

Introduction

John Madden

Chairman: Bartons' History Group

Welcome to Volume 2 of Bygone Bartons. As you will, I hope, agree the Bartons' History Group have again been active in uncovering the past of our village(s), from the Bronze Age through to (almost) the present day.

In particular, we have been gathering reminiscences of some of the older inhabitants - what is called officially *Oral History*. This issue features Jessie Newman and Joan Irons, who both have some fascinating stories to tell. If anyone else would be willing to share their memories with us - **please let us know!**

And dotted around and between the main articles are a few recipes and other oddments, all discovered - well, see page 30.

Oh, and if any of you missed the first Volume and would like to collect the full series (!) there are still copies available - see page 32.



*Ruth Kirby in the Post Office, 67 North Street 1981
(see page 12)*

Bronze Age Barton

Chris Edbury

Following on from the article about the Neolithic axe in Bygone Bartons Issue 1, we now move on to the Bronze Age (2,000BC - 800BC).

In October 1990 Audrey (Martin) and I walked the 'lumps and bumps' in the field called New Close, just to the north of the fishponds at Steeple Barton, which contains some of the remains of the shrunken village of Steeple Barton. We discovered, amongst bits of pottery, three pieces of flint, which were identified by Ival Hornbrook of the Museum Service at Woodstock. Ival dated them to the Bronze Age. Ival thought the flints may have been from a flint working site, as flints such as ours had been discovered in the same field in 1979. These flints were only rough pieces, you couldn't really say they were actual finished worked tools. Ival explained that some small rough pieces of flint may have been brought into the area by what he called the Northern Glacial Drift and when not swept up by the action of rivers and streams are left on the surface of land to be shattered by a combination of ground water and frost in winter. Other than those sources, we don't have large natural chunks of flint in our part of Oxfordshire.



the three flints picked up by Audrey and Chris Edbury

Nos 1 and 2 are parts of flint pebbles, No. 3 is a very crude attempt at making a flake (a tool)

Research into the archives held by Oxfordshire Museum Service located pieces of flint previously discovered in 1979 by Susan Digby-Firth. Susan was a keen amateur archaeologist and lived for a time in a cottage near Barton Abbey. These flints were not photographed.

Then in 1991, a broken barbed and tanged flint arrowhead was found by a member of the Young Archaeologists Club, whilst the club were fieldwalking in the area around Leys Farm. This was identified by the Museum Service at Woodstock and also dated to the Bronze Age.

The Bronze Age is considered the link from the stone ages to the manufacture of metals. Bronze, or copper alloy as it called these days in archaeological terms, is an alloy of copper and tin. The purest bronze would be a mix of about 90% copper and 10% of tin. It is believed this new material was brought over from continental Europe. Swords and axes (palstaves) were made by the smelting of copper and tin until it became liquid, which was then poured into the appropriately shaped pottery moulds. When cold, the tools or weapons were then tidied up and sharpened. Unfortunately, no tools or weapons of bronze have yet been found in our area, the nearest find being an axe on Dane Hill, just outside Deddington.



The arrowhead, photographed by kind permission of The Museum Resource Centre, Standlake



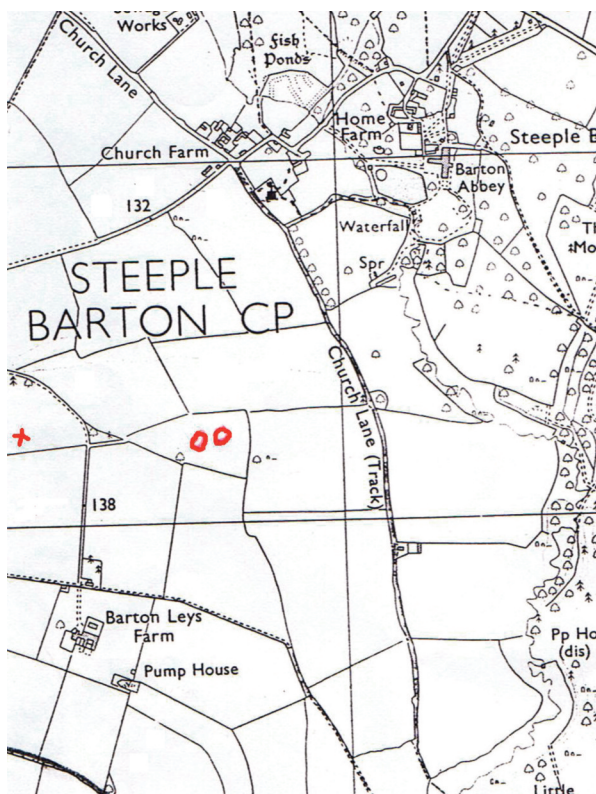
This is my quick drawing done when discovered



This is what the arrowhead should look like

However, alongside this new material, stone and flint tools continued to be hand crafted and used throughout the Bronze Age, which also saw the introduction of burial or cremation in round barrows.

So, although we do not have any bronze tools, we do have some flint tools and weapons, and further research discovered two Bronze Age barrows, showing up as crop circles on aerial photographs held in the County Archaeology department of Oxfordshire County Council at Westgate Library. The department's description reads 'circular enclosures, SP 44482423, probably Bronze Age Barrows'. I subsequently walked the entire field and found nothing!



The two red circles indicate the approximate position of the barrows, the red x is the approximate position where the arrowhead was found

The only other site in the Bartons that could be attributed to the Bronze Age is the large piece of sandstone which could be the capstone of a burial tomb, sometimes called a 'cromlech'. This is to be found in the woods near Barton Abbey. It is marked as a Hoar Stone on the maps. No excavation or survey has ever been done on this site. There were two hoar stones recorded as far back as 1210.

The medieval field names such as Stanlow, Wistaneslawe (probably Whistlow), Langlawe, Nordlanglawe and Succelawe, are all evidence that there were more standing stones (remains of cromlech type burial mounds) in our area – see ‘British History On-Line’.



*The large piece of sandstone in the woods near Barton Abbey
(photograph from the Bartons' History Group Archive)*

References:

Flints picked up by Susan Digby-Firth OXCMS:1990.41 (the museum object number).

The three flints picked up by in 1990 are in the Bartons' History Group archive.

The flint arrowhead references are County Archaeology Primary Record Number 14,265, and OXCMS:1992.44.1 (the museum object number).

Grateful thanks is extended to Oxfordshire Museum Service (The Museum Resource Centre, Standlake) for allowing access to the archives and for permission to photograph objects.

British Archaeological Periods (approximate):

Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) 50,000BC -	Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) 8,000BC -	Neolithic (New Stone Age) 4,000BC -	Bronze Age 2,200BC	Iron Age 800BC
Roman 43AD -	Anglo-Saxon 450AD -	Medieval 1066AD -	Post-Medieval 1500AD -	present

Bartons, Boddingtons and Breweries

David Wharton

A thousand years of history echo at the ford

The current mill building at the ford in Mill Lane is believed to be built on the site of one of the 1086 Domesday mills. By 1279, the mill was recorded as occupied by "villein Roger at Mill". By 1638 Timothy and Margaret Boddington had moved in. For the greater part of 200 years, until 1805, the Boddington family owned the mill. There is a reference to them in a Pedigree Register: "These Steeple Barton Boddingtons were a race of cornmillers, one was a wonderful weight carrier and had a remarkably resonant voice (a family characteristic) which was heard distinctly across the valley a mile distant." After 1805 Boddingtons, millers and brewers, moved away to Thame, Abingdon and Manchester. In the late 1800s, Henry Boddington, descendant of Timothy, set up Boddington's Breweries in Manchester.

In 1852 Henry Harris was the miller and he later bought the property. The Harris family were there until nearly 1920 and they lived in the mill house alongside the ford. Corn was ground at the mill until just before the Second World War - water power, sometimes supplemented by steam. Albert Pearce was miller until Walter Allen came, c1930, and was at the mill until it closed in 1938.

A later Timothy Boddington's will

'In the Name of God, Amen. I Timothy Boddington of Middle Barton in the Parish of Steeple Barton in the County of Oxon Miller being of perfect memory and understanding but calling to mind ye uncertainty of this Life do make this my last will and Testament in manner following. First I bequeath my Soul to Almighty God through Jesus Christ my Redeemer & my Body to ye Earth to be Buried at ye discretion of my Executrix being after named.

I give Demise & bequeath all that message or tenement wth ye mills & appurtanances hereunto belonging to my son John Boddington & his Heirs for Ever.

I give & bequeath to my Son Wm Boddington one Deal Coffe & all my Woolen Cloaths. I give to my grandson Timothy Steptoe my two best Puter Dishes & I give to my Grand Daughter Mary Steptoe my best Bed & Bedspread wth two pair of Sheets one Trough & one Barrel. I give & bequeath all ye rest of my Goods & Clouths Bills & Bonds & whatsoever I shall be Feasted wth at my Death to my Daughter Sarah.

Made this Twenty ninth Day of January in ye Year of our Lord one Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Five Six whereunto I have sett my Hand & Seal ye Day & Year above written. Boddington Timothy, Miller, MB, will 29 Jan 1735/6. The Occasion that ye said Timothy Boddington makeing his mark is because he is lately Blind.'

Will's Grave

Denise Roberts



If you have lived in the Bartons for long enough, you may be familiar with the area just outside the Bartons at the Kiddington crossroads (between Middle Barton, Kiddington and Wootton), known locally as “Will’s Grave”. The legend is that the Will in question was William Bowler, who was hanged in Oxford prison in 1783 for stealing a sheep at Kiddington, and that he was the last man in England to be hanged for that particular offence. The story goes that the crime happened in wintertime, and Will was caught because he left his footprints in the snow, which were tracked to his home. There is even a poem (of unknown origin) to commemorate this heinous crime and punishment:

It was winter time long years ago.
The earth was covered here with snow.
The old white way was white indeed
And paths that into it did lead.

The sheep were penned along Hell Hill
Where turnips grew as they do still.
The shepherd ere he went at night,
Counted and left them safe and right.

Next morning when he came along
He found out there was something wrong.
One sheep was missing from his flock
Which gave him something of a shock.

He found the steward and him told
Of the departure from his fold
Who quickly brought the case before
Lady Browne Mostyn and Squire Gore.

The constable was set to work
To see where sheep-stealers might lurk
And by the snow upon the ground
The thief was traced and quickly found.

The constable to Hell Hill came
 The steward, Shepherd then by name.
 They saw the footprints in the snow
 Which pointed out the way to go.

As on they went the track was clear
 To Gaging Well, a hamlet near
 In house where William Bowler dwelt
 It seemed as if the mutton smelt!

On entering at dinner time
 Where dwelt the man charged with the crime
 What they then saw before their eyes
 At once made their suspicions rise.

The mutton which appeared in sight
 The inmates sought to hide outright
 Beneath the potatoes in the dish
 But was not quite as they would wish.

Now William Bowler off they take
 Forced home and friends all to forsake.
 In Oxford prison cell to lie
 Till the Assizes should draw nigh.

In seventeen hundred and eighty three
 At Oxford prison hanged was he
 The penalty for many a crime
 Such was the law in William's time.

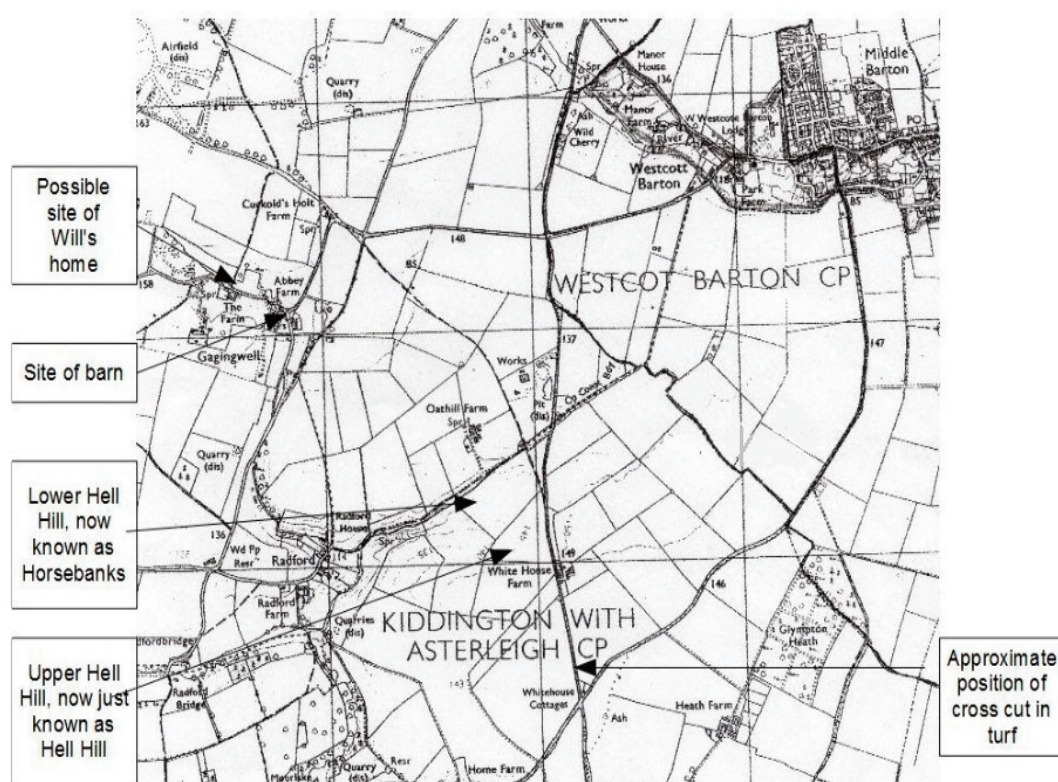
So how much truth is there in this local legend? Well a quick look on the Internet will tell you that many counties in England claim fame for being home to the last man to be hanged for sheep stealing.

Even so, there is some truth in the story. William Bowler was thought to live in Gagingwell, possibly opposite Wadham Farm. Wadham Farm may have been the large house on the left when travelling west out of the Bartons, behind the remains of the cross. If so, the only remaining house on the opposite side of the road of the right age is the large stone one, perhaps too grand for the likes of a sheep stealer? If he really did live on that side of the road, it is plausible that originally there were other dwellings there that no longer exist.

The poem states that Will stole the sheep at Hell Hill. Hell Hill is a 13 acre field on the left hand side of the road from Kiddington crossroads towards Sandford-St Martin. Originally there were two fields, Upper Hell Hill and Lower Hell Hill. Nowadays Lower Hell Hill is known as Horsebanks, but Upper Hell Hill is still referred to simply as Hell Hill. It is thought Will took the sheep to a barn on the Radford Road at Gagingwell to butcher it. The barn still survives but has now been converted to a modern residence.

According to the poem, on being caught Will Bowler was swiftly brought before Lady Browne-Mostyn, who, according to the Survey of Peerage of Britain, certainly existed at the right time and lived in the right place. Her husband, Sir Edward Mostyn, was buried at Kiddington in March 1775. Lady Barbara Browne-Mostyn, survived him and went on to marry Edward Gore, to whom presumably she was still married in 1783. Squire Gore is also mentioned in the poem.

Hanged men (also suicides), were traditionally buried at crossroads, it not being considered fitting to bury such bodies in churchyards. The small area by Whitehouse Cottages at Kiddington crossroads has long been known locally as “Will’s Grave”, and within living memory a patch of the verge was tended as a grave by lengthsman who looked after the roadside. The “grave” took the form of a cross cut into the turf on the verge, about 100 yards from Whitehouse Cottages on the right hand side towards Sandford St Martin, but there is no remaining sign of it today. A Lengthsman (or lengthman) is a term that refers to a person who keeps a “length” of road neat and tidy. This person was responsible for a few (usually 3-6) miles of road. Employed by the local parish council, his job was to keep the grass and weeds cut down at the edge of the road and the drainage ditch clear. Litter would have been collected and wild flowers tended to. Even today Whitehouse Cottages are officially known to the Post Office as “Will’s Grave”, but when the Goffe family moved there they renamed them as they thought “Wills Grave” to be too morbid.



But was William Bowler actually hanged?

There is a record from 1783 in the Quarter Sessions, Calendar of Prisoners at Oxford, which reads:

“Sentences of Prisoners for Felony and Misdemeanours in the Castle Gaol of Oxford.

William Bowler, aged about twenty three Years, committed by the Reverend John Cooke DD February 6 1783, on the oaths of Thomas Shepherd and William Taylor, on a violent Suspicion of feloniously stealing out of a Ground, at Kiddington, in this County, one Weather Sheep, the property of Edward Gore, Esq. Guilty. Death.”

Interestingly, the poem also mentions Steward Shepherd. It also explains why Squire Gore was so hastily informed, since the sheep was his property. A Weather sheep is a local term for a young castrated male sheep, about a year old.

However, another entry for the Summer Assizes 1783 and Lent Assizes 1784 reads:

“John Bowler. Condemned but reprieved”

Could he have been William John Bowler, or does this entry coincidentally refer to another man entirely?

Nowadays convicted criminals are usually given prison sentences, but in the past most criminal offences were punished by death, or by a fine and/or whipping. Many convicted criminals were pardoned to avoid carrying out a death sentence. Transportation emerged during the 17th century as a way of ensuring that criminals were punished without putting them to death. Initially transportation was to North America or the West Indies. The period of transportation was usually 14 years for those receiving conditional pardons from death sentences and 7 years for non-capital offences. However, the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776 meant that transportation to North America was no longer possible. Sentences of transportation were still passed, but convicts were held in hulks (old ships) moored in coastal waters, until a new penal colony was developed in Australia. Convicts were first sent to Australia in 1787.

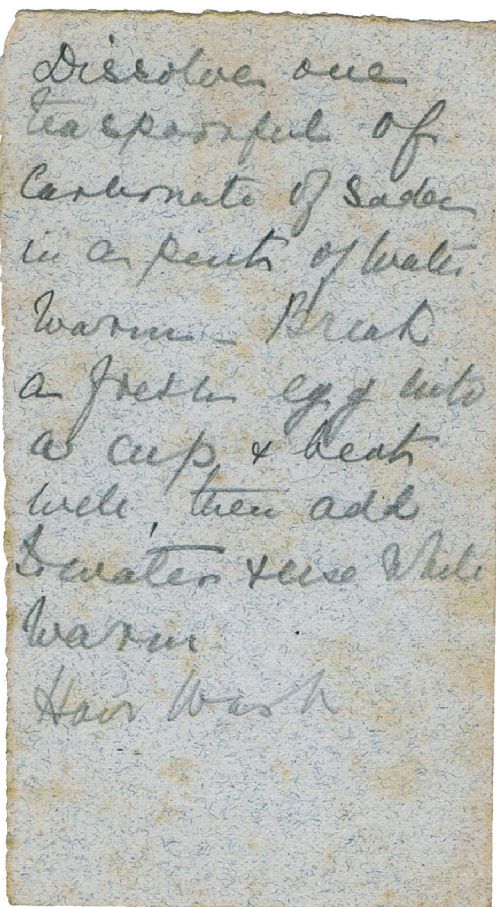
According to the indexes and synopses of Jackson's Oxford Journal, on Thursday 18th March 1784, William Bowler was among 22 convicts who were removed under strong guard from Oxford Castle for transportation; he was given a sentence of 14 years (the usual sentence for a conditional pardon from the death sentence). So, presumably the death sentence was commuted.

However, a further report from Monday 24th May 1784 states that a special commission was opened in Exeter to try convicts who had mutinied against the crew of the Great Duke of Tuscany transport near Torbay, including William Bowler. The report suggests that they were sentenced to death, although there are no further reports for William Bowler in Jackson's Oxford Journal up to 1790. The Great Duke

of Tuscany is not listed in Lloyd's Register so may possibly have been a hulk moored off the shores of Torbay, since these events took place after the American Revolution and before convicts started being sent to Australia.

Frustratingly, despite searching the National Archives Records extensive website, I have been unable to find out the true end of Will's story. However, it is quite possible that William Bowler was eventually hanged, not for sheep stealing but for mutiny. If so, was his body brought back from Devon to be buried at a local crossroads? It seems rather unlikely but unfortunately we may never know for sure. And if this never was Will's Grave, who, if anyone, was really buried there?

A recipe - for Hair Wash!



*Dissolve one
teaspoonful of
carbonate of
soda in a pint of
water, warm.
Break a fresh
egg into a cup
and beat well,
then add to water
and use while
warm*

Voices from WW1

David Wharton

Harold Bassett writes home to his mother, Annie, from the Front in France – July 2nd 1916

...It is now close on twelve months since we had our last leave from Lord Hill, I well remember the currants and gooseberries being ripe, and G. Keen and I walked from Oxford. Starting from the station at 12.15 am and arrived home at 4.30 am, we have been here 12 months on the 22nd of this month. We have just had a draft from Barrington and there is a chap from Gagingwell in it, his name is Beck, cousin to Fred Carpenter and he is new to our Company, he will be with Fred.... You know just lately we have all got a strong opinion of its soon being over, during this last months there has been splendid news from all fronts, we get it from H Quarters of our division, it seems impossible to go on a great while as they are going now And I hope it is. Sorry to say that Jack Wilkins has been rather poorly again he is always worse in the trenches...

Ruth Kirby remembers growing up in Middle Barton in the war years

"I've been asked to write down things I remember about my life. I was born on Feby 10th 1911 in the House which is still my Home. It is now known as 67 North St, Middle Barton. I remember very clearly starting school which I did not like at all but afterwards enjoyed. I can remember in the infants helping in a little charade based on the nursery rhyme Heigh Diddle the Cat and the Fiddle and I was called upon to be the Spoon which the Dish ran away with. Many more memories of school remain, how during the 1914-18 war we used to go out to gather acorns and horse chestnuts which I think were turned into food for horses being used in the forces. I can remember walking from school to Steeple Barton Church when one of the Hall family was buried. At eleven years old we went to Steeple Aston which I enjoyed very much. First we travelled on foot when we only attended cookery classes, afterwards we went by pony and trap or wagonette driven by James Hurst who lived at the Three Horse-Shoes, often we had to get out and walk and very often the chickens had roosted in the wagonette overnight. I enjoyed Steeple Aston School because of the variety of lessons, and we had a very nice gardening master who took us out to see various large gardens in Steeple Aston. After that I went to work for my uncle and aunt at the shop..."

Ed: Sadly and poignantly in the light of the above, Harold Bassett died of wounds in France on the 8th of September 1918 aged 23. He is buried at Arneke Cemetry, Plot 8, Row A24. His and 22 other names are recorded on our village war memorial for the Great War – a devastating loss. Ruth Kirby continued in her shop work throughout her life, first in the grocers and then for many years in the Post Office. For this work she was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1981. She died in 1998.

There was an old lady who swallowed ...

Barbara Hill

Some of you may be old enough to remember a song popularised by Burl Ives about a lady who swallowed a fly; she then swallowed a spider to catch the fly and so on ending with her swallowing a horse... “she’s dead of course”.

They say that truth is stranger than fiction and on reading through some of the history archive held by the Bartons’ History Group we have uncovered an apparently true story about a certain resident of the Bartons in times gone by.



In the Supplement to the “Memorials of Westcott Barton” of 1895, Jenner Marshall records an article in the ‘Banbury Guardian’ of August 16th 1883. Under the heading: The Quack and his Stock in Trade he reproduced an extract entitled:

A Remarkable Occurrence.

This related to a “remarkable formation in the human stomach, resulting, as it is supposed from drinking water containing ova or spawn. Since being successfully treated by Mr Pulley, herbalist, of Steeple Barton, Mrs Worvill, the person in question, has been strongly convinced that something unnatural still remains in her stomach, and after the administration of certain medicines, she vomited another toad of considerable size and a small one imperfectly formed, which was witnessed by persons of the highest respectability. The toads have been examined by many persons, amongst others by Mr Wyatt, naturalist, of Banbury, who was very incredulous and did not hesitate to denounce it as an imposture, as there is on the larger one a very distinctly marked cicatrix, or scar, but having seen the smaller one, he declared himself convinced that they had never had a natural existence, as the larger of the two has apparently no vertebra or other bones, the legs and body being quite flaccid. Naturalists can see the toads at Mr Linnett’s in Parson’s Street. It is desirable that an examination of them should be made by some competent person.”

Jenner Marshall reports that Mrs Maria Worvill, a labouring man's wife aged 30 of Westcott Barton, had been suffering for three years and more especially the last few weeks with a feeling that she had something alive within her – she had been to the Oxford Infirmary and since under the Parish Medical officer of Westcott Barton, Mr Hemingway of Steeple Aston – for some time without obtaining any relief and was induced upon accidentally falling into conversation with Mr Joseph Pulley, herbalist of Middle Barton, to submit her case to him. He after a prolonged sitting and administration of cold milk declared she had a toad in her stomach and directed



The Rev. Jenner Marshall and Mrs Marshall at Westcote Barton Manor House ca.1900. Richard Buswell standing by the donkey

her to come to him in July as he expressed it when 'all nature was active'. He gave her on her visit an emetic followed by a copious dose of salt and water and a [mixture] of marshmallow and wormwood when the woman vomited up a toad which lived for eight days and was put by Mr Pulley into a bottle of spirits of wine. The toad was said to have been inclosed in a membrane and to have diminished in size on exposure to the air – it appeared to have some remarkable points about it regarding its eyes and was seen by me (Jenner Marshall) alive.

Mr Pulley states his father was a herbalist at Stratford on Avon and lived to be 103 and died about a year ago and had had a similar case in his opinion.

Jessie Newman

Ruth Henderson

Jessie was born in Altrincham, Cheshire. At the start of World War II Jessie joined the ARP as a Messenger in Altrincham, when the outskirts of Manchester were bombed. On 28th June 1941 Jessie joined the WAAF aged 16 and a half, the only training she had was two weeks in Bridgnorth, this was when they were given their kit. After this she was posted to Pembroke Docks, Nr Milford Avon until 1943; this was very interesting because there was always something happening especially as this was where the Flying Boats were based. In 1943 she was posted to Barnwood, Gloucester; this was not anywhere near as interesting as most of her time was spent doing paper work.



After D Day Jessie took the opportunity to go abroad with the Women's Forces, she went to the Far East. During her time in Ceylon she had many adventures. One lunch time, with four colleagues, she killed a cobra with stones, while the natives hid, once the cobra was dead all they all came out waving their sticks. While Jessie was in Ceylon she met Les Newman. During their time there Les had Dengi Fever and had a spell in a Military Hospital. One day after visiting him in hospital, she was waiting outside for a lift back to the barracks when a Jeep stopped, it was Lord Louis Mountbatten, he gave her a lift, she explained that she had visited Les in hospital. The next day Lord Mountbatten went to visit Les, he treated his troops very well and wanted to see them informally, not just when they were standing to attention.

After Japan surrendered they were posted to Singapore, while in Singapore Jessie and Les got married. They travelled to Singapore on a ship. This was the place where they learnt to make some extra money by getting little boys to sell some of the cigarettes that they were given in their daily rations.

They came home on The Empire Trooper. On the ship the conditions were not of a high standard, there were ants everywhere, the food on the ship was very poor, they lived on K Rations which was 2 cigarettes and one match, a packet of Peanut butter, hard biscuits and a brick bar of chocolate. These rations were to be handed in but by the end of the journey they had eaten them all. The journey back took a month. She remembers that during the war Black Out curtains had to be used, there were no Sign Posts and all the Railway Stations had their name boards removed.

Jessie was awarded two medals, the Defence Medal and the Victory Medal. Many people will have seen her wearing these at Remembrance Day Services over the years. Jessie has given information about her time in War Service to the Martello Tower in Pembroke that is used as a Museum.

In 1946 Jessie and Les returned to Middle Barton and lived in half of the Upside Down House, 13-15 Worton Road, next door to Mr & Mrs Gilbert Newman. This was a bit of a shock for the locals as they were not used to Townies or Northerners, especially as one year Jessie entered some Runner Beans into a class at the Annual Flower and Produce Show and won, the usual winner was not amused being beaten by a woman. The Oxfordshire accent took a bit of getting used to, when Mrs Gascoigne asked if she had a bit of grace for the sandwiches for the football teas, she discovered she meant a bit of butter or margarine and a cup n tea meant a cup of tea.

One day Jessie heard that there were extra sausages in Cox's shop, when she went to see if she could buy some she was told they were only for local people, so Jessie explained that Les was a local!

Jessie remembers that some of the local tradesmen made a gate for Westcote church out of the old stocks to say Thank You for all the local men who returned alive back from the war.

Jessie's husband Les worked with his father Gilbert Newman running a haulage business, this was based in Worton Road. Jessie had three children, two sons and a daughter, and when they were younger she used to go spudding (potato picking)

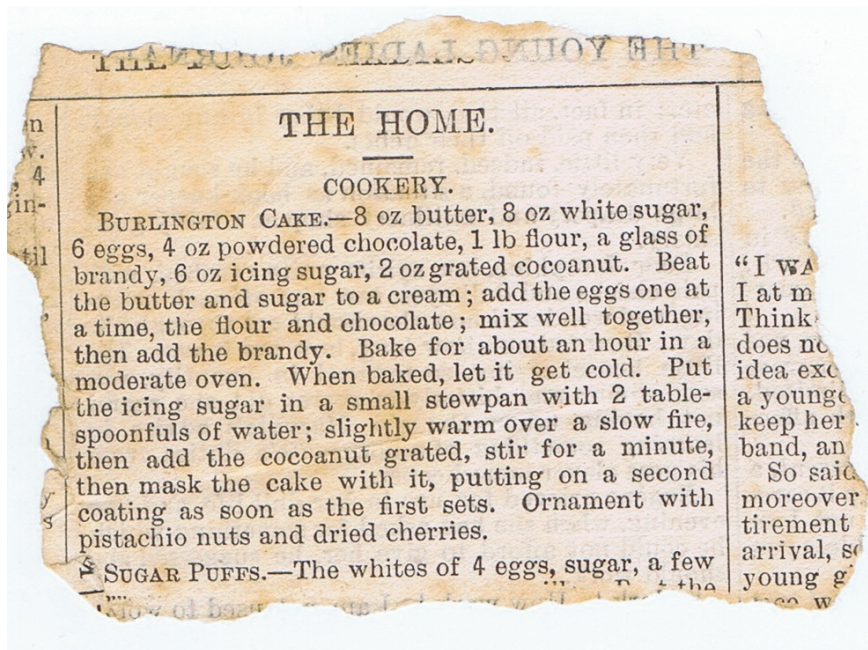
for local farmers - David Sizer, Bert Lewis and Taffy Hughes. This was back breaking work as some days the bags they had to fill were wool sacks (these were very big sacks).

Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation was shown on two small televisions in The Alice Marshall Hall. When she got back home with the children to have lunch her husband and his friends had eaten all the food!

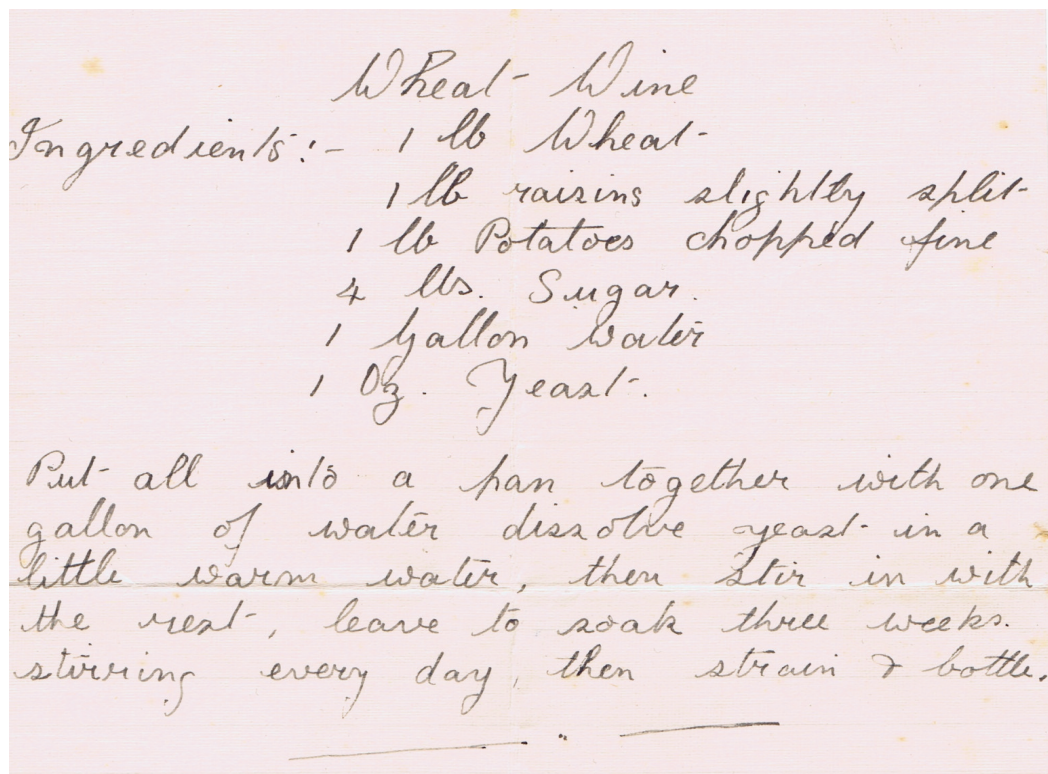
During the 1970's Jessie worked for a catering company in Heythrop Park when it was a National Westminster Bank Training College, Mini Buses picked up the workers from the village every day. In her spare time Jessie played Bowls for Barton and Heythrop Park.

After her husband's death Jessie moved into a flat in Dashwood House in Francis Road.

Try this cake recipe!



A Seasonal Recipe



Wheat Wine

Ingredients:-

- 1lb Wheat
- 1lb raisins slightly split
- 1lb potatoes chopped fine
- 4lbs sugar
- 1 gallon water
- 1oz yeast

Put all into a pan together with one gallon of water, dissolve yeast in a little warm water, then stir in with the rest, leave to soak three weeks stirring every day then strain and bottle.

Joan Irons

*as told to Ruth Henderson and Richard Samuelson
edited by Jackie Wood*

I was born prematurely in October 1920, in the house now know as Poplar Springs at the top of Washington Terrace; it was in those days two houses. Being such a very small baby, I was wrapped in cotton wool and olive oil and placed in a small drawer, instead of a cot. My Mum and Dad were originally going to name me Miriam Joan (mum wanted the name Joan, and the name Miriam was after my dad's mother), but then Milly Prior (Percy Prior's mother and a neighbour) said she wanted me to have the name Constance, I don't really know what it had to do with her, but eventually I ended up with the name Constance Miriam Joan Eaglestone, what a long name for such a small child!



Joan Eaglestone being held by her Mum, her Dad holding their dog

When I was confirmed it was at Christ Church Cathedral Oxford, Bob Jarvis drove us to Oxford (three girls and five boys) in his Daimler. Afterwards, we had tea at Elliston and Cavell.

When WW2 was declared in 1939, I was working as a housekeeper for Mr William Irons and his two sons (William and Jack) at Holliers Farm. On that Sunday in 1939 I can remember sitting on the back doorstep of the farm shelling peas and listening to Neville Chamberlain on the wireless as he announced that we were at war. Life in the Bartons was to change considerably during war time.

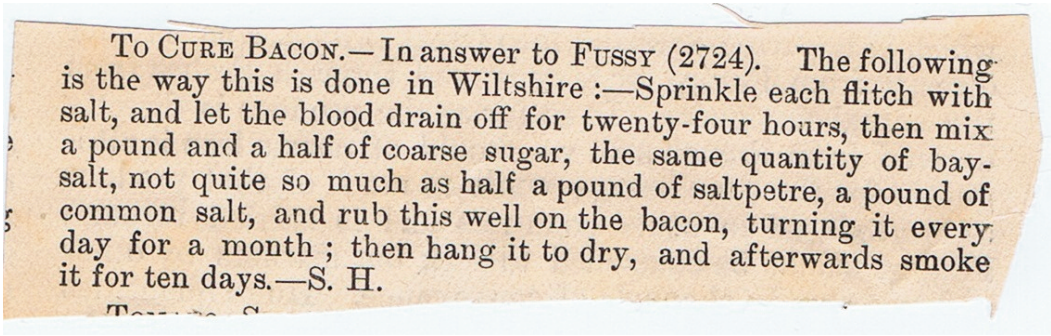
On many occasions you could hear the aeroplanes flying over the village even if you couldn't see them. We heard the German bombers going over on their way to bomb Coventry, we could see the glowing orange sky with the fires burning in Coventry, how dreadful, those poor people.

When we heard the Air Raid sirens you would stay indoors as there was nowhere else to go. Bombs were dropped near to the village at Leys Farm. Aubrey and Mary West were walking near by when Aubrey shouted 'Mary you silly bugger lay down' as the plane dropped its bomb, I think the crater is still there.

I wasn't 'called up' to do war work as I was a housekeeper for three farmers and helped on the farm, which was a reserved occupation. Many women were sent to work at the Aluminium factory in Banbury (Alcan). I believe three buses a day picked up workers from the village, one at 6.00am, the next at 1.00pm and one late at night. Alcan built a replica factory in Banbury away from the real working one, to fool the Germans, in case they decided to drop a bomb on the aluminium plant.

Children from London were evacuated to families in the village; some of them didn't stay long because they were homesick or their parents missed them too much. Soldiers were billeted to the House on the Horse Common, North Street and the Old Chapel in Worton Road. Officers were billeted to Miss Evans's house in Worton Road near the shop. The Home Guard (Dads Army) met a few times a week and practised their drill at the school. Norman Cross was an Officer and my dad (Charles Eaglestone) would drill them, you could hear his voice all over the village as he put the Home Guard through their paces. During WW1, my dad was a drill sergeant, unfortunately he was injured and sent home and on the train journey to Scotland to convalesce, he was looked after by Mr Banbury from the drapers shop in Woodstock. Mr Banbury whispered to my dad as the train passed through Heyford Station to Scotland 'Charlie, we are just going through Heyford Station'. After his spell in Scotland, Dad spent the rest of WW1 at Plymouth. Land Army girls worked on the village farms, many of them came from towns and cities and didn't know much about

Another answer from 'The Home'



TO CURE BACON.—In answer to FUSSY (2724). The following is the way this is done in Wiltshire :—Sprinkle each fitch with salt, and let the blood drain off for twenty-four hours, then mix a pound and a half of coarse sugar, the same quantity of bay-salt, not quite so much as half a pound of saltpetre, a pound of common salt, and rub this well on the bacon, turning it every day for a month ; then hang it to dry, and afterwards smoke it for ten days.—S. H.

the countryside. My brother, Jack Eaglestone, married Mabel, a land army girl, she was from Sunderland. Prisoners of War from Germany, Italy and Poland were also given work on farms. Helmut Allers, a German Prisoner, worked at the farm; he was used to farm work, he had a small holding in Germany. Helmut couldn't speak English so to learn the language he would point to things around him and listen to plays on the wireless. He would call me 'Kleine' which means 'little one'. He did not want to go back to Germany after the war, he didn't know what reaction he would get in the village where he came from. The Germans didn't want the war anymore than we did. Helmut kept in touch with us until he died in the 1990s. Christmas presents would be exchanged every year between our families, these presents would be eagerly awaited every Christmas, my grandchildren, Edward and Claire, weren't forgotten and when it got near to Christmas they would ask if 'the parcel from Germany had arrived yet?'

There were dances most Saturday nights at the Mission Hall. The local girls would go and the Land Army Girls, there was no shortage of boyfriends with the English and American boys there, but the vicar used to go sit and watch to make sure everyone was behaving themselves. The Americans were stationed near the village at Kiddington; my best friend, Doris Hawtin, met one of the Americans, Woody Johnson, and after a lot of red tape, within two months was married to him. Later she went to America with all the other GI brides, she told me 'all women on a ship together, an experience she never wanted to repeat'. Doris remained in the US for the rest of her life married to Woody, they had a son Greg. She visited Britain on several occasions, and kept in touch until recently, but I haven't heard from her for the last two Christmases, and I fear she may have passed away.

Vic Hazel worked on the farm and so did Tom Shirley until he left to become a lorry driver before the war, Tom was therefore called up and unfortunately was killed on D Day.

My dad (Charles Eaglestone) was a butcher and during WW2 on Saturdays he would kill pigs that people kept in a sty at the bottom of their gardens. When the pigs were killed sometimes they would be cut into joints and cured and hung from the beams in the cottages; after a while the meat would be ready to eat, you could then 'rasher' a bit off and pop it in the frying pan to make a tasty meal. It was believed the only thing you couldn't eat from a pig was its 'squeal'. Homemade brawn was made from the pig's head, faggots from the pluck, lard from the leaf and pigs' trotters were delicious. If you had a pig killed for your own consumption you would then lose some of your meat rations. Extra food rations were given to farm workers during harvest and haymaking as this work was very strenuous and they needed extra energy. All the cows on the farm were hand-milked, the churns were collected from the farm daily. Milk was also sold from the door at Holliers Farm; people would bring their own jugs or tin cans to be filled.



This cook's apron reads:

*"As thro' this weary world you go
Content with thee abide
For 'neath the surface well I know
A CHEERFUL SPIRIT hides!"*

...but when she lifts the apron:



Nature Notes from times gone by

Barbara Hill

In the Supplement to the Memorials of Westcott Barton by Jenner Marshall under the heading 'Observations on Natural History' there are some interesting snippets about the wildlife which could be found in and around the Bartons in the nineteenth century.

There is reference to a publication of 1865 by Buckland entitled 'Curiosities of Natural History'. This records that in Barton Brook was to be found a small species of black water rat shaped like a mole with a long body and short legs and a short thick head. This animal, which was likely to be a water vole, (" Ratty" from The Wind in the Willows) was very rare elsewhere and according to fishermen had mostly been killed by the common water rat.

At that time there were two kinds of rat in Great Britain, the Brown rat and the Black rat. The Black rat was supposed to have originated in France and introduced to this country about the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Apparently the Black rat had a long projecting upper jaw, greyish black fur and a number of long stiff hairs standing out from the ordinary fur. It was smaller than the Brown rat and its ears and tail were relatively long. It was, surprisingly, noted for its timidity. According to a contemporary Naturalist, Crevier, the Brown rat had a completely different character and was ' quarrelsome and courageous in driving the other kind out of the country.' The Brown rat was thought to have entered Europe during the Middle Ages from the East and to have been brought here in the cargoes of ships.

The banks of the Barton Brook at that time were full of tunnels made by the water rat, or vole. Voles were known to like trout streams. The vole, distinguished by its snub nose, had habits more like a beaver than a rat, feeding entirely on water plants and roots such as mangold wurzel. Jenner Marshall reports that he had seen young chestnut trees growing by the side of the brook at Westcott Barton completely nibbled through just above the ground as though it were done not just to reach the pith but out of 'sheer mischief'.

Another curiosity found in the Bartons in March 1859 was a mole of an unusual colour - 'fallow inclining to white'. Discovered in Westcott Barton, it was presented to Dr Rolleston, the Linacre Professor of Physiology at the University of Oxford. This eminent gentleman spoke of it as a 'specimen which on account of its Zoological value possesses an especial claim to preservation in addition to its worth for any more particularly anatomical investigation'.

The mole was described by naturalists as an energetic and thirsty little animal and mostly found in places which afford it the best hunting grounds and give it easy and ready access to water which it needs constantly which is why it frequented the meadows in and around the Bartons.



According to Jenner Marshall farmers were divided in their opinions as to whether the burrowing of moles was beneficial to their lands.

Some thought that their runs would help to carry water away from the surface which would otherwise stagnate and be detrimental to the herbage. They considered that the fine soil thrown up by the moles acted as a dressing when spread around and tended to improve the grasses of the meadows. On the other hand it was felt that the turf was damaged by the 'ramification of the excavations'. There was also a risk that the spreading of the molehills might be neglected at the proper time of the year thus leading to an uneven surface in the field which would be prejudicial both to seeding and mowing.

Mr Marshall clearly belongs to the second school of thought and states that he finds it difficult to conceive how a field studded with molehills at any time of the year can 'bespeak a mode of culture otherwise than slovenly and discreditable both to owner and occupier and consequently their appearance in modern agriculture is deserving of condemnation'.

Apparently the professional mole catcher with his traps was becoming extinct as 'high cultivation greatly diminished the profits of his trade.' The following is suggested:

Where moles abound and there is a desire to rid the fields of them this may be effected by watching with a gun their moving of the earth which takes place at unvarying times during the summer months at break of day and between two and three o'clock in the afternoon and the moment the soil is seen to move let the gun be fired at the spot.' This solution was said to be a very successful one so that a farmer in Somersetshire had been known to have killed twenty one moles with only twenty six shots.

The Peewit, otherwise known as the Lapwing, was a regular visitor to the Bartons, so much so that as long ago as 1795 its name was given to one of the fields between Westcott Barton and Sandford. The arrival of the Peewits in their season was a source of joy to the farmer as they feed almost entirely on grubs, slugs and insects which are so destructive to the turnip crop in particular. They used to be seen in large quantities and their flashing flight and piercing mournful cry and 'shamming of lameness' was familiar to all.

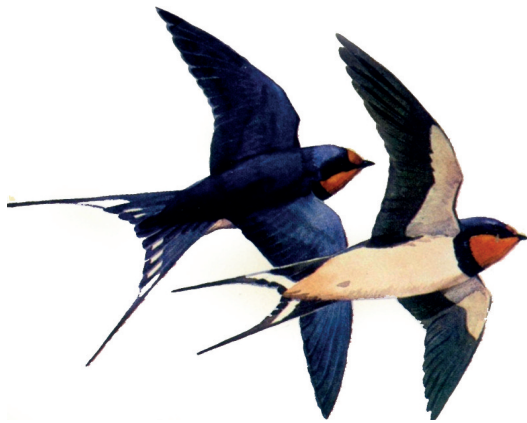
There was a Danish tradition that when Jesus was crucified three birds passed the Hill of Golgotha from East to West.

First came the Lapwing who is supposed to have flown round the cross crying 'torment him'; for this reason the Lapwing is forever accursed and can never be at rest, flying round and round its nest uttering its plaintive cry.



Then came the Stork and the stork cried in sorrow and grief for the ill deed done: Styrk ham! Styrk ham! Give him strength! Therefore the stork was considered to be blessed and was welcomed wherever it appeared.

Lastly came the Swallow and when it saw what had been done it is supposed to have called 'Refresh him! Cool him!' So the swallow was considered the most loved of the three and dwells and builds his nest under the eaves of men's houses, looking in through their windows and watching them without being disturbed 'either in the palaces or in the houses of the ground peasants'.



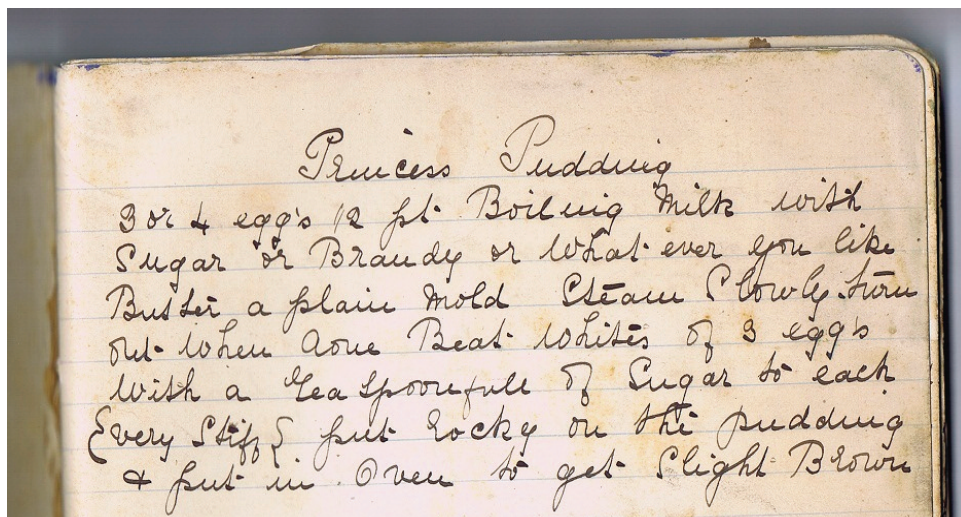
The Snipe also gave its name to a tract of land in the Parish which was formerly wet and swampy and much frequented by snipe. It was called Snipemore or Snitemore but following the Enclosure in 1796 the cultivation of this land made it useless as a feeding ground for snipe so they disappeared.

In the hot summer of 1865 it was reported that the rare Hummingbird Moth was seen in the gardens of the Bartons and was even bold enough to enter houses but was not seen in subsequent years.

The Green Woodpecker is also mentioned in the 'Observations': woods are the chief pleasure haunts and hunting grounds of this pretty bird but it was frequently seen disporting itself on the lawns and in the fir plantations of the then new Westcott Barton Manor House gardens.

The river Dorne was noted as a favoured stream for trout and 'a place of resort' for the kingfisher and heron.

A Pudding fit for a Princess!



The Milestone

Jackie Wood

Orders were given during WW2 to take down signs naming villages and towns across Britain, this also included railway station signs and milestones which told the traveller how many miles it was to the next village or town. Shops were also asked to take maps off of their shelves and not sell them to the public. This was because if Britain was invaded by the enemy, the enemy wouldn't be able to establish where they were in the country.

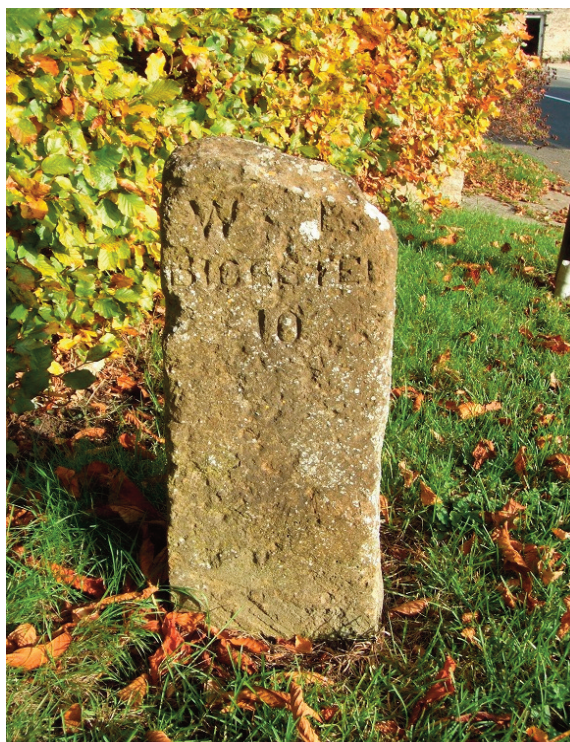


Apparently, my Grandfather, Charles Eaglestone, who was the Sgt in the home guard was asked to bury the milestone which stood outside the Fox in Westcote Barton. This milestone stood, so the saying goes, exactly midway between the Fox Public House at Chipping Norton and the Fox Public House at Bicester. In the 1980s my Uncle, William Roy Eaglestone, (Charles Eaglestone's youngest son) with permission from the Parish Council helped Colin Chesterman and others locate the buried milestone. They dug it up and positioned it back where it had stood for many years before the war.



The Milestone uncovered !

Both black and white pictures in this article by courtesy of the Banbury Guardian



Westcote Barton church -- a mass of Sundials

Rosemary Wharton

Sundials are a common feature on many parish churches and it is interesting to look at the collection we have at Westcote Barton church. Above the porch there are two. The top one, now damaged, was added in 1621. This stands perched above another sundial incorporated into the sixteenth century battlements of the church. Choose a sunny day and you will see the distinct shadow cast by the central post (the gnomon.)

But there is another much earlier sundial on the church – a ‘mass dial.’ This is more difficult to spot and has been worn away since it was scratched into the stone wall of the church many hundreds of years ago. These ‘mass’ or ‘scratch’ dials were created in mediaeval times to tell the parishioners when the service of mass was starting. This mass dial is on the south-east corner of the south wall of the church. Find the hole where the gnomon used to be, then look for the radiating scratches around it. Most of these dials are semi-circular, but ours seems to be one of the few which is circular. But now look on the wall just above this. Is there a faint circle around another hole here?

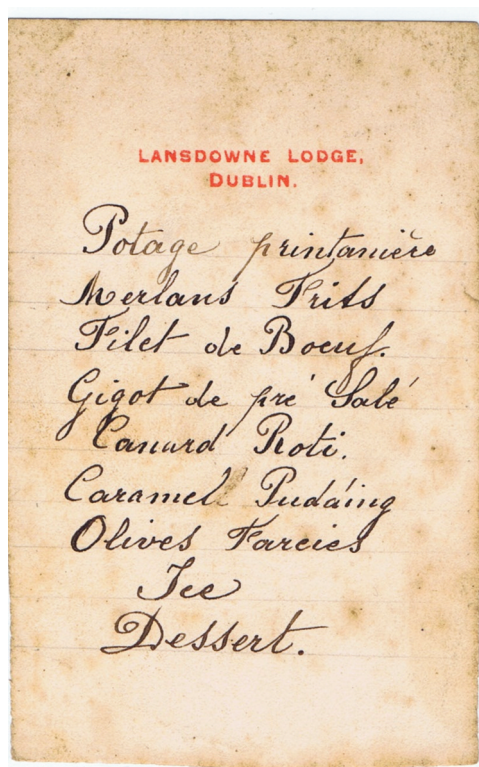


The historical leaflet about the church and a chat with our vicar Graeme Arthur, prompted me to search for the mass dial recorded on the left hand side of the porch. Looking very closely, there is a certainly a hole with a very indistinct circle around it. But are there the remains of another one just below? Sometimes in mediaeval times, different clerics progressively scratched their own dials into the church walls, so having several mass dials would not appear to be unique.

Rummaging, Recipes and Reminiscence

Jackie Wood

Recently whilst rummaging through an old cupboard at Holliers Farm I came across some dusty documents which included a postcard album and a hand written recipe book both belonging to my grandmother, Florence. Apparently, before my grandmother married my grandfather William Irons at Hook Norton in 1906, she was 'in service' at North Aston House working as a cook, preparing meals for the family and their guests. While at North Aston House, Florence would travel with the family to Ireland, which for a young girl brought up in the small Oxfordshire village of Hook Norton in the late 1800s/early 1900s was a daunting journey to undertake. There was no time to be homesick; during those visits to Ireland, Florence would be



A souvenir from Ireland?

too busy cooking for the family, or planning and preparing large dinner parties for thirty or forty guests, perhaps for a shooting party or a weekend house party. Florence would refer to her book of handwritten recipes which she had accumulated during the previous few years for those tried and tested recipes which would suit each occasion.

Extract from the *Banbury Advertiser* 20th April, 1964.....

MIDDLE BARTON WIN N. OXON DRAMA AGAIN



DRAMA FESTIVAL WINNERS FOR THIRD YEAR

A scene from the Middle Barton Youth Club entry, "Passion, Poison and Petrification" at the Oxfordshire Youth Service Drama competition on Saturday. Players in this scene are Paul Brooks as George Fitztollemache, Shirley Sabin (Lady Magnesia Fitztollemarche), Yvonne Bowden (Phyllis) and Leslie Dear (Adolphus). For the third year running, Middle Barton won the Oxfordshire Youth Service Drama competition. At the festival – held at Wheatley Secondary School on Saturday night – the club team was voted first for its production of George Bernard Shaw's "Passion, Poison and Petrification". Middle Barton, representing North Oxfordshire, competed against three other teams from various parts of the county. The Adjudicator, Mr. W. J. Cox, said the festival had shown that there was a tremendous amount of dramatic talent in Oxfordshire. Of Middle Barton's production by Mrs B. L. Savage, the wife of the club leader, Mr. Cox said he had been surprised and delighted to see it on the programme. "It is a very difficult play and needs experienced actors and split second timing," he said. "It nearly came off – although the whole thing needed a bit more panache". The adjudicator made the following specific points about the presentation and characters: Presentation – The play had a good setting although a rather heavier motif on the wallpaper would have conveyed more of the Victorian atmosphere.

Magnesia – A very good sense of comedy and therefore of timing. Stylishly played although she must never drop out of character. Her attack lapsed a little in the middle of the play.

Phyllis – Well played part with good comedy. Rather more projection needed, though.

George – This performance could be much more villainous and this actor would do well to forget the printed lines and make every word as spicy and natural as possible. Rather more speed would help.

Adolphus – The performance improved after a shaky beginning. Come in with much more confidence and do be careful with the voice as a great deal was lost to the audience.

Landlord – Actor's voice could be even more Cockney. Do watch repetitive hand movements.

Policeman – Well played but would benefit from a moustache or some sign of maturity.

Doctor – Well done but must be given greater projection.

Announcer – Do use the audience.

Middle Barton Drama Group of 2012 take note!

Bartons' History Group Publications

- 'The Changing Faces of the Bartons'** £8.50
by Audrey Martin
Includes pictures of people, streets, houses and events from Victorian times onwards
- 'Middle Barton School – Aspects of School Life 1866-1996'** £2.50
by Audrey Martin
A terrific read with photos and turn-of-the-century quotes from the school log-book
- 'Middle Barton – a village walk'** £0.80
Alerts you to sights you may never have been aware of before
- 'It Happened in the Dorn Valley'** £3.50
A vivid account of life in the Bartons during WW2 through the eyes of the Women's Institute.
- 'The History of the Bartons' by George Laws** £2.00
An overall history starting 1000 years ago
- 1920s prints** £1.50 each
Fox Lane, Mill Lane, North St, South St, Worton Rd and the School
- Silver Jubilee Celebrations in the Bartons (1977)** £5.00
A compilation of three films taken during the celebrations, now on a single DVD
- Barton Abbey** £1.00
An updated (2010) leaflet now in colour
- Bygone Bartons, Vol. 1** £3.00
The first of the series

All publications available from Rosemary Wharton tel: 01869 347638