

# A Visitor's Guide to Barton in Fabis

## Contents

STONE AGE BARTON .....	2
THE ANCIENT BRITONS' HILL .....	2
THE ROMAN LEGACY .....	2
BARTON IN THE BEANS .....	3
GARBYTHORPE - HOME OF THE VIKINGS? .....	3
13TH CENTURY MURDER.....	3
FIRE, FLOOD and a PIG IN THE CHURCHYARD! .....	4
PAST LORDS OF BARTON MANOR.....	5
THE DOVECOTE .....	6
BARTON GYPSUM.....	6
BARTON ON BROADWAY!.....	7
A KING RIDES BY.....	7
WORKING THE LAND .....	7
THAT FAMOUS CHEESE.....	8
FROM TAVERNS TO TEA-HOUSES VIA BARTON FERRY .....	9
HOWZAT.....	9
THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.....	10
"RIVER'S UP MISSUS!" .....	10
THE SMITHY.....	11
SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP .....	12
PUTTING ON A SHOW .....	13

The informed visitor to Barton in Fabis will not immediately enter the village but pause a while, look north, and enjoy the impressive escarpment of Brandshill Wood rising majestically from the floodplain. Many people use the ancient bridle path running under the wood to get here on foot and some of those who visited when Barton Ferry provided a regular service to Attenborough, head west through the village, re-emerging by the Trent to take in the view of the nature reserve across the river, and the abundance of bird life to be seen on the water. After a while, some may continue on their way southward towards the neighbouring parish of Thrumpton. It would, however, be a missed opportunity if a visit was not paid to the beautiful 14<sup>th</sup> century Church of St George, to spend a few quiet moments within its walls, reflecting on its history and charm.

## **STONE AGE BARTON**

The valley of the River Trent has long been regarded as 'a probable region of primary man', and the discovery of a Neolithic stone axe head and mace head gives us reason to believe that early man was at Barton during the period between 10,000 and 5,000 years B.C. The axe was of grey green stone, and both finds were considered to be of high status in the prehistoric period, no doubt taking many weeks of painstaking grinding and polishing to produce the intrinsic beauty such artefacts still possess today. Crop marks to the south-west of the village, near to the bridleway to Thrumpton, suggest the remains of what may have been an Iron Age settlement consisting of thatched round houses, probably made of wood, wattle and mud. By the time this site was inhabited much of the parish would have been fields set about with acres of woodland and coppice. The people living here would have grown grain (wheat and barley) and would probably have kept oxen, sheep and pigs. Indeed, this may well have been the original small farming community from which the village evolved.

## **THE ANCIENT BRITONS' HILL**

The imposing escarpment known as Brandshill lies to the northeast of the village and was formerly known as Brent's or British Hill. One theory suggests it was once the site of an Ancient British (pre-Roman) camp, and though the fortifications which once crowned its summit have long been levelled, there are still vestiges enough on its sides to show that this was a place of obstinate defence.

It is thought there were originally 15 earthen banks along the steep escarpment, each about 1/2 a mile long, which had to be successively breached before an enemy could attack the citadel. That it was perhaps once a place of importance is further emphasised by the number of coins that have been found in the area, along with the discovery of a Bronze Age sword. On the arrival of the Romans it is generally thought they may have adapted the fortifications to meet their own requirements. Today the banks are clad with trees and there is a lovely walk though the wood, which can be accessed by using the bridleway near the farmyard on New Road. This bridleway is part of the Trent Valley Way long distance footpath through Nottinghamshire, and the area is popular with birdwatchers, ramblers, cyclists and horse riders.

## **THE ROMAN LEGACY**

In 1858 a beautiful piece of mosaic floor (tessellated pavement) measuring 15' x 10', was discovered beneath the surface of the soil at Glebe Farm. This pavement was part of the floor of a Roman villa that faced the old settlement on the hill, and the quantity of charred wood found may point to its destruction by fire. Further excavations during 1933-1949 concluded that the villa was built and used for agricultural purposes.

The floor had been worked to geometrical patterns around a central oval, with wide scroll bordering of red tesserae, and parallel lines of white and blue separating it from the inner part. The pavement was in perfect condition and its colouring as brilliant as when it was first laid down. The rector had it carefully covered for preservation, but sightseers and children considerably diminished its size. In

1878 it was offered as a gift to the Castle Museum, who declined on account of the few pounds it would have cost to have it removed and reset in Nottingham. Sadly, the pavement was lifted, put in bags and transferred to the rectory at Barton in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, from where it has now disappeared.

Moving on to the present day, a team of archaeologists were doing further excavations in 2000, when they discovered the rare and unique remains of a Roman villa, dated around 220 AD. This had been replaced by the later villa which was dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, so now Barton in Fabis can claim two Roman villas within its parish boundary.

## **BARTON IN THE BEANS**

The Romans left behind many coins, a villa and perhaps also the name of the village, albeit considerably different from the one we are now familiar with. Earliest records give us 'Beretun', which derives from the Saxon 'outlying farm, grain enclosure or grange'. Exactly when it became known with its adjunct of 'in the beans' is rather a puzzle. There are some twenty Bartons in England, and a deed of 1331 refers to the village as Barton on Trent, a name that led to confusion with Burton on Trent. As Barton in le Benes it was mentioned in a 14<sup>th</sup> century document, and by the reign of Henry VIII it was noted for its profusion of bean crops. Faba is Latin for bean, and it is thought that Fabis was used at some time to distinguish the village from Barton in the Beans in Leicestershire.

## **GARBYTHORPE - HOME OF THE VIKINGS?**

To the west of where Brown Lane meets Church Lane once lay a small separate parish, which by 1640 was known as Garbythorpe. Few records exist of the area, but a document from 1280 names the area Karberthorpe and it is interesting to note that 'thorpe' is Danish for outlying settlement. This leads us to wonder whether this was an area in which the Danes settled following the Viking invasion and the inclusion of Barton in the Dane law of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Whatever its history, the lands of Garbythorpe were administered separately for many hundreds of years as they were owned by the Peverils and then the Cliftons, and not united with those of Barton until the Cliftons and Sacheverells married in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Even today, some Bartoners class three houses, which to all intents and purposes are in the village, as really belonging to the old parish of Garbythorpe!

## **13<sup>th</sup> CENTURY MURDER**

Towards the end of the reign of Henry III an event which centred around the parish church of St George shocked the villagers of Barton in Fabis.

In 1263, its rector was a pluralist absentee, Bartholomew de Agnani by name, and probably one of the hated Italians who at that time swarmed into English livings and dignities. Lenton Priory, asserting that he had died, presented the living to Thomas de Raley. Agnani protested, and appealed

to the Pope, who ordered his reinstatement. Armed with the Papal Injunctions, Agnani's proctor met the Lenton Prior at Barton, where in the presence of the latter he was stripped and beaten so severely beside the churchyard that he died. Prior Norman and Raley were summoned to answer at Rome, but failing to appear were excommunicated until they made 'condign' satisfaction in St Paul's Cathedral in the Archdeaconry of Nottingham and other prescribed places.

In one way or another the matter was settled, and subsequently the living remained with Lenton Priory.

## **FIRE, FLOOD and a PIG IN THE CHURCHYARD!**

In 1268, the Archbishop of York advised the Dean of Nottingham that 'certain sons of Satan had set fire to Barton Church and broken into it.' He was also ordered to excommunicate the offenders 'lest he should become partner of these sacrilegious persons if their audacity remained unpunished.'

Come 1346, a great flood wrecked the fire-damaged church, and remains existing in the present structure suggest that when the shock of the Black Death was over, a new church was erected near the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1834, a well known Nottingham author visited Barton and was none too impressed with the state of the churchyard - 'There is scarcely any thing that I like more to see in a cleanly and well kept condition than a village Church Yard, and the nicely weeded turf mounds always strike me as evidences of devotion and piety amongst the inhabitants. This, I am sorry to say, is not the case here, the rank foliage grew unmolested, except by a large sow that ranged amongst the graves, and seemed extremely angry that her solitude should be disturbed. The tombstones are pretty thickly scattered, but there were none that I could discover of more than a century back.

At my first visit to this place I was attended by the parish clerk, but he was totally destitute of information and at my last visit his daughter, a rosy fat faced girl, of about fourteen, with an infant in her arms, and two little ones accompanying her, waited on me with the ponderous key. A young friend had been my associate in the walk, and I was particularly desirous of exciting in the sensitive mind of youth some portion of that enthusiasm which ever has warmed my own heart, even amongst the cold regions of triumphant death. I had anticipated much pleasure in tracing the ancestry of those now become mere dust and ashes, in their mouldering decay beneath our feet, and conjuring up, by the potent spell of imagination, the events and the scenes of former times, when before the altar, the warrior, steel-clad in light armour, pledged the troth of honourable love to some fair dame, who blushed to hear his vow, whilst joy and laughter swelled within her heart, - but the spell was broken, the infant cried, the girl sung to it, whilst the other two made a beautiful see-saw with two forms in the middle aisle, and chaunted the ditty,

"Here we go up, up, up, &cc."

From 'Walks round Nottingham' by 'A Wanderer'.

We can assure today's visitors of a tidy and well kept graveyard with no livestock running amok!

## PAST LORDS OF BARTON MANOR

During the reign of Edward III (1327-1377) the manor of Barton was sold by the Stotevilles to Sir Richard Grey of Codnor, whose family seat (a castle near Heanor) was considered a place of great importance during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The price paid was £800 and with the manor went the family residence, a windmill, a dovecote and 20 acres of lush meadow. The Grey family ownership lasted some 200 years, and it was said the last Lord Grey dabbled in the ancient art of alchemy - the mysterious practice of attempting to turn base metal into silver or gold. Unfortunately his secret formula is no longer known in these parts! On his death in 1496, having no legitimate heirs, he willed Barton to one of his two natural sons, known as 'greater Harry', and little Harry', although history does not specify which one. In 1522, Harry's daughter Elizabeth married Richard, the third son of Sir Henry Sacheverell, Knight of Morley in the County of Derby, and this family retained ownership until 1715.

Barton in Fabis was anciently famous for its lords, the Sacheverells: Henry of 1579 and Rafe of 1605 have inscriptions in the church, and the name Sacheverell is on the beautiful marble tomb. William Sacheverell of 1616 and his wife lie side by side, both in ruffs, with Tabitha in a pretty headdress and flowing gown. But perhaps the greatest of all the family was another William, who rebuilt and enlarged the manor house. He was a famous patriot who, in the latter years of Charles II, boldly opposed the machinations of the Court in the interests of the succession of the fervent Romanist, James, Duke of York, later James II. He was said to be the 'brain of the Party in the House of Commons', for the upholding of Protestantism, and strongly resisted the attempt by James II to give Nottingham a new Charter. For this he was tried before the notorious Judge Jerffreys, who browbeat him and called him 'a little prick-eared knave' and fined him 500 marks. Undeterred, Sacheverell opposed the accession of James, and died at Barton in 1691 having lived to witness the downfall of that monarch. He was an incorruptible politician and is remembered as one of the first of his country's great orators. His son, Robert, represented Nottingham in Parliament almost continuously from 1699 to his death in 1715 and was the last of his line. Following the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth to George Clifton Esq., the lordship passed to a new line.

The Cliftons had been resident in the village which bears their name since 1284, and it was this family who were to become the last great landowners of Barton and Clifton. The member of this family who perhaps left the most permanent legacy to the parish was General Sir Arthur Benjamin Clifton who, in 1839, had Barton Lodge built at the entrance to the village. The house was described in White's Directory of 1844 as 'a beautiful mansion occupying a commanding eminence on the eastern side of the village. 'As Lieutenant General Colonel of the 1st Royal Dragoons, he fought in the Battle of Waterloo and for his heroic deeds was awarded the KCB (Knight Commander of the Order of Bath). In 1837, he succeeded his brother as Squire and it is thought he had The Lodge at Barton built as a dower house - although his mother never went to live there in the end. He was a great friend of the Byron family, particularly Admiral Byron from Newstead Abbey, and there is an 'avenue' in the grounds of The Lodge known as The Admiral's Walkway'. Sir Arthur went on to live to a ripe old age, and died in 1869, just a few months short of his 100th birthday.

During this century, the Clifton family were seen by the villagers as enlightened landlords and held in great regard. In the 1930's, all village children were invited every Christmas to a party in the Octagonal Room at Clifton Hall (with the added treat of being collected in the Moffrey Cart), whereas the adults would attend the New Year Ball. A Christmas tree was always given to Barton School, along with a present for every pupil - bought from Selfridges in London! Come the summer holidays, all the children returned to the Hall for an outdoor tea party. This was a particularly popular event as the Colonel organised different races, and the winners were rewarded with coins from the large 'money sack' he carried with him. Afterwards, the tired but happy participants were transported back to Barton in Mr Rice's horse and cart. Unfortunately, the war years broke the tradition, and come the 1950's the Clifton Estate had been sold to the Nottingham City Corporation to form what was then the largest council estate in Western Europe. By 1960, the whole of Barton was up for sale to sitting tenants.

## THE DOVECOTE

Sadly, there are no remains left of Barton's old Manor House - other than parts of the stable (now converted into Manor Farm), along with a portion of its estate walls on New Road and the high garden wall on Manor Road. Even the Sacheverell Coat of arms, which was fixed upside down on a stone buttress outside the Forge, is no longer legible, but fortunately the old dovecote still stands. In the Middle Ages, and later, the right to keep pigeons and build cotes was a prerogative of the Lords of the Manor. The pigeons were both a means of sustenance and a source of income for them. However, this reservation was a sad injustice to their feudal inferiors, who had to endure watching their crops raided daily by the numerous birds but were unable to protect them, for the shooting of pigeons was an offence that carried severe penalties, and in certain circumstances was punishable by death.

The Barton cote (Nottinghamshire's only remaining octagonal dovecote) stands in the yard of Manor Farm, adjacent to the Dovecote Farm Shop, and is a very attractive and historic listed building. The walls stand sixteen feet high, and there are two stringcourses, one about twelve feet up, the other just under the roof. It measures 82 feet in girth, and the walls are 2 feet 6 inches wide. The nesting places are of plaster, start on a brick foundation and originally numbered 1200. The entrance is through a Glover at the top, and there was a cord to close it up when pigeons were to be caught. On the south side was a plaster coat of arms, probably of the Sacheverell family, and whilst it was being restored in 1980 the interior of one nesting box revealed the inscription '1677 W.S.', so no doubt it was William Sacheverell who had this pretty and interesting cote built.

## BARTON GYPSUM

During the late 15<sup>th</sup> century quarrying became a local industry at Barton, and by 1511 plaster was being taken at 20s a load for the erection of houses in Nottingham. Come 1679 'Gypsum Fever' appeared to be rife in the village, and a too enterprising inhabitant was indicted for 'the digging of alabaster on the Common.' In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Barton had its own gypsum mine on Gotham Hills near Glebe Farm. Thankfully a test pit in Brandshill Wood came to nothing, although

the scar is still plain to see even today, near the Barton entrance to the wood. In pre-war years, the heavily laden train would come down from the mine and being unable to brake, a runner was sent ahead to open the double white gates onto the main road, so it could continue its journey to Barton jetty unhindered! By the 1940's gypsum trains stopped at the main road, where a crane would load the lorries which were destined for Newark, the Thrumpton plaster works and Barton quay having closed by this time.

## **BARTON ON BROADWAY!**

During the reign of Henry VIII, a group of local villagers formed a travelling troupe of actors known as the 'Barton Players 'who regularly performed in Nottingham and the surrounding neighbourhood, far into the reign of Elizabeth I. Strangely, some locals have unknowingly revived the tradition in recent times with their annual murder mystery evening performed in the Village Hall. Obviously this is a far cry from the plays of William Shakespeare, which would undoubtedly have formed part of the repertoire in Elizabethan times, although an open-air performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the garden of The Forge was hailed a side -splitting success only a few years ago!

## **A KING RIDES BY**

It may not be fancy to think that Barton has played a part in one of the great dramas of English history. In the early hours of a May morning, over 300 years ago, villagers might have heard the hard galloping of a small company of horsemen on their way to the river, little dreaming that a king was passing by on a fateful journey, his last ride as a free man.

In 1646, when Charles Stuart had resolved to give himself up to the Scots, he set out for Southwell, reaching Stamford on 31st May. It is believed that he crossed the Trent near Gotham in his anxiety to miss Nottingham, and if this is were so, nothing is more likely than that he would cross by Barton Ferry, and ride on past the very door of Henry Ireton's old home at Attenborough. Ireton was one of the Royalists' most feared and hated enemies, and also one of the finest characters on the Parliamentary side. He certainly played a major role in the downfall of Charles Stuart, for it was he who drew up the Army's Remonstrance, which was to help seal the King's doom.

There is no doubt that this story is linked in some way with a more supernatural tale, whereby it is said that fishermen, on the bank of the Trent at Barton Ferry, are used to the sight of a bedraggled platoon of mounted Roundheads wading across the river towards the church at Attenborough!

## **WORKING THE LAND**

As with most small rural communities, agriculture has been the mainstay of Barton's economy for many hundreds of years, although the last fifty years have seen the community's reliance on this way of life dramatically decline. During Saxon times villagers held strips of land which they worked with teams of oxen, on a three year rotation, under the supervision of Barton Manor Court. This was known as The Three Field or Open Field System, and the undulations of the ridge and furrow ploughing can still be seen around the village today, particularly at the end of the bridleway which

runs from Chestnut Lane to the river. By 1086 the Domesday Book recorded Barton to be a thriving community of over 200 persons and 11 plough teams.

Come medieval times, certain areas of 'common' land within the parish were used for communal grazing of livestock owned by the villagers. Up until the 2nd World War fields at the end of Chestnut Lane and the hills adjacent to Brandshill Wood were still used in this way, along with more marginal land on Barton Moor. In fact some residents still remember cultivating the old style ridge and furrow strips on the moor, as well as spending many hours driving cattle from the village to the common pastures for fresh grazing.

During the reign of Henry VIII, Barton was noted for the copious amount of coarse beans it produced, although no doubt some cereals were also grown. Moving through the centuries it appears little changed, for a document from 1910 tells us that the chief crops grown were wheat, barley, oats, roots and beans - obviously by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the village was still living up to its name! In fact, the landscape itself probably changed very little from late Tudor times until the Enclosure Act of 1760 which saw many of the open fields divided up by hawthorn hedges and the virtual end to 'common rights'. Fortunately, in Barton, two of the historic open fields of the area were preserved, for Barton Moor and Clifton Pasture were never enclosed, and the latter is said to be the largest unenclosed area of farmland in Britain.

However, the advent of World War 2 and the ensuing years dramatically altered the agricultural scene. Any land that was not used for arable farming came under pressure to grow crops and the villagers' rights to common land were taken away and never returned. But most significant of all as agents for change were tractors, and the farm horse, that steady and trusty worker on whom man had relied for hundreds of years began to lose its central position on the farm. Nevertheless one local farmer, Harry Plowright, was determined to carry on the heavy horse tradition in Barton. Up until the early 1970's his shires could be seen plodding around the village taking feed to the beef cattle kept in the yards. One old horse, Myra, knew the route so well she could make the trips unaccompanied! Harry's passion was always for greys, and he was well known in horse circles around the country. He supplied Shipstone's Brewery with horses from 1946, until they discontinued horse-drawn deliveries in the 1970's and went on to sell to Whitbread's until his death in 1990. Sadly, these days are now gone, and mechanisation continues apace, yet Barton's soil remains fertile and productive for those who work it today.

## **THAT FAMOUS CHEESE**

In the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, Barton was becoming noted for the number of its dairies, and the cheese they produced. The Harrison family specialised in Colwick cheese, which they sold with their fruit and vegetables in Nottingham on Wednesdays and Saturdays. As well as sharing a stall in the Market Square, they supplied eminent local businesses including the Black Boy Hotel and King's Grocery Shop in Friar Lane. In 1928, they moved into the Central Market, and continued selling there until it closed.



Cheese making had its own routine and implements - milk was collected daily from local farmers, and put into a large panshun. Rennet (from the inner membrane of a cow's stomach) was used to separate the milk into curds and whey. After separation, the whey was skimmed off and the curds put into 8" tins to drain. The cheese was then taken out and put on boards to ripen off.

Along with some other local traditions, cheese making has not continued in the village, and to the best of our knowledge, Colwick cheese has disappeared too. It is still well remembered by older residents, who recall it being similar to Brie in appearance and consistency, although to them far superior in taste!

## **FROM TAVERNS TO TEA-HOUSES VIA BARTON FERRY**

Barton folk have never known a pub in the village within living memory (although the Village Hall does open its bar twice a week – on Wednesday evening and Sunday lunchtime), but in 1676 it boasted two taverns to serve only '86 inhabitants of age to partake of the sacrament!' One old inn, known as The Elm Tree, was still serving at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but for some reason the Clifton family had it closed. Whether this was due to rowdy goings-on of a Saturday night, or because of their own 'Victorian Values' no one can be sure, but Barton has never been known for its alehouses since!

Come Victorian times, the village was nevertheless renowned for its abundance of tea- houses, and it seemed almost every cottage would genially invite you to 'tea and hot water'. During the summer months people visited from far and wide (including from Nottingham itself), and no doubt part of the pleasure was the trip on the ferry from Attenborough where two flat-bottomed rowing boats were used to take passengers to and fro across the Trent. In the 1930's, on a sunny Sunday afternoon, it was common for 200 or more people to have queued on either bank of the Trent, waiting for George Chamberlain or his son Arthur, who lived at Ferry Cottage, to take them across. If on reaching the village the 'trippers' felt too hot for tea, then they could always sample the home-made ice cream served by the Towers family at Pear Tree Cottage. By the late 1940's, this tradition of teas had come to an end. Many of the quaint old cottages which served them were pulled down to make way for the new council houses, but the ferry continued to run. In the 1950's it was operated by Arthur Tindall, who lived at the ferry house (now demolished) on the Attenborough side of the river, and it was not unknown for cattle or even Shire horses to be brought over by boat! Amazingly, the service continued, (albeit spasmodically) until the early 1960s.

## **HOWZAT**

By 1870 Barton boasted its own cricket club, playing their home fixtures in William Rice's field near the Trent, by the Ferry. During summer months, the ritual was to remove cowpats from the outfield before play commenced, and then to often run cattle off the pitch during the match. Unfortunately, none of the old scorebooks survived, and we can only guess whether 'cattle stopped play' was formally recorded in them! Due to the Trent's proximity, balls were often lost, and money for replacements was raised by selling teas, which were carried from the village by members of the Harrison family.

Fixtures were mainly with other village sides, but organisation was rather haphazard. On one Saturday morning Barton's team set off for a match with Clifton Village, only to meet the Clifton team on the top of Mill Hill - travelling to their away fixture at Barton!

A family who at one time had 4 brothers in the team was the Picks - Buck, George, Philip and Johnny. Buck's grandson Andy played for Nottinghamshire CCC many years later, so the talent obviously passed through the generations. The team eventually disbanded in 1963, when Colonel Clifton sold all his land, including the cricket pitch, which was turned over to arable use.

## **THE VILLAGE SCHOOL**

Records do not tell us when Barton School was first built, but they do reveal the village was without one in 1743, yet in 1832 a schoolmaster named John Barrow was in post. By 1874 the school had been enlarged and in 1882 a house was built for the schoolmistress, who at that time was a Miss Mary Newman. Come 1912 the school was classed as mixed Public Elementary, with 80 children on the roll and an average attendance of 53 - it would appear Frederick Wood (schoolmaster at that time) had more than a few truants to deal with! Come 1945 the register had dropped to 26 children who were taught in two groups by Mrs Deakin, the Headmistress, and Kath Robertson.

Many people still living in the village today fondly remember Mrs Deakin, and past pupils often recount amusing stories from their days at Barton School. On one occasion a certain young boy did not wish to spend the weekend learning his part for the school play, no doubt preferring to be off playing football or cricket. By chance Mrs Deakin overheard him saying, 'Not even the King 'imself could make me learn those lines!', yet come Monday morning the lad knew the part by heart. Amazed, and also very pleased, Mrs Deakin listened to him recite the lines without faltering and then calmly said, 'Well, I'm glad you think I have more authority than the King himself!'

Another story which illustrates the awe in which her pupils held her, tells of a concerned villager who had repeatedly seen a youngster smoking. The following day, Mrs Deakin stood at the front of the senior class and declared she would like the culprit to stand up and admit his or her guilt. Unfortunately the intended public shaming of a certain individual rather backfired when every pupil in the class stood up - apart from the one responsible!

Barton School finally closed in 1962. Unfortunately only 1 child out of a 17 attended school on the last day. No, the other 16 weren't protesting - they all had measles!

Happily, children's voices can still be heard echoing around the building due to the many community activities which now take place in what is now the Village Hall, opposite the church

## **"RIVER'S UP MISSUS!"**

The old saying 'February fill-dyke' had particular relevance in Barton, for like many villages close to

the Trent, it was prone to flooding. Near the village crossroads stands an old flood-marker which shows the height to which the water came in February 1795 - more than four feet above road level. Seventeen thirty-six was also a bad year for floods - Joseph Milner, Barton's Rector at that time wrote: "It began to rain on Fryday the second Day of July, 1736, about six in the Evening and continued raining incessantly till Monday following, about eight or nine in the morning, when the Trent swell'd to that Degree, that about five a clock the same evening the water was twelve or thirteen inches deep all over the Church Floor, which is the more remarkable, because the water was never Known to rise up to the wall of the Church, in the memory of the oldest person now alive."

During the 1950s and 60's, villagers would keep a close eye on the floodwater once it reached Cottager's Gate at the end of Chestnut Lane, worrying as to whether another night of rain might mean all their furniture and carpets would have to be moved upstairs, and anything particularly heavy raised on bricks. Of course, all the children viewed their parents' ordeal as a big adventure whereby they might get the chance to sail along the village roads in a rowing boat; and in addition to the sandbags at the door were often ducks, and even swans, waiting to be fed! In the long run there was not much fun to be had, for once the water receded houses took many days to dry out, and the smell that remained was very unpleasant!

Fortunately, these unwelcome episodes in Barton's history were finally put paid to in 1968, with the construction of the present flood bank, which has so far withstood the test of time and torrential rain! The river can be reached via two bridleways, one which runs from the end of Brown Lane and the other from Chestnut Lane. Birdlife is abundant on the river and in the surrounding fields. The diversity is helped by the area lying opposite Attenborough Nature Reserve. Examples of birdlife include Great Crested Grebe, Tufted Duck, Yellow & Grey Wagtail and Kingfisher.

## THE SMITHY

The Smithy (now known as The Forge) is one of the oldest cottages still standing in Barton today. During the time of the Sacheverells a great many dignitaries made regular visits to the Manor, and if their entourage of footmen, grooms and the like could not all be accommodated there, the attic room over the smithy was often used as their sleeping quarters.

As well as being home to the village blacksmith, it is thought once to have been a local alehouse and also the village bakery: certainly a very large old brick-built oven still stands in what is now the kitchen. However, it can be said with certainty that the Post Office was once situated there, and records from 1864, when John Oliver was blacksmith, state: 'Post Office at John Oliver's, letters arrive at 9.30 am and are despatched at 5.30pm' - obviously villagers did not expect to read the mail over breakfast in those days! A window on the east side of the house has the following inscription: 'Lizzie Oliver, Barton. June 7<sup>th</sup> 1889' etched into the glass, and serves as a pleasant reminder of past occupants.

The blacksmith who lived and worked at The Smithy during living memory was Tom Mills, whose

father George took over from the Olivers around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Tom was a skilled man who could make shoes for the daintiest pony to the heaviest shire, along with mending farm implements, making field gates and producing extremely fine wrought-iron work. He also possessed one most unusual skill (considering heavy work was his routine) and this was his ability to create the most intricate icing on wedding cakes ever imaginable. Right up until the 1960's, if a marriage was planned in the village, Sally (Tom's sister) was asked to bake the cake, to which Tom would add the artistic finish!

## SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

From the 1860s through to the 1960s shopping facilities were abundant compared to today, particularly considering the size of the village. As already mentioned, the first recorded Post Office was at the Smithy, but at least six other houses have served this function through till 1998, when Ann Austin ended 18 years service from her home in Manor Road.

Barton children, like those everywhere, have always had a sweet tooth, and perhaps the best remembered sweet shop was 'Ruth's', at what is now The Old Post Office in Brown Lane. She started her shop in the 1930's from a tiny room in her old beamed cottage, took over the Post Office in 1947 and also sold some basic groceries and household items. The small shop window was always crammed with old-fashioned jars of colourful sweets and lollipops, there to entice passing children inside to spend their pocket money. In fact getting inside often presented a problem, as space only allowed five bodies at the most - two standing, whilst three sat waiting their turn on the old wooden pop crates lined up against the back wall. The pace of life in those days probably added to the cramped conditions as there was no rush to be in and out of the door, for shops like Ruth Sherman's acted as a focal point for community life. Here people could meet up, exchange views and gossip, or generally put the world to rights, which often proved a lengthy process!

For many years, there was a shop at the village crossroads, which in the 1930's and 40's was run by Jack and Doris Priestly as the Post Office and General Stores. Prior to this, it was both the village bakery and butchers, and it is said that if ever a body was found in the river, it also served as the local mortuary!

As well as the village shops, over the years Barton has been well served by mobile shops. The older villagers remember the Haywoods and the Smiths who brought freshly baked bread to Barton, and the pork seller whose visit every Tuesday night meant an ample supply of scratchings for the children! Mr Barks the paraffin seller is also remembered, but his sideline of groceries never seemed to sell so well - perhaps nobody ever told the unfortunate fellow that they always smelt of paraffin! These days Barton has a farm shop, but villagers need to travel further afield for most of their requirements. Even in Victorian times Barton was not equipped to sell the finer things in life, and local carriers (including the Harrisons, Hibbards and Paynes) took passengers to Nottingham on Wednesdays and Saturdays to supplement their basic supplies. No doubt in those days a trip to the city was a major outing for village folk - how times have changed!

## PUTTING ON A SHOW

Every village needs its special occasions to bring people together, and in recent years few events compare with Barton's Flower and Vegetable Show in early September. Even though it has only been a feature of village life over the last 20 years or so, the show has become one of the events which is eagerly anticipated, and provokes much banter, gossip and rumour before, during and after it takes place in early September. The Harrison family, who were market gardeners in Barton for several generations, are the driving force behind it, and are also the family everyone wants to beat - but rarely do! The show attracts entries from further afield than the village itself and competitors vie to see if their exhibits can match those grown in good Barton soil! In addition to the Produce Show, the community has many other activities centred around the village hall and the church. The village hall hosts parties, celebrations, the Tuesday luncheon club, whist drives (which attract people from outside the village), keep fit classes and more. In recognition of its contribution to community life, it was awarded the 'Best Run Village Hall in Nottinghamshire' prize in 1998. Every July, St George's Church provides the perfect setting for the colourful displays created for the annual Flower Festival, and many residents also open their gardens to the public. Barton's well earned reputation for gardening was sealed in 2012 when the village won the Best Small Village category in East Midlands in Bloom, along with a Special Judges' Award for the work in the churchyard to encourage wildlife.

From 40 dwellings in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Barton has now grown to 90 and is home to approximately 250 adults and children. It is a happy, thriving community made up of people from all walks of life, and although many changes have been seen over the years the parish has retained its essentially rural character and local distinctiveness:-

Here where the village lies, within the rivers curve,  
Where sails slip by on sunny Sunday afternoons,  
Where shadows stretch across the harvest fields,  
And herons fly;  
Here we have lived, and passed a precious time.  
I pray you, Father, bless the people of this place;  
Your grace bestow on each and everyone,  
Pour out your spirit on the Church, that She  
Holds fast the Word  
And shines a witness bright, through time,  
Into eternity.

1st Royal Dragoons, 6  
 A Wanderer, 5  
 Admiral Byron, 6  
 Ann Austin, 13  
 Archbishop of York, 4  
 Arthur Tindall, 10  
 Attenborough, 1, 8, 10, 12  
 axe head, 2  
 Bartholomew de Agnani, 4  
 Barton, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,  
 14  
 Barton Ferry, 1, 8  
 Barton Lodge, 6  
 Barton Moor, 8, 9  
 Barton on Trent, 3  
 Barton Players, 7  
 Barton School, 6, 11  
 Battle of Waterloo, 6  
 Beretun, 3  
 Black Boy Hotel, 9  
 Black Death, 4  
 Brandshill Wood, 1, 7, 8  
 British Hill., 2  
 Bronze Age sword, 2  
 Castle Museum, 3  
 Charles II, 5  
 Charles Stuart, 8  
 Cheese, 9  
 Chestnut Lane, 8, 12  
 Church of St George, 1  
 Clifton Hall, 6  
 Clifton Pasture, 9  
 Cliftons, 3, 6  
 Colwick cheese, 9  
 cricket club, 10  
 Crop marks, 2  
 Danes, 3  
 Dean of Nottingham, 4  
 Domesday Book, 8  
 Dovecote, 7  
 Dovecote Farm Shop, 7  
 Duke of York, 5  
 East Midlands in Bloom, 14  
 Edward III, 5  
 Elizabeth I, 7  
 Enclosure Act, 9  
 Ferry Cottage, 10  
 Flower and Vegetable Show, 14  
 Flower Festival, 14  
 Frederick Wood, 11  
 Friar Lane, 9  
 Garbythorpe, 3  
 General Sir Arthur Benjamin Clifton, 6  
 George Chamberlain, 10  
 George Clifton Esq, 6  
 Glebe Farm, 2, 7  
 Gotham, 7, 8  
 Gypsum, 7  
 Harrison family, 9, 10, 14  
 Harry Plowright, 9  
 Henry III, 4  
 Henry VIII, 3, 7, 8  
 home-made ice cream, 10  
 Iron Age, 2  
 James II, 5  
 John Barrow, 11  
 Joseph Milner, Barton's, 11  
 Judge Jerffreys, 5  
 Kath Robertson, 11  
 Knight of Morley, 5  
 Lenton Priory, 4  
 Lizzie Oliver, 12  
 mace head, 2  
 Miss Mary Newman, 11  
 mosaic floor, 2  
 Mrs Deakin, 11  
 Neolithic stone, 2  
 Newstead Abbey, 6  
 Octagonal Room, 6  
 Pear Tree Cottage, 10  
 Peverils, 3  
 Pope, 4  
 River Trent, 2  
 Roman, 2, 3  
 Rome, 4  
 Roundheads, 8  
 Ruth Sherman, 13  
 Saxon, 3, 8  
 Sir Henry Sacheverell, 5  
 Sir Richard Grey of Codnor, 5  
 Southwell, 8  
 Stotevilles, 5  
 sweet shop, 13  
 tessellated pavement, 2  
 The Forge, 7, 12  
 Thomas de Raley, 4  
 Thrumpton., 1  
 Tom Mills, 12  
 Towers family, 10  
 Trent Valley Way, 2  
 Viking, 3  
 Village Hall, 7, 10, 11, 14  
 Walks round Nottingham, 5  
 William Sacheverell, 5, 7