

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This, our fourth Annual Bulletin, reverts to the previous format, by including several articles on the history of Minchinhampton and district. Three have been contributed by present members of the Group, and the fourth reprinted from an item in the Collection housed at Minchinhampton Library.

The Collection has grown considerably over the last two years, and to date contains some 400+ items. The donation of a filing cabinet for storage by the Parish Council has enabled the whole to be properly filed and catalogued. Further contributions are always welcomed, and recent acquisitions include three volumes of press cuttings relating to the district, copies of postcards of The Common and a piece of detailed research on Minchinhampton Windmill.

Other on-going projects include the Churchyard Survey, a history of Minchinhampton Scout Group, local Turnpike Roads, and the history of Minchinhampton Golf Club.

COMMITTEE 1986/7

Mr. C. Turk - Chairman
Mrs. D. Wall - Secretary/Treasurer
Mrs. B. Robson
Mrs. P. Hill
Mr. J. Cooper
Mr. C. Brown

A list of the activities of the Minchinhampton Local History Group for the years 1985 to 1987 is given at the back of the Bulletin.

THE HISTORY OF HORSLEY PRISON - Mr. R. Close

The prison was one of four "Houses of Correction" built in Gloucestershire, after a 1883 Act of Parliament, by a commission headed by the champion of prison reform in the county, Sir George Onesiphorous Paul. All four (the others were at Littledean, Northleach and Lawford Gate) were of similar construction to the Gloucester Penitentiary, but on a smaller scale and all were to be run with the intention of fulfilling his ideas to check the early dawnings of vice by some form of detention. In 1783 he declared that "Bread, water and air, as the means of healthful existence, should be denied to no prisoner, with fresh air as essential to the purposes of life as food." These ideas were clearly reflected in his insistence that provision of work, controlled diets and health and religious

MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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education were to be the main priorities for the prison authorities and staff.

Horsley prison was built on the site of the original priory, which in 1783 was owned by Henry Stephens the Lord of the Manor. After an approach from Paul he agreed to give this piece of land, adjoining the churchyard, specifically for this purpose. For this very charitable act, the commission decided his generosity should be recorded in the Gloucester Journal and that a commemorative inscription be mounted in the prison.

Although contracts were signed in 1786 the early work was delayed by a series of mishaps, varying from an accident to the surveyor when he lost a leg, the bankruptcy of a contractor to shortages of building materials. Eventually the work was completed in 1792, twice the estimated time and possibly twice the quoted cost.

Opened by the Horsley Justices on 20th October 1792, the prison consisted of a keeper's house with a magistrates committee room, a turnkeys lodge with baths and fumigating rooms, an infirmary, chapel, courtyards, dayrooms and cells. The latter were warmed by flues, the heat being checked daily by the prison officers with a thermometer.

On admission, all prisoners were thoroughly washed, given a prison uniform in place of their verminous clothing, divided into four classes and subjected to the appropriate discipline — generally labour proportionate to their age and force, and separated here possible. Women prisoners were responsible for all the cleaning and washing in the prison.

Petty Sessions were held at the prison until 1801 when the agreement lapsed. After several years the rules were revised and specified that they were to be held at certain times to appoint auditors, overseers and the granting of public house licensing and this resulted in the Sessions returning in 1808.

Although most of the prisoners had committed the more common offences such as petty theft, larceny, or were a vagabond or rogue, some were guilty of the more unusual ones. Among those listed in the records are bastardy, wool employment offences, leaving a wife and children chargeable to the Parish, and even an instance of riding on a wagon without holding the reins. From 1840 there was a considerable increase in those sentenced for stealing-food. (This was felt by Paul to be connected with the rising price of food.) Defendants involved in the more serious cases of threats to kill, rape and assault were held at Horsley pending trial at Gloucester Assizes.

Most sentences were of one or two months duration, although women

found guilty of bastardy could be sentenced for up to twelve months. The largest number of inmates held at any one time was 37, whilst the approximate yearly average was nearly ten times that number. In 1792 Paul was largely responsible for the installation of a broadloom as a means of providing work, the proceeds from the sale of cloth being divided between inmates, the courts and the Governor.. Prisoners also did some cloth dyeing, domestic and garden chores, whilst women with suckling children were given light duties. In the 1830's a decision to install a treadmill to provide power for the mill led to considerable complaint from the prisoners who had to work it, mainly because of the heavy, physical demand it required. One visiting magistrate ruled they should change places every two rounds instead of the previous four, but then allowed a second wheel to be worked by the women prisoners. However, an increase in illnesses resulting from the work eventually led to visiting surgeons refusing to allow certain prisoners to do the work. During the same period, though, one prisoner, George Cooper, was ordered on the wheel because he had put on a stone in weight, and had become too fat for his own good!

A fairly strict control was exercised over the prisoners diets, with the main items being bread, with oatmeal for breakfast, and usually a meat dinner as the main meal, served with vegetables from the garden. Measured quantities of salt were also issued, whilst on Sundays extra meat was provided, with broth from the bones being served the following day. In cases of sickness the surgeon could order mutton broth and gruel, with occasional delicacies such as ginger and tea. Paul was sympathetic to the needs of women with suckling children, ensuring they had an adequate diet by allowing them extra bread and an additional penny a day. An indication of the high Standard of their diets is illustrated by a 1822 directive which ordered a lowering, as the standards were higher than those of the long-stay prisoners in Gloucester.

A high standard of cleanliness was also expected. Paul, once in 1795, blamed the now keeper for the dirty living conditions, and later refused to accept overcrowding as a cause of dirty accommodation. An immediate order was made that half the prisoners would undertake the cleaning, whilst the remainder carried on with the normal work. This brought about a considerable improvement as it was noted "that the walls had been newly whitewashed while all surfaces were clean." Still on this theme, in 1822, a visiting magistrate accused the authorities of neglect, because some prisoners were wearing the same stockings for almost two months, and the same shirt for at least a month.

The emphasis on religion is illustrated by the action of the authorities

following Paul's attendance at a Good Friday service, when he complained that some prisoners were not properly attentive or respectful. They were immediately punished by loss of privileges and special lessons were introduced to improve their behaviour and participation in services. This, and Paul's insistence that other ministers should deputise for the regular one to ensure services were not reduced, clearly brought about improvements, reflected in a request for extra Bibles and Testaments to encourage the prisoners to read them. Some were actually taught to write in large and small print from these books.

The authorities also had problems with the health and security of the prisoners in various ways. A spare room was used to bleed prisoners who were mentally disturbed, (apparently a regular practice in Victorian times) and one turnkey was removed from his post because of his mental state. Deaths also, unfortunately, occurred, with listed causes varying from 'A visitation of God', Typhus and Dropsy, as well as the more usual ones. Surgeons attended whippings, and on several occasions in the 1840's ordered them to be stopped before the number of nominated lashes had been carried out.

Security was a continual problem throughout the life of Horsley prison, for as early as 1794 the turnkey was dismissed for opening the cell doors too early and allowing two prisoners to escape, while in 1821 another was dismissed for being in a drunken stupor on duty, when one prisoner escaped. The locks were regularly picked, with records indicating several instances of escapes by this means, despite the locks being changed. Escapes apparently caused concern in the village, as during this period plans were made to fit a warning bell to rouse the village when this occurred. Unfortunately, after installation it was found to be cracked and could not be heard outside the prison walls! However, despite all its problems, the prison was regarded as a well-run and ordered house, well supervised by staff, magistrates and surgeons, all of whom showed genuine concern for the care of the inmates. In 1809 Paul reported it as the most neatly kept and best managed it this, or any other county.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the use of the prison declined sharply, in 1867-76 being used only as, a remand centre for those appearing at Gloucester, although still requiring a keeper. It was eventually closed, sold and partly demolished in 1878, although apparently some parts were used to form a mansion which became known as 'The Priory'. This is now used for administration purposes by the Highways Department of the County Council. During my childhood we were able to explore the old dungeon passages, when we could take advantage of the openings made accessible by local knowledge.

INVASION AS FEARED, 1942 - Mrs. D. Wall

The fall of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain brought the threat of invasion close to the shores of Great Britain. For the first time in our history, the majority of the British people could feel themselves personally threatened. How did this affect a small community like Minchinhampton, on top of the Cotswolds, well away from the English Channel?

Much of the answer is provided by the War Book, produced by the Minchinhampton Invasion Committee in 1942, preserved with copy and appendix, by the Parish Council. I have not looked at War Books for other villages, but ours provides a highly detailed account of precautions and preparations for an invasion - even down to an inventory of household items like bedpans that could be provided by townsfolk for use in Rest Centres!

The Home Guard were asked to identify the probable course an invasion would take. In a letter to the Invasion Committee from Capt. C. R. Brown, Second-in-Command, 'B' Company, Home Guard, he thought it probable that the major German attack for the area would be directed at Aston Down Airfield, the nearest important military objective, and "if these preliminary attacks were successful the enemy might signal for airborne reinforcements. Troop carrying planes require more space for landing and would probably choose the common between Amberley and Minchinhampton. Here again the general movement would be eastwards, and Minchinhampton or its approaches would almost certainly become involved in fighting, as the town lies in the direct path of the hostile operation envisaged."

If the worst happened, and invasion of the area occurred, the Home Guard would of course come to 'Action Stations' There were 184 Home Guard personnel of all ranks in 1942, but twenty of these were employed on essential war work and would not report immediately. There were four platoons in the 'B' Co. and these would be backed up by Police and Civil Defence personnel.

An extract of the Secret Orders for the Operational Role of the Home Guard states that the duty of the Company is "the defence in depth outwards of the Western and South Western perimeters of Aston Down Aerodrome." On receipt of the order to 'Action Stations' the intentions were:

- (a) to man observation posts
- (b) to "occupy the line BESBURY COMMON -BLUE BOYS -

MINCHINHAMPTON - HAMPTON GREEN - HALFWAY HOUSE
- with one platoon based on GATCOMBE LODGE to cover the dead
ground S. W. of Aston Down.”

(c) to prepare for the “destruction of Petrol Pumps, with the exception
of those in Minchinhampton, which will be maintained for our own
use until the last moment,”

The observation post was the church tower, where two men were to be
positioned. It was suggested that there be “a connecting link on the ground
to take verbal or written messages dropped from the tower.”

The tower could form another link in the call to ‘Action Stations’. Major
J. Davidson, the Officer commanding the Minchinhampton Company
would probably pass on the order from H.Q. through his chain of
command (detailed in the War Book) but “any man who, himself, sees not
less than 25 enemy parachutists descending in or near the Company area
will cause the church bells to be rung at Minchinhampton, Amberley and
Rodborough. Church bells will not be rung on hearsay evidence, nor will
they be rung because other church bells are heard. The ringing of church
bells in the Company area is equivalent to an order to man action stations.”

Thus we can envisage, by means of a direct command, or by hearing the
church bells, at other times silent, that the men of the Home Guard would
assume their responsibilities. No.1 Platoon, who had their headquarters at
the British Legion, which also served as Company H.Q. would “man all
defence posts covering Road Blocks in Minchinhampton.” evidence of one
road block can still be seen in the posts and rings along Tobacconist Road.
“One Lewis Gun team will be in reserve at Coy. H.Q. ... ready to move to
any point in the defences which may be hard-pressed.” Two men would be
dispatched to the church ‘tower, another two to the Ragged Cot to form a
contact patrol with Aston Down, the stretcher—bearers would be at H.Q.
and guides would “be stationed in front of the Post Office”

Thus the first stage of the invasion is complete. Orders and preparations
appear very thorough, and the military training of the Home Guard would
hopefully have won the day. But what of the civilian population, should an
invasion take place, either here or further afield? That is the next topic to
explore.

ROADS FROM NAILSWORTH TO MINCHINHAMPTON AND AMBERLEY - Mr. C. Turk

“A new TURNPIKE’ ROAD to be made. The Trustees acting
upon an Act of Parliament for making and maintaining a

Turnpike Road from Tiltups Inn in the parish of Horsley to
Dudbridge in the parish of Rodborough and other roads them
included all in the County of Gloucester hereby give notice that
a meeting will be held at the Lodge on Minchinhampton
Common on Friday the 19th of May next for the Purpose of
receiving Estimates for the making of the line of Road from
Tiltups Inn to Dudbridge aforesaid from any Person or Persons
who may wish to undertake the same.

Particulars to be required in the execution thereof may be
learned and the plan thereof see by Application to Mr. William
Wilkins of Nailsworth.”

This notice which appeared in the Gloucester Journal for April 24th 1780
marked the setting in motion of plans which were to revolutionise the road
system in this part of the Cotswolds. Movement of traffic between
Nailsworth and Stroud in the eighteenth Century and earlier - was slow and
difficult. (Shakespeare complained “These hills wear out our miles to
make them long”) The road wound up and down the hills to the south,
through Selsley and Woodchester, dipping down to the valley near Little
Britain and Frogmarsh, while the roads to the villages and towns on the
hills were exceptionally awkward — think of the Ladder as the direct road
to Minchinhampton, with the alternative route for coach and cart traffic
going via Watledge, Theescombe and Amberley and across the Common
to the Windmill at Nailsworth Gate, The burden of such a system would
have weighed heavily, particularly on the clothiers who must have spent
many anxious hours discussing the advantages as against the costs of an
improved system. Eventually, their minds made up, a small group of local
men, sought, at a cost of £367-10-5 an Act of Parliament (20GeoIIIc84)
authorising the setting up of Trustees for a Turnpike road, with branches,
and the committee met on March 24th 1730 at the Lodge to decide the
order in which the roads should be made:

- (1) The main road. Tiltups Inn to Dudbridge via St. Chloe’s
Grounds.
- (2) Nailsworth Bridge to the Fives Court on Minchinhampton
Common
- (3) Nurlsgate on Selsley via the Spout to the Bear
- (4) Dudbridge through Buckholt Wood to Frocester Hill
- (5) Nailsworth Bridge via Howcombe and Well Hill to
Minchinhampton

By May 19th the line of the first road was marked out by Mr. Weston at a
cost of £34/11/-; on June 13th an estimate of £1306 for the road was

approved; approaches were made to various landowners for the purchase of land over which the road would go; finance was requested from leading men, many giving bonds e.g. Mr. Nathaniel Peach offered a bond of £150; by August the land was bought and Dennis Edsom appointed Surveyor; details of the construction were approved; and by May 7th 1781 the road was nearly completed, to be officially opened on May 30th.

Two days later, on June 1st, at a meeting at Mr. Biggs house in Nailsworth the Committee discussed the making of the first branch road.

In the course of making the main road the Committee had overcome one obstacle to this branch road. In front of the George Inn a stream, coming from Upper Nailsworth ran across the road to join the main stream, flowing towards Egypt Mill, meeting at the Bridge. (See map overleaf.) In June 1780 this stream was turned so as to pass under a "sufficiently covered archway" between Mr. Wm. Keene's house and Nathaniel Dyer's shop. Later in this year they ordered that the archway should be 'planked' with stone to within two to three feet at each end to "accommodate Mr. Day's Mill", and on February 20th 1781 they arranged for a bridge to be built, later widening it by four feet with a parapet 34- feet high and coping 10 inches thick and 18 inches wide, at the same time requiring a substantial wall to be built from Mr. Wathen's floodgate pile to the bridge.

With this part now completed on May 28th they arranged for the erection of a turnpike at Day's Mill. The scale of charges proposed gives an interesting picture of the traffic using the road:

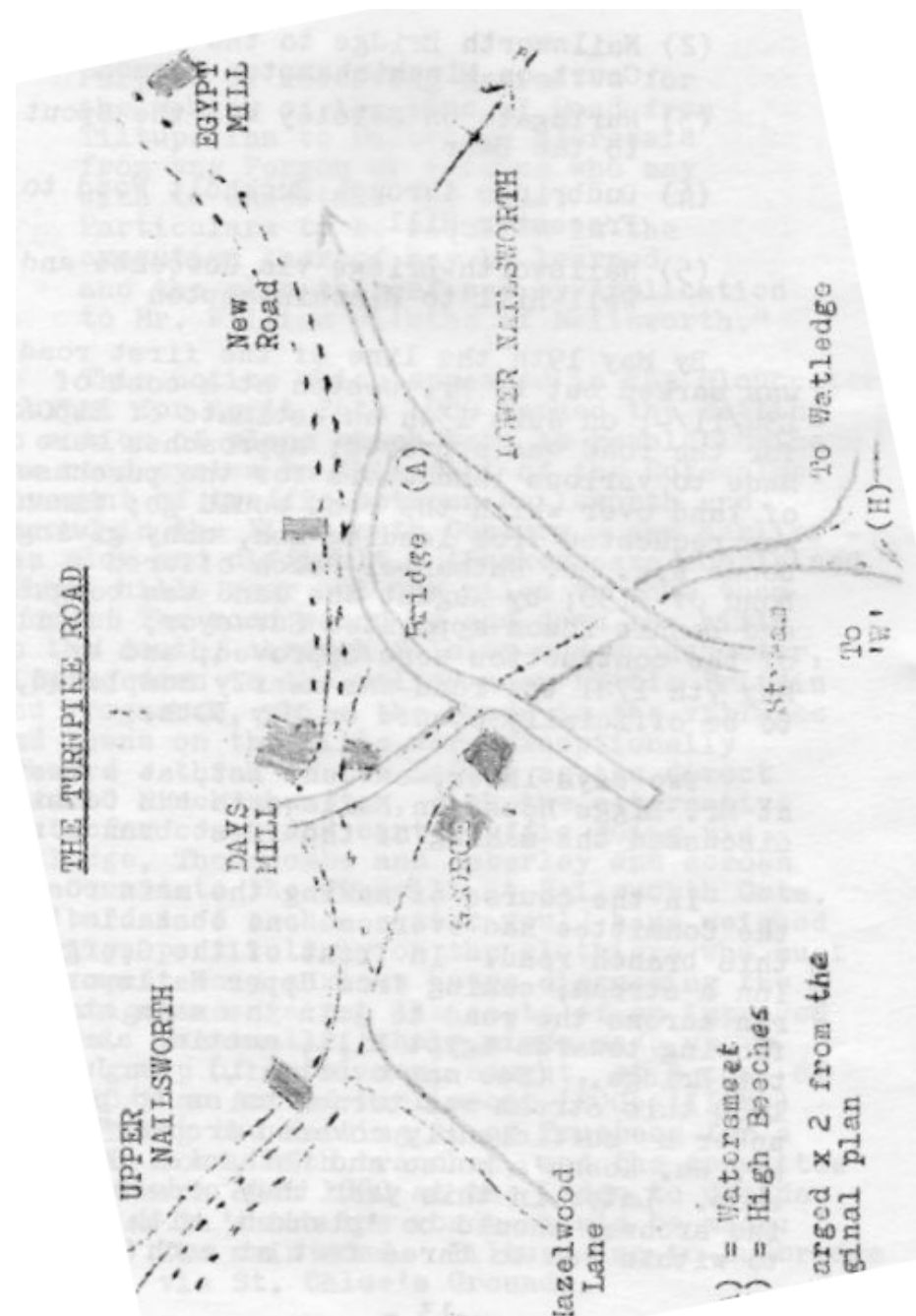
"Every horse, mare, gelding, mule, ass, ox or other beast drawing any carriage 4 d."

This was reduced to 1d. if the animal was not drawing a carriage. Further:

"Every drove of oxen or cattle, 10d. a score, or in proportion."

"Every drove of calves, hogs, sheep or lambs, 5d. a score or in proportion."

Later in 1807 they increased the charges for Sunday use for horses and carriages to 6d. for "drawing" and 2d. for "not drawing" with the proviso that people going to a place of worship would pay only the weekday charge.



The Committee, then, at their meeting on June 1st 1781 considered the purchase of land from High Beeches. and from Mr. Smith. In his case the purchase was complicated because the proposed road would run across land, in the sub-tenancy of Mr. & Mrs. John Penley, and this land was also held in reversion by Mrs. Sheppard. In the event, she agreed to accept 14 years purchase while the Penley's accepted £11. After noting that the next estate belonged to Mr. Biggs, the Committee went on to lay down details for the construction of the road.

Its width was to be 30 ft. but at the first turning after passing Barley Hill it was to be 50 ft. wide.. The ascent, from the Crown Inn, Nailsworth to Barley Hill was to be at 4 inches per yard, and thereafter 3 inches per yard up to the top at Cobs Stone. A quarry in Hazelwood could supply stone for the road which was to be laid 12 inches deep in the middle of the road and 6 inches deep at the sides, with special care taken of the swampy area near the top of the hill, with six culverts each 12 inches square were to be made to carry off the water.

So the 'W' was finished in six months. On July 9th Mr. Pavey and Mr. Biggs were instructed to erect a turnpike at the foot of the road, to take down the bar across the road to Dunkirk and at the same time the recently widened road was covered with a foot of stone.

The Committee went on to consider the third and fourth of their roads and then on December 20th 1790 turned to the last on their list - the road from the bridge at Nailsworth by Howcombe and Well Hill to the Tetbury Road in Minchinhampton. Mr. Howard estimated the cost as £300, which included any damage done by quarrying, keeping the road in repair and protecting the banks from slipping. A fortnight later, January 3rd 1791, he agreed to make the road with a further £20 p.a. to keep it in order for ten years. Seven members of the Committee - John Cooper, Sam Wathen, Thomas Perry, John Hawkins, Thomas Skipp and James Clutterbuck undertook to survey the road, erect fences and contact proprietors. Of these, Mr. Clutterbuck agreed to give up the necessary land through Rack Close so as to prevent the road going below Upper Rack.

On February 1st 1791 it was agreed to make the road in four stages:

- (1) from John Hawkins press shop to Howcombe Bend
Cost £100
- (2) from the bend to where the road turns down to Longford's Mill
Cost £84
- (3) from there to Forehead (s. Forwood) near the Lammas
Cost £80

- (4) from Forehead to Hampton
Cost £36

In June it was agreed to remove the turnpike house at the foot of Nailsworth Hill and to erect a new one where the two roads joined. (This has lately been taken down.) At the same time Thomas Chambers house in Well Hill was purchased in order to put it into repair and place a turnpike gate upon it. The road was completed by September.

But it soon became clear that the ascent at Well Hill was far too steep, and by August 1800 the surveyor recommended, breaking it near Forwood, going through the lands of the Rev. Williams, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Cambridge and Mr. Walker to join the road from the Half Way House to West End at Trapend Gate, which would give an ascent of 2 inches per yard instead of the 5 inches in Well Hill. So the New Road was made and the cottage at the new junction below Well Hill became a turnpike.

Now, with all the roads on their list completed, the Committee was urged in 1815 by the Baronet G.O. Paul to make the road leading from near Little Britain passing Broad Mead near St. Chloe's School and Culver House to Amberley Bank, with a branch road to St. Chloe's Green. This road had been considered some time previously. On December 21st 1799 it had been discussed and on August 4th 1800 authority sought for its construction. At last, on July 5th 1815, it was decided to go ahead and the surveyor, William Howard, was ordered to prepare an estimate of the cost. He reported on September 6th with a figure of £731/3/- which included the cost of fences, turnpike houses and gates, and the purchase of land. This was accepted and the Committee agreed to meeting part of the cost by allocating £100 from tolls for the section from Little Britain to Culver House, and a further £50 for the remainder to Amberley Bank.

Work began immediately and by April 17th 1816 the road was completed as far as Culver House estate. Good fences had been erected through the estate and Sinclair ploughed field, and on to Orchard Hill where a quick set hedge was to be planted. There had been one problem. Mr. Howard reported that his men's work had been interrupted by Joseph Hort, who lived at Littleworth. (He may have been the son of the Joseph Hort who held St. Chloe School until his death in 1815.) Hort and others claimed right of common against Howard's removal of turf and surface ground to a depth of 3 feet across the road width. Howard, in turn, claimed that he was following the line of the road laid down by the Act, which gave authority to remove turf and soil. The Committee backed him up and nothing more seems to have been heard of the affair.

By October 13th the remaining part was completed to Amberley Bank at

a total cost of £733. Now Sir G.O. Paul offered to make the side branch from Sinckley Green to Amberley for 60 Guineas, and later on December 5th 1820 he received in return the old carriage way from Little Britain to St. Chloe Green -which had been stopped up on April 27th of that year - at a charge of -£10 for the estimated area of half an acre.

From now on the minutes are concerned mainly with the repair and maintenance of the roads. The Act gave them authority to make footpaths at the sides of the roads and this they decided to do. An annual concern was the letting of turnpikes, and occasional trouble there. The money from lettings was of course the only source of income for the Committee beyond the demands made on parish Surveyors of the Highways who were entitled to use statute labour on their roads, which was paid for from rates. Since they did not have to maintain the turnpike road in their parish therefore the Committee claimed compensation money annually; so when the Well Hill section was made Hampton parish was charged £6/10/6.

Turnpike lettings were advertised in the Gloucester Journal, bids were sought and the largest accepted. Here are the figures for 1813 with the successful bidder:

Lightpill Gate	John Heaven for	£134
Spout Gate	Thomas Rooke for	£130
Woodchester Gate	Thomas Rooke for	£35
Inchbrook Gate	John Bennett for	£102
Nailsworth and Well Hill Gate	William Wathen for	£110
Stanley Gate	James Marmont for	£40
Tiltups Inn Gate	Bartholomew Elwen for	£173

By the 1850's the turnpikes were coming to an end. The Continuation Act (17/18 Victoria 58) ordered that a turnpike trust should be wound up unless the Trustees were able to assure the Secretary of State that they had sufficient yearly surplus to redeem mortgages. This gave the Nailsworth Trust, who satisfied the condition, a short lease of life during which they were faced with the intrusion of the developing modern services on their roads. Thus, on August 18th 1857 Stroud Gas applied for permission to break up the Dudridge — Nailsworth section so as to lay gas pipes. Agreement was given providing there was no unnecessary damage to the road and traffic was neither stopped nor delayed. A few years later, in 1863, the Committee received notice that it was proposed to lay a railway from Stroud to Nailsworth which would cross the road at three places. There must have been some hard talking in the Committee for the minutes record that agreement was given but “not unanimous” and a little later the Committee complained that the boarded fences by the railroad at Little

Britain were so low that horses on the main road could see moving engines. Again in 1863, the United Electric Telegraph Company applied for permission to erect a line of telegraph poles. The Committee agreed to the application, but required that the poles should be erected so as to cause no obstruction to traffic.

In the next decade the Nailsworth Trust was ended by the Turnpike Continuation of 1877 (36/37 Victoria c90). The final act was to dispose of the turnpike houses. There was no offer for Woodchester; Culver Hill and Nailsworth were taken down as was Spout, and December 12th 1877 saw the final winding up meeting. The Trust, which had completely re—organised the road system of this area, was now history.

Source: Minutes of the Nailsworth Turnpike Committee.

MINCHINHAMPTON BAPTIST CHURCH - Rev. J. Edwards

(Reprinted from the Minchinhampton Jubilee Magazine.)

In the middle of the 18th Century there were several Protestant Dissenters living at Minchinhampton and the surrounding area. They met together for worship in each others homes, as well as for prayer and Bible study and mutual fellowship.

The Rev. Benjamin Francis, A.M., became minister of the Baptist Church at Shortwood, Nailsworth, in 1758 and exercised a ministry here for the next 41 years until his death in 1799. Frequently he visited surrounding towns, villages and hamlets; and some of the Dissenters in Minchinhampton became members of the Shortwood Church.

In 1765 Mr. Francis bought a piece of land in Workhouse Lane (now Chapel Lane) and on it he had built The Baptist Meeting-house. The total cost was £400, and the Meeting -house opened on September 17th of that year. The stage-coach was the only passenger service between Minchinhampton and London, and Mr. Francis journeyed to and fro soliciting assistance towards the cost of The Chapel and soon it was completely paid for. Mr. Francis visited Minchinhampton regularly for the next 35 years, preaching on Sunday evenings once a fortnight. His biography says, “No difficulties deterred him from his arduous labours. He even persisted in his unwearied efforts for the good of the inhabitants of Minchinhampton, notwithstanding his want of success, of which he had

more reason to complain than in any other instance.”

Little is known of the work of the people connected with the chapel during those early years. Following the death of Mr. Francis the work slumped badly, though the chapel was furnished with pews and improved. However, the chapel was eventually closed for public worship, as nobody could be found to conduct the services.

Matters improved with the appointment of the Rev. Joseph Baynes as assistant minister at Shortwood at 1818. He recommenced worship at Minchinhampton and on the 7th October 1824, with the blessing of the church at Shortwood a Christian Church was formed at The Baptist Meeting-house. Hitherto it had been a preaching station, now it was a church in its own right.

Of the nineteen ministers who to date have served the church, the Rev. Joseph Dunn was the first, and conducted the first service of Believers Baptism in Minchinhampton, by immersing twelve candidates in August 1830.

The Meeting—house became too small, and in 1834 a new church seating 650 people was built on land owned by the then owner of Gatcombe, David Ricardo.

Improvements were made to the Church and the old Meeting-house before the turn of the century. The Institute was erected during the early part of the Rev. S.J. Ford's ministry.

The house now The Coffee Bean in the High Street served as the Baptist Manse for five Ministers until it was sold in 1920, and another house purchased in Windmill Road.

Major reconstruction of the Church is taking place in this Jubilee year of the Queen, 1977. In July a new church within the old walls will be opened to the glory of God and to serve Minchinhampton in the 21st Century.

Footnote: Rev. J.A.L. Edwards saw the opening of the new church, with its schoolroom above, in 1977. He continued as Minister until 1986, living in a house in Butt Street.

PROGRAMME OF PAST EVENTS

1986	Jan.	Informal Members' Get Together
	Mar.	R.Close — 'History of Amberley'
	Apl.	Visit to Countryside Collection, Northleach.
	Apl.	Local History Week at Minchinhampton Library
	Jun.	J. Whiting — 'Gloucestershire Turnpikes'
	Sep.	Display at Minchinhampton Country Fayre
	Oct.	W. Gardner - 'Minchinhampton Common'
	Nov.	A.G.M. H. Board - 'A Cotswold Camera'
1986	Dec.	Informal Members' Get Together
1987	Feb.	M. Hill - 'Listed Buildings'
	Mar.	F. Simmonds - 'Quarries'
	May.	T. Darvill - 'The Longstone and her Sisters'
	Jun.	Visit to Cirencester Local History Day
	Jun.	Visit to the Record Office
	Oct.	A.G.M. H. Conway-Jones - 'Gloucester Docks'