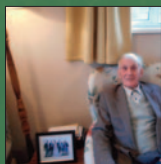


BYGONE BARTONS

Volume 8
2020



Contents

Mesolithic Barton

Christine Edbury

Stan Wood's Memories

as told to Ruth Henderson

Kay Davies

Jane Davies

History of the Bartons, part 1

George Laws

The Temperance Hall Banner

Barbara Hill

Middle Barton School in the 1960s

Michael Waine

Barton Abbey Airfield

Barbara Hill

Harris Close

Christine Edbury

Bubbles Pratley

Sarah Pinion

RAF Upper Heyford in WWII

John Madden

Royal Dressmaker

Barbara Hill

Introduction

John Madden, Editor

on behalf of Bartons' History Group

As you will know by now, this year sees the 75th anniversary of V-E Day, or V-Day as many called it at the time. On May 7th 1945 the German Admiral Dönitz signed the deed of surrender of all German forces, to come into force at 23:01 (CET) on the 8th; and it is on the 8th that we commemorate the end of the greatest ever conflict in Europe.

Less well-known is the fact that the Bartons had their very own airfield in the War - RAF Barton Abbey - more about this on page 23.

And of course there was also RAF Upper Heyford; not the major base it was to become in the Cold War, but still an important training ground for our bomber crews. Along with many of the young men and women of the Bartons who served in WWII Stan Wood made his contribution to the war effort, albeit down the coal mines as a conscripted 'Bevin Boy' - reputed to be much harder work than in the armed forces, though only recognised officially when Tony Blair announced in 2007 that they would be awarded a veteran badge. Stan's recollections of life in the Bartons start on page 3.

And true to its title, this eighth issue of ***Bygone Bartons*** holds many other memories of present and former Bartonians, from Kay Davies and Bubbles Pratley to Ian Thomas and Michael Waine.

Another long-time resident was George Laws, who devoted much time and effort to researching the history of the Bartons. His extensive notes were edited, after his death, by Audrey Martin and published in booklet form; this is now, unfortunately, out of print, so we decided to reproduce it, in two instalments, in ***Bygone Bartons*** - look out for the final part in ***BB9***!

We also remember Audrey herself, who sadly passed away 20 years ago this year, and whose obituary we reprint with kind permission of the Dorn Free Press.

From Jackson's Oxford Journal, 30/11/1889:

A very handsome banner has been presented to the Church Mission and Temperance Hall at Middle Barton, by Miss Evill of No 1 Lancaster Gate, Hyde Park W. It is of Roman satin embroidered 'Steeple Barton Branch C.E.T.S; established 1884.' In the centre is a medallion in oils of St George and the Dragon which measures 28 inches by 19 inches. The full measurement of the banner is 43 inches by 39 inches.

But what became of it? - see page 19!

Mesolithic Barton

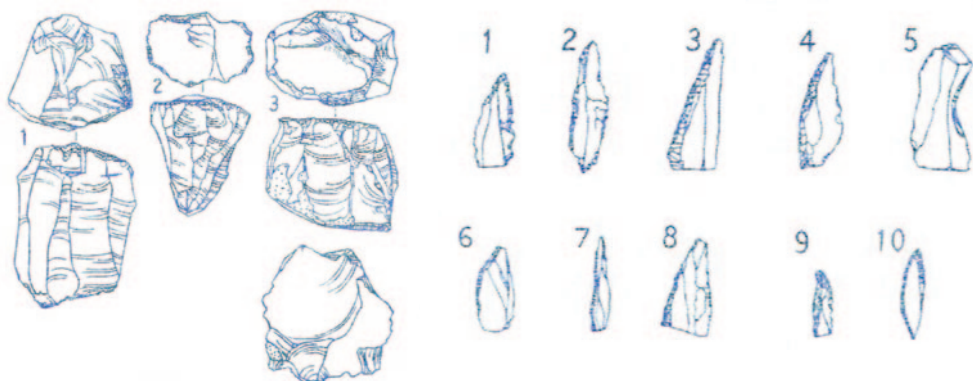
Christine Edbury

For those of you interested in the age of the Bartons, we can now take our history back even further - into the Mesolithic Period. The Mesolithic period falls between the end of the Palaeolithic (old stone age) and the Neolithic (new stone age). The dates of the Meso period vary by geographical location, but in Britain this is approximately 10,000 BC to 8,000 BC.

I found an article by Humphrey Case: 'Mesolithic Finds in the Oxford Area' published in *Oxoniensia* Volumes 17-18, 1952-3. Humphrey Case was Assistant Keeper, then Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum for many years.

Case mentions on page 12, under the heading *Microlithic Cores*: 'there are also examples from Steeple Barton, Oxon, in the collection of Mr. W.H.M. Hodges, Institute of Archaeology'.

Unfortunately, according to his article, the flints from Steeple Barton were not drawn, so we have no way of knowing what they looked like. Here are some examples of cores and microliths from South Oxfordshire from his article.



Cores are chunks of flint used to make the microliths. The toolmaker flakes off the small sharp pieces, sometimes several can be made from one chunk.

Microliths are small sharp flint tools flaked off a chunk of flint to be used as spear points or arrowheads.

I contacted the Institute of Archaeology in London in October 2018, asking them to confirm the existence of the Hodges collection and if they still had the objects, but unfortunately did not get a reply.

Stan Wood's Memories

of Life in Barton in the first half of the 20th Century

as told to Ruth Henderson

Stan was born in 1925 and his brother Horace was born in 1928, their parents were Isobel Muriel Stewart and William John Wood. There were six children in the family: Muriel, Beryl, Dorothy, Stan, Horace and Nigel. They were born in South Street, after this they moved to a cottage in Steeple Barton.

When Stan started school at five, Chasey Airs was the headmaster and Mrs Greenslade was the infant teacher. Horace was a little older than five when he started school as his mother didn't want him walking along the road until he was older. The day that Horace started school Mrs Byford became the headmistress.



The brothers had to walk home for their dinner every day. Horace used to collect a packed lunch from Mrs Powell who lived in the cottage nearest the path down the Dock and deliver it to Mr Powell who worked at the water works at the top of Worton Road, then he went back home to have his dinner and walk back to school. Stan and Horace had to walk everywhere when they were young.

The children used to walk around the village, they would play with their spinning tops and whips. They would frequently play in the spinney at the end of Fox Lane (South Street end).

The bridge over the River Dorn in Pound Lane (the road from the cross roads by the Alice Marshall Hall to South Street) had steps to the water, this is where people used to go and get their water, that was if Mr Jarvis's cows hadn't been in the brook, in addition to this there were fresh water springs by the Mill and at the side of Farley's shop in Mill Lane.

Fresh running water came to the village in the 1930's, there was a reservoir on the left-hand side at the top of Worton Road, there were standpipes all over the village, many of these could still be seen until the 1970's. His brother Horace used to carry 15 buckets of water a day for Gardeners Bakery when he was still at school.

A Mr Constable had the bakery before the Gardeners, apparently, he kept his wagons in the small paddock at the end of South Street and the corner of Church Lane.

On a Sunday many families used to take their Yorkshire puddings with the meat in the middle to the bakers to cook. The Yorkshire puddings were always very crispy on the outside and soft in the middle. The left-over Yorkshire pudding was eaten with jam on Mondays.

Mark Stockford used to cook the roasts at 10 every Sunday morning, the villagers would go and collect the cooked meal at 12.00, they had to pay 2d (1p) for each tin.

Stan and his brother Horace went to Steeple Aston Secondary Modern School at the age of 11 and left aged 14.

Stan left school in 1939. Stan, Jack Eaglestone and a lot of the village boys worked for G and F Henderson at Oathill Farm (next to Renault Racing) in their Corn Bin Factory. They made bins of all shapes and sizes. These were delivered to Heyford Station by Gilbert Newman's lorries, one of the drivers was Teddy Pratley. These corn bins were delivered all over the British Isles, apparently there are still some at Barton Abbey. The Henderson brothers were always very careful not to pay their employees more than the minimum wage.

Stan's brother Horace worked for Gardeners the bakers when he first left school, then Barton Abbey Gardens until he went into the army, on May 6th 1946, for National Service. When Horace started work in the Gardens at Barton Abbey there were a lot of gardeners employed and many grooms as the Fleming family were keen horse people, especially Mrs Joan Fleming. They had polo ponies, hunters, show horses and competition horses, Mrs Fleming competed all over the country. There were also a lot of people employed in Barton Abbey. An annual horse show was held at Leys Farm every April in the 1950's and 1960's.

Stan went to work at Barton Abbey in August 1942, before that he worked for Boffins the builders for nearly 2 years. When Stan started working there it was nearly all old people working on the farm then because all the young men had gone to war or were working for the War Effort.

Stan was a Bevin Boy* from April 1944 until October 1947; he went to Pontefract for training and then to Maltbury. All miners were in the army, that's why Bevin got the boys to go down the mines. The Bevin Boys were conscripted which meant they couldn't get out of it.

Nigel Wood, Stan's youngest brother was born in 1931, he went into the Regular Army for five years, he fought in the Korean war.

Stan's sister Muriel looked after Aunt Nell, his sister Dorothy went to Reading in service and his sister Beryl worked at the aluminium factory in Banbury, she travelled

* named after Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour in WWII; 10% of all young men conscripted were chosen by lot to work in the mines rather than go into the armed forces. Many famous names served in this way, including Eric Morecambe (Ed)

on the Bus run by Mr Jarvis. Harry Stevens and Sid Stewart were the bus drivers. There was also a bus that ran to Oxford on a Wednesday and a Saturday.

During the war the Mission Hall (The Alice Marshall Hall) was a cook house, the old cinema (South Street) was a soldiers' billet.

The 1935 Jubilee playing fields were next door to the original council houses on North Street, there is a red brick bungalow there now.

Doctors visited the village, the surgery was at the top of Jacobs Yard, then opposite Bradshaw's harness shop in North Street, the Surgery then moved across the road in the houses that were knocked down to make the entrance to the Firs (Holliers Crescent), it then moved to the House on the Horse Common, and finally to the Mission Hall (the Alice Marshall Hall).

The Post Office was based on the Horse Common, this was then knocked down. Derek Jarvis was the last person to live there. It then moved to the Kirbys' in North Street (where the Post Box is still in the wall of the cottage).

A disabled man called Arthur Gibson used to take the telegrams around the village.

Shops in the village were Mrs Hall's the fish and chips shop in Jacobs Yard, Miss Farley's (Mill Lane), Alldays, Robins, Cox's (North Street where the Steps children's home is now), the butchers shop in Enstone Road, which had its own slaughter house which was in the barn next door (this has recently been converted and added to the cottage).

Gilbert Newman had a haulage business in Worton Road, he had four lorries, and employed a lot of village people.

Gordon Mole, the livestock haulier, lived at the Turnpike, he had a garage nearby.

The blacksmith, Frank Gascoigne, had a forge and house in Worton Road, his son Ron still lives in the Red Brick Cottage. Frank Gascoigne used to make hay from Long Meadow, this was the grass verges from the Turnpike to the Holt. (The B4030 used to be called Bicester Way).

Liggins Poultry Farm was where Woodway Road is now, the chickens were kept for laying eggs. People didn't used to eat chicken in those days.

Don Wyatt's grandad had two horses, he took soil from Barton Abbey down the woods, there were no tractors in those days.

There were allotments in the village on Hard Road Hill, the top of Pack Lane, Steeple



*Stan, Horace & Nigel Wood
VJ Day 1995
Royal British Legion*

Barton, and the field in Church Lane, this was known as the Fuzz, the gorse was cleared by setting fire to it.

Nat Jarvis had Elm Farm opposite the Alice Marshall, the Irons family had Holliers Farm in Mill Lane, Bosleys were at Manor Farm on the Sandford St Martin Road, Taylors Park Farm, Village Farm was next to the school in Church Lane, Sycamore Farm and Horse Hay Farm on the Duns Tew Road, Church Farm near Steeple Barton Church, Leys Farm, Whistlow Farm.

There was a cottage called Tea Gardens Cottage, the remains of a ramp still can be seen by Rayford Lane. The hill past Whistlow (B4030) was called Greggors Hill.

Family nicknames carried on for generations, apparently there have been quite a lot of Pudgy Simpsons (one is now living in Farriers Road).

Dances were held every Saturday night in the Mission Hall, Frank Gascoigne and Bernard Pratley (Sarah Pinion's father) were the Masters of Ceremonies, the music was provided by a small band. There was a fight every Saturday, as no one got to the dance until they turned out the Fox Public House.

Buses came into the village on a Monday night to the cinema, Bob Jarvis's buses collected people from Wootton, Kiddington and Glympton. The cinema-goers would visit Mrs Hall's Fish and Chip shop, they played darts in the Chip Shop while they waited for their fish and chips to be cooked.

Whist drives were held on a Friday night in the British Legion which was in North Street. There were two billiard tables at the back of Jack Irons' garage, this was open until 10.00 pm every night. The Rosewood table one is still in use at the Sports and Social Club and the Oak one is still in the village somewhere.

There was a village cricket team and another team played cricket at the Sands in Barton Abbey.

The Bartons used to have a football pitch in Hawkers field on the Duns Tew road by Sycamore Farm. Before play could commence someone had to shovel up the cow muck first. The Bowls club was by the Old Rectory in Enstone Road.

The Chapel Sunday school organised trips every summer, Stan remembers going to Weymouth, Southsea, and Margate was the furthest. The transport was a train from Heyford Station. The Sunday School also organised a party every Whit Monday for the Chapel Anniversary, these were held in Clover Close which is the land behind the Old Chapel.

Kay Davies 1919-2017

Jane Davies, ed. John Umney

[Editor's note: this article is a lightly edited version of the Eulogy given by Jane Davies and originally suggested by Madeleine Samuelson-White as an item of interest for the Bygone Bartons. It pays tribute to Kay who played an important role in the life of Middle Barton and the local area, perhaps most notably at the School and in the History Group. Grateful thanks to Jane, but also to Rose Panting, John Madden and Madeleine for their help.]

Annie Kathleen Davies was born at 'The Hollies', West Felton near Oswestry on 4th February 1919. Her parents had moved there from Wales and her father Rev. D H Davies was minister of Weirbrook and West Felton Congregational Churches. She was their first child, followed a year later by Nesta and two years later by Beryl and then in 1924 brother Ivor was born. Despite being baptized as Annie she was called Kay by her family from an infant.

In 1924 the family moved to 'The Manse', Wellington Road, Newport where her father took up his post as minister of the Congregational Church (now Trinity Church) where he served and remained for thirty-one years. Kay received an excellent all round education at the Newport Girls High School, but particularly excelled in History, English, Latin, French and Botany. The latter interest remained with her throughout her life. Her parents, having been raised on Welsh farms were always keen for their children to spend time outdoors and encouraged walking in the countryside to learn about flora and fauna. After Sunday morning service and dinner the whole family would walk out of Newport through fields to Lilleshall and take in the nature around them. Kay particularly enjoyed this, keeping nature diaries, but her brother went under duress!



Kay Davies in 1957

At the age of eighteen, and after gaining excellent exam results, she left Newport and went to Somerville College, Oxford as an undergraduate. In this respect she was rather a pioneer, for women had not been encouraged to enter the realms of university and it's male social elite. Here, she not only relished the educational opportunities offered, had become more independent but also enjoyed making new friends, for she radiated an easily approachable aura and could often see beyond the shyness of a person's character regardless of their class, religion, ethnicity and gender.

In 1937 one such friend she made was Indira Nehru, later to become Indira Gandhi, India's Prime Minister. They shared tutorials and went to meetings of the Indian

Society. On a lighter note Indira tried to teach Kay how to wear a sari – with much laughter and amusement! They remained lifelong friends and whenever Indira visited England she would always meet and take Kay out for a meal (usually the Savoy), to



*Somerville College, Oxford, "Freshers" 1937 -
Kay Davies: 3rd row, 2nd right. Indira Gandhi: 4th row, 3rd left.*

the theatre or the opera – complete with unobtrusive bodyguards! Later in 1998 Kay was invited to the Nehru Center, Mayfair to speak of her personal recollections and friendship, with proceeds donated to the Somerville Indira Gandhi Fund.

Many days were spent attending formal lectures, one-to-one tutorials, reading in Somerville and Bodleian libraries, the Ashmolean Museum and hours in her room preparing essays. Literary and political debates were also interesting to her at the Oxford Union. Every Sunday she would attend morning service at Mansfield College (Congregational Foundation) and evenings in the Somerville Chapel.

At the end of each eight week term she returned home to Shropshire with plenty of work to complete essays or assignments. Again, during the breaks she not only spent time with her family at ‘The Rest’ at All Stretton where the peace and solitude provided relaxation, but also on archaeological digs – one in Oakengates, where she invited several others of all nationalities to tea at ‘The Manse’, quite a surprise for her parents!

The Second World War affected and delayed all degree courses, so that Kay’s graduation ceremony at the Sheldonian Theatre in 1941 of a BA in Modern History, followed by a Diploma in Education and an MA in 1944 were low key affairs and her parents were prevented from attending.

She secured a teaching post in History at Withington School for Girls in Manchester and remained there happily for four years, making new friends and visiting galleries and museums. Her sister Beryl also attended Somerville, attained the same degrees as Kay and teaching, in Alderley Edge, was able to meet up in Manchester.

In 1947 she became lecturer in History at the Froebel Institute, Roehampton, then Vice-Principal until 1966. At this time she learned to drive and bought her first car – a Ford Anglia. She obviously made a lasting impression on both students and fellow teaching colleagues because many kept in touch right up to her death. Again, she led a very full academic and social life dedicated to her work, attending numerous functions in London with invitations to speak at a variety of venues, including Somerville and as guest speaker back at Newport Girls High School speech days.

She had friends at Oxford who were chosen for secret war work and General Sir Colin Gubbins of Special Operations Executive invited her to the Sikorski Institute for the launch of a book entitled ‘The Assassination of Winston Churchill’. Her paths also crossed with old Somervillians Shirley Williams, Iris Murdoch and Margaret Thatcher.

In 1996 she became Principal of Wall Hall College, Aldenham, Watford which, in 1976 amalgamated with Balls Park College to become Hertfordshire College of Higher Education, training over three thousand students and with a large teaching staff. Although a traditionalist she always embraced change and welcomed mixed sex staff for the first time. Her flat was situated within the early 19th century hall, surrounded by fifty-five acres of parkland, walled gardens and woodland. Her deep interest in horticulture and love of garden plants meant that she could wander and talk to the gardeners, often being given cuttings and seedlings nurtured for her. Her knowledge was phenomenal for she recognized every plant and its Latin name. As an RHS member she visited hundreds of gardens.

During these years she attended several garden parties at Buckingham Palace, London Lord Mayor’s banquets and received dozens of invitations to social events, book launches or to speak at meetings. Her brilliant organizational skills enabled her to successfully run the college smoothly, not being afraid to implement changes during the transitional period in 1976, proving competent in every way. On a pastoral level she proved a compassionate, caring and concerned Principal, knowing that students away from home sometimes needed help, emotionally and financially, and often assisted with those problems, always approachable and offering an ‘open-door policy’. During her years here she had the opportunity to join field trips with lecturers and students both in the UK and abroad. She also enjoyed shared holidays with work colleagues in Europe. Apart from cruises in the Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea areas she became well travelled visiting Canada, South Africa, Japan and old USSR – where she was shadowed by the KGB!

In 1981 Kay retired as Principal, enjoying a farewell garden party attended by various dignitaries from various educational bodies, Lord High Sheriff and many more. But retirement didn't stop her dedication to education. She became academic secretary of the National Standing Committee for the Education and Training of Teachers and Chairman of Governors at the RNIB New College, Worcester until 1999 (where she met and presented Princess Anne to the Staff). Being a loyal



Kay Davies (Chair of Governors) presenting Princess Anne to staff of New College (RNIB), Worcester 1989

Somervillian she was a member of Somerville London Literary and Media network, and in 1998 gave a speech of her personal recollections from her friendship with Indira Gandhi. She remained Chairman of the National Froebel Foundation and on the Council for National Academic Awards.

Nearer to Oxfordshire home she became Chair of Governors at Middle Barton School until 2000 and, again with her well-honed organizational skills, was instrumental in steering the school through a very difficult period. Kay also took up the baton from Audrey Martin – the founder of the Middle Barton History Society - until 2001, and her effect can still be felt today. She was a leading member of the W.I., RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and CPRE. Always keen to use her influential contacts she often acquired plants from the Blenheim Palace Head Gardener for CPRE fundraising events. Her passion for gardens came second only to education and she not only was an RHS and Oxford Botanical Society member, but she started the local Kidlington group visiting stately homes such as Highgrove, local estates and smaller gardens. From making new friends she formed a coffee and luncheon group, who met every week for a meal and a chat. Despite her decline in eyesight and mobility problems she continued these lunches until earlier this year. She was

enormously proud of her nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews' achievements and was always ready to encourage their progress in any way.

Kay was a very private person, never boasted or bragged about achievements or gestures she made to anyone, so it was difficult to access her world and find out anything about her, but occasionally she would let slip some smidgeon of news.

One friend Kay owed a lot to was her neighbour Rose Panting, whose garden adjoined hers. They met in 1981 in the local shop and remained firm friends ever since. Rose called in most days, not only to discuss local news, but also to do any housework, shopping, cooking or chores which Kay became unable to do as her health deteriorated. Kay held an enormous amount of respect and praise for Rose and would tell her family how kind she was. Kay's family are indebted to her for her care and loyalty over the years. Indeed, had it not been for Rose's care and attention Kay would not have remained in her home independently for so long. It was Rose who found her in July and acted so promptly when Kay gashed her leg open, sat injured all night and could easily have died alone. She was so fiercely independent and of determined spirit and didn't want to bother anyone in the night.



from left: Chris Edbury, Audrey Martin (with her book "The Changing Faces of the Bartons") , Kay Davies*

** available from the Bartons History Group - see p. 32 !*

Naughty boys! Graffiti on the church roof

These images were taken by members of the Trefoil group on a visit to Steeple Barton Church; access to the roof, supervised by Roger Stranks. This is what they found!



Pam Hanks, Vivien Bouverie, Nynka Graham, Sam Cross, Roger



Michael Newman



*David Jarvis
May 1949*



*John Sokol
- a Spurs fan!*



*Charlie Hazell
July 4th 1967*



*Robin Cox
15 Jan 1950*

The History of the Bartons

George Laws M.A.

Foreword

George Laws gave several talks on the history of the Bartons. He knew this part of Oxfordshire well - he had lived in all three Bartons, Steeple, Middle and Westcote, and had been Agent to the Barton Abbey estate.

The local history, and the history of the people, was a great interest of his but, very sadly, he died before he could finish the work he had started.

The following outline of what he had hoped to do and his account of the history of the Barton is taken from notes made by him for talks he gave in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

The notes, made for talks and not prepared for publication, are as he left them except that street numbers are used to identify houses rather than the names of the people then living in them. Dates and information added to make references clear are given in square brackets

In addition to these notes, he wrote a history of Westcote Barton Church and made interpretations and analyses of many documents. These form the basis of further work being done on the local history. Everyone interested in the area owes a great debt to George Laws for all the work he did.

Audrey Martin, 1985

THE BARTONS

Past Histories

Apart from a few references in Domesday Book (1086) and Robert Plot's Natural History of Oxfordshire (1705), there have been two written histories of the village, both full of interest. The first was William Wing's Annals of Steeple Barton and Westcot Barton (1866) and the second Jenner Marshall's Memorials of Westcott Barton (1870). There is a third book, by a great scholar, which was written in the village and touches on it.

William Wing was a surveyor and land agent - he managed the estate of Barton Abbey for Squire Hall - and also a landowner in the parish, he had 50 acres of what is now Whistlow Farm. His book is out-of-print and not easily obtainable. It was most attractively written and takes us through the intimate history of the village (Middle, Steeple and Sesswell's Barton, with a little of Westcote Barton) from earliest days to 1866.

Jenner Marshall was Lord of the Manor of Westcote Barton (his brother being Lord of the Manor of Sandford) and built the present Manor House; it was in this house that he wrote his history which is of Westcote Barton but which touches on Steeple and Middle Barton.

The third source of village history comes from Professor W.G. Hoskins, who for about ten years after the Second World War lived at the Old Vicarage in Steeple Barton. Professor Hoskins, a well known historian, is in quite a different category from the first two. His book *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955) was written in his study at Steeple Barton and contains many references to the village. In particular his last two pages, written in beautiful English, give us not only a sketch of the long history of Steeple Barton but also a picture of the pleasure which comes to all of us, even the least scholarly, who love our countryside and want to know how and when it took shape.

Maps. The Enclosure Award Map of 1796 gives information about owners of land and houses in Middle Barton and Westcote Barton. Enclosure in Steeple Barton took place much earlier but information about land and property there can be found in the Steeple Barton Tithe Award Map made in 1848.

(Open Village; Victorian Middle Barton, an article by G.R. Stevenson, appeared in *Cake and Cockhorse*, Summer 1975. It Happened in the Dorn Valley 1939-45, a booklet published just after the war by the Barton Women's Institute, was reissued in 1982. The Victoria County History, Vol. XI which includes this area, was published in 1983.)

Present Objects

My own ultimate object involves no scholarship and is due to the nature of the social revolution to which the village has been subjected since I first came to live in Barton thirty years ago. My interest is largely in those old Barton families which are still represented in the village.

Between 1930 and 1950 the whole nature of the village was transformed by the coming of electricity, mains water and, most of all, the motor car. If we look back over the centuries we can see previous revolutionary changes in the nature of the village, but perhaps none so shattering as to eradicate, for any practical purpose, the meaning of the word parish.

Earliest Times

At the beginning we see the village of Steeple Barton as an appendage of the royal court at Woodstock. This period lasted from about 800 to 1250, when Osney Abbey became its landlord; but this was no revolutionary change.

The first of these came in about 1350 when for two reasons the centre of activity started to move from Steeple Barton to Middle Barton; the main reasons were the

building of Heyford bridge the late thirteenth century, which made the east-west road important, and the Black Death (1348) which may have killed off up to half the villagers of Steeple Barton.

Dissolution of the Monasteries

The second revolution came with the dissolution of Oseney Abbey about 1540, when private squires took the place of the monasteries, and for most of the time from now on Barton has a resident lord of the manor.

Squirearchy Begins

The third was after the Napoleonic wars, when in 1822 the Hall family bought the Abbey (then Sesswell's Barton Manor House) and built up again a large estate; during the nineteenth century they acquired nearly all Middle Barton (and Jenner Marshall a large part of Westcote Barton) - by 1873 Squire Hall had 2500 acres and Squire Marshall 420.

The Squatters

Before 1800 there was only one cottage on the north side of North Street between Hopcrofts Holt and Sandford, and the fourth revolution was directly due to the great increase of population during the hundred relatively peaceful and prosperous years 1815 to 1914. The village population reached its peak about 1860, and it was soon after this that Middle Barton took its present shape, by folk acting as squatters and building their cottages on the roadside waste in North Street. It was this exercise of squatters' rights that constituted the revolution, leading as it did to the establishment of small businesses - shops, smithies, saddlers, carriers, wheelwrights and small builders.

The Car

And the fifth, and greatest, was the motor car, leading to an enormous increase of population, and population of quite a new kind - no longer working on the land and no longer stationary - which will soon swamp what is left of the old village.

It is the old village families who made village history; until 1940 they were the village, and it is these families that I want to study: when they lived and how they lived.

THE VILLAGE'S BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Steeple Barton and Westcote Barton have been in existence for more than 1000 years, Middle Barton for about 500 only. Steeple refers to the Church tower and Westcote simply means the hamlet lying to the west of Steeple Barton.

To get at the beginning of the Bartons we need to look at the meaning of the word BARTON. 'Barton' means a place for the storage of corn; in early mediaeval 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 calls it an outlying demesne farm.

We will come back to this, but first let us try to sort out the various Bartons which make up the village now called Middle Barton.

There are two parishes, Steeple Barton and Westcote Barton, each of course with its church. Steeple Barton parish was divided into three townships: Steeple Barton (in the Middle Ages called Great Barton or Barton St. John), Sesswell's Barton (or Barton Ede) and Middle Barton.

The parish boundaries are very mixed up and until recently each parish had detached parts in the other. Middle Barton is not a parish; its houses are in the parishes of either Steeple or Westcote Barton.

There are three manors. The oldest are Steeple Barton and Sesswell's Barton. Steeple Barton lies to the west of the River Dorn; it includes the Church, Church Farm, the old vicarage and three cottages.

The manor house was probably at, or on the site of, Church Farm. Sesswell's Barton lies to the east of the River Dorn, and its manor house is still standing - that is Barton Abbey. The third manor was Westcote Barton, here the present manor house was built only in the mid nineteenth century, on what was then a field; an earlier manor house was probably where Manor Farm is. There may have been a fourth manor - Middle Barton - the house being what is now Manor Farm, but more probably all this land was subject to the lord of the manor of Steeple Barton.

Today there is one village (Middle Barton) with the Methodist chapel in the centre and a hamlet at each end of it. (Steeple and Westcote, each with its church).

The beginning of it all was around Steeple Barton Church. The Domesday Book lists no less than three water mills in Steeple Barton which was already (1086) quite a thriving village. How did it begin, and how and when did it decline to its present state?

We have seen that Barton is an outlying grange or farmstead. Now in very early days - say from about 800 - Woodstock was an important royal seat belonging to and frequently occupied by the Saxon kings. Barton was built for the purpose of supplying their courts with food, mainly corn but also meat and fish. This period lasted for 400- 500 years until about 1300. What are the present signs of this, the great time of Steeple Barton? There are quite a few:

1. First, of course, the great church with its huge (2 acre) churchyard. We do not know when the first church was built here; it may have been 1100 years ago or more. We know that the stone church was consecrated by a bishop in 1273 and considerable parts of the present building date back to that time.

2. Next the roads, of which we may look at three:

a) the winding lane running from Church Farm to the main road - Pack Lane - so called from the pack horse traffic which used to use it. Where the cottages stand, on the hill towards the main road, there was, until the present century, an inn called the Woolpack. The cross roads by the church is still called the market place.

b) the green road, called Wootton Way or Dornford Way which is still a public road, running from the Barton Abbey drive past Barton Lodge and New Barn to Woodstock. Now the Oxford-Banbury road is very very old: here we find a wide, and also very old, trackway running parallel to it and quite close. The likelihood is that this farm road was originally the road between Woodstock and the food-supplying manor at Barton.

c) the track - again still a right of way - which leads from the corner of the old Vicarage to the main road near Abbey wood and to Bartongate. It was probably along this road that the earliest village lay. (All that is left is the track bridge and a few fruit trees where later on were built the cottages in the fields. These cottages have now gone and so also have Teagarden cottages which were on the track by Abbey Wood.)

3. There are two bridges at Steeple Barton:

a) the one still used by traffic crosses the Dorn just by the back gate into the Abbey. When this was widened in 1948 one could see the tudor stonework of the first bridge, and below this, in the bed of the stream, one could see the great flat stones of the ford over which pack-trains used to go in mediaeval times.

b) there is an old stone bridge on the trackway which used to be the main street of the village.

4. We know that until about 1840 when it was, sadly, pulled down there was a great tithe barn near Woodman's Cottage (by Steeple Barton Church).

There is a young oak tree on the site planted by Major Fleming.

5. We also know that Woodman's Cottage, with its pretty stone archway in the garden, was formerly the Rectory of Steeple Barton; it subsequently became a farmhouse, occupied by the Faulkner family.

6. As well as corn and meat, Barton supplied Woodstock with fish, and the fishponds are still there (opposite the Abbey back gate). They were constructed by Thomas St. John in about 1175 and in 1951 were planted with cricket bat willow.

7. We know that in 1086 there were three mills (i.e. water wheels) in Steeple Barton parish. The remains of one of these, just the stone foundations, can be identified near the road-bridge, at the bottom of the old Vicarage garden.

Another would be the mill in the centre of Middle Barton.

The ending of the period of Steeple Barton's importance was also the time of the first enclosure award which itself contributed to depopulation. This was mediaeval enclosure in Steeple Barton converting arable (corn land) to pasture for sheep.

The next five hundred years until 1800 was the time of the open fields of Barton. There were six fields only in the whole village (Middle and Westcote Barton). Their names, given in a Terrier of 1685 were: East Brookside, Long Meere Fallows, Behind Barnhill, Downhill Side, Snitemoor Side, South Side (Westcote Barton), plus South Field 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. There were also pasture commons e.g. the Horse Common and wastes like 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 Westcote and Middle Barton but not to 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 (including the turnpike road just made), bridle roads and foot-paths.

to be continued ...

Seen at an Antiques Emporium, Gloucester Docks, 29/08/11

Black slate clock with redish marble inserts & columns, with
small brass plaque attached to base, reading:

“Presented to J.E. Herbert F.E. by A.W. Hall Esq. Barton Abbey
on completion of electric light installation. March 1913”

Thanks to Cherry Kent for this

The Temperance Hall Banner

Barbara Hill

Some twelve or so years ago members of the Drama Group found the Temperance Banner bundled up in a cupboard in the Alice Marshall Hall. Although the Banner itself is in reasonable condition considering its age, the central medallion has badly deteriorated and the image is very difficult to distinguish.

I felt that modern digital techniques might enable us to produce a facsimile so that the banner might be displayed rather than languishing unseen.

I persuaded my brother-in-law, Barry Hill, an accomplished photographer, to take a picture of the central image and enhance it. After many hours of close scrutiny, research and manipulation of the image Barry was able to produce a very satisfactory result. One of the challenges was to



decipher the

wording in the original painting. The lettering at the base of the picture was intriguing. A friend, Liz Olditch, realised that it was a bible reference to Ephesians Chapter VI verses 11-17. This was a revelation! The King James version reads :-

'Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God'

The next step was to turn the digital image into a format which would enable it to be incorporated into the banner.

A company was identified who specialise in printing onto fabric. The size of the image was critical so that it would exactly cover the original painting.

The digital image was then printed onto linen fabric. The original oil painting was covered with linen to prevent it from further deterioration. After cutting out the

central image from the linen it was carefully hand-stitched to the banner. Although barely discernible the original oil painting was edged with what appeared to be twisted gold wire. Sourcing a suitable substitute was a little challenging but eventually a metallized thread was used with three strands plaited together. This was stitched to the edge of the linen image using a fine gold thread.

So that the banner can be conserved it will need to be suitably framed. I consulted with the Ashmolean museum conservation staff as well as a specialist textile conservator recommended by them as to the most appropriate materials and positioning of the banner. In November 2019 I approached Steeple Barton Parish Council regarding possible funding for this aspect. By a fortunate coincidence, at the same meeting were two gentlemen from Renault F1. Subsequently Martin Cummings, Renault's Facilities Manager, generously offered to make the box-frame and supply the necessary materials.

The project is progressing well and it is hoped that in the not too distant future, the Temperance Banner will be hung for all to see in the Alice Marshall Hall.



Acknowledgements and thanks to:

Christine Edbury, Barry Hill, Martin Cummings, Liz Olditch

Andrea Diss, Ashmolean Museum

Wendy Toulson James

Kate Carter-Windle

Harry Mustoe-Playfair, Prinfab

My Time at Middle Barton School in the 1960s

Michael Waine (former teacher)

In September 1966 I joined Middle Barton School as a ‘probationer’. This might sound a little dubious now but at that time it was the name given to what is now known as a “Newly Qualified Teacher”. Gordon Norris was Headmaster, along with two other teachers, Mary Dudfield, Joan Alexander - and me! On my preliminary visit I was shown the classroom I would be using, told my handwriting wasn’t good enough and told when term started. The classroom was like a non-conformist chapel with high gothic windows, random pieces of furniture, a Slow-But-Sure Tortoise stove for heating, and the teacher’s cupboard containing lots of old books, tins of paint, worn brushes, rolls of coloured paper, pencils and rulers – a bit of a jumble sale! I was given no jurisdiction as to learning or curriculum of any kind, I had a complete free hand. I was given a class list of about 38 children which would have been the current equivalent of years 2, 3 and 4, with even some year 5s. However, they were all delightful children.

Memorable happenings:

The first visit by the County Museum Service took place during my time at Middle Barton with the large Museum Van delivering its monthly collection of ‘red’ boxes full of interesting delights from stuffed animals and birds to Roman artefacts. In those early days of the service staff were as keen as the children to get the boxes open, see inside, and put the items into use!

I regularly took the whole class on my own on nature walks along the road to Steeple Barton, down the lane to the main road and on to the Turnpike then back across the stream. The children knew that when Annely Drummond-Hay was approaching on her horse they had to stop and wait for her to pass. She was always very friendly, and the children very respectful.

The swimming pool was a great asset to the children’s learning even though it was outdoors and the water often freezing. It was given largely by the Washington family (manufacturers of concrete coal bunkers, advertised nationally), and it was where I learnt to swim, receiving my ten yards swimming certificate in a school assembly. Billy Washington was in my class and we never knew whether he would arrive at school by Rolls Royce or by horse and trap. During his time in my class he was very poorly, then hospitalised, and I visited him at the Horton, taking a message from fellow pupils. On his recovery his parents gave a spectacular party as a thank you. It featured an appearance by Ken Dodd!

During my time at Middle Barton I led the very first Oxfordshire primary school visit to the newly opened Yenworthy Lodge on the border of Somerset and Devon, nestled between Exmoor and the sea. We took twenty four children and enjoyed a

week of walking, sea and stream studies, pony trekking, and many other activities.

At times of bad weather I shared car journeys to school with Tudor Jones and the Reverend John Goddard, teachers at Dr Radcliff's Secondary School at Steeple Aston, with me driving. On one occasion when the snow was pretty deep and, having struggled up the Beeches, we found Dr Radcliff's school closed with a message that Middle Barton was closed too! In those days teachers had to offer their services to another school, if open, so I found my way back to Bicester where my offer of help was turned down.

I joined the school when the village was growing so the school needed to increase in size to meet the pressure of increasing pupil numbers, firstly in a new temporary classroom on the playground in front of school, and then a year later with the purpose-built double classroom unit in the field alongside the school house. Gordon Norris and I taught 'juniors' next door to each other in what were then amazingly spacious modern classrooms.

The school kitchen was in the very capable hands of Mrs Stockford, Mrs (Bubbles) Pratley, and Mrs Monk and produced the most wonderful meals, all sourced locally, including from Mrs Stockford's garden. I was seen as needing 'fattening-up' and my somewhat obvious weight increase led me, there and then, to give up sugar!

Most of our teaching at this time was 'project' based with a lot of hands-on learning. I remember a project on cave men when the children made their own pottery and baked it in a sawdust kiln in the school grounds, and also a Victorian project when the children built a large model of the Great Exhibition which was set on fire outside and gave the basis for some incredible creative writing. What Health and Safety would have to say about it these days I would hate to think, let alone the need for risk assessments.

Life at Middle Barton School was always full of fun even though, at times, some parents were not as trusting as they might be! One parent notably asked to speak to Gordon Norris personally about me, only to ask if I really was on 'probation'. The reply was 'yes', coupled with Gordon saying that the school was a rum place, as he had two 'mistresses' at the school, one senior and one junior!

They were very happy days and on leaving I was given a box set of Sir Malcom Sergeant conducting Handel's Messiah, which I still enjoy.

Barton Abbey Airfield

Barbara Hill

Many of you who live in The Bartons may not be aware that during World War II there was a military airfield here.

The Airfield was RAF Barton Abbey SLG 28 but was sometimes known as Lower Heyford , Steeple Barton or Hopcrofts Holt Airfield. It was a Satellite Landing Ground (SLG). Typically an SLG used trees and other natural features to hide the airstrip and buildings from the air.

The Airfield was located close to the main Banbury to Oxford road (A4260) with the airstrip to the east of the main road and associated buildings on the west of the road - see the aerial view below, and the map on the next page.

The Airfield was used for aircraft preparation and storage and was in operation from 30th September 1941 to 14th March 1945. It was initially administered by 39 MU (Maintenance Unit) at RAF Colerne in Wiltshire until March 1943 then subsequently by 6 MU at RAF Brize Norton.



Aircraft would have landed on the Lower Heyford side of the road and then would have been towed across the road. Remains of the tractor shed and office can still be seen.

In 2015 Joanne and Steve Kemp from New Barn cottages advised us that they had heard that their cottage was the canteen and the next-door cottage was the chemical store.

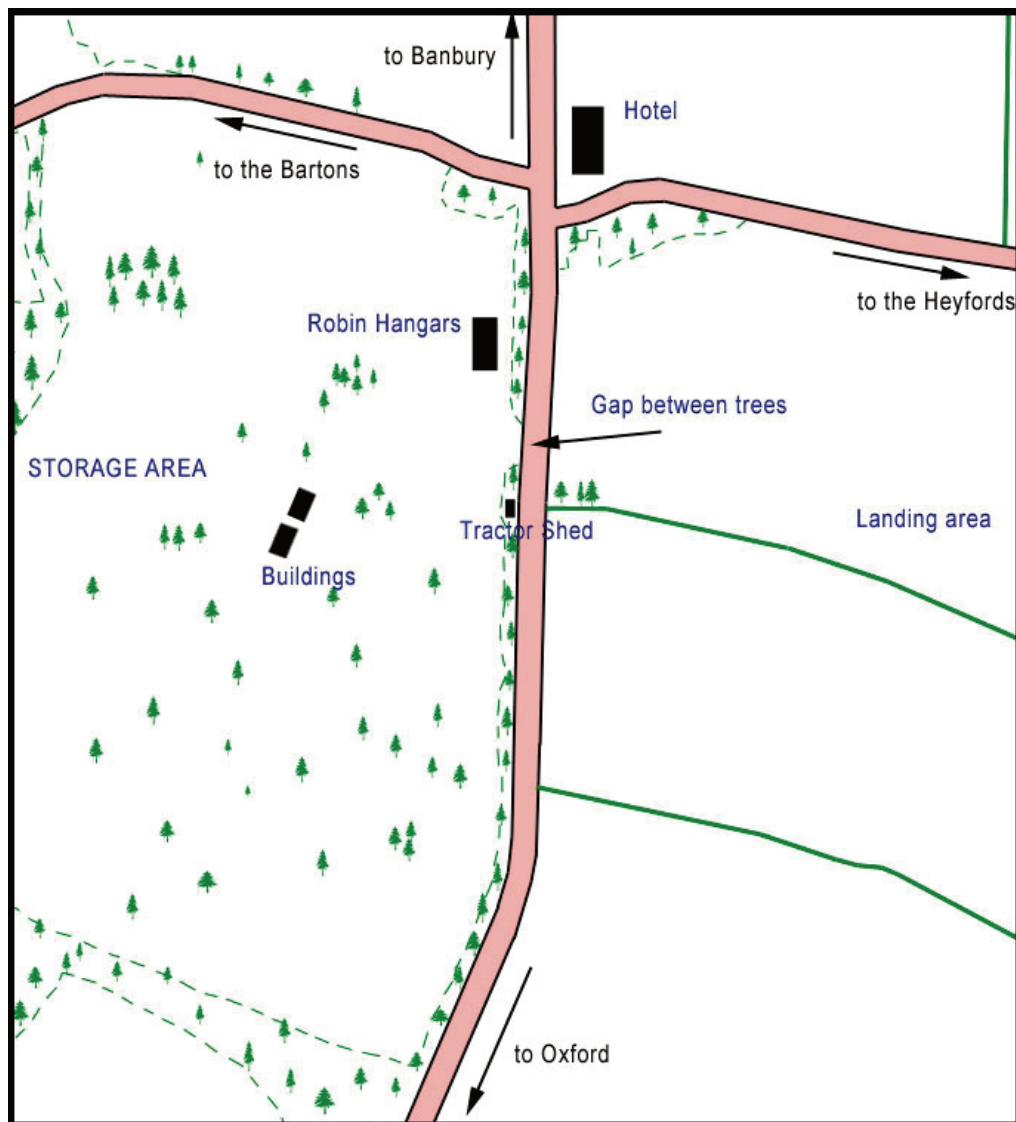


The remains of the tractor shed and servicing crew office

References:

Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust UK
Wikipedia
Christine Edbury

Pictures by kind permission of Pete Dorward, www.picture.co.uk



Barton Abbey storage area. Some remains still exist, in the centre of the image are two huts, and to the right is the base of a Robin hangar.

Where is Harris Close?

Some research by Chris Edbury

The new occupants of Vic and Irene Hazell's bungalow in Church Lane made enquiries to the Group about the name Harris Close which appears in one of their documents. After the usual detective work, the following is all the information I gathered:

The earliest reference I could find was the Enclosure Award of 1795, Plots 122-125.

Plot 122, the site in question, is Kings Close, taken in exchange of E. Taylor

Plot 123 Dornes Close, taken in exchange of the Duke of Marlborough

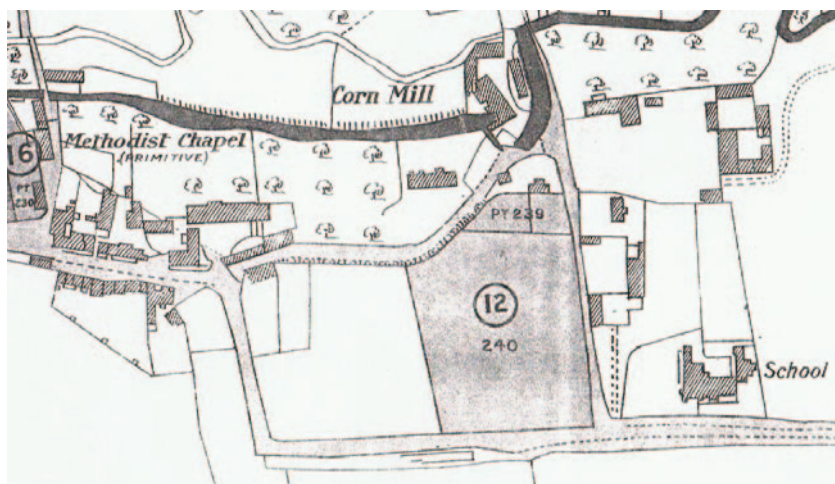
Plot 124 Mill Close

Plot 125 Dornes Close taken in exchange of J. Walker

Plot 126 Home Close (for Home Farm)

The next map is from 1881, but unfortunately there is no explanation of plots 112 or 110 in the archives. (No. 134 is Village Farm)





divided it up into four plots for four of his six children. One daughter had died earlier. Not entirely clear what happened to Frederick James Hazell, the eldest son, but a Frederick Hazell is in the burial register for 1949 aged 24. Vic had the plot nearest Mole Lane and his sister Marion had the plot the other end, they called it CostaPlente. Robert and June had the plot next to Marion, their address on the voters lists for 1965 is Harris Close. This is the part that took a long time to work out, I could not remember or find anything called Harris Close in South Street. On a plan dated c1972 (courtesy of Pauline Adams), the plot between Vic and Robert was vacant, had not been built on by Ruby Hazell. The plot was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Tunstall, and they called it Carrick Springs, (it still is called that). Pauline Adams of Carrick Springs, No. 19, kindly lent me her house documents. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the land before the houses were built.

Vic Hazell said that the land was allotments when his father purchased it; it had a path running south/north between allotments, obviously not a designated path otherwise it would still be there. Pieces of medieval pottery were said to have been found somewhere on the land (source unknown).

From the census returns:

1891: Henry Harris with family, including sisters Elizabeth and Sarah 'at The Mill'.

1901: Henry Harris and sister Sarah, 'Cornmillers, Mill Street'

1911: Henry and sister Elizabeth, 'Miller and Farmer'

From the Voters lists:

1965/66 – Robert and June Hazell, Harris Close

1968/69 – Vic and Irene Hazell, Lyndene, South Street

June and Robert Hazell, Highfield, South Street

1969/70 – Both still same

1970/71 – Only Vic and Irene, June and Robert gone

1971/72 – Vic and Irene, 21 South Street; Marion (nee Hazell) and Keith Pettingell, Costa Plente, 15 South Street

Originally South Street went right up to the church, later changed from the bend by Home Farm; up to the church it became School Lane in 1969, then Church Lane.

Bubbles Pratley

A personal recollection by Sarah Pinion (née Pratley)

Monica Stockford was born to Mark and Ada (née Adams, one of 14 siblings) in the 1920's.

My mother lived most of her childhood at The Old Rectory, Westcote Barton, where her parents worked for Wilmot Griffiths, rector of this parish.

She became known as Bubbles as a very young baby.

My Aunt Hilda leant over the pram and saw her making baby talk, and called her "Our Bubbles" (from the song, "*I'm forever blowing bubbles*").

She went to Middle Barton School where she learnt to play the piano and bake. She worked at Alcan the munitions factory during the war, and lodged in Banbury (there were no buses then). She married my father, Bernard Pratley (from Kiddington) at Westcote Barton Church and had their reception at The Alice Marshall Hall.

They had two children, myself and my brother Michael. We lived in Grafton, Westcote Barton, and had the most amazing childhood - it was the good life, with Jam and Jerusalem.

Our garden had an orchard. We used to tease mum. "Is there anything you can't make with an apple?!" Apple pie, apple crumble, apple Charlotte etc. My favourite was baked apple with raisins and a bit of treacle.

We kept chickens, and had a well stocked vegetable supply. Dad kept 15 beehives and worked at Owen Mumford in Woodstock.

The dahlias and sweetpeas from our garden were awesome and were used at church and flower shows. These were wonderful times.

In the winter, we stored rows of produce and honey on corrugated paper in the cellar. Endless jams. Kilner jars

crammed with apples, red cabbage, plums, eggs and chutney, all carefully dated. My tortoise Pip went into the cellar along with the veg, wrapped in newspaper for hibernation.

Winters were hard but fun. Mum belonged to many organisations in the village including the WI from the age of 16.



Drama: she kept us all amazed with her humour and piano skills.

Her real love was playing the organ, which she did for over 40 years at all four parishes.

I remember when playing at one wedding, she forgot to take her gloves out of her hat. It made her look like a chicken!

She was kind, funny and always had time for everyone.

She was a wonderful cook. Used stock from our chickens to make soup and nothing was ever wasted. The lamb from a Sunday became Shepherds pie or a fruity mild curry, and her bread and butter pudding was fabulous.

She made many three-tier wedding cakes for people, and bought most of the ingredients from Cox's shop, now The Steps.

Her decorations were bought at the Co-op in Chippy. I remember watching the money being pulled round the shop for change like on the TV program *'Are You Being Served?'*. "I'm free!"

She went on to help at the choir and PCC. Mum also helped weigh the babies at the clinic in The Alice Marshall Hall.

She joined the school canteen, and along with her mother Ada and many other local ladies produced fantastic home cooked meals from scratch. Most of that produce came from Mr Greenslade. Their meals were also delivered to other local schools.

Stew and dumplings, roast dinners, Shepherd's pie, steak pie, you name it! Along with jam roly-poly, cornflake and treacle tart with custard and apple crumble. Oh it was good food! Along with this she met and went the extra mile with any food issues of her own accord.

The dinners later changed to frozen ones. They served up things like Chicken à la King, lasagne and curry and rice. I still get stopped by my generation and the memories are still strong. She used to say to me, "It takes face powder to attract a man, but baking powder to keep him!"

My gran Ada came to live with us. Now with two cooks in the house, between them they doubled our store cupboards.

My gran was a St. Johns nurse and many a time, usually at night, there would be a knock at the door to go and lay out the deceased. We had no phone then.

Mum had a massive surprise when she was invited to the Queen's Garden Party. She had a wonderful day, and was overwhelmed to be nominated.

Her life was full of fun and kindness. The good life was just that, living and sustaining.

When she had to move from Grafton due to Dad having Alzheimer's, she still lived life to the full in her bungalow next door to Audrey Martin (local historian), and helped her log local knowledge.



Preston's grocery van would park on her driveway and all would come to natter and buy. Even in retirement there was never a dull moment. Always a houseful with endless tea and cake.

All of her grandchildren were as important to her as her own, as she was an only child.

Bubbles was a true villager. A strong-hearted woman who thrived, and wore many hats helping and generously supporting our community.

Audrey Martin - from the DFP January 2001

The *Dorn Free Press* team would like to place on record their sadness at the death, in November 2000, of Mrs Audrey Martin. For 25 years Audrey had edited the monthly Barton Bulletin. Not only did she prepare, edit and type all the 'snippets' of information which arrived from the many local organisations, but she actively sought out news about other activities and agencies outside the village knowing that they would be of interest to many Bartonians. Audrey also took the responsibility for reproducing over 800 copies of the Bulletin, arranging the deliveries and pacifying the occasional resident who had, for whatever reason, not received his/her copy. Very little escaped Audrey's expert proof-reading – her editorial skills were second to none.

Audrey graduated from St. Hugh's college in Oxford and worked as a Librarian in the (then) Institute of Colonial Studies (since absorbed into Queen Elizabeth House). Her interest in history was well known and her books on various aspects of life in the Bartons were, and still are, much acclaimed. She was, for many years, Clerk to the School Governors of Middle Barton and she was always very keen to support the children in their many activities. She felt strongly about the survival of smaller village schools and supported the Headteachers Martin Cox, Martin Norton and, more recently, David Haley during the many years of continuous change in education policy, not least as it affected the delivery of the curriculum in rural primary schools.

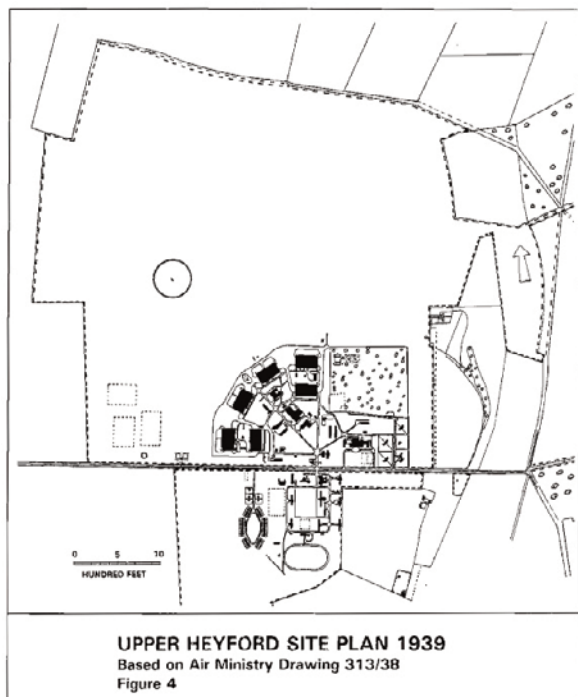
Although Audrey was keen to retain the separate identity of 'her' Barton Bulletin, she was sympathetic to the plans (arising as a result of the Bartons Appraisal) to initiate a bi-monthly publication which would allow more space for the reports from village organisations and, hopefully, comments from readers about local issues. Just over a year ago she was enthusiastically involved in searching out and editing material for the Millennium Edition of the *Dorn Free Press*-, without her complete commitment the publication, as a record of life in the Bartons and Sandford at the end of the Millennium, would have been much the poorer.

To her husband, Dick, and family Anne and David we extend our deepest sympathies-, we have all lost a good friend and colleague.

RAF Upper Heyford in WWII

John Madden

The base was opened in July 1918, just too late to play any part in the first World War, and was closed again in May 1919. It re-opened in 1927, and from 1931 housed three bomber squadrons, flying a variety of aircraft. One of these was actually named after the airfield: the Handley Page Heyford.



As the clouds of war darkened across Europe, the facilities at Upper Heyford grew, and in April 1940 16 Operational Training Unit (OTU) was formed, with a view to training pilots, navigators and gunners. A dummy airfield was created on Otmoor to deceive any enemy bombers. Guy Gibson, later of Dambusters fame, spent a short time at Heyford in between active postings.

In 1942 the first Wellingtons arrived at the base, and although it was primarily a training unit, 16 OTU sent some of these on the first Thousand Bomber raid, on Cologne in May that year.

At this time the runway was still grass, strengthened with metal sheets, but in April 1944 work began on construction of concrete surfaces and for eight months all flying took place from Heyford's satellite base at Barford St. John.

When it reopened, the Wellingtons were replaced by the 'Wooden Wonder' - the De Havilland Mosquito, as a consequence of the decrease in Bomber Command casualties. By the spring of 1945 the beginning of the end in Europe was in sight, but 16 OTU was now tasked with training crews for action in the Far East. Following V-J Day on August 15 the unit remained at Upper Heyford, with reducing activity, until March 1946.

Thanks to Nick Forder, RAF Upper Heyford Heritage Manager, for this information. The Heritage Centre there, which I was fortunate to get a preview of last year, is well worth a visit. Tours (including much of the remaining USAF facilities) can be booked at:

www.upperheyfordheritage.co.uk/tours/

Auction of Royal Dressmaker's Archive

Barbara Hill

Some of you may remember an article in an earlier 'Bygone Bartons' concerning Ian Thomas who grew up in the Bartons and who designed clothing for various members of the Royal family including the Queen. He helped create the Queen's coronation dress in 1953 and in 1961 produced the blue chiffon outfit Her Majesty wore for Charles and Diana's wedding. Ian was awarded a Royal Warrant in 1973. Ian shared the Queen's love of horses and racing and the Queen gave him a horse and a corgi; although he returned the corgi as he did not get on with it. Ian often joined the Queen at race meetings.

Ian, a lifelong bachelor, died in 1993 and left his home, a small farmhouse in Sutton-under-Brailes, and its contents to a close friend of 25 years who was a florist in London with a shop near his studio in London's Belgravia. After she died in 2015 the property passed to a relative who decided to auction the contents in the Autumn of 2019.

Ian had preserved many mementoes of his long association with the Queen and his home was said to have resembled a museum with framed and signed photographs of the Queen taken on her Coronation day by Sir Cecil Beaton, Christmas cards from the Queen as well as drawings for royal designs. There was a 12-piece Royal Worcester coffee set given to him by the Queen and framed embroidered samples for the Coronation gown worn for the ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

Amersham Antiques were chosen to auction this rare treasure trove of memorabilia which was anticipated to realise in excess of £100,000.

Acknowledgements:

Daily Express – article and photographs
Mrs D Bauckham



Bartons' History Group Publications

'Middle Barton School – Aspects of School Life 1866-1996' **£2.50**

by Audrey Martin

A terrific read with photos and turn-of-the-century quotes from the school log-book

'The Changing Faces of the Bartons' **£8.50**

by Audrey Martin

Includes pictures of people, streets, houses and events from Victorian times onwards

'Middle Barton – a village walk' **£0.80**

Alerts you to sights you may never have been aware of before

'It Happened in the Dorn Valley' **£3.50**

*A vivid account of life in the Bartons during WW2 through
the eyes of the Women's Institute.*

1920s prints **£1.50 each**

Fox Lane, Mill Lane, North St, South St, Worton Rd and the School

Silver Jubilee Celebrations in the Bartons (1977) **£5.00**

A compilation of three films taken during the celebrations, now on a single DVD

Barton Abbey **£1.00**

An updated (2010) leaflet now in colour

Bygone Bartons, Vols. 1,2,3,4,5,6 & 7 and the Jubilee Edition **£3.00 each**

The first seven of the series and the special Jubilee edition **(or all 8 for £12)**

All publications available from Michael Horwood-Smith tel: 01869 347588

Bartons' History Group

www.bartonshistorygroup.org.uk

The Bartons' History Group was revived in 2007 with a committee of eight members and the support of many village residents. Much of our activity initially centred around preserving, and making more accessible, the material collected by the late Audrey Martin. This work continues but mixed with other activities, not least being the writing and production of the ***Bygone Bartons*** series.

We also deal with a considerable number of local and internet requests for village information, particularly family history. Some of these have come from places far distant, such as USA and Australia.

We have recently revamped our website to make it even easier to use, so do please have a look at it - the address is above. In line with current data protection rules, some information is not publicly available; please apply to the Committee for access if required.

Above all, we try to choose projects which interest us as village residents. If you like the sound of it and would like to help, or have some new material we could use, just get in touch with a committee member.

Bartons' History Group Committee

Kate Carter-Windle, Ruth Henderson, Barbara Hill, Andy Hinton,
Mike Horwood-Smith, Anna Madden, John Madden, Kelly Peedell, Denise Roberts,
Jacqueline Taugwalder-Hill, John Umney, Rosemary Wharton, David Wharton

Enquiries:

enquiries@bartonshistorygroup.org.uk

Bartons' History Group is grateful for the support provided by:
Steeple Barton Parish Council (2007-8, 2019)
West Oxfordshire District Council (2007-8, 2010-13, 2015-18)
Westcote Barton Parish Meeting (2012, 2019)
The Bouttall Trust (2008)
and village residents
and in particular to Robin Roberts-Gant for his invaluable assistance



**This copy of Bygone Bartons is delivered
free of charge to every household in the Bartons.**

**It is the ninth in a series of booklets by
Bartons' History Group.**

www.bartonshistorygroup.org.uk

**Additional copies are available from
Michael Horwood-Smith (Tel: 01869 347588)
at £3 each**

