

Cricket & the End of a Dynasty

It was a well-known that the Barringtons, in general, were keen cricketers. It was natural therefore, that they might wish to get involved when it came to fundraising for the same. The Advertiser reported on June 13, 1885, that a meeting had taken place to form a new Cricket Club, *'A club has been formed here under good auspices, about 40 persons having joined. Lord Barrington is president; Rev G.W. Murray and A.W. Fairthorne Esq, vice-presidents; Mr Oliver, secretary and Mr Phipps captain; together with a good working committee of nine members. But then on October 1, 1887, the same newspaper reports that, 'For the last few years the lovers of cricket in this village found no means of carrying on the exhilarating pastime of cricket in consequence of being unable to obtain a suitable ground, but this year the difficulty was overcome through the kindness of the Right Hon Viscount Barrington, who placed at their disposal that portion of Beckett Park called, 'Barnicles.' (see photo below). A club was rapidly formed.'* It noted later in the article that over 70 members enrolled themselves.

One assumes that the club was doing well as a few years later the Hon Mary Barrington lent a hand with fundraising. On Saturday, July 25, 1891, the Advertiser reported, *'The American Fair and fancy bazaar recently held in the grounds of Dower House, and which was so thoroughly well managed by the Hon Mrs Barrington, proved a great success, and that lady has handed over to the cricket club committee the handsome sum of £36.3s.2.5d towards the funds of the club. That the thanks of the members are due to Mrs Barrington goes without saying, but at a meeting of the committee held at the Barrington Arms Hotel, on Thursday evening, the following resolution was passed and forwarded:- "That a sincere and respectful vote of thanks be accorded to the Hon Mrs Barrington for her great kindness in getting up the American fair in aid of the funds of the club, the success of which was due entirely to her great exertions, for which the club owe the Hon Mrs Barrington a deep debt of gratitude. - Signed on behalf of the committee by Dr Nixon, Hon Sec S.C.C. To this the following reply has been received by the secretary from the Hon Mrs Barrington, "Shrivenham, Berks. The Hon Mrs Barrington returns her best thanks to Dr Nixon and the members of the committee of the Shrivenham C.C. for the very kind letter of thanks received from them. She feels much pleased that the American fair turned out such a success, and that in working it she received so much help and support from both members and friends. - Signed Mary J. Barrington. July 19, 1891."*

But just before the end of the century, the newspaper reported another fundraising event but this time it to help the Football Club too. On December 19, 1896, the article stated that, *'A very successful juvenile entertainment was held here, under the kind patronage of Captain Hamilton, of Beckett Park, on Wednesday and Thursday evening, the 2nd & 3rd inst. The hall was specially decorated and heated for the occasion, and all proceeds are to be given to the Shrivenham Cricket and Football Clubs.'*



The end of a Dynasty

Percy Barrington died on April 29, 1901, leaving his eldest son, William Bulkeley Barrington to inherit the title and the estate. But unlike his father, he was able to take up residence at Beckett and was to be the last Viscount to do so before the estate would be broken up and sold off.

The effects of the great war of 1914 - 1918, took a heavy toll on the running of the estate. The huge staff required to maintain it were just not available. Also, great social changes had taken place with women no longer in domestic service but helping the war effort directly by working in munitions factories; many of them afterwards not willing to return to the lower paid work. An act of parliament had enabled the break-up of estates from the legal stranglehold of complex wills, trusts and taxes. Although the great sell off of land had started in the 1880's and reached its climax by 1920, the Barrington's managed to hold on a little longer. Some of the farms and associated cottages belonging to the estate, had already been sold in a sale of 1917. In 1922, the rest of the estate was put up for auction, but such was the poor state of the economy that very little of it was sold. Another attempt was made in 1927, using the same sales catalogue, but that too, failed to attract much interest. However, the following year a buyer was found. Both Viscount and Viscountess Barrington moved to Rickmansworth Park in Hertfordshire, which Charlotte had inherited. In September 1933, the Viscount, William, died and his body was laid to rest at the outside and close to the east wall of St Andrew's church, Shrivenham. But Charlotte was clearly not settled at Rickmansworth, because when Beckett

House became available for purchase again, she bought it back. The previous owners, having sold off the agricultural land, had failed to broker a deal that would have turned Beckett House into a school. Charlotte immediately set the builders to work with decorating and improvements, but sadly, in 1935, she died. The following year, Beckett House and Park was sold to the government; more specifically, the War Office.

BERKSHIRE
On the White borders, in the famed Vale of White Horse.

Particulars with Plans and Conditions of Sale
OF
5 FREEHOLD FARMS
PRODUCING A RENTAL OF ABOUT
PER £1534 ANNUM
SITUATE IN THE PARISHES OF
Shrivenham, Longcot & Watchfield
Being part of the Beckett Estate,
AND COMPRISING
Rich Dairy and Grazing Lands and Productive Arable,
WITH
FARM HOUSES AND HOMESTEADS
AND VARIOUS
Cottages on the Farms and in the villages of Watchfield & Longcot,

	COMPRISING	A.	R.	P.
SANDHILL FARM	-	278	1	16
STALLPITS FARM	-	324	0	2
COWLEAZE FARM	-	228	0	10
GALLEYHERNS FARM	-	283	3	5
STONE FARM	-	277	2	14
A. 1859 8 7				

Also the CHARMING OLD FASHIONED RESIDENCE known as
"Elm Tree House,"
TRADE PREMISES and 20 COTTAGES,
WHICH


ADKIN, BELCHER & BOWEN

are honoured with instructions to submit to public competition, at the
GODDARD ARMS HOTEL, SWINDON,
On Monday, September 24th, 1917,
AT 3 O'CLOCK, PRECISELY

Particulars, Plans and Conditions of Sale may be obtained at the Goddard Arms Hotel,
Swindon; of Messrs. Adkin, Belcher & Bowen, Auctioneers, Surveyors and Land Agents,
Wantage, and 10 High Street, Hingston; and of
Messrs. RIDER, HEATON, MEREDITH & MILES, Solicitors,
8 New Square, Lincoln Inn, W.C.2.

A. V. DIBBS & SON, PRINTERS, WANTAGE

The photos above and below show the information of the three sales from 1917, 1922 and 1927. The last one shows the first page of the legal document that transferred Beckett Estate to the government War Department.


**THE
BECKETT
ESTATE,
BERKS.**

Monday, October 16th, 1922.

Solicitors:
 Messrs. Rider Hutton, Meredith & Mills,
 6 New Square,
 Lincoln Inn, Strand, W.C.2.

Auctioneers:
 Messrs. Adkin, Belcher & Bowen,
 Wantage,
 and at Abingdon, Berks.

By direction of the Right Hon. Viscount Berrington.

BERKSHIRE
 IN THE NOTED VALE OF WHITE HORSE
 in the parishes of
 Shrivensham, Watchfield, Ashbury and Longcot.

Illustrated Particulars with Plan and Conditions of Sale of the remaining portions of

THE BECKETT ESTATE
 comprising
The Stately Mansion
 built of stone in the Tudor style of architecture with the picturesque Gables, Towers, Oriel and clustered chimneys characteristic of the period, set in a finely-wooded Park and charming surroundings of Lawns, Pleasaunces, Gardens, Shrubberies, and Lake with Fishing Temple.

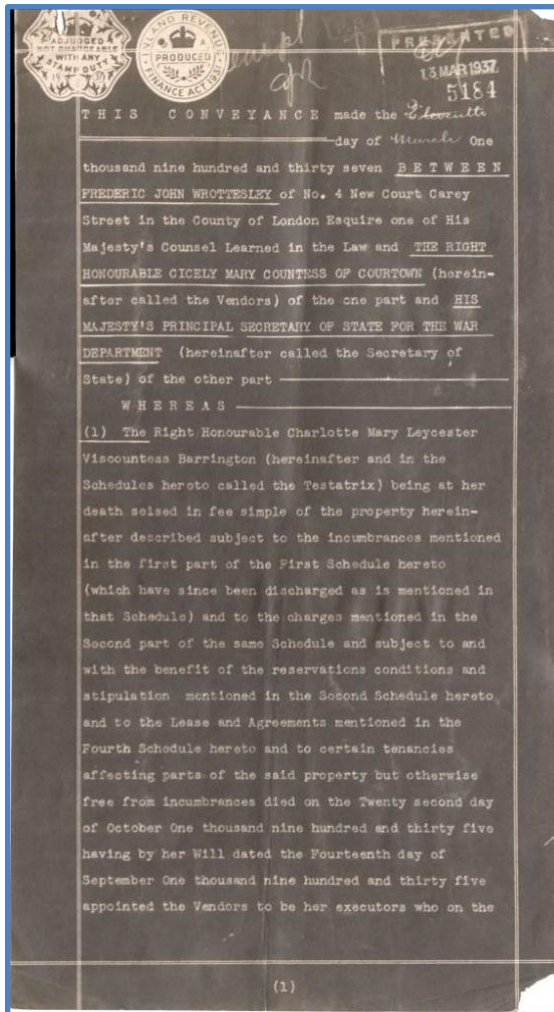
FOUR FARMS,
 Small Holdings, Accommodation Lands, Residence and Cottages,
 the whole having a total area of about
1090 acres,
 to be offered for sale by auction by Messrs.

JOHN D. WOOD & CO.
ADKIN, BELCHER & BOWEN
(unless previously disposed of by private treaty)
 at the London Auction Mart, 155 Queen Victoria Street, E.C.

on Thursday, June 9th, 1927,
 at 2.30 p.m.

The Estate will first be offered as a whole, and if not so sold, the Residential Portion being Lot 1, together with such a portion of the other lots as may be offered in conjunction therewith. If the whole is not sold as a whole and at the time when the first portion is offered, the remaining lots will be offered in conjunction with the whole and at the time when the first portion is offered, unless previously sold privately.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale, with plan, and orders to view may be obtained on application to the Auctioneers—Messrs. ADKIN, BELCHER & BOWEN, Market Place, Wantage and 39 High Street, Abingdon, Berks. and Messrs. JOHN D. WOOD & CO., 6 Moat Street, London, W.1. and of Messrs. RIDER HUTTON, MEREDITH & MILLS, Solicitors, 6 New Square, Lincoln Inn, London, W.C.2.



Beckett Park was purchased by the government for a specific use. As aircraft technology was developing rapidly, it became clear to those knowledgeable in matters of warfare, that air power would play a huge role. It therefore made sense to train military personnel in the use of guns that could shoot aircraft down. The meteorological experts claimed that the skies around Shrivenham and the Vale of White Horse were clear of cloud more often than most which was instrumental in the decision to purchase Beckett. But before they could really get started with anti-aircraft gun training – along came World War two.