

## **Garlick's Ointment**

### **Ewelme News, Feb-Mar 2016**

The Garlick family was a prolific local family in Church records from 1769 to 1932. One 19<sup>th</sup> Century branch ran The Greyhound public house, and also operated an abattoir there. Another was headed by James Garlick, who advertised in Jackson's Oxford Journal of January 1807 his intention to open a boarding school to teach boys the 3-R's. Board and education cost £15 per annum, washing an extra £1. 1s, with an entrance fee of 10/6d. The school was situated in an old house called Westcourt, demolished in late 19<sup>th</sup> century James died in 1843, but his third wife Elizabeth continued to run the school and also operated a lucrative business making an herbal ointment. Institutional environments inevitably created hygiene problems resulting from unwashed hair - one was Scald Head, [a name for scalp diseases characterised by pustules, the dried yellow discharge of which formed scales and caused hair to fall out]. Fortunately, the Garlicks had a remedy, and Stephen Skillman, a descendent of the headmaster, provided the Archive with an advertisement in Jackson's Oxford Journal dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 1837: -

*“GARLICK'S invaluable VEGETABLE OINTMENT for the cure of Scald Head and all kinds of Ringworm, without shaving the head. Ewelme School, Oxon. Mrs Garlick, of the above Establishment, at the peculiar request of her friends, begs to inform principles of Seminaries, Public Institutions etc., that, about 18 years ago, a pupil entered with a dreadful eruption on his head, which increased to an alarming extent - he was taken to an eminent medical gentleman, who pronounced it Scald Head, and advised his immediate removal from School - notwithstanding, 16 of his school fellows caught the complaint, and the greatest consternation prevailed; but very fortunately for Mrs Garlick the receipt [sic] for preparing the above mentioned excellent ointment was providentially placed in her hands by a friend, and after having paid the strictest attention to the instructions given for the use of the same, the disease was entirely eradicated without having recourse to the usual remedy of shaving the head, the hair grew thicker and stronger than before, and the 16 pupils returned home at the end of the half year, perfectly cured. From that time to the present numerous applications for the ointment have been made, and the numberless testimonials of its efficacy have confirmed its never-failing success. Prepared only and sold in posts at 2s 9d each, by Mrs Garlick, Ewelme Academy and sold, by appointment, and may be had through the medium of every respectable Medicine Vendor in the Kingdom.”*

[There followed an impressive list of purveyors in ten Country towns in Oxon, Bucks and Berks - and Ewelme].

*“The following lines from respectable individuals, expressive of its superiority, will partly show its intrinsic value.”*

*“Madam – I should consider myself deficient both in gratitude and justice towards you, if I neglected to express my sincere acknowledgements for the benefit derived by my daughter, from the application of your invaluable Ointment to her head. After having, during 3 months, used nearly ever known remedy, the only effect of which appeared to be an extension of the disease, I was persuaded to try your Ointment, and you will be as pleased to hear, as I as was delighted to see, that a perfect cure was brought about within a fortnight. The child's head, which for months had presented a most distressing appearance and was nearly bald, is now perfectly sound, and covered with a profusion of hair. You are at liberty to make what use you please of this statement, and to refer to me any person requiring information concerning the effects of your Ointment. I am, Madam, your most obliged servant. T B King, Wallingford 1837.”*

Reference to the remarkable ointment was made some 70 years later when Miss Prister Cruttwell was interviewing a son of James Garlick, an old Almsman Septimus Garlick, who died in 1907 aged 81. In her history 'Ewelme: A Romantic Village' she wrote - "*Septimus was also celebrated for his home-made ointment, a cure according to himself for 'all the ills that flesh is heir to'. It was concocted from herbs by an old family recipe, handed down by his grandmother. What the ingredients were I was never able to find out. Were you to be highly favoured, he might present you with a box of this precious medicament. He had a great eye for the ladies, complimenting my cousin on her beautiful complexion and advising her to preserve it by diligent use of his ointment!*"

Miss Cruttwell portrayed Septimus as a larger-than-life character in the Cloisters. This may explain how, in the intervening years, the ointment had acquired considerably greater curative properties, and the secret recipe being credited, not to a family friend, but to his grandmother!

***Ewelme Village Archive***