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BLHA Autumn Event – Chester House Estate

Higham Road, Irchester NN29 7EZ
Wednesday 27th September 2023, 11.00 am Start

We are very fortunate to have a visit to the Chester House Estate tailored specifically to the BLHA.

- The morning begins at 11 am with an introductory talk about the Chester House Estate Restoration Project by Martin Lawrence (General Manager at Chester House Estate and also the Head of Culture, Tourism and Heritage for North Northamptonshire Council).

- A guided tour of the archaeological dig led by Jack Pishhorn (General Manager). The dig is run by the University of Leicester's School of Archaeology and the University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The general site has a rich heritage from Mesolithic flint scatters to 17th-century farm buildings with Roman evidence from the suburbs of the small Roman town of Irchester.

- Ben Donnelly Symes (Archive Creator) will give us a guided tour of the Archaeological Resource Centre. This is a state-of-the-art facility, which is the new archaeological archive repository for the whole of Northants.

Lunch is planned for 1 pm and can be taken in the Farmhouse Café, alternatively, bring a packed lunch for eating in the grounds and taking one of the walks. The afternoon you will be free to explore the site.

Parking for our group will be available close to the main building along with disabled parking via the Lime Avenue entrance. Walking no further than a couple of hundred yards from the main building will be necessary during the day, though the dig site is not accessible to wheelchair users.

We do need to give Chester House an idea of numbers attending, and also those likely to want to eat in the Café. Please book a place on the visit using the booking link below.

Apart from the events laid on for the BLHA, the Estate has a Florist, Saxby's Cider Shop, Canine Cottage (goods for four-legged friends), Gift Shop and Visitor Centre and Farm Shop.

We hope you will be able to join us in what is going to be a fascinating visit.

Bookings must be received no later than *Wednesday 20th September*.

For further details and to book, please visit https://www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk/

A bridge too far . . .

On Tuesday 11 February 1873, a steam-ploughing engine pulling a threshing machine owned by T B Kitchener & Co departed from Mr Fowler's farm in Langford headed for John King's farm in Broom. Rather than going through their home town of Biggleswade, the team (David Larman and Walter Bonas, with a lad named Yerrall), took the minor road that passes Holme Mill (now often referred to as 'Jordans'). As can be seen from the Ordnance Survey mapping at Figure 1, this shorter route involves four bridges – the first crossing a small brook; the second, the channel of the River Ivel serving the mill (beside the bypass weir); the road then bending sharply to cross the Ivel Navigation channel (next to the lock) on a third bridge; with the fourth (known as 'Broom Bridge') traversing another small channel of the Ivel at 'Rook's Hole' a short distance before Broom Grange.

Figure 1: *Ordnance Survey map extracts showing location. (Source: National Library of Scotland.)*

But, just after 2.30pm, disaster struck when both the steam plough and threshing machine dropped from this last bridge into the stream, upending to stand side by side, as Plates 1–3, below, show.

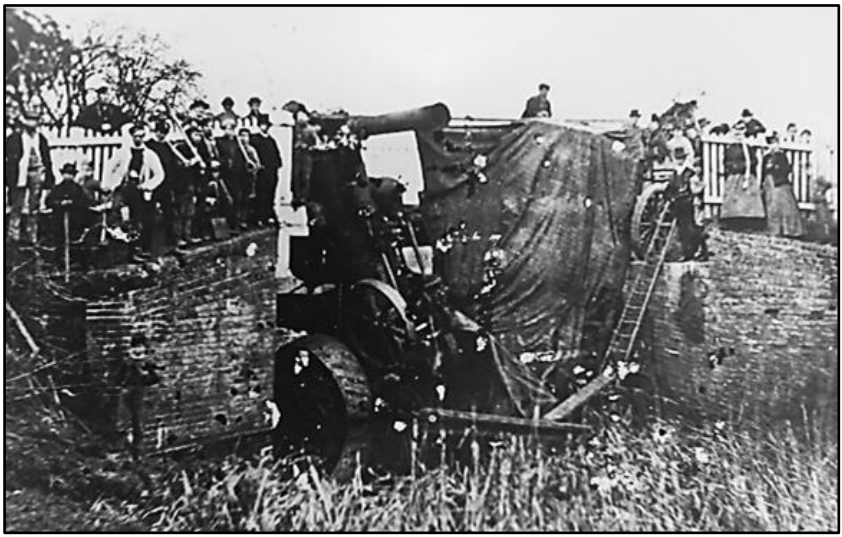

Plate 1. *View of the accident*

Plate 2. *View from the opposite direction*

Plate 3. *Postcards were produced of this view of the accident. (Source: Biggleswade History Society and Brian Kerr.*)

The team riding on the engine were thrown off: whilst Yerrall escaped injury, the two men were less fortunate – David Larman suffered serious head wounds and Walter Bonas was trapped underneath with part of his body out of the water, but the tangled machinery and a portion of the broken girder were on his left leg. As soon as possible, help was sought from Broom and Biggleswade – with a builder, carpenter, and a Biggleswade agricultural machinist plus police officers arriving, followed by two surgeons from Biggleswade as well as another from Girtford. David Larman was taken to his home, where he received medical treatment. But despite every effort being made to extricate 30-year-old Walter Bonas, who, in agony, was able to talk and declined amputation, he sadly died some two hours later. It did not prove possible to free Mr Bonas until the following morning (Wednesday, 12 February) whence his body was conveyed to the Black Horse, a small beerhouse nearby, where an external examination was undertaken by Mr Stevens, one of the Biggleswade surgeons who had been present the previous afternoon. As the photographs above also demonstrate, a number of onlookers visited the scene of the accident (apparently reaching into the hundreds, according to a local newspaper report, with some wanting to see the body at the Black Horse).

The inquest

The inquest into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Bonas (who left a wife and two children) was opened on the afternoon of Friday, 14 February by Mark Whyley, coroner for the county, and resumed on Friday, 21 February.

Mr. T W Pearse, clerk of the peace for the county, attended to watch the proceedings on behalf of the justices and County Surveyor, Mr. James Horsford. (As explained below, part of the role of the legally qualified county clerk was to advise justices of the peace in both their judicial function and their administrative responsibilities which included some bridges.)

Bedfordshire Times and Independent reported that Colonel William Yolland, who had inspected the scene of the accident on the morning of 21 February by order of the Board of Trade and at the request of the Secretary of State (with whom the coroner had communicated), gave evidence. He stated that

> as the greater portion of the girders were still in the water he had been unable to inspect them to ascertain their strength and defects, but he should say that the bridge was never intended to carry such a heavy weight as a traction engine. He had no hesitation in saying that the weight on the after wheels was the cause of the fracture, there having been about 8 tons over the two girders, supposing the engine was in the centre of the road the time. The outside girders were much stronger than the others, but the whole structure was very slight.

County surveyor, James Horsford, who had been present at the scene early on the morning following the accident gave evidence that 'when he inspected the bridge at Christmas it appeared all right, and he had had it repaired several times'. James Finding testified that 'when he repaired it he found crack in one of the girders, which hung down an inch and he put his rule into the fissure'. In her *History of Bedfordshire*, Joyce Godber indicates 'there was a known crack in one girder' suggesting

> This may have been the result of the canal freezing in 1823 when it was in transit; the forwarding agents disclaimed responsibility; and as it was an outside girder, and normal traffic over the bridge at that time was not heavy, it was thought this would not matter.

The inquest jury returned a verdict of 'Accidental death', but added the opinion that other bridges in the neighbourhood were also insecure. Colonel Yolland said that probably a circular would be issued by the Board of Trade giving a general caution to the authorities with respect to

such bridges, and recommending that they be tested before being crossed by such heavy weights.

Paying for repair/replacement of the bridge

Before turning to the considerable court proceedings that followed the inquest concerning who was responsible for repairing/replacing the bridge, a bit of context about the role of the justices of the peace; what is known about the bridge; and about the steam-ploughing engine:

Bedfordshire bridges – the role of the county administration at the time

Justices of the peace carried the main weight of county administration and the supervision of hundreds and parishes. They held sessions quarterly each year and their chief paid officer was the clerk of the peace (the Pearse family held the office for nearly a century: Theed Pearse senior from 1798–1843, his son Theed William Pearse serving from 1857–1890). The clerk's duties also involved Quarter Sessions record-keeping and the drafting of indictments and presentments (the statement presented when a matter to be dealt with was formally referred to an authority for consideration). Quarter Sessions served two functions – both administrative and as a court of justice. At Quarter Sessions the justices' administrative responsibilities were very minor compared with county/unitary authority administration today. Not all bridges came within their sphere – but the justices themselves supervised local contractors for repairs for those that did; they also authorised parish highway rates; and had various other powers and duties.

Initially in rural areas, bridges were often the sole responsibility of the local lord of the manor, although in some places, bridges were maintained by the parish as a whole, rather than by the lord of the manor as an individual. In some cases, there was a complex arrangement of shared liability, in addition, monastic houses were frequently involved in bridge-building and repair.

Under Henry VIII, legislation was introduced which not only reaffirmed existing customs, but also for the first time required justices of the peace to raise a county rate for the repair of those bridges outside towns where no authority or individual could be proven to be responsible. Ecclesiastical liability for bridges was removed after the Dissolution of the Monasteries – the repair liabilities were not transferred to the new landowners and subsequently fell to the justices of the peace for the county.

Until the end of the 18th century, the county bore responsibility (in whole or part) only for the great bridges of St Neots, Barford, Bromham, Stafford and Harrold. By this time more and more bridges were being built through private funds, by turnpike trusts, parishes or individuals. Their builders frequently failed to maintain them, and the county was found responsible for ever-increasing numbers of bridges. This problem was addressed to some extent in 1803, when an Act of Parliament required that new, privately built, bridges should be constructed in a manner of which the justices would approve, before the county could take over responsibility for repair.

Most of Bedfordshire's early iron bridges were extremely simple. They were invariably of single span and basic in design. They relied on the principle of the timber beam rather than the stone arch, though the iron beams were slightly curved in order to distribute weight to the abutments.

The earliest was built at Langford in 1819, followed by Broom in 1822. Both of these were cast at Coalbrookdale in sections and transported by the Grand Junction Canal to Linford Wharf near Newport Pagnell, and thence by road to be assembled on site.

Throughout the 18th century individual justices supervised repairs of bridges for which they were responsible, often carried out by locally appointed caretakers. By 1816 the need for a full-time post was recognised and John Millington was appointed Surveyor of Bridges, and a separate committee was established to administer the surveyor's work.

By 1849, the county accepted responsibility (in whole or part) for 39 bridges. The development of the Ivel Navigation and the Grand Junction Canal in the late 18th and early 19th centuries also saw the construction of several bridges, most of which remained the responsibility of the navigation and canal operators. Between 1868 and 1877 the turnpike trusts were wound up, and liability for their various bridges and culverts transferred to the county. From 1858 to 1874 Bedfordshire had two surveyors, one each for the north and south of the county. The justices usually ordered what they called a rate of 1/2d in the £.

Broom Bridge

A bridge known as Broom Bridge collapsed in about 1788 and was rebuilt in brick by the inhabitants of Broom in the parish of Southill. *Bridges in Bedfordshire* indicates that it was replaced in 1823 with an iron bridge designed by John Millington, the County Surveyor. Accounts surviving in the Quarter Sessions records show that the ironwork cost £13 per ton.

Inclusive of screws, bolts and other wrought ironwork, the making of the drawings, and the expense of carriage from Coalbrookdale to Linford, the bill came to £156 16s 0d. The bridge itself weighed 12 ton, 1 cwt, 1 stone and 12 lbs (12.25 tonnes). A further £22 9s 10d was incurred in transporting the ironwork from Stanton Hill wharf (near Linford) to Broom. The bridge was a simple single span 20 feet wide. Millington's drawing, dated September 1822 (Figure 2), shows it to have been formed by a series of iron girders resting on brick abutments. The braced girders supported a flat road surface, with two cut-outs in each spandrel. There was a low relief 'keystone' which projected below the 'arch ring'. There were ornamental iron railings above, ending in square stone terminals. The design included stone pillars over the 'keystones' in the centre of the arch. Figure 2 can be compared with Plate 2, above.

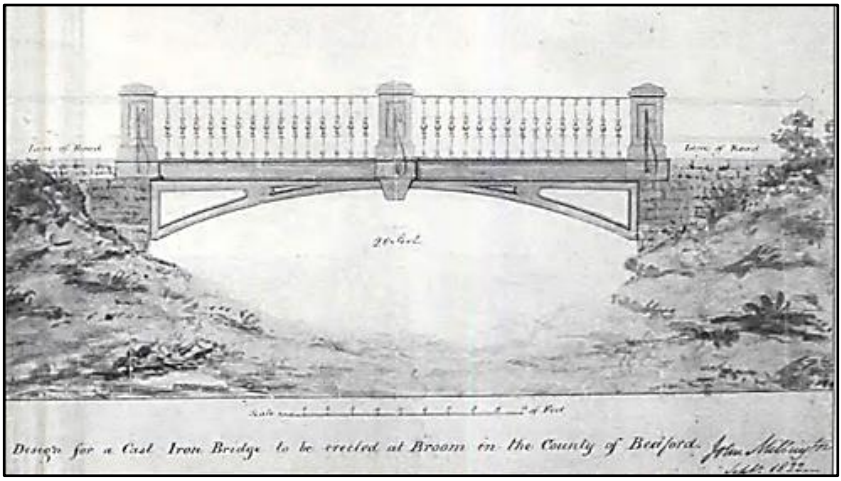

Figure 2. *Millington's design for Broom Bridge (Source: Bridges in Bedfordshire.)*

The ploughing engine

Between 1830 and 1850 there were numerous patents describing steam cultivating machinery. Initially these were horse-drawn portable engines, but from about the 1860s self-propelled steam engines started to be popularised. The engine involved in the accident was manufactured by the John Fowler company at the Steam Plough Works in Leeds. Records held by the Steam Plough Club indicate the engine involved was one of the pair of John Fowler, 10 horse-power, single cylinder, horizontal shaft,

ploughing engines, numbers 1074 and 1076, completed on 30 September 1868 and delivered new to Thomas Kitchener at Potton, Bedfordshire.

T B Kitchener & Co. of Potton was the largest operator of steam engines hired out to local farmers in east Bedfordshire – the firm had traction engines, ploughing engines, and a steam roller, using their own foundry and works to repair and maintain a whole range of equipment including threshing tackle, ploughs, cultivators, harrows, mole drainers, clover hullers and pond dredgers.

Plate 4 shows a Fowler-built horizontal shaft engine of a similar vintage. Ploughing engines were specifically built to do cable work – the winding drum having some 450 yards of wire rope, this being clearly visible beneath the boiler drum. This was accomplished by having a pair of engines – one either side of the field – with their respective cables connected to the plough or cultivator which was to do the work. Very simply, they took turns to pull in their cable thereby drawing the implement from one side of the field to the other. At the end of each run (bout) the implement was either 'tipped' (as in the plough) or 'turned' (as in the cultivator) so it could return to the other side doing its work.

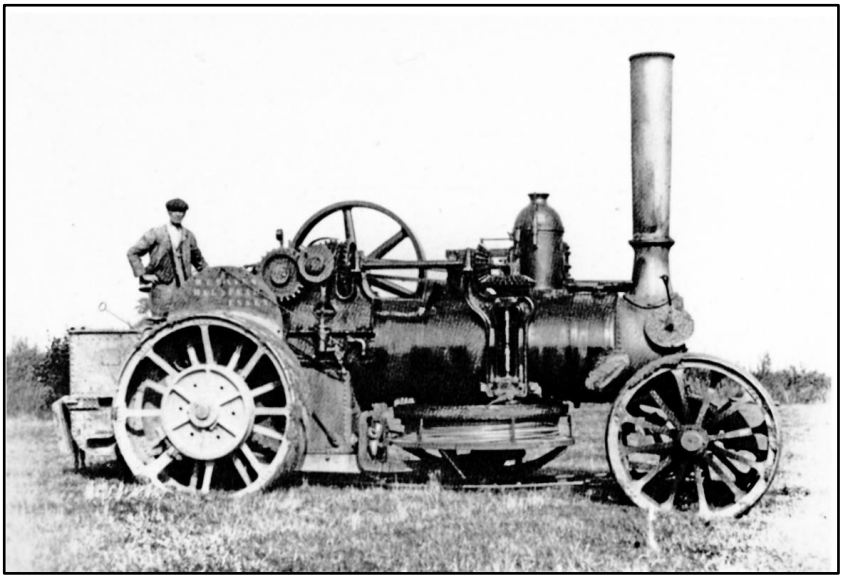

Plate 4. *A Fowler-built horizontal shaft engine similar to that involved in the accident. (Source: Steam Plough Club.)*

In the case of the engine involved in the accident, the power to drive the winch drum was via a horizontal-shaft, through bevel gears down a

vertical shaft to the drum gears. This horizontal-shaft was a feature of late 1860s design but was later superseded by a drive system directly under the crankshaft which did away with the need for it. It was not unusual for such ploughing engines to be used for more general purpose duties like towing the Threshing Set and then driving it via a belt on the flywheel. It would have been a far less onerous job than ploughing or cultivating and far cheaper for the owner unless he had other traction engines.

Court proceedings

On 29 July 1873, the *Bedfordshire Times and Independent* reported on the assizes trial of Thomas Benbow Kitchener, who had been on bail

for breaking down the bridge near Holme Mill, crossing stream called Rook's hole, in the parish of Southill, causing a traction engine to go upon it, on February 11, whereby the traffic was stopped.

He pleaded Not Guilty. The lawyer prosecuting for the county justices opened the case by citing from the statute 'making liable any person who caused damage to any bridge on a public highway whereby the traffic was impeded'; arguing that the bridge was strong enough to carry most ordinary traffic, like most other bridges, 'but when any person chose to run the risk of conveying locomotives over them he became liable for the damage which might ensue"'

The defence lawyer contended that there had been a defect in the bridge several years before, and this ought to have been repaired unless notices were posted to stop the traffic, which had not been done; he had evidence to show the bad state of the bridge, and that there was no negligence on the part of the driver; and further suggested that the Act never contemplated the total breaking down of a bridge, but merely repairs. In response to the Judge saying that ordinary traffic did not include traction engines, the defence lawyer replied that surely in the year 1873 traction engines were so included.

In his evidence, James Horsford said that he had been County Surveyor for the northern division for the previous 15 years during which time the bridge had been repeatedly repaired under his direction and the cost charged upon the county rates. He clarified that it consisted of iron girders lying on brickwork, and that he had ordered repairs to the iron fencing and brickwork, but not to the girders. The iron plate bolted on in repair had been put on before he was appointed. Although a mason employed to repair the bridge two years before the accident had drawn his attention to a crack considered unimportant, the surveyor averred

that it was not in consequence of the defect in the girder or spandril that the bridge broke down. At the beginning of this year it had been strong enough to bear any ordinary traffic. However, when he saw it on 12 February, the day after the accident, one girder alone remained out of the five; he expected that the girders ran deeper than they did; and whilst many of the bolts were gone they did not affect the strength of the bridge, being only connected with that part where the gravel was laid over. The engine with the machine stood on end side by side, and the traffic was altogether suspended.

He confirmed that the traction engine was marked 10 tons as the weight without water or coals or the drum; the water and coals would have been about 2 tons. Mr Horsford said the second time he went, he saw Mr Kitchener there giving orders respecting its removal. The bridge remained in the same condition at the time of the trial, but the county had put up a temporary bridge for the convenience of the public. The surveyor said that he had not been asked the question at the coroner's inquiry, but he was never aware that a traction engine ever crossed the bridge or he would have said it would not have been strong enough. He was now aware that, by putting up a notice, persons can be prohibited from taking such engines over and confirmed to the Judge that such notices had now been put up on other similar bridges.

After hearing further evidence, the Judge was of opinion that the case for the prosecution was made out – those who took locomotives across bridges did so at their own risk as they were not included in ordinary traffic, and the authorities were not bound to give notice that the traffic was not to include traction engines. But he said that he could refer these various points before the Court for Consideration of Crown Cases Reserved for judgment.[1] (Under the legal system in place at that time, after a conviction, the trial judge in a criminal case had discretion to refer an appeal on a point of law to the Court for Consideration of Crown Cases Reserved, where it would be heard by at least five judges including at least one Chief Justice or Chief Baron. This court could only hear appeals on a point of law; it could quash a conviction, but not order a retrial or alter a sentence.)

The lawyers for both sides then put forward arguments as to how much Mr Kitchener should have to pay towards the re-erection of the bridge, if the reserved matters be decided in favour of the county; and, conversely, whether he would be entitled to something for the repair of the engine and machinery in the event that the case was determined in

his favour. The judge said that it was advisable that some sum should be agreed and suggested that £150 should be named by the parties.

As there was no agreement, the judge told the jury that the prosecution were legally right, and as the facts were clear a verdict of Guilty must be returned. But, after having consulted for some minutes, the jury told the judge that they found a verdict of Guilty, but they thought Mr Kitchener ought not to pay more than the value of the old bridge, which could easily be assessed by the County Surveyor. The Judge then confirmed that subject to the points reserved, the defendant, Mr Kitchener, had been convicted – he was bound over in the sum of £150 to appear at the next Assizes to receive judgment if called upon.

However, the Court for Consideration of Crown Cases Reserved unanimously found in favour of Mr Kitchener and quashed the decision given at the Assizes.

On 10 January 1874, the *Bedfordshire Mercury* reported on the local justices' response to the decision of the appellate court. At an initial committee meeting, the Clerk of the Peace read the justices the case stated by Mr Baron Cleasby in *Regina* v *Kitchener* and the decision. The committee chairman commented that he was

> very sorry that this case should have been decided in the way it has by the Court for the Consideration of Crown Cases Reserved, for it seems to me that are now at the mercy of anybody who likes to come over our bridges with an engine of any weight; and there is no appeal . . . the best thing we can do is to accept the situation.

It was observed that although a temporary bridge had been put up, no other action had been possible until the case had been decided but now must be taken urgently. The committee agreed that the bridge would need to be replaced and any other such bridges be strengthened in such a way as to avoid a repetition of the accident. The chairman pointed out that the court could not order the widening of any bridge without making a presentment to the grand jury. It was suggested that if the report were adopted at once, the jury would authorise the expenditure of £1,000 but not specify what bridges were to be done and that the money could be borrowed from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, to be repaid in 14 years.

The following day, the court assembled and the grand jury was sworn in. The chairman said that after the grand jury had done all the criminal business, the justices would send up a formal presentment to enable the magistrates to strengthen certain county bridges, which they could not

do without the permission of the grand jury. He told them that the Court for the Consideration of Crown Cases Reserved had quashed the decision given at the Assizes on the accident at Broom Bridge. Previously, because the Assizes Judge had determined that the person who broke the bridge was liable for the repair of the bridge and as magistrates generally thought this was the situation, it had been the magistrates' duty to exhaust every legal means to try to compel the engine owner to pay, and it would have been illegal for the county to have expended any money upon it till the point was settled. But, he explained, it was now the duty of the county to strengthen all these bridges because the court above had quashed that decision.

Accordingly, there was a certain number of the county bridges which a committee of the justices considered should be repaired at once. The grand jury would be sent a list, they would have the evidence of the County Surveyor, and the committee could also give evidence. The chairman also reminded them that if the grand jury did not find the presentment, the county risked being put to a very much greater expense if any bridge failed before it was strengthened – but assured them that apart from Broom, there was only one bridge which was very bad, and that would have required a large expenditure to put it in repair even for ordinary traffic.

The court ordered a 1d rate after the grand jury formally heard the presentment urging the strengthening of certain named bridges that were insufficient for the traffic (doubling the usual rate).

Afterwards

The implications for the county's bridges were quite significant. Inspections were widely undertaken, especially to bridges of similar construction. For example:

- Three additional wrought-iron, solid-flange girders were fixed to Langford Bridge to lend support to the iron plates of the deck (when the bridge was taken down in 1946, the abutments showed evidence of widening which may also have been part of the work carried out at the same time).
- at Clay Bridge, which crossed the River Ivel north-west of Clifton, it was noted that the iron girders had been cast in two pieces and joined in the centre, causing vibrations when carts passed over, also the centre girder had been repaired and the bridge could only support a 7 ton (7.1 tonnes) weight. The report recommended inserting six new iron trellis

girders to reinforce the outer part of the old girders and the iron plates that support the road – at a cost of £135.

– detailed surveys were carried out on both Shefford's north and south bridges and the plans for strengthening the north bridge in 1873 have been preserved.

From 1858 to 1874 Bedfordshire had two surveyors, one each for the north and south of the county. But, in 1874, William Wallace was appointed surveyor for the whole county with a salary of £200 pa.

The Steam Plough Club archives reveal that both engines survived in Mr Kitchener's ownership through to 1921 when they acquired the road registration identities of NM 196 and NM 197. Clearly, the engine that fell through the bridge was repaired and had a long life. When T B Kitchener & Co was sold in 1927, they had 27 steam engines, a living van and water cart, plus a large range of other agricultural machinery.

Plate 5. T*he bridge today.*

Note

1. The Court for Crown Cases Reserved was created by the Crown Cases Act 1848 for criminal cases in England and Wales for appeal only on a point of law. It was superseded in 1907 by the Court of Criminal Appeal which became the Criminal Division of the Court of Appeal in 1966.

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Acknowledgements

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ANN CURRELL

The Tacchi Family, Part 2

The Tacchi Family in Bedford was founded by Antonio Tacchi, born in 1784 at Bellagio on Lake Como, Lombardy, Northern Italy. Antonio settled in Bedford and set up his business as a carver, gilder and barometer maker.

Soon after his arrival in England he changed his Christian name to Anthony and, on 24 April 1811, he married Ann Butcher by licence at the Church of St John the Baptist in Eversholt. At the time of their marriage Anthony lived in St Paul's parish, Bedford. Ann was born in 1790 at Eversholt and was the youngest of the seven children of John Butcher and Elizabeth (née Hawkins). We continue the story of their children from HIB, 10.1, Summer 2023.

THE CHILDREN OF ANTHONY AND ANN, CONTINUED

Elizabeth Tacchi, the second daughter and third child of Anthony and Ann

Elizabeth was born in 1816 at Bedford. Elizabeth married Horace Terry on 14 April 1846 at St John's Church, Bedford. Horace was the son of William Terry, a gardener. Horace was an ale and porter merchant.

After their marriage Elizabeth and Horace moved to London. They had three daughters: Mary was born in 1849, Annie born in 1855, and Hannah born in 1859. In 1876 Horace died at Wandsworth, London. The 1881 census records that Elizabeth was employed as a housekeeper living at Wandsworth, with her unmarried daughter, Annie who was a school governess.

Elizabeth's daughter Mary married William Silsby in 1878 at St George, Hanover Square, London. William (1850–1893) was born in Stotfold, Bedfordshire. The 1891 census records that Mary and William are boarding-house keepers, and they have five children. Also living with them are Elizabeth, and her other two daughters, Annie and Hannah. Elizabeth died in 1895 at Islington, London.

Ann Tacchi, the third eldest daughter and the fourth child of Anthony and Ann

Ann was born in 1818 at Bedford. Ann moved to Italy, where she married Giuseppe Tacchi on 1 September 1867. Giuseppe was the son of Francesco and Antonia Maria Tacchi. Giuseppe and his father were government officials. After their marriage, Ann and Giuseppe lived in Bellagio, Como, Lombardy, Italy. The census for Como records Ann as '*benestante*' which in English means wealthy. Ann died on 5 March 1907 at Como.

George Tacchi, the second eldest son and the fifth child of Anthony and Ann

George was born in 1820 at Bedford. In 1842 George married Susannah Morgan at Clerkenwell, London. Susannah was born in 1819 at Clay Hyson, Devon. The 1851 census records that George is working as a journeyman carver amd gilder. He was living at 8 Manchester Street, St Pancras, Marylebone, London.

George and Susannah had two children. George Jr was born in 1844, and was apprenticed to his father as a carver and gilder. Their daughter Emma was born in 1846. George and his family subsequently moved to 18 Goswell Street, in The Liberty of Glasshouse Yard, London. In the course of his business George made picture frames. He also gilded the Lord Mayor's coach and the Royal Barge.

On 11 November 1870 Susannah died aged 51 years at 18 Goswell Street. Her funeral took place a few days later on 19 November at Foster Hill Road Cemetery. Inscribed on her memorial are the words, 'Susan, wife of George Tacchi of London'. It appears she was known to her family as Susan and not Susannah (*Grave Ref F3 215*).

In 1874 George married his second wife Ellen Death. Ellen was born on 18 December 1841 at Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, and was one of the seven children of Oliver Death and Sarah née Champness. Oliver owned his own drapery business.

In 1852 Ellen and with her family had moved to London. Oliver died three years later. The 1861 census records Ellen living with her mother who was the licensee of the Prince of Wales public-house at 16 Frederick Place, Hampstead Road, St Pancras. By 1871 Ellen's brother, Frederick, had taken over the licence of the Prince of Wales.

George made picture frames for the artist, James Abbott McNeill Whistler. Whistler owed George £41 8s 4d for frames he had made, and Whistler had no means of paying the debt (£42.00 in 1879 is worth approximately £5,550 in 2022). Whistler had been declared bankrupt in 1879 following a libel case against John Ruskin. Although Whistler had won the case he was only awarded damages of one farthing and had to pay his own costs.

The 1881 census records George and Ellen living at 18 Goswell Road, Glasshouse Yard, London, with their two sons, Percy George who was born in 1875, and Clifford John who was born in 1881. George is a self-employed carver and gilder, employing two men. They also employed a domestic servant.

In 1890 George died aged 70 years in London. By 1901 Ellen and her son Clifford were living at 78 Mortimer Road, Hackney. Three years later Ellen was living in one room at 10 Mildmay Park, Islington, London. In 1904 Ellen married Arthur Richard Abbott at Islington. Ellen died in 1906 aged 66 years, in Islington.

Clifford John Tacchi, son of George and Ellen

Clifford was born in 1880 in London. On 13 February 1912 he married Mabel Grace Taylor at Stratford, London. At the time of his marriage Clifford lived at New Wanstead, London. Mabel was born in 1885 at Dartmouth, Devon, and was the third daughter of Albert Taylor who lived in Portsmouth. Before her marriage Mabel was employed as a sick nurse at the home of Godfrey John Meynell, at 76 Redcliffe Gardens, Kensington, London.

Four days after their marriage Mabel and Clifford sailed on the ship *Hitachi Maru* to Hong Kong. The passenger list states Clifford's occupation as a merchant. Clifford was employed by the Public Works Department in Hong Kong. His annual salary was £200. After the Second World War, Clifford travelled to Australia five times. His last visit to Australia was in 1954.

On 22 October 1956 Clifford died aged 76 at 154A Kenton Road, Harrow, Middlesex. Mabel died on 3 January 1957 aged 72 years at 83 Milton Road, Portsmouth.

George Clifford Tacchi, son of Clifford and Mabel

George was born in 1913 in Hong Kong. His Christening took place on 12 August 1913 at St John's Cathedral, Old Hong Kong. In 1932 George was a student at Emmanuel College in the University of Cambridge. He studied English and Medieval Languages. In 1935 he gained his Bachelor of Arts degree. On 11 August 1936 George sailed from England to Singapore on the *Ranpura*.

By 1941 George was serving as a lieutenant with the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force, 1st Perak Battalion when the Japanese invaded Malaysia and in 1942 he was taken prisoner by the Japanese when they invaded Singapore. George died on 16 June 1943 whilst working on the Burma Railway. His first burial took place at Kannyu No 1 Cemetery, Grave 32, near Hellfire Pass. In 1946 George was one of the many prisoners of war who were exhumed and reburied at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. The words inscribed on his memorial: '*Requiescat in Pace*'

(May he Rest in Peace), Section 8, L 2. His wife, Helen Teresa Tacchi, who lived in Singapore survived him.

Percy George Tacchi, son of George and Ellen

Percy, the eldest son of George and Ellen was born on 12 June 1875 at St Botolph's Aldersgate, London. On leaving school, Percy trained as an engineer. He subsequently moved to Johannesburg, South Africa, and formed a partnership with a Mr Wright making bicycles. On 23 June 1897, Percy married Rebecca Kathleen Mercer at Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Rebecca was born in London on 8 June 1875. On 24 January 1899 their daughter, Ellen Kathleen was born in Johannesburg. Ellen's Christening took place on 24 February 1899 at St Mary the Lees, Jeppestown, Johannesburg. Soon after Ellen was born Percy and Rebecca returned to England, and lived at 29 Nemoure Road, Acton, London. While living in Acton they had three children. Percy George Jr (1904–2001), Mercia Olga Eunice (1910–1984), Maurice Phoebus (1913–1992)

In their later years Percy and Rebecca moved to Somerset and lived with their daughter, Ellen at North Curry, Taunton. Percy died in 1970 and Rebecca died in 1975.

THE CHILDREN OF PERCY AND REBECCA TACCHI

Ellen Kathleen Tacchi, the eldest child of Percy and Rebecca

In 1929 Ellen ran her own dance school, 'Tacchomo School of Dance' at 174a Hammersmith Road, Hammersmith, London. She taught ballroom, ballet and musical comedy. In 1931 Ellen moved to Souldern Road, Brook Green, Hammersmith, London, and opened her theatrical business, under the name of Tacchomo Productions. She appeared in several films, including *Men Are Not Gods* in 1936 alongside Rex Harrison and Noel Coward. Ellen and Noel Coward were uncredited. In December 1936 Ellen married Flight Lieutenant Walter Stagg at Kensington, London. Walter said that he fell in love with Ellen at first sight.

In 1939 Ellen opened the Tacchomo International Summer School at Curry, Somerset. The school opened for one month from 7 August to 7 September. Ellen and Walter's marriage ended in divorce. In 1945 Ellen married her second husband, Richard Rodham Morris (1903–1988). Richard was an auctioneer and surveyor. He was born in North Curry, Somerset, and was the son of Alice and Richard Spearing Morris. After her marriage Ellen became known as Kathleen Tacchi Morris.

Kathleen was the founder of Women for World Disarmament, and was a campaigner for peace. During WW2 Kathleen opened her home to

30 children of different nationalities whose parents could not bring them up. In July 1962 Kathleen attended the Moscow Peace Conference taking a message from the Taunton Group of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. She hoped that the message would go some way to finding a solution to the arms race. The message said: 'We believe that food for the whole world is more important than arms production. People in Asia are starving – Russia spends millions on arms. People in the Americas are starving – the United States spends millions on arms. Even in Europe, people are starving – our own country spends millions on arms.

Kathleen died in 1993 at North Curry, Somerset. In 1999 the Tacchi Morris Trust donated £1 million together with a £2.1 million grant from the National Lottery Fund to build the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre at Monkton Heathfield, Taunton.

KATHLEEN TACCHI. Has just finished "Men Are Not Gods" for London Films. She was born in Johannesburg and is of Italian descent, and has earned fame with her dancing in New York, Chicago and Detroit, so we may well look forward to seeing her in an English film.

Caption reads: 'Kathleen Tacchi has just finished 'Men are not Gods' for London Films. She was born in Jahannesburg and is of Italian descent, and has earned fame with her dancing in New York, Chicago and Detroit and we may well look forward to seeing her in an English film.'

Maurice Phoebus Tacchi, the youngest son of Percy and Rebecca
Maurice was born on 16 October 1913 at Acton, London. He started sailing at the age of 16 years. In the mid-1950s he sailed 27,000 miles in his yacht *Cabiri* to the Caribbean, Canada, Panama, the Galapagos, Norway, Sweden, France, Spain and Ireland. In 1954 he was chief engineer of the 52-ton American motor yacht *Glenmoor*, owned by Colonel Thompson, a Louisville, Kentucky, whiskey distillery magnate. For many years he delivered sailing vessels from England to the Mediterranean and France. Maurice died in 1992 at Chichester, Sussex.

THE CHILDREN OF ANTHONY AND ANN, CONTINUED

John Tacchi, the third son and sixth eldest child of Anthony and Ann
John was born in 1821 at Bedford. The 1841 census records John as a house painter and living in the High Street, Sharnbrook. John subsequently went to live with his older brother, George at 8 Manchester Street, St Pancras, London. On 22 March 1852 John married Ann Parry at the Church of St Andrew Holborn, London. Ann was born in Wiltshire in 1825. They had one son, John, born on 6 September 1852 at St Pancras.

John sailed from England on the *Vriendschap* and arrived at Port Phillip, Victoria, Australia, on 1 May 1854. Ann and John Jr joined John later when he had found a home for them. The family settled in Bendigo, Victoria, which became known as a gold rush boom town.

Soon after John arrived, he formed a partnership with Morris Collmann and his brother. They had been in Bendigo since 1853. Like so many others they made for the goldfields. Morris, his brother and John pegged out their claim in the California Gully and named it Collmann and Tacchi Gold Mining Company. The Collmann brothers and John held a third share each. For six years the results from their mine were only moderate. Morris bought his brother's shares and his brother returned to his home in Prussia. Morris then had two-thirds of the shares. They eventually struck good gold, and Collmann and Tacchi's Mining Company became one of the best-known on the field.

Morris Collman was trustee of the first Trades and Labour Council and was believed to be the first in the world to grant his mine workers an eight-hour day, paid holidays, and two weeks' holiday a year.

John Tacchi, his wife and son, left Australia in May 1864 on the *True Briton* and sailed to England. John's partner, Morris left Australia on 16 May 1867 and travelled to Germany where he married.[3]

John, Ann and John Jr returned to Bedford and lived at 11 Wellington Street. John invested the money he earned from the gold mine into property. In 1868 John acquired Cook's Villa also known as Yew Tree House, as it had a large yew tree in the front. He purchased the house for the sum of £1,660. The house and grounds adjoined the London and County Bank, at 81 High Street, Bedford. John had the house pulled down and the ground cleared, and had shops built on the site. John instructed the architect and auctioneer, John Usher to sell at auction all the materials from the house.

Yew Tree House had belonged to Miss Elizabeth Langley who died aged 86 on 27 December 1867. Her burial took place on 2 January 1868 at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref B7 37*).

In 1875 John acquired land in Ampthill Road, Bedford, where he had his house built. He employed Henry Young, an architect and surveyor to design the house and it was built by Laurence Moore of Harper Place.

The 1881 census records John, with his wife Ann and unmarried sister Eleanor, living at 40 Ampthill Road, Bedford. John died aged 60 years on 14 January 1882. His burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref. F3 221*).

On 17 September 1891, Ann married her second husband, James Carruthers at the Wesleyan Chapel, Bedford. James was a retired Superintendent of Bedfordshire Police, Sharnbrook Division. The marriage was short-lived as James died on 22 January 1892. His burial took place in Sharnbrook Churchyard. Ann died at 40 Ampthill Road. Her burial took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery on 8 October 1900 (*Grave Ref F4 227*).

John Tacchi Jr, the son of John and Ann

John spent much of his early childhood in Australia. After he arrived home, he went to the Bedford Modern School. On leaving he began his training in agriculture. He lived at the home of John Maydon who farmed 175 acres at Moggerhanger. John Maydon employed seven men and two boys. When John Maydon retired John continued training with Thomas Robinson at Park Farm Westoning. Thomas farmed 500 acres and employed 14 men and seven boys. John subsequently became bailiff for William Platt at Manor Farm, Beckerings Park, Ridgmont. John took over the tenancy when William retired.

On 25 November 1879 John married Emma Fanny Tansley at St Peter's Church, Bedford. Emma was born in Bedford in 1858 and was one of the eleven children of Charles Tansley and Elizabeth née Negus. Charles was

a master butcher. The family moved several times and lived above the butcher shop. The first butcher shop was at 2 Offa Street, Bedford, and then in 1869 they moved into 95 High Street, and lastly to 111 High Street. (111 High Street is now Barclays Bank). Charles and Elizabeth Tansley lived out the rest of their lives at Alexandra Road, Bedford. Charles died on 24 March 1899 and Elizabeth died on 9 January 1900. Their burials took place at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref E2 177*).

The 1891 census records Emma and John living at Manor Farm, Cobblers Lane, Ridgmont, with their five children: Edith, 10; John, 9; Marjorie, 7; Charles and Mabel, 5.

John had been unwell for some time and on medical advice he took a trip to Italy and appeared to be on the road to recovery. However, on 3 August 1900 while walking in one of his fields he collapsed under an oak tree. Thomas Pearse, a shepherd, found him and carried John back to the farmhouse where he died despite all efforts to revive him. The cause of death was heart failure. John's burial took place at All Saints Churchyard Ridgmont.

After John died Emma and the children moved to Bedford. The 1911 census records Emma living at 68 Ampthill Road, with her daughter Edith aged 30 years, and a live-in servant. Emma Tacchi died aged 86 years at 22B De Parys Avenue. Her burial took place on 26 September 1944 at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref I 206*).

THE CHILDREN OF JOHN AND EMMA

Edith Mary Tacchi, the eldest daughter of John and Emma
Edith Mary Tacchi died aged 98 years on 4 December 1978 at Dial House, Park Avenue, Bedford. The burial of her cremated remains took place in the Garden of Remembrance at Foster Hill Road Cemetery.

John Tacchi, the eldest son of John and Emma
John was a builder by trade and subsequently ran his own building and decorating firm. In 1909 John married May Emma Stevens at St Albans, Hertfordshire. After their marriage they lived at 9 Upper Dagnall Street, St Albans. In 1932 John became a member of the City Council. He was elected Mayor of St Albans in 1941 and 1942. On 17 November 1942, John died aged 60 years, while in office.

Charles Tacchi, the second son of John and Emma
On leaving Bedford Modern School, Charles went into farming. In 1908 he married Charlotte Walker. Charlotte was one of the seven children of

Martha and George Walker. Her father farmed Grange Farm, Brook End, Keysoe. Charles and Charlotte had three children: Marjory, born 1913; Geoffrey, born 1915; and Brian, born 1921. Charles was a tenant farmer at Snelson Farm, Harrold Road, Lavendon, Olney, Buckinghamshire. On 1 March 1933, Charles died in tragic circumstances when his coat became caught up in moving machinery in a barn at his farm. His burial took place at St Peter's Church Cemetery, Harrold. His wife and three children survived him.

THE CHILDREN OF ANTHONY AND ANN, CONTINUED

Mary Tacchi, the fourth daughter and the seventh child of Anthony and Ann

Mary was born in 1823 at Bedford. On 21 July 1850, Mary married Edward Tyler at St Martins in the Fields, London. Edward was born in 1794 at Hartlebury, Worcestershire. After their marriage Mary and Edward lived at 20 Cockspur Street, St Martin in the Fields. Edward's occupation was as a porter in charge of a house. By 1861 Mary and Edward had moved to Bryanston Street, Middlesex. Edward was working as a lodging-house-keeper. Mary and Edward had two children. Susan was born in 1852 and Edward Jr in 1860.

Edward died in 1863 in London. In 1864 Mary married her second husband John Henry William Mansfield at St Pancras, London. John was born in 1832 in London. His occupation was as a lodging-house-keeper. John died in 1875 in London. Mary died aged 77 years in 1900 at Marylebone, London.

Anthony Tacchi Jr, the fourth son and the eighth child of Anthony and Ann

Anthony Jr was born in 1825 in Bedford and drew his apprentice fee.[2] He served only three and a half years of his apprenticeship to John Gudgeon, a tailor of Biggleswade.

Anthony moved to Essex and became a teacher. On 13 June 1853 Anthony married Agnes Manning Gregory at St John's Church, Moulsham, Essex. At the time of their marriage Anthony and Agnes were school teachers at the Chelmsford Union. Agnes was born in 1830 in Middlesex. After their marriage they lived at West Farleigh, Kent. In 1855 their son, Anthony, was born. They subsequently moved to Ketton, Rutland, where their son William was born in 1856. Sadly, William died on 26 May 1858. In 1859 another son, George, was born. By 1864 they had

moved to Suffolk where their son, William, was born in 1864 and their daughter Kate in 1866.

In 1874 Anthony and Agnes opened their own boys' and girls' boarding school (Old Grammar School), at Seckford Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk. That same year Agnes died aged 44 years at Woodbridge. The following year Anthony married his second wife, Ann Pepper, who was a widow. Ann died in 1884 aged 72 at Woodbridge. In 1887 Anthony married his third wife, Frances Southgate at Woodbridge. They subsequently moved to 10 Seckford Almshouses, Seckford Street, Woodbridge. Anthony died in 1913 aged 87 at Woodbridge.

Anthony Tacchi the son of Anthony and Agnes

At the age of 12 years Anthony went to Seckford Grammar School. In 1874 he then went on to study at the University of London. In 1876 Anthony went as a missionary to Madagascar, but, due to unfair treatment, he resigned from the missionary service. Anthony was fluent in the Madagascan language, and became a secretary and interpreter to the Madagascan Ambassadors. He went with the Madagascan Ambassadors to Europe. When they arrived in Paris the French Government refused to allow Anthony to stay with the Ambassadors. The reason given was that a French newspaper reported that Anthony was a British Government spy.

Anthony was also the editor and owner of the *Madagascar Times*. He translated the paper into three languages. He was the only person working there who could speak English and French and had to write and correct the entire Malagasy edition unaided. Anthony died in 1908 aged 53 years in Madagascar.

Thomas Tacchi, the fifth son and the ninth child of Anthony and Ann

Thomas was born in 1827. In 1840 Thomas drew his apprentice fee[2] and served his apprenticeship as a painter, plumber and glazier. By 1861 Thomas was living in lodgings at Girtford Village, Sandy. The 1871 census records Thomas lodging at The Swan, North Road, Sandy. Thomas never married. He died in 1885 aged 59 years at Biggleswade.

Eleanor Tacchi, the youngest daughter and the tenth child of Anthony and Ann

Eleanor was born in 1829 at Bedford. At the age of 14 years Eleanor drew her apprentice fee from the Bedford Charity.[2] She served a five-year apprenticeship to a dressmaker. At the age of 21 years Eleanor was

employed as an assistant dressmaker. She lived at London Road, Luton, the home of her employer, Elizabeth Wingrave, who was a milliner and dressmaker. Eleanor subsequently ran her own dressmaking and millinery business at Upper Wellington Street, Luton. In 1856, Eleanor gave up her business and moved to 30 St John's Street, Bedford. Her parents lived next door at number 32. Eleanor carried on her work as a dressmaker.

Eleanor died in Gloucester. Her remains were conveyed to Bedford, where she was buried on 1 September 1897 at Foster Hill Road Cemetery (*Grave Ref F3 216*).

Peter Tacchi, the eleventh child and the sixth son of Anthony and Ann

Peter was born in 1832 at Bedford. At the age of 13 years, he drew his apprentice fees,[2] and moved to 8 Goswell Street, London. He became an apprentice to the head of the house, Samuel Jennings, a gilder and picture-frame maker.

Living at the same address was Mary Ann Nightingale who was a servant. On 26 October 1851, Peter and Mary Ann were married at St Luke's, London. Mary Ann was born in 1832 at Bethnal Green. The 1861 census records that Peter and Mary were living at Whiskin Street, Clerkenwell. Peter is a carver and gilder. Peter and Mary went on to have eight children, two of their children died in infancy. The 1891 census records Peter and Mary and two of their children living at 20 Easton Street, Holborn. Their daughter Emily aged 20 years was employed as a book gilder, and their son Alfred aged 17 years was a printer.

Peter died in Holborn in 1900 aged 68 years. After Peter died Mary Ann moved to Affleck Street, Islington. She became a monthly nurse. She looked after mothers and their babies during the postnatal period. After she retired, she lived with her son, Alfred, and his wife Sarah and their two sons, Alfred and Albert. Mary Ann died at West Ham, in 1918 aged 87 years.

Richard Tacchi, the twelfth child and the seventh **son of Anthony and Ann**

Richard was born on 31 January 1836 at Bedford. At the age of 13 years, he drew his apprentice fees,[2] and served a seven-year apprenticeship as a carver and gilder.

In 1867 Richard married Mary Ann Sutton at Islington, London. Mary was born in 1833 in Derbyshire. In 1892 they lived at 25 Rodney Street,

Finsbury, London. By 1894 they had moved to 14 Rodney Street. The 1901 census records Richard and Mary Ann living at 135 Kilburn Park Road, Paddington. Richard died in 1910 at Willesden, London. Mary Ann died in 1919 at West Ham, London.

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WILLIAM HALE WHITE – NOVELIST

William Hale White was born in Bedford on 22 December 1831. He wrote under the pseudonym Mark Rutherford. In 1890 he published his fictitious novel *Miriam's Schooling*, which was set in 'Cowfold', in fact Hale White's birth town of Bedford. His acquaintance with the Tacchi family inspired him to write *Miriam's Schooling*.

William Hale White's father, William White, was a printer and bookseller at 5 High Street, Bedford, he later became the doorkeeper for the House of Commons.

Miriam's Schooling by Mark Rutherford is available at Bedford Central Library. His other works, set in 'Cowfold', include *The Revolution in Tanners Lane* (1887); *Catherine Furze* (1893) and *Clara Hopgood* (1896).

Note

3. Morris Collman settled in Berlin. He speculated a great deal, mainly in grain and lost his fortune. He returned to Bendigo hoping to recoup it but all his attempts failed. Morris died aged 73 at Bendigo, Victoria, on 19 May 1902. His funeral took place at White Hills Cemetery. On arrival at the cemetery the Rabbi read the burial service in Hebrew. His coffin was plain wood with no nails, metal, or any decoration, which is always a feature of Jewish funerals. The custom, which has prevailed for centuries, is in accordance with the Biblical teaching that death reduces all to one level. The inscription on his memorial stone reads: 'Morris Collman born at Mackel, Posen, Prussia in the year 1829, died at Bendigo 19 May 1902, aged 73 years. This memorial was erected by the citizens of Bendigo, in grateful remembrance of his many public acts of goodness and charity and especially because he was the first to establish the eight hours system in the mines of Victoria.'

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Linda S Ayres

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A History of Some Faith Groups in Bedford. A Special Issue of Bedford Local History Magazine, Edited by Bob Ricketts, CBE. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. A4, 92pp, price £5 to non-BAALHS members, available from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN.

At the Long Ford: A History of Langford, by Michael Rutt; Ed, Ted Martin. Paperback, 172 pp incl indexes. Price £7 (£10 by post). Langford & District History Society, 2021. Copies obtainable through the Editor.

Beats, Boots and Thieves – A History of Policing in North Bedfordshire, By Des Hoar and Richard Handscomb. Sharnbrook Local History Group. 2013. Paperback, 146 pp, £10 from 24 Loring Road, Sharnbrook, Bedford MK44 1JZ.

Bedford History Timeline, by Alan Crawley and Bob Ricketts. Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society. 2019, Paperback, 94pp, 119 illustrations. Price £8, from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN or £10 incl postage from Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

Bedford Town Centre Statues, by Stuart Antrobus, £5, on sale only at the John Bunyan Museum shop, Mill Street, Bedford, MK40 3EU**.** Tel 01234 270303. Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 4pm.

*Clophill in the Great War: Those who Died and those who Survived***,** by Colin Watt. Hardback, A5 landscape, 169 pp, £12.50 + £2.50 p& p. For purchase details see: website bit.ly/307uLMM or phone 01525 860922.

Colmworth and Neighbours History: Volume 5, March 2023. Published by Colmworth and Neighbours History Society: www.colmworthhistory.org.uk. 44pp including cover, price £6, plus £1.60 p & p from secretary@colmworthhistory.org.uk or Dave Jarrett, 3 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8JQ.

Colmworth and Neighbouring Villages: Then and Now, by Colmworth and Neighbours History Society. 2018. Paperback, 46pp, 100+ illustrations, £5 + £2 postage from Dave Jarrett, 3 Collingwood Road, Eaton Socon, PE19 8JQ.

Henry John Sylvester Stannard with notes on his daughter Theresa Sylvester Stannard, by Richard Morgan. Bedfordshire Local History Association, 2018. 48 pp incl index. Available via the BLHA website http://www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk, £5 + p&p.

*Langford Then and Now 2006***.** Langford & District History Society, 2006. Paperback, 40 pp, 80+ photos, £4 from Rowena Wolfe by phone or email: 01767 312556 or rowena.wolfe@btinternet.com.

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Life in Bedford during the Second World War, by Stuart Antrobus. Published by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological and Local History Society, 2021. A4 paperback, 102 pp, incl Appendices 18 pp, Indexes, 13 pp, 85 illustrations. Price £11, from the Eagle Bookshop, 16–20 St Peter's Street, Bedford MK40 2NN or £13, incl postage, from BAALHS (cheque payable to BAALHS), Bob Ricketts, 68 Mendip Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9EP.

Willington in the First World War by Robert Bollington. Gostwick Press. 2018. 96 pp, £6 from Willington Local History Group (cheque to be payable to them) c/o Rob Bollington, 2 Beauchamp Place, Willington MK44 3QA.