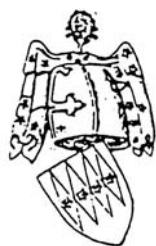


# BRIZE NORTON THROUGH THE AGES



From a postcard dated 6 January 1907. Farm workers with their carts and horses outside the Chequers public house



**A compilation of articles giving the history of the village of Brize Norton. Assembled for and published by the Parish Council to mark the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Queen's Coronation in 1953 and the One Hundredth Anniversary of the start of the First World War in 1914.**



Millenium celebrations beside the village hall

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## Contents

BRIZE NORTON THROUGH THE AGES . . . . .	2
Millenium History of Brize Norton . . . . .	4
Origins of Brize Norton . . . . .	4
The Church . . . . .	6
Landlords . . . . .	9
Lord of the Manor . . . . .	10
People remembered in the Church . . . . .	12
The Village . . . . .	13
Future . . . . .	17
Supplementary Material . . . . .	18
The Church and Manor . . . . .	18
Brize Norton Farmers . . . . .	18
Glebe Farm . . . . .	19
The Manor House and the Worleys . . . . .	19
History of the Manor House . . . . .	20
The Worley Family . . . . .	20
The Worleys of Manor Farm . . . . .	21
Listed Buildings in Brize Norton . . . . .	23
“They are but names in stone” . . . . .	28
Charlie Archer . . . . .	28
Ernie Bellenger . . . . .	28
Bert Blackwell . . . . .	29
Harold and Jack Castle . . . . .	29
Albert Faulkner . . . . .	30
Arthur Faulkner . . . . .	31
William Garratt . . . . .	32
Henry Godwin . . . . .	33
Frank Lock . . . . .	33
Edwin Miles . . . . .	33
Bill Parker . . . . .	34
Tom Powell . . . . .	34
Jack Timms . . . . .	37
Percival Timms . . . . .	38
Jack Upstone . . . . .	38
Edward Wilkins . . . . .	39
Albert Wilkins . . . . .	39
The Diamond Jubilee Years of Brize Norton 1952-2012 . . . . .	41
History in the making! . . . . .	47
Sources . . . . .	48

# BRIZE NORTON THROUGH THE AGES

Our **Millenium History** was published in 2000 covering 1000 years as part of the millennium celebrations of our village and was intended to be an entertaining read. History is often a mixture of facts, experiences and educated guess work. The origin of our village name is a prime example; was it named after a Saint, a landowner or an old Saxon word?

**Listed Buildings in Brize Norton** identifies the many historic houses and other structures examined by English Heritage in October 1988 and given listed building status and gives architectural detail and underlines the ages of properties in the village.

**"They are but names in stone"** is not only an account of those who died during the First World War who are commemorated on our War Memorial but also an insight into rural village life, including the involvement (see Arthur Faulkner on harvesting) of the villagers with farming in Edwardian times. Written by Howell Powell in 1978 at the request of the Parish Council, Howell remembers our fallen in a very personal and revealing account.

**The Diamond Jubilee Years of Brize Norton 1952-2012** has been written by Fred Bellenger and shows how much the village has changed during the Queen's reign.

Finally in a brief article entitled **"History in the making"** we look at events over the last decade and sources of information, especially those accessible through the Internet. A significant publication by the Victorian History Society published in 2006 is a "must read". We are reminded that keeping records, photos and other media today is the only way of ensuring an adequate record of our village's history - with modern technology we have few excuses for not recording village developments and events for the benefit of future generations. Our thanks to Phil & Margaret Timms and Debbie Merriman for the use of their pictures and postcards. Please help the Parish Council by contributing to its records of village history and to the planned collection of photos and other items published electronically. Contact the Parish Clerk, Mrs Carolyn Peach, 52a Station Road, Brize Norton if you can help.

Dr Phil Holmes  
Church Farm House  
June 2013



Brize Norton. Entrance to the village



Brize Norton Primary School pre 1920. ? 1910



Barnes' shop

# Millenium History of Brize Norton

## Origins of Brize Norton

Prior to the beginning of the last millennium (e.g. before 1000) there is little or no evidence to show that a settlement existed. There are references to local areas contained in the Saxon land grants for Witney and Curbridge produced in the 8th Century. In these documents there are references to Ealden Weg, or the Old Way. It is thought this could be Abingdon Lane, which suggests the road (or track as it is now) was a fairly important road link for both the ancient Britons and the Romans. The Roman settlements around Swinbrook, Widford and Asthall and the ancient burial grounds at the Barrows at Lew and Asthall certainly prove that early Britons used the road ways, but there is no evidence of dwellings in the village during the first millennium.

The real origin of 'Nortone' as a village becomes a little clearer around the turn of the first millennium - 1000 years ago! So with a little bit of historical licence Brize Norton is celebrating a very special birthday this year.

Nortone meaning "settlement to the North" (Nor is the shortened version, Tone or Tun is a Saxon word meaning enclosed piece of land, homestead, village) would suggest that it was an overflow from Bampton in the Bush. But why pick this particular position? There are no geographical advantages here, e.g. hills, rivers, natural fortifications, etc. In fact if Abingdon Lane was the main road link between Abingdon/Standlake in the south and the settlements north of the River Windrush, via Ting Tang Lane, it would bypass the village as we know it today. So why?

One fact which is known is that the land here was owned by a goldsmith called Teodovic during the time when England was ruled over the by Danish kings and was allowed to retain it when Edward the Confessor became king in 1042. To give further evidence to the fact that a settlement existed at this time is that the word "Astrop" is of Danish origin (Astrope) and meant "the hamlet to the east". (East of Nortone).

The reasons for settling here may be as simple as it was the first 'clear ground' heading northward from Bampton. Bampton means 'Beam Town' signifying that it was surrounded by forest (Bampton in the Bush). It is believed that the Wychwood Forest stretched over the majority of this area during this period. Records show that many old local quarries have been worked to gain good building stone, but how far back in history these date is hard to define.

After 1066 and the Battle of Hastings, much of the land came under the control of William the Conqueror, and the land on which Brize Norton stands was such a case. It was given by William to one of his Norman knights, Roger d'Ivry, therefore becoming the first 'Lord of the Manor'.

Whatever reason for settling at this clearing, by the time of the Domesday survey of 1086, it was recorded as a stable and settled village. It is also mentioned in the Domesday book that a number of serfs, villiens and borders resided here. As these people were little more than slaves it would suggest that wealthier merchants, a 'Lord of the Manor' (Roger d'Ivry) lived close by as it was land owners who supplied all the work and owned all the land on which they had their homes. Serfs, whose role in life was a little above that of the other 'slaves' would be allowed to own small plots of land, normally in return for certain services to the Lord. So the village starts, if a little slowly, to grow.

Over the next 100 years or so there was little change in Norton - bar one - the building of the village church was started. The Norman arch is still splendid today.

By 1200 it is mentioned in the Curia Regis Rolls that one William le Brun owned lands here, a member of a noble French family, and that his name was added to Norton to show his own importance and that the land belonged to him. The village was now called Nortone Brun.

This change of name started something which is still argued about today! How and why has the village name changed from Norton (whatever spelling) to Brize Norton (the correct spelling). Many people, wiser than I, have argued a strong case for each of the differing views held on this matter, and all I can do is to state these views and allow people to make up their own mind or hopefully find hard evidence to prove one theory is correct.

As already stated, it is generally acknowledged that Norton is a 'settlement to the north' or similar. The meaning of Brize is not so clear.

It is acknowledged that William Le Brun (William the Brown, so called for his swarthy skin) owned the land and added the name Brun to Norton around the turn of the 14th century.

Was it a corruption or mispronunciation of the word which lead the change of Norton Brun to Brize Norton? Various suggestions of corruption of the name

have been given which involve Nortone Brun, Brun Norton evolving into Brimesnorton, then to Bresenorton and Brize Norton. Was it again a corruption of St. Britius or Brice which enabled our village to become Brize Norton.

Or was it that the Saint was chosen because of a similar sounding name to Brize.

What ever the reasoning, by the early 1700's maps show the spelling of Brize Norton as it is today - while many local places have yet to finalise their spelling (e.g. Fullbrook, Stanlake, Heyley, Alveston, Whichwood Forest and the River Wainrush).

## The Church



St Britius Church, Brize Norton. 1829



Inside of St Britius Church  
in Georgian times

The church is by some way the oldest building in the village. If it could tell all its secrets we would have a very clear picture of how village life has unfolded over the last 1000 years.

The church consists of a west tower, which houses 6 bells, the tenor bell dates from 1672, a nave, south porch and north aisle. The doorway and porch are typically Norman, much of the remaining structure is of early English construction with modifications throughout its history. There is a fine example of 15th century wood work in the rood-screen. The font has been stated as a fine piece of Norman stone masonry.

In 1270, a new chapel was built on the north side of the church, and was named (some time later) the Wenman Chapel after Lord Francis Wenman. The organ was put into the Wenman Chapel in 1881. Like many churches in

England, it has undergone many changes and distinctive influences - such as the Reformation and the Protectorate of Cromwell which put paid to many decorative and structural features. These 'acts' were not the only thing to affect the church, it seems that neglect was another, this extract from a book of the early 19th century explains all.

*"The church of Brize Norton is a plain but ancient fabric and contains several memorials of the Greenwood family together with many other monuments. But the whole of the interior of the building is in a state of lamentable neglect. The part termed Lord Wenman's aisle exhibits a scene of dirt and dilapidation that cannot be too severely reprehended. The earthen floor and the lower part of the walls are covered with green slime; there are several stone effigies lying indiscriminately about upon the ground disfigured with dirt and apparantly considered as common lumber. The roofing of this aisle and that of the chancel, the pews, the reading desk and pulpit all equally demand reparation. The beholder finds difficulty in believing that this is really a place appropriated for religious worship according to the form of the Church of England! It would be easy to expiate on the evils likely to accrue from such an irreverent neglect; but the violation of decency in the first instance is a sufficient subject for remark."*

This may be a good insight to what the church and therefore village life must have been like prior to this writing.

One remarkable fact is that during the time of the church falling into a 'state of lamentable neglect' four succeeding vicars held their positions for a period of 195 years - from 1663 until 1858 - ten years before the church was completely renovated.

John Eckley 1663 - 1723 Died

John Kipling 1723 - 1769 Died

Samuel Goodenough 1769 - 1806 ceded

John Penson - 1805 - 1858 Died

One historian wrote of the fact 'The three who held the living till death averaged fifty-three years each, which is surely an unique record, and must testify to the comfort and salubrity of the village.'

This might be so, but the church is, and certainly in those times, normally the centre of the villagers' life; it had a strong influence on the way of life and reflected the wealth of that village. If as stated in the extract that "the beholder of the church finds difficulty in believing that this is really a place



appropriated for religious worship..." what does that tell us about the vicars? Or indeed the wealth of the village?

In 1868 the church was renovated in a typical Victorian fashion. 1893 saw murals painted each side of the altar by Mr. C.E.G. Gray of Cambridge, depicting Saint Frideswide, an Oxfordshire saint and on the right hand side Saint Britius, who is holding hot coals in his cloak, commemorating the miracle that made him a Saint. At the same time painted designs were discovered on the north and south walls but these have since been painted over. (Pictures and illustrations of these are housed in the County Library).

In more recent times the decorated embellishments have been simplified even further so that the church is now simply furnished. The altar screen, the woodwork enclosing the pulpit, the pew enclosures and the large stove, which was used to heat the church, have all been removed.

To return to early days, notes from the historian Charles Keyser state that the Brize Norton church in England has the unique dedication to St. Britius, and equally in the 12th Century contained relics most probably of that rare saint. A reliquary in the north wall of the chancel show traces of the hinges and doors that guarded the remains of the sacred relics.

If these relics were of St. Britius (which is doubtful) what is the connection between a little known French saint and a small village in a quite corner of England?

St. Britius (Brice) appears to be somewhat of an odd Saint. Not held in high esteem in his own country, he was a troublesome young person, causing his benefactor, the Bishop of Tours much trouble by his ingratitude, pride and bad temper. However, the Bishop had a revelation that Britius would succeed him as Bishop of Tours and forgave many of his bad ways. So on the death of his benefactor Britius became Bishop of Tours.

Britius was attacked by his enemies and charged with very serious moral crimes, and though he was twice able, by the exercise of a miracle, to prove his innocence, he was driven out, and remained in exile for many years. He was, however, allowed to return to Tours where in later life he was able to refute the charges and be able to acquire the character of Saint. The date of his canonisation is given as A.D. 443. He is represented, as already mentioned, as carrying burning coals in a fold of his cloak, a portrayal of one of his miracles performed to establish his innocence. There is, I believe, only one known

picture of St. Britius (other than the 1893 murals) and that is in a stained glass window in the church of Wiggshall, Norfolk. It is equally hard to find any connection between any of the three sites as it was with two.

One theory worthy of consideration is that the original dedication to the church was lost, burnt, stolen, and re-dedicated to St. Britius or Brice because of the similarity of the village name. It has been suggested that the original dedication was St. Peter and St. Paul. If this is so it certainly puts to an end the theory that the village was named after the Saint! We shall return to the church many times during the remainder of this booklet, as it still has many a story to tell in its walls, stones and monuments.

## Landlords

Land in and around the village has changed hands many times over the last millennium. The Lovells (of Minster Lovell) for example had land here until it was confiscated when Francis Lovell was attainted, (after the Battle of Bosworth) when Jasper Duke of Bedford took possession (1485).

Lord Francis Wenman, who lived in Caswell House, believed to be a large mansion, now a farm between Brize and Curbridge, may well have owned land in the area, but this is conjecture. Tradition says that an avenue of trees led from the village to their ancient seat.

It is possible that Sir John Daubyngne or his family may have owned land, but there are no records to confirm this. An effigy lies in the church (Wenman Chapel) which would normally indicate the wealth, importance or status of a person. He died in 1346, in the reign of Edward III.



Sir John was related to the D'Albini family who had much influence at the royal court and were involved in both the crusades and witnessing of the Magna Carta. A member of the Daubyngne family lived in Bampton and mortgaged his property to go to the Crusades. Actually this is one of Brize Norton's mysteries, nobody knows why Sir John Daugyngne (Daubenys/Daubigny) was buried in the church. Whatever the reason his memory lives on in the use of his coat of arms as the Brize Norton coat of arms and a fairly recent development - Daubigny Mead.

Inscribed on his tomb are the words "Here lies John Daubyngne, who died on the eve of St. James the Apostle, in the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred and forty-six, on whose soul God have mercy" (translated from the original inscription).

Both the church and Oxford University (Christ Church College) had become very wealthy landowners and up to very recently owned much of farmland and the houses in the area.

The Duke of Marlborough also held land in the parish, of which he sold 740 acres (Rock Farm) in 1894 to a Thomas Arkell, who later sold it in 1900 to one William Carter.

### **Lord of the Manor**

The second oldest building still remaining is the Manor House, although the Old Vicarage has parts dating back some 500 years. However, the Manor House in early Brize Norton was where the 'Lords of the Manor' lived, whom I am sure had much influence over the ways of the village, indeed were landlords for many centuries.

The site is mentioned in the Domesday Book with the possibility of a monastery being there. One wall in the Manor has been dated to 1400, which was in the reign of Henry IV. Little is known of the site or ownership until the late 1500's, where records show that the Rathbone family occupied the Manor. On August 9th, 1584 a son (Francis) was born to Henry Rathbone. One other birth is recorded in 1588. Four births are recorded to Francis from 1608 to 1614 but this is the last record of the Rathbone family in the village.

Shortly after, the Gillett Family lived in the Manor, but only for 20 to 30 years. For in 1648 - 1664 Basil Woodd was Lord of the Manor. A local poster gives information that the Woodd Coat of Arms depicts them as 'Lords of the Manor'. Interestingly in the vestry of the church are memorial marble tablets to Basil Woodd, his father, mother and wife. Woodd was killed at Preston (Civil War) in 1648. One can only assume that the family lived on in the Manor until the Greenwood family bought it. Woodd is also featured in a Bampton ghost story, of which I know very little.

The Greenwoods had moved from Yorkshire, possibly Leeds and were Roman Catholics, I mention this only because at the time all Catholics were persecuted for their faith, and it may well of been the reason for moving to a

quiet village like Brize Norton. The family must have enjoyed the air - as it was not until 1813 that the Greenwoods left the Manor. It was sold to Sir John Worley.

Thomas Greenwood was descended from Sir Thomas More and was extremely proud of that fact. And although ledger stones lie in the Choir



The Manor in 1915

Chapel (Chancel) of the parish church it is known that the rites of their religion were performed in a private chapel in their garden, which has now been pulled down. Later some rooms in the upper portion of the Manor continued to be used as a place of worship. Thomas Greenwood died in 1678, Ann his daughter, wife of Charles Trinder died in 1706, John Greenwood died 1711, Margaret Greenwood died 1738, and in 1721 Charles Greenwood was baptised, as an adult. This baptism to the Church of England, was properly arranged so as to show that the family was Protestant, or at least one member. This was common practice at the time to get round the harsh laws against the Catholics.

George Greenwood married Elizabeth Jones, daughter of Walter Jones, the builder of Chastleton House, near Stow-on-the-Wold, now a National Trust property and reported to be one of the finest remaining Jacobean Houses in the country.

Sir John Worley took charge of the Manor House from 1813 and until the turn of the century ownership is difficult to confirm as the deeds were lost in a fire. Although records do show that a William Worley of Brize Norton (possibly a son) was killed after falling from his horse in 1863.

In the interim years it was sold to Christ Church College, Oxford and Mr. Wilkins rented it from 1928 to 1971. From 1971 - 1977 there were several owners including John Bassett who bought the house from Christ Church. The manor has changed hands several times since.

The connection between Church and the Manor House must have been a strong one over the centuries, even with the Catholic family, the Greenwoods.

It is rumoured that one link is even stronger than any spiritual or wealthy one! A tunnel is said to have existed between the two buildings - or at least to the grounds. An escape route for who? Evidence is no more than stories handed down from generation to generation - but these stories must have started sometime and be based on something.

### **People remembered in the Church**

Returning to the church and the history which it holds - there are memorials to other families who have lived in the village but about who little else is known.

In the Choir room (vestry) there is a tablet for the Collier family who lived in the 18th century. As did the Cruse family whose tablet is partly concealed by the organ in the Wenman Chapel.

In the Vestry is a memorial to a young woman named Ann Summers who died in 1631 aged 23. Inscribed on a brass plate reads:

*Thy cruelty o' death complayne  
That thou a harmless mayde has slayne  
Boast not thy victory to dust  
That this weak vessel thou has thrust  
For who shall think thine had to scape  
That has committed such a rape  
On this lov'd mayde and basely throwne*

*Her chastity under this stone  
Yet grieve not parents her to loose  
Whom heaven itself hath designed to choose  
But rather joy that shee was sent  
As pure to heaven as shee was lent.  
There dwelt her love and when shee dide  
Shee there was mayde a glorious bride*

It seems that the last two lines, being in a different type style may have been added at a later time.

Who she was is unknown but a young woman who was pure of heart and perhaps with thoughts of marriage. A romantic may believe her husband-to-be added those last two lines.

## **The Village**

The village itself has until recently seen little change despite its long history. Brize Norton grew up along the old roads of Bampton to Burford (north/south) and Witney to Gloucestershire (east/west), which remain today, although the roads to the A40 have changed priorities. Buildings old and new have been built along these thoroughfares. No new roads have been constructed, other than the cul de sacs which serve the new housing estates, and the village has retained its original shape. When one considers the amount of construction that has taken place in local towns and villages, Brize Norton has been very fortunate to remain relatively unchanged. Even with the new North East Carterton (Shilton Park) development, the village will be unaffected in size. In fact some may say with the benefit of the new bypass, the village may become isolated once again, or at least quieter with the reduction of the heavy traffic which drives through the village. (*Time has shown this promise unfounded!*)

Bishop Secker's "Visitation Returns of 1738" state that Brize Norton was then "two miles in length and hath 89 houses". It also shows that the population was 362. Today the village is still two miles long, but now has around 380 houses and a population of about 900.

Lets go back in time again and travel up the Burford Road, pass the Norton Pits, where a great deal of the stone for the buildings in the village was quarried. Past Kilkenny Farm, the name and position is thought to be a relic of the Celtic missionaries who came here in the early days of Christianity. There are three places named Kilkenny in this area not twenty-five miles from each other. Over 1000 years ago a cross existed at Ducklington and it is the opinion of Dr. Macray, long serving Rector there, that it was raised by the missionaries before starting on the journeys.

Only a short distance further up the road lies the most infamous part of Brize Norton's history, Stonelands. Here stood a large house called Sworn Leys. It stood upon "No Man's Land". This was between Oxfordshire and a detached

portion of Berkshire. On such land many irregularities took place. Here to the house came women "mostly of good class" who found themselves pregnant, or as the old country people would say "unfortunate" - to have the child. Tradition says in the "laaing" (laying) house nearby, the lives of the infants were taken and their tiny bodies buried in the surrounding fields. It is still said to this day that on certain nights you can hear the cries of all those babies in the wind. It has also been stated that an old woman with a screaming baby has been seen haunting the ruins.

The age of the house is uncertain, there is mention of the house being there in the middle of the 17th century which may give credence to the story of King Charles sending a number of young wenches to Sworn Leys to have his illegitimate heirs to the throne killed. I found no evidence to this story, although Charles did visit Oxford on many occasions. I would imagine that any records of such a place and its occupiers would not be open to the public gaze, so loose talk and rumour plays a part in this piece of history.

The reputation of Sworn Leys did not improve on the passing of the Poor Law, which put an end to such places. Sworn Leys became an inn. A haven for rogues, thieves and murderers. The house is no longer standing but the evil atmosphere of the place still lingers in the night air.

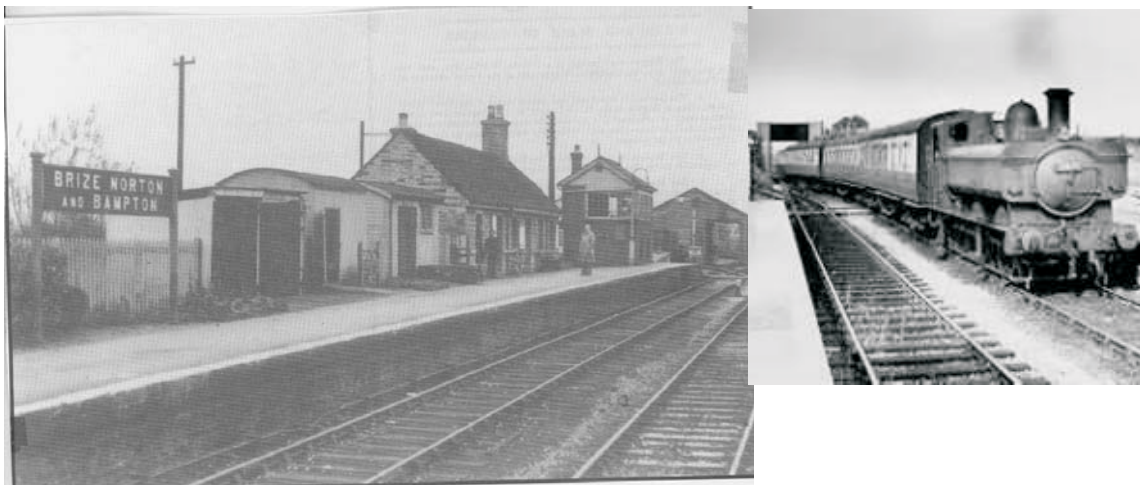
Moving back into the village, we can start to look at the village and the residents of the 19th century. Many family names start to appear on the censuses, which are still present today and the buildings which they built are still used or lived in.

In 1773 the family names of Timms appeared, 1787 Faulkner, 1788 Drinkwater', 1807 Bellenger, 1851 Hunts. By 1851 family numbers were recorded in that year's census and reads as follows - 17 Bellengers, 23 Drinkwaters, 18 Faulkners, 24 Hunts and 48 Timms.

Agriculture was of course the main employer, but it is worth mentioning that 11 masons lived in the village, along with 4 carpenters, a slater, a quarrier and a timber dealer named John Lord. Among the other occupants were 8 shepherds, 8 carters, 2 grooms, 12 farmers, 2 bailiffs, 1 gamekeeper and around 120 farm labourers and 11 ploughboys. Serving the village were many shops - 4 confectioners, 4 shoemakers, 1 tailor, 1 draper, 1 butcher, 4 bakers, 1 dressmaker and 2 grocers. Add to these 2 pubs, 2 blacksmiths, a carrier, 2 washerwomen and a maltster you quickly get a picture of a thriving and busy village. Most of the shops and places of work were situated on the High

Street, renamed Manor Road and Station Road, sometime after 1873 when the railway was built.

The railway came to Brize Norton during 1873 with the opening of the East Gloucestershire Railway from Witney, travelling west to Fairford. It was intended by the EGR to make this line a new trunk route between Cheltenham and London. However, because of economic and political pressures exerted by the Great Western Railway, who wished to protect their existing line from Cheltenham to London via Swindon and Reading, the route never got any further than just to the east of Fairford where, it was said by one observer, "It finished in a field".



Brize Norton railway station

Later the two companies, EGR and GWR, amalgamated under Great Western and ran the branch line until it was closed by the 'Beeching Axe' in 1962. One oddity of the East Gloucestershire Line was that most of its stations and halts were some distance from the villages they were supposed to serve. This may have been out of protest by the villagers or pure economics.

The Brize Norton and Bampton Station was situated just south of Marsh Haddon Farm and 2 miles from Bampton. I am sure many people of fifty years or more can remember catching the steam train to Witney or Oxford or possibly west to Alvescot or Fairford. I wonder, 40 years on if a train link to Oxford or Swindon from Brize or Carterton would be well supported? What do you think Dr. Beeching?



1876 saw a new school built (endorsed by William Carter, the founder of Carterton) and has been teaching the children of Brize Norton ever since. Records have been kept of every child that has studied there.

The modern history of the village has been shaped by the development of the RAF station and Carterton. Up until 1900 Carterton, or the site on which it stands, was Rock Farm, which was sold to a firm called 'Homesteads' owned by William Carter for the sum of £8,880. The land was divided into plots and sold to refugees from cities or abroad. The resulting settlement became known as Carterton.

During the early 1930's rumours were spreading that an aerodrome was going to be built in the area. This became reality when RAF Brize Norton opened as a pilot training base in 1937. During the Second World War its facilities were greatly expanded and farms and roads were lost to the airfield. Marsh Haddon farm and the link road between Carterton and Black Bourton being the major casualties. In 1950 the base was leased to the USAF for a period of 17 years and during that time it became one of the biggest stations in the UK.

1967 saw the RAF take over the airfield with the intention of expanding it into a large transport unit. The large hanger was built and the station was developed into the largest forces airfield in the UK.

This of course had a dramatic effect on Carterton. From a rather untidy market gardening settlement - disparagingly known as Cardboardtown - it has grown into a modern town with many of the facilities you would expect from such a rapidly growing town.

The effect both the RAF and Carterton have had on the village is both positive and negative. The amount of traffic through the village seems to be increasing every year to an almost unbearable level. All the local village shops have vanished (but that might have happened anyway). Noise levels from the planes can be from irritating to an absolute headache. The benefits - it brought money and jobs to the area, it made successful businesses and the RAF station helped pay for public amenities such as the village hall and children's playground in the village. (As the majority of the airfield did lie in the parish boundaries of Brize Norton, it had to pay a proportion of its taxes to the Parish Council).

## Future

What of the future? If the village in its different guises can last 1000 years why can't it last another? Perhaps the airfield and the new North East Carterton (Shilton Park) development will stop Brize Norton village changing from its 'two miles in length' geographical shape. It may evolve - and the economic and social lives of its residents may change, but the character of the village is in the people who built the houses and roads through their blood, sweat and tears. It's now the people who live and work in the village and partake in its activities that make the village what it is, and who will help shape the future. It's all this and it is the history!

## History of Brize Norton

Many thanks to all those people who helped with this leaflet, especially Bob Watts who contributed much to this publication.

### Brize Norton Millennium Celebration

A brief history of the village of BRIZE NORTON 1000 - 2000



Repro postcard published in 1989. Photos date from around 1916

## Supplementary Material

The name of the village evolved from Norton -Nortone Brun (after William de Brun the lord of the manor)- to Brimes Norton- Brese Norton and then Brize Norton. These are variations on documents. Locals just called the village Norton. The name of the church came from Mr Browne Willis who named it St Brise in 1740 who probably connected it with the village name. Nobody knows for sure or why and that is the official explanation! It was latinised to St Brize in the late 19th century. (*Wendy Morgan*)

Wendy Morgan also points out a few mistakes. P. 8. The original pulpit was a Georgian carved wooden three tiered with a sounding board on top. Sermons in the top one, announcements in the middle and the vergger in the lower one and not a wooden structure built around a pulpit. Our present pulpit was a Victorian one. P.9. Caswell House was the farm, and still is, and the mansion now demolished was on the opposite side of the road. P.10. Duke of Marlborough owned the land now Carterton. Brize Norton land was always from the 16th century owned by Christ Church. Lords of the Manor were always tenants until the Greenwoods bought both the Manors and lived in the Manor House and the other Manor changed to the Church Farm House. P.13. Not all the babies died at Sworn Lanes, many were baptised in the Brize Norton, Shilton and Asthall parishes and adopted. No Mans Land meant that it was an Extra-Parochial land belonging to no parish so any one could live there and not be under parish law. P.14. It was never named 'High Street', rather as Turnpike Road or Bampton Road. P.16. School never endorsed by William Carter (Carterton bought by him 1900) Rather it was Goddard Carter of Alvescot who willed rent from Marsh Haddon Farm to pay for village children education 1738-1874. It was the Vicars who pushed for a village school. P.16. All the airfield is in Brize Norton parish. Airfields were named after the parish on which they were built on.

### The Church and Manor

The church was originally named St Peter when established about 1074 under the patronage of Eynsham Abbey and was named that until the 16th century when the patronage was given to Christ Church. After William 1st conquered England all the Saxons lords were turned out and Norman Earls given a third of the land – the King and Bishops having the other thirds. Our Earl was Robert D'Ivry and the manor was given to a Norman knight, Fulk Harang, as tenant with a house on the site of Church Farmhouse. When Fulk's grandson,

Walkelin, died he left the manor to be divided up between his daughters, one was married to William le Brun and they had the Church Farmhouse site – Brun Manor, and the other daughter married to Miles le Fritwell built the other Manor, Fritwell Manor, on the site of the present Manor farm. In 1616 both manors were bought and combined by Sir Thomas Greenwood. The Greenwood memorial stones can be seen in the Chancel floor of the church where they were buried.

A monastic grange was built in the 12th century on the site of the present Grange Farm.

### **Brize Norton Farmers**

The Gilletts from Great Rissington came to the village in 1785 to Marsh Haddon farm and became the main farming family in the district. They were at Kilkenny farm from 1817 -1907 Marsh Haddon farm 1785-1830, Astrop farm 1807-1883. They also farmed in Shilton, Minster Lovell, Bampton, Lower Haddon and Southleigh.

The Worleys at Manor Farm came from Long Combe in 1817 and left in 1877 and like the Timms married into several other village families. The last Worley farmed at the Rookery and his sister married Edward Castle who took over Manor Farm. Two of his sons died in the First World War and their names are on the war memorial.

The Morleys came from Derby to Marsh Haddon farm in 1842. The farm was sold in 1920 by the last owner's widow. In the church is a memorial to her daughter Bertha and her 2nd husband John Hall Smith, both who were on the church council. On the same wall is a window donated by her husband's sisters to their parents William and Harriet.

The Sturch family came to farm at Grange Farm from Warwickshire in the middle of the 19th century and the last members, all unmarried were there until 1929.

The Brights from Somerset came to Astrop Farm via Northleigh in 1889 taking it over from George Gillett. Their daughter married William Badger of Grove Farm.

The Badgers, William and Mary Ann Drusilla, came to Grove Farm from Warwickshire, with their first child born there in 1874. Named after a grove of

trees mentioned in the Domesday Book it was formerly known as Rectory Farm.

## **Glebe Farm**

A vicarage (not a house but land) was instituted about 1267 and Glebe tithes came from Rectory Farm (Grove Farm); tithes was a rent collected by the incumbent as a salary. In 1776 a farmstead was acquired named Butlers' as a Glebe Farm from which the vicar received tithes and in 1879 it was demolished and a new farm built. Since then, among many, William Atkins, Daniel Bye and William Fowler farmed there. Sold by Christ Church it was renamed Foxbury Farm.

Some members of the Timms, Gillett, Worley, Morley and Sturch families became Churchwardens or were involved with the church in some way.

## **The Manor House and the Worleys**

All villages have, or had, a Manor House with a landowner and provider of work for the villagers. Brize Norton is no exception. First, a quick history of the manor and owners and then a look at the Worley family who owned the manor and lands in the 19th century.

### **History of the Manor House**

The earliest settlement in the village was formed probably near the site of the church. The village was recorded as "Norton" in the 11th century. ("North of the town" of Bampton - the royal and ecclesiastical centre). A manorial centre was established at the settlement's north end possibly soon after the Norman Conquest. Its location on the site of Church Farm but from the late 12th or early 13th century there was probably a second manorial centre, which may have occupied the site of the Brize Norton Manor House. The land was held by a Norman tenant in chief and the manor held by a sub-tenant. In the 13th century it was divided into two manors- Fritwell later Yates Manor and Brun (Brown) later the Rathbone Manor, both reunited later by the Greenwoods in 1616, in whose family it remained until 1814 when they sold a farm to James Gillett (Astrop farm) and in 1817 sold the manor lands to William Worley of Brize Norton and John Clinch of Witney as tenants-in- common who owned half each. The remainder of the estate was sold to Charles Gillett (Kilkenny farm). On Worley and Clinch's death the manor was bequeathed to their sons, John Worley and John Clinch. John Worley's son John bought Clinch's half and acquired three more farms. In 1877 John Worley sold his properties to

Christ Church and leased them back, in 1888 the estate was known as Manor Farm. The existing Manor House is 16th century. (Information from the Victoria History of Oxfordshire).

## **The Worley Family**

The Worley family originated in Holbeach, Lincoln and, working from parish records, we get a good idea when the family arrived in the village which must have been about 1804. William Worley was born in Holbeach, Lincolnshire in 1763 and married Elizabeth Wade there in 1788 and had a son John, born in 1790. There is a possibility that she died and he married for the second time Ann Hudson in Surrey in 1803 for Mary Ann was born in Brize Norton in 1805 to a William and Ann Worley. Mary Ann Worley, their daughter, married Samuel Clack in Brize Norton in 1823. Two other members of the family also arrived in the village but as yet their connection with William is unknown. One was Ann Worley who married John Timms (an illegitimate son of Edward Timms and Mary Bunce) in 1810 having two known sons, Edward and James. The other was William Worley who married Elizabeth Gardner in 1823 and had 7 children born in Black Bourton and Hurley, Berkshire, both places where he farmed. One son, Thomas Gardner Worley, married Selina Silman and moved his family to Leeds where he was a shop owner for many years. Later they moved to Brize Norton. Rosa Worley, their daughter, had a shop at The Chestnuts and many older residents will remember her.

Rosa's shop sold everything from sweets to haberdashery, stationery to china. Apart from the shop she gave great support to the church and many other activities. She was secretary to the Women's Institute when it first started in the village. For many years Miss Worley provided a second home to her nephew, Tom Worley and his sister Phyllis (later Finlayson), whose father had died so early in their lives in the First World War. Also living in the house was Miss Elizabeth Sillman, who sometimes helped in the shop and Miss Harrex, both were related to Rosa Worley.

We now come to the Worleys of Manor Farm - as it was to be named later.

## **The Worleys of Manor Farm**

William Worley, born in 1763, bought the Manor House and land with John Clinch of Witney in 1817 and died in 1821. His son, John, took over the half share. John, born in 1790 in Holbeach, married in 1825, at Brize Norton, Elizabeth Lord, the daughter of a farmer in Stanton Harcourt. The Lord

family also farmed in Brize Norton. They had two sons and a daughter; Ann, who in 1850 married a farmer William Walker and had 5 children, the elder son was John Worley born in 1826, the younger son William born in 1828.

John Worley married Mary Ann Gillett, from a local farming family in 1854 and they had 6 children, 2 sons and 4 daughters. The eldest son, John, was to die at the early age of 27 and left two daughters by his wife, Elizabeth Castle. The other son, Edward, married Clara Pearce, and farmed from The Rookery, Brize Norton; he and his wife had a son and three daughters and emigrated to New Zealand.

John and Mary's eldest daughter, Mary Ann, married Edward Castle (brother to Elizabeth, wife of her brother John). Two of his daughters - Norah and Emma - did not marry and the other, Rosa, married the Rev. Samuel Bradshaw and lived in the West Indies. John Worley was for a long time also Churchwarden of St Britius Church. He died in 1906 when his daughter Mary Ann and her husband Edward Castle then took over Manor Farm. The Castles had 3 daughters and three sons, two of the sons were killed in the First World War. Mary Ann Castle died in 1914 and Edward Castle in 1930. After his death Manor Farm was sold to the Wilkins family, so ending the Worley family of a century of occupancy.

The Census returns for 1851-1881 gives one an idea of how large the farm acreage was. In 1851 John Worley farmed 265 acres. In 1861 he farmed 310 acres employing 10 men, 5 boys. In 1871 he farmed 626 acres employing 22 men, 3 women and 8 boys. In 1881 he farmed 774 acres employing 29 men, 1 woman and 9 boys. The work force would be the full time paid workers; farmers in those days also took on casual labour during the ploughing, planting season and harvesting so then the workers' families would join in earning extra money.

Wendy Morgan.

Sources of information:

International Genealogical Index of parish records.

Census returns of Brize Norton.

St Britius Parish Records.

Mrs Kathleen Timms.

Personal recollections and author's own research.

# Listed Buildings in Brize Norton

Astrop Farmhouse

Grade II

Witney Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Farmhouse. c.1700; refronted early C19.

Bale Tomb and Chest Tomb Approximately 6 Metres and 8 Metres South of Nave and 6 Metres and 8 Metres SE of porch of Church of St. Britius

Grade II

Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire

Dated 1718. Limestone. Two worn inscription panels each side, flanked by foliate scrolls to rear. Moulded cornice: gadrooned bale with skulls set in shell hoods at ends. Chest tomb to south-east. Mid C18. Limestone. Two winged cherubs' heads carved over inscription panel, flanked by 2 narrow panels with trailing foliate carving: moulded cornice and capping. Commemorates John James (died 1760) and others of the James family.

Bale Tomb Approximately 8 Metres South South East of Church of St Britius

Grade II

Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire

Early C18.

Barn and Stables Approximately 50 Metres South East of Grange Farmhouse

Grade II

Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire

C17, with mid C19 alterations and stabling to right.

Brewhouse Approximately 10 Metres East of Astrop Farmhouse

Grade II

Witney Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire

c.1700;

Chapel Hill Cottage and Number 2 Chapel Hill Cottage

Grade II

Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire

Two cottages. Early/mid C18, with later C18 extension to right; C20 extension.

Chest Tomb Approximately 1 1/2 Metres South of Chancel of Church of St Britius



Grade II  
Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Early/mid C18.

Chest Tomb Approximately 3 Metres South of Tower and 4 Metres West of South Porch of Church of St Britius Church  
Grade II  
Carterton Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Date 1713 but probably mid C18.

Chest Tomb Approximately 5 Metres South of Chancel of Church of St Britius  
Grade II  
Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Date 1716.

Chest Tomb Approximately 6 Metres South of South Porch of Church of St Britius  
Grade II  
Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Early/mid C18.

Church of St Britius  
Grade II\*  
Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Late C12; early C13 north aisle and chapel, and late C13 west tower; restored in 1868 by G.E. Street. Walls, mostly replaced by Street.  
Fine late C12 Norman south door: arch has roll moulding and 3 bands of chevron decoration, the outer one carried on shafts with cushion capitals - one with carving of 2 birds; the tympanum has a symbol of the Tree of Life carved in the centre of a chequer pattern. Only church in England dedicated to St. Britius, a C5 French saint.  
(Buildings of England: Oxfordshire, pp.487-8; Bodleian Library, Topographical Drawings, has many C19 views of church including exterior and interior drawings of 1821 by J.C. Buckler (M.S. Top. Oxon; National Monuments Record).

Cottage by the Church  
Grade II  
Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Late C17/early C18; remodelled c.1900.

Cottage, Formerly Named Leys Cottage, Approximately 20 Metres South East of the Willows  
Grade II  
100 Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Late C16/early C17.

Dovecote Approximately 40 Metres North East of Grange Farmhouse  
Grade II  
Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Late C16/early C17.

Grange Farmhouse  
Grade II  
Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Late C16/early C17; refronted early C18.

Grove Farm, Barn and Attached Outbuilding Approximately 40 Metres North of Farmhouse  
Grade II  
Minster Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Late C18.

Grove Farmhouse  
Grade II  
Minster Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Late C18.

Labernum Cottages  
Grade II  
100 Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Two cottages. Mid C18 with mid C19 fenestration.

Outbuilding Approximately 15 Metres South South East of Grange Farmhouse  
Grade II  
Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Stable and traphouse C18.

Outbuilding Approximately 5 Metres South West of Grange Farmhouse  
Grade II

Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Outbuilding, probably former brewhouse, woolstore and granary C18.

Rookery Farmhouse and Attached Wall  
Grade II  
Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
C18 with late C16/early C17 origins; refronted and rear block built in early C19.

Rose Cottage  
Grade II  
4 Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Early/mid C18.

Thatcher's Place  
Grade II  
Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Early C17; C20 alterations.

The Carpenter's Arms Public House  
Grade II  
96 Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
House, now public house. Mid C18.

The Cottage  
Grade II  
Burford Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
C17, remodelled early C19.

The Homestead and Attached Barn and Outbuilding  
Grade II  
Carterton Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Farmhouse. Late C17/early C18; refronted late C19. Outbuilding to left of front, C18, former stable and granary.

The Manor House  
Grade II  
Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
House. Early C17, with earlier right wing; late C17 and mid C19 alterations.

Upper Haddon Farmhouse  
Grade II  
Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
C18.

Yew Tree Cottage  
Grade II  
Station Road, Brize Norton, Oxfordshire  
Farmhouse, now house. Mid C18.



St Britius Church & the War Memorial



Remembrance Service 9th November 2003

## **“They are but names in stone”**

Those “names” on our War Memorial can mean little, if anything, to many Brize Nortoners for the First World War was sixty years ago and the population of the village, 600 in 1914, has doubled since. Eighteen Brize Norton men were killed in the First World War, and one, Flying Officer Millis, in the Second. He was a Witney Grammarian. Beyond his disappearing on a flight in Malaya nothing seems to be known of him. His parents are dead, and his married sister is said to have emigrated to no one knows where. I feel much is lacking in this effort of mine .. I do say “Sorry!”. As almost all those killed men were my schoolmates at Norton School the Parish Council has asked me if I would put on record who and what they were: for me this is an act of homage. As on the Memorial they are taken alphabetically:

### **Charlie Archer**

On the Army Reserve he worked as a railway ganger. We kids respected him: if he said “Stop that you boys!” we stopped it — and a back-answer would bring a back-hander. Called up before the War he was killed in May ‘15 leaving a wife and five children, some still live in Brize. That spring my elder brother David, commissioned by the University in the Gunners, was trekking to the Arras front when an infantry battalion “fell” out to let David’s battery through. Suddenly David became aware of an infantryman half waving, half saluting and wholly grinning — it was Charlie! Dave only had time to give him a handshake and the old tag, “Keep thee yed down, Charlie, even if thee cassint thee fat backside, cheerio boy!” “Cheerio Dave!”. He had stripes up David thought.

### **Ernie Bellenger**

“Nickut” (nicknames are often due to infantile mispronouciations) enlisted in the “Oxford and Bucks” like most Norton chaps. He was always captain of Upstrit teams and was leader of us choir boys. “Nickut” was three years older than I. He worked at Kilkenny Farm and sometimes helped his dad quarrying on the latter’s Liberal Government’s famous “small-holding”. Nick married the belle of the village and had two children. A couple of years ago his grandson won an exhibition at the academically select Balliol College.

## Bert Blackwell

Bert, a kid to me, must have enlisted under age. He and his dad ran a coal yard. Bert was also odd-job man at Mr Nesbit's Lower Haddon Farm which is in Bampton though seemingly in Brize. Bert wasn't married. Murray Nesbit, a friend of my younger brother, and an only son, was killed in the War. Bert joined the Royal Army Service Corps and was killed in the Salonica big stunt of 1917.

## Harold and Jack Castle

Enlisted in the Oxford Yeomanry. They were killed in France in 1918 but not at the same time. Neither was married. They worked on their father's six hundred acre Manor Farm, Christ Church College, Oxford, being the landlord. Their father took the farm over from his father-in-law Mr Worley (the latter's father and he were Vicar's Warden consecutively for nearly a hundred years.) The Castle boys never mixed with us villagers except to grunt "How do" shyness maybe. (They could have been exempt from the War as farmers.) They never came to our village socials and dances as did their sisters. I fell desperately in love with Miss Nora who took the younger kids in Sunday School. She lent me books e.g. "The Count of Monte Cristo!" I was too shy to fetch them. Tom, my brother, did but charged me a halfpenny a-time.

Mr Castle was a first class farmer but a bit of a tartar. He was always on horseback. We wondered whether he went to bed on horseback. He made



Farmer Mr Castle on his horse, Elderbank Cottage and "Benny's" Field (all fields locally had names but no one had any idea as to who "Benny" was)

Dad give up his handful of chickens because they strayed into Little Garson's meadow. In the shade of the elms and withies some of us kids during the holidays were one day mucking about on Garson's little stone bridge. Stretched full length I was feeling for trout in the holes of the bridge when someone shouted "Here comes ol' devil Castle!" They all, except Tom and me, skedaddled over the stone stile and onto the road. (Tom my young brother was fourteen months younger than I and as big). I sat up and looked to see if he were bunking. No! not he and so not I though my heart beat a bit. Master Castle cantered towards us cracking his long thonged whip like mad. Again I looked at Tom, there was still time to beat it, he was calmly chewing the white stalk of a blade of grass. Master Castle pulled his nag "Dick " almost on its gaunches just short of us and shouted, "What the devil are you doing trespassing on my land?" "Nothing Maaster Castle, please," I pleaded. "Well don't do it, and clear off!" He pulled Dick round and cleared off himself. "Well I be blowed!" I gasped. "What else could he do?" laughed Tom.

## Albert Faulkner

"Bert" "Swinny". Bert was the best all-rounder I ever came across in class, work or in play: he had a greased-lightning flick from cover-point comparable to Jack Hobbs's (as M.O. later to the Surrey Cricket Club for umpteen years I reckoned them equal). Bert was under-carter to good old Fred Field at Manor Farm (Fred kept wicket without gloves and close up! With his trombone he timed the Chapel Band ). Bert was a crack builder of



The Brize Norton Band outside the Primitive Methodist Church. Standing, left to right: Fred Field, Tom Winfield, C Wilkins, ? Holtom, George Faulkner, ? Calibfield. Seated: ?, William Faulkner, ? Timms, Tom Byre, Bert Faulkner and Arthur Bellinger

loads, high ones, and his ploughed furrows were straight as a die. The ten farm cart horses loved him and would nose into his big pockets for a lump of sugar, and if disappointed would snort like a trumpet in one of Bert's ear-holes. Bert was killed before he had time to be recommended for a commission. My youngest sister, a V.A.D. in France wrote what perfect manners "Bert" had and - O - how she wished her dear brothers had too! The cheeky kid! I wrote and asked her if she remembered how, when a snivelling brat of seven she was ticked off by the then parson's wife for not curtsying, how the good lady made her curtsy six times, and how the little wretch stuck her tongue out behind that good lady's back as she went away proud of her good deed! But I picture ol' Bert best as a kid sliding on Manor pond, hands nonchalantly in his trouser pockets, his feet, close together, doing the "Cobblers Knock" - the toes and heel of one foot alternately tapping the ice. Then at the end of the slide with one foot stationary the other cut a semicircle on the ice- the white "Rasher of Bacon" the while my arms would be flapping like sails and my feet feet apart.

## **Arthur Faulkner**

Granny's and Grampy's grandson lived with them till he joined the Brummagem police. He had a relative there. Even as a kid Art had this slow measured tread of a policeman due perhaps to having to wear his Grampy's cast off hob-nailed boots: but almost all of us had to wear cast-offs in some form. Tom and Art hit it off well. Art was never one to chuck his weight and words about and one waited to hear what he had to say. I think of him, Tom and me harvesting up in "Sixty Acres" (name not a measure, Carterton is sprouting over it now-a-days). Except for the ousting of the sickle by the scythe, harvesting as we knew it at the turn of the century differed but little from that in Ruth's time in the Old Testament, "She gleaned in the field after the reapers-" In "Sixty Acres" each labourer was allotted an acreage of corn to scythe; kids made bonds, and a woman with a bond tied sufficient of the swath to make a sheaf. Art taught Tom and me how to make bonds: enough corn stalks were grasped in each hand close to the ears of corn and the two were twisted and than intertwined and Bob was your uncle. The old people "shocked" the sheaves. I felt cocky when later I took loaded waggons to the rickyard and then the empty waggons back to the cornfield. When the last sheaves and rakings were carted away villagers were allowed to leaze (glean) there. But the best job was riding the for'est horse pulling the binder. We boys were paid four bob a week. What I remember best is, wacked to the world, we would go and bathe in the lovely Cuckoo Pen withy surrounded



and stanked to five foot: the lovely Cuckoo Pen buried this many a year neath the concreted runway! I was knee high to a harvest bug (I not yet breeched) when the one horsed reaper appeared. Our age was to see epoch making development in harvesting. That reaper had two sails which swept the cut corn into swaths. The elevater came next. Then the binder turned up before the first war. Pulled by three horses or two it cut the corn, tied it into sheaves and then chucked the sheaves out. Finally around the end of the First World War arrived the majestic petrol driven combine which cut the corn, threshed it and poured the grain into sacks or into a truck. The valuable tractor was introduced about the some time. We kids also saw the last of "broad casting" seed by hand, and the last of "Rook Starving" with a rattle so frightening birds away from sown seed. The automatic gun does this nowadays. But O my Blossom! O my Jewel of long ago! And "Swinny" with their sugar! And Art!

Art's death nearly killed poor old Gran. Fortunately her nursing kept her busy. There was no State nurse as yet. Gran was not hospital trained, but trained by Life. Common sense was her stand-by. Her sandy hair and lively smiling eyes made her forty not seventy. She was full of old sayings, e.g. "You never see an old fat man!" "Feed a cold starve a fever", "Lazy gel" (delayed labour). She and her house were as clean as two pins. She always smelt of freshly ironed clothes airing in the sun. Our mother died when I was ten: Gran kept an eye on us I have since realised. Art and Tom were her favourites. She would have been terribly upset had she known that unwittingly she had shown it. But honestly we others didn't mind because we were all her favourites really. She lived to over ninety.

## **William Garratt**

No orisons from me - Bill wouldn't want them. We were in the some standards together at school, and together till teacher separated us for Bill and I saw the same sorts of things. While still at school Bill played 'OOmpah in the Shilton Band of which his dad was bandmaster. George his young brother played in the band too. The Garrat's lived at Lingerfield the farthest north of Norton's houses. Shilton was not much farther away than Norton church. The band practised in the Club Room of the "Rose and Crown" in Shilton. Bill was late for practise one evening, they were playing "Men of Harlech", Bill rushed in bellowing, "Wonderful! Come outside and listen to it!" And some of them put their instruments on the floor and went outside to listen: Bill all over! Most Saturday nights Bill and I and sometimes Bert Wilkins and Tom

biked into Witney to give the Witney wenches a treat but my thatch-like hair stood no chance with Bill's curly quiff. We always got our literature then. Bill "The Boys Realm" and I "The Magnet" (price ha'penny ) and we swapped over on Wednesday. One time it started to rain on our way to Witney so we sheltered under a tree. Already there was a la-di-da bloke there. He at once started to grumble about the weather. Bill at once put on his big bumpkin look (easy as pet for him ) and spluttered " Oh I dwunt know, Maister, any weather be better nor no weather at all!" The bloke couldn't fathom this, trance-like he mounted his bike and sloped off.

No farm work for Bill. He enlisted some time before the First World War almost certainly in the band (in those early days bandsmen were stretcher bearers). And no one seemed to know what Bill was in! He was killed at the Dardenelles.

### **Henry Godwin**

"Oxford and Bucks." He was single. Before the war he worked for Mr Hoskins at Kilkenny Farm. He lodged at that rose-smothered cottage which bordered the then bridle track to Rock Farm soon to become Carterton with its galvanized little freehold bungalows at fifty quid a time! He was reported "Missing believed killed" and later "Killed".

### **Frank Lock**

Frank was after my time. I was prep teaching in wonderful London. I had met him when he was helping his father run "The Axe" (The Carpenter Arms). Mr Lock took over from Mr Drinkwater before the War. Addle yeaded " foreigners guffawed their yeads off at "Drinkwater" keeping a pub. It meant another drink and laughter. On the quiet it paid! Frank enlisted in the Grenadiers Guards and was badly wounded. Unfortunately he developed tuberculosis, a killer in those days. The double fight was too much for him.

### **Edwin Miles**

Ted's mother was Charlie Archer's sister A widow she married a widower - none other than dear old John Lockett. John was Dad's foreman on the roads. John always had grin for us kids and a humbug in one of his hands for us to choose which , but we had a sweet anyroad. Early Saturday mornings we would take Mrs Lockett's cake to Barnes's bakehouse and fetch it when done - what a lovely smell was there! She always gave us a slice apiece of the last

cake. She was a dear and so was John's second wife, but we couldn't very well mention that slice of cake.

Ted always looked spick and span. He worked in Barnes's who sold everything under the sun from corduroys - even the smelly ones - to kids toys, from candles to sandals, everything. At the end of the counter there were half a dozen sacks of currants and a big box of broken biscuits. When our hands hung down they accidental of a purpose touched one or other and it was a watchful battle between - well - us kids and Ted. For a time Ted worked at Henley. Ted had a beautiful new bike, first of its kind, the tyres weren't solid but pneumatic and a brake on the front wheel and a lovely sounding bell - beautiful! - Ted was in the Territorials sometime before the War. Nobody seemed to know his rank. I wouldn't mind betting he was commissioned.

### **Bill Parker**

Some four years older than I, Bill was in the Navy, and was in it before the War, being soon a leading seaman. What I remember most about him was his kindness and he didn't swear - well not much. I liked him. Somehow I don't think he liked Norton. He went down with the ship, HMS Scott, when it was sunk in the North Sea, 1917. Why did I feel sorry for Bill?

### **Tom Powell**

Tom and I were as big friends as we were brothers. I was fourteen months the elder. Full grown Tom lacked half inch to six foot and I half inch to him. Mate could be awk'ard as the divil. The following two instances were Tom to the "T": due to begin at the Grammar School in the September Tom was dead set on his butty, Bill Hollis, going there with him as he reckoned no kid would know as well or as fast as Bill how many beans make five! So Tom and Bill waylaying school boss tackled him, "please Sir, we want Bill to take the exam for a free place at the Grammar School and for you to cram him for the three weeks, please Sir - " "What utter nonsense and colossal cheek! Besides he hasn't a ghost of - " "Right, Sir!" "Tom exclaimed," "I shall write to the Prime Minister and the Duke of Marlborough and let them know young Bill is being done out of his disserts!" There was silence until Tom moving away spoke "come Bill". Quaking, school boss caved in, "Steady on Tom, half a mo! I'll start on Bill tomorrow 6.30" "Thank you, Sir!" and Bill passed!

The second instance; wonderful. Witney Feast. Tom, fifteen, studied the Boxing Booth and its notices " Stand up for three rounds and earn five bob

against a pro." Tom muttered, " Easy as pie. 'Money for Jam!'" The pro lost his grin in the second round the same time Tom's eye closed. But he won his five bob! Being short of spondulicks - later I asked him to lend me a bob. " Righto, you, but I shall charge sixpence interest." Another characteristic of his - he always counted his pennies and named them one by one.

John, for whom we worked in the holidays, asked Tom to join him in partnership on his farm on leaving school. But Tom preferred to paint London red with me after school. We didn't teach in the same prep school (seventy pounds a year and keep ). Like eighty percent of Nortons we hadn't been to London nor like them had we seen the sea. We soon put that to rights. We took our gels on one of those Sunday excursions three bob return to Brighton. My Louise was a lovely little French gel and as smart as they made um; Tom's Vivienne was a smart big wench with some spare avoir du pois. They worked in Paquins of Paris, London branch in Mount Street off Park Lane. We first met them one glorious June Sunday evening when listening to the Guard's glorious band in Hyde Park. Later in strolling in the Park we came to the railings bordering one of the footpaths. I picked Louise up and gently threw her over to Tom and Tom threw her back to me she giggling with glee. Then pretending to be cross she made me hold her little mirror for her, but sometimes her eyes slipped past her mirror to search mine. I think the - metaphorically - cow-dung on my boots and the straw in my hair intrigued her but soon we got to like each other a lot. She spoke English very well. I did French for London Matric but my spoken French was laughable. I am everlastingly grateful to her for the gentle way she for instance taught me how to help a lady onto a bus or off: there weren't no busses running from Nortons' Ting Tang Lane to her Park Lane. Tom got on fine with Vivi, she was almost his height. But she objected to his smacking her behind.

The war was declared. The girls had to go back to Paris. We saw them off. Louise cried and cried and I nearly did. We promised to write. Vivi too cried and didn't mind at all now Tom's patting her behind. We waved and waved and so did they - till the end.

Sad I went home. Tom was catching a later train as he wanted to say ta-ta to one of the girl teachers. When I got home Dad looked anxious but said nothing. When Tom arrived back I took him to the parlour and getting him to put his hand on the big family bible made him say after me , " I hereby swear by almighty God that whatever happens to me I will not go back to teaching."

Bernard Shaw said "He who can't -teaches!" David came home next day. He was getting through his university a commission in the "Gunners". Tom and I were enlisting in the London Territorials so as to get our evenings off in London! Tom was for the 24th County of London Territorials, Kennington, a tough crowd. Now, I was calming down after a severe attack of post Impressionists painting shared enjoyably with the knowledgeable Louise: I for the "Artist's Rifles", the Twenty Eight County of London, its H.Q. in Bloomsbury. They were a crack crowd and no mistake! Within three weeks Tom's Colonel recommended him for a commission. At the same time "The Artists" clamped down on letting chaps go for commissions. David advised me to ask for a week's leave and sit for the next entrance exam into Sandhurst. I was successful. I told Tom to do the same. "No!" He was emphatic, "the damned war will be over. I want to see what it is like." In no time David was in France. In no time I would be passing out of Sandhurst and no longer a "Gentleman Cadet". In no time Tom, a second lieutenant, had joined the 9th Battalion The Welsh Regiment, just before the big battle of Loos, and in no time Tom was being recommended for the Victoria Cross!

I possess a letter written to Tom by his Colonel in which he commiserates with Tom on his not having been awarded the Victoria Cross. "In the eyes of this Division you earned it, Tom". Unfortunately the battle of Loos was a colossal failure, many senior officers were sent home including the Commander-in-Chief. The Boche knew all our plans for Loos! Tom's battalion was in the front line of attack. Almost at the last minute zero hour was postponed for an hour. The tragedy was Tom's brigade never got the new order! Our guns dropped their barrage on the German wire which our men were struggling through. They found the thick German barb wire was almost intact and our wire cutters almost useless: a terrible slaughtering resulted! Tom with Sergeant Williams and eleven men got a good footing in the Boche front line and terrific hand to hand fighting took place. (Afterwards Tom got leave and came to see me at Clock House Hospital on the Chelsea Embankment at my first wounding. This account of his I wrote down immediately afterwards. Some of the bloodier details I have omitted).

One screaming Boche did a belly-flop onto Tom's bayonet, he preferred a rifle to a revolver! It was like pitching over a waggon a heavy sodden bolten of straw. There was no sleep at all. The Boches's very lights made night light. We rarely used them. The crowd to go through Tom's lot never materialised. Sergeant Williams was wounded but refused to leave - good man. After two bloody days and nights they were reduced to himself, Sergt. Williams and

three men. Tom sneaked out to shift a pile of dead Boche that obstructed our line of fire. He morsed back that he was running out of ammunition, of water and grub. He reckoned 43 dead Germans - not all his killing of course. Almost all his men had chucked back Boche grenades but Walters had been unlucky. Tom had orders to retire; he promised his helpless wounded they would be fetched.

The old front line was smashed to hell. No officer remained. Tom took over. There were 23 of "C" company left. Concertina barbed wire was put out at the double and doubled. Still no sleep. Dig in! First counter attack beaten off! He and Sergt. Williams in turn fetched in the badly wounded men as promised. Williams was hit again and swearing like a trooper! Tom found a bullet jammed in his Sam Brown buckle. (Officers still wore officer's kit in battle! Loos changed that stupidity). After two days they were relieved. Tom's captaincy of "C" company was confirmed. Eventually he received one of the first Military Crosses, Sergt. Williams got the DSM and three of the grand boys a Military Medal each!

Tom was chosen for the Hush! Hush! tanks and soon commanded a company of them. Meanwhile I had been wounded a second time and evacuated home. I married my precious V.A.D. who nursed me the first time I caught out. Tom wangled leave to be my best man. We had spent the night before putting the world to rights. We swore this time that whatever happened, we would go in for medicine after the war. Next morning we went to Guy's Hospital and he registered there, then over to St. Mary's Hospital where I registered. We would become doctors though God alone knew how! Buy a taxi with our gratuities and do night work in turn. Soon we were sitting in the church waiting when the divil frightened me to death with "Has't got the ring, you?" Panic stricken I protested "I gave it thee breakfast time damned thee!" "Don't swear in church, you!" The divil had it of course! That was the last time I was ever to see him. At Cambrai one of his tanks stalled. He got out of his to examine it and got gassed. In England they discovered that his heart had endocarditis (inflammation). What chance had he at all against that flu epidemic.

## **Jack Timms**

"Young Mark", after his dad was as good a cricketer as his cousin "Swinny". Any two people in Norton those days were cousins. Jack was fast left hander and a good inside forward (between the Wars for two summers the village cricket team was composed solely of Timms). "Young Leaky" after his dad

was as good a bowler as his dad. He survived the War as a sergeant and with a D.C.M. Jack had worked with Mr Harry Smith our butcher. They did say Mr Smith made his money mostly from "crock" meat that is by bleeding dying animals. (Art his son, made a fortune in his big emporium on Tooting Broadway). Another to survive the First World War was Jack's elder brother Sergeant Bert Timms, The Grenadier Guards. For a while I was gone on one of their sisters but she preferred a blooming Bam bloke. Bert was the spit of our terrific Grenadier company instructor at Sandhurst. Later Bert was to become landlord of the "AXE". A typical Norton story emanated from the "AXE". Two elderly brothers, local farmers came in one Saturday night after a match. Fred, the younger, had on a brand new pair of breeches, made of big black and white checks, which he kept admiring. At last Bert said to him, "Fred, get down on thee knees and elbows and let us have a game of draughts on thee backside!" Up sprang Joe, Fred's brother, protesting, "how dare thee insult my brother's breeches!"

### **Percival Timms**

Perce, a cousin to Jack, was only a kid in my time and not yet in long trousers. Boys were "trouserred" according to their years and not their size - a personal grievance to Tom and me. After leaving school he worked on Tom Pratt's farm (Tom Pratt kept the Chequers as well) Perce must have put his age up to join up. He died as he was being taken to a Prisoners Camp hospital. It was his first trip to France. He was in the "Oxford and Bucks". His father had a big name as a Cots'll stone worker. The Timms were essentially masons. Aggy Dawson lived with the family. She was a pupil teacher along with one of my sisters. A pupil teacher was a pupil for half a day and a pupil teacher other half. I have never forgotten her calling me "the biggest ass in christendom." The other kids putting a wrong interpretation on the " Ass " - and I was a big chap - laughed their heads off. I didn't mind much because her eyes were laughing too. She and my sister started teaching at twenty pounds a year. Her son has just retired as Headmaster of Sherborne School, Dorset.

### **Jack Upstone**

Jack. His death hit me. We had always been butties and in the same standards. He was a quiet shy chap: you could lead him but never drive him. Without being asked he would carry a football post, or stumps and always "Sampson". The latter was a one piece oak bat heavy as lead and jarred like blazes. It had been in the village for generations. Jack worked on Tom Pratt's

farm. In the County Regiment he was killed on his second trip out. I'll bet he was as good a soldier as his two brothers Joe and Jim. Joe had enlisted before the war. He came down home, for our Whitsuntide wonderful Club Feast, in swanky red coat, blue trousers - all of it! He hailed me "Hullo, my little man!" And I nigh as tall as he and he three years younger "And thee, hast come in thee fancy rig-out to do a little rook-staring?" All the same Joe survived the war and ended Regimental Sergeant Major and D.C.M. and Jim survived the war as sergeant and Military Medal. For years he was the backbone of the County Cricket Club as seam bowler and an awkward No 7 batsmen. He held down a good job at Smith's blanket factory. But it is of Jack that I think.

## **Edward Wilkins**

"Ted" was the son of Mr Tom Wilkins of Manor Cottages who worked for Mr Castle. Ted worked in Barnes's shop after Ted Miles left. He was a quick obliging server, and took care we kids did not help ourselves to broken biscuits. Ted was in the Territorials before the war began. He was reported "Missing believed Killed" on the Somme in 1916. Ted was the sort of chap to get commissioned rank.

## **Albert Wilkins**

Good old stick - "Bert" and I also passed through the classes together. When we were in Class III Bert was a mite smit on my youngest sister, but she told him to save his breath as she intended marrying a duke. Bert worked hard at home. Not only had Mr Wilkins a small farm but he also had a covered-in carriers cart plying market days between Norton and Witney and Norton and



Charles Wilkins, the Brize Norton carrier, with his wife, Martha, and daughter, Annie, in about 1908



Oxford. He went loaded and came home loaded e.g., he always brought back a whacking great slab of delicious dripping from Christ Church College kitchen. We were brought up on that dripping. Only on Sundays had we bread and butter or jam. The dripping was tuppence a pound. Barnes's shop lard was fourpence a pound; butter tenpence a pound and a dozen boxes of matches were also a penny three farthings. Almost every house kept a pig and fowl. Milk was tuppence a pint and beer the same. A gang of us kids on Saturday mornings would saunter over the fields and through the 'nut copse to lonely Cas'll Farm with its moats. There whatever the size of our receptacles, Tom's and mine was a smallish bucket, they were all filled with milk for only a penny each! We had had strict instructions to thank kind Mrs Joslin. All I remember is that she smiled all the time we were there. Bert's brother Bill and the latter's sons have farmed the Manor farm since the thirties. Poor Mr Castle what a loss just when he could have done with Harold and Jack. Bert was a dabster at "tots" at school. A "tot" was an enormous addition or multiplication with some thirty items in pounds shillings and pence and such! Issued out at 3.30 on Fridays and "go when done correctly". Bert would always cough going past me.

One Saturday morning I went up to see if he were coming to Witney in the evening. There was no telephone then. His sister Liz said he was up cleaning the pigs out. She came with me to see." Yes " she said " There he is! That's Bert the one with the cap on! It was the first time ever I had heard that old chestnut! Any road we three burst out laughing. And remembering Bert's roar I laugh again!

' They grow not old...'

H J Powell

*(written around 1978)*



The Carpenters Arms  
otherwise known as the Axe

# The Diamond Jubilee Years of Brize Norton 1952-2012

Over the last 60 years approximately 230 new dwellings have been built or converted in Brize Norton more or less doubling the amount of houses and the population.

For years farming had been one of the main industries in the village with many villagers working on the farms, some living in the farms' tied cottages. Several farms still worked horses, albeit for light work only (pulling carts etc) and all farming was still pretty labour intensive. However as farming started to progress, most farmland was annexed into larger working acreages, modern machinery made most of the labour redundant and men gradually drifted into the local factories and other work. Most of the farm premises were gradually turned into living accommodation leaving only a few working farms. One farm, Marsh Haddon Farm ('a lovely walled farm') was overrun by the expanding RAF Camp and bulldozed to the ground. Its entrance was by the crash gates the Brize Norton side of the runway.

Many families in the early years relied on their allotments to provide them with their vegetables and in some cases meat and poultry. There were then a lot of allotments. The present allotments spread over the ditch and filled half the field behind the recreation ground. 'Southmere' was allotments down to the ditch and there were several smaller plots throughout the village. All of these allotments gradually disappeared as people lost interest or didn't need them and only the present allotments survived thanks to one or two stalwarts who kept them on thus keeping the developers at bay. Now it's turned full circle and allotments are in demand again but not for the austere reasons of the 50's and 60's.

Brize boasted three shops (a bakery, post office, and blacksmiths shop), three pubs, a railway station, school and numerous other small businesses in 1952. The three shops catered for most of peoples' needs – groceries, cigarettes, clothes, paraffin, bicycle parts and even studs and laces for football boots! The largest shop was on Church Corner with petrol pumps on the side of the road and this could supply most things a family required. The other two shops were by the Masons Arms and in the large house adjacent to Chestnut Close in Station Road. The bakery was also on Church Corner and not only supplied the village but also the surrounding villages. Unfortunately with

the advent of supermarkets and lack of decent parking areas they gradually declined, plus as the amount of people with access to vehicles increased and Witney, Oxford and Swindon became more accessible. The shops and bakery then became unviable and gradually closed leaving the village with no shops today. The post office was originally in 'West View', Manor Road and then moved into the Church Corner shop but of course went when the shop closed, but we still have two post office sessions a week in the pavilion.



Brize Norton Village Post Office run by Joseph and Emily Timms. Joseph died in 1914. The Post Office then moved to the corner shop before that in turn closed

The blacksmiths shop was opposite Chestnut Close originally and moved to the "Kithicks" wheelwright's premises in the early 50's where it stayed until the late 70's before moving on to bigger premises away from the village. By this time there was no longer a need for a blacksmith as farmers were repairing their own equipment and machinery became more complicated.

The railway station, although being a long way out of the village was a great boon to the village for (a) commuting and (b) for the goods that came and went through it to supply local shops and businesses. Alas Dr Beeching put an end to it all and in the late 60's the last train carriage passed through. The station area is now an industrial estate (Viscount Court Industrial Estate).

A builders and timber merchants grew from small beginnings in the early 50's in Burford Road later moving to Station Road to become a major local amenity catering for most DIY needs for the village and surrounding area and also employing many local staff.

The school in 1952 hadn't altered much since it was built with only two classrooms, kitchen and very basic bucket toilets which were situated at the end of the playground. Gradually improvements were made over the years with new modern toilets and new kitchen added in the 60's with a major development in 2007 allowing it to teach the 110+ pupils it has today. The numbers at the school were very low in the 60's and it was in danger of closure but the building of Daubigny Mead and other estates managed to push the numbers up above the closure threshold.

Only one pub has closed – The Carpenter's Arms (Jim's Inn) in Station Road in 1991 much to the dismay of the locals and is now a Bed and Breakfast business. The Chequers is the largest pub in the village and has had many alterations and extensions over the years and is now a carvery/restaurant as well as a pub, and draws in customers from a wide area. The Masons Arms has recently had some alterations and is a Real Ale pub and has served the Burford Road clientele for many years. It was the "in" pub in the 70's and 80's when it sold 'Brize Pies', a chicken and mushroom pie made on the premises



Masons Arms in Burford Road - then and now

which drew people in from a wide area. Although the pub trade is in a sad decline both the village pubs seem to be coping in the present climate.

The recreation ground had only just been created in 1952 in a field rented from Christ Church and was still being worked on with the help of volunteers. The entrance was through the ornamental gates, made by the village blacksmith, opposite The Chequers. The village sports teams had a permanent base now, not having to move from field to field. Changing facilities were basic in The Chequers barn (now gone), but gradually facilities

were built on the Rec culminating in the Pavilion being built with the help of a local businessman.

Elderbank Cottage and grounds became part of the Rec allowing room for a decent car park and ultimately the Elderbank Hall, built to replace the ageing Victory Hut. The play area was originally a sand pit, see-saw and swings with other items being added over the years, culminating in today's modern play equipment.

Before the Elderbank Hall, the Victory Hut was the main venue for village get togethers. It was a wooden First World War barrack block type building and was situated opposite the school. It was used for all manner of village meetings – WI, youth club and all celebrations much as the Elderbank Hall today. One highlight of the week was the film show on Friday nights showing most films of the day, normally in black and white with usually a serial which would leave you on tenterhooks till the next episode, ensuring you came the next week. In the days before TV it was very popular and well supported. However by the end of the 70's the Victory Hut was getting well beyond its 'sell by date' and the decision was made to build a new hall on the recreation ground which the village had recently bought from Christ Church College the previous owners.

A tennis court had been built on the rec but it was decided that where it was would be the best site for the Hall so the court was repositioned where it is today (so much for forward planning). However with the sale of the Victory Hut site, grants, loans and a lot of hard work by one or two people enough money was raised to build the Elderbank Hall albeit with quite a bit of voluntary building work. Today the hall is on a par with any other locally and is well used and supported by the village and surrounding areas.

The Church has stood through it all as it has done for centuries although its bells are no longer safe to be rung and the roof is in need of major repairs but hopefully thanks to a major fundraising effort the roof should be refurbished soon. The Church still has a reasonable congregation and of course is still there for weddings, christenings etc. The Methodist Chapel was a thriving community in the 50's, 60's and 70's but gradually the congregation dwindled and it closed soon after its centenary and was sold off as a house. This also seems to be the case in most villages.

Although they now have a decent field on which to play, both the football and cricket teams folded in the 50's through lack of players and interest. However

both clubs reformed in the 60's; the football club restarted in 1963 soon forming two teams and a Sunday team and went on to become one of the top clubs in the County winning both County cups and most of the Witney and District cups and leagues and it still continues strong today, although the ladies team has disbanded. There have also been several other football teams in the village over the years, playing in different fields in the village.

The cricket club reformed in 1968 and was well supported playing both Saturday and Sunday matches and, at one time, had a very successful youth section. It also went on to win County cups and leagues but, alas, had to fold due to lack of players. The pitch is now used by Minster Lovell but hopefully the club will reform in the future.

In the past Brize had not had many significant issues with flooding, but since 2000 there have been several serious floods, the most severe being in 2007 when many village properties were flooded. Is it freak weather or due to the increased house building programme? Hopefully it won't be as drastic again.

One of the most serious losses to the landscape has been the disappearance of the majestic elm trees which graced every street and field in the village. They were felled due to Dutch elm disease in the 1970's. It's impossible to say how many were in the village, probably in the region of 1,000 and millions nationwide.

The RAF camp has grown dramatically over the Jubilee years and with it Carterton. In 1952 American engineers were making drastic alterations to the Camp in preparation for their Cold War jet aircraft. The Black Bourton, Carterton Road was closed and the runway extended into Alvescot and back to the Station Road in Brize. The NW/SW runway was closed much to the relief of Station Road residents as the approach was over Southmere area. Also further Brize Norton land was commandeered along the Carterton Road for storage bunkers to hold the nuclear bombs. Most of the aircraft were on immediate take-off mode and the noise was incredible at times. The Cuban Crisis and J F Kennedy's assassination were worrying times in history as a nuclear war seemed possible.

In 1967 the airfield reverted back to the RAF and became a major transport command Camp. Base Hangar was built altering the village skyline somewhat along with a new terminal building and hotel. Also 1,000 kit form houses were built in Carterton and Brize Norton Parish for accommodation for the increased RAF personnel. The airfield has continued to grow over the

years with more hangars and buildings and it is now the principle RAF base sending troops and ordinance all over the world and latterly repatriating the fallen from Afghanistan. Most types of aircraft have been stationed at or visited Brize but perhaps its most famous visitor was Concorde when its crews practised approaches and landings.

Carterton in 1952 was a medium size village with many small holders growing vegetables etc and was famous for its tomatoes which had a distinct flavour. Its affairs were administered by the Black Bourton Parish Council and it wasn't until the mid 60's that Carterton became a Parish in its own right. From then it has grown into the town it is today but I'm sure Carterton will have its history documented better in their Jubilee celebrations.

Fred Bellenger



School Fete 2003



David Cameron, our Prime Minister opens the school extension in 2007



New school extension, 2007

## History in the making!

Looking at recent events in the village we can point to a number which impact on Brize Norton - Brize Norton Open Gardens and the Flower Festival in Church under the National Gardens Scheme, the Annual Cricket Festival and Horticultural Show are features of village life. Brize gained an award in the Best Kept Village - 3rd place in 2003. The church's fund raising in recent years has included the first Beer and Music Festival. These are recorded in the Friends of St Britius Newsletters. The church also saw the laying up of the RAF Squadron 99 standard in July 2005. Sadly the annual procession through the village as part of the School's Annual Fete is no longer permitted but featured a fancy dress parade led by church's beir dressed up for the occasion. Since September 2011 the village has been on the Repatriation Route for service persons killed in Afghanistan - 63 service personnel have been repatriated through the village so far (April 2013). Threat from developers to the west of the village (a WODC plan for Carterton East, a proposed development of 700 houses) would have a significant impact through encroachment, flooding and traffic amongst others. This is explained fully in a dossier prepared by the Brize Norton Village Action Group and the Brize Norton Parish Council.

Fortunately with modern technology the events and issues mentioned above are covered by village websites: [www.brizenorton.org.uk/community](http://www.brizenorton.org.uk/community), [www.bnschool.org](http://www.bnschool.org) and [www.savebrizevillage.org](http://www.savebrizevillage.org). These have online copies of the Parish Newsletter from September 2003 and the Friends of St Britius Newsletters.



One of the many amusements during the Millenium festivities on the village recreation



## Sources

Below you will find an annotated bibliography with a selection of sources for further reading:

Victorian County History - A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 15: Bampton Hundred (Part Three). Author: Simon Townley (Editor), Christina Colvin, Carol Cragoe, Veronica Ortenberg, R.B. Peberdy, Nesta Selwyn, Elizabeth Williamson. Published 2006. An electronic copy can be found at [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=117029](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=117029) and in subsequent web pages.

The History of RAF Brize Norton is given on the RAF Brize Norton website at [www.mod.uk/rafbrizenorton/aboutus/history.cfm](http://www.mod.uk/rafbrizenorton/aboutus/history.cfm).

Brize Norton School Website ([www.bnschool.org](http://www.bnschool.org)) includes web pages with a copy of the School Magazine for Christmas 1922 and Richard (Dick) Print's exercise book from 1930. Pictures and articles prior to the current year (2004 - 2012) have been archived.

Brize Norton Parish Newsletter. Issues from September 2003 to date can be found on the community website at [www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/brize\\_norton/](http://www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/brize_norton/).

St Britius Church has a short history which can be found online at [www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/brize\\_norton/bnchurch\\_guide.htm](http://www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/brize_norton/bnchurch_guide.htm) whilst a list of its vicars can be found at [www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/brize\\_norton/bnchurch\\_vicars.htm](http://www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/brize_norton/bnchurch_vicars.htm). The Friends of St Britius newsletters can be found at [www.brizenorton.org.uk/stbritiusroof/](http://www.brizenorton.org.uk/stbritiusroof/).

The dossier underlying the threats to Brize Norton Village through the proposed housing development to the west of the village and discussion of encroachment, flooding and traffic, together with aircraft noise and other matters can be found on the website at [www.savebrizevillage.org](http://www.savebrizevillage.org).

"Old Brize Norton through the eyes of two young girls" by Kathy Timms and Clare Hicks was published in 2002 (ISBN 1870519-68-X) by Bookmarque Publishing and provides an interesting and informative read. Also by Kathy Timms is "A Family Affair" describing the development of

A K Timms and Sons of Brize Norton. Published in 1999 as a private publication.

The Listed Buildings of Brize Norton, Oxfordshire is available online at [www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/oxfordshire/brize+norton](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/oxfordshire/brize+norton), a summary is contained in this publication with the detail for each building on the website.

A 1916 Almanac covering Brize Norton with local services and residents can be found [www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/history/almanac/1916\\_almanac.htm](http://www.brizenorton.org.uk/community/history/almanac/1916_almanac.htm).



School Cookery Class going to Bampton about 1930. Back: Iris Preston, Kath Taylor, Pyliss Badger, Eva Field. Front: Vera Faulkner, May Parker, May Wilkins, Marjorie Jones, Annie Siford and Violet Hayward



Bus Service - to Brize Norton



Elm trees along Manor Road



Threshing at Moat Farm, now  
Church Farm House



Annual village cricket festival and horticultural  
show, 2003



School Science Class 1930



Sunday School Outing, September 2007



Beer Festival, 26 May 2012

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