

Explore Your Archive

Explore Your Archive is a joint campaign delivered by The National Archives and the Archives and Records Association across the UK and Ireland

Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre



Muddy construction site, 1979

Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre's Archive & Reference Library has been collecting material focusing on the development of the new town for over 30 years. The collection includes records, maps, plans, artwork and images telling the story of the building of Milton Keynes. These materials are used by the local community to discover their new town heritage, by artists who are inspired by the design and ethos of Milton Keynes, and by academics from all over the world who research the methods used to build the UK's largest post-war planned development.

The Image Archive contains hundreds of slides and photographic prints telling the visual story of the development of Milton Keynes. From early views when the city was just fields, to construction work, newly built houses on estates like Fullers Slade, Tinkers Bridge and Downs Barn, innovative energy projects like HomeWorld and FutureWorld, the linear parks and green spaces, and a variety of events.



View looking north east from Central Milton Keynes over fields towards Willen Lake (under construction), 1975.



Fullers Slade Housing. View of the front elevation of three storey terraced housing with car parking at Blackdown, c1975.



Caldecotte Lake Pub, c1985.

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Living Archive MK



Wolverton Pool, 1964

For over 30 years we have been collecting primary source evidence of life in the Milton Keynes area. We currently hold over 2500 hours of oral history interviews, over 700,000 images, 600 hours of film and many contemporary diaries, letters, journals, logs and company papers dating back to the mid-19th century. These have inspired creative activities that have acted as a focus for community celebration and pride – documentary plays, community heritage books, education packs, original songs, multi-media exhibitions, websites, DVDs and films.



A wedding party at the Scout Hall, 1960

The Taylor Brown Collection was presented to the Living Archive Milton Keynes by Bernice Taylor Brown (née Brown) in order to preserve the large number of records and memorabilia which had been collected by both the Taylor and Brown families since the late 19th century. The collection includes items from both World Wars; information relating to Wolverton Works and various leisure activities in Wolverton; family history including certificates of birth, marriage and death; family photographs, and souvenir newspapers relating to the Royal family. The wedding dress and accessories worn by Beryl Taylor when she married Frank Brown in 1939 are also held in the collection. Three audio cassettes of interviews with Bernice Taylor Brown talking about the members of her family and their lives are also included.



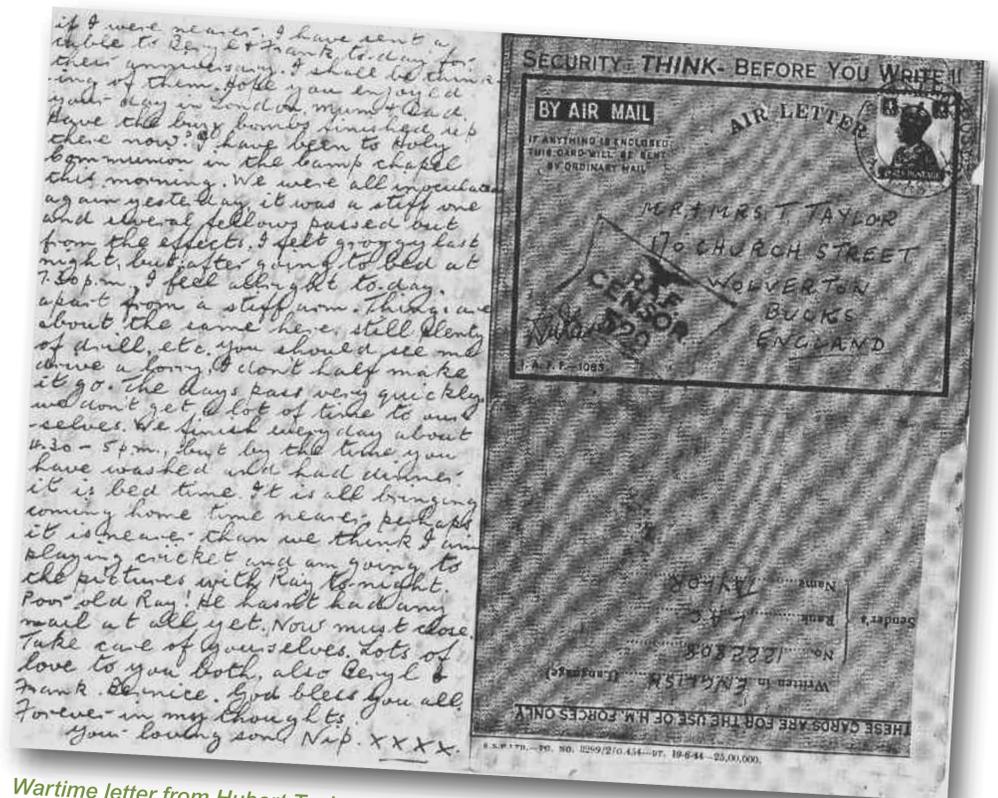
Payment advice from British Railways Workshops



Frank Brown and colleagues, Wolverton Works finishing shop



Co-operative shop in Jersey Road Wolverton, 1911



Wartime letter from Hubert Taylor to his parents, 1944



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Bow Brickhill History Society



The Society was formed ten years ago to create a digital record of the growing number of documents and photographs relating to Bow Brickhill which were coming to light, often as a consequence of the internet.

We hold around 24 gigabytes of data, in approximately 6,000 files. The contents include old photographs of Bow Brickhill and events held in the village, sound files of interviews, videos, images of conveyances, press cuttings and artefacts. Because there is no facility in the village for storage of documents or artefacts, all remain in private ownership, with the Society retaining a digital copy.

Using these resources the Society has produced several publications: **'Village Walk'**, **'Memories of a Bow Brickhill Boy'**, **'Bow Brickhill during the Great War'**, and most recently, **'The Stone Walls of Bow Brickhill'**. We also present the village history in the form of drama at community events.



Hill Top House, 1979



Junction Street, 1925



Ancient Order of Foresters Annual Whitsun Party, 1890s



George V Silver Jubilee, Carter's Field



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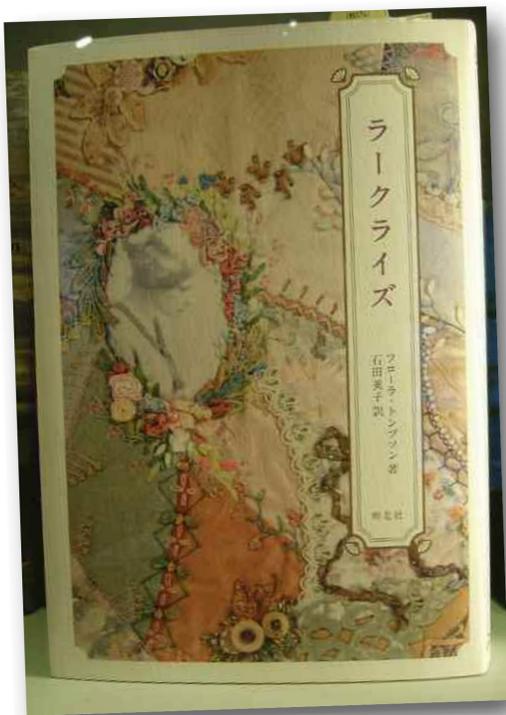
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Buckingham Old Gaol



Laura's dress from the BBC series of 'Lark Rise'

Flora Thompson, famed for her book **'Lark Rise to Candleford'** is celebrated in special displays in the Old Gaol. She is one of Buckingham's famous women as her childhood growing up in a hamlet in the north Bucks countryside is mirrored in **'Lark Rise'**. Her typewriter forms a centre piece of the display alongside a collection of her writings, first editions, translations and articles about her and her works. Costumes and props from the BBC production of **'Lark Rise'** are also on show.



'Lark Rise' in Japanese translation

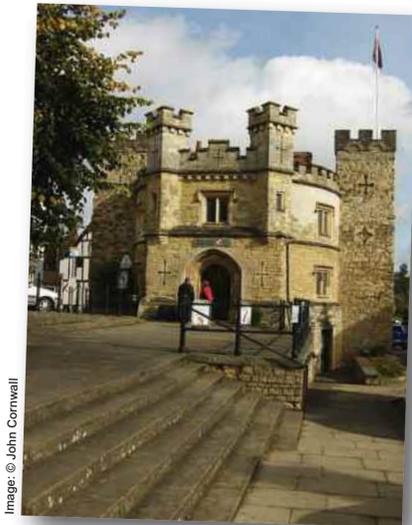


Image: © John Cornwall

Buckingham Old Gaol: Museum, Gift Shop, Tourist Office, Venue Hire.

The old cells now house the story of Buckingham, from prehistory to modern times, including some Anglo Saxon silver pennies from the Lenborough Hoard. Also displays part of the Bucks Military Museum Trust's collection and the Flora Thompson collection.



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Cowper & Newton Museum



COWPER & NEWTON MUSEUM

The Cowper & Newton Museum in Olney opened in 1900, in the house where the poet William Cowper once lived (1768 – 86). The museum rapidly acquired an important archive of manuscripts and letters relating to the poet and his family. The museum also has a collection of personal notebooks and letters written by the Reverend John Newton, writer of 'Amazing Grace'. Local history materials continue to be added to the archive, including documents, photographs, printed matter and ephemera. The town's surviving Poor Law records have also been digitised.

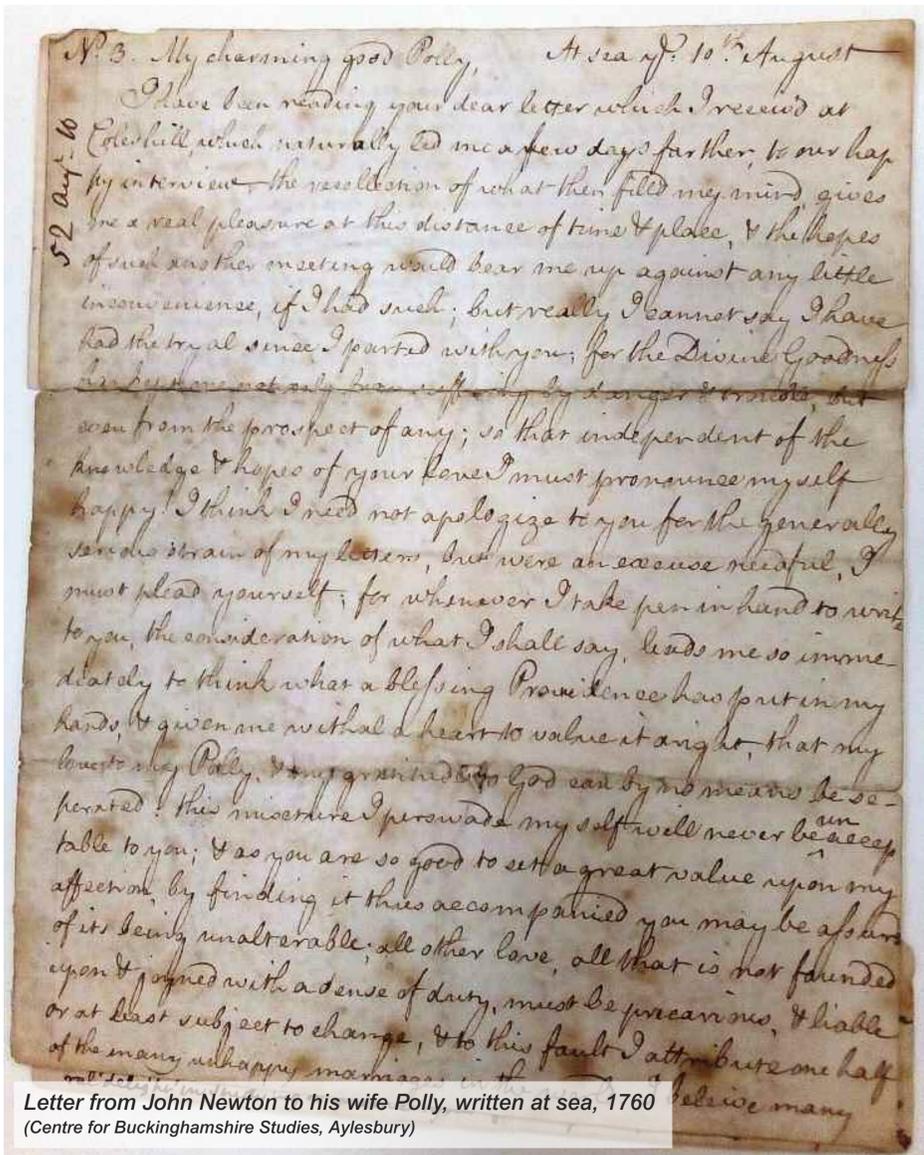


William Cowper

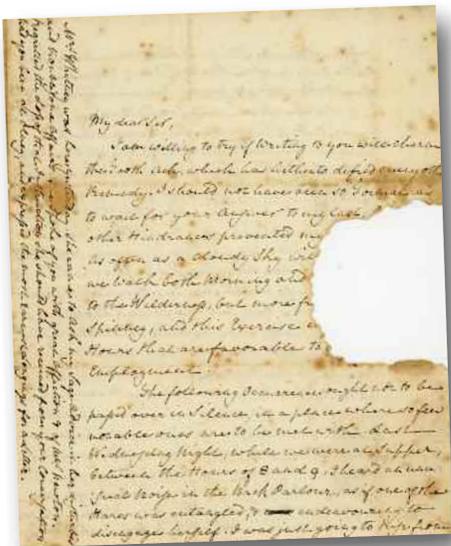


John Newton

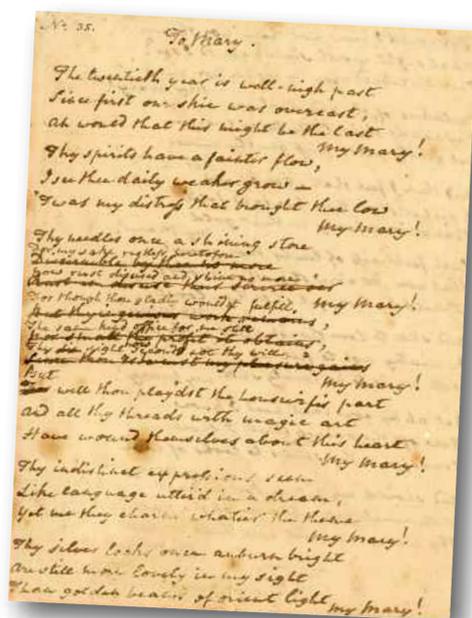
In the year 2000 the Cowper and Newton archive material was lodged at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies in Aylesbury to ensure its long-term survival. It has been recently re-catalogued. The Olney local history collection continues to grow, augmented by books in the museum's library, and is open to researchers on request, in writing, to the House Manager.



Letter from John Newton to his wife Polly, written at sea, 1760 (Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury)



William Cowper's letter to John Newton, 21 August 1780, describing the antics of his runaway hare (Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury)



'My Mary', original manuscript in William Cowper's hand (on display at the Museum)



Illustration from 'The Rural Walks of Cowper', 1822



Mary Unwin (née Cawthorne) (1724-1796)



The Earl of Dartmouth land survey 1796 - Olney, Warrington and Bradwell Abbey



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The Open University



Baroness Betty Boothroyd,
Chancellor of The Open
University from 1995-2006

The Open University is famous across the world for providing flexible and innovative distance teaching, which has seen over 2 million students receive an education since its creation in 1969.

Celebrating its 50th birthday in 2019, the University's headquarters are based in Milton Keynes at the Walton Hall Campus.

The Open University Archive is located within the **Betty Boothroyd** Library Building. Collections include, amongst others, the papers of **Jennie Lee** – one of the founders of the University under Prime Minister **Harold Wilson**, and the Betty Boothroyd Collection (first woman Speaker of the House of Commons and Chancellor of The Open University from 1994-2006). The largest collection contains the University's teaching materials – which includes around 20,000 audio and video items, printed course materials and examples of Home Experiment Kits.



Jennie Lee, co-founder of The Open University laying the foundation stone for the original Library building in 1973

A selection of archive material, including original television programmes, images and online exhibitions is available on the OU Digital Archive.

Learn more about the OU Archive collections and access the OU Digital Archive by visiting:
www.open.ac.uk/library/library-resources/the-open-university-archive



1995 aerial photograph
of The Open University
Campus in Milton
Keynes c.1995



2012 aerial
photograph of
The Open
University
Campus in
Milton Keynes



A Science Home Experiment Kit
sent to Open University students
in the early 1970s

An Open University television set, 1972



All images: © The Open University



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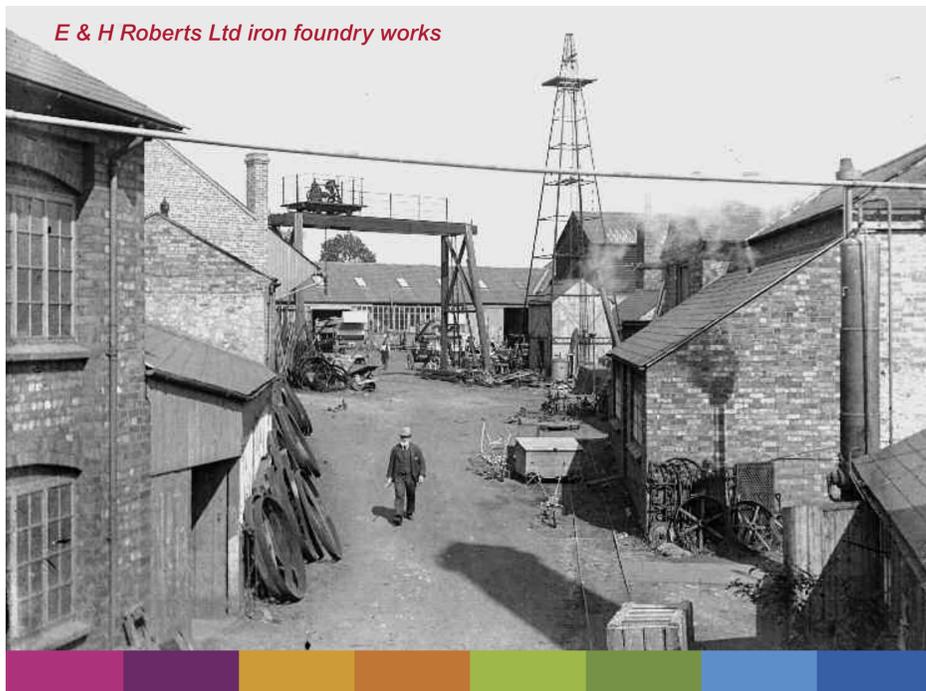
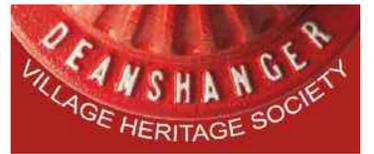
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Deanshanger Village Heritage Society

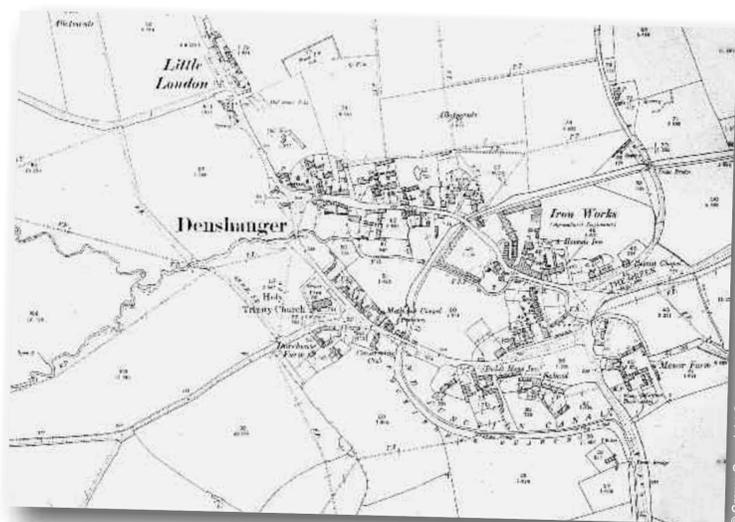


E & H Roberts Ltd iron foundry works

Deanshanger Village Heritage Society (DVHS) established in 1999, preserves and promotes the extraordinary history of a rural community in South Northamptonshire that was propelled into the industrial age. A proactive society, we successfully engage with village schools and the local and wider community. We also undertake projects to improve the local environment helping to protect the village's future.

Our archives record the development of the village from the Iron Age to present day with a strong bias on industrial and social history told through documents, photographs, and an active **DVHS Memories Team** which collects oral history interviews.

The opening of the Buckingham Arm of the Grand Junction Canal on May 1st 1801 that ran through the heart of the village gave rise to the development of two internationally renowned businesses, the Victorian Iron Foundry and Agricultural Implements and Machinery manufacturer, E & H Roberts Ltd, which grew from a small smithy established in 1820 and operated until 1927 and the Oxide Works that operated from 1935 at the same canal-side site and became the largest factory of its type in Western Europe, finally closing in 1999.



1884 Deanshanger map showing the route of the Canal through the village



Boating on the Canal, c1910

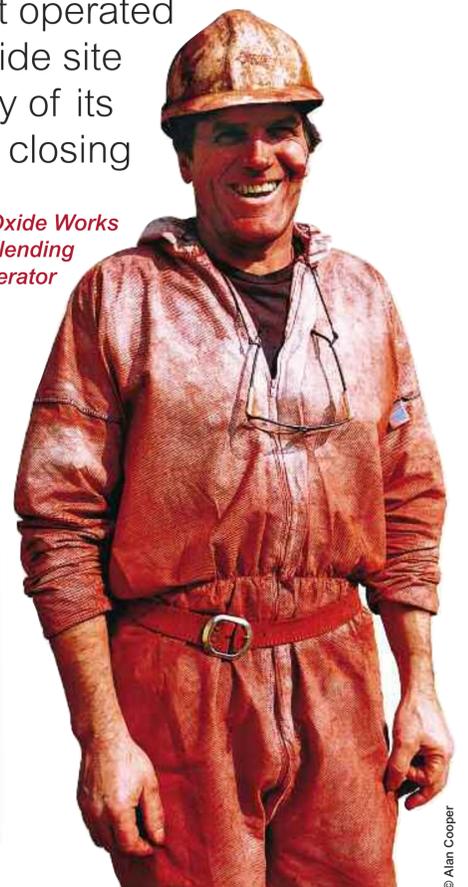


A 1921 Bill of Sale from E & H Roberts Ltd depicting its award-winning Mephisto Plough



Aerial view of the Oxide Works factory, showing the notorious red and yellow pigment staining of the local area

Oxide Works Blending Operator



© Alan Cooper

All images: © DVHS unless otherwise stated

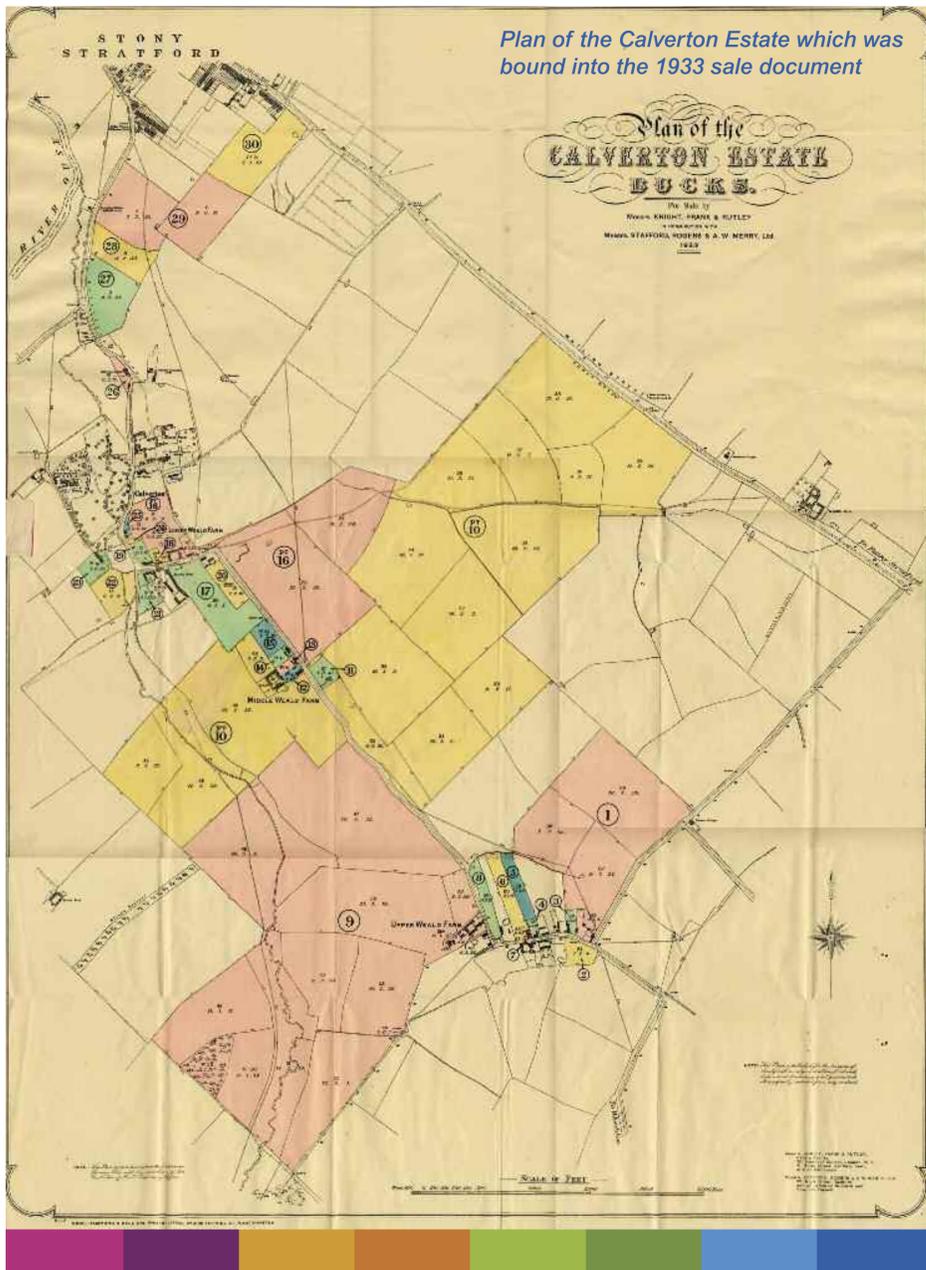


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Calverton Records Project

CALVERTON RECORDS PROJECT



CRP scan - document loaned by Eric West

The Calverton Records Project was started more than 20 years ago. The objectives of the project are to uncover the past of Calverton, and to record its present for the future. The area covered focuses on the village of Calverton with its associated small hamlets of Lower, Middle and Upper Weald but includes all the agricultural land out to the original medieval parish boundaries. Our researches have extended the recorded period back some 4000 years to include Bronze Age archaeology, and forward through living memories up to the new Millennium.

The early story of Calverton is about land and agriculture. One of the most illuminating documents in our collection is the Calverton Estate Sale Plan and Lot descriptions of 1933. It lists all the property and land belonging Lord Egmont which was put up for sale after his death in 1932. The majority of properties in Calverton have an agricultural heritage and this document gives a snapshot of who lived in them, what they paid in rent and what the buildings must have been like to live in during the early part of the last century. This document also provided the backbone for further researches on individual properties and the inspiration for Calverton's Millennium Domesday Project which recorded their modern day occupants and their experiences of living in the village. These 'records of the present' (as it then was) were buried in a time capsule in the Church and should make interesting reading for some future generation when compared with the Estate Sale particulars of 1933 and the original Domesday Survey of the village around 1086.



Nos. 7 & 8 Middle Weald



Burying the time capsule containing modern Domesday documents in Calverton's All Saints Church



Lot description Nos. 8 & 9 Middle Weald



Villagers after the burial of Calverton's Millennium time capsule in the church



Frederick Joseph Trevelyan Perceval 10th Earl of Egmont



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Caz Tricks Collection

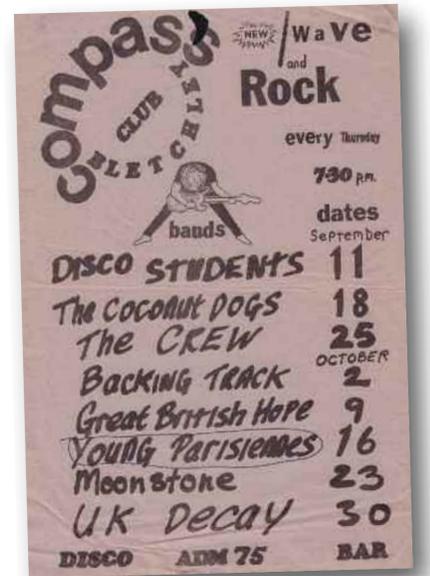
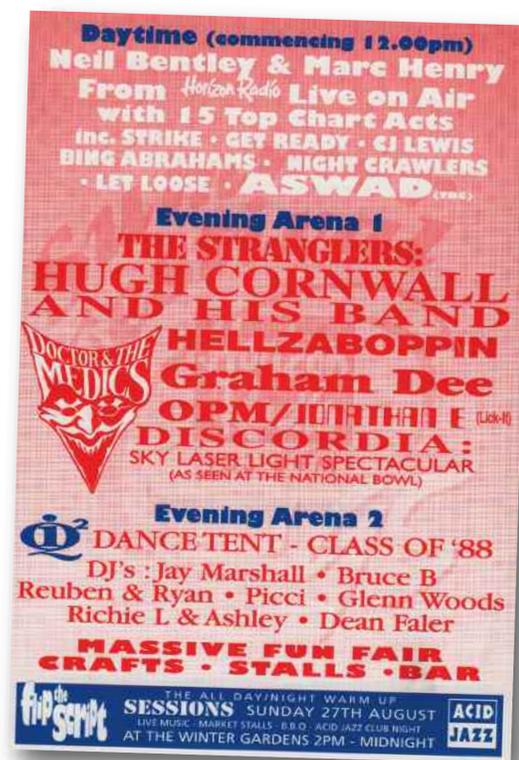
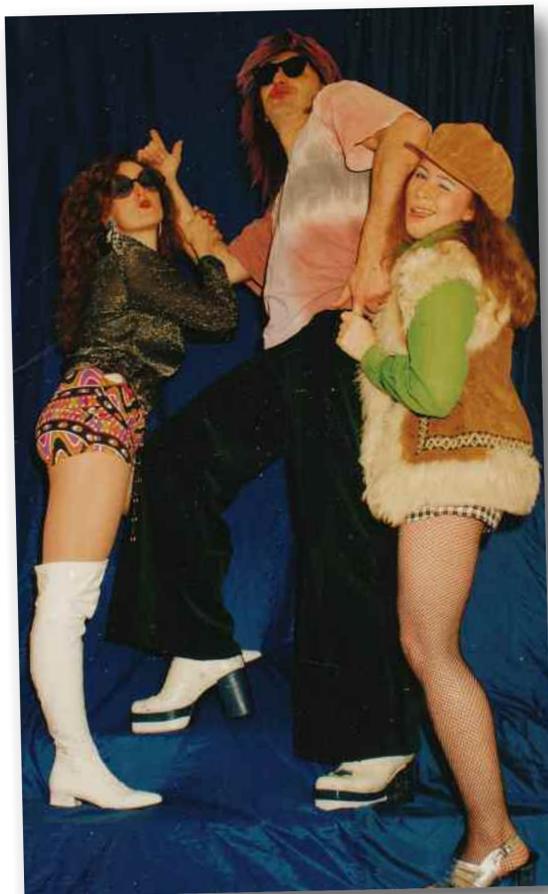
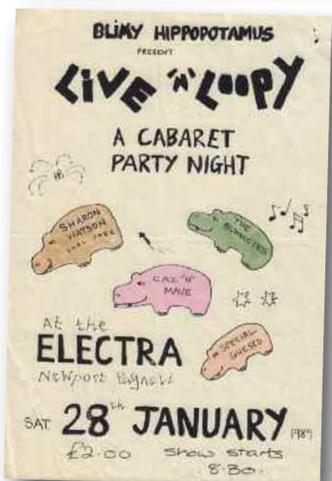
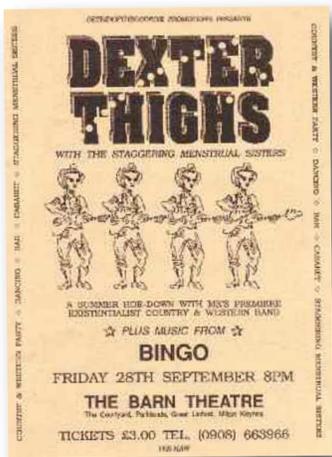


A promotional photo shoot with The Blues Collective, 1990

Caz Tricks has been very active on the local arts scene for many years. Singing in bands like The Blues Collective and acting, producing and directing stage performances. She's maintained her keen interest in a variety of art forms. This collection is a window on one woman's experience of the local – and wider – arts community, and features promotional photos, images of stage performances, posters and press cuttings from the 1980s to present day.



The Blues Collective performing at the Grosvenor House Hotel, 1993



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Syd and Jean Pearson Collection

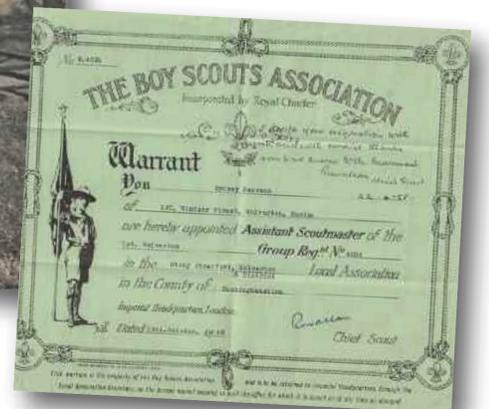


Syd and Jean amassed a huge collection of photos and memorabilia of their activities in local dramatic arts and (in Syd's case) in the Boy Scouts. Their collection of posters and programmes from local events and performances is a valuable record of the community effort and talent that entertained the growing population of the Milton Keynes area. In addition, there's a further collection of photographs of the productions and audio and video records of rehearsals and shows.

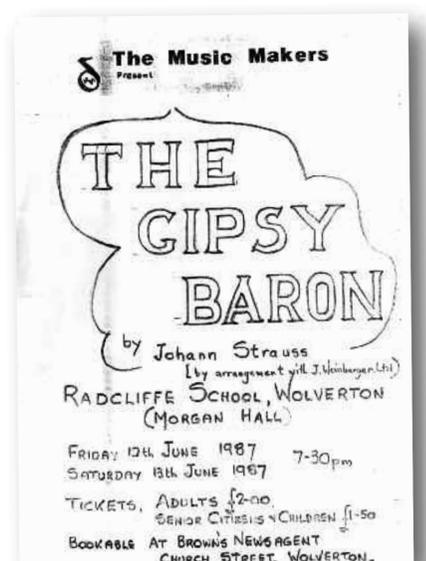
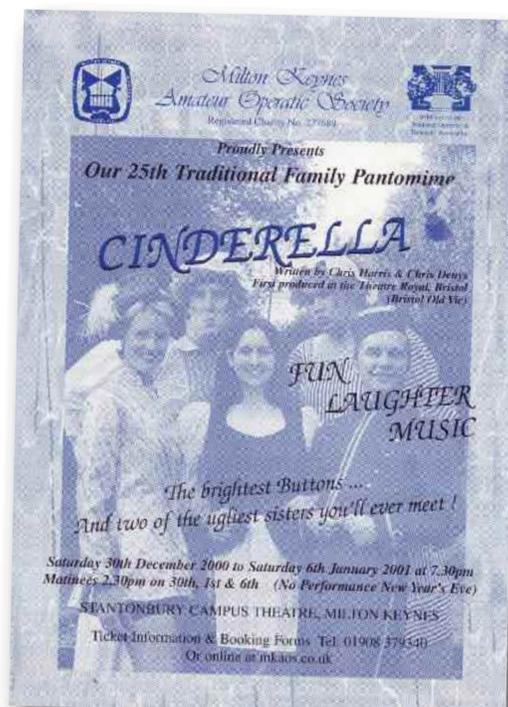
Syd's time in the Scouts is well documented in the collection, with a whole range of camping kit, photographs, badges and papers, including certificates, hike reports and committee minutes.



Syd Pearson (2nd right standing) with international Scouts



The Merry Widow, 1985



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