

BARNET and DISTRICT RECORD SOCIETY

B U L L E T I N

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DEVIATIONS OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

In considering the diversions of this road, it must be remembered that its importance has grown only during the last 200 to 250 years.

In the early 18th century it was called the St. Neot's Road^a, the portion from Hadley to Galley (Gannic) Corner being within Enfield Chase. At this time it was in a very bad state^b.

Gannic is a corruption of Gannox, originally a farm house on Mandevyll's Hill^c, later a small Elizabethan mansion^d, small remains of which still exist at Elm Farm, Bentley Heath. With 120 acres of land it formed the endowment of the Frowyk Chantry in South Myms Church. The modern Ganwick for Gannic - a change not for the better - is due entirely to the Great Northern Railway calling their signal box by that name.

"The Angel" (1720), later "The White Horse" (1745)^e, was a beerhouse in a wooden cottage slightly south of the present "Duke o'York," which was built in 1811 by Mr. Pallet. It must be remembered that Gannic Corner was a descriptive name, as the old road, wide plan, formed a definite corner^f. The present straight road in front of the "Duke o'York" was made in 1735, and runs over a bed of very fine shifting sand, a formation common to the South Myms area.

On the west side of this road from Hadley to Gannic was a high bank known as Gannox Bank^g, and there are frequent reports in the Georgian period of it being broken down by the local inhabitants. It will be realised that the

Tudor and Stuart Kings would not have allowed an important road to run through their hunting chase. As Bentley Heath, which ran along the whole western side of Gannox Bank, is described as open brush land, it is evident the bank was erected to keep the deer in the chase.

In 1730 the Galley Corner and Lemsford Mill Toll Bar Trustⁿ, was formed by the local gentry - the Marquis of Salisbury, Hatfield House; R.W. Gaussen, Brookmans; Jeremy Sambrooke, Gubbins; John Sambrooke, Nashes (now Moffats); Sir William Leman, Bart, Nyn Park, Northaw; Roger Coningsby, North Mymms Park; Francis Bowyer, Gannox - by Act of Parliament, 3, Geo. 11, c 10, they were authorised to deal with the nine miles of road between the two places. From the "Duke o'York" to the present Potters Bar War Memorial the road followed its present course. Potters Bar at that time consisted of two small mansions (Cuttoles or Cathale and Easy Lodge), three farms, three publichouses, a few, mainly wooden cottages. From there it took the right-hand road, passing Asty's Farm Houseⁱ, which stood N.E. of the present house, Morven, shortly after pulled down and the Clock House built, on the left, and the Deputy Ranger's house (of Enfield Chase) on the right, and again entered the parish of Enfield along The Causeway. This road gave the same trouble as existed at Gannic Corner; in 1727 the gentry of Northaw expended £158.18.0., and again in 1757 £25.13s.4d., on repairs to the road^j. The only Toll Bar at first was at Coopers Lane, a hamlet with quite a number of houses and cottages, and I think the bow window on the south side of Chase House was the tollkeeper's office (of Whetstone). We know this house was originally a brewery and also called "The New Inn", or "Chequers Inn"^k. The usual Acts of Parliament were obtained for the continuance of the Toll Bar Trust, and the name was changed several times. The records

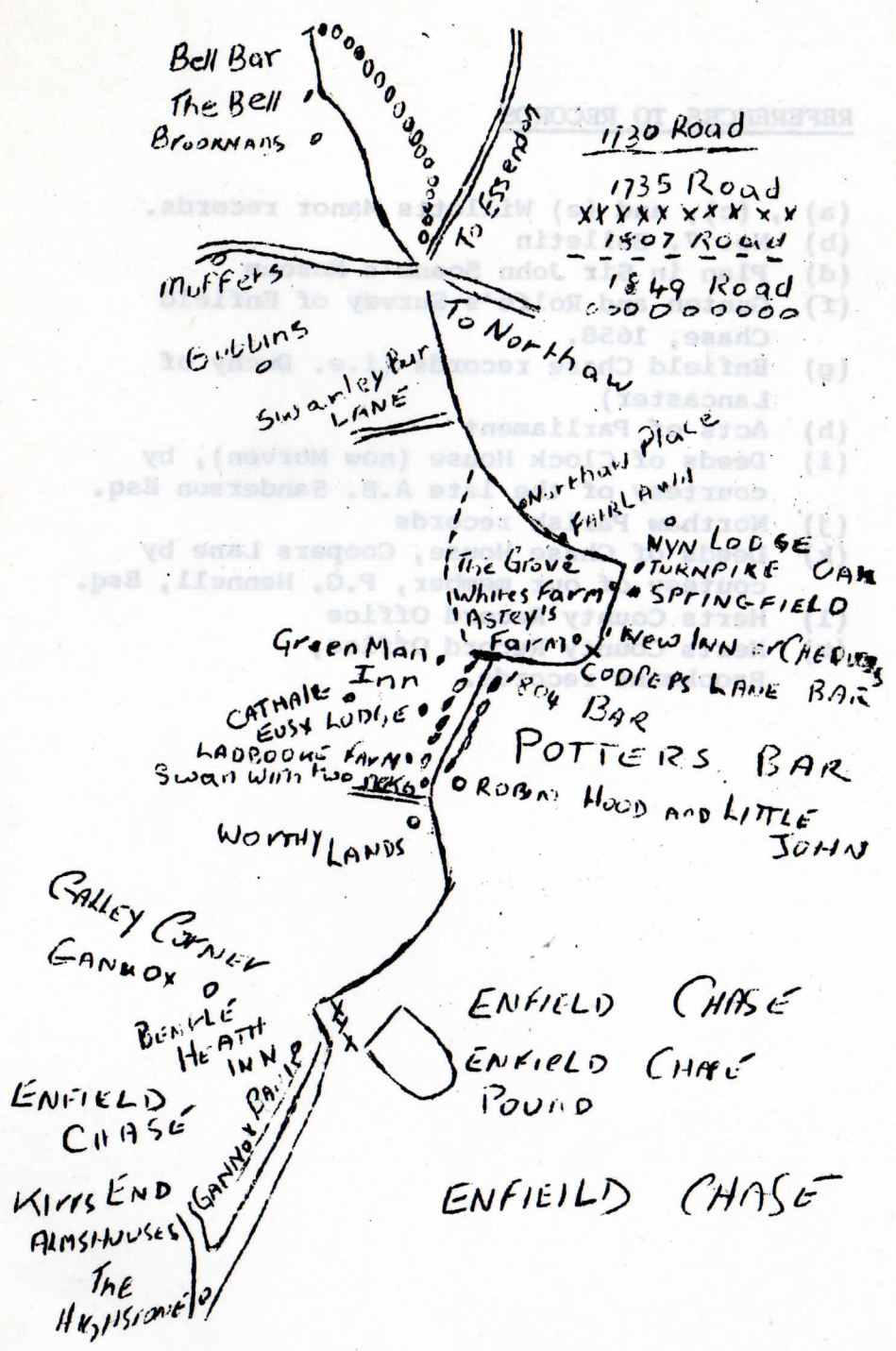
of the Toll Bar Trust are lost, except for one volume, 1846-55, which covers fortunately the longest diversion from the 16th milestone to Hatfield¹. The road continued along Coopers Lane as far as Turnpike Oak, that huge oak tree on the right-hand side of the road, marked on all large scale ordnance maps, then turned sharply left in front of the Lion Gateway south of Northaw Place, and followed the line of the present footpath to the foot of Little Heath Hill. I cannot produce any documentary evidence for the Hertfordshire portion of this diversion. As is well known, the Herts Session Rolls are not complete. My opinion is that the diversion never went to the Justices; John Hunter, who owned Gubbins held the site of the present road, and it is probable he gave the site and took the old road. The portion of the present Great North Road from Potters Bar War Memorial to Quakers Lane was made in 1802, the road from Quakers Lane (formerly Colliers Lane) to The Causeway being closed. The Toll Bar was also moved to the north end of Potters Bar in 1804.

The closure of the road across the Clock House estate is typical of the many diversions made by landowners in the Georgian period. There are about a dozen examples in the parishes of South Myms and Northaw. The finish of this one is, however, unusual and somewhat amusing. A short distance up the former road from the present Great North Road to The Causeway stood a public-house called "The Red Lyon". It was evidently demolished, but the land was the property of the Lords of the Manor, the Brewers Company. They would not sell, and insisted on having access thereto. So the owner of the Clock House had a plot of land adjoining his lawn, which he did not own and could not buy. In 1856 the Brewers Company granted Mrs. Lee, then owner of the Clock House, a lease for 99 years at £4 per annum ground rent, still with right of access for them thereto. As all this estate is now vested in the National Trust it must now be freehold.

The road then followed its present course, passing Swanley Bar Lane, a corruption of Swanland, its 12th-century owners, to the 16th. milestone, splitting the Gubbins estate in twain. Here was a junction of five roads - S., Great North Road; W., Muffets Lane; N.W., Great North Road; N.E., Essendon Road; E. Northaw Road. Our road proceeds up the hill near to Brookman House, into the rick yard and out into Bell Bar, so called from "The Old Bell" publichouse^m, which formerly stood on the left just outside the park gates. This house then moved to the other side of the road, and was finally transferred as "The Lord Melbourne" to the bottom end of the hamlet on the new road; later it was changed to "The Swan", until finally its licence was allowed to lapse. The road then continued on to Lower Woodside through Hatfield Park, between what is known as Millwards Park and Hatfield Park, to the top of Church Street; Hatfield, and down the hill. The big diversion north of the 16th milestone was inserted in the Toll Bar Trust's Bill of 1830 but they never had sufficient money to carry it out. In 1840 the Northern Railroad Co., later the London and York Railway, and finally the Great Northern Railway, approached both Mr. R.W. Gausson, of Brookmans, and Lord Salisbury about running their railway through their respective estates. Both owners offered their land provided the Railway Co. diverted the road into its present form. The matter dragged on for years, finally in 1848 the Railway Co. offered the Toll Bar Trust £8,000 in debentures, and Mr. Gausson and Lord Salisbury agreed to buy them, thus giving the Toll Bar Trust the funds to make the new road. This diversion, according to Telford's plan, was gradually carried out under the supervision of Sir James McAdam and the road was opened to traffic on 31st January 1850.

March 1954.

H.J. BUTCHER



Bell Bar
The Bell
Brookmans

Muffets

Gubbins

Swanley Bar
LANE

To Essendon

To Northaw

Northaw Place
FAIRLAWIN

The Grove
Whites Farm
ASTEY'S
Farm

NYN LODGE
TURNPIKE OAK
SPRINGFIELD

NEW INN or CHERTONS
COPPERS LANE BAR

POTTERS BAR

ROBEN HOOD AND LITTLE
JOHN

Green Man
Inn
CATHALE Inn
EUSY LODGE
LADBROOKS FARM
Swan with two necks

WORTHY LANDS

GALLEY CORNER
GANNOX

BEAKLE
HEATH
INN

ENFIELD CHASE

KINGS END
ARMSHOUSES

The Hkissone

GANNOX PARK

ENFIELD CHASE

ENFIELD CHASE
POND

ENFIELD CHASE

1130 Road

1735 Road
XXXXXXXXXX

1807 Road

1849 Road
OOOOOOOO

REFERENCES TO RECORDS

- (a) , (c), and (e) Willotts Manor records.
- (b) No. 7. Bulletin
- (d) Plan in Sir John Soane's Museum
- (f) Gunton and Rolfe's Survey of Enfield Chase, 1658.
- (g) Enfield Chase records (i.e. Duchy of Lancaster)
- (h) Acts of Parliament
- (i) Deeds of Clock House (now Morven), by courtesy of the late A.B. Sanderson Esq.
- (j) Northaw Parish records
- (k) Deeds of Chase House, Coopers Lane by courtesy of our member, P.G. Hennell, Esq.
- (l) Herts County Record Office
- (m) Herts County Record Office, Brookmans records.