

# Ongar Millennium History Society Newsletter

## August 2017

Welcome to the August newsletter, a little shorter this quarter. We have the AGM in September which will be held at the library. We would encourage all to come along to hear that latest news and the talk that we are planning for the event.

**Jenny Main, Editor**

### **Committee members**

Chair	Vacancy	Vice Chair + Newsletter	Jenny Main
Treasurer	Kathleen Jenkins	Venues Sec.	Tonia Hart
Secretary	Sandra Dear	Membership+Speaker Sec.	Lorna Vaux
Archive	Vacancy	Committee Member	Lawrence Mendoza
		Committee Member	Felicite Barnes

### **A day in the life of Mr Potter, surgeon of Ongar**

It is rare to get a glimpse of the work of a medical practitioner a century or more ago. However the *Essex Standard* of 2 July 1875 provides a brief glimpse of Frank Dobson Potter's work in the previous month. Potter lived and practiced from Greylands in the High Street, a house that was built for him, complete with a consulting room and a side door for patient access, an integral part of the architect's design.

Potter was called to Ongar police station late in the evening of 14 June to examine a young man who had been found unconscious in a field between Chipping and High Ongar. The patient, John Butcher, had been working that day as a labourer on Castle Farm, carting and stacking tares, and had had an altercation with two fellow workers. This had led to a violent assault after work when the three men were walking together over the fields to High Ongar. This was witnessed by two individuals who later gave evidence at the trial. Butcher did not recover consciousness, and died early the next morning, presumably still in the police station. Potter then conducted the post mortem examination which showed extensive fractures of the skull with massive bleeding in the brain itself. He was closely questioned by the coroner at the subsequent inquest, but was firmly of the opinion that such extensive injuries could only have been caused by a blow or blows to the head with a heavy object. He was dismissive of the suggestion that they could have been caused by an accidental fall. The coroner's verdict does not seem to have been recorded by the *Essex Standard*. However Butcher's assailants were committed to the Assizes on a murder charge, convicted of manslaughter and imprisoned in Pentonville within 6 weeks of the event. Justice moved swiftly in those days.

At about the same time, Richard Moore, Captain Budworth's coachman and gamekeeper, was doing his evening rounds, looking for vermin and armed with a shotgun. William Flack of Stanford Rivers, who had been working at New Barns Farm, Bobbingworth, was walking home via Greensted and –

for a reason never explained in the later court appearance – was crouching in a ditch. It was dusk and, in the half light, Moore mistook Flack's partly visible white jacket for a white cat in search of rabbits. He discharged his gun, his aim was good and he hit Flack in the face and arm. Captain Budworth was immediately informed and arrived on the scene with brandy and lint. Potter was then summoned and, after examining the unfortunate victim, had him removed to his house for treatment. Captain Budworth followed soon after, equipped with more brandy and a supply of paper to enable him to take down a deposition in case the injuries were to prove fatal. However, Potter reassured him that the victim was likely to recover. The unfortunate coachman was taken before the Ongar magistrates, and remanded on bail of £70 (to which Captain Budworth contributed £20). There were no further reports in the *Essex Standard*, so presumably Flack recovered and Moore was eventually exonerated.

Today all this would have happened in hospital, including the post mortem. However a medical practitioner at that time (and well into the twentieth century in rural areas) had to be almost entirely self-sufficient, and it is often forgotten that this included performing post mortem examinations, usually in highly unsuitable premises such as barns or stables. It was also the duty of the jury at the coroner's inquest to view the body before reaching their verdict, which could be a disturbing experience in the case of a violent death.

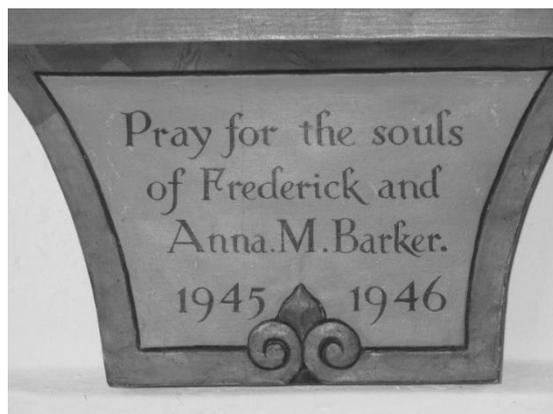
On a lighter note, Captain Budworth must have taken a leaf out of the book of Sherlock Holmes' companion, Dr Watson. A colleague of mine combed Conan Doyle's stories to note when and how often Dr Watson administered brandy as a medication, and concluded that he had been very fortunate not to be arraigned before the General Medical Council for excessive and inappropriate treatment!

## Michael Leach

### The Barker Family

On the north wall of the Chancel in St Martin's Church is a wooden statue depicting St. Martin with his cloak partially covering a naked beggar. Above the plaque is a gold coloured canopy bearing the initials S M. and there is a dedication beneath the figure: "Pray for the souls of Frederick and Anna. M. Barker 1945 1946". This refers to husband and wife, Frederick Barker, who died in 1945 aged 80, and Anna Maria Barker who passed away in 1946 aged 79. Frederick and Anna Deacon married on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1905 at St. Martin's Church and their marriage certificate is signed by Rev. James Tanner. Frederick's occupation is given as carriage builder. They are buried together at the cemetery in Chipping Ongar and the grave

inscription reads: "In loving memory of Frederick Barker 1864-1945 also his beloved wife Anna Maria Barker 1866-1946. RIP".



Some of the residents of Ongar will have known their son and daughter, Frederick Harry and Anne Frederica. Both Fred and Anne were life-long worshippers at St Martin's Church. Fred joined the choir, in which his father already sang, in 1915 and for more than 30 years, from 1944, was choirmaster, with Anne playing the organ.

Frederick Barker was born on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1907 and his sister, Anne on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1906, both in Ongar. Fred and his sister, Anne, started their education at the Ongar School, in Banson's Lane in 1911 at which time the Census gave their address as High Street, Ongar and they were living with their mother and father.

On leaving school in the early 1920s, they both became pupil teachers and continued their education to become qualified teachers. Fred studied at Culham College, Oxfordshire.

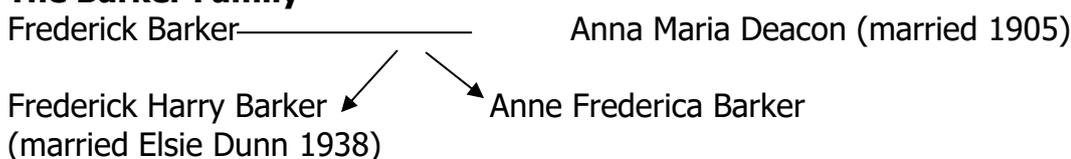
Frederick married Elsie Dunn at St Martin's Church on 20th August 1938 and bought a house in Fyfield Road, Shelley, where they lived for the rest of their lives. During the war Fred was Commanding Officer of the Ongar Flight of the Air Training Corps, based at the senior school where he was teaching. He was appointed headmaster of Chipping Ongar County Primary School, then in Banson's Lane in 1945 and retired in 1971 after successfully establishing the school on its new site in Greensted Road.

Anne did not marry and died on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1975, aged 69, while living at 8 Green Walk, Ongar, and Frederick on 26th January 1995 while residing at *Oakleigh*, 67 Fyfield Road, Ongar. All three are buried in the cemetery in Chipping Ongar. Their two gravestones read:

"In loving memory of Elsie Barker who died 13th April 1988 aged 77 years Also her beloved husband Frederick Harry Barker who died 26th January 1995 aged 87 years R I P."  
And

"In loving memory of Anne Frederica Barker 1906 - 1975 R I P."

### **The Barker Family**



*Our thanks to John Barker for confirming the information given in this article.*

### **Keith Snow and Stan Ball**

### **Barbara Sutton 1920 -2017**

Barbara was born in the North of England on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1920. She had one brother who was killed in the RAF in the war. She came South when she got a job as an engineer at the BBC and worked there during World War 2. She met her husband, Peter, a fellow engineer and they settled in Woodford. Barbara decided to take up teaching. She then worked as a primary school teacher until she retired. They moved to Norwood End, Fyfield where Ruth their daughter grew up. Ruth and

husband Mike have three children, and their family unit was very important to Barbara during her long and interesting life.

Barbara was very active in Fyfield and later moved down into the centre of the village. She was the secretary of the PCC at the church for many years. She taught French to many groups of all ages. She was a member of Ongar Millennium History Society from the beginning, as well as the Twinning Association and the Music Club.

Barbara was a very good friend of Ron and I, and Ron used her garden at Norwood End to keep his bees. We had a lot of common interests and shared them when we went on holidays together. We visited and enjoyed the European countries, but particularly France and the culture of wine tasting! She was very well known and respected and had definite views on most things. We loved her dearly.

**Felicite Barnes.**

### **Publications at the Library**

As a reminder, members are able to access two publications supplied from the British Association of Local History. These are "Local History News" and "The Local Historian" and are available to look through in the local history section at Ongar Library. Ongar Library opening times are Tuesday and Wednesday 9.00am to 6.00pm, Friday and Saturday 9.00am to 5.00pm. The library is closed on Mondays and Thursdays.

### **Railway comes to Ongar**

The exhibition that OMHS produced for E&OR and display at the station has now moved into the library. An album containing pictures of Ongar through the ages is also on display. Please come and have a look!

### **Dates for the diary**

**20<sup>th</sup> September – AGM and Talk**

### **Future Events**

Further events will be announced in future newsletters and on the website as they arise. Have you looked at our website? The site is regularly updated with future events so this is where you will hear the news first. The address is <http://www.omhs.org.uk/> or just type OMHS into a search engine.

#### **Newsletter Contributions**

We need your help with articles for the newsletter. If you have anything that you would like to contribute no matter how small or large, please submit to the editor or through the website before the end of October 2017 to be in time for inclusion in the next edition of the newsletter