Introduction

John Madden

Chairman: Bartons' History Group

Welcome to Volume 3 of Bygone Bartons. I hope you enjoyed reading Volumes 1 and 2 - and the special Jubilee Edition last year.

In this issue, Chris Edbury "reveals all" about Westcote Barton Church, Barbara Hill tells the story of farming in the Bartons, Eric Bosley shares with us his memories of farming, and we hear of three individuals who all had connections with Steeple Barton Vicarage. To round off, there is a description of Fred Bradshaw's famous model railway layout, and a couple of 'oddities' from the archives - a rather unusual Will, and a (heartfelt?) Apology for some drunken misdemeanours in Victorian times - yes, such things happened then as now. Though whether such an apology could be elicited from a modern-day transgressor is doubtful ...

We would love to hear from any reader whose own memories are triggered by any of these pieces. Perhaps you have memories of the model railway, perhaps you were there when it was filmed for television. Or could you add some more details about life back then when our villages were still predominantly a farming community? If so please contact one of the Bartons' History Group members or write your memories down and give it to one of us. Thank you.

There are also, dotted around, some photographs from our archives where we have so far been unable to identify the people concerned. If you recognise any of them, do please let us know.

THE GREAT RACE AT BARTON

1890's

Thomas Stockford the baker, Caleb Eaglestone the butcher, Tom Allen, of Park Farm and Henry Harris at the Mill organised the race and Caleb Eaglestone gave a leg of mutton as a prize.

The race was to be between two men, one of whom was pigeon toed and the other man had one leg shorter than the other. Their names were Huckell and Buswell but as they had at one time lived next door to each other they had come to be known as Huckle and Buckle.

They were to run from Hopcrofts Holt to the Mill. There were stepping stones by the Mill then. The one to get to the middle stone first would win the leg of mutton.

The race started – all Barton looking on. When the men got to the corner to turn down Mill Lane, Tom Stockford went to the mill sluice and let the water through. The first one to arrive was swamped.

A ditty was then made up:

Huckle and Buckle went for a race
From the Holt to Barton mud pool was the place
Huckle went in right up to his chin
And said Damn you Buckle, come on in.

This account was given by Mrs. Rose Pound whose father, Mr. Jesse Wyatt, had described it to her.

Can you identify any of these:

Revelations of Westcote Barton Church

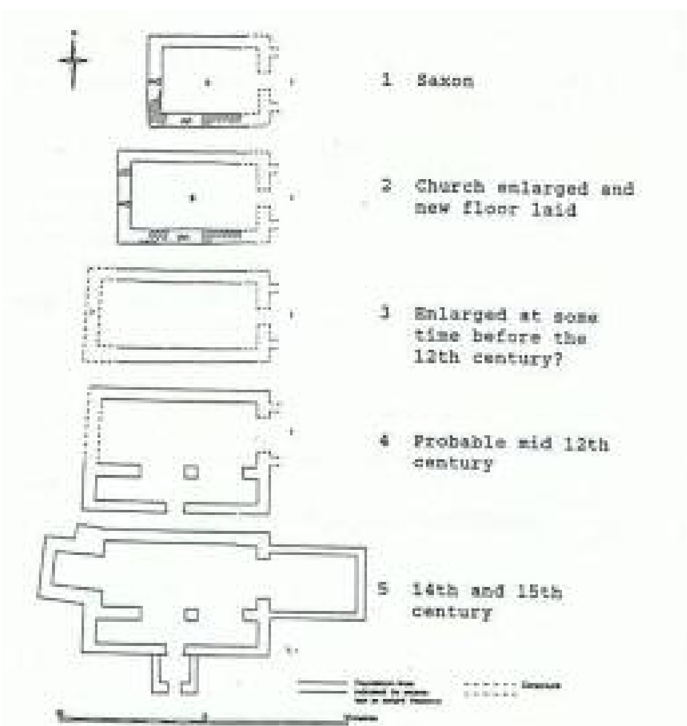
Christine Edbury

One of the earliest images of Westcote Barton Church, a drawing by Buckler dated 1823

Westcote Barton was once part of a Saxon estate. The entry in Domesday reads : 'The Land of Bishop of Lisieux. The bishop holds Westcott Barton (Bertone) and Routrou holds of him. There are 5 hides. There is land for 8 ploughs. Now in demesne are 3 ploughs and 5 slaves, 10 villeins with 4 borders have 5 ploughs. There are 3 acres of meadow and pasture 1 furlong long and a half broad. It was and is worth £7. Leofwine held these lands as he wished.' However, there is no mention of a church in the survey. John Blair in an article on this subject states 'the absence of a separate entry for a church is not surprising, for the Oxfordshire circuit rarely recorded churches'. A Norman church was recorded about 100 years later where we find reference to the church in a document at Eynsham Abbey, dated 1180. This makes reference to the advowson granted to the Benedictine Abbey at Eynsham, the context implying that the church had been in existence for many years. It is from these charters that we know the original dedication was to St. Edmund – a Saxon (from East Anglia). It is believed the dedication was changed to St. Edward the Confessor when the church was enlarged in the 12th century; the Confessor was very popular at that time, and he had been born in Oxfordshire (Islip).

While the work to remove the old broken tiles and re-lay a wooden floor was taking place, the then Vicar, the Rev. Peter Dance, gave permission for the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit (now Oxford Archaeology) to carry out limited work within the church. The following paragraphs give a short archaeological tour of the excavation

of 1977 in the context of the church history, with details of the main findings.
Many Saxon foundations reveal evidence of earlier timber buildings and, having found the stone foundations of an early church, it is assumed a timber church was probably the earliest building on this site. From the excavation of 1977 we can confirm that a Saxon church did indeed stand on this site. Richard (Charlie) Chambers, of Oxford Archaeology, was the archaeologist in charge of the excavation. Given that urgent excavations of this type are carried out under very difficult constraints, Charlie could not determine whether wooden foundations of the first church may have been under the stone floor - he did not have time to dig down into the very first level to find any timber foundations, but did find stone foundations of an early church, probably from the second phase of construction. Unfortunately, the Victorian rebuilding of 1855-56 had taken out all the levels of building between the old Cotswold stone paving at the top down to the rough stone floor of the Anglo-Saxon church.
Shown below is an extract from the church booklet and the article written by Chambers in Oxoniensia depicting drawings of the building phases, starting with a small Saxon rectangular building, roughly where the nave meets the chancel . Shortly afterwards the nave was lengthened to the west and to the south, somewhere just past the existing large round pillar. In the mid 12th century the Norman builders again lengthened the nave and built the south aisle (the pillars and arches dating from this time). The Norman grave monument in the south aisle was discovered in the Victorian renovations.

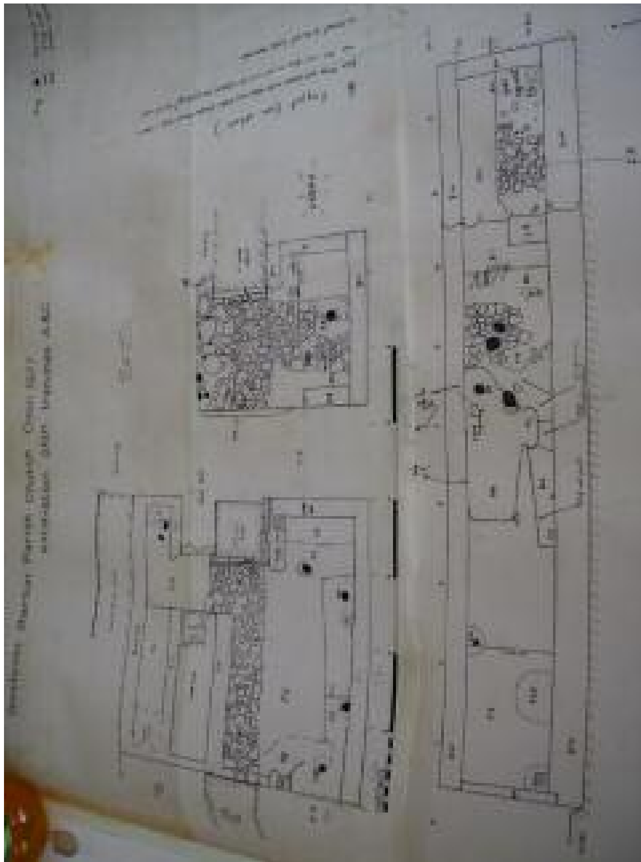


At an early stage a small chancel was added. Without excavation [not very likely] we will never know if or when the chancel had ever been extended. It is assumed the chancel arch, although possibly rebuilt sometime during the 12-13th centuries, and again possibly in the Victorian renovations, had always been where it is now. The arch remains a mystery because it may have been rebuilt during the second or third building phase (Early English), utilising the two old capitals, one plain, the other carved with lines, or as Charlie thought by the Victorian renovators, who built it to resemble an Early English arch. I hardly think the Victorian re-builders would have been so careless with the two white stone capitals. They have been inserted, not very well, for they do not match and are not set square. These two capitals pre-date the Norman rebuild and are almost certainly Saxon, but not necessarily from the earlier arch. Someone may have realised their antiquity and thought they had better be included somewhere. They do not comply with the plain chamfer decoration of the arch. There is a good description of the church before restoration (pre 1855) in a Topographical Oxon Report which describes the chancel arch and screen. 'The chancel is transition Norman, acutely pointed, plain square jambs and Norman in-posts (no mention of carved white stone capitals) The screen is much mutilated, the lower half in good repair, top not, remains of red, blue and yellow paint'. The screen was recorded as 'broken' in an 18th century record. The rood screen was renovated and repainted by the Victorian renovators in 1855-6 who found remnants of the original paint and carefully matched the colours. It was painted again about 30 years later by the Rector, Edmund Lockyer. He apparently cared greatly for his church and parishioners and was very artistic.

In the 1856 newspaper article about the re-opening of the church after the renovations, we read "the Chancel is laid with glazed encaustic tiles, mixed with glazed green and black, and plain red and black. The passages of the nave, aisle, the tower and the porch are all laid with plain red, black and buff tiles. All these are from Messrs. Minton's " [Staffordshire potteries]. The new Staffordshire tiles replaced 'a pavement of Oxfordshire stone'. The tiles in the chancel remain, as do the ones in the porch and tower, but in 1977 the old tiles in the nave were removed and a new wooden floor was put in. There is a letter in the archive dated March 1977 from the builder D.J. Duthie, agreeing to remove the pews and timber floors so Oxford Archaeology can carry out the excavation. The whereabouts of the remains of the floor was not recorded.

In his report in Oxoniensia 1977, Charlie Chambers mentions human bone fragments coming from the general tread-level of debris left over the mortar floor suggesting that the post-pits from the timber scaffolding grossly disturbed a number of burials and coffins. He records the shape and what the poles were made of – circular pieces of 20-25 year old coppice wood, also sawn off square giving dead end flat bottomed post-holes.

Excavation slide, showing the tiled floor before removal
Copy of slide from their archive, kindly provided by the Museum Resource Centre, Standlake



Excavation plan, showing all the features. I have aligned it to match up with the excavation slide
Photographed by kind permission of the Museum Resource Centre

 The Victorian builders had removed painted wall plaster – 'frescoes on wall' had been recorded earlier. These were possibly the remains of medieval wall paintings and the Victorian builders removed them, leaving bits scattered on the floor, some filling in the post holes when the scaffolding was removed, to be discovered by Charlie during his excavation.

Fragments of painted wall plaster
Photographed by kind permission of the
Museum Resource Centre

He also recorded finding pieces of deep red, deep yellow, ochre, black and green paint on the bottom of the column underneath some rubbed off whitewash. Charlie believed the Victorian renovations had removed about a foot of soil and debris, as well as the slabbed floor, thus removing all previous floor levels between the last phase of the Saxon church and the new floor level. No medieval tile fragments were found, therefore it is almost certain that the floor was never tiled, just paved with the Cotswold stone slabs. Very few glass fragments were found, so this may have been removed with the other debris; we don't know what was used in the small

Pair of copper alloy early medieval tweezers from grave 2 Photographed by kind permission of the Museum Resource Centre, Standlake

windows, it is not recorded anywhere.

A pair of early copper alloy tweezers was found in one of the grave pits. The position of this discovery can be seen on the excavation slide and plan, the big brown mark to the right of the tiled floor and just below the four black 'blobs' on the plan. Charlie recorded that tomb slabs appear to have been removed during the renovations, their whereabouts now not known, it was not recorded at the time. In a pre-Victorian TopOxon report it was recorded that a 'white freestone to Matthew Wright, 1679 and another nearby like the former, to Elizabeth, wife of Matthew, 1672' was in the chancel. Where are they now?

All the finds from the excavation, the human bone, wall plaster, fragments of stone, tweezers etc are at the Museum Resource Centre, Standlake, under accession number 1982.16

Acknowledgements: Gillian Hoy , Denise Roberts, Barbara Hill, Carol Lister and Oxfordshire County Council, Museum Resource Centre, Standlake.

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History of Farming in the Bartons

Barbara Hill

Farming in the British Isles began in the New Stone Age around 3500 BC when the first farmers arrived from Europe introducing domesticated sheep, cattle and strains of barley and wheat. Their homes were timber, wattle and thatched huts, sometimes grouped together.

There is dating evidence to suggest that Westcott Barton has been in place since about 700AD; Steeple Barton has existed for more than a thousand years, Middle Barton for only five hundred or so years.

From about 800AD to 1250AD the village of Steeple Barton was an appendage of the Royal Court at Woodstock. The original meaning of the word 'Barton' was 'a place for the storage of corn'; in early medieval times it came to mean an outlying grange or farmstead, usually in the sense of a farmstead attached to a great estate but lying some way from the lord's house. Hoskins, in his 'Making of the English Landscape', calls it an outlying demesne farm.

In 1250AD Oseney Abbey became the landlord of Steeple Barton. In around 1350 the centre of activity began to move to Middle Barton The main reason for this was the building of Heyford bridge in the late 13th century which made the east-west road through the village important but also the Black Death in 1348 which may have killed up to half the villagers of Steeple Barton.

In 1540 with the dissolution of the monasteries private squires took the place of the monasteries so from then on Barton had a resident Lord of the Manor.

The ending of the prominence of Steeple Barton was the time of the first enclosure award in mediaeval times, converting arable (corn land) to pasture for sheep.

The next five hundred years was a time of open fields in the Bartons. There were six fields only in the whole village (Middle Barton and Westcott Barton combined). Their names, recorded in 1685 were:

East Brookside, Behind Barnhill, Downhill Side, Snitemoor Side, South Side (Westcott Barton) and Long Meare Fallows plus Southfield Leys which had not been cultivated for sixty years.

These fields were worked on a three course system : winter wheat or rye; spring corn – barley, oats, peas or beans; and fallow.

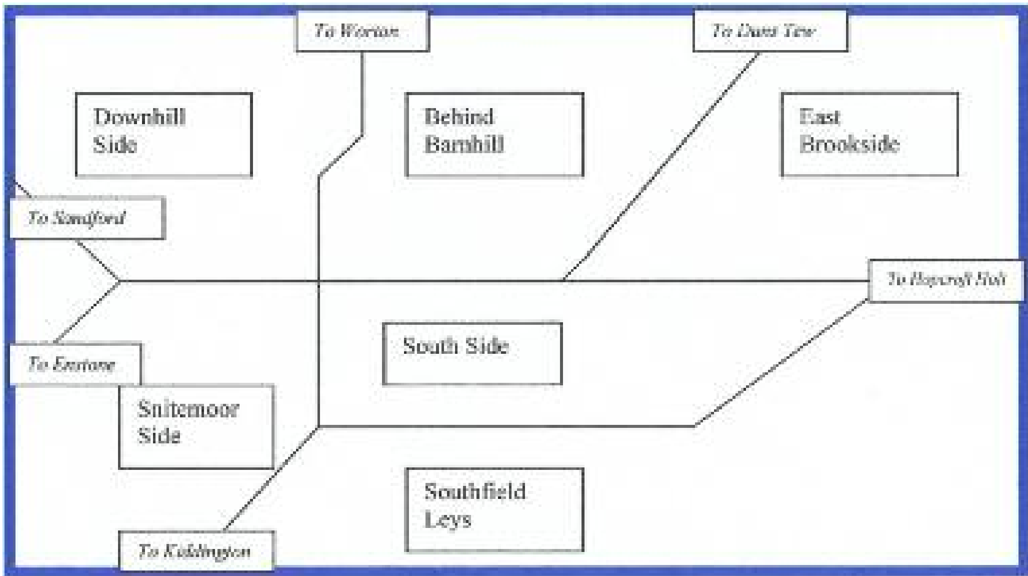

Diagram showing approximate location of the fields in the 17th century.

There were also pasture commons such as the Horse Common and wasteland such as Worton Heath. It was a time of small occupiers and a self-sufficient village community.

This came to an end with the Enclosure Award of 1796 which applied to Middle Barton and Westcott Barton but not Steeple Barton. There was a loss of independence and to compensate for this the Award included a poor allotment. The Award also set out all the roads, bridle ways and footpaths.

In 1818 the general survey of the Agriculture of Oxfordshire, published for the consideration of the Board of Agriculture, indicated that the predominant feature of the soil of Westcott Barton was Stonebrash (like much of the Cotswolds). This was defined as 'land the staple of which is of more or less depth of a loose dry friable sand or loam apparently formed of abraded stone and abounding with fragments of it forming an excellent turnip soil and production of wheat'.

Also around that time a Geological Survey of the local area alluded to the corn producing qualities of the soil. To the north and north-east of the parish Young states that the soil begins to 'partake of the character of Red Loam', which he refers

to as the 'Glory of the County' and in the Dorne Valley he says there is a narrow strip of alluvial pasture.

In the 18th and 19th Centuries the vast majority of the population worked in agriculture and at the beginning of this period most had a reasonable livelihood, using common land to grow vegetables, graze animals and collect fuel for their fires.

As Enclosure continued the common land was gradually taken over by single landowners. The tenant farmers tended to hire casual labour so life became more precarious for agricultural workers; increased mechanisation and in particular the introduction of threshing machines in the early 19th century took away valuable winter work and made things worse. Many of the farm workers lived in tied cottages and some were able to pass them on to their children but the cottages were small and often fell into a poor state of repair as times became harder.

The conditions of the farming and labouring man in the Bartons in the early 1800s

Westcote Barton Manor House

were generally as poor as could be. The depths of poverty were probably reached in about 1820. The farm men were kept at work after harvestime on the 'poor rate'. The allotments were greatly used. Men grew corn as well as vegetables and brought it to the mill to be ground for flour.

If the land was enclosed and let it might fetch as much as twenty shillings an acre so

farmers in a position to do this were doing well. In the open field it was impossible to occupy and stock the land in a remunerative way.

The improvements arising from enclosure were found to be greatest in land with stonebrash or sandy loam used for turnips or grass seeds.

It appears that some 200 acres from 921 acres which were hitherto wasteland were improved to enable wheat to be grown. In 1813 the crop rotation was :

1. Turnips fed by sheep
2. Barley
3. (two years) Clover - first year mown, second year grazed
4. Wheat
5. Oats

The average yield of wheat was three quarters per acre, though sometimes five were obtained.
(A quarter was equivalent to 8 bushels or 2 hundredweight, a hundredweight being 112 pounds)

Growing of swedes was introduced around this time and they were thought to be more nourishing for sheep and especially pigs.

Before Enclosure, due to the marshiness of the ground rot in sheep was a major problem. Subsequently Young maintains that if you went into Banbury market you could distinguish between the farmers from enclosures and those from open fields – the former were 'quite new men in point of morals and ideas'.

After the Napoleonic wars in 1822 the Hall family bought Barton Abbey (which was then the Sesswell's Barton Manor House) and built up a large estate. During the 19th century Squire Hall acquired most of Middle Barton, having 2500 acres by 1873, with Squire Jenner Marshall having 420 acres centred on Westcott Barton.

During the 19th century the Marshall family were the lords of Sandford Manor and between 1852 and 1858 Jenner Marshall built Westcott Barton Manor House. The Marshall family bought the lordship with three farms : Park Farm, Manor Farm and Graftons, together with most of the cottages in Westcott Barton. The Marshall family owned the estate until it was split up and sold in 1954.

Church Farm, Steeple Barton may have originally been the Steeple Barton Manor House. In Middle Barton, Manor Farm with the corn mill opposite was once known

as Middle Barton Manor House. The latter was built by the Brangwin family in about 1730 and sold in 1806 to Samuel Churchill of Deddington. It is thought that the original property may have been knocked down and replaced with the existing house and research continues into this hypothesis.

By the mid to late 20th century there were numerous farms in the Bartons. Based on 1979 and 1984 Ordnance Survey maps the following existed :

Tom Hopes at Church Farm

Manor Farm (Westcott)
Horsehay Farm
Graftons
Greenacres Farm
Park Farm
Sycamore Farm
Downhill Farm
Whistlowe Farm
Holliers Barn Farm
Church Farm
Leys Farm
New Barn Farm
Twenty Acre Farm
New Farm (later Shepherd's house)
Purgatory Farm
Manor Farm (Middle Barton)
Elm Grove Farm
Home Farm
Village Farm
Holliers Farm

You can read more about farming in the 20th century by reading the next article in this booklet – an interview with Eric Bosley.

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Farming in Westcote Barton

Eric Bosley talks to Denise Roberts about his family farm as it was in his father's time

My father, Arthur Alfred Bosley, originally came here to Manor Farm in September 1937. Previously he was a tenant farmer on the country house estate in Chasleton. He was offered money to move and wanted to move out anyway so he came here. The estate here was then owned by a Mr Marshall from Enstone, and there are quite a number of Marshall tombstones in Westcote Barton churchyard. They built the Manor house where Charles and Carol Harris are now, they built it round about 1856 I think, and it was Mr Francis Marshall who was my father's landlord. Mr Marshall died I think in 1950, but his wife continued running the farm and the estate until 1954 when she decided to sell it. So we bought our farm then.

The farm then was just 123 acres which is not very much really, but that is what father had all through the war years. He had cows, which he milked by hand of course, and then he retailed the milk around the village, especially the Westcote Barton end. My father did this for many many, years and then he sold the milk round business to Mr George Wyatt up the Worton Road, opposite the Playing fields. Mr Wyatt had a little shop up there just where the walk goes through into the Council Houses now. He also had a paddock opposite where he kept a pony. My father sold him the milk round although Mr Wyatt still came to collect the milk from my father, he then delivered it around the village. Eventually he sold the business to Mr Peter Bauckham by the bridge at the bottom of the hill in Enstone Road in Westcote Barton, and later it was taken over by the Webb brothers when they had general stores in the village. My father delivered the milk to Sandford School (I went to Sandford School myself) and also to the Manor at Westcote Barton for the Women's Land Army during the war as there were about 30+ girls working on the farms locally while the farm workers were away doing their service in the Army, RAF, and whatnot.

During the war father was in the Home Guard. He used to patrol the roads round here with his 12 bore shotgun which I now have. It was given to him by his father when he was 21 years old as a birthday present, and he left it to me when he died in 1968. He thought he did his bit for the country by walking the streets. In those days it was like Dads'Army. Sandford Home Guard would come and raid Bartons' Home Guard and they used to have little mock wars between themselves. I think they had a lot of fun between the serious side of it. They would have shooting competitions on Sunday mornings very often. They would shoot in the paddock down below here in front of the cottages and they put the target on a willow tree. The willow tree had a diameter of probably 15 or 16 inches trunk, and they would shoot into this

tree. Quite a few years later we had a gale and this tree broke off exactly where they used to shoot into it, and when it broke open you could see all the lead bullets in the tree and that was what caused the tree to fall over in the gale. But they would have competitions and whoever scored most points would probably win two rabbits or something like that. Major Fleming was one of the leaders of the Home Guard in those days and he and father were good friends.

We didn't have a tractor in those days, we didn't have a tractor until 1944 I think, so it was all horse work. My father would have some contractors in to help him cutting the corn with a binder, and putting it into sheaves and things like that, and then the threshing machine would come eventually. I can still remember as a child a load of coal coming one day and then the next day the steam engine came with a threshing machine. The coal was for the steam engine to work the threshing machine and the elevators and bailers and things they used to have. That must have been during the war years. The steam engine would have been owned by the two Berry brothers who farmed some land around Gagingwell area, and they also operated out of Great Tew as Agricultural Contractors. They set the steam engine up in the rick-yard, along by the ricks, put the threshing drum as near as they could to the ricks, and then lined the steam engine up. They had to get the belts from the pulley on the steam engine in line with the pulley on the threshing drum on the threshing machine, and if they didn't get it lined up right the belts would come off, so it was pretty precise to get it all squared up and to get the right tension so the belt didn't slip. The belt drove from the steam engine onto the threshing drum and then there were other belts going from the threshing drum to work the elevator if you wanted loose straw for thatching, which we did in those days as we had the cottages at the end of the drive. We used to have those thatched every so often by a man called Dan Reeve who came from Upper Heyford. He would come and the first thing he would do was go along the valley here and cut some nut sticks for the pegs to hold the straw in place on the roofs of the cottages. The straw in those days didn't last as long as the Norfolk reed they use now which lasts a lot longer.

Once the machinery was in place, the binder went up the field to cut the wheat and the sails used to go round to bring the wheat back onto some canvasses which rotated and took the whole crop back like a conveyer belt. There were two canvasses, and Mr Bradshaw, who was a cobbler and had the shoe shop in Middle Barton, he used to repair the canvasses when they needed it, before harvesting. They had straps and buckles and they used to do them up tight. The wheat would go between these two canvasses, one would go one way and one would go the other way, and it needed to get into a position like a balance, and you could adjust it to make the sheaves bigger or smaller. When it reached the required weight it would trip, and when it tripped a knotter would come up and tie it with binder twine round each sheaf and it would

then tip them out into rows. Then you would come round behind and make stooks – put these sheaves into bunches of 6-8 together, ears upwards, and then leave them to dry. With oats they used to say that oats needed to hear the church bells three times. In other words they had to dry for three weeks because you had to cut the oats before they were really ripe because if you didn't they would fall out of the binder when they were cut, so you cut them early and they ripened off in the stooks. But that was a job – two or three of you would go along and take about 6 rows of sheaves which were all in a line, and eventually the wagons would come down the rows which were just the right width to allow a wagon through so you could load from both sides, and you would go along with a pitchfork and pitch them onto the wagons, ears inwards and butts outwards to keep the weight in the centre. You always had somebody on the wagon to place the sheaves in position so they didn't fall off. Sometimes they did, we did have the occasional calamity. I can remember once when they were bringing a wagon load of sheaves into the rick-yard at the other end of the yard here with a tractor, and the draw pin that connected the tractor to the wagon came out and a wagon load of sheaves freewheeled backwards and turned over and all the lot came off, so it was a bit of a job getting that wagon back on its wheels and reloading all that crop.

The haymaking, well it used to be more in July then. More recently we used to start silage making about 18th May with the first cut of grass for the cows, but in those days they used to say "a dripping June keeps all things in tune" which means with some rain in June you would get a good crop of hay and a good crop of corn as well because all things came at the right time. Nowadays the weather has changed, here we are today 9th August 2012 and I am hoping to start my oilseed rape today, about 3 weeks later this year because of all the rain we've had and we haven't been able to get on at all.

Yes, haymaking was hard work years ago, I had an uncle, my mother's brother, and she told me how many a time he would get up a 4 o'clock in the morning and go with two horses and a mower before it was too hot for the horses to work and the flies weren't about. They were long hard days. You had to milk the cows early too, by hand.

My father liked buying up property, he was a bit of a wheeler and dealer really. One night he bought 9 cottages in the village from Mr Parsons. They were the four red brick ones past the garage in Middle Barton, 3 houses opposite on the corner where Mr Hazel used to live, and the 2 thatched ones at the Turnpike. He bought all 9 of them in one night. Another time there were 6 sold on South Street, £600 for all six. Jack Irons, a farmer in the village, wanted a house for an employee of his who wanted to get married, and if he couldn't find a house he was going to seek employment

elsewhere, so father sold two of these houses, one empty and the one adjoining it, for £600, so really he got the other 4 for nothing. There were 2 more my father bought in the village, on the bend just past where Cox's shop used to be. I don't know what he gave for them but he advertised them in the Oxford Times and a lady came out from Oxford on the bus one Saturday, on Jarvis's coaches as they were in those days, and my father asked her for £1,000 for these cottages. She misunderstood a bit and she said "you do mean a thousand pounds each, don't you Mr Bosley?" and he said "Oh no, a thousand pounds for the two", so he did himself out of a thousand pounds as she was prepared to pay a thousand pounds each. But he got a little bit of profit so he was happy, and the houses are still standing now. I often think of that as I go past them.

Your cottage *(Roberts' house – Burnside, WB)* used to be part of the Marshall's estate. My father was very keen on growing vegetables and liked to show them at the local flower shows, not only the one we had here in the Bartons but also Steeple Aston, Enstone, Wootton, Great Tew. He just loved to exhibit vegetables and always used the garden to your cottage to grow them. I can remember when we were kids we would go down there and pull carrots up, then cross the road to the steps down to the brook *(now hidden by the footbridge but still in situ)* to wash them and eat them, never thinking what was happening upstream where the cows were drinking and paddling in the brook. The other houses that were in Enstone Road at that time were all part of the Marshall estate as well, but my father only bought yours (for £65) mainly for the garden. He also bought the 4 buildings at the end of our drive and the buildings at Grafton where Bernard and Bubbles Pratley lived at that time. They bought the house but we bought the other buildings so the land went right down to the main road from the farm in one long paddock down to the bridge.

Of course father was well known in the village for retailing the milk, but he was also known for fixing people up with pigs. Most cottages had a pigsty at the end of the garden then. Where the hairdressers shop is now was a building owned by Mr Walt Baker and he used to run the "Pig Club". He used to supply people in the village with pig meal, and you would see people going with a wheelbarrow to collect the bags of pig feed. They fed the pigs very cheaply on potato peelings and waste from the garden until they were ready for slaughter and eating.

We didn't stop having cows on the farm until July 1994 when we had a sale and sold off the cows because my brother Geoff had two sons and the place wasn't big enough for everybody. Geoff wanted to go off on his own so he bought a farm over at Grove near Wantage with the cows already on the farm because the owner was selling the whole lot together, but that meant that we had to have a sale to get rid of our cows. It was a sad day really because cows had been here ever since we

had been here and suddenly one day they were all gone. It seemed very quiet at night as we used to having calves bellowing for their mothers or mothers bellowing for their calves, and it was very different afterwards. After having my brother and his boys about - and we also had a herdsman as well at one time - I was left on my own. So from being at least 4 of us on the farm, I was on my own. I ploughed it all up and went into growing oilseed rape, winter wheat for bread making, and spring-sown barley which I sell for malting for making beer or lager. The rape goes for bio fuel, some of it goes for fuel for cars and diesel and some goes for making these imitation butter, margarines and things. This gives it a nice break having three crops in rotation and, apart from having a bit of help with the harvesting, and a contractor to cut the hedges and another to do the spraying, I can manage it on my own.

Some more unidentified photos - do you recognise anyone?

Steeple Barton Vicarage

Samuel Sanders Teulon --- A Rogue Architect

Rosemary Wharton

It was the coat-of-arms with the double-headed eagle on the front wall that first caught the attention of the History Group. Did Steeple Barton vicarage have some connection with the Romanoffs of Russia? And above the bay window, there is a second coat-of-arms. Two puzzles which triggered our interest in this building. What we did know was that the vicarage was built in 1856 by a famous Victorian architect.

He was Samuel Sanders Teulon (1812-1873) an architect who was 'out to shock'. He was known to the Duke of Marlborough, who employed him to design the National School in Woodstock in 1854. The Duke was patron of Steeple Barton church, which is probably how Teulon came to design our vicarage in 1856.

Samuel Teulon

As a prolific member of the Gothic Revival school of Architecture which flourished in the mid-1800s, Teulon was simultaneously loathed and loved. Comments such as 'positively corpulent; outrageous; an arch exhibitionist' were matched with 'remarkable; frenetic; pursuit of originality; an astonishing life force.' Teulon was on the fringe of the 'rogue' architects of the Victorian era who all had a penchant for 'streaky bacon' architecture: red, yellow, blue, black multi-coloured (polychromatic) brickwork like Keble College.

Teulon's style is succinctly summarised in a fascinating biography by his great, great, great nephew Alan Teulon and my conversations with Alan have been very illuminating.

'Teulon introduced some theatrical, dramatic and colourful elements of medieval architecture into his work. Elaborate decoration using bricks, tiles and polychromy. He revelled in anything pointed and rarely missed an opportunity to add a spire, tower, turret, cupola, pinnacle or any other feature that went skywards. Other favourite features included octagonal bases for towers, diamond shaped patterns (diapering) of colourful slate on roofs, clocks in small housings, oriel windows, ogee porches, mosaic work and serpentine signs.'

After all this, it's rather an anticlimax to realise that our vicarage has few of these features, hence Pevsner's description of Steeple Barton Vicarage as 'a restrained design, unusual for this architect.' Teulon's trademark features are more apparent in his churches and large country houses. But the hall in our vicarage is worth noting

Steeple Barton Vicarage

and described by Pevsner as 'hexagonal'. The present occupants kindly invited me to see this and in my view the hall (and landing) is based on Teulon's typical octagon, not a hexagon. Four sides complete exactly half an octagon, with the stairs and front doorway fitting more conventionally into the remaining space. On the outside, there is faint evidence of polychromatic design. But to see true 'Teulonesque' architecture, one needs to go further afield. Some of his dramatic pinnacles can be seen at Middleton Stoney church where he remodelled the Jersey family mausoleum. They do seem strangely out of proportion. There's a 'serpentine sign' on the old school, Oxford Road, Woodstock and a squat octagonal tower on St Frideswide's church,

Botley Road, Oxford. However, none of these buildings can really claim to shock. For polychrome and turreted madness, Bestwood Lodge in Nottinghamshire and Elvetham Hall, Hampshire are good places to start. One of his prettiest monuments is the Buxton Memorial fountain in Victoria Tower Gardens, near the Houses of Parliament. It is a memorial to the abolition of slavery, with highly coloured enamel tiles and decorated ironwork. I've known it for some time and was astonished to find it was by our village architect. Look out for it when they are doing an outside broadcast from Westminster!

Buxton Memorial Fountain

The 'serpentine sign', Woodstock

But going back to our coats-of-arms: The Russian connection was fanciful and in retrospect, it was no surprise to discover that it was the arms of the church patron, the Duke of Marlborough. The second coat-of-arms has proved to be more elusive. It has the motto 'nec temere nec timide' --- 'neither rashly nor timidly'. This is the motto of the Cottrell-Dormer family who have always been our Lords of the manor. Sure enough, Rousham church revealed the motto popping up all over the place. Mrs Cottrell-Dormer confirmed the motto, which is actually common amongst many families, but she was dubious about the coat-of arms and she recommended contacting the College of Arms.

The 'Hall' coat-of-arms

A reply came from a gentleman who had the magnificent title 'Portcullis Pursuivant.'

'The arms are those of a husband and wife. The husband's arms are on the left as you look the shield, and the wife's on the right. In my opinion what you have purport to be the arms of Henry Hall (1808-1862) of Barton Abbey Oxfordshire, impaling the arms of his wife Catherine Louisa Hood, 4th daughter of the 2nd Lord Bridport. The arms on the right are those of Hood.'

The fascinating detective work which had led him to this conclusion is too long to include here. But he also added that he had not been able to confirm that the Halls of Barton Abbey were actually entitled to use the arms on the left, though these arms are similar to those used by families called Hall.

I had earlier considered the Hall family as a likely possibility for this coat-of-arms, but rejected the idea because the motto didn't match. So we have a new mystery. A Hall crest with the Cottrell-Dormer motto.

Back to the Portcullis Pursuivant: 'Mottos are not controlled by the College of Arms. Families can change them at will, although in practice it is rare for them to do so. Why Mr Hall adopted the motto "nec temere nec timide" is anyone's guess.'

I'd love to think that this mix-up was our architect being 'rogueish' but I'm afraid that would be too far-fetched. So having pursued one mystery, another little puzzle remains.

Acknowledgements
Nell and Oliver Harvey; Steeple Barton Vicarage; Alan Teulon; Mrs Angela Cottrell-Dormer;
Mr Christopher Vane, Portcullis Pursuivant, College of Arms.

Bibliography
'The Buildings of England, Oxfordshire' Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner
'The Life and Work of Samuel Sanders Teulon Victorian Architect' Alan Edwards Teulon

……..and two famous Professors

William George Hoskins

Rosemary Wharton

It was from a room at the front of the vicarage that one of the most evocative descriptions of the English landscape was written. WG Hoskins, an Oxford academic, was living here when he wrote his classic work 'The Making of the English Landscape' in 1955 and it was the countryside of Steeple Barton that he described so movingly in the final chapter.

'The view from the room where I write these last pages is small, but it will serve as an epitome of the gentle unravished English landscape. Circumscribed as it is, with tall trees closing it in barely half a mile away, it contains in its detail something of every age from the Saxon to the nineteenth century….'

We, who live here, can recognise the features he continues to describe in this chapter. They are features that are replicated across the land. The gentle river, medieval remains, the old apple trees, the church, the manor house and the lake. The descriptions are eloquent and convey the rural simplicity of our countryside. (Although they can't all actually be seen from the same room, I think we can forgive his artistic licence.)

Hoskins lived in Steeple Barton vicarage in the 1950s. One of his students, now living locally, remembers his lectures in what was then the new discipline of historical Geography. It seems that Hoskins was not a great lecturer, but the subject matter was absorbing and his heart was in his subject which made him very endearing to his students. Later, Hoskins was to play a leading role in establishing the study of Local History as an academic subject. Think how many devotees the subject has now and it's nice to think that his time in our vicarage helped to lay those foundations.

Prof. W.G. Hoskins

His home county was Devon which he loved. Born in 1908 and educated in Exeter, he was then appointed to the staff of the University College of Leicester, lecturing in Economics and English Local History. In 1951, he left and came to Oxford as Reader in Economic History. He stayed until 1965, when he moved back to a Professorship in Leicester. Hoskins finally retired to Devon in 1968, but remained active, continuing to write and

research. He also made two TV programmes based on 'The Making of the English Landscape.' He was instrumental in forming the Exeter Civic Society and regarded the war-time destruction of historical cities including the medieval centre of Exeter as vandalism as these were not military targets.
Hoskins died in his beloved Devon in 1992 and his ashes were scattered in the countryside.

Bibliography

'The Making of the English landscape' WG Hoskins
University of Leicester : website
www.le.ac.uk/lahs/downloads/ObitHoskinsvolumeLXVI-9sm.pdf
University of Leicester: copyright permission for Hoskins photo

Professor Bernard Kettlewell

Chris Jones

After Hoskins, the next occupant at the Old Vicarage was Bernard Kettlewell. Students of GCSE Biology will have heard about the important experiments performed by Professor Kettlewell with 'peppered' moths. Although much of his work was based on his observations around Birmingham and Dorset, he drew inspiration from the ecology around Steeple Barton where comfrey – the food of his moths – still grows in profusion.

Henry Bernard Davis Kettlewell was born in Yorkshire in 1907 and qualified in medicine, working as an anaesthetist at St. Luke's Hospital, Guildford, and then, during the war, for the Emergency Medical Service at Woking War Hospital. He emigrated to South Africa in 1949 and, for about five years, was a researcher investigating methods of locust control at Cape Town University. During 1952 he was appointed to a Nuffield Research Fellowship in the Department of Genetics at Oxford University and divided his time between South Africa and Oxford (he later accepted a post as Senior Research Officer in the same Department).

It was during the time that Kettlewell lived at the Old Vicarage that he immersed himself in his childhood hobby as an amateur lepitopterist whilst continuing to pursue his research on 'peppered' moths (Biston betularia). There are two types of these moths, the light-coloured ('typica') ones - which look as though they have been sprinkled with pepper - and the rarer, darker ('carbonaria') ones. In the late nineteenth century it had been observed by William Bateson and others that, in some industrial areas where the pollution from factory chimneys was high, the rarer, darker type had become increasingly common. Bateson (later regarded by some scientists to be the "founder" of genetics) suggested that 'natural selection' might explain the rise in the population of these darker moths in the more polluted areas. Kettlewell wanted to

find a more detailed explanation for this increase in the population of the darker moths (and the fall in the number of the traditional, light-coloured moths) in these areas.

For his research, Kettlewell used two different woodland habitats, one in a (polluted) area of Birmingham and the other in rural, unpolluted Dorset. He was reported to have carried mercury-vapour lamps and moth traps into the countryside where he released thousands of both light and dark-coloured moths (which he had marked with paint on their wings so that they could be recognised later) and monitored their survival.

From his observations he concluded that, in the polluted areas, 'acid rain' (as it is now called) had stripped the tree trunks of the speckled lichen which helped to protect the typical, light-coloured moths from their predators. The 'acid rain' had left the trees bare and almost black – this was no longer a safe camouflage for the light-coloured 'peppered' moths and the darker ones, which were less conspicuous against the dark tree trunks, had taken over. In the rural forests, the opposite had happened, the lichen on the trees provided a safe habitat for the light-coloured moths and it was the darker ones which became breakfast for the birds. Kettlewell's conclusions were backed up by actually filming some birds eating the (uncamouflaged) moths and sometimes actually passing right over a moth that was the same colour as its background.

His experimental work, although not without its critics, resulted in a better understanding of 'industrial melanism' (an adaptation over a long period of time which enables the organism to survive through better camouflage). He showed that the difference between the two types of the moth was due to a gene and that evolution is brought about by changes in the patterns of these genes.

As Prof. Kettlewell developed his experiments, he planted comfrey and this still grows in profusion along the lanes and in the fields of Steeple Barton. Although Kettlewell was without doubt a gifted scientist, it appears that he was not amused when a bull at Steeple Barton was let into a neighbouring field and proceeded to eat the comfrey – the major food source for his beloved moths.
Prof. Kettlewell died in May 1979 from an accidental drugs overdose. (will check this on the Wolfson site -- CJ) .

Comfrey growing by Steeple Barton Church

Can you identify any of these people?

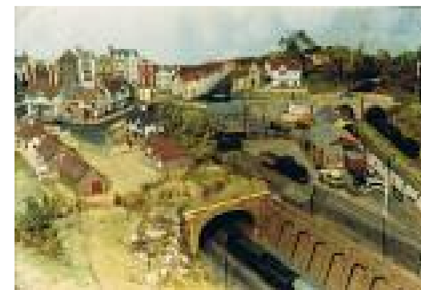
STATIONS, SHOES, AND SADDLERY

Jackie Wood

Perhaps you have watched Michael Portillo travelling the country's railway system, visiting interesting places and reading snippets from his Bradshaw's Guide. Did you know that in the 1960s or 1970s you could also take a railway journey in Middle Barton with Bradshaw?

As you turned the silver door knob of the Shoe Shop (and Saddlery) in North Street, a bell rang; from the back of the shop, a gentleman would appear, a small man with brown glasses, wearing a brown leather apron to protect his clothes, clutching what looked like a small hammer in his hands. Fred Bradshaw not only repaired shoes and saddlery, he also had a hobby, model railways. If you were at a loose end, you and your friends could visit the railway. Mr Bradshaw would open up the hinged countertop to allowed access to the rear of the shop where a narrow dark staircase took you up to the world of steam.

Apparently, Fred Bradshaw bought his young son a train set which consisted of a few yards of track and one engine. The set was added to by Mr Bradshaw and it soon took over the room above the shoe shop, in fact there were over 300 to 400 yards of track! If you were lucky enough to visit the model railway you would see numerous engines pulling coaches and trucks around the track, passing fields with cud-chewing cattle and bleating woolly sheep, stopping at several villages and towns, where daytime turned into night-time, strings of street lights twinkling, Belisha beacons flashing like golden moons. The tiny model figures scurrying home, through the smoke, to their small immaculate model houses, whose warm welcoming lights glow. The embers of a bonfire dying quietly in a field, as dusk descended into night.



The Model Railway attracted many visitors from far and wide, coach loads of them at times! It was also filmed for television on several occasions, which caused great excitement in the village. If you, like Michael Portillo, didn't visit Bradshaw's model railway, you certainly missed out on a very special treat.

An unusual Will

BUSWELL ROBERT, husbandman, MB, will 29 Apr 1640, inventory 20 June 1640, OA W I 200.425; 115/3/20
Extrix Catherine wife
Bequests Cathedral of Oxford one shilling
Parish Church of Steeple Barton two shillings
Poore Inhabitants of Barton six shillings eight pence
Expenses of funerall sermon six shillings eightpence

John Buswell, my eldest son, my house and orchard half a yard land thereto belonging in WB on condition that son John in the choice of his wife shall obtain the consent and approbation of Catherine Buswell his mother, John Howes his uncle, John Busby his
godfather and Gabriell Myrry his friende. If my son John doe crosse and contradict their consent house and land to go to Robert Buswell my youngest son

John Buswell, son, £20 on same condition, otherwise to be residue

Elizabeth, eldest daughter, full and entire use? Of eight score pounds to be paid her on the day of her marriage – under same conditions as John, otherwise to her two sisters to be equally divided between them
Robert Buswell, son, my house etc in Hayly in the parish of Witney in present possession of the ? thereof, immediately at my death
Robert Buswell, son, £20 to be paid when he is 21

Marie, daughter, Jone, daughter, £100 to be equally divided between them when they are 21
If any of my five children die before they are 21 or before their marriage
their mother
(my) executor or her assigns shall divide between the others
Elizabeth, sister and Tabitha Ha…es??, sister 40s
Edward Ha…es??, son of Tabitha, 40s
Catherine, wife, residue
Signed Robert Buswell[mark]
Witnessed Gabriell Murry, John Busbee??

Note. Names with queries are very much guesswork

An Unusual Will

The Apology of Charles Adams
to the
Parishioners of Westcote Barton

I the undersigned Charles Adams hereby publicly declare and confess that I have been guilty of a great wickedness against God, and have committed a gross outrage and insult against the Parishioners of Westcote Barton.

On Saturday night last when intoxicated and maddened with drink, I and a companion my nephew Thomas Warr entered the Churchyard in this Parish - took off the Gates of the Church - threw them into the Brook - pulled up and mutilated a Tomb Stone belonging to the Revd. Jerome Marshall, cut down papers in on the Church Porch, and committed other acts of violence and outrage —

I hereby publicly declare my earnest and sincere sorrow and repentance for these wicked acts - And I hereby crave for pardon and forgiveness of the Rector, and the Church Warden, the Revd. J. Marshall - and all the Parishioners generally, belonging to the Parish of Westcote Barton — I also beg the pardon and forgiveness of all good Christian people for these wicked acts which I sincerely deplore and repent of. —

Signed by Charles Adams
on December 5th 1876.
in the Presence of
Edmund [illegible] Rector.

Charles Adams
also on behalf of Thomas Warr and above.
Thomas Warr. by
Charles Adams

William Taylor
Henry [illegible] Wilson
Church Wardens.

The Apology of Charles Adams
to the
Parishioners of Westcote Barton

I the undersigned Charles Adams hereby
publicly declare and confess that I have been
guilty of a great wickedness against God, and
have committed a gross outrage and insult
against the Parishioners of Wstcote Barton.
On Saturday night last when intoxicated
and maddened with drink, I and a companion,
my nephew Thomas Warr, entered
the Churchyard in this parish, took off the gates
of the Church, threw them into the brook,
pulled up and mutilated a Tomb Stone belonging
to the Revd Jenner Marshall, cut down papers in
the Church Porch, and committed other acts
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forgiveness of the Rector, and the Church Warden,
the Revd J.Marshall - and all the Parishioners
generally, belonging to the Parish of Westcote
Barton. I also beg the pardon
and forgiveness of all good Christian
people for these wicked acts which I sincerely
deplore and repent of.

Signed by Charles Adams *[signature]*
on December 5th 1876 also on behalf of Thomas
in the presence of Warr as absent
Edmund L. Lock**xxxx**, Rector
William Taylor Thomas Warr, by
Henry T. Wilsdon *[signature]*
Church Wardens

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