

A blossoming community

WELCOME to a new series which turns the spotlight onto your community. First Maureen Butler focuses on Badsey and Aldington. Do, please, get in touch with your own reminiscences.



Entering the village: the main route in to Badsey, from the south, along Willesey road.



Admiring the wonderful produce display at the 100th Badsey Flower Show, held at the Recreation Ground last summer. Photo: Phillips and Noyes

BADSEY and its adjoining village of Aldington lie off the main traffic route in the heart of the Vale of Evesham. It is thought that a settlement could have been here as long ago as the Bronze Age - as indicated by the isolated discovery of a palstave, a primitive axe-like tool.

In the 19th century a cache of Roman coins and pottery unearthed in the Black Banks area of

the parish revealed much evidence of Roman and pre-Roman times. Later, many more discoveries were unearthed between the two villages, including more pottery, stone querns (hand mills), whetstones for tool sharpening, and coins of about 20 Roman emperors, ranging from Claudius (41 to 54AD) to Gratianus (367 - 383AD).

Three hundred years later, with the founding of Evesham Abbey, Badsey and Aldington were among the first villages to be given to the new monastery and continued to remain in the possession of the abbey for the next 800 years. Consequently, rather than being governed by a lord of the manor, the villages were inhabited by communities of independent smallholders and

Race Feature Competition Winners

Smiles ahead

FIRST past the post in our grand Best Mate competition were Mrs J. Bartlett from Mickleton, Mrs J. Wits of Chadbury and Mrs P. Jones from Wormington. All three knew that Best Mate's owner is Jim Lewis and were the first out of the post bag in the competition offering the glittering prizes of a signed copy of Henrietta Knight's book *Best Mate*, a necklace from Harts Silversmiths of Chipping Campden or a day at Cheltenham Races.

Guy Coleman from Evesham was the lucky winner of the fabulous horse rug kindly donated by Fox Saddlery.

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Village in View



In the spring Badsey churchyard is a picture, filled with daffodils and crocuses.
Photo: Richard Phillips and Elizabeth Noyes



Monks Path; the route taken by the monks of Evesham Abbey on their way to the Stone House for blood letting and immascence. Photo: Phillips and Noyes.

yeoman farmers, who paid the abbot his various dues (either in kind or money) as well as tithes (a tenth of their annual produce).

One can assume the churchyard is as old as the village itself. St James would have begun life as a small wooden building and it seems that the first stone church was built by the Norman abbot, Walter.

The dissolution of the Monasteries brought great changes around the country, especially in the villages and hamlets around Evesham, which had relied on the abbey for their survival. For the next 200 years villagers eked out a meagre

existence farming and growing their crops for their families.

But by the late 19th century Badsey was developing a thriving market garden industry, its picturesque orchards and gardens resulting in the area becoming known as the Garden of England. By now fresh fruit and vegetables were being transported all over the country, initially by packhorse and wagons and later, with the opening of Evesham Station in 1852, by train. As the industry continued to expand, in 1884 Badsey and Littleton Station opened in the parish of Offenham, to cater for those gardeners on the

east side of the town. Sadly by the end of the next century the Vale's traditional market gardening industry was in decline. But the village of Badsey (and Aldington) continue to thrive in different ways. Today its amenities include several thriving clubs and pubs as well as an excellent general stores, post office and traditional family butcher.

Such is the interest in the village's rich history that, in February 2002, the Badsey Society was formed to promote the study and understanding of the parish and surrounding area. Several residents collaborated on building a superb website (www.badsey.net) which won the Community Pride Award for 2002.

MAUREEN BUTLER

• *THIS information has been taken from A Brief History of Badsey and Aldington, by TC Sparrow, available from the author, the Spar shop in Badsey and the Almonry Heritage Centre in Evesham.*

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Bygone Badsey



The large barn that stood at the back of the Poptars, the house that once stood on the side of the road of the same name. William Pethard was a fruit and veg merchant who lived at the Poptars and had a stall in Birmingham's Smithfield Market. Picture courtesy of Eve Bent.



The blacksmith's shop in 1927. Frank Caswell and his son Dick are about to repair a plough. Dick's son David still runs the forge at the same premises today.



King George VI Coronation Party, 1937, held in the playground of Badsey School. Does anyone know the names of those pictured? Photo courtesy of Ivor and Roger Martin.



William Pethard on his telephone (Eve Bent collection).



The old vicarage, now demolished and replaced with Allesbrook Gardens. Photo courtesy of Terry Sparrow.



The Wheatsheaf Inn, an postcard from 1929. The 17th century building had previously been a farm and possibly a bakery before becoming a pub.



The eclipse of the sun on April 17, 1912. The telescope was set up to project an image of the sun onto a sheet of paper so everyone could safely view the progress of the eclipse. The instrument belonged to Mr CA Binyon. Those pictured are probably teachers at Badsey School. Picture by courtesy of Ivor and Roger Martin.

Photographs used by courtesy of Phillips and Noyes, Eve Bent, and the Badsey website: www.Badsey.net

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