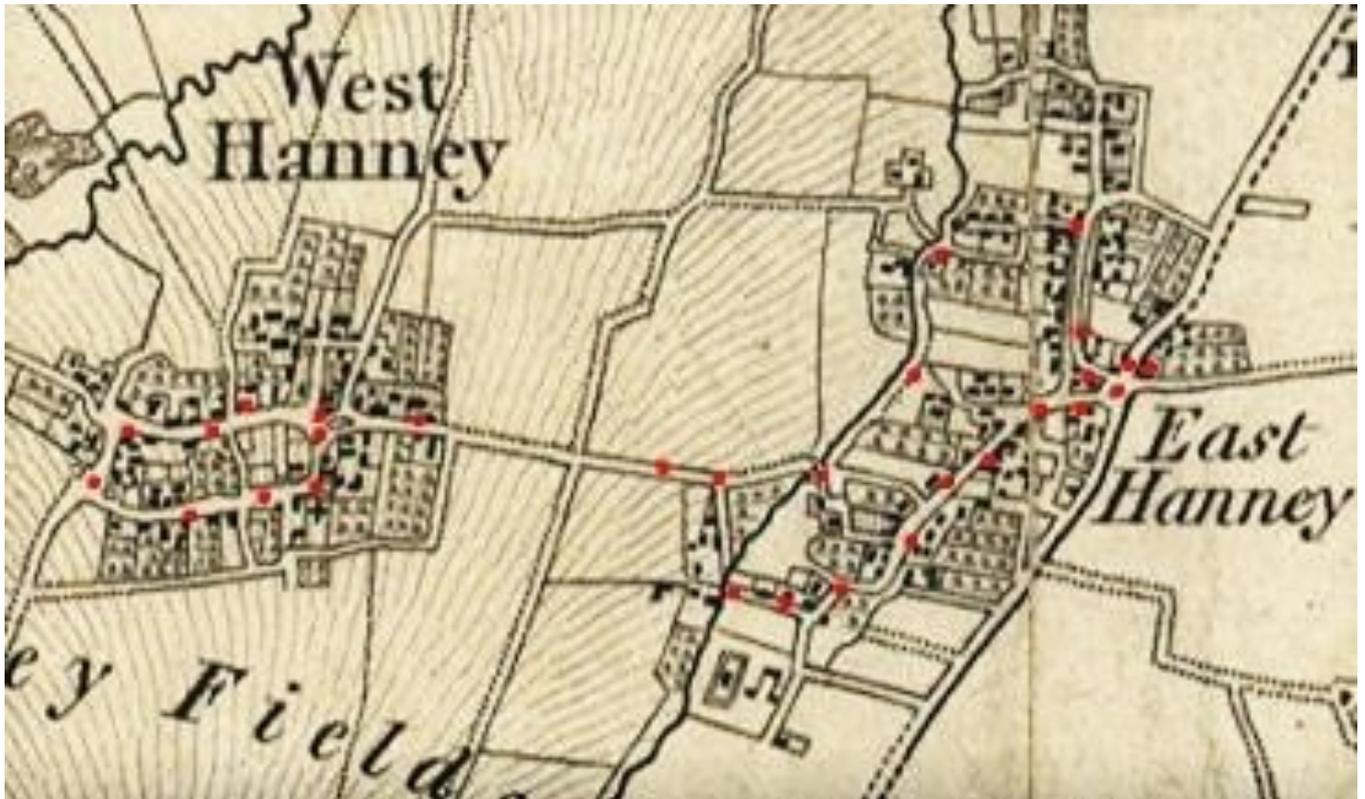


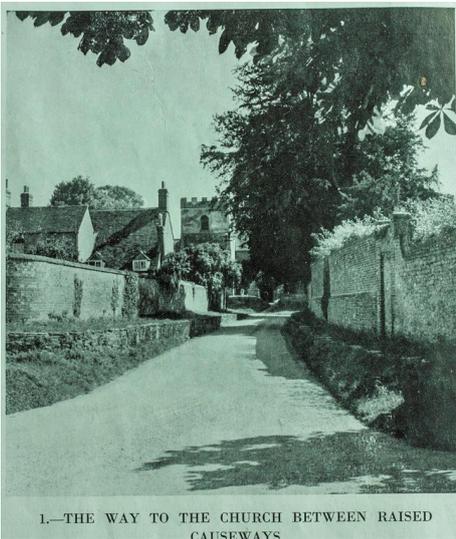
HANNEY HISTORY WALK

Hanney History Group invites you to take a “figure of eight” walk through West & East Hanney, with old photographs and notes on some of the buildings you will see on your way. Not every “historic” building is included, and even some of the “notes” could be wrong – but enjoy!



The map above is from the first Ordnance Survey 1” map dated 1830 – not bad for nearly 200 years ago! So, starting at the War Memorial Hall, we take a walk along the Causeway to West Hanney Green.

Our first picture of West Hanney is looking back to the Green, in the centre of which is the Buttercross. But if you had been here in the late C19 you wouldn't have seen it, as it had been demolished and the stones distributed around West Hanney. It wasn't until the early C20 when, organised by Mr Emmott Large, of Pound Croft in East Hanney, the stones were recovered and the cross rebuilt. The picture shows the “dedication ceremony” in March 1908, led by the Bishop of Oxford. The Olde Forge can be seen in the background – we'll visit this on our way back.

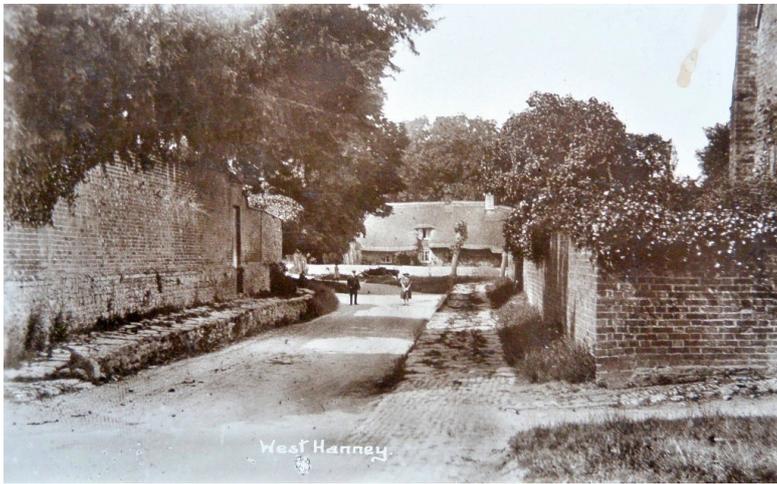


Looking up, we see the “Way to the Church between Raised Causeways” as described in an edition of *Country Life* from January 1943 (costing One Shilling and Six Pence). But keen observers will see that this view of the Church shows the original castellated tower.

This fell into disrepair and the top 6ft was demolished in 1939, with many of the stones still visible in some West Hanney gardens.

The Church contains many treasures, including medieval brasses. But maybe most intriguing is the memorial plaque to Elizabeth Bowles, who died in 1718, aged 124 years...(??).

This fine pre-Norman Church is well worth a separate visit.



Back down to the Green we can see the same raised causeways, but there is a key absence in this view – the Buttercross. It's up to you to work out whether you could have seen it, anyway, or whether it is missing? The age of what appears to be an open car in front of the Old Forge would give a clue – what do you think?

Looking to your left as you pass the Church you will see what is now called the Dower House – in fact the historically correct name, as it was originally the “Yate Dower House” and thought to be one of the oldest houses in Oxfordshire. This was named after the Yate family of Lyford, who, amongst other things, established charities which remain active members of the Hanney Parochial Charities today. But the photograph shows the time when it became West Hanney Post Office – for reasons shrouded in the mists of time. It was still the Post Office at the time of the Country Life article, but became a private house again in the 1960s.



Turning right into Church Street it's difficult not to be impressed by the imposing West Hanney House, previously known as the Old Rectory. This was built between 1720 – 1730 on the site of a Tudor building, and with a Tudor fireplace and a chamber for smoking sides of bacon. According to the Country Life article “the use of the scarlet rubbed bricks contrasts with the grey flared headers and architraves to produce the most singular and picturesque silhouette”. But in order to create this look of symmetry, if you look carefully, you can see that quite a number of the windows are in fact false. Whether that was done on purpose, or as a result of using inexperienced builders let free after the building of Blenheim Palace, is an interesting question.



The Plough has been an Inn in West Hanney since the 1890s, before which the building is thought to have been a wheelwright's workshop. This picture shows it looking much the same as it does now, but the cottage in front was demolished in the 1960s. The owners of the Plough wanted to sell it for housing development in 2015, but Hanney residents clubbed together to buy it as a “Community Pub”, and every resident in the village now has the option of a shareholding.

As you pass Deans Farm on the left you may notice several wooden buildings in the grounds. These were used for many years as accommodation for the regular meetings of a Christian group, known as the Nazarenes.

The picture shows cars for one gathering parked outside, maybe from the 1930 - 1940s. These meetings carried on in West Hanney from 1915 to 2012, when they moved to another location near Lydney in the Forest of Dean.



Before reaching Main Street you pass the site of "Headings Pond" on the left – now drained, and with a bench for you to have a quick rest on. Records show William and Georgina Heading having children in West Hanney in 1853-55. He is listed as a Farmer. Things must have gone well, since William Williams Heading had children in Hanney between 1873-81, but he is listed as a Gentleman Farmer. Looking back, you see over the pond what is now called Rose Cottage, but was probably not called this at the time of the photograph.



Turning right along Main Street you will not see much similarity between how it looks today and at the time of this picture – say somewhere in the 1920s.

On the left is a thatched cottage called Moss Edge, the same name as the modern house on this site. But the photograph shows only one or two other houses – a far cry from today!



This photograph of a row of cottages half way down Main Street on the right is at least 100 years old. They were probably not seen as having any great historical or architectural significance, had leaking roofs, lacked insulation and any utility services.

So, in the post WW2 era, who would argue against replacing them with "modern" housing? But even as far back as 1943, the Country Life article commented that "if well cared for, such primitive construction will remain sound, a comfortable home and pleasing on the eye".

In any event, nearly all were demolished in the early 1960s. Yes, such an act might not be permitted now, but housing decisions 60 years ago were simpler!





Immediately after, you pass Carters Close on the left. From the amount of timber used in its construction, it seems likely that it was originally built for a yeoman farmer. Sometime in the 1800s the house was transformed into three farm-labourer's cottages, probably working at Lydbrook Farm. The long front garden would have been used for growing fruit and vegetables. The cottages were requisitioned by the army during WW2. The land was registered in 1939 and sold for £175 in 1947 to one Lady Allen of Chichester, an early enthusiast for preserving old properties. Cecily Dix, the lady shown in the photograph, lived in the end cottage. It became a single private house in 1958.

Carrying on down Main Street you pass Rascarral House (previously called Westholme) and The Villa on the corner of North Green. They were both built by John Parker Barrett (JPB), who had moved to West Hanney from London in the 1890s, and set up his building business in North Green. The Villa was built in 1895 for JPB himself, then Westholme in 1921. This aerial photograph shows the business still in full swing in the late 1950s/early 1960s – occupying most of the land between North Green and Winter Lane.



On the other side of North Green you pass a recently restored house called the Old Forge on your left. But this location goes back many years, as you can see from this photograph, and the two earlier pictures across the Green. This original forge building burnt down in the early 1920s, but there seems little information on its history. The current black and white Old Forge was also built by John Barrett around 1926, for his sister, Ivy. Barrett's generated electricity for the business in the early 1920s. During the day the electricity powered the machinery, but at night the power was transferred to the three houses - eighteen years before it was brought to the rest of the Hanneys!



We pass Castleacre on the left, one of the oldest house in West Hanney, and unusual for having a slate roof from Stonesfield near Woodstock. Next we reach the Lamb (now Hanney Spice) which has been serving West Hanney for many years, maybe as long ago as the 1850s. In 1887 the Boor Family became landlords, and William Boor is shown in this photograph. This building burnt down in 1935, while William was landlord, but was rebuilt and handed down to his son, John. Some years ago, a neighbour found a silver WW1 medal inscribed "W Boor" while digging the garden, presumed lost in the fire. This was returned to the Boor family. The pub became Hanney Spice in 2011, a popular family owned business - "bringing you the taste of authentic cuisine from the Grand Moghuls".

Back along the Causeway we pass Hanney School. In 1811 the Church of England formed the “National Schools for Promoting the Education of the poor in the Fine Principles of the Established Church”, and Hanney “National School” was one of these – although the present building dates from 1840. A School Log Book exists, with the opening entry dated 26 June 1865: “School commenced this day under the new master James Stone, 2nd class certificated, and Jane Wickes, sempstress”. On 31st January 1872, water was “nigh upon a foot deep along the road from East Hanney. Only 12 children present.” But some things don’t change – as a result of a measles epidemic in 1902, the Chief Medical Officer wrote: “I visited Hanney and conclude that your school better be closed at once.”



Passing the Hall and walking down Brookside we come to the Old Mill House at the corner. This was built in the mid C19 as the home for an early member of the Dandridge family, who had bought the neighbouring Mill after it went “bust” in the late 1830s. We know from an old Hanney Parochial Magazine dated May 1877 that “Mr Dandridge was sitting on the bridge when, a horse and trap passing, the horse was frightened and dreadfully crushed his leg”.

In the 1950s Anne de Winton transformed the Mill House into a Country Club,

“frequented by Oxford Dons, local land-owners and racing people from Lambourn - especially after a win!”. Osbert Lancaster and John Betjeman were said to be regular visitors...as well as the Kray twins!



Opposite you now is Dandridge’s Mill. Mills have been on this site for centuries and the current building dates from 1820, where it may have originally been a silk mill – although this is subject to some debate. It certainly was not successful, as it was derelict by 1839. It became a profitable grain mill later, and Church records note “the death of a child crushed by machinery”. Wagons with three carthorses used to carry loads to Witney and Oxford. Sometimes the driver fell asleep on the homeward journey and the horses knew their way back home! It eventually closed in the 1930s. In WW2 it was used to manufacture parts for Mosquito bombers. In the 1960s it became the home and studio of “Pud” Farmer, a sculptor – or “construction artist” as he preferred to be

known. Several of his works exist in various Hanney homes. Again in danger of becoming derelict, it was recently converted into three flats and the Wheelhouse. But the stream is still used – to provide electricity this time.

Hale Cottage, next on the left, was named after Jonathan Hale, whose name appears in the East Hanney Enclosures from 1803.

Charles Aldworth moved to Hale Cottage in the 1850s as a carpenter and coffin maker – known for “doing a beautiful funeral”. Next door, the original name of ‘Sawpits’ records where the timber was sawn by two men using a long saw over the sawpit. And that’s where the name “top dog” originates!

But from a History Group perspective, of more lasting significance was that his son, Alfred, collected a batch of “Hanney Parochial Magazines” from 1874 to 1895 – which by good fortune remain to this day and were donated to us in 2016.



At the corner of Main Street is the Mulberries. It is most famous as the home of James Holmes, who moved to Hanney as a schoolboy in the 1860s.

A committed "Malthusian", he was concerned that rapid population growth would only be checked by starvation. To prevent this, he published a booklet "True Morality" which promoted contraception, and established a business selling contraceptives – delivered by bicycle to the Post Office in Wantage. His 'stores' were kept in Hazelwood further down Main Street, which he also owned. For this he was prosecuted both in Abingdon and Reading.

But he was a considerable benefactor to Hanney, as you will read later in the walk. A well-known character – seen here with the author H G Wells.



The photograph, probably dating from the 1890s, shows the view down to the Black Horse, with what is now called Jasmine Cottage on the left. But in the East Hanney 1861 Census things were rather more crowded, with 8 properties on the site and a total of 87 occupants. All the heads of household were described as Agricultural Labourers, with all but one born in East or West Hanney. Four of the wives were born here – but one came from Ireland! In total there were 27 children.

Lilac Cottage probably dates from the late C17, but the photograph here shows two dwellings attached and it is unclear whether they date from the same time. It shows how rundown many cottages became. The part of the dwelling on the left was demolished as late as the 1960s. Like many houses it used to be called after the family living in it - "Godfreys". William Godfrey, who lived here in the beginning of the C20, died in the First World War. Opposite, the Black Horse (or "Kicker") has been a centre of village life for years - but caused a storm in 1998 when the original "Flemish Bond" local brickwork was overpainted with thick white paint. Modern vandalism?



The picture here shows children in their "Sunday Best" outside Hanney Chapel. It dates back to 1862, when it was erected by the 'Frilford and Longworth Home Mission' and in an architectural style we also see in Steventon and Stanford. The first minister, Mr Broughton, moved from Abingdon into Chapel Cottage, where he also kept a shop. The locals called it 'Broughton's Chapel and Cottage'. When he died in c1917, the chapel closed and only reopened as a place of worship in 1943, then known as 'The Mission'. For a long time it had a thriving congregation and Sunday School, but by 1998 membership had dwindled to 2. A local church sent 10 of their members to revitalise the work, and the chapel is again an active community of local Christians.



Here is a puzzle. Continuing down Main Street, we pass the Old Post Office on the left – shown in the 1st photograph. The Miss Piggots lived here and delivered the post. Their brother was a cobbler. Another Post Office existed at the side of Dorley House, opposite. But in a few minutes, we will pass Cross Tree House on the way to the Green. And looking at the 2nd photograph it's

also a Post Office – which explains why there is an old telephone box directly outside. It's unlikely that they were all operational at the same time – less than 50 yards apart, but why so many? On the opposite side of the road is the Old Bakery, until recently the home of Fred Harris, a decorator, and Ted, the baker.



Without crossing the dangerous A338, La Fontana is clearly ahead. But not that long ago East Hanney had its own Plough Inn – as shown in this photograph, maybe from the 1900s. It continued in this form until the 1960s, when it became a restaurant, "The Vintage Car" (with a vintage car outside), but soon after the owner discovered that there was already one of the same name in Oxford so it became simply "The Vintage". It changed again to "La Fontana" (The Fountain) in the 1990s, becoming the Italian restaurant and hotel.

But turn around and ahead of you is...another pub. Yes, until not that long ago the Hanneys had five of them! The Crown seemed to play an important part of village life. For example, in June 1877 the Hanney Parochial Magazine records "The Hanney Foresters Benefit Club held their annual feast at The Crown on Thursday in Whitsun week. Headed by the Wantage Band the members walked in procession to the Parish Church where prayers were read and a sermon preached". The landlords also seemed to flourish, as per the photograph of the Butcher family in 1904, but it became a private house in 1997.



Turning back you can get some idea of the agricultural heart of East Hanney where, at the end of the C19, there were nine working farms, and as many again in West Hanney. Imagine how different the noises, smells, the roads and tracks would have been from dawn to dusk.

You are now at 'Five Shoot'. It is supposed to have gained its name from an execution in the Civil War. More prosaically a meeting of five roads! In front you will see a railed off garden. This is where the ashes of James Holmes were laid to rest. It was the site of a very old blacksmith business run by generations of the Cox family.



Heading to the right into East Hanney Green, we see a row of old thatched cottages. In the late C19 they were owned by James Holmes and housed five families at very reasonable rents (now there are only two). The cottages overlooked a sawpit and a village swing erected by the Parish Council. There was also an enormous spreading elm tree, so big it had a seat within it. Every year a fair came and Hanney Feast was a special day which re-united families from near and far.



Further up the Green we come to Varlins, a late Victorian house from 1889. But of more interest is what was found in the black wooden barn, just visible to the left. When it was bought in 1956, old aircraft wings were found attached to the inside walls of the barn. On research some were shown to be from Sopwith Pups & Camels – British WW1 single-seat biplane fighter aircraft. Others were shown to be very rare examples of the de Havilland DH10s, the British twin-engined medium bomber that just missed the end of the First World War. All these have been donated to two RAF museums. Propellers from various aircraft were also found in the farm opposite.

**VERY VALUABLE AND COMPLETE NEW ERECTED
WATER CORN MILL,
DWELLING-HOUSE, & other FREEHOLD ESTATES,
SITUATE AT EAST HANNEY, BERKS.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By CRIPPS and COLE.**

**On Saturday the 1st day of February next, at the Bear Inn, in Wantage, in the county of Berks, at two o'clock in the afternoon precisely, by order of the Assignees of Mr. CHARLES RAINSFORD, a Bankrupt, the following eligible property,
IN SEVEN LOTS:—**

Lot 1. A Capital new-erected WATER CORN MILL, Three Stories high, with an excellent Stream of Water, carrying Three Pair of Stones, and capable of grinding from 8 to 10 Loads per Week, Iron Geers, and other superior tackle, Granaries in the Attic for 500 Quarters of Corn, all built with Brick and Slate, in the most complete repair, and every convenience for loading and unloading without labour.

Walking left down Halls Lane we pass the entrance to Philberd's Manor on the right, but the building unfortunately is not much visible. Then we come to Lower Mill. This was built around 1812, on an old site, by Charles Rainsford. As with Dandridge's Mill, there is talk of it, or a previous site, being used as a Silk Mill – in this case by prisoners from the Napoleonic Wars. This seems unlikely, as certainly this building has all the characteristics of a corn mill. But, again as with Dandridge's Mill, it was not initially an economic success, and Charles Rainsford went bankrupt. The photograph shows an extract of the sale documentation following his bankruptcy. It was later run by the West family, but was burnt out in 1903 and not used for milling again. It is now a private house.

Passing Lower Mill to our right, walk down the footpath at the side of Letcombe Brook. But this is also not without history! In 1896, a committee resolved to provide a bathing place between the Iron Bridge and Lower Mill. A "sturdy corrugated iron structure about 12 yards square was constructed...and the stream depth controlled by the Miller". Access was via Snuggs Lane – then called "Bath Lane". We soon come to the "Iron Bridge" across the brook. Read the signboard for the full story of the bathing place. The bridge was built in the late C19, probably by Wantage Engineering, with turnstiles at each end to prevent cows coming into East Hanney. They were removed in the 1940s.



Turn right and you are back at Hanney's War Memorial Hall.

Hanney History Group hopes you have enjoyed your walk and learnt a little about our history. We would appreciate any corrections.... but, even more, we would welcome any photographs, cuttings or just memories from earlier times before they get lost for ever.

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