

## The evolution of Barby, Crick and Kilsby 1750-1900 (Part 2)

In the previous issue, we explored some early factors that shaped the growth of our local villages – manorial lordships and turnpike roads. This issue will focus on the coming of the canals, and the ways in which Barby, Crick and Kilsby responded to this new form of transport.

1768: Canal Act for Coventry.

1769: Canal Act for Oxford.

1778: Oxford Canal open as far as Banbury. Work then suspended, until 1786.

1790: Many Acts passed, incl. Grand Junction, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick & Birmingham, Old Union.

1794: Acts passed for Grand Junction, Warwick & Braunston, Kennet & Avon.

1796: Act passed for Warwick & Napton.

1799: Completion of Warwick & Napton and Warwick & Birmingham canals.

1801: Buckingham and Paddington branches of Grand Junction Canal completed.

1802: Nottingham Canal completed.

1805: Main line of Grand Junction Canal completed from Brentford to Braunston.

1810: Completion of Kennet and Avon Canal.

1813: Completion of Grand Junction Aylesbury branch.

1815: Completion of Grand Junction Northampton branch.

### The influence of canals

Crick lies on the Grand Union Canal, which runs very close to the village thanks to the canal tunnel under Crick Hill. In Barby and Kilsby, the Oxford Canal passes through each parish but does not come close to either village.

A meeting was held on 30th August 1808, to consider linking between the Grand Junction and the Leicestershire & Northamptonshire Union canals, by the proposed Grand Union Canal. Estimates were given of expected annual freight tonnage on the Grand Union Canal:

- Lime for agricultural purposes (i.e. fertiliser), 50,000 acres requiring lime at 10 quarters per acre, is 500,000 quarters, which will also consume 15,000 tons of coals
- Limestone, of which a considerable quantity will be sent into Leicestershire, 150,000 tons
- Coals for domestic purposes, 10,000 tons
- Coals from the Derbyshire mines, 20,000 tons.
- The produce of the land in grain, hay, wool, bricks, lime, and stone for building

It was obvious that money could be made out of this venture – and Crick was quickly developed as a major station on the new canal, with a wharf and a coal depot, along with two brickyards.

#### **Northampton Mercury - 3 December 1814**

GRAND UNION CANAL WHARFS. To be LET on LEASE with immediate Possession, TWO new WHARFS; No.1 In Husbands Bosworth parish adjoining the Harborough-Lutterworth Turnpike Road, comprising a new substantial House, with Offices, Warehouse, Weighing-Machine, and nearly three Acres of Ground; No.2, in Crick parish, adjoining the Northampton-Dunchurch Turnpike Road, with a new and substantial House, Coal Sheds, and about one Acre of Ground.

### Felling of Barby Wood 1817-1818

Work on the Oxford Canal commenced in 1769, By 1774 it had reached Napton, but the company was running out of money. In 1775, a second Act was passed allowing the company to raise more funds. Construction recommenced, and by 1778 the canal reached Banbury, but work on the final stretch to Oxford did not begin until 1786.

Although the Oxford Canal in Barby does not run close to the village, it passes around the foot of Barby Hill. In the agricultural depression following the Napoleonic Wars of 1793-

1815, many farmers went bankrupt – and those who survived often had to resort to ingenious stratagems.

The new canal offered a source of salvation to one Barby farmer, whose land included the remains of the once huge Barby Wood. In medieval times the wood covered hundreds of acres, and though much of it was felled between 1570 and 1770 there were still hundreds of mature oak trees on the hillsides in 1815.

**Northampton Mercury - 10 May 1817**

To be SOLD by AUCTION, On 19th May 1817, SIXTY fine OAK TREES. The lots are blazed and numbered, standing in Barby Wood, and in Little Wood, in the parish of Barby and very near the Oxford Canal. For a View, apply to Mr. WINTERTON, Ashby Lodge.

**Northampton Mercury - 28 March 1818**

To be SOLD by AUCTION On 10th April, at the Sign of Black Horse in Barby, UPWARDS of 300 OAK TREES, blazed and numbered, in Barby Wood, and divided into small lots. For further particulars, apply to Mr. WINTERTON, Ashby Lodge.

## **An enterprising Crick carpenter**

William Haddon, a Crick cabinet maker, quickly realised that the new canal through Crick could help him to expand his business – by providing transport for his furniture (which was difficult to carry via road), it allowed him to advertise his wares to a much wider clientele:

**Northampton Mercury - 10 October 1818**

To be SOLD by AUCTION, on 13th October 1818, on the premises of Mr. W. HADDON, at CRICK, THE following new HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE; seven sets of mahogany and oak drawers, set of double oak drawers, two writing desks, mahogany and oak dining tables, mahogany and oak dressing tables, five breakfast tables, two press bedsteads, night stands and wash-hand stand, five lots of chairs, mahogany work box, handsome 30-hour clock, neat oak case, and other articles. The furniture may be viewed on application to the maker, Mr. Wm. HADDON, at any time previous to the sale. The Auctioneer pledges that every article is made of the very best materials, put together in a manner highly creditable to the maker, and will establish his future reputation as a furniture manufacturer.

It is clear that his venture succeeded, as he advertised for an apprentice soon afterwards:

**Northampton Mercury - 23 June 1821**

WANTED, A respectable YOUTH, as an Apprentice to A JOINER and CABINET MAKER. Inquire of Mr. HADDON, of Crick, Northamptonshire.

## **Crick wharf prospers**

In the following reports from the mid-1800s, we see that the canal supported maintenance of the turnpike roads, and shipment of bricks from the Crick brickyards. Kilsby also had a brickyard – but because Kilsby lacked nearby canal access, Kilsby's brickyard was limited to supplying bricks locally – initially to construct the railway tunnel, and subsequently for purely local building projects. Kilsby brickyard therefore ceased operation relatively early, but the Crick brickyards were able to continue much longer.

**Northampton Mercury - 18 March 1843**

PERSONS desirous of SUPPLYING the Northampton and Dunchurch Turnpike Road with HARTSHILL STONE, at Long Buckby Wharf 200 tons, and at Crick, Hillmorton, and Northampton Wharf, each 170 tons, are requested to send sealed Tenders specifying the price per ton to Mr. Britten, Solicitor, Northampton, on or before 15th April.

**Northampton Mercury - 30 November 1850**

CRICK WHARF BRICK-KILNS. TO BE SOLD BY PUBLIC AUCTION, on 5th December 1850, the STOCK-IN-TRADE of Mr J. FOSTER, deceased; comprising nearly 70,000 building bricks, several thousand floor bricks, hexagon and other quarries, several lots of plinth and coping bricks, 600 ridge tiles, 30,000 pipe and common drainage tiles; a few lots of very stout, large tiles for gateways etc.; also several hundred pairs of common sized tiles, several thousand black swelled bricks (for foundation work), paving etc.; patent tile machine, seven wheelbarrows, cover boards and deal planks, brick and other

moulds and mould boards, and a general assortment of other implements; also 12 cast-iron heavy kiln doors and frames.

## **The agricultural revolution**

By the mid-1800s, bulk deliveries of feed and fertiliser, coal and lime were revolutionising the farmer's ability to make maximum use of the land.

We can get some idea of the magnitude of this change by comparing livestock numbers in farm auction sales (as listed in newspaper reports for Kilsby) during the period 1800-1900:

1800: 78 sheep, 8 cattle, 1 horse  
1813: 19 sheep, 3 cattle, 1 horse  
1818: 75 sheep, 17 cattle, 1 pig  
1822: 50 sheep, 11 cattle, 3 pigs  
1825: 164 sheep, 14 cattle, 5 horses  
1830: 84 sheep, 11 cattle, 6 horses  
1830: 266 sheep, 2 cattle, 3 horses  
1846: 385 sheep, 39 cattle, 11 horses  
1848: 46 sheep, 14 cattle, 6 pigs  
1853: 771 sheep, 92 cattle, 22 horses  
1860: 107 sheep, 28 cattle  
1865: 151 sheep, 32 cattle, 7 horses  
1872: 39 sheep, 25 cattle, 1 horse  
1893: 360 sheep, 82 cattle, 11 horses

We see that average farm sizes are increasing – and there is at least a doubling of average livestock numbers, particularly sheep and draught horses. It is also evident that the gap between rich and poor is steadily increasing.

In the following issue, we will look at the effects of the next transport revolution – the arrival of the railways – in which, although Kilsby was more involved than any other local village, many of the long-term benefits actually went to other communities.

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