

# Introduction

John Madden

*Chairman: Bartons' History Group*

Jig, Geoff and Giant Redwoods - not to mention a hanged sheep-thief and an incendiary bomb. Intrigued? Then read on, and all will be revealed!

This, the seventh issue of *Bygone Bartons*, features a piece on the history of our near neighbour Gagingwell by the Chair of the Enstone History Group, Carol Geare - also an acclaimed travel writer - as well as several accounts of life in the Bartons in days gone by.

We have also started a project to collect interesting artifacts found or preserved in and around the Bartons. These will be displayed at a future History Group event yet to be arranged, but dotted around this booklet are a few objects already earmarked. If you have, or know of, any other items which you think would be of interest, please do get in touch with us.

Once again I hope you enjoy reading this.



*An old print showing Gagingwell Cross*

## 100 Objects from the Bartons



*A pair of scales from the Farley shop, Mill Lane. Probably letter scales, although it was never a post office, but possibly they sold postage when PO closed. Given to BHG by a descendent of Miss Farley. Farleys came to MB c1912 from Buckinghamshire.*



*... and a pair of WW1 medals given to Private Horace Percy Stewart, No. 12477, The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 6th Battalion. Killed in action 3 Sept 1916, aged 21.*

# The Giants among us

Barbara Hill

*I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree  
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast  
A tree that looks at God all day  
And lifts her lovely arms to pray  
A tree that may in Summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair  
Upon whose bosom snow has lain  
Who intimately lives with rain  
Poems are made by fools like me  
But only God can make a tree*

Poem by Joyce Kilmer

Whether you are visiting Barton Abbey on the annual Open Garden day or simply walking or driving past, you can hardly fail to notice the imposing avenue of trees lining the drive to the Abbey.

In the 1920s and 1930s the avenue of trees stretched all along the drive as can be seen below.



Some of the trees have been removed so the view nowadays is a little different. These trees are known as Wellingtonias although more properly Giant Redwoods. The botanical name is *Sequoiadendron giganteum* and they originate in the Sierra Nevada in California.

The trees are noted for their immense girth, often over 100 feet in circumference, swollen at the base and covered in two feet of thick red-brown spongy bark. They are known by some people as 'Punch Trees' as they can be punched with relative

impunity.

Redwoods are among the world's most famous and best known trees. They are the tallest in the world and the quickest growing conifers in North America. The Wellingtonia is found growing naturally in 70 groves on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada . Some of the specimens growing there are thought to be over 3,500 years old. The largest living tree (by volume) which grows there is a giant redwood



called 'General Sherman'. It is 275 feet (84 metres) tall and has a circumference at the base of 103 feet (31 metres). In mass this relates to approximately 52,500 cubic feet (1,487 cubic metres).

In Great Britain the trees reach a more modest height. One of the tallest is at Castlehead in Devon at 172 feet (52.4 metres). In Benmore Botanic Garden, Argyll, Scotland there is an avenue of impressive Giant Redwoods one of which is 177 feet tall (54 metres). They flourish in the damp climate in the west of Scotland.

General Sherman is not, however, the tallest living tree in the world. That title goes to 'Hyperion', a coastal redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*, also growing in California, which is 379 feet tall (116 metres). Nor is General Sherman the oldest. Several Bristle cone pines (also growing in California) are known to be more than 4,000 years old and one has been dated at over 5,000 years old.

Amazingly there are some clonal trees (re-growth from the same DNA that have never died) which are much older. The root system of a Norway spruce, *Picea abies*, growing in Sweden has been carbon-dated as 9,550 years old; in Utah, USA over 47,000 stems of quaking aspen, *Populus tremuloides*, all from the same rootstock, over an area of 107 acres, have been growing there for more than 80,000 years

Giant Redwoods were first discovered by John Bidwell in 1841. They were introduced to the British Isles in 1853. The credit for the introduction of the Giant Redwood is usually given to William Lobb (1809-1863). Lobb was one of numerous Victorian plant collectors and first went to North America in the summer of 1849 having already collected seeds in the previous two years from South America. Lobb collected living and dried specimens of the giant redwood from Calaveros Grove on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada and brought back large quantities of seed to Veitch's nursery in Exeter. A few months earlier, J.D Matthews had sent a small consignment home to Gourdiehill near Perth in Scotland. A specimen from Matthews' seed planted out at Glendoik in Scotland in 1860 was 118 feet tall in 1970.

However, it was from Lobb's collection that most of the original trees in Britain were grown. Lobb's specimens were given the name *Wellingtonia gigantea* by John Lindley of the Horticultural Society after the Duke of Wellington who had died in 1852; the Duke of Wellington never actually saw the tree. There was some indignation from 'across the pond' as Dr Kellogg, the founder of the California Academy of Sciences wanted to name the tree 'Washingtonia' in honour of the US first president. The argument was ultimately settled by the choice of the botanical name *Sequoiadendron giganteum*

The 'Wellingtonias' rapidly became extremely popular and specimens were planted in almost every estate and large garden throughout Britain. It became something of a status symbol at the time

It is believed that the Barton Abbey trees were planted in 1870. There are about forty trees in total including elsewhere on the estate. The trees were measured at approxi-

mately 30 to 34 metres tall in 2011.

There is an apocryphal account of the seeds for the Barton Abbey trees having been brought back from Canada by Solomon Stewart. It has not been possible to verify this particular story.

Records show that one Solomon Stewart was born locally in 1842, the son of Thomas and Ann (née Matthews); he married Emma Barrett on 9th September 1864 at Steeple Barton church at which time he was described as an Agricultural Labourer. Solomon, together with his wife Emma and son Samuel (born in England in 1868) seems subsequently to have moved to Canada where their daughter, Helen, was born in 1873. Records from Canada show a Solomon Stewart up to the 1916 census, in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan. It is not clear when he returned but we have a photograph of Solomon Stewart as a wedding guest and as a member of the Mission band in 1910. We believe that the Barton Abbey trees were planted around 1870 so unless Solomon posted the seeds or came back for more than one visit it does seem a little unlikely that he was responsible for bringing the Barton Abbey seeds. The other factor is that Giant Redwoods do not normally grow in Canada and they generally need to reach 150 to 200 years before they produce large quantities of viable seed.

Another Solomon Stewart who was the nephew of the Solomon above was born in 1880 so would have been too young to be the originator of the seeds. Two of his sons were Sid, father of Alan, still living in the village, and William John father of Deanna Gardner (née Stewart) and her siblings most of whom still live locally. Both Alan and Deanna have fond memories of their grandfather who was a gardener at the Abbey and is said to have planted snowdrops on the bank alongside the lane in Steeple Barton so may be responsible for the wonderful displays we enjoy in early spring each



*The Mission Band in 1910. Solomon is third from left with the notation '(from Canada)', implying that he recently returned or is on a visit.*

year. Another theory is that the saplings were supplied by the Middle Barton Grove nursery, run by the Soden family, which specialised in trees and was a thriving business at the time the trees would have been planted. The latter possibility is plausible due to the existence of a Wellingtonia tree in the paddock of the Medlar Tree which would have originally been within the nursery grounds. This tree consists of three trunks fused together, as though three saplings had been 'heeled in' together. Handed-down oral history tells us that they were left over from the Barton Abbey plantings.

Unfortunately two of the Barton Abbey Giant Redwoods have been felled recently as they had died. Darren Bullock, Head Gardener at the Abbey, has advised that it is likely to be due to over-wet conditions; but that still leaves us with a significant number of these magnificent trees to admire. Young saplings of *Sequoiadendron giganteum* have been planted to fill the spaces between the existing 'giants'.



*The Medlar Tree Wellingtonia with its three trunks.*

**Information sources:**

Whence our Trees by Scott Leathart MBE, MA, FLS

A Field guide to the trees of Britain and Northern Europe by Alan Mitchell

Batsford Arboretum Information boards

National Trust

Changing Face of the Bartons by Audrey Martin

Redwoodworld.co.uk

Chris Edbury

Rosemary Wharton

Bartons History Group website

Ancestry .co.uk

Darren Bullock, Head Gardener Barton Abbey

Alan Stewart

Deanna Gardner

Jackie Wood

## The Bartons History Group visit the Palace of Westminster

On Monday September 4th 2017 the Palace (aka the Houses of Parliament) was honoured (?) to receive a visit from the Bartons, organised by the History Group. Robert Courts, our MP, was there to greet us, before we were taken round by the very knowledgeable guides.



*Roman Plaster: Found by Richard Samuelson in his back garden, 44 South Street. Identified as Roman painted wall plaster by Christine Edbury, who took it to the Ashmolean Museum identification day, to be verified.*



# Gagingwell

Carol Geare

A mere dot on the landscape and rarely featured on maps, Gagingwell's name is said to derive from the Anglo Saxon meaning the 'spring of the kinsman' or alternatively 'wanderer' or 'vagabond'. In the Middle Ages it was spelt Gadelingwelle, the 'g' often omitted as it is in today's usage.

It was built on a spring line associated with Anglo Saxon settlements and along with many other springs, the eponymous well remains in the gardens of Wadham House. It has never run dry. Gagingwell resident and archeologist, Barbara Shaw believes Gagingwell wasn't settled before Anglo Saxon times as it lies in a valley not on a defensive hilltop necessary in earlier eras. It may well have been part of a nearby Roman villa estate.



*B4030 through Gagingwell in winter, Wadham House in distance*

Occasionally referred to as a 'township', Gagingwell was traditionally - apart from its glory days in World War 2 - a small agricultural community of two good farms, a public house and a handful of cottages. In 1851 the population was 76 in 16 houses, in 1997, 25 and today there are around 28 in 14 houses several of which are Grade 2 listed. The houses, mainly dating from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are built in stone with Stonesfield slate roofs; only one house is thatched.

The two most important dwellings were the two adjacent farms: Abbey Farm and Wadham House; the latter probably the oldest house with interesting sixteenth century interior details.



*Wadham House*

These two house names underline previous ownership of the hamlet. The King of Mercia gave Gagingwell to the Abbey of Winchcombe in 818. Enstone was also owned by the Abbey and Gagingwell later became part of 'Enstone of the Seven Towns' as it was known for the number of communities within its parish. Winchcombe owned the village till 1539 when Henry VIII appropriated abbey properties. Much later Wadham College continued to hold 116 of Gagingwell's 500 acres and Viscount Dillon of Ditchley Park owned 300. In May 1900 it is recorded the postmaster general gave Lord Dillon permission for the erection of wire stays for telegraph poles on his Gagingwell property. Latterly Gagingwell led the area in fast reliable broadband, transmitted from its phone mast.



*Window in interior of Wadham House, probably dating from 16th C*

Gagingwell's little valley of coarse soil of rough clay and stones but plentiful water supported cattle and sheep through the ages as it does today. Old field names,

however, include a triangular Vineyard probably dating from Winchcombe Abbey days or even Roman times. Other interesting field names include Crows Corner, Bones' Ground, Greensward Moors, Hangings, the Gardens and Cat's Barn.

Not in the Domesday Book, Gagingwell's historical record is mainly of land exchanges. An early mention was in 1171 when Sir William de Tracy, one of Thomas à Becket's assassins and an illegitimate descendant of Henry I, attested a quit claim relating to the Abbey's land at Gagingwell and was present when the charter recording the transaction was offered up on the High Altar of Winchcombe abbey.

Another brief record was made in 1339 when John Zanewyrthe granted three acres of Gagingwell land to John Fuller of Cleveley. Hearth tax returns of 1665 list five residents in 'Gaddingwell' including two members of the Busby family. In 1730 Benjamin Busby, described as a yeoman, signed deeds to Long Croft to provide rental money so that beef could be distributed to the fifteen poorest families in Enstone and Radford at Christmas and Easter. In 1739 the enclosure of corner lands in Gagingwell by the Earl of Litchfield, described as Lord of the Manor of Enstone, Benjamin Martin and Stephen Wisdom, Gagingwell yeoman, was recorded. Two years before a marriage settlement between Stephen Wisdom's son William and Jane Stone detailed Newbroke Lane and Pigsty lands in Gagingwell to be held in trust for the couple after their marriage worth respectively £170 and £50.

In the 1665 hearth tax returns Edward Drinkwater was discharged by poverty. This seems strange since the Drinkwater family lived in Gagingwell for three hundred years from 1558 and were noted for their fine beef production. Robert Drinkwater (after whom Robert's field was named) died in 1599 and his tombstone inscription read *Formosi peccoris custos*, 'a leading rearer of cattle'.



*Cross House, Gagingwell, formerly three cottages  
where once the last hanged sheep stealer lived*

Less honourable in animal husbandry was William Bowler who lived in what is now Cross House (opposite Wadham House) then three labourer's cottages. In 1783 Bowler became the last man in England to be hanged for sheep stealing. George Busby wrote a lengthy contemporary ballad about it describing how the constable, steward and shepherd set out in the snow to find the thief:

*As on they went the track was clear  
 To Gadgingwell, a hamlet near  
 In house where William Bowler dwelt  
 It seemed as if they mutton smelt.  
 On entering at dinner time  
 Where dwelt the man charged with the crime  
 What they saw before their eyes  
 At once made their suspicions rise....*

Another more unusual Gagingwell resident among the farmers and labourers was a so called witch who in the 1890's lived in the Thatched Cottage (now my house, built around 1640). This old lady grew her hair over her face, dressed in a long black coat and terrified local children passing by. Every fortnight she walked to Adam's Stores in Enstone to buy laudanum to which she was addicted.



*The only thatched dwelling in Gagingwell in winter*

The road she walked to Enstone was what is now the B4030. In 1769 documents referred to it as the lane from Church Enstone to Gagingwell and the agricultural steward to the Earl of Litchfield gave Samuel Bumpas of Stonesfield a labourer, permission to dig slate from the lane for 10.6d per thousand of good slate. The way

was made a turnpike in 1793 and declassified as such in 1876. Another notable route was the Drover's way from Wales to London that ran along the ancient Green lane towards Enstone from Cuckold's Holt. This house was an inn known originally as the White Hart and had a small (now demolished) toll keeper's cottage alongside. The name was perhaps a hint at the overnight happenings among the travellers who stayed there. Remains of the bar and an upstairs dance floor can still be seen and there were extensive barns to house the sheep and cattle overnight.



*Cuckold's Holt*

The other old meeting place in

Gagingwell was the Preaching Cross; the remains of which, listed as an ancient historical monument, lie in front of Wadham House. The base plinth and steps were restored by the Enstone History Circle in 1962 at a cost of £66.6s. The limestone cross probably dates from the late Middle Ages. Lacking a church of its own, the cross was installed to be a focal point at which Gagingwell's faithful could gather to hear visiting preachers sent out by Winchcombe Abbey.



*The medieval preaching cross*

Though suggestions of the remains of a medieval village have never been substantiated, a huge 'village' of around fourteen hundred people did spring up during World War 2 when Gagingwell farmland was requisitioned by the RAF to provide living quarters, officers' messes and hospital for personnel stationed at nearby Enstone Airfield. Seven purpose built sites including a WAAF site were erected. Details are



*Ruins of RAF WW2 camp buildings at Gagingwell*

recorded in 'RAF Enstone, A Brief History' by Nicholas Hook in which he says: 'Each site housed approximately two hundred airmen in both Nissen and Laing huts, and was fitted with latrines and washing facilities. Most officers lived on site with the rest of the airmen, though some lodged in houses in Gagingwell and Enstone. Each hut contained its own stove to keep the airmen warm, though strict coal rationing meant that most airmen (including officers) opportunistically broke into the compound where fuel was kept, to keep them from freezing in the winter months'.

‘The communal site, located to the left of the B4030 leading from Enstone, and now largely populated by sheep, once represented the hub of the RAF community at Gagingwell. This area housed the officers’ and the airmen’s messes, as well as various other amenities, such as a grocer and produce store, barbers, sick quarters and a bath house for the officers’. One officer recalled his mess fondly: ‘Our mess, although of a temporary nature was very comfortable with an anteroom, lounge with bar and two fireplaces and a dining room and behind the scenes cooking facilities and a wine and beer store’.

Once the war was over, several of the huts helped to overcome housing shortages and were lived in for some years. Barbara Hill of Middle Barton recalls her family lived in one for a time: ‘my parents lived for a while in the buildings on the airfield in about 1947/48. I don’t have any memory of living there as I was only a baby at the time, having been born while they lived there and before they moved to Middle Barton. I now know that it was not only my parents, Derrick and Win Jarvis who lived there having failed to find somewhere else to live when they got married. My Mum’s older sister, Helen (Nell) and her husband, Jack Pickering, who had married I think in 1946 when Nell was 21, lived in the first building as you go through the gate just up the hill from Abbey farm. Jack was in the RAF stationed at the airfield and was an Air gunner. Their eldest son Graham, my cousin , was born while they were there. My Mum and Dad lived in a building further up the track and next door to them lived my Aunt Jenny and her husband, John Lowden. My Aunt Nell remembers that they generated their own electricity as there was none laid on.’



*Probably a wash house at RAF WW2 camp at Gagingwell \**



*Remains of RAF air raid shelter*

My upper garden still has the remains of concrete floorings and as I look over the field behind the house, there are the ruins of several dormitory huts and air raid shelters. When we first arrived in Gagingwell in 1970, the huts still had drawings on the walls made by the airmen. Now they have become shelters for a bull and horses as Gagingwell has reverted to being its traditional hamlet size where cattle and sheep still graze.

\* Definitely not Barbara Hill’s house Ed.

# The Stewart Family

Deanna Jean Gardner (née Stewart)  
as told to Ruth Henderson

## The Eldest of a Family of 11 Children

On the 23rd February 1942 Margaret Jean Tomlins of 29 Oakwood Road Smethwick, Birmingham married William John Stewart of Turnpike Cottage Rayford Lane Steeple Barton, at The Ackrill Memorial Church, Smethwick, Birmingham.

My parents were known as Bill and Jean Stewart who lived in the bungalow by the school.

My Dad married my Mum so she could come and live in a "safer place" because of the bombing of Smethwick. Mum's family home had already had an incendiary bomb dropped on it while they were in the Anderson shelter in the garden. Grandad worked at the Scribona cake factory, this had also been bombed, the local wasps had a field day in all that splattered jam!

Dad was in the Army and Mum's "War Work" was at the Aluminium Factory, Southam Road, Banbury. A bus used to leave Jarvis Garage at six o'clock in the morning, Mum used to have to run full pelt from the Turn Pike to the garage and stand with her back pressed against the house door till someone turned up to drive the bus. Mum was used to street lights having lived in Birmingham, the dark countryside, with the bonus of animal noises, used to scare her. Mum worked in the Sheet Mill department where sheets of Ally were rolled out then pegged up to go through a water spray to cool them down, her job was to peg up the sheets as they came off the rollers.

Bastille Day, July 14th, 1943 at around 5.30 pm, I was born, Dr Woods had to use forceps to bring Deanna Jean Stewart into the world. I was the first of eleven children Mum and Dad went on to have over the next 21 years.

We lived with my Dad's parents in the family home, The Turnpike Cottages. Dad was the youngest of seven children, so my Granny was used to children. By this time, they were all married except Uncle Bob who was away in the Army. Mrs. Beale lived in the cottage on Duns Tew Road opposite The Turnpike Cottages. Mrs Beale and her son Albert came to see the new baby, gave me a shilling for my money box. Albert was asked if he wanted to hold me, he shook his head and said, "No he might break me".

My brother John was born in 1945. In 1947 we all walked up Rayford Lane to our new home, Hill View, Church Lane next door to the Primary School. At the time this was a four roomed bungalow which was constructed out of Asbestos



sheets and timber. There was an outside toilet and a water tap in a building known as the "Wash House." This had a built-in boiler, a fire had to be made underneath to heat the water to boil the cotton sheets and towels. This took hours and if the wind was from the wrong direction the fire used to go out!

Dad was out of the Army by this time, but he suffered from Shell Shock and it took him several years to recover. Before the war he was a plumber, after he was demobbed he went back to work at the Upper Heyford Base for the Ministry of Defense as a plumber. He eventually became a Foreman of Trades and was responsible for the general upkeep of the R.A.F Base until his retirement.

July 1946 saw the birth of Ronald, a quiet child with a blonde curly mop of hair.

November 5th, Bonfire night 1947 heralded the birth of my first sister Linda. That year was the winter of all winters. Church Lane was blocked with snow drifts 6ft tall, the only way we could get food was Dad walking across the fields to the Carpenters Arms in North Street and get a farmer to bring him and the shopping back over the fields. We had to melt snow for water because the one and only tap outside was frozen up. We only had oil lamps for light and a paraffin run oven you couldn't control. The open fire in the kitchen/ living room was the only source of heat. The washing up was done in a bowl on the table, the hot water coming from the kettle. The kettle and saucepan were the only way to get hot water to fill the tin bath for the weekly baths. The bath was always placed by the fire side, the rest of the week it was a strip wash. It was so cold in our house nobody wanted to go to bed or get up in the morning. The frost was so hard there was ice on the inside of the windows for weeks, which meant we couldn't see out of them.

In 1948 Mum had all four of us down with whooping cough. I'd started school in the September. It was thought I brought home all the germs. She nursed us all, it was over six weeks before she was able to get a night's sleep.

All the clothes washing was done by hand, the sheets and towels done in the outside boiler. We did have one "mod con" a wringer which helped a bit with the drying process, but you had to be careful about buttons on the cloths because they would break.

1949 a third brother David in June of that year. With the family growing there was less play time and more helping Mum time. We used to go home for lunch, then back to school for the afternoon lessons. When I got home in the afternoons it was my job to mind the "baby" while Mum got the dinner prepared. Then I helped with the washing up, scrubbing the loose collars of Dad's shirts and iron them dry for him to wear the next day. I also used to run errands to the shops Farley's, Halls or Cox's shops to buy food.

The year Carol was born, January 1951 was a very cold winter but a lovely hot summer, we played outside most of the time and even Carol's cot was carried



outside with a canopy of a bedspread to keep her in the shade, so we could mind her while mum got on with the chores. By then we were the proud owners of a "Revo electric cooker and a Fridge" they were second or even third hand as we didn't have money for luxurious living.

George Wyatt used to bring the milk by mid-day in his horse driven Milk Float with milk in churns on board, Mum took the milk pan out to him to put a pint in then she took it straight to the cooker to scald it by bringing it to the boil so that it didn't go sour because by the time it got to us it was already warm. That also reminds me of school milk left in crates outside the school door in full sun or frozen, so it was popping out of the bottle top, it's no wonder I never liked milk is it?

Every year I used to be fetched by my Granny Tomlins, (Mum's Mother) to spend two weeks with them when a new baby was born at our house. When I was school age I still went for two weeks in August before we went back to school. Every evening after dinner Grandad used to take me for a walk, he tested me for observation on the walk. When we got back I had to recite all I'd seen, where, when size and colour, as appropriate to his questions. To this day I'm very aware of new thing/places etc. Thanks, grandad!

Baby number seven was born in September 1952 Jacqueline by name the seventh child of a seventh child. Now there were three of us at school. Someone said to mum one day, seven children, Mrs. Stewart how do you cope? She answered we all muck in and it's only one more potato in the pot and another place at the table. I have to say at this juncture we were never hungry only at meal times. You had to make sure you ate up quickly as there was always someone waiting or offering to clear your plate if you couldn't quite manage to eat everything. There weren't many leftovers in our house. We never had a party! Mum said we have a party here every day and there's not enough food to give to other people's children.

The first television I saw was with John and Ron at Mr. Eric Stowe's house in North street. It was a 9- inch screen, so tiny by today's standards, the two men sat on chairs, we three stood behind looking over their shoulders at our first ever Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race. I think we had our first Bush television for the Coronation in 1953.

Dad and Uncle Bob used to go to Oxford to watch speedway racing. When the BBC started televising it, Dad used to get so mad when the broadcast broke down, and he didn't see the races.

Joy was born after tea in May 1954 another blonde head like Carol and myself.

Martin made an appearance in June 1956 so now there were 4 girls and 4 boys.

It was very useful that Mum was a good maker out of nothing person. This went for our meals and our clothing. Whatever there was to eat we shared, if the hens laid

an egg it was saved till there was enough for half an egg each, together with a half slice of fried bread and sometimes a baked bean was also available.

Dad's Mum Granny Stewart used to frequent the Jumble Sales that were prevalent in that era. Her aim was to buy items that were in the best condition and had plenty of material in the skirts of dresses and coats. Mum used to unpick all these garments and then wash it all. We used to lay on the floor on old Newspapers or brown paper, then she would cut round us to make a paper pattern, so that she could then make us clothes. The only thing that was bought new were shoes from Fred Bradshaw's Shoe Shop in North Street. Mum used to work in a shoe shop in Birmingham before she got married so she knew all about the right fitting shoes and socks. Mum used to stand us on paper, draw around both our feet. I then had to go to Mr. Bradshaw who used the patterns to judge which shoes would likely fit. I used to carry three boxes of shoes in each hand which were tied with string, on approval so mum could make up her mind which if any fitted correctly. Then take back the unwanted pairs and pay for the ones she deemed right.

Our underwear came from Bomber Wells who came to the village in a van from the Deddington Drapery shop he owned. He was always ready to talk you to buying something or other you couldn't afford. He'd say "That's alright Mrs. pay me when you can." We were never to buy anything as my Dad called "on the glad and sorry" glad you'd got it, sorry you still had to pay with interest. In later years Littlewoods in Banbury was the place Dad went to shop. When he used to go with his brother Bob to the cinema on Saturdays, we used to ask who was in the film, his answer "Walter Pidgeon," it was many years later I found out there was such a person.

1958 when I was fifteen years and one month old I left Steeple Aston School to go out into the big wide world of work at the USAF Base at Upper Heyford. I was so shy being thrust into another world of foreign people who talked differently, and they were mixed race too.



*Walter Pidgeon*

We used to get picked up from the villages in a truck and taken to the Base. We had to have ID cards and were not allowed to have anything that was tax free and had to sign to say that we understood.

When I was at Steeple Aston School we had to take it in turns to take the Headmaster's lunch to him in his office. As it was near the end of term and I was about to leave school, Mum suggested I asked Mr. Passant for a reference. He looked thunder struck at me laid his knife and fork back down and said "Reference! Reference! You're not worth referring to anyone." You can imagine how I felt? I was so humiliated. I ran out crying. When I got home I told Mum what happened, she said he's only a man, you don't need his help to get a job, you can do it yourself, just

tell whoever you see that your willing to try anything. That has always been my motto, don't say I can't, have a try, it's surprising what you can do if you try. I worked at the base for 8½ years got promoted on merit and ended up a manager. So, take it from me never say never.

My sister Kay was the next on the list. I was 18 by now and had my leg pulled at work because my mum was having another baby. Another brother made an appearance in May 1964.

In the July I was 21 then got married to Derek Valentine Gardner on the 29th of



August 1964. Eventually I went on to have two girls of my own.

I am proud to say I have five brothers and five sisters who all live in a 12-mile radius except for Linda the sister next to me, she has lived in Texas for over forty years but comes to England every year to visit. We FaceTime every Sunday night to keep in touch.

Yes! In closing I have to say we were brought up to know right from wrong. We were never dirty or unkept and certainly never hungry. We all have been in employment. Three of us have our own businesses in building or the motor trade and the rest of us have trades and work in retail or commerce.

None of us has any O or A levels, so if we could do it, it's not too late for anyone else, all you must do is try. That's what we did, and it was all down to encouragement from our parents Bill and Jean Stewart. God Bless them.

# Stewart Cousins postcard

**Christine Edbury**

Last year the history group were contacted by Jayne in Suffolk, who had purchased a postcard titled 'Barton, The Mill Stream' via e-bay thinking it was her own village



Barton Mills. When she realised it wasn't she found the details of our parish council clerk and contacted us via Abbi Beale to see if our history group would like it. The black and white postcard shows The Mill, Middle Barton. We already have a copy of the photograph, however it was the reverse side that is of interest. There is a brief message from Lily Stewart, 'Dear Daisy, Thanks for postcard sorry I have not written to you before will write soon with love Lily Stewart write soon' (as written) to Miss D. Stewart, 1 Clifton Villas, Camden Square, London N.W. At the



top is written Whitehouse, Glympton, Oxon; I could not find out whether Lily was working at the farm, she falls between two census returns - she was too young in the 1901 census and she may have changed jobs by the 1911 census returns, where she is recorded as being at home in Middle Barton (although she could have just been visiting her family the night of the census). The postmark is Middle Barton, April 1905.

So, putting on my detective hat, using our archives, parish records and Ancestry, I started to research these two girls to see if they were related to any of the Stewart family in Barton.

Lilian and Daisy were cousins. Lilian's father was Stephen and he remained with his family in Middle Barton; Daisy's father was George, who went to London, where he eventually married and had children. Stephen and George were brothers. The confusing bit was both girls seem to have been christened Edith as their first names! So, a little hard to track down.

On the 1891 census for Steeple Barton, Edith Lilian, aged 2 months, is living with father Stephen, mother Sarah Mary and Sarah's brother Arthur Castle, aged 23, in South Street. Sarah and Arthur were born in Sandford. Edith was born in Barton. On the 1901 census for Steeple Barton Lilian, now called Edith, is 10 living with father Stephen, mother Sarah and now sister Isobel and brother Tom.

On the 1911 census for Steeple Barton she is recorded as Edith Lilian, aged 20, at home with the family; she seems to be not working, nothing is recorded.

Daisy, recorded as Edith Daisy aged 10 on the 1901 census, and her family are recorded as living in Islington where she and her older brother were born.

On the 1911 census Daisy is living in Islington, with father George, mother Bessie. She too, does not seem to be working, nothing is recorded in that section of the census form. I can only assume that Daisy was working (in 1905), probably in service at 1 Clifton Villas, Camden Sq. The two girls are just the right age to be in service in 1905. Unfortunately we can't get access to the 1921 census yet to follow their working lives.

Edith Lilian went on to marry and have children; she married Frederick Henry Bradshaw in 1914; I can't find a church record, so I'm assuming that because they were Chapel people, they married in our Dock Chapel (can't find non-conformist record yet). They were the parents of our much loved Freddie Bradshaw, the owner of our boots, wellies, knitting wool and everything else shop in North Street. He also built the model railway and opened it to the public. Fred married Elsie Garvey and they had Cynthia and Graham. Cynthia and Graham both married but did not have any children, so no descendents. Edith Lilian died in 1956 aged 64. Edith Lilian was the aunt of our Stan, Horace and Nigel Wood (her sister Muriel Isobel married William Wood).

It seems Edith Daisy never married and she died in Kent, December 1976, aged 86.

# The Gibsons

## Julie Seymour

My great-grandfather Arthur Gibson was born in Middle Barton in 1852 to Michael Gibson (1818-1890) and Elizabeth Newman (1818-1873). Both Michael and Elizabeth were born and raised in the Bartons, and like many Michael was an agricultural labourer. They had 5 sons in total - James, Andrew, Mark, Arthur and Alfred.

James lived in the Bartons all his life (1881 in North Street, 1911 in The Dock). Andrew remained in Steeple Barton and is buried in St Mary's Churchyard. Mark was seen living in North Street in 1881 (and there is a mention of him buying some of the land of a property in South Street that my friend now owns!). Alfred was the only son who moved away, ending up in Berkshire. I remember also discovering that Michael died in a workhouse in Woodstock in 1890. I often wondered why one of the sons could not have taken him in, but in those days families lived hand to mouth and could not afford to always take elderly relatives in - which must have been awful for the family.

Arthur married Elizabeth Abraham in 1872 and their first daughter Edith was born in Steeple Barton and soon after they moved to Kiddington where Arthur worked as a Carter on Rectory Farm. Second daughter Mabel was born in 1883. Elizabeth passed away in 1890. At this time Arthur met widow Agnes Prue (nee West). Agnes was born and raised in Kiddington, her father Walter West was a gardener at Kiddington Hall. Agnes had been widowed in 1885 and was left with one daughter, Sophia, born in 1878. At some point Agnes and Arthur met and were married in October 1892 - with Rose (my grandmother) being born in April 1893 in the cottage closest to "the Cross" in Kiddington. My nan also had a younger brother, Ernest, who fought in WW1 and whose name is on the plaque in St Nicholas church. My nan's nephews Walter, William and Thomas Symonds are also listed, but sadly Thomas was one of the 2 local men who lost their life in the war, aged 19. Because they were the children of her step sister, they were very close in age to my nan! She grew up being close to Walter, who worked with the horses at the Hall. Agnes' father Walter West (the gardener at Kiddington Hall) was injured at work, going blind due to this injury. Walter moved in with my nan's family when this happened in the 1890s.

Agnes became quite an important figure in the village and she was called on to help with births and "lay out" the deceased. Her importance was borne out when the Gaskell family paid for Agnes' gravestone at St Nicholas when she died in 1932. Not many Gibsons ever had the money to pay for headstones!

My nan went to the school down the lane and had the foresight to list the names of her classmates on the reverse of their school photo. She remained close to Annie Busby all her life. She said that they occasionally went to Woodstock on a Sunday,

hopping on the back of any cart heading that way.



She went in to service, working at The Rectory, and eventually went to work for Lord Webb Johnson in London (he was the Royal Surgeon). Whilst in service in London, she became pen-friends with a young soldier serving in WW1 who she later went on to marry by special licence on Xmas Day 1917 - my grandfather Charles Francis.

Charles and Rose went on to have 3 children - my uncle, my mum and her twin sister, my aunt. They often visited Kiddington, and we have lots of photos of them around the cottage and surrounding area. Although their connection with the area went after Agnes and Arthurs death, we often took them to Kiddington and I still visit the area to this day. I have been to see the (now extended) cottage she was born and raised in.



*Medieval floor tile: found by Audrey Martin and Christine Edbury when they were 'poking' about the churchyard when groundworks were being done, around 1991. Identified by Richard Chambers of Oxford Archaeology.*

# Memories of Middle Barton

**Art Giguere, USAF Airman  
stationed at RAF Upper Heyford, 1973 – 1975**

The following impressions of Middle Barton are from my time there as a U.S. Airman. While my impressions may not be historically accurate, they live in my memory and occasionally come to life for me. I am sharing them with you now in the hopes that they will awaken some memories of your own, or at least make for some topics of discussion around a pint or two.

I arrived in England in November of 1973 at RAF Mildenhall on a military charter flight. After clearing customs, I boarded a bus along with about 20 others for the drive to RAF Upper Heyford. I don't remember much of the trip except for the narrow roads, small villages and the green of the countryside. I am from a small town in Vermont, in the New England (North Eastern) part of the U.S. so the landscape was familiar to me in some ways.

My arrival at RAF Upper Heyford was uneventful and I was met by the members of my unit at the drop point. From there I was taken to the barracks and then to the mess hall (aka chow hall). The barracks for our unit was not one of the new ones that were being built but rather one of the old "H" shaped barracks of undetermined age.

After a few days getting oriented to the base, I had my first weekend off. With no particular place to go, a new friend (from the bus trip) and I walked along the road to the west of the base and came on the village of Upper Heyford. We wandered around looking at the canal, the church and the village for the day. Later we stopped at a pub (I can't remember the name of it) and tried our hand at ordering a pint of beer. Language and money identification got in the way, but we did finally figure out what we wanted and how to pay for it. On the way out the door we were asked not to come back until we had learned how to use the money. A fair request, however in all my time in the UK, I never went into that pub again. A couple of weekends later we had much better luck in the village of Lower Heyford. Other than the pub incident, we were impressed by the countryside, thatched roofs on some of the homes, the shape and age of the church, and the canal. I had never seen canal boats like the ones located in Lower Heyford. I thought they were very unique and colorful. As the winter progressed, I saved enough money to purchase an old Austin four door of some sort and started to explore a bit further afield. On one of my short excursions I ended up on the road (I think the Oxford/Banbury Road) near the Hopcrofts Holt. Anyway, I ended up with my friend in the town of Banbury. I am not sure what day it was, but it was market day. I had never seen a "market day" before so the wandering around was fascinating. Words and signs started to make sense to me (i.e. Iron Monger, Aluminum/Aluminium, Bonnet, Boot, etc.) and the ebb and flow of the local accent started to take root in my brain. Shortly after this



excursion my vehicle died and had to be towed off. The loss of the vehicle grounded me for a bit, but it was not too bad as there was always someone from the barracks going somewhere on an adventure.

I eventually ended up with an old Morris Minor painted purple. From the front it looked like Mickey Mouse and from the back it looked like a miniature Conestoga wagon. The turn signals were on the roof and it had a vacuum cleaner hose as the “heating system” punched through the firewall of the driver’s compartment. The brakes weren’t great, and it wasn’t a flashy vehicle but somehow the police seemed to be attracted to it. I called it the “Purple Phantom”, but found out from the local constables that it was supposed to be blue and I should get that information adjusted at the local Motor Vehicle Office at my earliest convenience. They came to the house about a week later to see if I had found a convenient time yet...fortunately I had.

Our adventures took us many places, the obvious and obligatory visits to London and Oxford and such, but for the most part, my friends and I tended to like the country west of RAF Upper Heyford. Early on we spent much of our free time discovering the villages and towns of the area. Middle Barton was one of those discoveries.

Please take a minute and consider the mind set of this young airman at the time. As you know it was a time before cell phones and internet. Mail from home took a chunk of time to transit back and forth across the Atlantic. The Cold War was in full swing and Vietnam was a major consideration for anyone in the U.S. forces at the time even as the war was under negotiation and starting to wind to an end. The backdrop of Vietnam impacted much of our interactions with other Europeans though not so much from you. My friends and I were all single. The economy in the U.S. and in the U.K. was not pretty. At least we had jobs, which was not true for many of our friends in the States or those of our age group in the villages and towns we visited. While we were young, the point of having a job was not lost on us. Unfortunately, the time was also one when the IRA was targeting pubs and UK military units in the UK.

Middle Barton, I have only fond memories of my time with you. I first visited Middle Barton one evening at the Carpenter’s Arms for some type of a dart league. I was



not part of the league at the time, but some friends were and they drug the new guy with them. It would have been about February of 1974. Paul Alvarez (we called him Taco as he was of Mexican Heritage...probably would not use that today) of San Jose California, was a gregarious individual and larger than life. He and a couple of other yanks (Bill Brock, a tall lanky yank from

New York State and Dick Burgess from somewhere in the Midwest) and myself ended up at the Arms and had a great evening. People were friendly and talkative and the place was packed compared to some pubs we had been to. I think Frank and Heather Bachelor were the owners at the time. They had at least one son who was about our age. In one corner, to the left of the door in the dart section of the pub were a number of young ladies sitting by themselves enjoying the evening. The



*Date of photo: 1975*

*Location: The Carpenters Arms, Middle Barton.*

*Back row (from left): ?? Pete Watts Jimmy Sokol Rocky Moore ?? ??*

*Middle row: ?? Bob Rucinski, USAF Joan Adams Lynn Stewart ?? Sid Stewart ?? ??*

*Helen Watts Nita Watts ??*

*Front row: Pinky Watts ?? ?? Art Giguere USAF*

point that they were sitting by themselves was not lost on me, though I was still somewhat hesitant to make contact with them at the time other than to say hi and to stare at them (while being “cool” with it all). It was also my first time trying “Bitter”, which I eventually ordered as my regular pint. Going home was a bit blurry...but I think that is because I was riding in the back seat...not sure though. Later, in the late spring of 74, four of us from the barracks decided to move out onto the local economy. We had all been to Middle Barton several times by now and decided on your village as our new home. None of us had any furniture or kitchen

ware so we tried to find a place that was at least somewhat furnished. We also had to maintain our rooms in the barracks as we were too junior in rank to be moved out. The four of us ended up in a house up by the Fox. The house entrance was not on North St, but on another one just off of it and it was behind and above a beauty shop/hair dresser's shop. We tended to work different shifts so it was rare to find all of us home at the same time. We also shared a couple of vehicles to get back and forth to work and so we made the village our home.



I'll ramble for a little bit on some things I remember, though I am unsure of the sequence of all the events

...English Women are beautiful, that piece I know historically was my first and lasting impression of them

...One evening after a night at the Arms we were walking home and as we turned the corner to our house a car with four local blokes ran up on the sidewalk and lawn (pretending to try to hit us) and yelling out to "Leave their girls alone!". One of my roommates kicked the car door and we started yelling back. Nothing happened beyond that but it was an event that sticks in my mind. We later played darts and spoke with them around the village after we had lived there for a bit. It was then that I realized the difference between dating in the UK and in the US. The girls in the corner of the pub were in some way attached to each of these guys and we (or at least I) did not pick up on this subtlety of dating in the UK. In the US at the time, if you ignored your date all night you probably left alone.

...I met Pete Watts, Nita Watts, Paul Watts, Ken Watts and Helen Watts one evening chasing cows that had somehow got out of their pasture or pen. Pete Watts worked the farm down behind the Arms and he was in the process of chasing them down as they were his charges. A few of us Yanks joined in the chase. I still stay in touch with Pete. It turned out that we share the same birthday and so a friendship was solidified over time. Pete and a couple of others (Pete, Pete & Duffel) visited my family and me in New England in the 1990's for about 10 days.

...Tried my first "Parsnip Wine" at Pete and Nita's house one night about Christmas time...I can honestly say it was the most unusual wine I had and have ever tasted. Never have run into it since...

...I remember one fall or late summer day wandering over by the school house and coming upon what must have been some riders of a Fox Hunt. At least they were on some beautiful mounts and dressed in red or black jackets with white pants and tall riding boots. It seemed like a story to me at the time, and still does.

...The owner of The Fox pub had died somewhere around the time we had lived in

the village for about 5 months. His wife we learned was going to have to give up the Pub or find a male relative to take it over within a year as women (as I understand it) were not allowed to hold onto the license because of their sex. That did not seem right to any of us at the house...but apparently that is the way it was. I think her brother or his brother ended up taking it over before we left.

...We learned playing "soccer" or football (your version) was not an easy game. We played some of the local guys about our age one day on the field in the village. It was after a long period of time where we boasted about our football on a regular basis. We were out played and out matched but it was a good lesson. I no longer saw it as an easy game. Of course, years later it started to catch on in the U.S. As I am sure you know, it is not like Yanks to boast about much...but football is something we just had to point out. In short we developed "Foot in Mouth Disease" after that friendly.

...One or two days a week, I remember that there was a butcher and maybe a dairy delivery guy that came to the village to sell their goods from little work vans. We still had milkmen in the States at that time, but I had never seen anyone selling meat and other products on the side of the road.

...Fell in love with Fish and Chips, and have never found them anywhere else as good as they were in the UK.

...Learned about English Cheddar Cheese, and learned to love the Plough Boy lunch too. Still will buy English Cheddar when I find it.

...The first time I ever saw cherry tomatoes was at the Arms.

...Some of the best beef I have ever eaten was from the village.

...We were invited to someone's house for a special dinner once, the main course was mutton and the traditional supporting cast...it was a great time, but I have never eaten mutton again...I did however chew and swallow with the best expression that I could muster...not sure if the cook was fooled...I doubt it...

...We had to save a wedding once at the local church, one of the Yanks from the base, not well known to us had somehow convinced himself that a young lady (already engaged) from the village was in love with him...she was not and she was getting married. Anyway, he showed up at the church the day of the wedding and somehow we became involved to get him out of there at the request of someone from the village...it was rather embarrassing for me (us) and it kind of tempered our welcome in the village for a bit in some circles.

...Fifty pence pieces were our friends. We learned that in order to have electricity we had to pump the meter with fifty pence pieces...we became experts on collecting them.

...I was impressed with the house of one gal I dated for a short time as being very hot, it turned out that her water heater was built in above the fireplace so regardless of the outside season, the fireplace was lit. I had not seen that before.

...One of our roommates (Dick Burgess) married a local gal named Carol Sykes

(I think the name is right), we celebrated in some community hall in the village after the wedding. We had to get a new roomie after that.



*Ruth Kirby in the Post Office*

... We really liked the Post Office along North Street. Nothing fancy about it, it was small and quaint, but it seemed like a place where information was always posted about village events etc.

...For such a small village, it seemed like an awful lot of folks were into car racing when we were there. Dave Bellini was one guy we knew involved in it and so were the folks at the little gas station by the Post Office.

Phone booth on North Street...used often by us to call work...bright red

...Played lots of darts, mostly at the Arms, but some other places too. Even ended up buying my own set before I left. Still play from time to time, though it is rare now.

...I liked the tradition of regulars having their own "pint glass/mug" at their favorite pub.

...Christmas and Boxing Day stick in my mind, I think because of the similarities I saw in some of our traditions of the time...and because it seems like everyone was really of "good cheer" that winter of '74. As an individual and as a group we were invited to many a home during this timeframe.

...In the summer of '75, I lost my roommates and had to move to Charlbury with a friend. We still continued to frequent the Arms as regulars as the town of Charlbury just did not click with us. The photo I sent earlier was from my last days in country. Off the top of my head, these are some of the many treasures I remember from my time with you. After leaving you I returned to the U.S. to complete my time with the USAF. I later ended up serving in the US Navy for about 27 years. I have been extremely fortunate to have seen many things and have been to many places...you and your village will always be one of the special places that will always hold a warm place in my heart. I wish you all only the best,

Art "Jig" Giguere



P.S. In retrospect, I can forgive anyone who was a bit tired of U.S. Airmen and our presence at the base. I did not appreciate at the time the impact of our presence and the extremely loud engines of the FB-111's that were located there. Overall, I sincerely hope we brought as much to the table of life as we took away and that our presence is remembered fondly, even if through the haze of time.

*This article was received by the History Group in February 2014.*

# Memories of Growing up in Westcote Barton in the 1940's and 1950's

Geoff Bosley

I clearly remember my first day at Middle Barton Primary School, Mrs Bayliss was the Headmistress, a formidable woman. Helen Anson (Cox) looked after me on that first daunting day. Ada Stockford (Sarah Pinion's grandmother) was an excellent school cook who looked after us well. Ted Smith collected the meals daily and delivered them to Duns Tew Primary School. Ted ran a Taxi service. If we needed to get a bus, we walked to the Bus Stop by Jack Irons' Barn Door. We always went to Miss Farley's shop to buy sweets or an Oxo cube, then went to get a drink of water from the Stand Pipe by Cogger Hazell's house opposite Jarvis's Garage. We were lucky having four shops; Cox's, George Wyatt's on Worton Road, Mrs Hall's and Miss Farley's. Mr Pillin and Mary Stewart delivered fresh bread, Milly Prior ran her Butchers shop, Bob Jarvis had a flour-ishing Coach business, with sons Derek and Dave assisted by Harry Stevens and Bill Baker.



*Coach service set up by Bob Jarvis*

Walter Howe ran a fleet of lorries with garages on the Worton Road opposite the Mission Hall (Alice Marshall Hall). They carried stone from Whiteways Quarry (now Renault Racing) to the American Air Base at Upper Heyford. Ralph Greenslade had a Petrol Station and a shop on the main road but Bob Jarvis was the main petrol supplier for the village. Frank Gascoigne and his son Bill were busy shoeing horses, Bill moved onto making Drags and Harrows. Arthur Perkins was always busy decorating houses locally.

I can clearly remember The Queen's Coronation when the new Sports Field and Pavilion was opened, we had a lot of fun with races and games before an excellent tea in the Pavilion when we were presented with a Coronation Mug.

Reggie Strickland lived in Fox Lane and was the local Chimney Sweep, he was also a very active member of the St John's Ambulance, along with Ada Stockford.

If we had a puncture in a bike tyre we also took it to Frank Humphries, who was brilliant at mending them. He worked for Bob Jarvis filling cars with petrol.

There was an active British Legion which had a hut. Miss Kirby ran the Post Office for many years, with Reg Cater and Ted Button delivering the post locally.

Fred Bradshaw ran a Boot and Shoe shop which also sold a good collection of wools, later he built a Model Railway. Ken Castle ran a Building and Undertaking Business.

One of the highlights of the summer was the Fair which was held in a paddock on the left before The Fox Pub (there are now a row of bungalows there).

Gilbert Newman was a man running several thriving businesses, he had a lorry which went to Avonmouth most days bringing back loads of bagged animal feed to his store on Worton Road, he also built Farm trailers and hired out corn sacks from a yard at Lower Heyford.



*The Cinema*

Later the Cinema became very popular for many years with Jarvis's coaches bringing loads of people from the surrounding villages. I can remember seeing 'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers' in about 1956.

One clear childhood memory was grazing our cows on the verges of the road above Manor Farm towards Sandford, there was no traffic to worry about, we would shut the gate at The Manor Drive and one person would go to the 'Sandford Hallow' to stop them from grazing further up the road and one by the farm, this was usually for an hour a day in the spring and early summer.

My father ran a milk round for several years before selling it to George Wyatt, he in turn sold it to Peter Baukham, who grew the business and then sold it to the Webb family.

Most farmers in the village kept a few cows, Jack Irons had a large herd which walked from Holliers Farm along the road in the middle of the village and they would turn left by Miss Kirby's Post Office to their grazing, unfortunately Jack's cows had to be put down as most of them were carrying TB. Milly Prior kept about 10 cows which were milked behind the Butchers shop by Jim Read, he would then walk them up the road and they grazed in the field between the Fox and the church, they went into the field where the Rectory gateway is. Nat Jarvis milked a few cows at Elm Farm, he had a milk churn standby his farm entrance.

My father would take pigs, sheep or cattle to Banbury market regularly, my mother would go and meet other farmers' wives at 'Browns' in Parson's street, she always went to 'Truss' the fishmongers and would bring fresh fish home.

I can remember Ration Books and worrying my mother for chocolate, she gave in and I used my rations up very quickly and regretted it for a long time.

I feel I was very fortunate to have grown up in a time which was a slower pace than today, crime rate was low, and a local policeman Reg Butler lived in the Police House at Hopcroft Holt, he would pedal gently round stopping to talk to the Community, also enjoying several drinks on his way.

*Copied exactly as Geoff had written.*

*Ruth Henderson 22 January 2018*

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