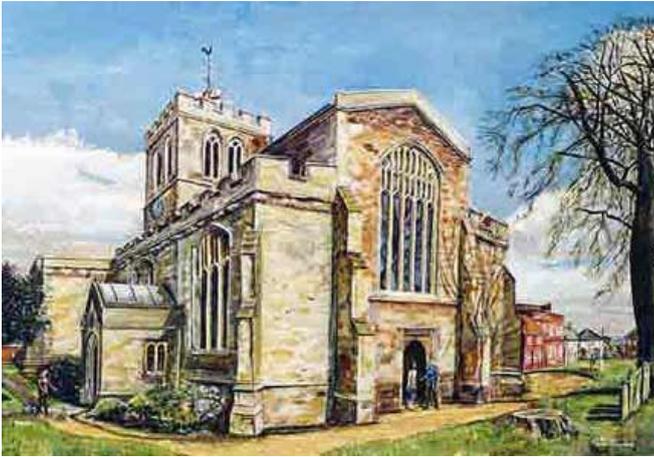


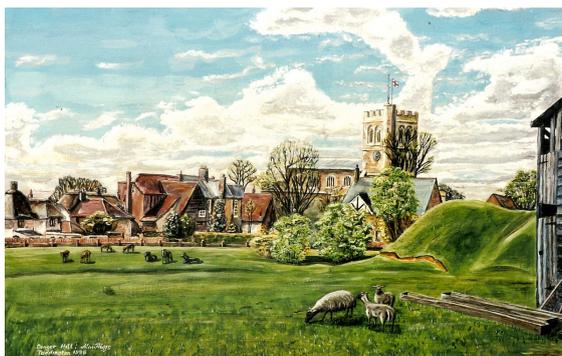
The evolution of Tudor Toddington by Alan Higgs

Soon after moving to Toddington and refurbishing my house I was into art and did many painting of our village in many mediums.

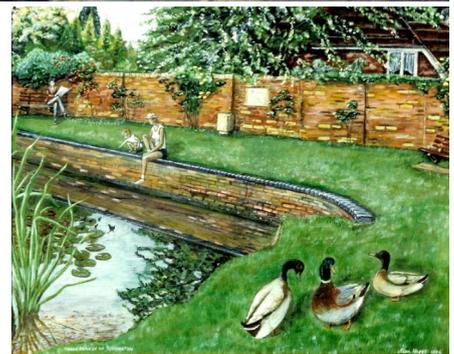


This one of the Angel was done for Keith and Paula Baldwin as a token for them giving our Company the work to extend their pub in 1996. I included Keith 's Granada car and their lovely greyhound called Nina

I well remember setting up my easel and stool to paint our church and Roger Martin walking across the road from the Sow & Pigs and bringing me a pint of Abbot Ale to quench my thirst because it was a very hot day.



I also remember painting Conger Hill in that spring and getting a terrible one sided sunburn by standing still so long. And our pond, etc.



But by 2001 I wanted more from my art so went to Barnfield College to take a Higher National Diploma in Fine Arts. This led to me going to University College Northampton and graduating in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours).



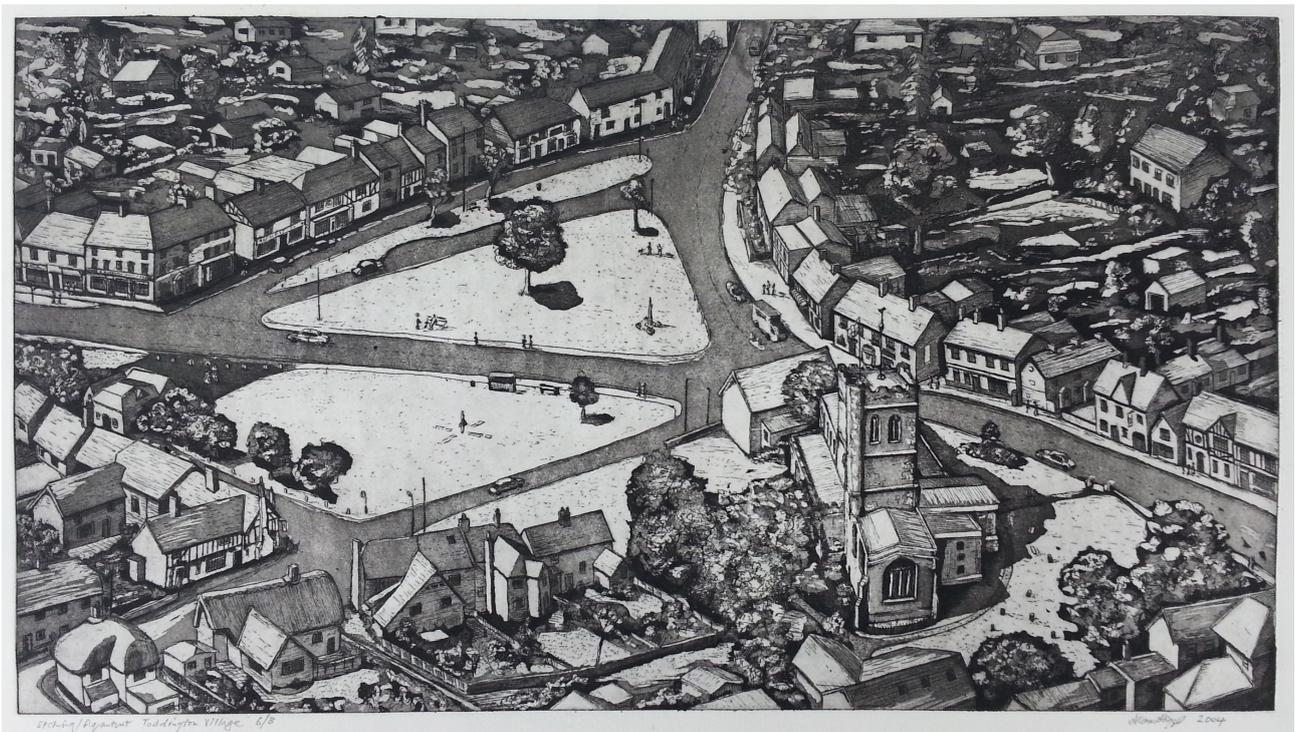
At college I was introduced to etching and aquatint, a process where you take a steel, zinc or copper plate, apply a ground wax varnish, scratch your image and immerse it in acid which etches the image in the metal. Then you aquatint further by applying a ground and further short acid processes to attain shades of grey. Then the plate is cleaned and inked and each image produced in a printing press one at a time.



At college I got into the digital, combining scanned line drawings with computer colouring. Like a digital pen and wash. I first did my house in the High Street then went on to picture our Market Square from every angle.



At this point I was thinking where can I go now and the only place was UP. I spent a whole summer break investigating what lay behind the facade of our market square. Taking photos and making sketches. And at University College Northampton my first work in the print room was this aerial view etching/aquatint.



It took eighteen hours to scratch the image on the plate and many more to get the aquatint shades of grey. I made eight prints and after giving seven away have one left. But it depicts our four central public houses at the time; the Griffin roof lower right, the Sow and Pigs, the Bell, the Oddfellows and the Red Lion.

Now what to do next? I was aware of the Radalph Agas Survey map of 1581 so I visited the British Library in 2009 to see it first hand. After making the appointment I was instructed to go to the viewing room and it was wheeled out on a trolley supporting a large oak case. This was placed on two tables, the lid was opened and the attendant said "it 's all yours " .

I was amazed, no gloves needed, but it was on heavy parchment and for storage it had been cut into twenty pieces.

But prior to my visit I only had a black and white digital copy. But here it was in yellow, red, green and black. But so small, even with my spectacles I was struggling and the kind lady at the desk lent me a magnifying glass. I was enthralled and spent the next three hours pouring over this document making notes. (no photos were allowed) . But in colour the various parts were much more easily identified.

It was then I decided there was sufficient detail to attempt to fairly accurately reconstruct the Village centre in large scale.



A much enlarged centre section of the Town Hall area and elsewhere there are the following descriptions of the red letters thus:

O .. Lords wast lately holden by Richard Thomas Renoldes.

N .. Towne House (Town Hall)

K .. In lease to John Arnolde (Session House and Toll Booth)

L .. Town Kitchen

H .. In lease to Robt. Smyth the younger (Market House)

I .. Town Shambles (Butchers)

But although very tiny 3D drawings were shown there was not much to really know the detail on some of the principle town buildings of the time. I realised I was going to require much artist ' s licence to achieve my goal.

But the work of old artists proved invaluable.



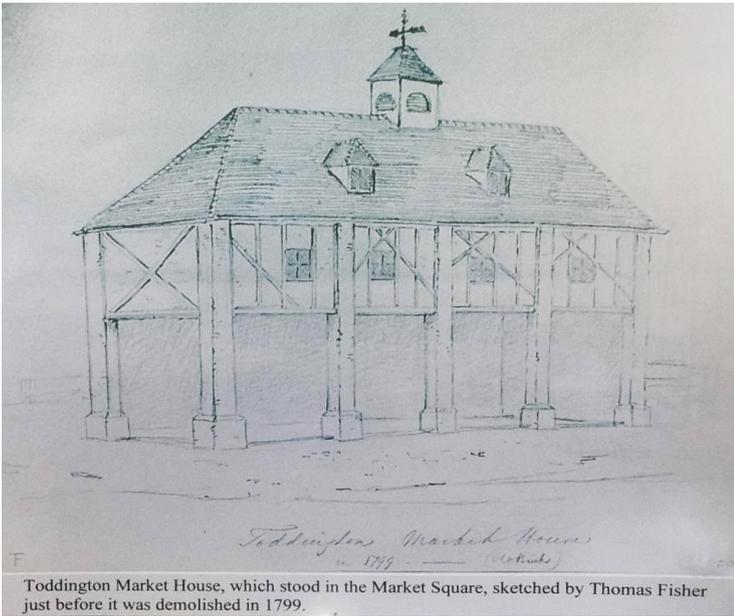
67 *Carrier's waggon unloading at Toddington.*

This painting by George Sheppard in 1818 illustrates exactly how the Session House and Toll Booth were attached to the Town Hall then and the Town Kitchens for the poor stood nearby and reputedly housed ten poor families and had seven ovens.



Further endorsed by a similar painting by George ' s brother Thomas Hosmer Sheppard. Same buildings and same pile of logs with wall and gate to the Church.

This installed much confidence in my work.



Another amazing find in our library.
 The bottom was open with no stairs so one can deduce the stairs to the first floor would be at the rear.
 I made this view photo realistic then worked on a view from above for Tudor Toddington.



To the right is the view from above made for Tudor Toddington.
 Below is a 1820 painting by Thomas Fisher of our High Street and shows the Session House and Toll Booth attached to the Town Hall and also the Town Kitchens at that time as well as the sheep pens by the pond.
 Our Village is blessed with so much information available from the past.
 Long live the future !!





1. St George of England Church

St George of England Church was consecrated on St George's Day in 1222. This was the same day that St George became the Patron Saint of England. The present building was started by Paulinus Peyvre although there was probably a building on the same spot from Saxon times. The current building is mainly of Totternhoe limestone.

It is a beautiful church with many interesting features. The tower is 90 feet high and the cross on the top has been there since the time of Charles 1. The weather vane was added in Georgian times.

2. Town House

The Town Hall, toll booth and session house.

Only the Town Hall remains being much altered.



3. Market House

This was the very spacious market house built from materials from the demolished hospital of St John the Baptist. This is dated towards the end of the sixteenth century so when Agas added it to his survey map in 1581 it was relatively new.

Toddington was at one time a flourishing market town by Royal Warrant, as well as this building traders would set up stalls all over the green on market days.

Sadly the market declined and the building was taken down in 1799 and the materials sold.



4. Town Kitchens

Reputed to have had seven ovens and capable of housing ten poor families it was pulled down in 1828. Luckily it was captured by artists George Sheppard, Thomas Fisher and Thomas Hosmer Sheppard before demolition to enable this to be an accurate representation.





5. Market Cross

The market cross was an old spelling for market cross and is known to have been in a very similar position to the present war memorial. Agas depicted it a decent size and its present reconstruction is based on existing remaining crosses elsewhere in the UK.

6. The Shambles

The shambles was the slaughter house and butcher's market. From other similar buildings recorded they had a vented roof and partially open sides. At its height it is recorded up to seven butchers operated from this building



7. Old Red Lion

This corner of Park Road building remains very similar and has a Tudor beamed interior. It was the original Red Lion but it cannot be established if this was so in 1581.

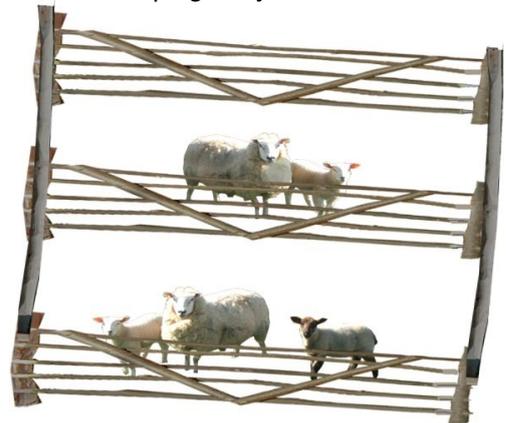
9. Dung

Artists have established piles of horse manure in Market Square in the old days so it was realistic to add one in 1581.

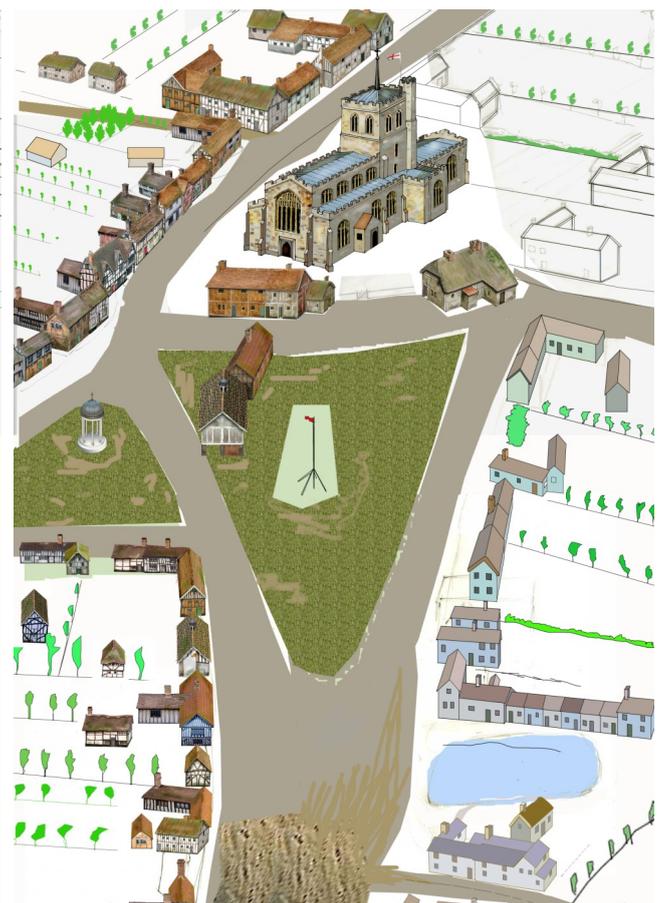
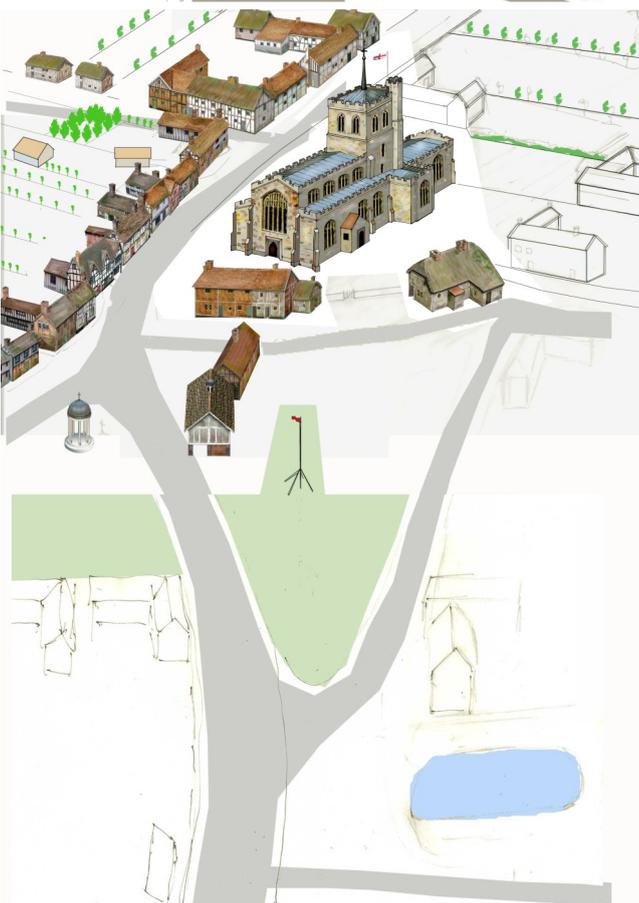
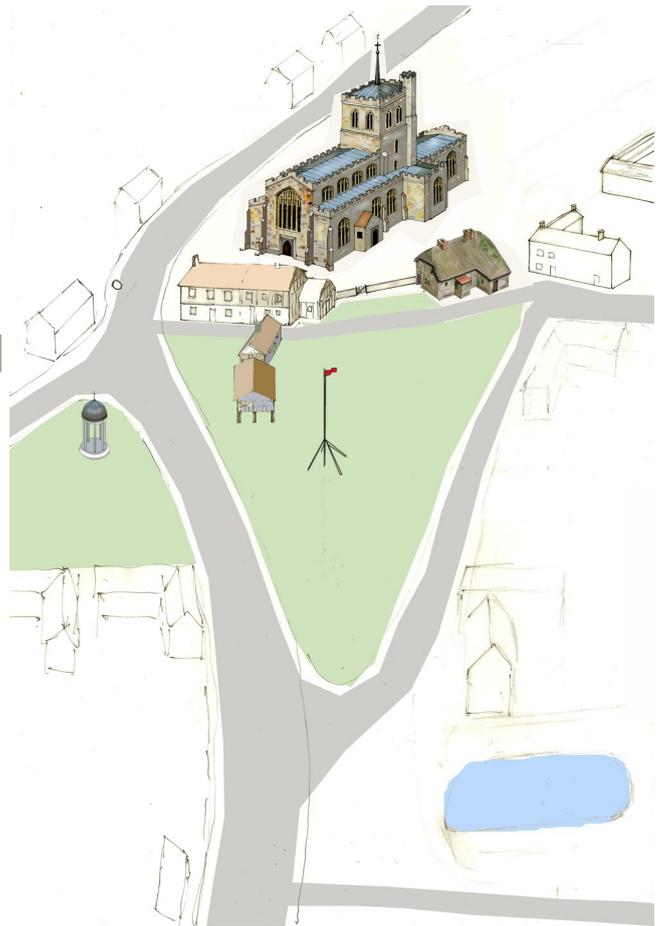
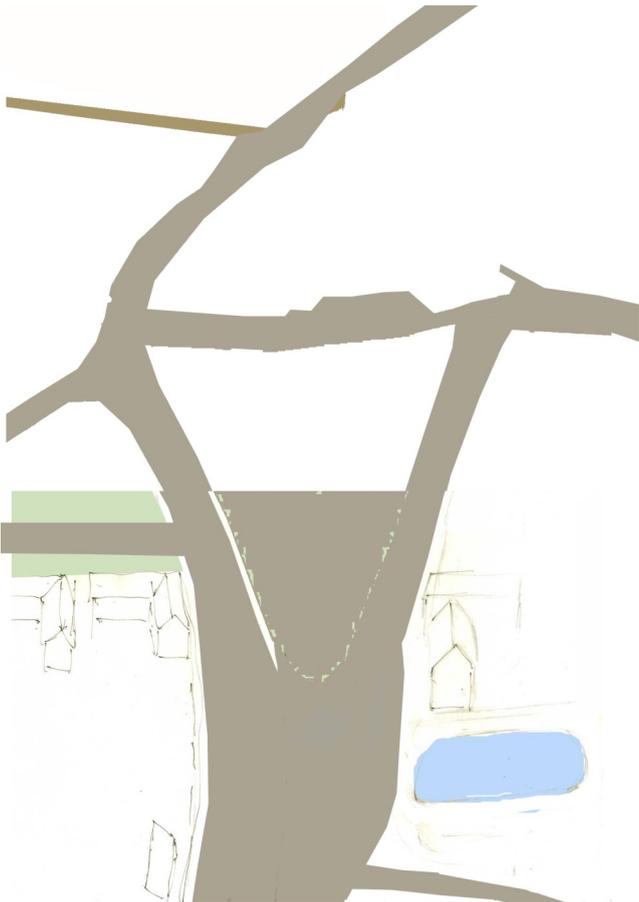


8 Sheep Pens

In 1581 there were sheep pens by the pond. Off the picture further up the road by the Grange was a Pound; A much larger area for keeping stray animals.



And on and on until the whole image appeared. During the process I printed regular updates thus which show hand sketches of the areas:



Final result TUDOR TODDINGTON printable AO or larger

