

## *WHERE DO You LIVE?*

### **The roads in Goldington from farmland track to trunk route**

#### **Part 2 - The early road pattern**

We look now at the roads which criss-cross our parish. How did the layout of the roads develop in Goldington? In the Middle Ages there was effectively a crossroads in the centre of the parish. This crossing is not always apparent on the early maps as the intersection was effectively in the middle of Goldington Green and the roads are often shown only as going up to the edges of the green; the route across is not always marked. Thus we have a framework of roads comprising the St Neot's Road running west to east from Bedford, Church Lane going north from the Green and Barker's Lane stretching south to Newnham Abbey.

One furlong name associated with a road which has lived on was Putenhoestrete otherwise spelt Putnoe Street. This runs from Church Lane out to Putnoe Farm. The use of the word 'street' is often indicative of Roman occupation and at least two Roman artefacts have been found in the area. The 'Viatores' in their book *Roman Roads in the South East Midlands* suggest that it was the continuation of a road from Shefford *via* Old Warden but concede that there is very little conclusive evidence for this. There was also a Roman Farmstead - completely eradicated during the gravel extraction in the south of the parish - lying roughly underneath the present lake in Priory Country Park.

There were certainly other green lanes and paths in the parish, for example down to the mill at Rishingoe and among the cottages clustered about the green but those mentioned above were the only noteworthy 'roads' and even these would only have been rough, cart-rutted tracks.

Early maps are, not surprisingly, few in number and often difficult to relate to modern maps especially when the cartographical accuracy is somewhat approximate! The first of these early plans to consider here is the large county map of Bedfordshire produced by Thomas Jeffreys in 1765. This shows remarkable detail and the roads of Goldington are clearly marked. These include all those mentioned so far and two more enclosing the church and Goldington Bury and a little further out an extension of Putnoe Street to the east and south *via* the modern Bury Walk around the Bury grounds. The only other road Jeffries includes appears to be a northern extension of Bury Walk through East or Windmill Field and across the Renhold boundary Brook. Unfortunately the brook itself is very imprecisely drawn and it is difficult to assess exactly where this road lay but it seemed to join up with the path which still exists today running out to Salph End. On Bryant's map of 1826 there is no evidence of this route although all the other 'roads' so far mentioned are marked.

The Pre-enclosure Map of the Parish dating from 1852 indicates a trackway following roughly the same course through Goldington East Field as far as the common land along the brook banks. Here it stops with no sign of a bridge crossing but this being a parish map only the Goldington Road is depicted as extending beyond the boundary and so it may well have continued over the water. There was considerable iron-age and Roman activity in Renhold just across the brook and it is possible that some sort of crossing existed.

Looking at the Ordnance Survey maps we see that on the Old Series map updated in 1836 the road across windmill field is clearly defined and crosses the brook into Renhold roughly where the entrance to the

Norse Road cemetery has been built. In the middle of the road a building is marked and I suggest that this is the location of the windmill which was to give its name to the former East Field and much later to Windmill Close. The site is at the highest point in the locality which would seem ideal for a windmill. [Now under Hudson Road] Interestingly Jefferys marks two windmills on the Kimbolton Road in Bedford and one to the west of Newnham Avenue but none in Goldington! The County Planning Department's book on Bedfordshire Mills gives a grid reference which would place the mill under *Go Outdoors* next to the brook on low ground. (What is the history of this windmill? It is definitely documented. Who were the millers? When was it destroyed? More research for another article I think!)

By the time we get to the Enclosure Award map the fieldscape in this area has changed dramatically and a perfectly straight Occupation Road has been scored across windmill field to its centre from Church Lane at Elms Farm. This was a private road giving the landowners access to their property.

There are some aerial photographs taken in 1952 and on these can be seen, very faintly, some of the old pre-enclosure furlong outlines in Windmill Field. With the use of some imagination, a ghost line of the old road leading to the brook can be traced but there is no sign of a crossing. Nor is there any sign of a crossing on the large scale 1902 Ordnance Survey map. Today the area has been totally changed with the building of Norse Road and the Crematorium. Did this track across Windmill Field exist and, if so, why was the bridge or ford apparently so completely eradicated?

[Next time: *The Later Nineteenth Century*]

[*To be continued*]

