

Medlar Cottage, Faringdon Rd, Shrivenham

General history so far

By Neil B. Maw



You could be forgiven for not noticing the large white house that is Medlar Cottage on the eastern edge of the village. Historically it was on the extremity of Beckett Park but was part of, and belonged to, the Barrington Estate. In her memoirs, Augusta Barrington in 1861 when referring to some nephews said: *'the little boys were in the little house in the grounds of Beckett Estate called Medlar Cottage.'* (SHS N887 Page 58). It certainly was much smaller then but probably still much larger than we would call a cottage today.



There is documentary evidence provided by the Beckett Estate Map commissioned by George Merryweather in 1815, confirming that the property was there then. The extract from the map above shows an 'L' shaped building.



The photo above allows us to understand a little more about how the property may have developed, as it doesn't appear to be a listed building. The front range nearest the road and the right-angle extension to the rear is likely to be the original house. (The little house that Augusta Barrington referred to and matches the 1815 Estate Map.) The range coming off the rear extension and the front were likely added later.

The earliest reference we have for the property is from a newspaper advertisement that announced the departure of Mr Niel Campbell from Shrivenham. (Oxford Chronicle 15th October 1842). The details of it provides a good assessment as to his wealth and status. The census that took place in June the year previous confirmed that he was 48 years of age and he had Elizabeth his wife with him. We don't know how long he had been there.

Medlar Cottage, Shrivenham.

Neat HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, Chimney Glasses,
Eight-Day Dial, Glass, China, Cabinet Piano Forte,
Plated Goods, fine Oil Paintings, and other Effects.

FOR SALE BY AUCTION,
By Messrs. **FIDEL and SON,**

On Friday next the 21st of October, 1842, on the premises, Shrivenham, Berks, the property of Mr. Niell Campbell, who is leaving Shrivenham: comprising four-post and tent bedsteads and furnitures, superior goose-feather beds and bedding, mattresses, mahogany and oak chests of drawers, set of excellent mahogany dining tables, neat sideboard, set of superior mahogany chairs, Brussels and Kidderminster carpets and rugs, stair-carpet and rods, chimney and dressing glasses, 8-day bracket dial, a variety of cut glass and china, ditto plated goods, a few fine oil paintings in gold frames, moreen and chintz window curtains, fenders and fire irons, iron-bound casks, &c. &c.

Catalogues will appear in due time.—Sale to commence at twelve o'clock.

N.B. The House to Let.

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|--|----|
| Campbell | Niel | Independant. Scotsman | 48 |
| Campbell | Elizabeth | Wife of Niel | 50 |
| Hill | George | Clergyman in household of Niel Campbell | 25 |
| Painter | Richard | Cheese Factor. Same household as Niel Campbell | 25 |
| Speers | David | Ag Lab. Same household as Niel Campbell | 20 |

The next occupier for which we have documentary evidence was the Rev. Edward Harrance and we obtained his name from the 1844 Tithe Survey. His full name was the Rev. Edward Alexander Frederick Harrance and he was the Vicar of Longcott. It's likely that he succeeded Niel Campbell. However, he left soon after when a newspaper advert appeared offering the house to let again by name and described: *'standing in a very pretty laid out Garden and pleasantly situated within three minutes walk of the Church and one mile from the Railway Station.'* (Devizes & Wiltshire Gazette, 23rd January 1845.)

There are several pieces of evidence to confirm that William Addison and his family left Beckett Home Farm in Watchfield (Now The Grange) in March 1846 and then occupied Medlar Cottage. (See SHS Listing No N2557). Both properties belonged to the Barrington Estate and newspaper advertisements confirmed that Medlar was unoccupied in 1845. It's likely that William left the farm in Watchfield due to poor health as he died in 1848 and was buried in St Andrew's Churchyard, just across the road, on the 8th May. His wife Elizabeth was recorded on the census for 1851 and was financially comfortable being described as an *'Annuitant.'* She died on 11th February 1854 and was buried with her husband. (See below)



The rest of that decade is lean on information but in early 1861, an advertisement was placed in the newspaper for a sale of furniture belonging to Mrs Sheppard, *'who is leaving the neighbourhood.'* But the census of April 1861, identified by the name of the property, listed that it was occupied by Elizabeth Pound, aged 65, who was a local Dressmaker. The Directory, Dutton Allen & Co for Berkshire 1863, listed that Alfred Sartoris was the occupier. Alfred Sartoris was part of the Barrington family and had a few years earlier married Mary Frances Barrington, the 7th child of William Keppel Lord Viscount Barrington (6th). But he wasn't there for long as he moved in to Shrevenham House at about that time. (*Memoires of Augusta Barrington SHS N887*). In the Barrington Estate Map of 1866, it looked like the cartographer had chosen to depict the premises in a block rather than with detail. But it was the start of occupation by farmers and the occupier was listed as George Lewis



The census of 1871 showed that there was then a complete farming family of Lewis' in Medlar Cottage, farming the land on the perimeter of the estate, Barnacle Park and various other fields that have since been built upon. Samuel was still there in 1878 as recorded by Kelly's Directory.

| | | | |
|---------|-----------|----|--|
| Lewis | Samuel | 39 | Medlar Cottage. Farmer employing 10 men, 4 women, 3 boys |
| Lewis | Lucy E | 33 | Medlar Cott. Wife of Samuel. |
| Lewis | George H | 6 | Medlar Cott. Son of Samuel |
| Lewis | Edith L | 4 | Medlar Cott. Daughter of Samuel |
| Lewis | William E | 1 | Medlar Cott. Son of Samuel |
| Goddard | Sarah | 40 | Medlar Cott. General Servant with the Lewis household |
| Tye | Anne | 17 | Medlar Cott. Servant with the Lewis household |
| Lewis | Ann | 22 | Medlar Cott. Visitor. Daughter of the Lewis' |
| Lewis | Arthur | 2 | Medlar Cott. Visitor. Grand Son of the Lewis' |
| Lewis | Sarah | 0 | Medlar Cott. Visitor. Grand Daughter of the Lewis'. 3 months old |

The Kelly's Directory of 1881 recorded that Mrs Fowler was the occupier and the census for that year confirmed it. The Fowlers were still there in 1884 when a newspaper article extolled the talents of young Mr Harcourt Fowler of Medlar Cottage, Shrivenham. He was an under-graduate of Jesus College, Cambridge and was presented with a, '*handsome gold keyless watch and massive chain, in recognition of his valuable services in connection with the Jesus College Musical Society.*' (Faringdon Adver 5th Jan 1884).

| | | | |
|---------|------------------|----|--|
| Fowler | Catherine Dianna | 47 | Widow of Clergyman. No occupation |
| Fowler | Jessie Louisa | 20 | Daughter of Catherine. No occupation |
| Fowler | Charles Bertram | 16 | Son of Catherine |
| Swinhoe | John Mercer | 11 | Boarder with the Fowler household. |
| Fessey | Ellan | 26 | Domestic Servant with the Fowler household |

The village of Shriveham was decked in the gayest holiday attire last Thursday, on the occasion of the marriage of the Rev. W. A. M. Hughes, of Houghton-le-spring, Durham, to Miss Frances Louisa Fowler, only daughter of the late Rev. Alfred Fowler, curate of Compton Beauchamp, of Medlar Cottage, Shriveham. Wedding bells and presents, wedding flowers and favours, were the order of the day. The ceremony took place at eleven o'clock in the parish church, before a large gathering of friends.

And the pleasant events continued in the summer of 1884 when Catherine Fowler's daughter was married at Shriveham as the article above notes. (Witney Express 14th August 1884).

The 1891 census listed that George Eagle was the next resident and he was the Stationmaster at Shriveham Station. The Kelly's Directory of 1895 listed that he was still there then and provided his name in full as George Edward Windsor Eagle. We know that he was still the Stationmaster in 1901 when he was called to give evidence at a private action at High Wycombe County Court. (South Bucks Standard 11th July 1902). But he had moved out of Medlar Cottage before then as the census for 1901 listed that William King was then in residence. However, the property was not listed by name so a newspaper article from the following year was most useful in identification. William King was the Butler at Beckett House which had been the target of a burglary and William was called to give evidence at the subsequent trial of the accused. (Faringdon Adver 30th August 1902).

| Record Transcription: | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----|------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census | | | | | | | | |
| Private House, Shrivenham, Faringdon, Berkshire & Oxfordshire, England | | | | | | | | |
| Learn about this record set | | | | | | | | |
| Household Members ⓘ | | | | | | | | |
| First name(s) | Last name | Relationship | Marital status | Sex | Age | Birth year | Occupation | Birth place |
| William | King | Head | Married | Male | 38 | 1863 | Butler | Gorton, Suffolk, England |
| Flora | King | Wife | Married | Female | 30 | 1871 | - | Oakley, Hampshire, England |
| William G | King | Son | - | Male | 7 | 1894 | - | Germany |
| Horace | Green | Boarder | Single | Male | 21 | 1880 | Footman (Domestic) | Chatham, Kent, England |

Amos Batchelor of Medlar Cottage described himself as a, *'Second-Horseman and Groom, under Stud Groom or Coachman,'* when he placed an advertisement in the local paper. But there was nothing stated as to the purpose of the advert only that he was recommended by the Hon. W. Shute Barrington. (Faringdon Adver 29th June 1907).

By the census of 1911, Henry Lionel Pigott was in occupation, aged 33 and described as a Land Agent. With him was his wife Mary Gwendoline, aged 36 and servants, Rebecca Griffiths and Mary Ann Roberts.

The Kelly's Directory for 1915 listed that William Reginald Shute Barrington was the occupier of Medlar Cottage. William or Bill, as he preferred to be known among his friends, was the owner of it, given to him by his parents at the age of 21 (1894) as a hunting lodge. However, we know from papers within the Barrington Collection within the British Library, that his attentions lay elsewhere and during the First World War he was stationed in India. (For more information see, *'Beckett & the Barringtons,'* published by SHS N1481). But by 1927, an advertisement in the newspaper showed that he was clearing the house out. (North Wilts Herald 30th September 1927). On the same day, the same was happening at Beckett House, hence the reference to it in the cutting below. In 1932 we have a newspaper reference to prize-winner, *'Phyllis Snook of Medlar Cottage,'* (North Wilts Herald 16th December 1932), so it may that the house was being prepared to be re-let again, or perhaps sold. At the moment, we have no information to confirm either case.

We move forward a few years to information gleaned from the records of Shrivenham Primary School, where we learn that in 1961, Major J.A. Robertson MBE, occupied the property with his family.

MEDLAR COTTAGE, SHRIVENHAM.

Sale of the capital remaining
FURNITURE & EFFECTS,
including mahogany and brass bedsteads, hair and wool mattresses, mahogany and painted chests of drawers, mahogany wardrobe, antique toilet table and dressing glasses, Copeland Spode toilet ware, grandfather clock, two antique card tables, Wilton pile carpet, curtains, fenders, Axminster stair carpet, coloured pictures on glass, carved oak corner cupboard, settee, easy chairs, mahogany dining chairs, antique dark oak sideboard, oval Queen Anne dining table, kitchen items, ladder, wheelbarrow, &c.

Adkin, Belcher & Bowen
are favoured with instructions from the Hon. W. R. S. Barrington to **SELL** the above by **AUCTION** on the premises in Shrivenham Village,

On **THURSDAY, 13th OCTOBER, 1927,**
at 2.30 p.m., after the sale at Beckett House.
Catalogues in due course may be had of the Auctioneers, Wantage and Abingdon.

At the moment, that is as far as we can go. If any reader can provide further information on Medlar Cottage or would like to comment on anything stated in this article, please contact us:

info@shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk

***** From the Electoral Register of 1978-9 listed is John G. Pike and Necta E. Pike ****

