

FAMOUS PEOPLE

Memoirs of some of the more prominent local people

Tape 2 -

The Musical Ladies.

Margaret Ritchie - soprano here about 15-20 years ago.

Lady Hambleton - first to visit him when he crashed his mail van in 1976.

Tape -

The musical ladies and Miss Ritchie – all professionals.

Lady Hambleton - a poppet – remembers royal visitors.

Tape 4 -

The musical ladies. Jelly d'Aranyi, Adila Fachiri lived in a house with Baron Eric Palmstierna about 1956 to 1966. Jelly d'Aranyi had been famous violinist, Adila only famous because of her sister but she was a good violinist. They lived together in the Howes' present house (behind the garage), and the Baron was a dear loving friend. The Millars knew them well medically and musically. Jelly a most delightful lady and Adila was more flamboyant. They were retired and in their 70s. If you drove them to play it was worrisome that the car insurance would cover the value of their violins. Bach Violin Double Concerto was their party piece.

Tape 5 -

The musical ladies – collected money for milk but saw little of them, referred to an old Dragon.

Lady Hambleton - was a real lady, paid her bill promptly and weekly. Took an active interest in the Youth Club and lit the bonfire for them which was an annual event held at the Manor house for the YC, plus the rest of the village. There was a special area for people to let off their own fireworks. It was a good event but some people objected to its nearness to the village hall. However the local Fire Chief inspected it and declared it safe.

Tape 6-

The musical ladies - remembers the singer who died of cancer of the throat. One was rather severe in her manner.

Lady Hambleton – a lovely lady.

Tape 9 -

One of my earliest memories is of **Mr Atkinson**, who lived at Prospect Farm. He was an artist, quite a famous one I believe. I recently heard there is an Atkinson Society in America. He was known for his cockfighting pictures and kept cocks in his back yard. I remember him as an elderly Victorian gentleman with a high collar and cravat, and I think he wore a bowler hat. He drove a pony and trap and one of the things that intrigued me most was the large Monkey Puzzle tree he had right in front of his house. When he died [circa 1931] there was a sale of his things and I came home (aged 10) with a treasured picture I had bought for 2/-. It was a silver point and I still have it. I call it my 2/- lady.

Tape 10 -

Lady Hambleton – a real lady. Took Lady Hambleton's mother's dog to Harley Street – it had to sit on the front seat of the car on a cushion. Lady H said don't forget to bring it back. Princess Margaret used to stay with her at The Old Rectory with Group Captain Townsend. Christening of the Hicks baby – the Queen was present.

Margaret Ritchie - gave Amy lots of tips on singing when she travelled in her taxi. Margaret Ritchie, a famous soprano, lived in the Music House - a very famous soprano and she gave Amy lots of tips on singing when she travelled in her taxi to London. Amy charged 6p a mile in her taxi, 47 miles to Heathrow and 47 miles return, 564 pence.

Scott of the Antarctic stayed at the Manor at one time.

Sir Donald Somervell lived at the Old Rectory. Before him there was Sir Claude Severne, he was a choirmaster around 1925.

Blossom, a WAAF at RAF Benson during the war became Max Bygraves wife. Used to drink pints in Shepherds Hut.

Tape 11 -

Jerome K Jerome - wrote novels at Dew Pond.

Herbert Atkinson - father was a doctor in Wallingford. Spent time in India. He wrote books on Old English game and cockfighting. Lived at Prospect Farm. The Old English Game Club was started by him in the 1920's.

Tape 12 -

Musical ladies - called in one day with son Julian and they had an impromptu pineapple party. Baron Palmstierna an ambassador - lived in the original bungalow by Garden House. He was fond of Lady D'Aranyi.

Margaret Ritchie came and they ran summer school in Garden House.

Tape 13 -

Lady Hambleton - Used to see the Queen Mother pass in her Bentley. On her way to visit Lady Hambleton.

Tape 15 -

Margaret Ritchie - Miss Ritchie, a pianist gave her last performance at Garden House. It was built as a music house and there is a great room. We were invited there, only those who had a rank, title or double barrel name were invited. Model house for the Daily Mail Exhibition in the 1930's was built in the gardens but had no drains.

Lady Hambleton - was very good when we started NEW in 1990. Has photograph of Alex, her daughter presenting Lady H with a bouquet of flowers. Always at ease with everyone, very ordinary. Liked people who worked for her. What is called Old Rectory Cottage was the gardener's Mr Beecham's cottage. Mrs Beecham went to turn back the beds at the Rectory and put in hot water bottles. Lady H was on her own every since we knew her - widowed young. She moved to Hill House in the 70's. Mary Canny lived there, said in passing they were thinking of selling, Lady H was straight round with an offer. A very kind person.

Tape 16 -

Lady Hambleton - did a lot of things for the Guides as well as being chairwoman of the Horticultural Society. Lovely lady.

The Buchan's - Barbara Buchan had a donkey called Jack that made a lot of noise. A nice lady.

Tape 17 -

Lady Hambleton - She lived in the Old Rectory when I first came. I held a Bazaar to make money for the Christmas party. Would send a huge box of Christmas crackers for the Christmas party. Would never become a manager of the School - was a governor at Icknield and other places, but always showed an interest. Came to talk about her duties as a lady in waiting. She was on the Parochial Church Council for many years. When we came to live in Cloister Cottage she would use it as a short cut through on her way to

church. Outside our door is a lovely magnolia which comes into flower at the beginning of April. It was a gift to me from the children when I left the school. She died on the day when the first flowers came out on my magnolia that she used to admire so much. I asked the undertaker if I could put the first of the buds in her hand. She really was a lady in every sense. A great church lady.

Royalty came to Ewelme quite often and with the Queens Flight at RAF Benson. The Queen would go to the church when she visited the Hicks. Their children were baptised here and Prince Charles popped in on one occasion to see Lady Hambleton.

Tape 19 -

Jerome K Jerome's - wife paid Fred to look after her grave. Thought she was mid-European.

Jelly D'Aranyi - mentioned in the Daily Mail not long ago. It is said Edward Elgar loved her. Jelly D'Aranyi lived with her mother and the Baron.

Margaret Ritchie - gave concerts. Friendly with the Rambert of ballet fame.

Kennelley Rumford, his son married Dame Clara Butt. They lived at Troy.

Mrs Booth - Norah has looked after Mrs Booth for 40 years. Mrs Booth is 83 lives mostly in London and also knew John Buchan of 39 Steps.

Tape 22 -

The musical ladies. Remembers going to a recital by them at the church once.

Also Margaret Ritchie lived locally, who was a noted singer.

Tape 23 -

Musical sisters - played the violins and played in the church.

Tape 24 - Mick Gilbey

Barbara Buchan -- (The White House) - There is a story about her old donkey [Jack] that was so dirty she and a friend took it upstairs to bath it. Unfortunately, it had trouble getting back down the stairs and a local man had to carry it down.

Musical ladies - remembers going to concerts at Madam Fakiri- when he was about 7 - she liked to play to an audience. She would play her violin with her partner. They used to wish she wouldn't play so long because they were held there for hours on end. The audience used to clap to try to encourage her to end the performance. But she would shake her head. When she bowed to them they could start clapping and the performance was at an end.

Lady Bowls - At the Mill House - Lady Bowls with a gardener Mr Luker. She owned one of the first cars in the village, a Triumph Mayflower. Gypsies called and told her they would give the car a good home. Lady Bowls sold it cheaply to them, they promptly took it to Passesys and resold it for a profit.

Tape 27 -

Lady Hambleton - Pleasant and kind. Welcoming. She was interviewed for a school project on her role as a lady in waiting.

Tape 29 -

Queen Mother - Went to the church whilst visiting Lady Hambleton. Children taken up to church to meet her. Remembers lots of jewellery. Cannot remember who amused the Queen Mother pointing out Duchess Alice 'being in the middle bit and that's what she looks like now.' See George Cannon's interview.

Tape 41 -

The Musical Ladies – I went to a concert at The Electra Cinema in Watlington by the 2 violinists and a pianist who was called Gerald Moore. Charity job.

The Barrington-Wards – lived at the White House. One of the sons was on the brass plaque in Beaumont Street, Oxford. One was an editor of the Oxford Mail. Before Horsley.

Written Essay 50

One night, and looking back, I think it must have been long past my bedtime, I was standing entranced in the darkness. Perhaps my mother had got me out of bed or even kept me up so I could hear the music. *“Someone’s playing a violin.”* I don’t know how many nights the music flooded over me. And I had no idea at the time what it was. I like to think I knew it was being played by a very accomplished violinist – a professional. Mrs Quixley, being the headmaster’s wife, as a leading player in the village soon discovered who it was and told my mother that a famous violinist was staying at the Somervell’s house; someone from Hungary with a very odd name, Jelly d’Arani. For any number of nights without knowing anything at all about it I was hearing Unaccompanied Music for Violin by Bach. Extraordinary, indeed; strange and astonishing sounds on these beautiful nights, coming from a garden in this beautiful village in the depths of war.

But I heard something else. Although I didn’t know the Bach was Bach, I did realise that it flowed together. Then there was a sequence of sounds that were stopping and starting and somehow different. I had no words or concepts even to tell me anything about these music I was hearing.