

The Bowdon Sheaf

A BOWDON HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATION

No 7 April, 1986

40p

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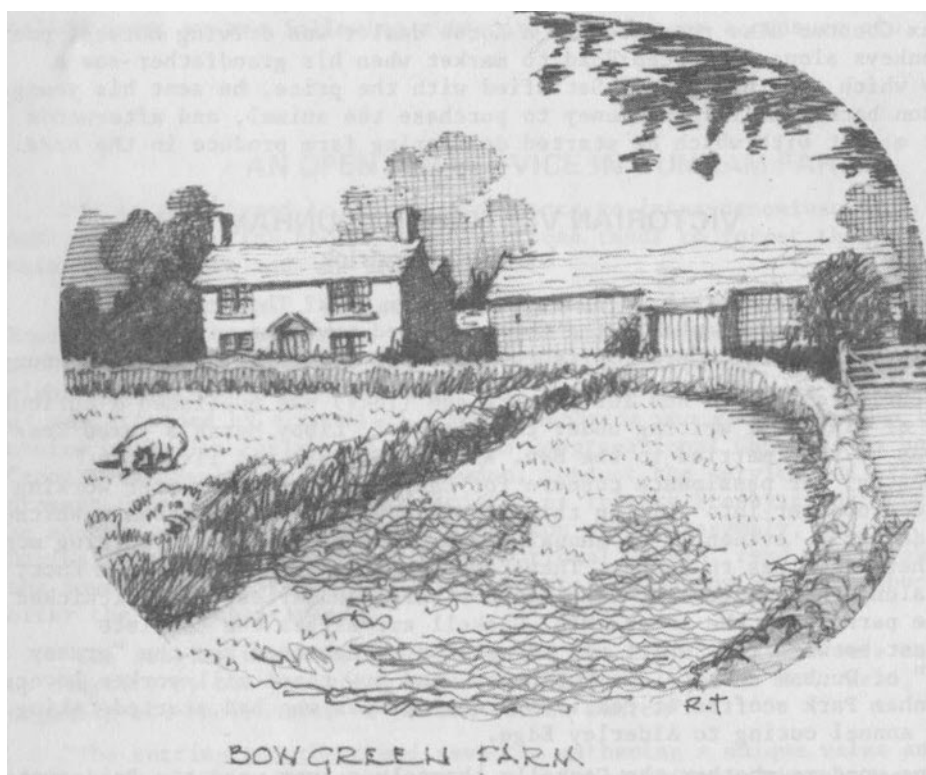
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The long narrow field in front of Bow Green Farm was the last one of this shape to survive the programme of enlarging fields.

CATTLE DROVING IN BOWDON by Max Chester

Max Chester, who lives at West Bank Farm where his family has farmed for three generations, recalls how, in his youth, cattle droving was regularly undertaken by local farmers. In those days heifers and colts were taken every year, on May 12th, to graze on the higher ground in the Pennine hills above Buxton. Prior to this operation farmers would brand initials on the front hoof of each beast, for identification, and then take them to Bow Green Farm, where Mr Goodier, the farmer, would collect them in a small paddock in front of his house. On the day a number of men, accompanied by a horse and trap, would drive the animals through Bowdon and Hale Bams to the Bull's Head at High Lane, where they were met by a party of men from Buxton who continued the journey, while the Bowdon contingent returned in the horse and trap after refreshment at the meeting place.

On October 12th the operation was repeated in reverse, when the beasts were returned to winter in the milder climate of Bowdon. This process ceased to be viable after the introduction of cattle waggons by a local man Philip Oakden. Max Chester also recounts how a horse dealer was driving horses, ponies and donkeys along Bow Green Road to market when his grandfather saw a donkey which took his fancy. Satisfied with the price, he sent his young grandson back home for the money to purchase the animal, and afterwards bought a cart with which he started delivering farm produce in the area.

VICTORIAN VISITORS TO DUNHAM PARK by Myra Kendrick

How long has there been access to Dunham Park? The writings of Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, the Cheshire bred novelist with Bowdon associations, provide proof of such access in the mid-nineteenth century. Nearly a hundred and forty years ago (1847) she published a curious piece of fictional writing under the title of "Libby Marsh's Three Eras". She was by then married to the Rev. William Gaskell and living in Manchester; her passionate concern for the plight of Manchester working people drove her into writing this story in which she describes a Whitsuntide day-trip, evidently an annual event, made by Manchester working men and their families to Dunham. They came in horse-drawn barges from Knott Mill along the Bridgewater Canal to the park boundaries, then picnicked in the park under the trees. Mrs. Gaskell emphasises the complete contrast between the "whirl and turmoil" of Manchester and the "grassy walks" of Dunham and its ancient trees, and how these mill-worker lovers of Dunham Park scoffed at restless acquaintances who had started taking their annual outing to Alderley Edge.

One wonders whether the Gaskells themselves ever used the Bridgewater Canal as a means of reaching Dunham. Certainly after the opening of the railway line from Manchester (about two years after she had published this story), Mrs. Gaskell and her husband and children were coming to Bowdon Station by train, to escape the "whirl and turmoil", then sturdily walking on to the park to enjoy the air, the great trees and the grass.

Once the two younger girls were staying at Moss Farm, Bowdon, as they often did, and their father took Meta, the second daughter, to see them. The younger girls met their father and sister at the railway station and they all walked to the park together. Mrs Gaskell wrote about the visit to Marianne, the eldest of the family, who was away at school, telling how the nine year old Flossy, who had been ill, managed the long walk well but found the fallow deer alarming. One suspects that even in 1851 deer were in the habit of following visitors in hope of being fed.

Twenty-five years later, a young Cheshire born man, later to become a celebrated artist and illustrator, took lodgings in Bowdon for a time while working for a Manchester bank. This was Randolph Caldecott, who reminisced to a friend about the charms of Dunham and its woods. It seems, however that the attraction for him was possibly as much "The Swan with Two Nicks" as the park itself.

Another crumb of literary evidence for the enjoyment of the park by the public comes in the Bowdon diary of Mrs. J.H. Ewing, the children's writer, a contemporary of Caldecott's, who in fact came to illustrate some of her stories, notably "Jackanapes", when they were published in book form. She and her husband, when living on the Higher Downs, used to walk their dogs around Bowdon and Dunham Park was one of their haunts. So when we in the 1980s enjoy the green spaces, the ancient trees and the herd of fallow deer, we are following a tradition well over a century old.

AN OPEN AIR SERVICE IN DUNHAM PARK

One is accustomed to hearing reference to inter-denominational participation during recent years, but one tends to forget that efforts in this respect were made in former times.

It is of interest, therefore, to note reports in the Altrincham, Bowdon and Hale Guardian in August, 1930 when "Bowdon churches united in a unique effort" at an open-air service in Dunham Park. The service, at eight o'clock one Sunday evening, was reported to have been a success. It was attended by a crowd of several hundreds who gathered round the choirs of Bowdon Parish and the Downs Congregational Churches to hear Canon Lowry Hamilton, Vicar of Bowdon, conduct the service and offer prayers, the Rev. L.G. Tucker, Minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church give an address which held the close attention of the assembly, the Rev G.C. Davies, Minister of the Downs Congregational Church, read the Parable of the Sower, and the Rev. F.J. Gould, Minister of Bowdon Wesleyan Church, offered the closing prayer.

"The singing was most impressive and the familiar hymns were taken up heartily by the gathering under the leadership of Dr. H.L. Read, organist and choirmaster of Bowdon Parish Church".

"The setting and the crowd gave the gathering a unique value and the clergy and ministers in their robes furnished evidence that it was no ordinary open-air meeting, but a considerable summons to worship". The effort was loyally supported by the Earl of Stamford, his mother (the Countess of Stamford), Sir Arthur and Lady Haworth and Mr Faulkner-Armitage and the Lord Bishop of Chester gave his blessing to the event.

WATLING STREET (continued)
by Ronald Trenbath

During the 18th century Betty Dunham, a gatekeeper at New Bridge Hollow Lodge, who was thought to be an illegitimate member of the Earl's family, recounted many interesting stories which illustrated a different aspect of travelling from that described by William Trenbath's documents. Her accounts record how Lady Warrington, the grandmother of the kindly fifth Earl of Stamford, regularly drove at very high speed in a coach drawn by four very large and powerful black horses to the Knutsford Races in competition against her husband, in another coach, having given him a good start ahead of her, gaily waving her handkerchief to him as she passed him at great speed, and always paying her coachman a sovereign for winning.

Lady Warrington would also drive to the Sanjam Fair in Altrincham upsetting stalls and frightening women and children, but never failing to pay compensation for her "little bit of relaxation", and regularly exchanging vulgar jokes with local youths.

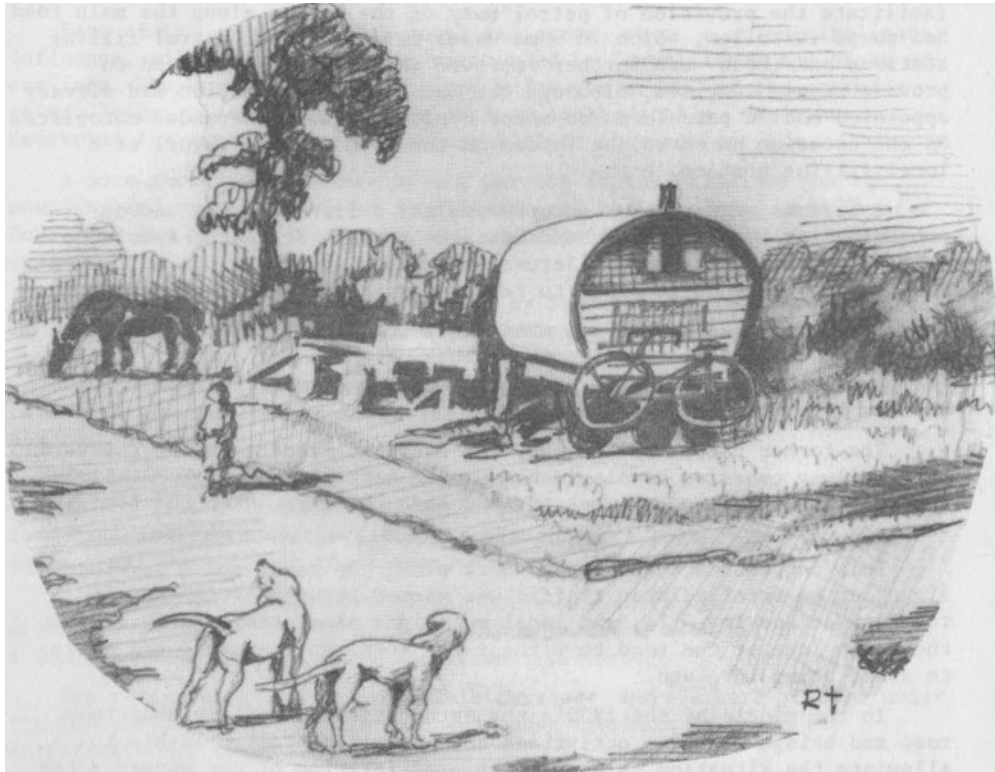
The sixth Earl retained the family tradition by driving a coach and four, and employing two postillions and a coachman to ride on before him in order to clear the way so that he could proceed unhindered. In 1842 Watling Street again became an invasion route when Chartists from Manchester descended en masse upon Bowdon, and the Earl of Stamford ordered that barrels of beer, cheeses and baskets of bread should be placed near the junction with Green Walk in order to divert their attention from trouble. This ploy worked to a large degree, although the pupils and servants at the local ladies boarding school were forced to surrender the contents of their pockets and boxes. The Principal of the school, however, was more devious and after hiding all her money and valuables disguised herself as a poor servant and claimed dire poverty in order to protect her belongings.

Haulage on this road must have been very tough going for horses and a drinking trough was placed at Street Head to provide facilities for watering them after the long haul up from the Bollin, or after negotiating the sharp inclines between Shepherds Cottages and Street Head Cottages, although many carters, in order to avoid the main road, used Bow Green Lane, which had more gentle gradients.

A building shown on the Tithe Map of 1838 at the south east corner of Bow Green Lane, where it joins Watling Street, may have been a smithy providing a service for horses in distress, as this area is still known by many of the older local inhabitants as Smithy Green.

When the condition of roads improved generally, gypsies, who had formerly lived in tents transported by horses, began to travel in horse-drawn caravans, and these colourful vehicles became a regular feature of the countryside, and as recently as 1960 they were to be seen at night encamped on a small patch: of unenclosed land adjacent to Whitfield Cottage in Bow Green.

The gypsies made and sold wooden clothes pegs and trapped and cooked rabbits, hares and hedgehogs, the latter being enclosed in wet clay prior to being roasted on a log fire, as in this way the skin and spines could be separated from the meat. The gypsy children and dogs slept underneath the caravan while the parents slept inside. Farmers learned to know which gypsy families could be relied upon to be clean, tidy, honest and considerate, and which had to be seen off, and the residents who befriended the former usually found it had been to their advantage. The Romanies often bought fine porcelain when they travelled through the Potteries, which became prized possessions to be displayed to those they respected.



Road travel began to decline in the second quarter of the 19th century as a result of the introduction of railways which provided a better service, although in Cheshire it is thought to have been due more to fluctuating trade, with the result that the main roads became deserted and businesses which relied on them for trade became depressed. Many inns and hotels fell into disuse, and whole villages became virtually isolated, and there are people alive today who can remember as children playing quite safely on the main road.

During the late 19th century the bicycle became popular, and every weekend cycling clubs from the north passed through Bowdon on the way to south Cheshire or North Wales, to the annoyance of local police who constantly prosecuted them for infringements of the law. Ellis Clark, a local builder many years ago, used to recall that before he enlisted in the army during the Boer War it was not unusual on a Monday morning for the Magistrates' Court to be overflowing with defendants, and that on one occasion, as a protest, every cyclist passing the local police station rang his bell until out of hearing distance. He noted that as a great many cycling clubs passed during the course of the day the noise was deafening.

Some of the local cottages found it lucrative to provide refreshments for cyclists, and wooden sheds were often erected in their gardens with trestle tables and forms for this purpose, with the Cyclist Touring Club logo, CTC, being prominently displayed outside.

At the turn of the century motor cars were seen on the roads for the first time, and after 1918 their presence rapidly increased. In order to facilitate the provision of petrol many of the houses along the main road had pumps installed, which in some cases developed into petrol filling stations and these were further improved when mechanics started to provide repair services, although the Automobile Association had already appointed mobile patrolmen on motor cycles to assist stranded motorists. On one occasion an aeroplane landed on the main road to refuel at a local filling station.

Accidents were regular occurrences and a first-aid box was on constant display at the Shepherd Cottages and the St John's Ambulance Brigade camped at the John O'Jerusalem's Patch at New Bridge Hollow on most summer weekends in order to render assistance when required. Policemen or AA patrolmen manned all the dangerous road junctions on point duty to control traffic, where they often became quite friendly with regular motorists, and for many years a one-armed patrolman was a popular figure on duty at Bucklow Hill.

The former narrow bridge over the canal at Broadheath and the very busy railway crossing at Altrincham caused bottlenecks which regularly resulted in congestion at weekends and bank holidays, when the traffic was very heavy.

This congestion could spread back along the road, and a spectacular sight can be recalled when traffic was jammed between Altrincham and the Swan at Bucklow Hill, and local motorists drove their families down the south lane of the road to witness the scene and returned via Ashley to avoid being involved.

In the middle of the 1930's the authorities grudgingly undertook road and bridge widening activities and installed traffic lights to alleviate the situation, although the proliferation of car owners after 1945 again produced momentous problems, only to be eased by the building of the M56.

Public benches along the main road provided viewing points for interested spectators during the inter-war years, and one placed near the Park Road junction was the meeting place for local worthies who would sit for hours watching the traffic, and reminisce on former times. On calculation one realizes that these memories would go back to the 1860s.

Erratum

In the article on Juliana Ewing's Bowdon Years in The Bowdon Sheaf No 6, October 1985, the words "the early title deeds of the house were destroyed by fire" should read "the early title deeds of the house were lost". The writer regrets the error.

DENZELL **by Valerie Trenbath**

One of the largest and possibly one of the most interesting houses to be built in Bowdon during the last century was Denzell on Green Walk, built by Robert Scott in 1874 for himself and his Cornish wife who, no doubt, influenced the choice of the name, which is an ancient Cornish word. Part of the grounds, which cover ten acres, show a strong Italianate influence, with a large fountain surrounded by formal lawns and banks of conifers. The unfortunate demolition, a few years ago, of the entrance gates, lodge, clock tower and the archway to the stable yard, have destroyed the sense of enclosure essential to this concept.

A more successful feature of the gardens is the brilliant use of mounding and tree planting to totally conceal the adjoining main Chester Road from the house and grounds, and visually link them with Dunham Park Opposite.

The gardens were further developed by Samuel Lamb, the second owner, who purchased the property at the turn of the century and laid out tennis and croquet lawns. Vines, peaches and orchids were grown in hot houses and Lord Rothschild's former gardener, a man called Ellis, who specialised in orchid growing, was employed for this purpose in a workforce of sixteen gardeners.

Garden fetes in aid of charity were regular events, particularly during the 1914-1918 war, when marquees and awnings were erected to forestall inclement weather, and the gardens were open to the general public most weekends in the summer.

The courtyard at the back of the house was surrounded by greenhouses, stables and other offices, entered through a stone archway, and featured a clock tower which has since been demolished.

Two riding horses and five or six carriage horses were stabled under the protection of a head coachman and under coachman prior to the introduction of motor cars.

Cottages were provided for some of the male staff, the head gardener living at the main entrance gate and the under gardener in a cottage situated in a field behind the property.

Pevsner dismissively described the house as a luscious villa in which debased Jacobean had been mixed with Gothic and Italianate details to produce a very bad composition, but it might now be opportune to re-examine the subject with a more analytical approach, for without becoming embroiled in Pevsner's justified abhorrence of bad taste one must accord this building a greater degree of scholarship than he was prepared to give it. Viewed from the main south lawn the house shows a marked similarity, in general outline to a public building, such as a Town Hall or Guild Hall in Flanders or its northern neighbours, and further careful examination of comparative details would tend to confirm the opinion that the design of the building was inspired by the Early Flemish Renaissance with allowance for Victorian crudity.

To appreciate, this concept it is necessary to consider briefly the development of Early Renaissance architecture in Europe. This style, which had its origins in Italy, was introduced into Holland, Belgium, the Western German States and Denmark from France, not as a complete concept, as Inigo Jones and his contemporaries introduced Palladian architecture into Britain from Italy, but as decorative detailing to be applied to basically Gothic buildings. Thus elaborately designed dormer windows first seen on such buildings as Fontainebleau and Chambord may be seen repeated in almost identical forms on buildings along the western coast of Europe as far as Gdansk in Poland.

Local influences often produced regional characteristics important to the development of the style, so that in Holland the predominant use of brickwork and the sobering influence of the Calvinist Church resulted in a different expression of architectural form from that to be seen in neighbouring Belgium which was under Spanish occupation and Jesuit influence and bound by predominantly stone construction.

Belgian design was similar to French design but characterised by a greater freedom amounting to extravagance and to the grotesque with picturesque results to be further influenced by the coarse and realistic humour characteristic of all Flemish art.

Facades were often asymmetrical with total disregard for architectural balance and a complete lack of French refinement. Renaissance details were quite freely used alongside Gothic ones, to produce a conglomerate form despised by the classical purists of later years.

Apart from the general massing of Denzell most of the detailing can be seen in Ypres, Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent or in neighbouring cities across the Belgian border. The Gothic oriel window and turret, supported on an alabaster column, with quatrefoil tracery which is a dominant feature on the south elevation, is a detail common in many Flemish buildings but it can also be seen in more elegant form at Chateau d'O in northern France and with regional modifications at the Rathaus Chapel in Prague.

Steep pitched roofs similar to the one at Denzell may be seen on large buildings throughout this part of Europe but the decorative tiling is more common to northern France and Belgium and the detailing of the dormer windows and finials, also seen on Denzell, are common to buildings throughout northern Europe as previously noted. The mullioned and transome windows are a feature common to sixteenth century buildings, including Britain, although the bow windows present problems of identification. The porte-cochere is an interesting and useful feature, being a porch large enough for the passage of wheeled vehicles, and is perhaps more Italianate than other features of the building and could be a free translation of any number of Renaissance arcades, including Hatfield House in Hertfordshire. It is interesting to note that Early Renaissance architecture in England, although introduced from France, tended to have less affinity with that of northern Europe than the countries discussed, and whilst many fine examples exist from the time of Elizabeth I, such as Kirby Hall, Hardwick, Audley End, Hatfield House and Wollaton Hall they are mainly located in rural areas and very little influence can be noted in English towns today.

This French influence was also of much shorter duration in England, than in the other countries mentioned, no doubt due to the introduction of Palladian work direct from Italy.
(to be continued)

ISSN-0265-816X