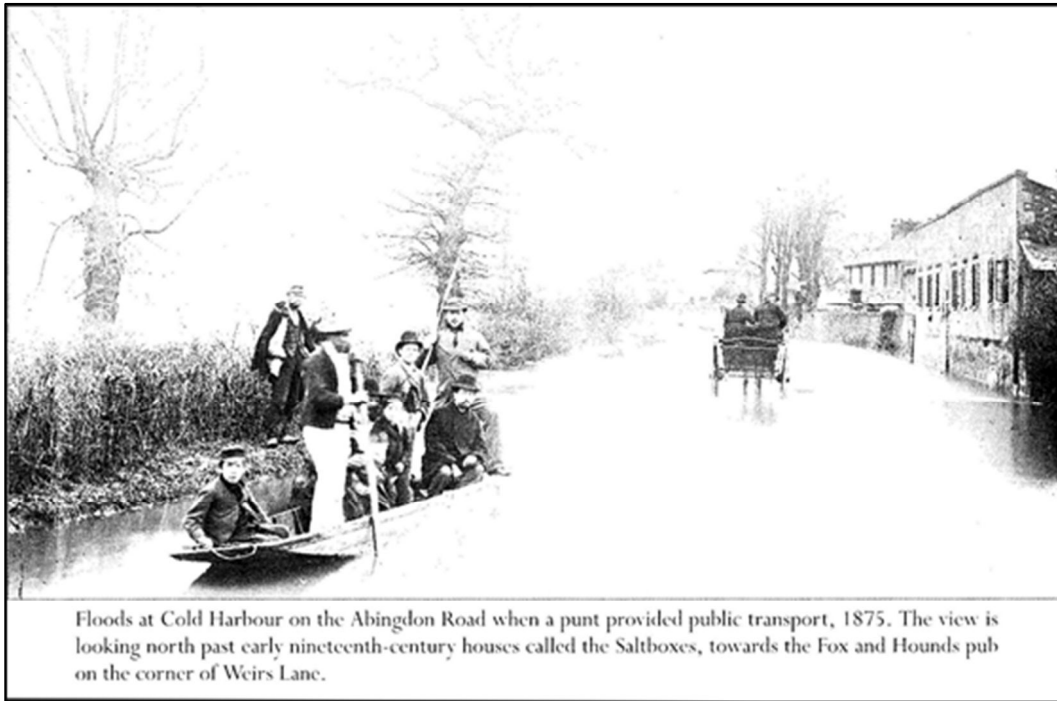


Memories of Len Viner and South Oxford
by Don Bennett (born in Cold Arbour, South Oxford in 1929)

Len Viner was my uncle. I remember he used to go regularly to the **Farrier's Arms**. His hobby was repairing old clocks and watches, and I can remember sitting in his living room in the Towle house [**John Towle's paper house**], and listening to all the clocks going off on the hour. If I remember rightly, he had a grandfather clock in the hallway, and also what he called a grandmother clock, which only had an hour hand and where the space between the hour markings was divided into 4, instead of 5. He also used to look after the clocks at the Farrier's Arms, and no-one else was allowed to touch them.



Floods at Cold Harbour on the Abingdon Road when a punt provided public transport, 1875. The view is looking north past early nineteenth-century houses called the Saltboxes, towards the Fox and Hounds pub on the corner of Weirs Lane.

Image from *Oxford Yesterday & Today* by Malcolm Graham & Laurence Waters (Sutton, 1997)

We lived in one of the '**Saltboxes**' on the corner of Abingdon Road and Canning Crescent (left). The four joined houses adjoined a coalyard which formed the actual northern corner, then came our house. The next two were occupied by a shoemaker and a kind of free house where beer was sold, if I remember rightly. The northernmost house of the four was occupied by Mr and Mrs Viner, who, when the houses were demolished, later went to the Towle house.

We moved to **32 Fox Crescent** in about 1939. I remember my father digging up large numbers of horseradish roots from our garden and selling them to Frank Cooper's, where they made horseradish sauce (as well as marmalade). I can also remember walking up Pitt Road (now Chatham Road), with my gas mask over my shoulder, to catch the bus. The bus towed a trailer which was producing the gas which the bus ran on. My mother lived in Fox Crescent until 1991, till she was 99 years old. She moved out and lived to be 103.

We would go out with a jug and he would use his measuring ladle to give us a pint or quart, as required. Later, the milk came in bottles, with different coloured tops (probably so that the birds would know which bottle tops to peck through!).

Andrew Turner was our milkman, and I can remember him coming on his tricycle, with the container with two milk churns

I googled our old house recently, and it is still there, though I haven't been back to Oxford for many years, having worked and lived in Germany and now living in California.