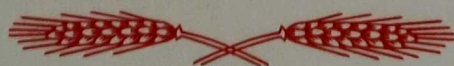


Villages of
BANBURYSHIRE

including Lark Rise to Candleford Green




COTTISFORD CROPREDY
FRINGFORD FRITWELL
GREAT TEW HORLEY
JUNIPER HILL KING'S SUTTON
LOWER HEYFORD SIBFORD GOWER
SIBFORD FERRIS



MARTIN GREENWOOD

ALIVELY, KNOWLEDGEABLE and enchanting guide to this little known part of North Oxfordshire, including the three villages immortalised by Flora Thompson in *Lark Rise to Candleford*. The other villages included are Cropredy, Fritwell, Lower Heyford, Horley, King's Sutton, Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Great Tew.

The history of each village is followed by a walking tour, taking in the buildings, streets and memorable inhabitants. 

MARTIN GREENWOOD is a well-known local historian.

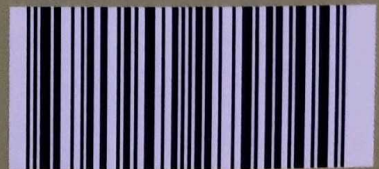


The Square, King's Sutton, painted by Molly Huxley, a long-term local resident until her recent death. (Painting lent by Barbara Harris.)

Cover design by Sarah Tyzack



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In Flora's Footsteps

LARK RISE

CA

Cottisford
Finnere
Fringford
Godington
Hardwick
Hethe
Juniper Hill
Mixbury
Newton Purcell
Stoke Lyne
Stratton Audley

Daily life in Lark Rise
country 1876-2009

MARTIN
GREENWOOD

A LIVELY AND KNOWLEDGEABLE portrayal of the real-life characters and places behind the BBC television series *Lark Rise to Candleford*. **Martin Greenwood**, a well-known local historian, provides a wide-ranging review of village life in 'Lark Rise Country', focusing on the major influences and changes during and after Flora Thompson's Victorian childhood.



The Old Forge, Fringford (Candleford Green), where Flora Thompson worked in the post office in the 1890s, painted by Julie Barrett, 2006. © Julie Barrett



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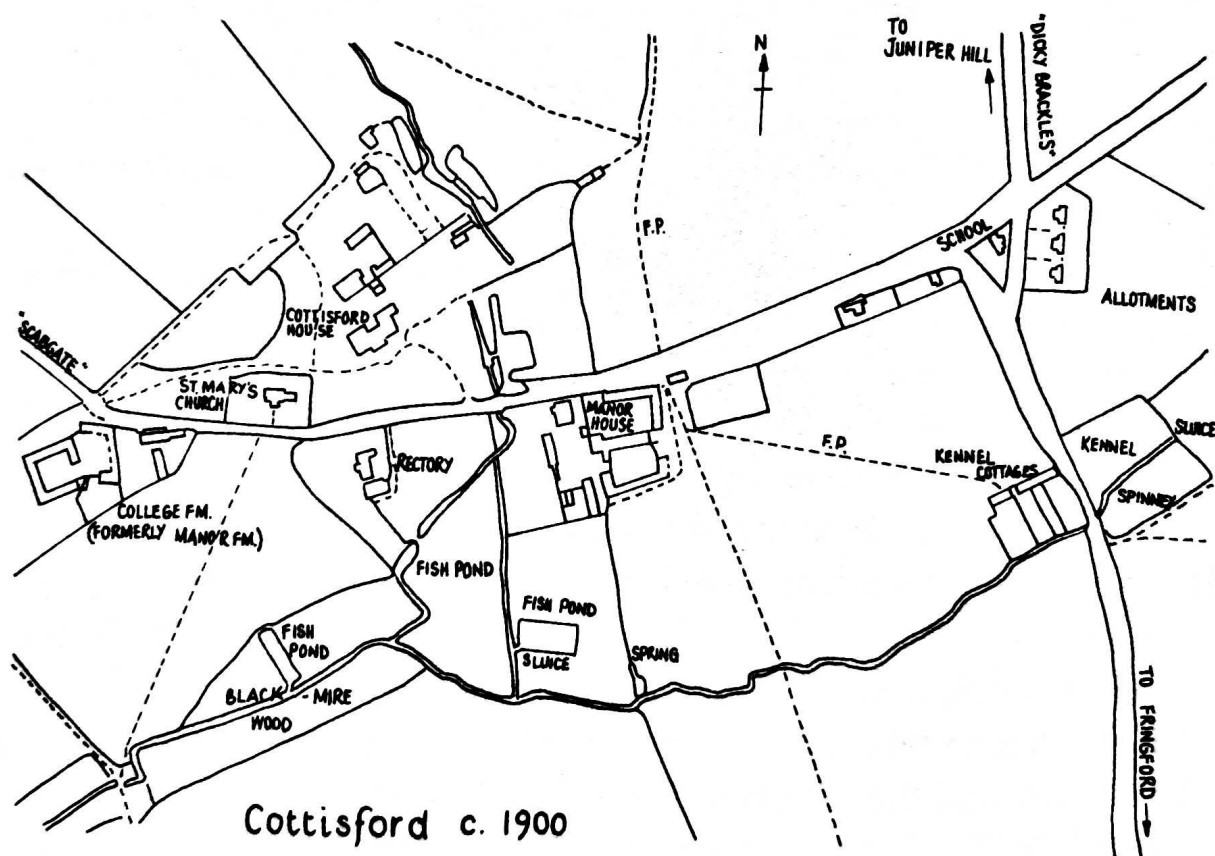
tiz@phonecoop.coop

MANOR FARM was built in the fourteenth century and is one of the oldest dwellings in Oxfordshire. It was remodelled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when a south wing was added. There is a sixteenth-century parlour on the west side. The original house consisted of a north-south block, with two small projections on the west. The main block had a hall and solar on the first floor. A number of old windows survive. In 1857, the 2nd Earl of Effingham bought it from the Ramsays and leased it to tenant farmers. Joseph Waters, the farmer whom Flora knew, lived here for nine years before moving in 1891 to Home Farm, Shelswell.

THE OLD SCHOOL, at the crossroads, was built in 1857 by Charles Harrison, with a small grant from the 'National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church'. In the following year he built a teacher's residence, attached to the schoolroom. Flora walked daily to Fordlow School, where she was taught by Miss Holmyard (Miss Holmes), who married the squire's gardener. She has much to say in Lark Rise about the school and her schooling in the 1880s.

Cottisford (Fordlow)

The old village, including the church, the Rectory, and College Farm, lay mainly to the west of the old ford, while the medieval manor was to the east. Eton College owned the manor from 1441 until 1885, when it was sold to Edwards Rousby. To the south of the road there used to be numerous fish-ponds to supply Cottisford House, which was formerly a grange in the hands of the Norman Abbey of Bec. The village pond and the stocks were to the north of the road. Under the Enclosure Award of 1854, the principal beneficiaries were Eton College (489 acres), Sir Henry Dryden and John Kendal (592 acres), and the rector C.S. Harrison.



In the nineteenth century, the village was dominated by agriculture and the population rose and fell with the fortunes of farming. In 1801, the population was only 106, rising to a peak of 327 in 1871. By 1901 it had fallen to 161, following the agricultural depressions. By 1951 there were only 154 and the present population is about 130. In the late nineteenth century, about half the population were living in Juniper Hill. In Cottisford itself, some 30 to 40 people were living in the group of cottages known as The Warren, which was situated on the north side of



St Mary's Church, Cottisford, south east view in 1825 (J.C. Blomfield).

the village, about half a mile from the crossroads by the School. These had been built in the 1820s, presumably by William Turner to re-house the occupants of the church cottages which he had demolished. The whole place was deserted by 1910 and today there is no trace of it.

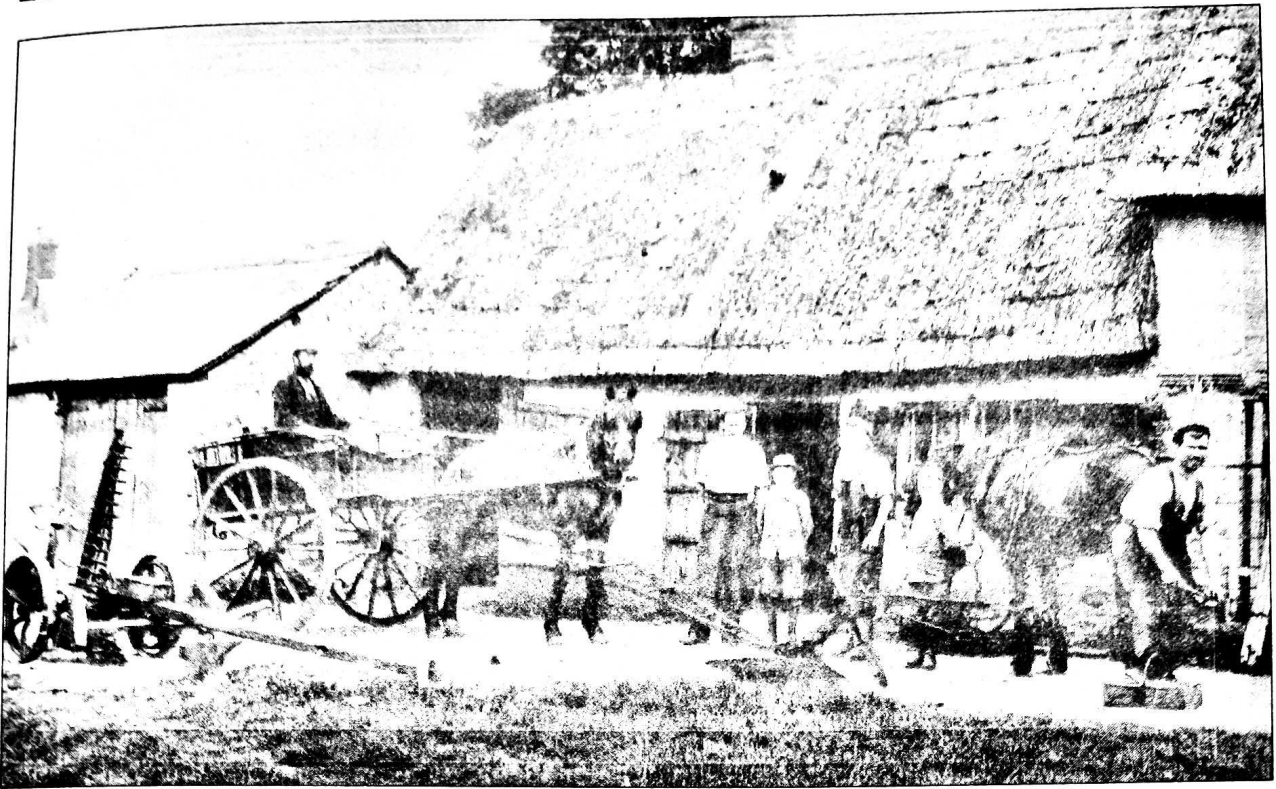
We begin our walk at St Mary's Church (GR 587311).

ST MARY'S CHURCH: the churchyard used to be enclosed by cottages on three sides. About 1825, William Turner took the lease of Cottisford House, altered the roads and demolished the cottages to lay out pleasure gardens. On the right of the path to the south doorway, there are the remains of an old medieval cross.

13th century: the church and the three-light east window and the south porch doorway date from this period, as does the recess on the north side of the chancel, with a low stone slab and the stem of a cross.

The south porch doorway has recently been restored and the old sundial replaced.

16th century: on the south wall of the nave, there is a mutilated brass of a man in armour with his wife and thirteen children. He may be John Samwell who leased the manor from Eton College and died c.1500.



The Old Forge, Fringford, with Frederick Plumb (Matthew) in the cart c.1898. The smartly dressed boys were two of Kesia Whitton's nephews on a visit from Liverpool. (Bill Plumb)

the Boxing Day Meet in the Market Square was an outstanding event in the Bicester calendar. However, the prohibitive costs of policing the event have forced a move to Winslow. Apart from the hunting itself, the Hunt is involved in the popular local Point-to-Points and actively encourages the involvement of the young in the local Pony Clubs.

Hunt employment¹⁴

Since the early nineteenth century, a number of trades have been almost entirely dependent on the work provided by the Hunt. For many years these included saddlers, harness-makers, farriers, horseclippers, breeches-makers, sporting tailors, ostlers and grooms. So much was hand-made that Bicester and Brackley benefited enormously from the hunt trade. An early guide of the Automobile Association even referred to Bicester as a 'Horsey Little Town'. In the period prior to the outbreak of the 1914-18 War, the town in the winter was full of hunters, with stables in all parts of the town, including Kelly's Livery Stables off the Banbury Road (on the site of the present Stable Road). So many horses meant that three shoeing forges, three saddleries, and two coach-builders were very busy industries indeed, employing about fifty men.

Examination of the various trade directories for Bicester from 1876 to 1967 confirms the town's continuing involvement with the hunt trade, although it is noticeable that by 1924 there were many fewer listings. We