

COLN

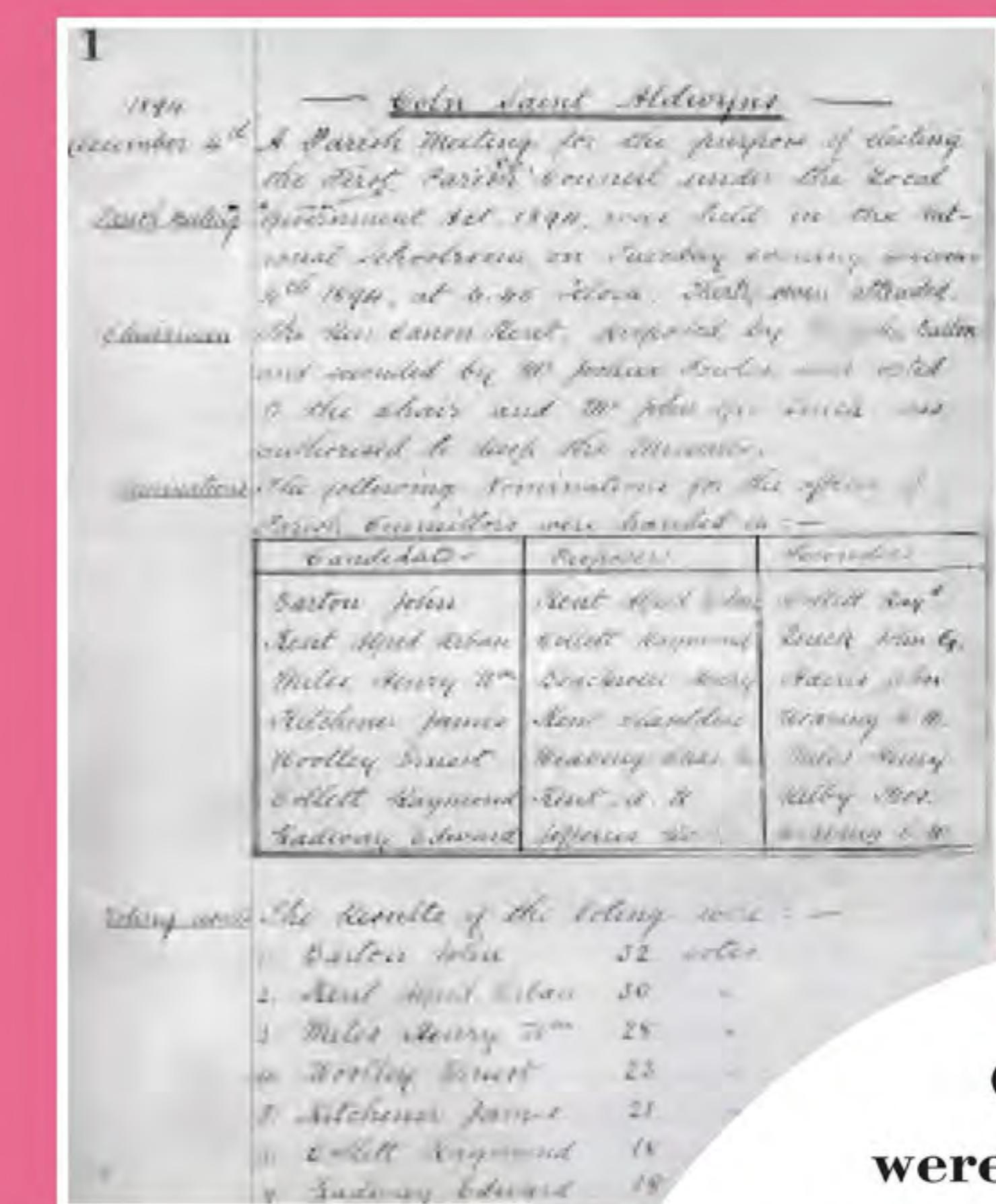
Akeman Street, a Roman road which linked Watling Street north of Verulanium (near modern St Albans) with the Fosse Way at Corinium, runs north-eastwards from Coln. It was crossed by the Salt Way and the village grew up south of the junction and above the valley of the Coln River, which was bridged by 1559. These salt ways predated Roman roads and drovers' routes.



The road through the village was also one of the routes that the Welsh cattle drovers took to avoid paying expensive toll-gate charges at places like Tewkesbury.



Crossroads at Coln St Aldwyns, 1902



The first Parish Council was elected on 4th December 1894. Thirty seven people attended the meeting which was held in the schoolroom and seven people put themselves up for election for the five places on the Council.

ST ALDWYNS

An introduction



The earliest sign of habitation around Coln St Aldwyns can be found at Dean Camp, near Dean Farm, which is an iron age hill fort dating from the 8th to 5th centuries BC. The settlement there would have consisted of crude thatched huts surrounded by a few ploughed fields and grazing for sheep and cattle.

When the Romans arrived in 43 AD they would have found a tribe of Celtic origins called the Dobunni, who inhabited the area covered by Gloucestershire and Somerset. They were farmers and craftsmen, living in small villages concentrated in fertile valleys. They put up no resistance to the Romans and nearby Corinium (now Cirencester) became a very important Roman city.



Coln St Aldwyns is part of the Brightwell Barrow Hundred and is said to have derived its name from Aldwyn, Bishop of Worcester, a tutor to Charles the Great (also known as Charlemagne). It became part of the domain of Gloucester Abbey in the middle of the 8th century. The earliest mention of the village can be found in the Domesday Book of 1086 where, known as "Culne", the extract mentions that it had *'4 hides. In demesne are 3 ploughs; and 11 villans and 7 bordars with 12 ploughs. here are 4 slaves. It was worth 6l; now 8l. 2 mills rendered 25s.'*



Between 1327 and 1548 the population of Coln St Aldwyns grew from 35 registered for poll tax to 106 'housing people'. By 1603 there were 161 'communicants' and in 1650, 40 families were registered, after which the population increased rapidly to an estimated 300 by 1710 and to 392 by 1775. Enclosure of land at Coln St Aldwyns had been completed by 1770.

In 1878 the piped water supply was given to the village by Sir Michael Edward Hicks Beach (later to be the 1st Earl St Aldwyn) and was originally serviced by the Pump House on the Coln river below Coln Manor. This pumping station pumped water into



huge tanks in the Dovecote at Coln Manor in order to supply the village with fresh water. The old pumping station still exists (see above), situated on the riverside below Coln Manor. Mains water eventually came to the village in the late 1950s.

Oil street lights were installed in 1905: a villager remembers that his grandfather, nicknamed "Billy Wink the Bladder Blower" (for his skill in blowing up pig's bladders to make footballs) would light the lamps only to have them blown out by the village lads. Electricity was not introduced to the village houses until the 1930s.



The children's playground was officially opened on May 6th 1951. In 1959, to avoid confusion, the village officially changed its name from Coln St Aldwyn to Coln St Aldwyns. The population numbers 282 today, which includes some weekenders, with commercial activities mainly revolving around arable and livestock farming.

