

# Chearsley Village Historical Society

September 2022

# Chearsley over the years.....

In the early years of the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium a 'Roman Road' (from Dorchester to Alconbury) ran through our village

Chronicles from the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> century, report that Saxon king 'Cerdic of Wessex' defeated the Britons in a major battle near our village

Our village (Cerdeslai) is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086)

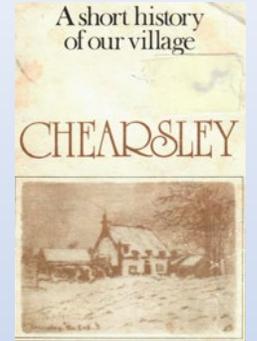
Evidence of human habitation in the field below St Nicholas Church, until the area appeared to have become derelict from the time of the Black Death in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> Century

In 1538, our village church formed part of the 'gift' of the parsonage of Notley Abbey to Christ Church Oxford at the time of the Reformation.

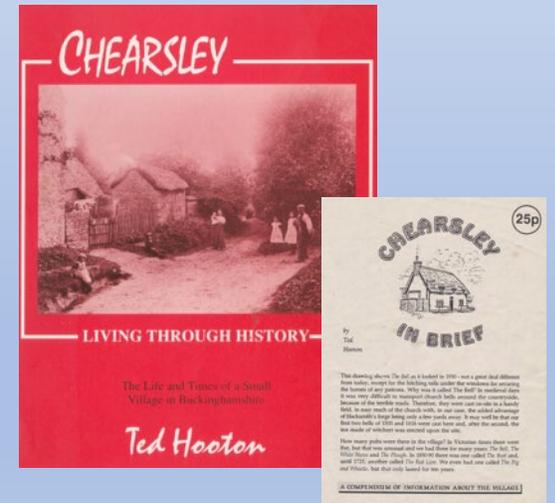
Bucks described as 'bandit country' in the English Civil War (1642 – 1651), caught in the 'crossfire' between Roundhead & Cavalier forces

In the early 1800s there were still seven farms (and five pubs!) within the village.

From the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the population of our village has more than doubled to well over 500 residents.



**Dennis Lane**  
**Published 1977**



**Ted Hooton**  
**Published 1994**

## Programme for this evening.....

- Update on Stockwell Restoration Project
- Plans for a 'Chearsley Village Heritage Trail'
- Application for external funding (inc. National Lottery Heritage Fund)
- Next steps
- Discussion

# The Stockwell Restoration Project

## Project Group:

Derek Allen, Paul Bown, Ian Houseman, John Howard, John Lewis.

## Works undertaken to date:

Extensive restoration and landscaping works, including the pond and adjacent drainage system

Grant received from H&W Community Board (£8,000)

## Remaining works include:

- Further landscaping
- Site maintenance plan
- Kerbing works
- Restoration of 'original' pump
- Completion of historical research



c.1900



January 2021



January 2022



# The Stockwell

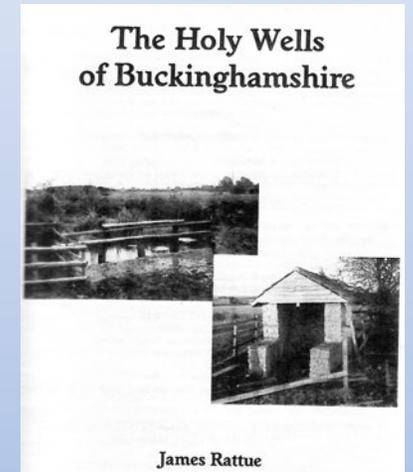
Many 'Holy Wells' had their origins in pagan rites but assumed a prominent role, visited by pilgrims and often attributed with miraculous healing powers, as Christianity became the dominant religion within these shores

*"...in 1538 'Cherdeley Well' was mentioned in a gift of the parsonage to Christ Church, Oxford...."*

**Source: 'Holy Wells of Buckinghamshire' (2003) - James Rattue**

Their religious significance of 'holy wells' declined rapidly in the years following The Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

Water for household use in our village was still being drawn from The Stockwell as late as the 1960s



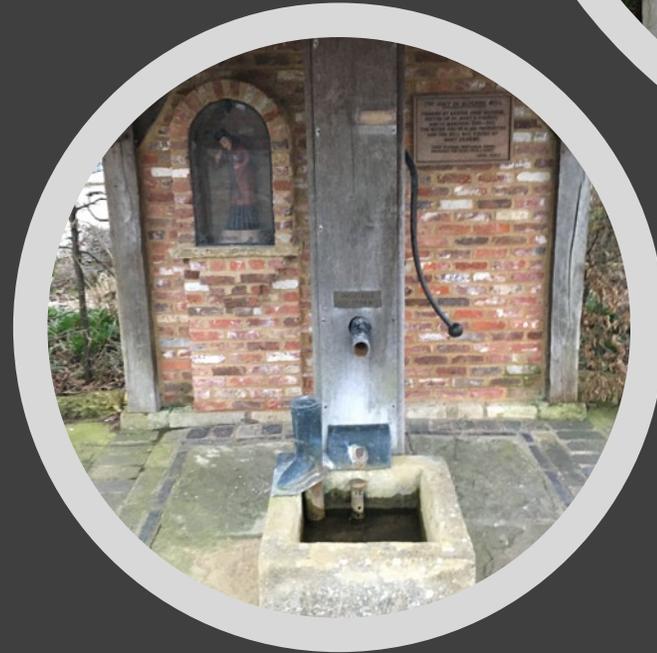
# 'The Holy or Schorne Well' – North Marston Village

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“John Schorne, a famed wonder worker who became the Rector of the village in 1290. Schorne, an unofficial Saint performed two great miracles, firstly conjuring and trapping the Devil in a Boot and secondly, he is said to have struck the ground with his staff whereupon a spring with amazing healing powers gushed forth.

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The village flourished and prospered due to the well and after Schornes death and subsequent burial in the Church pilgrims came in droves to visit the shrine.”



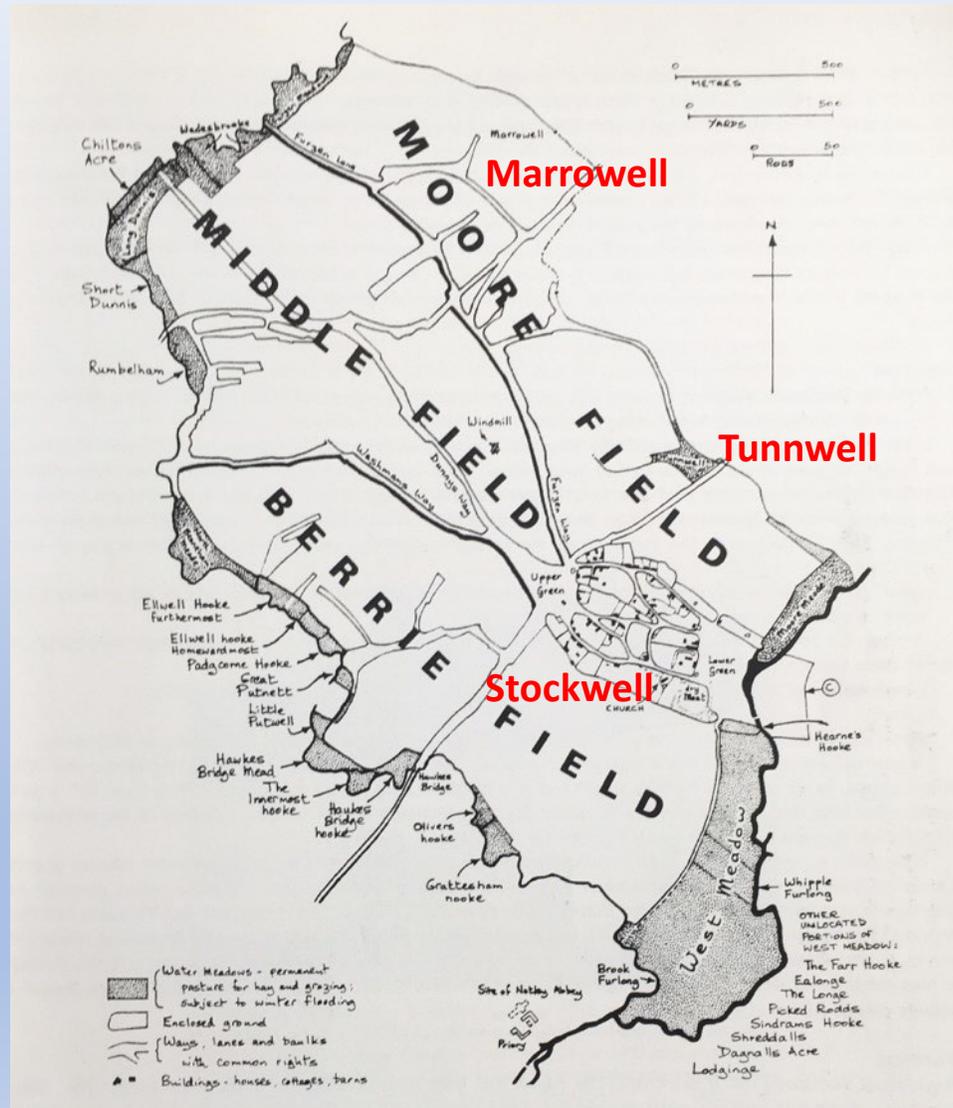
**HOLY OR SCHORNE WELL**

FOUNDED BY MASTER JOHN SCHORNE,  
RECTOR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH,  
NORTH MARSTON, 1290-1314.  
THE WATER HAD HEALING PROPERTIES  
AND THE WELL WAS VISITED BY  
MANY PILGRIMS.

'JOHN SCHORNE, GENTLEMAN BORNE,  
CONJURED THE DEVIL INTO A BOOT.'

LOCAL JINGLE

# Holy Wells – within Chearsley Parish boundary

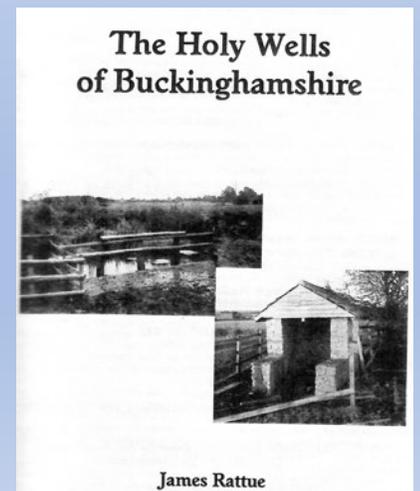


## Sources:

Map of Chearsley Parish (1624) drawn by Ted Hooton, based on a number of historical sources.

Published in 'Chearsley – Living Through History (1994)

'Holy Wells of Buckinghamshire' (2003)  
James Rattue



# Chearsley Village Heritage Trail.....some ideas

- Interpretation boards at key sites  
e.g. St Nicholas Church, The Stockwell, Village Green
- Traditional 'fingerpoint' signs to replace current 'public footpath' signage
- Plaques (inc. QR Code linking to an audio commentary) located at key sites of 'historical interest' within village 'conservation area':
  - former village school and village pond
  - former village shops
  - houses where traditional crafts were undertaken
  - former village pubs
  - current 'listed buildings'\*
  - other sites?

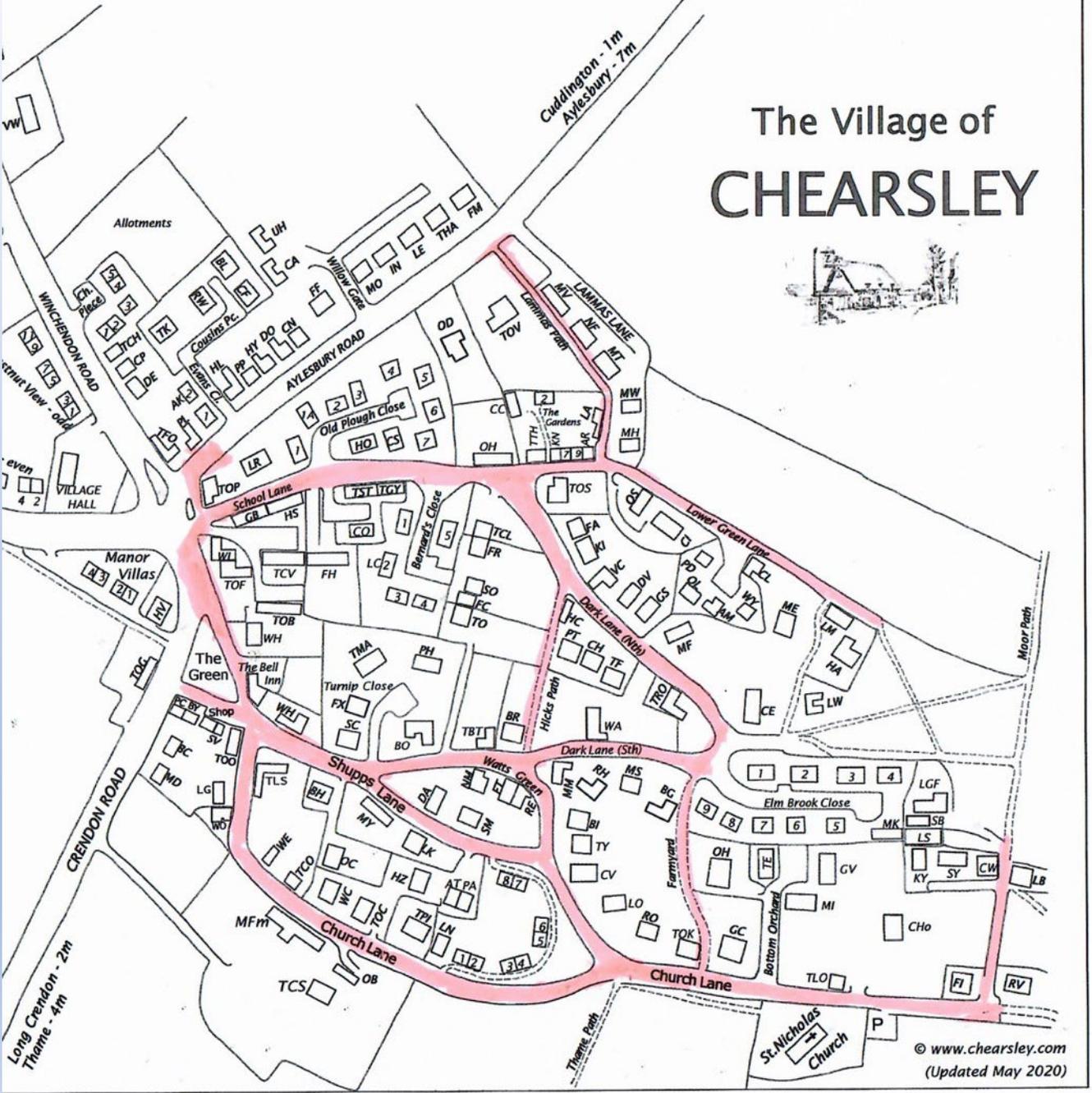


\* <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/search/?q=Chearsley>

# Proposed 'Heritage Trail'



Approx. Size 10 x 15 cm



# 'A walk about old Chearsley....' (Dennis Lane 1977)

## Walk No.1

The Bell – down Church Lane, passing....

'The Old Post Office', 'Sunrise' ('The Long House'), 2 cottages - '*West End Cottage*' & '*The Cottage*' - 'Manor Farmhouse', 'The White House' ('The Old Bakery') 'The Stockwell', 'St Nicholas Church' 'Chearsley House'.

## Walk No. 2

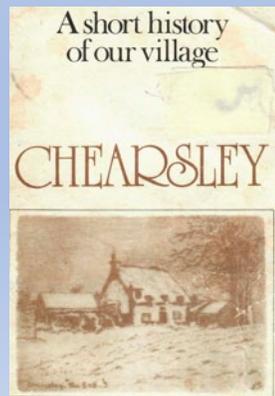
The Bell – down Shupps Lane to Watts Green and top of Dark Lane, passing...

3 cottages – '*Lynton Cottage*' ('Needlemakers'), '*Farthing Cottage*', '*Regency Cottage*' – 'The Boot', 'Michaelmas Cottage', 'Walnut Orchard'.

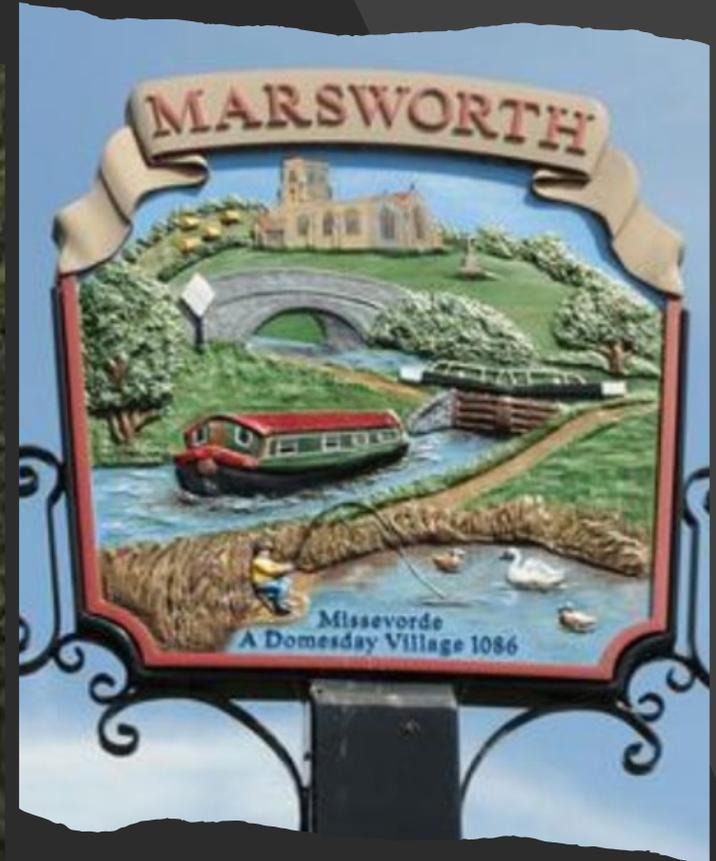
## Walk No. 3

The Bell – along The Green, down School Lane and Lower Green Lane, back up Dark Lane, passing....

'The Old Farmhouse', 'Village Pond', 3 barns – '*Great Barn*', '*The Caveings*', '*Hideaway*' – 'The Old Plough' 'The Forge', 'Furze Farmhouse', 'The Old House', 5 cottages – '*The Thatches*', '*Knoll Cottage*', 'No. 7', 'No. 9', '*Arden Cottage*' – 'Lammas Cottage', 1 cottage - '*Old Sawpit Cottage*', 'Rose Cottage' ('Mead House'), 'Elder Tree Cottage' ('Lacemakers'), 'Lower Green Farm', 'The Close', 'Vine Cottage', 'Hicks Cottage', 'Merrifield', 'The Rosaries'.



# Local examples of village signs.....



# Application for funding - National Lottery Heritage Fund

'Project Enquiry' (£10,000 - £250,000 Projects) submitted in July 2022

Key points in NLHF response:

- Project needs to demonstrate significant heritage 'activity' and 'engagement'
- Mandatory project outcome.....'a wider range of people will be involved in heritage'
- Need to demonstrate good understanding of those who engage in 'heritage' and those who do not
- Details of 'specialist providers' where needed
- Final application will need to include details of planned activities and costs
- Focus on 'outcomes' as opposed to 'outputs'

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding>



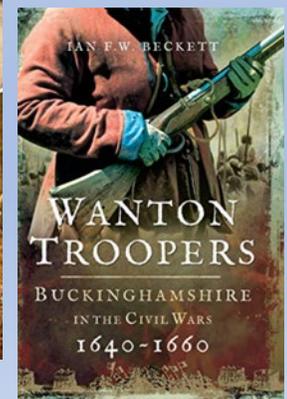
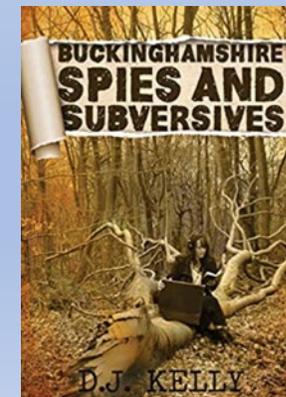
# Chearsley Village Historical Society

- 'Steering Group'
  - agree role and scope of activities of new CVHS organisation
  - engage with local groups – e.g. schools, community groups, walking groups etc.
  - seek external funding
  
- 'Project groups' to manage village 'events' and 'initiatives'
  - meetings with invited speakers
  - liaison with Bucks 'heritage' organisations
  - carry out research, including contact with local history 'experts'
  - create and maintain 'archive' of historical records, including digital library and recorded interviews with 'longstanding' Chearsley residents



# Historic Project Groups – some questions??

- The original name of our village, 'Cerdesleah', as mentioned in Saxon chronicles, is linked by some to a famous victory by the Saxon king 'Cerdic of Wessex' over the Britons during the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, which may have taken place in this locality.
- There have been various theories as to what took place at the 'moated site' below our church, which may have become derelict following the Black Death in 1346.
- During the Civil War in the 1640s, the Parliamentarian forces headquarters were based in Oxford, with our own county of Buckinghamshire separating them from the mainly London based Royalist troops. Although no major battles took place in Buckinghamshire, there were regular skirmishes in our immediate locality.



# Chearsley Pubs Revival Day



The Bell



The Plough  
(The Old Plough)



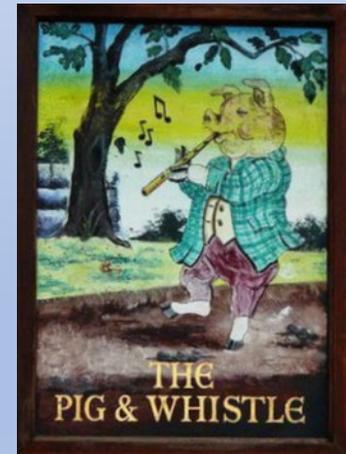
The White Horse  
(The Old Bakery)



The Boot

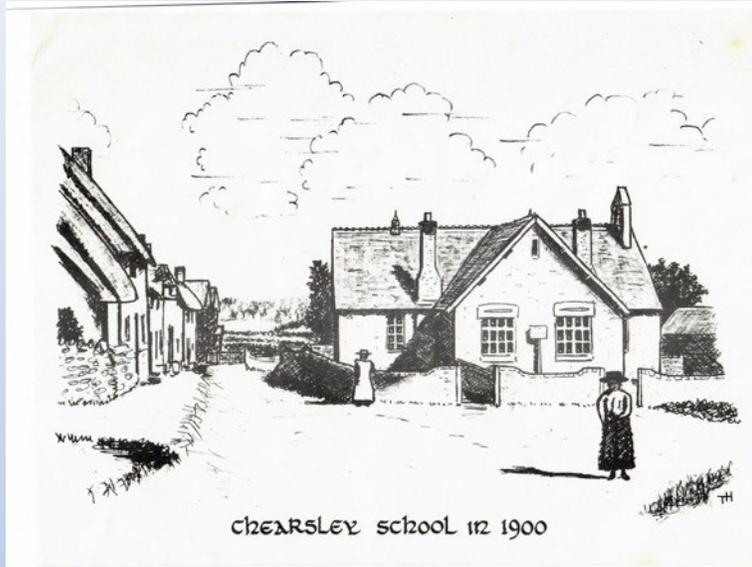


The Red Lion  
(Cloverdale)



The Pig & Whistle  
(Merrifield – The Mansion)

# Chearsley Village School Reunion



1900



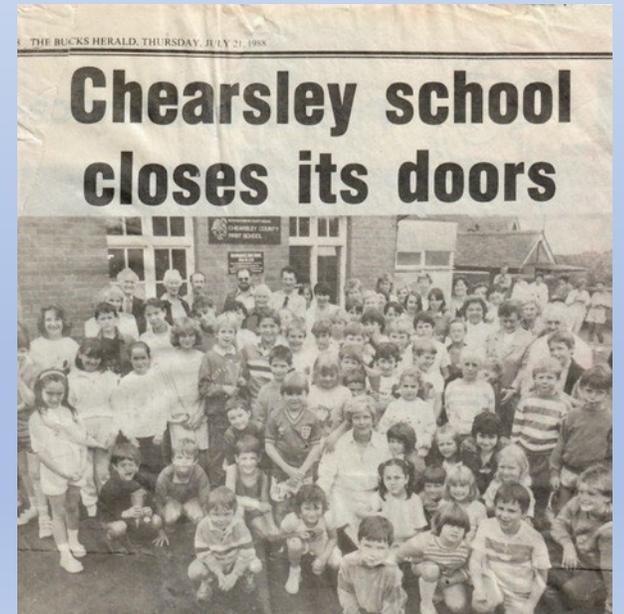
1931



1959



Centenary Pageant 1980



1988

# Celebrating our heritage .....

100 not out!!



## The Great War Centenary 2014 - 18

### Chearsley remembers....

An opportunity for the community of Chearsley to share memories, photographs, letters and other memorabilia from The Great War.

### at Chearsley Village Hall

Sunday 11th November 11.30 - 14.00  
*(following the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial)*

Refreshments available

Free entrance - during the event, a collection will be made for the 'The Not Forgotten Association' [www.nfassociation.org](http://www.nfassociation.org)

For those wishing to bring along their memorabilia, tables and display boards will be available.

For more information, please contact:  
John Howard 07970 651326 or [jnh@dbmc.co.uk](mailto:jnh@dbmc.co.uk)



November 2018



## St Nicholas' Church HISTORY DAY

Sunday 20th March  
2.00 ~ 4.00 pm

- Our church is named after St Nicholas, the patron saint of children.
- It was originally a tiny Anglo Saxon chapel dating back to the 11th century.
- There used to be a 'Devil's Door' behind the font for evil spirits to fly out during baptisms.
- Our Communion chalice is Elizabethan - over 300 years old.

Discover all of this and much more....

View Chearsley from the top of the church tower. Visit the bell-ringing room, and ring the Sanctus Bell. Discover entries in our church records, with Baptisms dating back to 1800. Enjoy afternoon tea in our beautiful churchyard, with family crafts and a treasure hunt.

It's free and there's no need to book.  
For more information contact:  
Sharon Sampson [sharon@cloverdale.biz](mailto:sharon@cloverdale.biz)  
Alicia Howard [alicia@greatbarn.net](mailto:alicia@greatbarn.net)  
Sara Turnbull [stj3456@gmail.com](mailto:stj3456@gmail.com)

### All Welcome



## Church History Day

20th March 2-4pm

Treasure Hunt  
Can you spot the church tower's graffiti or find the oldest grave?

Design and make a stained glass window

Climb the Tower  
Can you spot your house?

Ring the 'Hurry Up' bell

Cakes!

March 2022



November 2022

## Next steps.....

- Carry out formal 'community consultation' (i.e. research survey) to establish level of interest in village history and heritage
- Establish a range of 'special interest groups' to investigate particular areas of village history
- Establish Steering Group to review potential areas of activity for a Chearsley Village Historical Society
- Finalise application for financial support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund

*“What is the future of Chearsley?”*

*We have in this year of 1977 celebrated the Queen’s Silver Jubilee and all the many exciting events leading up to and during Jubilee week itself seem to have drawn all sections of the village together in a wonderful way.*

*Let us hope that the communal functions and the ensuing spirit of goodwill will continue and that the present and future generations of Chearsley inhabitants will remember with pride their past heritage.”*

**Dennis Lane ‘A short history of our village – Chearsley’ 1977**

