

was a Trustee. Brian Little¹⁰ notes the prominence of Cobb (banker), John Gazey (spirit merchant) and Bernhard Samuelson (industrialist) as Vice-Presidents and William Potts (newspaper editor) as one of the Arbitrators. Subscribers were invited to register at the Society's room in the Mechanics' Institute on Church Passage.

The Grimsbury Scheme

In April 1851, a further meeting was held in the Town Hall when members were told of the site in Grimsbury which had been purchased by Timothy Rhodes Cobb from Sloan Stanley, and had been sold on to the Society at the same price. The Northamptonshire site – variously known as South Grimsbury, Freetown or even as ‘the Diggings’ – was divided into 151 allotments. The cost to the allottees varied according to proximity to the turnpike road, now known as Middleton Road. The cheapest lots (1-13) were each 1s.8d. whereas those close to the road ranged from 3s.1½d. to 3s.6d.

The 101 purchasers included many known locally for welfare concerns: Ebenezer Wall (rope maker), Richard Grimly (retailer), William Potts (newspaper editor) and James Cadbury. Leadership roles and opportunities thus provided deserve some exploration. By 1855 some fifty houses had been built or were under construction along five roads which were under the control of the Board of Health.

No such scheme could remain in principled isolation. The Great Western Railway, needing accommodation for its workers, is reported by Trinder¹¹ as assisting in the construction of one street, probably West Street. Samuelson was similarly interested in the properties for his workers who could not be housed in the developing Cherwell area.

East, South and West Streets began to be used by carters as a prototype ‘rat run’ to avoid the Banbury and Lutterworth Toll Company charges on the Middleton Road. The Company threatened to move its toll point closer to Banbury and by this means would have charged Grimsbury residents for access to town (here Trinder¹² provides considerable detail).

The resulting area, focus of the newly-designated Conservation Area, is characterised by pairs, with occasional single homes, trios and short terraces of brick-built two or three storey properties with modest decoration and relatively small plots. A row of packed town houses, or

¹⁰ Little, Brian: ‘Homes for the working man,’ *Banbury Guardian*, 13:IV.2006: p.8.85

¹¹ As fn. 5, p.84

¹² As fn. 5, p.84