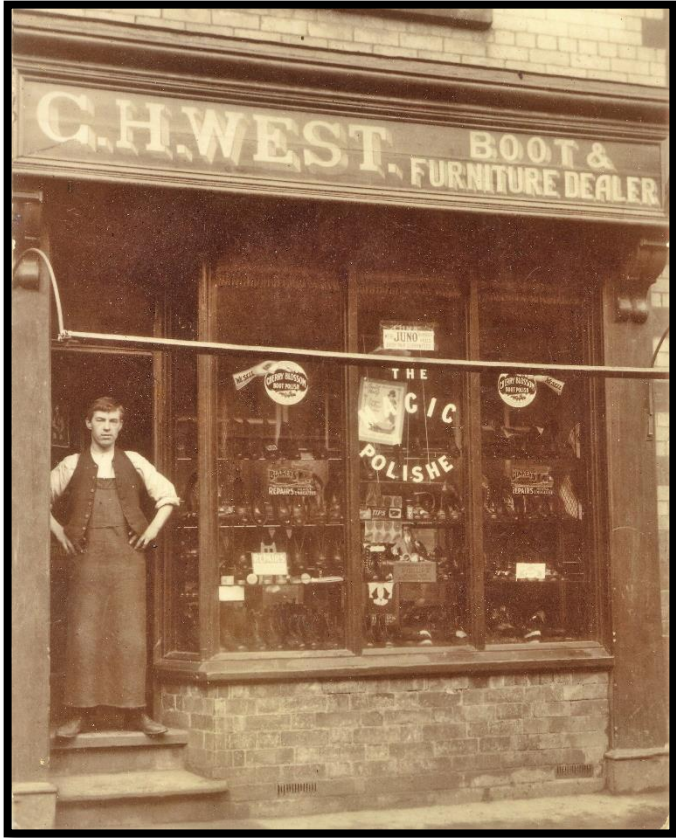


# Finedon Local History Society



G.H West, High Street, Finedon. c1929

## Newsletter May 2018

## **2018 COMMITTEE**

The officers and committee members elected at the AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017 are:

President	Jacqui Minchinton
Chairman	David Bailey
Vice Chairman	Michael Shipton
Secretary	Mick Britton
Treasurer	Rachel Terry
Minute Secretary	Brenda Beck
Committee Members	Karen Eames Jeremy Millington Malcolm Peet
Co-opted Member	Jim Hill
Researcher	Carolyn Smith

Website [www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk)

### **2018 Exhibition**

#### **“FINEDON SHOPS PAST AND PRESENT”**

A photographic exhibition of shops and shopping in Finedon from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present time.

A reflection of times past when it was said that the only shop or service not available in Finedon was a solicitor!

Open on Saturdays and Sundays from 2pm to 4pm, except Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May

## SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER...

Firstly, apologies as this newsletter has been a long time in coming since our last edition back in September. This was because of two main factors: unfortunately, Malcolm has been suffering from poor health and was understandably unable to give the newsletter his full attention. Additionally, we had some computer software issues – which (hopefully) have been resolved! Carolyn and Mick have taken on the role of newsletter editors (no gender pay gap issues here as we are both unpaid!)

At the annual general meeting in November Malcolm stood down after 15 sterling years as the Society Chairman but he has remained on the committee. David Bailey offered to step up as the new Chairman; all the other committee members offered to remain in post, with no objections from the floor all were duly re-elected.

At the time of writing (mid-April) the committee have been faced with the challenge of looking at potential options for a new “base” as there is currently a question mark over our continued use of the Friends’ Meeting House. As and when the full details are known we will be expeditious in informing the membership.

Our major highlight of 2017 was without doubt the invitation from the officers of the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum requesting FLHS to host their annual “History Day” (see page 7)

By the time you read this the 2018 Exhibition, “Finedon Shops Past and Present” will be open between 2pm and 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Except for Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup> when the Northamptonshire Quakers will be using the Friends’ Meeting House – the first service to held in the building for many a year. Please make every effort to attend this photographic exhibition and take a “walk” down memory lane into the High Street!

In an effort to reduce the cost of printing and postage to the society we would like to send as many future newsletters by email. If you are willing to accept your newsletter in a pdf format, then please drop me a line at michael.britton@ntlworld.com. Thank you.

Have a good summer!

*Mick & Carolyn*

## REPORTS ON MEETINGS

SOCIAL NETWORKING BEFORE WORLD WAR 2 – FINEDON  
WOMENS' CO-OPERATIVE GUILD

FRANCIS TERRY

FEBRUARY 2018

In Finedon, the Guild was formally launched in October 1921 and remained active for more than seventy years, closing finally in October 1998. The Society is fortunate to hold many of the surviving records of the Guild, including the attendance records, contributions register, minute books and song-books.

Guild meetings typically opened with a welcome by the President, followed by the reading aloud of the minutes of the last meeting, reports from the Secretary and correspondence received. In the 1920s and '30s, before the NHS existed, unemployment was a perennial threat and conditions of life were often hard. Consequently, letters to the Guild came frequently from charitable and other local organisations seeking financial help; these were dealt with either by a motion to donate a fixed sum, or notice being given that a collection would be held at the following week's meeting. Members could then decide on an individual basis whether they wished to contribute.

The centre-piece of the weekly programme was usually an address by a visiting speaker. Many of the topics may seem nowadays to be rather dry, dealing with 'Guild progress', 'Co-operation in general', and similar themes. But there were also topics clearly designed to promote debate on contemporary issues, to educate, inform and not least to amuse the assembled company. Though a hearty vote of thanks to the speaker was always recorded, the effort to stimulate debate was not always successful. As the minutes of 17 October 1928 remark: 'Questions were invited on the subject but as usual all were shy amongst our own members'.

The weekly programme normally concluded with some form of light entertainment and refreshments. More extended social events took place at intervals during the year, and the branch usually organised an annual outing to the coast or some place of cultural interest. From the minutes of 6 January 1933, we read that 87 members sat down to a New Year's Tea with 'beautifully decorated

tables and a nice spread of enjoyable things'. After tea, cornet solos were given by Master Stanley, recitations by Master Daniels and Mrs Deacon, community choruses by a 'merry band of Guilders accompanied by Mrs Morris' on the piano. There were party games and the President wished all members a 'Bright and Happy New Year' followed by the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne'. A profit of £1-2-1d (about £70 at present day prices) was made on the event.

A darker mood is evident from the minutes of 20 January 1937. On the topic of 'A state within a state' the speaker, Mr Avery, remarked 'how uncertain everything is at the present time. There are half a million gas-masks being made every week. War is being prepared for and we do not want it. The goal we as co-operators want to aim for is peace. We do not want to see humanity destroyed. Life is a wonderful thing and we want to see prosperity [through] co-operating one with another'. The minutes add that 'The speaker was listened to with rapt attention.....'

There was also illness, disability and death, and the Guild regularly received a report from their Sick Visitor. At the meeting on 27 November 1929, the record of the talk by Mr Singlehurst from the County Blind [Association] noted 'an eloquent and pathetic address which was an appeal for help'. It may be indicative of the times in which they lived that when the Guild adopted a motion in October 1928 to grant 'Freedom of the Guild' to those over the age of 70, only two members actually qualified for this honour. (Life expectancy for women was under 60 at that time, and for men only just over 55.) The demise of the Guild's own members was normally marked by all standing for a minute's silence.

War-time brought many new challenges to the Finedon Guild, and for a time opinion was divided as to the merits of the conflict (many women opposed armed conflict on principle). Study of the records of the Guild for this period and after World War II is still in progress. However, from the records of April 1991, the last date from which they have survived, it appears that the Guild was holding fast to its traditions. By now, attendance was down to little more than a dozen members at the fortnightly meetings, but the main activities still consisted of a talk (often illustrated with slides or photographs), relationships with the wider Co-op movement, fund-raising for various causes and of course refreshments.

If any reader can contribute further information about The Finedon WCG or has memories of it, they would be most gratefully received by Francis Terry.

*Francis can be contacted via email at [fracis@gmail.com](mailto:fracis@gmail.com) – Note: the missing “n” in the email address name is correct. Alternatively, please contact a committee member.*

## TRAINS IN TROUBLE – HISTORIC RAILWAY ACCIDENTS REV. PAUL NEEDLE MARCH 2018

In this fascinating presentation, Paul Needle drew on four railway accidents to show the lessons that were learned – what went wrong and what was done to prevent future accidents. These were:

The Southall accident on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1997 in which an InterCity 125 hit the tail end of a freight train resulting in 7 deaths and 139 injuries and was the result of a number of errors following the failure of an Automatic Warning System on the express.

The accident on the single-track line at Abermule in 1921 in which misunderstandings between staff over the use of tokens led to a collision between a stopping train and an express.

The accident at Weedon in 1951, caused by an over tightened bogie which jumped track and derailed the train causing it to tip down an embankment.

Of most local interest was the 1898 accident at Wellingborough. Here, a station trolley used by a postman had rolled onto the track leading to the derailment of the London – Manchester express, leading to 7 deaths and 65 injuries. The subsequent accident investigation recommended that platforms should slope away from the track or be level, trolleys should have brakes or chocks and that only railway staff should operate railway equipment.

The closing comment posed the question of whether such events are serendipity or all down to chance

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HERITAGE FORUM HISTORY DAY

28<sup>th</sup> October 2017

In early 2017 the Society was approached by Jon-Paul Carr, on behalf of the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum, with a view to the FLHS hosting their annual History Day. With no hesitation the committee were delighted to be asked and the planning and organisation of the event began in earnest.

The event, held at the Dolben Cricket Club, was a major success for our Society with 70 delegates attending from a number of History and Heritage Societies from around the county. We provided four speakers for the morning session: Malcolm Peet (History of Finedon), Ron Clayton (Mackworth Dolben and the Volta Tower), Mick Britton (From Finedon to Van Diemen's Land – the transportation of John Hodson, 1828) and Francis Terry (Finedon Co-operative Womens' Guild). Following a splendid lunch at the club the delegates were offered a choice of a guided tour of Finedon Parish Church (Michael Shipton), a guided walk around the historic parts of Finedon (Rachel & Francis Terry) or a visit to the Meeting House to view the exhibition "Lt Mackworth Dolben and the Volta Tower" (Ron Clayton and Mick Britton).

Profits from the event were shared with the Heritage Forum and close to £250 was added to FLHS funds.



Michael Shipton leading the Finedon Parish Church tour.

**FROM OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES.**



Finedon Carnival entry, "Old Woman in a Shoe" from Arthur Nutt's shoe factory. The date is unknown.



Picnic Outing, believed to be Harrowden Lane c1920s





Recalling May Day celebrations from 1955. We would be interested if any of members could provide names.



Carolyn believes she is on this photograph, out of sight, amongst the sitting group holding down the pole!

This writer was a member of school May Pole dancing team 7 years later; 50 years ago.

May Pole dancing in the Banks Park, 1961.

**FROM THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHIVES.**  
**RESEARCHING THE FINEDON SWING RIOTS OF 1830**  
**CAROLYN SMITH**

The Young of Orlingbury collection has recently been uploaded to the Northants Archive on line catalogue. This collection includes, as well as a quantity of family documents, information relating to Orlingbury, Little and Great Harrowden, Isham, Loddington, Sibbertoft, the Orlingbury Hundred villages also Theddingworth and the Langtons in Leicestershire. As I have a particular interest in Finedon I kept an eye open for anything relating to this place while I was transferring information from the index cards to the database. One of the things I discovered was a letter that sheds new light on the Finedon Swing Riot of 1830.

Finedon historians Reginald Underwood and John Bailey both recorded in their books all that was known about the incident. That is, on the morning of Wednesday December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1830 a group of unemployed agricultural labourers dragged a newly arrived thrashing machine into Mulso Square and broken it to pieces using hammers taken from the nearby smithy. The military was turned out and the culprits were caught, and appeared before the Revd. S.W.Paul, Vicar of Finedon and local magistrate, and committed to trial at the next Assizes.

The *Northampton Mercury* of 5<sup>th</sup> March 1831 reported that at their trial 6 men were found guilty and imprisoned for from 2 to 9 months. Five were acquitted, including town crier Philip Desborough who had been accused of going round the parish on the evening prior to the riot crying that no man should go to work the next morning for less than 2/3d a day.

This was the total amount of information on the incident that had come down to us until I discovered a letter in the Young collection (reference number YO/803). This letter was written on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1830 by Charlotte Young of Orlingbury to her aunt Mrs Barton of the Rectory at Maidwell. The Young family socialized with their close neighbours the Dolben and Paul families of Finedon and were obviously considered to be a safe haven in times of trouble.

A transcript of Charlotte's letter follows: -

*My Dear Aunt,*

*You will have heard from John that Wellingborough and Finedon are not so quiet as could be wished. I have no doubt you will be anxious to hear further tidings of us.*

*The disturbances first began at Wellingbro; on Monday in consequence of some machine breakers being conveyed through that town to Northampton gaol. John will have told you also that two men were sent from Finedon in Mr. Paul's carriage yesterday afternoon to Northton. Allen was at Wellingbro; till nearly five o'clock and left it apparently perfectly quiet. He c'd not have been gone above a ¼ of an hour before two men from Finedon came into the Town and blew a Horn, which in less than a quarter of an hour collected nearly a thousand people-upon this Mr Hill came forward and made a speech strongly recommending them to disperse not withstanding two or three hundred immediately proceeded to Finedon entered Mr Paul's yard; and insisted upon speaking to him. They then called him to account for having sent the prisoners to North'ton. He talked to them for sometime and I believe gave them beer, upon which we hear they drank his health and then went into the village and paraded the streets two by two telling the people that they would come at any moment and assist them to recover their rights. In the meantime a dispatch had been sent off for some military to Thrapston, who arrived about 9 o'clock.*

*The way in which we heard of the disturbance was in consequence of Mr Paul's servant returning from North'ton with the carriage when within about a hundred yards of Finedon he received a message from Mr Paul to turn back immediately and lodge the carriage in safety somewhere as the mob were waiting for it, determined: if possible to break it to pieces. The servant brought the carriage with all speed to Orlingbury this was about 8 o'clock. Mr Bridges and Mr Wm Rose were dining here. They with my two brothers and some of the farmers, in all a little troop of about 27 men on horseback set out immediately for Finedon. They got there just as the Military arrived and I am thankful to say found all quiet the mob having taken the alarm.*

*Vast numbers of people of the better sort flocked into Finedon from the neighbouring villages armed with swords and guns to defend Mr Paul. Allen and Newton (Charlotte's brothers) saw him for a few*

*minutes but there were so many people in the room (two Mr Arbutnot's the Major of the Company of Soldiers) so that he could scarcely speak a word to them, the rest of the party were all well but of course had been sadly frightened.*

*Our party returned a little before twelve. Much I assure you to my Father's and my satisfaction. My Father is gone today to Finedon with Newton if he brings any more intelligence I will let you know. Give my kindest love to all my cousins and thank them all for their kind notes. I have sent you a long rigmarole and cannot answer for the truth of all I have said, it is only what we hear at present. We do not anticipate a visit from Mr Swing as we have no machines in this village. There is to be a great meeting of all the Gentlemen and Farmers at Kettering tomorrow to establish something of a regular patrol. I suppose John will be there.*

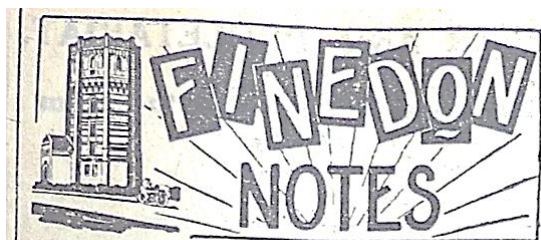
*Pray my dear aunt do not be alarmed for us, at present at least there is no necessity for it. As all are particularly well affected here, with our united kindest love believe me my dear aunt.*

*Your truly affectionate niece  
Charlotte*

Any current resident of Finedon could well imagine the coach turning down Harrowden Lane and speeding past Great Harrowden Hall on its way through to Orlingbury.

This is an example of what can unexpectedly turn up in the collections held at Wootton. The volunteers are currently involved in getting as many of the indexed collections on to the on-line catalogue to make them more easily accessible to researchers.

*Note: The sentences received by those involved in the Swing Riots were very lenient for the period. Particularly when you compare them against John Hodson of Finedon being sentenced to death and commuted to transportation for life to Van Diemen's Land in 1828 for stealing a lamb. Additionally, in 1836 Thomas Boddington and Joseph Houghton, also of Finedon, were transported to the same destination for 14 years, convicted for stealing two bushels of potatoes from the 4 times great grandmother of our chairman. It is my belief that the short sentences given to those involved in the Swing Riots was politically motivated to suppress a potential widespread protest movement. MB*



"A quiet time" is a description that aptly sums up the holiday activities of the majority of the inhabitants of Finedon. Most of the factories closed down for the whole week, but a few were limited to one or two days, with a half-day for the Agricultural Show. Those who left the town went early, but there did not seem to be any great rush on buses or trains. Those who stayed had the Dolben C.C. fixtures to entertain them, and the Old Prize Band had quite an appreciative audience on Sunday night. The Wesleyan School treat on Monday provided enjoyment for a good many, and the Church Heating Fund fete drew a good crowd until rain set in, unfortunately, in the evening. For a holiday time the allotments presented an unusually deserted appearance. Doubtless the holders were resting for a space on their oars—I mean their spades—waiting for potatoes and other edibles to burst through—or, perhaps, for the more certain weeds.

The disappearance of one of the cross-road lamps provided reason for a little speculation, mingled with a little alarm. There is no need, actually, for either. A gentle push by the back of a motor-car casually tilted it over, and the column was expeditiously removed by the Council workmen.



**MORE FROM OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES**  
*OUR SCHOOL DAYS!*



Senior School girls, names and date unknown.  
Captain Sutton, Headteacher.



Boys Football Team, 1925 – 26 Season



Junior School Recorder Group c1968/9



Junior School Boys Football Season 1968 – 69 Season  
 Back Row: L to R. Mr Swindall, Headteacher, Mr Nutt  
 Middle: David Howe, Philip Wookey, Richard Amey, Paul  
 Richardson, Trevor Turner, Andrew Barnard, Chris Munns, Chris  
 Dunmore  
 Front: Peter Curti, Melvyn Underwood, Robert Pike, Graham  
 Needle, Kevin Marlow, Keith Lewis, Paul Toop

## 2018 MEETING PROGRAMME

25<sup>th</sup> June                                      Helen Norman  
The Life and Paintings of Charles Spencelayh –  
A Northamptonshire Artist

23<sup>rd</sup> July                                        Roy York  
The Hiccups and Horrors of Steaming Up the Valley -  
Development of the Railways in the Nene Valley

20<sup>th</sup> August                                    Kevin Varity  
Dead and Buried But Not For Long –  
The Victorian Gruesome Fascination with Body Snatching

24<sup>th</sup> September                            Gary Shaeffer  
An American Eye-View of Northamptonshire.

22<sup>nd</sup> October                                   Delia Thomas  
The Powder Treason –  
The Events Surrounding the Gunpowder Plot.

26<sup>th</sup> November  
Annual General Meeting

This year's evening visit is to the Carpetbaggers Aviation Museum at Harrington, just off the A14 at Rothwell. It is on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May commencing at 7pm. The cost of the admission is £6. Those wishing to attend would they please drop me a line at michael.britton@ntlworld.com or call me on 07988 065010 so I can advise the museum of the numbers expected.

Full details of the museum, including directions, can be found at <http://www.harringtonmuseum.org.uk/>

<p>Finedon Local History Society is a member of the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum. Their website <a href="http://www.northamptonshireheritageforum.co.uk">www.northamptonshireheritageforum.co.uk</a> contains information, including newsletters, that may be of interest to our own Society members</p>
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