

## Musbury Heritage – News

### Another loss to the village?

Some of you who frequent “Musbury Magazine” on Facebook may have seen this picture appear at the end of January. It had been well-spotted by Theresa Stockman on a Devon picture enthusiast’s page and Theresa uploaded it to the Musbury page. It quickly got the



attention of a few of us in the village. We had not seen this postcard before. I soon discovered the original source of this was eBay, where someone in Sussex had put it up for sale.

I set up an eBay ‘watch’ on this item until close to the deadline. No one had placed a bid. Was I really going to get it for £1.50 + postage, even though my maximum bid was a lot higher? Well, no.... Within one second of bidding coming to a close, I was outbid. Some people use special software to do this.

It is sad not to have obtained this for the village and I blame myself for not bidding higher, but I have no budget to speak of. This will continue to happen with pictures, old documents, etc. until we have a village history organisation to make a policy decision on what items like this are really worth to Musbury and to raise funds accordingly. Just 2 or 3 willing officers with an interest in preserving Musbury’s history are required.

### Musbury School – Group Photographs

We are fortunate to have received copies of many school group photographs from a past resident of our village. There are 16 so far, they range from 1894 to 1948 and can all be viewed on the Musbury Heritage website. The school was opened in 1878, so we have



many more to find.

I wonder if more pictures are stored in the homes of people in Musbury and surrounding villages. For obvious reasons I am only looking for years up to say 1980, but if you have any I would very much like to scan them. In due course, I hope to write (or have written?) a school history for the website, so any pictures of pupils and

the building would be very useful, as would any interesting recollections of your time there. Recently I received a nice picture of some boys basket-weaving in the early 1960s, which is also available to view online.

# Musbury Heritage – From the Newspaper Archives

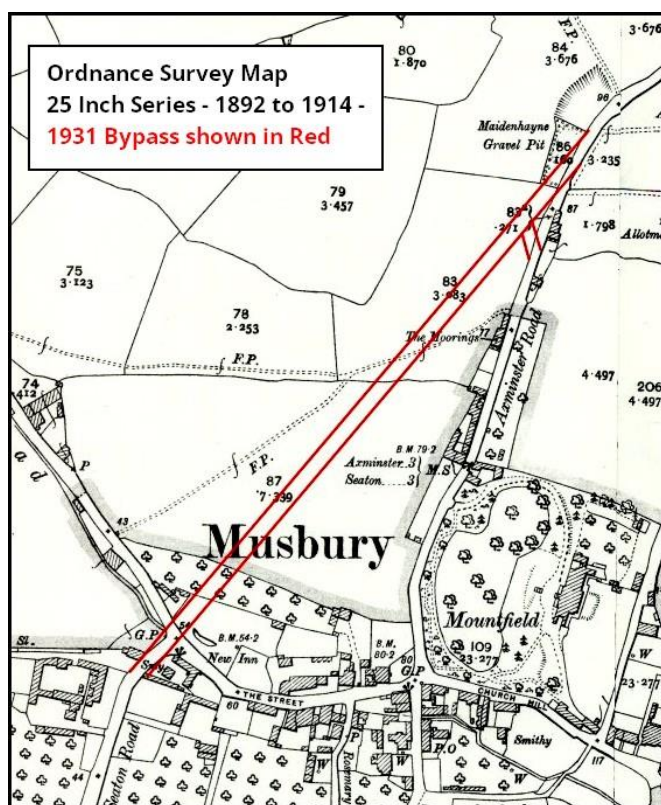
## Marlborough Road

If there is one feature of Musbury many of us take for granted, it is probably Marlborough Road. You may simply call it the A358 or 'the main road'. You may curse it being so straight and therefore a temptation to speedsters. But do think about its origins?

Before its opening, all traffic went through the village, in other words along Axminster Road and The Street. Can you imagine what the traffic may have been like, as the tourist trade became very active in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? There was also an extensive bus service (unlike today) and a mixture of horse-drawn and motor-powered vehicles.

The existing road layout meant two dangerous corners (old Post Office & New Inn) had to be negotiated and narrow streets with many trading premises. At the old Musbury Cross (by the old Post Office) the traffic situation was so bad an eighty-year-old retired policeman made it his daily duty to direct the traffic at this tricky junction.

The first known rumblings about the need for road improvements were in 1923, as evidenced by Reverend Cockerton writing to a local newspaper to highlight the dangerous corners. He also included the bend by Myrtle Cottage (Seaton Road), which was a sharper and quite a blind bend in those days.



Despite an improvement plan being approved in June 1927, the money (£7535) was not available. Government grants were greater for major roadworks, so funds were diverted to the Taunton-Plymouth Road, where a higher proportion would be subsidised. In the meantime, the Council decided to defer the major works and go ahead with some improvements to the dangerous corners.

Despite repeated pressure from Axminster Rural Council, it was not until September 1929 that extra funds became available for DCC to order the bypass plans to commence. £4000 was to be made available at once to acquire the necessary land to proceed.

Compulsory purchase orders were issued to many owners. These affected properties from the New Inn, through fields and northwards to include part of the allotments. Over 2½ acres were purchased, but mainly the land of Maidenhayne Farm. Owners were given just 18 days to lodge objections.

Little has been discovered about the actual building of the road, apart from there being a group of Welsh Miners employed. They sang as a choir at the annual Musbury Sports Day in

July 1930. We also know of at least one relative of a current villager who was employed in the works.

The grand opening came on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1931 at a gathering of many dignitaries. Councillor H Strawbridge performed the opening ceremony and named the bypass 'Marlborough Road' in memory of the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke. He also praised the 'wonderful little place' of Musbury and mentioned the great



possibilities of developing the land for building. Ironically the DCC were to ban the building of houses with entrances onto Marlborough Road for many years.

The National Anthem was sung, the ribbon was cut and the first vehicles drove along the bypass. I just hope they kept below 40mph!

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