

Nostalgia Corner

— by Jim Brown

What parking problems?

The choice for this month's photograph is instantly recognisable. At first glance you could say it is still the same today — but a closer look shows many changes to Faringdon Market Place.

The date is around the 1870s. The square is almost deserted — only 13 people in the photograph, plus one on the horse trough at the Portwell, who moved as the camera clicked (the photographer has done his best to brush him off during the developing) and not one female! I have heard that years ago it was said that the woman's place was in the home, but I think this is most unusual even considering the date: perhaps it was very early in the morning, because the only transport visible is one horse and farmer's trap, parked in front of Mr Liddiard's.

The first building on the left is Lay's, the chemist, with Mr Haines' office and postal lending library above. Next in line, now in London Street, is a private house where now there are shops. Then comes a general outfitters, as yet name unknown. The Bell Hotel is much the same today, though the wooden bell sign is missing — down for repairs, maybe?. The archway through to the stables is evidence of its popularity as a coaching inn, and horses, traps, etc. were also hired out by the hour or day, or even a month, for hunting with the Old Berks Hounds. Mr Franklin, the landlord, even advertised a bier, or funeral hearse, for hire.

Southampton Street has the Eagle brewery entrance with a bowler-hatted man standing under a sign which appears to read The Rising Sun. A cast-iron swing jib hoist with rope attached is visible, and later a projecting tallet was erected to jut out over the pavement so that the



sacks of salt and large barrels, etc., could be hoisted up or lowered into the cart below.

Faringdon Clothing Mart later became Mr Pocock's tailors and outfitters, still fondly remembered by many older residents — now, of course, it is Barclay's Bank and the entrance much altered.

On the corner leading to Church Street, we have the Postal Telegraph Office and Post Office Savings Bank. The signs on the first and third window say just that — the second window was evidently once a doorway (note the steps). Did the post office need enlarging, and the cottage next door taken over and a doorway blocked up? That was probably in October 1869, when the office was connected to the

telegraph system, and the postmaster, Mr Pike, gave up one of his rooms for an open counter and public lobby. The post rising up past the eaves on the corner was a semaphore-type signal with three arms controlled by wires running through the pipe leading through the first window. This was the signal for the mail-carrying coaches that there was mail to collect. This was

not Faringdon's first post office — one in Southampton Street was thought to be the first.

The Angel Inn completes the properties — landlady Anne Jefferies licensed to sell ales, etc. — another of the Faringdon pubs that are now gone. Also gone is the large pump at the Portwell, the large horse trough, and, thankfully, the uncomfortable-looking cobblestone pavement.

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- Wednesday, December 6.** Oxford shopping. 4-hour stay. Adults and Senior citizens £2.20. Children £1.40
- Friday, December 8.** Carol concert at Wyvern Theatre, Swindon. Adults £4.90. Senior citizens £4.40. Children £3.60. More tickets now available.
- Tuesday, December 12.** Brent Cross shopping centre. 5-hr. stay. Adults £4.40. Senior citizens £4.00. Children £3.00.
- Thursday, December 14.** Newbury. 4-hr. stay. Adults and Senior citizens £2.20. Children £1.40.

SPECIAL ATTRACTION!
PANTOMIME, SATURDAY, JANUARY 13.
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