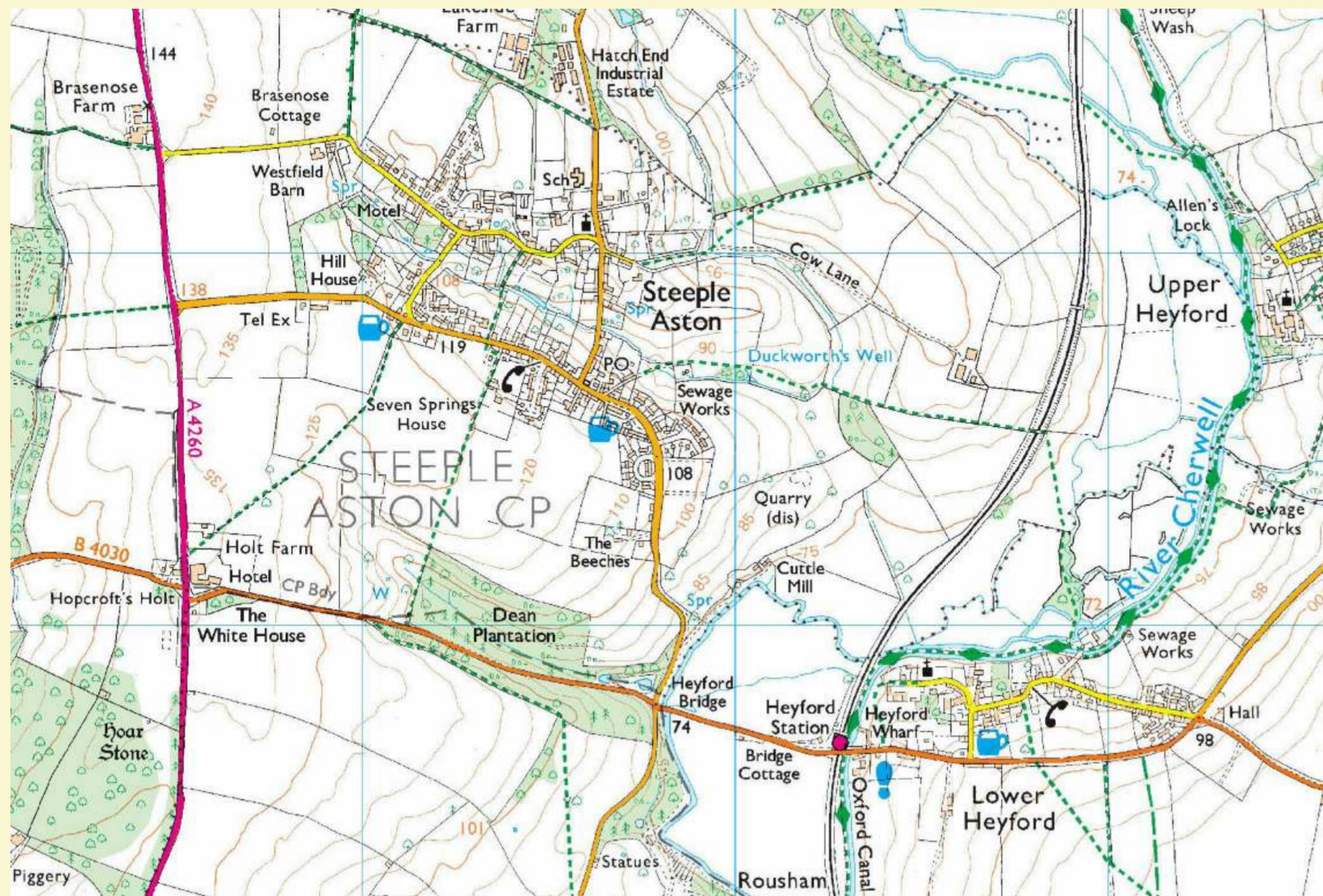
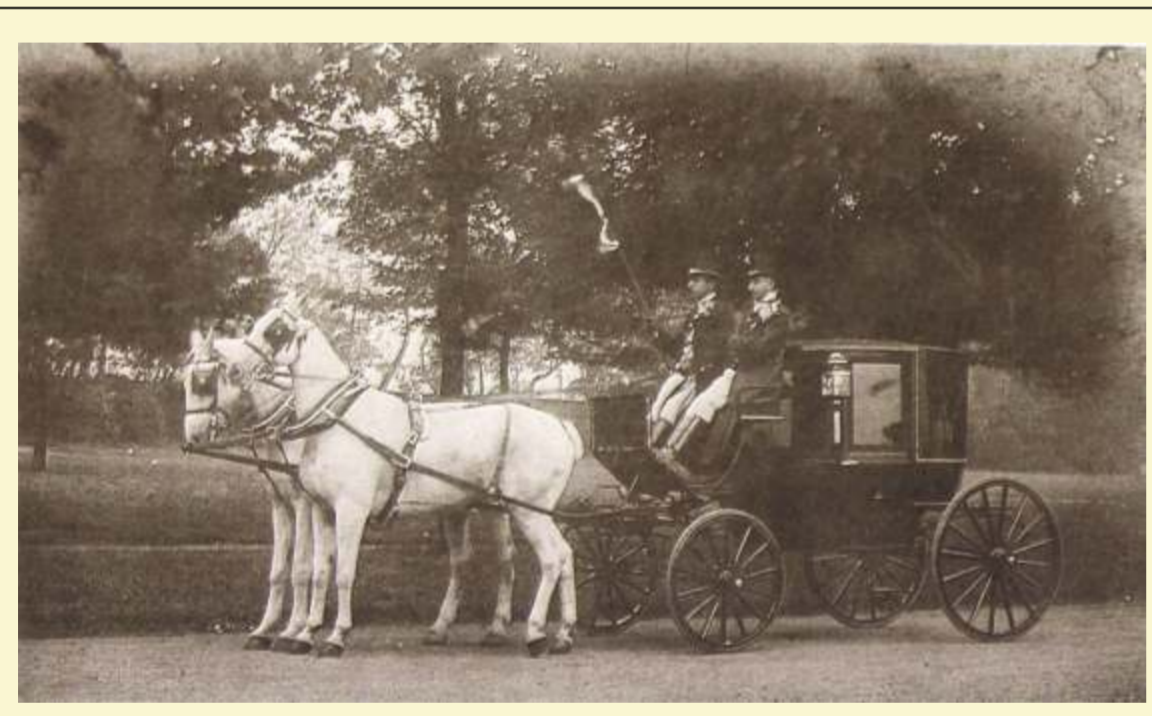


# TRANSPORT: 1



Steeple Aston is situated midway between Banbury to the north and Oxford to the south, and midway between Chipping Norton to the west and Bicester to the east. Residents of the village have long travelled to these neighbouring towns for work or pleasure.

The Cherwell Valley provides a natural route between Banbury and Oxford. Both the Oxford Canal and, a short time later, the railway followed the valley. Both the wharf and railway station at Lower Heyford enabled local people to make use of these transport links.



*"She "recalled the Ogles' acquisition of the first intruder of the machine age – a spanking new Daimler car."*

But before the advent of the motor car, horse-drawn carts and carriages dominated our village life. In May 1985, some recollections of Hill House circa 1920 recorded that:

*"... her most vivid recollection was of being invited to accompany Mrs Ogle on many of the lady's regular shopping visits to Oxford – and being driven there and back in a handsome carriage and pair: yes, along the A423, then quite a pleasant country road."*

(The A423 was renumbered as the A4260)



In this area the River Cherwell is not sufficiently navigable to be useful. However, the bridge over the river at the crossroads between Steeple Aston, Lower Heyford and Rousham is on the main east-west thoroughfare through Steeple Aston and its maintenance has often caused disruption to the flow of traffic.



SAL – Apr 1995  
BRIDGE REPAIRS

*The flooding in the Cherwell Valley in February has undermined the foundations of the bridge at Rousham. Long Bridge will have to be closed for urgent repairs during April. For those requiring access to the station at Lower Heyford, a rowing boat service will be made available.*

Note the date!!



As the railway developed, the transport of goods moved away from the canal on to the railway. Nowadays, the canal is largely a place for pleasure trips.

The proximity of the Oxford Canal has also contributed to the village's transport links. The stretch between Banbury and Tackley was completed in 1787 but the final section into central Oxford wasn't opened until 1790. The wharf at Heyford became an important point for transporting goods into and out of the area, although there was still a need for a carrier service between the wharf and the village.



*"The railway through Heyford was in existence 60 years ago, and consequently the functions of the village carrier were not so vital as they had been. But John Weston was an exceptional carrier, (on his gravestone is 'His journies ended') ... In spite of railway competition he was able to 'make good' and no doubt did quite as much business as his predecessors, Elmore and Needle."*  
(Recollections article - SAL May 1975)

The successful carrier business passed down from father John to son Philip (known as Phip, above, in Southside in the 1930s).

The construction of the railway between Oxford and Banbury began in 1845. It runs through the parish of Steeple Aston although the nearest accessible station is situated in the neighbouring parish of Lower Heyford. Heyford station was opened by the Great Western Railway in 1850. As well as taking much of the goods transport away from the canal, the railway provided a convenient passenger service.

