

RETROSPECTIVES



Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society 1868- 2022

Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society milk cart at the crossroads c.1921

Left to right: Jack Townsend, policeman; Freddie Cook, RAC patrol,
Freddie Crane, milk delivery driver

From the collection of the late John Bailey, donated to the FLHS

The Journal of FINEDON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

January 2023

Chairman's Report

This year has been a quiet year for the Society. The Buffs' 2022 Christmas Fair was cancelled because of bad weather and no other similar activities took place during the summer.

We have had a good, interesting selection of speakers during the year, thanks to Carolyn. However, myself and fellow committee members are becoming concerned at the noticeable decline in the number of those attending the monthly speaker's evenings. The October meeting, when we only had 18 attendees, is a case in point. It is now getting to a stage where our income from these evenings does not cover the combined cost of the speaker's fees and room hire. In previous years this has never been the case. In 2023, for the first time, we will not be holding a speaker's evening in August.

In September, we took part in the Church Flower Festival. Our contribution to the festival, which was made for us by Emily Wilson, was much admired. Thank you to Emily for your help and assistance.

At the time of writing, there are two events on the last weekend in November in which we will take part: the Christmas Tree Festival and the Library Christmas Market.

During the summer, the Princess Royal opened Chester House, for which the Society received (at only four days' notice for security reasons) an invitation for two members to be present. James Sheehan and Sue Nicholls attended the event on behalf of the Society.

Finally, I would like to thank, on behalf of the Society, Sue and Rosemary Nicholls for preparing and serving refreshments for every meeting for many years.

David Bailey

Treasurers Report for the Financial Year ending 31st October 2022

The opening balance of £4,244 on 1st November 2021 has reduced to £3,791 at the year end. Membership subscriptions and private donations are similar for this year and last. Income has remained similar to last year. However, expenditure, has risen by some £640. The Mission Room hire cost and speaker fees have increased considerably this year in line with the

number of presentations and the higher charges being made by our speakers. A much-needed projection screen was purchased this year which should last for many years.

The £5 increase in membership subscriptions to £10 per person, per year (as agreed at the 2022 Annual General Meeting), beginning on 1st November 2022, may assist in restoring Society funds together with any other means of boosting income.

My grateful thanks to Mr Harry Nicholls for auditing these accounts once more on my behalf.

James Sheehan

2022 Annual General Meeting

Committee Members

The current committee members were prepared to serve another year. Therefore, with no other nominations, they were re-elected en-bloc.

Chairman	David Bailey
Vice-Chairman	Michael Shipton
Treasurer	James Sheehan
Secretary & Journal Editor	Mick Britton
Minutes Secretary	Brenda Beck
Photographic Archive	Karen Eames

2023 Subscriptions

Thanks are due to all those members who have already renewed their subscription. Your subscription (£10 per person from this year) can be sent to James Sheehan, 17 Ivy Lane, Finedon, NN9 5NE. Alternatively, it can be delivered to Michael Shipton at 10 Rockleigh Close, Finedon, if this is more convenient.

For members who use online banking, there is the option of transferring your subscription to *Finedon Local History Society* (or as much as can be fitted into the online transaction); Sort Code 09-01-29, Account Number 02892977, giving your name(s) in the reference section of the transaction.

Setting up a direct debit for the annual subscription is a further option. It would be appreciated if members choosing an online banking option, whether a BACS payment or direct debit, would inform James, preferably via email, at finedonlhs@outlook.com.

If you have not yet renewed, we hope that you will do so before 30th April 2023 so that you will continue to receive the next edition of the newsletter, which will be available in May.

May 2023 Journal

Mick Britton

The Coronation of King Charles III will take place on the 6th May this year. As the main article for the May Journal, I intend to take a reflective look at the Finedon Coronation events and life in the town at the time of the late Queen Elizabeth's coronation on 2nd June 1953.

The Society is fortunate to have in its archive a 1953 Coronation Scrapbook, researched and collated by the then pupils of the Top Class at Finedon Girls' School. This scrapbook, donated by Tom Jefferies, son of the then Headmistress Mrs Grace Jefferies, provides a view of Finedon since the girls, as part of their project, interviewed local shopkeepers, farmers, and factory owners. The scrapbook also contains several newspaper articles and press photographs, some of which has not been seen before.

To assist me with this article, I am asking if society members 'of a certain age' have memories of the day (or the year) that they would be prepared to share with me, as it would be very much appreciated. I can be contacted at the email address, telephone number or address below.

Thank you in anticipation!

Telephone: 07988 065010

email: finedonlhs@outlook.com

Post: 42 Belvoir Drive, Barton Seagrave, Kettering, NN15 6RB

The society also has a website at www.finedonlocalhistorysociety.com and a Facebook page at [finedonlocalhistorysociety](https://www.facebook.com/finedonlocalhistorysociety).

Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society, 1868-2022

Carolyn Smith

The recent announcement that the 'Co-op' garage and store on Burton Road has been sold to another company (ASDA), marks the end of an era lasting more than 150 years during which the Co-operative Society has provided a wide range of services for the people of Finedon. Carolyn, assisted by several society members and non-members, looks back at the history of the Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society, including the amalgamations with other local Societies that took place from the late 1960s onwards.

Perhaps the most significant attempt by the working classes to improve their position through their own efforts was the consumer movement which originated at Rochdale, Lancashire in 1844. The 28 members, with a capital of £1 per head, were named the Rochdale Pioneers. This movement gave workers three benefits. It provided them with good food at a time when adulteration was very common. It helped to break down the truck system, wherein workers were paid with tokens that could only be redeemed at shops owned by their employers. It provided a means whereby the working classes could save in a savings bank, but also, for each purchase made at a cooperative store, the member received a percentage of the purchase price as a dividend, returned as a lump sum at the end of the year.

William Amey, in his booklet, published in 1918, entitled '*Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd, Jubilee History: 1868-1918*', said that by 1868 collective shopkeeping was being conducted successfully in villages in the vicinity of Finedon. Several men in Finedon could see the advantages of this scheme and invited the Rector of Stanwick to come to a public meeting in Finedon to explain the principles and ideals of Co-operation.

At the first meeting there was some dissent, probably in the main from independent traders who could see the likely impact upon their trade. However, there was sufficient support for a second meeting to be arranged for those who were interested in setting up a Co-operative store in Finedon. At the end of that meeting twenty-one people put forward their names for membership of the proposed Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society (FICS).

Those present appointed a committee; Samuel Manning, Chairman; Mr Mann, the schoolmaster, Secretary; Miss Mackworth, Treasurer; and the rules for the Society were adopted.

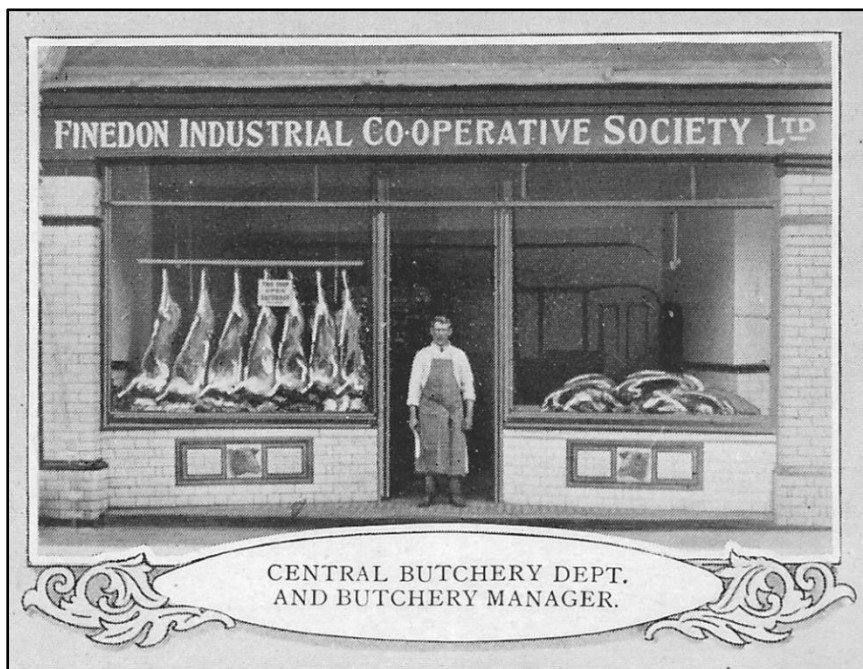
The first priority was how money was to be raised to establish the grocery store, equip and stock it, and employ staff. As with so many projects in Finedon, the Mackworth Dolben ladies stepped forward, Miss Ellen Mackworth Dolben and her cousin Miss Mackworth, agreeing to lend the project £20 each with another friend lending £10, this along with deposits from less affluent members resulted in banking of £71.

Next a decision needed to be made regarding the location of the store. It was proposed that a thatched cottage in North West Street (now Church Street) was suitable. Once this site was agreed Mr William Mackworth Dolben purchased the property and agreed to let it to the Society at a moderate rent on the understanding that they would be able to buy the site at a future date if they wished to do so.

Initially the project was slow to get off the ground. There was opposition from existing traders who could see trade and profit being lost to the new enterprise. Also, there was suspicion of something new from prospective members and customers. After seven years little progress had been made, with an average weekly turnover of about £20 [present value of £1,965. *measuringworth.com*] and membership only increased to thirty-seven.

In 1874 Mr Meadows took over as Secretary. Gradually confidence in the project improved and the Society began to branch out into other areas of retailing. Initially the Society came to an arrangement with local bakers to supply all their members with the Society receiving half a penny for each quartern loaf sold [quartern: an historic term for a large loaf, often cut into quarters before sale]. This was immediately more successful than expected and very soon members were pushing for the Society to have their own bakery. A bakehouse became available and a baker from Leicester was engaged. There was initially a problem with the first two bakers concerning short weight being given and dishonesty towards the Society; one man was imprisoned for six weeks. Despite this the project was successful and twice as much bread as expected was sold in the first week.

By the end of 1876 business and capital has increased so much that the committee was considering purchasing the original store with a view to enlarging the premises. Mrs Francis Mackworth Dolben agreed to sell the whole property to the Society for £345. The Committee decided to build a new store on the east of the site which would cost £445. This financial outlay generated a large increase in trade and membership such that the committee then decided to erect a bakery and warehousing on the site of the new store at a cost of £608. The increase in membership had generated such an increase in capital that all these investments could be covered without any need for mortgages or loans. Between 1875 and 1882 membership had increased from 37 to 286 members and a net profit over that period of £4,144 was shared amongst the membership.



From the 'Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd, Jubilee History: 1868-1918'

In 1882 the committee decided to move into the butchery trade. Initially they built a slaughterhouse and a butchery store in the yard of their store; this cost £147. This also proved to be such a success that in 1901 the butchery was replaced by a brand-new store on Church Street, next to Pytchley Row. The old butchery was converted into an office for the Society's Secretary.

By 1893 the Society was already supplying coal. Its stock of coal was such that they were able to keep selling at a fair price despite a 12-week national coal strike. The Society continued its policy of retaining a good stock of coal; this meant that in 1911 when the South Wales miners went on strike, and in 1912 when there was a 37-day national coal strike, the Society was able to share its supply with other Finedon coal merchants so that everyone in the town had sufficient coal for their needs.

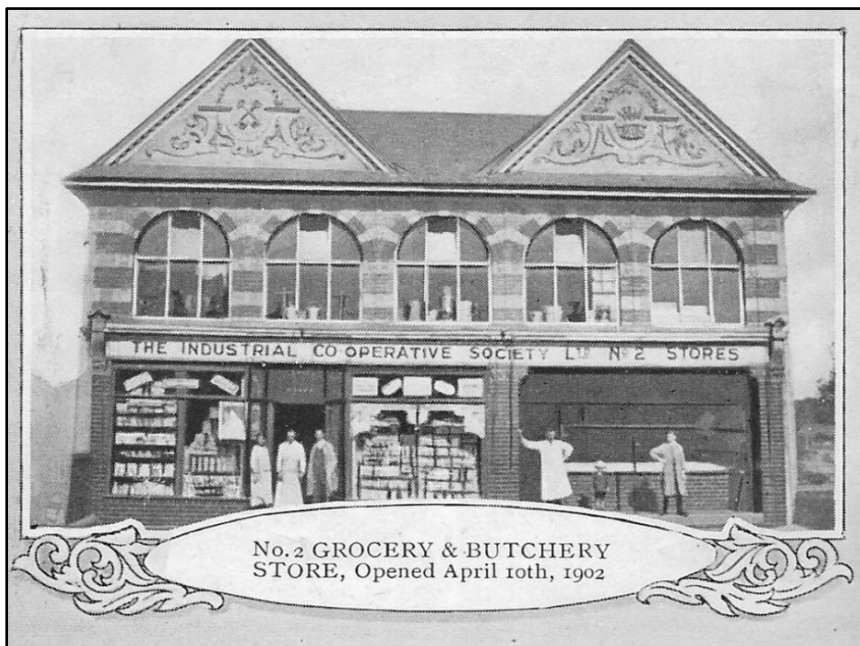
At some point a drapery department was established in the grocery store and in 1899 there was a general clearance of men's clothing and boots held on 'Dividend Day.'

At the end of the 19th century the Society was renting a branch store that supplied grocery and butchery provisions in Obelisk Road, this later became the home of Pross Cooper's barber's shop. This store was flourishing but there was no room for expansion on that site and so, in 1900, the committee decided to purchase a portion of Banks Field with the intention of putting up an additional store in this more central location.

April 10th 1902 was a red-letter day in the history of FICS as the No: 2 Store at 10 Wellingborough Road opened on that day with flags flying and a general holiday. A CWS [Co-operative Wholesale Society] exhibition was held in the Star Hall and a tea was provided for members, who were so numerous that nearly all public places in the town had to be engaged to provide enough seating. The committee proudly declared that the No. 2 Store building, and the adjoining land was all paid for without any mortgage or overdraft.

In 1902, following the Boer War [1899 – 1902], the country was hit by a trade depression. Manufacturing was hit but FICS store business remained good, although the Society had to draw on share capital to get through this period. By January 1906 the depression had abated, and members had begun to save again it was reported that the Penny Bank was in credit to the tune prior to £900.

In 1913 it was decided that the Society should invest in a coal depot, accommodation, and stables. The property of Mr T Nicholls, at the junction of Orchard Road and Albert Road, came on to the market and was purchased for this purpose.



From the 'Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd, Jubilee History: 1868-1918'

The years of the First World War impacted upon the running of FICS; like other retailers, the Society faced several challenges. The Society had a system of credit but, with bigger membership, the risk of bad debt had increased so, at a special general meeting on 13th August 1914, it was proposed that the Society should adopt 'ready money' trade, that is, members should do their own shopping and pay for their goods at the time of purchase. This proposal was accepted and enacted across all departments on 31st August 1914.

During the first half of 1915, livestock prices were high, and stock was difficult to obtain, so much so that the butchery department was only covering working expenses. From 1916, following the introduction of conscription, several employees were called up and this had an impact on the stores, especially the delivery services. Rationing was introduced in 1917 and the Society reported it had been able to supply all allocated amounts to its members.

Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society



Number 1 Store, Church Street, c.1904.



Co-operative Butchers, Church Street. c.1921.
Postcard donated by the late Derek Richardson



Church Street, 1950. Number 1 Store, Bakery and Offices in the centre of the photograph and the Drapery on the left.
 Photograph donated by John Coles.



Finedon Co-operative Store, Wellingborough Road. Carnival Day, 1985.
 Photograph donated by the late Connie Piggott

The 50th anniversary report of the Society in 1918 showed that membership had increased from 37 in 1874 to 892 in 1918; reserves had increased from £70 to £1,180 and the quarterly sales from £288 to £12,844. These figures showed that the Society had prospered in most of its retail endeavours. Its stores and depots supplied all types of commodities, both perishable and non-perishable, with delivery services for milk, bread, and coal. It also offered allotments to members and financial services such as mortgages and savings schemes. The Society did not actually celebrate its 50th Jubilee until July 1920, when, despite the wet weather, it was reported that 1,200 -1,400 members and their families sat down to tea in the open.

The information for the years after 1918 is very much dependent on newspaper reports and the memories of current and former Finedon residents. With this in mind, any corrections or additional information will be gratefully received.

The 1920s began well for the Society: by mid-1922 the membership had increased to 1,182 at a time when the population of the town was 3,782. In 1920 the Society had applied to make alterations to its Church Street premises, but this was turned down as the proposals would have reduced the width of the road. In the *Wellingborough News* of 14th January 1821, it was reported that the Society had allocated £40 as a deposit to purchase land in the High Street, almost opposite the Conservative Working Men's Club [as it was known at that time]. This, too, appears to have come to nothing, but it was around this time that Alington Cottage (1 Church Street), next to the butchery shop, was acquired and converted to contain the menswear, shoe, and furniture departments. The 1924 Kelly's Directory lists Co-op stores at '*1, 8 & 10 Church Street and Wellingborough Road.*'

The *Daily Herald* reported that late on the evening of 24th September 1928 the recently opened Co-op fish and chip shop suffered an explosion and fire; 20 people were trapped when the flames were at their height. The oil had caught fire and flames spread to the ceiling; the explosion caused the door to close. The assistant, Mrs Bulley, heroically crawled along the floor and turned off the gas; meanwhile Mrs Underwood, the manager, opened the door and let the frightened customers out. Nine people, including the two members of staff, were treated for burns. Unfortunately, no location is given for the shop, but it could have been the fish & chip and wet fish shop that used to trade from Rose Hill, which was behind the No. 2 Store on

Wellingborough Road. This shop closed c.1960 and was replaced by a builder's yard. The white glazed tiles, from an internal wall of the former fish and chip shop, can still be seen from Rose Hill.

The *Wellingborough News* of 16th April 1937 reported on the opening of extensions to the Co-operative store on Wellingborough Road. This comprised a two-storey extension on the east side of the original store. Further alterations were planned as the *Evening Telegraph* of 12th July 1939 reported that FICS had been granted planning permission for additions to the Church Street store. It did not state which store in Church Street this was, and bearing in mind that war was approaching, this planned work may not have taken place.

The Society was also hitting the headlines following the half yearly meeting in 1939. The *Evening Telegraph* reported on 13th June 1939 that 44 women and 8 men had attended the meeting, but even so, no lady was elected to the committee. The three candidates were Mr F King, Councillor C Ford and Mrs F B Joyce; both gentlemen were elected.

There was a significant amount of house building, both social and private, in Finedon following the Second World War, and it is likely that FICS saw the advantage of putting branch stores in the vicinity of these developments. During the late 1940s a grocery store was opened on the corner of Milner and Wellingborough Roads, close to the Neilson council housing estate. This store closed in the late 1960s and is now Gracious Hair & Beauty Salon.

In the mid-1950s, as housing developments east of the A6 in Hayden Avenue and Oxford Street, were completed, or under way, a further store at 35 Irthlingborough Road was opened. The shop had previously been Ida Lilley's sweet shop and, after its closure in the late 1960s, it became Wesdene shoe shop. The building has recently been demolished to make way for the Parkwell retail development.

These stores were also supported at this time by a mobile grocery van for several years; the driver was George 'Speed' Coles. Home delivery of milk, bread and coal continued to be expected by members.

In the mid-1950s the ladies' wear department moved from Church Street into a newly built single storey building on the corner of Cromer and

Wellingborough Roads. This store closed during the late 1960s and the building is now a hairdressing salon.

The 1940s and 1950s saw a shift in the centre of population in Finedon, with the Church Street and High Street retail area going into decline. FICS had already established their presence away from this area and it is likely that the percentage of the total FICS takings contributed by the Church Street stores fell. Certainly, decisions were made during the late 1950s to close some of those sites. The original store, bakery and offices closed around 1959, with a smaller grocery set up within the butchery premises, and new offices were built at 10 Wellingborough Road. In 1963/64, 1 Church Street closed: menswear moved to the corner of Milner Road and furniture to 10 Wellingborough Road.

The original drapery and furniture store is now occupied by Margaret Rose funeral directors. The butchery store is now Jane Efford's salon and the original store at 8 & 10 Church Street was demolished, initially to make way for Battens factory, and is now occupied by St Mary's Court.

The only new shop to open in the 1960s was devoted to the sale of electrical goods and televisions. This store traded for less than 10 years and was situated in Obelisk Road.

Although the Co-operative Union produced a report in 1960 advocating significant reductions in the number of individual Co-operative Societies' it was early 1969 before Finedon merged with Wellingborough, followed quickly on 12th January 1970, by Wellingborough and Finedon merging with the Northampton Society. The 'Divi' being was replaced by stamps on that date. Although a report by 'Mulso' [the regular Finedon correspondent of the time] in the *Wellingborough News* of 6th February 1970 had the headline: '*Bright Future for Finedon Co-op*', these changes, along with competition from supermarkets sounded the death knell for Co-op stores and services in Finedon. The final manager/secretary of FICS was William Avery, who had served the Society in various posts since the mid-1930s.

Following these management changes, the Finedon stores reduced to a single outlet at 10 Wellingborough Road. The original building there had already been extended twice, and from this point operated as a grocery alongside a butchery, a drapery, hardware, DIY, and television departments.

In 1996 this Co-op store contracted into the eastern section of the premises and returned to supplying just grocery. This was in part due to a desire to reduce the size of the shop so that it would be able to open for longer hours.

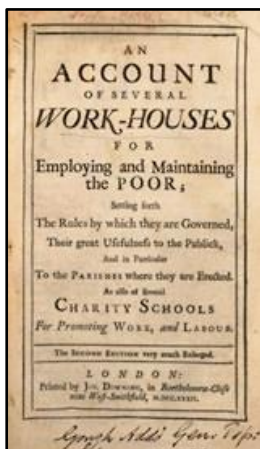
The store was renovated in 2006, and again in October 2016, but finally closed its doors in September 2021 to be replaced by a brand-new store and petrol filling station on Burton Road. Ownership of this outlet is now due to transfer to the ASDA supermarket chain in 2023, thus severing Finedon's connection with the Co-operative movement after a total of 155 years of service to the town.

My thanks go to the following for their assistance with this article: Richard and Pam Buckby, Ian and Julie Poole, Joyce Stanford, Enid Biggs, Johnny Ellson, Helen Howes, Velma Munns, Caroline Clipston, Pat Peet, Michael and Mary Shipton, Gerry Needle, Mick Britton, Lois Chambers, Marjorie Wood, Jean Wills, Alan Moore, John Spencer, and Enid Pickering

I also wish to acknowledge the late John Bailey, and Audrey Ellis, for information contained in their respective books, 'Finedon otherwise Thingdon' (1975) and 'Memories of Finedon' (2006).

Finedon Girls' Charity School, 1732

Mick Britton



Google Books can be a veritable feast of discovery in the search for resources when researching articles for publication, as shown by this 'gem' that was found by Carolyn Smith and Stephen Swales. '*An Account of Several Workhouses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor,,and also of Several Charity Schools for promoting work and labour,,Volume 10*', was published in 1732'. This book provides an insight into the lives of those girls who were present at the time when this undated report was written.

A report dated 1725 of Artleborough [Irthlingborough] Charity School can also be found in this book.

For the purpose of clarity, several of the older versions of spellings and phrases in this report have been modernized. For those who wish to do so, the original and full version of the report can be read by accessing Google Books and using the search title 'An Account of Several Work-houses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor, Volume 10'.

Findon [sic], alias Thingdon, Northamptonshire

Twenty girls are set to work, taught and lodged, and wholly maintained, after the following manner.

Sixteen girls are constantly kept to spinning Jersey at which they earn weekly £1/4s. They are never tasked above 4d a day, and all that the great girls get besides they keep to themselves, the little girls are tasked as they are able to at spin, 2d or 3d a day.

The other four girls, who are called Housewives, take their turns in doing the work in the family; whilst the three others learn all sorts of work to fit them for service, viz. spinning linen, knitting gloves and stockings, sewing, marking and mending all their clothes, both linen and woollen. All the Housewives help to wash; but she, whose turn it is to be Maid, brews, milks, gets their diet &c. but is overlooked by the Mistress or Dame, to see does it as she ought.

The girls earn about £60 a year towards their maintenance, besides spinning their own linen, knitting their own stockings, and every other year spinning their woollen clothes, which, being made of strong serge, last them for two years.

As to their learning to read, the Mistress teaches three of them at a time and they are called out of the spinning-room to read for as long as she thinks proper; and then three others succeed until they are all heard, every morning and afternoon.

The Housewives also read a chapter morning and afternoon. The girls read also the chapters and psalms appointed for the evening service, after supper, verse by verse, as they sit around the table; but not so after breakfast because they read them for the morning at church. The girls take it by turns to say prayers in the morning and evening, which every one of them learns without a book; and they also by turns say grace at their meals.

Sundays and other Holy days are a good part spent in reading the Bible and Whole Duty of Man, and other books printed chiefly for the use of Charity Schools. They are taught to sing Psalms which they practise at their wheels. The four Housewives are taught to write and do accounts which they do very well. When they are sent out to service, four others are chosen out of the spinning-room to succeed them. These girls go to church every day and when past 16 they go to the monthly Sacrament. They commonly stay till 17 when they go to service.

All of them as soon as they can read handsomely carry a New Testament and Common-Prayer Book to church but none has a Bible given them until they can say Our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount, and the Exposition of the Church Catechism perfectly without looking at a book.

The provisions for supporting this School seldom exceed weekly:

1 bushel of wheat for bread, pudding and dumplings for dinner Monday, Wednesday and Friday,

1 Quart of frumetty [porridge] wheat for frumetty,

3 bushels of barley for brewing,

3 quart of pease for pease porridge for Wednesday dinner,

22 pounds of meat for meat and broth, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday,

10 pounds of new milk cheese for suppers every evening.

From Michaelmas to May Day, they have hot breakfasts of their own dressing. At Christmas they learn to make minced pies and at other time cheesecakes and apple pies, as the season of the year affords the materials for them. Their own dairy supplies them plentifully with milk and butter a good part of the year, and leads them to understand Housewifry

Speakers Programme 2023

23rd January	Any Old Iron – The Butlin Furnaces, Wellingborough	Jon-Paul Carr
27th February	The Spanish Civil War and my Role in it	Revd. Paul Needle
27th March	The Medieval Churches of Northamptonshire	Douglas Goddard
24th April	Witchcraft and Northamptonshire	Kevin Varty
22nd May	The Great Plague of London	Sally Henshaw
26th June	Warrior Women of the English Civil War	Stephen Barker
24th July	Talking Machines. History of Phonographs and Gramophones	Colin Ray
There is no meeting in August		
25th Sept.	The Hunting Empress and her Northamptonshire Connections	Colin Rowe
23rd October	Tales from the Projection Room – The Things That Made You Stamp!	Tom Watts
27th Nov.	Annual General Meeting. Followed by: When Olive Oil was for Earache, C20th Food History	Sharn Matthews

Meetings are held in the Mission Room, Well Street, commencing at 7.30pm. Members £2.50, Non-members £3.50, except the Annual General Meeting which is free to all. Circumstances beyond FLHS control may lead to a change of speaker or topic, or cancellation so, to save a wasted journey please check the FLHS website, or Facebook page or call 07988 065010.

Finedon Industrial Co-operative Society staff - 50 years apart.



c.1938. The late John Ellson, of Allen Road, delivery boy on his round.
Photograph provided by his son, Johnny (Snowy)



1988. Retirement of Bill Poole (Store Manager). Julie McPolin (Thompson), Bill Poole, Dawn Comley, Tracey Templeman (Main), Isobel Swords, Brenda Maycock, Enid Pickering and Eileen Desborough.

Photograph provided by Ian Poole, son of Bill.

FINEDON INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY Ltd.

Telephone:

FINEDON 293

Reg. Office:

10, Wellingborough Road, Finedon

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The full range of services available from the FICS in the mid-1960s,
as advertised in the Finedon Parish Church magazine.