

The Aims of the Project

- To produce a book about the rise and fall of market gardening.
- To produce a DVD with the working title “The Last Market Gardener” in order to capture market gardening on film before it’s too late.
- To transcribe the 1911 census for Badsey and Aldington and place it on the Badsey website (www.badsey.net).
- To produce an outside mural at Badsey First School, based on the occupations and land-use in the Parish at the time of the census 100 years ago.
- To create adequate storage facilities for the growing archive (market gardening tools, photographs, documents) which The Badsey Society is accumulating; to hold annual archive evenings when the contents of the archive will be on display and to allow more accessibility.
- To hold historical exhibitions at Badsey Flower Show, Evesham Asparagus Festival, Bretforton Fleece Inn Asparagus Auction.
- To hold a series of walks and talks and readings from some letters written by Badsey schoolchildren in 1933 about living in a market gardening community.

Tenth Anniversary of The Badsey Society

As some of you may know, The Badsey Society celebrates its tenth birthday in February. We have come a long way from the small band of people who gathered together in the church ten years ago at a public meeting. A Society was formed with Tony Jerram as the first Chairman and, since then, the Society has gone from strength to strength. We have published four books and two DVDs, won awards for our website and our Enclosure Map project. Our “Last Market Gardener” Project is still on-going. We shall be celebrating our tenth birthday at the AGM on Friday 17th February at 7.30 pm in St James Church. After the business part of the meeting and the Tony Jerram Award presentation, there will be a birthday cake baked by Badsey Society member, Jane Thompson, and tea/coffee, followed by a slide show and DVD compilation of the highlights of the last ten years. Current members can pay their 2012 subscription fees on the night and new members are very welcome.

We are extremely grateful for the support which has been shown to us by many members of the village, whether members of the Society or not. It is pleasing that these quarterly Newsletters seem to be well received, keeping you up-to-date with what is going on with the project, and bringing to you regular stories about the people and places which formed part of our market gardening heritage. Thanks to the co-operation of the Parish Newsletter distributors, every household in Badsey and Aldington receives a copy of The Last Market Gardener Newsletter. These Newsletters will continue until the end of the year when the project finishes.

Conctact Numbers					
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How to Join The Badsey Society

Membership - £2 per person (please give your name, full address, telephone number and email address). Cheques should be made payable to “The Badsey Society” and sent to the Treasurer, Terry Sparrow, 36 Brewers Lane, Badsey, Evesham, WR11 7EU.



THE BADSEY
SOCIETY



THE LAST MARKET GARDENER NEWSLETTER 7 – JANUARY 2012

A Happy New Year to all our readers! Our quarterly feature on the market gardening families of a hundred years ago and the roads where they lived is proving to be very popular. In our last Newsletter, we ran a feature on the Jones family of Badsey, who had been market gardeners since the early days of market gardening in the village.

This provoked a response for more information from John Haines of Chapel Street who is the great-grandson of Charles Jones (1837-1914). Members of The Badsey Society instantly sprang into action and, with a wonderful bit of trans-Atlantic teamwork, we were able to supply John with more information. Badsey-born Roger Savory (also a great-grandson of Charles Jones), who now lives in America, provided some fascinating details about Charles Jones’ eldest son who sailed for America in 1891 and remained there until 1938 before returning to Badsey to end his days in a newly-built house, Packard House, on School Lane (named after the park in Ohio where he had been superintendent for many years). If you want to read more about this branch of the family, there is a longer article in the January 2012 edition of The Badsey Society Newsletter. If you are not a member of the Society, please do consider joining (see back page for details of how to join).

First the book – now the DVD

As you all know, *Digging for a Living* by Terry Sparrow was published last May. The emphasis now is on completing the DVD for release later this year. Will Dallimore and his assistants, Valerie Magan and Richard Phillips, have been busy filming and conducting interviews; they are now in the processes of editing.

Will and Richard also paid a trip to Leicester to the Media Archive for Central England (MACE) and saw many old ATV television news clips from the 1950s onwards. Good finds were film clips of market gardener, George Keen (pictured right), and an event at Badsey Remembrance Hall. Some of our Heritage Lottery Fund grant money has been used to purchase the licence to use the films.



THE SEARS FAMILY

In 1911 there were five Sears families living in Badsey, all engaged in market gardening and all descended from Thomas Sears of Wickhamford who moved to Badsey in the 1850s. Thomas' grandson, Arthur, went on to become one of the most successful growers in the village.



Lorry-load of asparagus with the words, "Arthur Sears & Son, Fruit Growers" on the side.

Thomas Sears (1809-1892) started his working career as an agricultural labourer but was one of the earliest people in Badsey to embrace market gardening. He was described as a gardener in the 1871 census (probably market garden type work, rather than a domestic gardener) and a market gardener in 1881 and 1891, a job which he continued doing until his death in 1892.

Thomas' eldest son, Thomas (1836-1896), remained an agricultural labourer for most of his life, only appearing as a market gardener in the 1891 census. However, both his sons, John (1869-1923) and Thomas (1881-1955) became market gardeners. By 1908, John had sufficient income to buy a new pair of houses (Hopyard Villas) on Bretforton Road. The 1911 census reveals that he was living in one of the houses with his half-brother, William Savage, and his sister, Sarah Agg and her husband in what is now No 14. His younger brother, Thomas, by now married and with children, lived in No 16.

Thomas' youngest son, Benjamin (1853-1928) was also fairly late coming into market gardening. After his marriage to Caroline Pethard at Badsey in 1880, he moved into a cottage which had been built for labourers who worked on the Lord estate, on the site of the present-day No 12 School Lane. In 1895, they suddenly found themselves with new neighbours when the school was built next door after some of the land had been sold off. Benjamin had become a market gardener by 1901. Both Benjamin and two of his sons, Frederick (1881-1951) and Thomas John (1886-1941), were described in the 1911 census as market gardeners working on their own account. Benjamin continued to live on School Lane, Frederick lived at 26 Brewers Lane and Thomas John lived at The Little Cottage in the High Street.

NATIONAL TELEPHONE NO. 4, BADSEY.	
ARTHUR SEARS,	
Fruit, Vegetable,	
and Coal Merchant,	
HIGH STREET, BADSEY.	
COAL DEPOT: Littleton and Badsey Station.	Big Waggon service: BADSEY Mondays and Fridays; ALDRINGTON and WICKHAMFORD every Tuesday, the LITTLETONS every Thursday, and BRETFORTON every Saturday.
PRICES ON . . . APPLICATION.	
AGENT FOR NITRO GUANO.	

But it was the eldest son, Arthur (1880-1946), who went on to become one of the foremost fruit and vegetable growers and merchants in the Vale. His company, Arthur Sears & Son, formed in about the late 1920s, purchased asparagus from other growers in Badsey and the surrounding area. The 1911 census describes Arthur as an employer and a salesman of market garden produce. By this time, Arthur was married to Beatrice, had three children and lived at Orchard House (No 21 Badsey Fields Lane), built on a plot of land bought by Beatrice's widowed mother, Elizabeth Evans, in 1906. The lych-gate in the churchyard is dedicated to Arthur's memory.

COMING SOON IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER – THE HARTWELL FAMILY

SANDS LANE

On the south side of Sands Lane there exists a legacy of our market gardening past: an early 20th century brick and tile hovel (a place where market gardeners stored tools and produce, ate meals and sheltered from the rain). There are rumours of a planning application for development of land owned by Christ Church College, so the future of the hovel is uncertain.



In 1815, at the time of the Badsey Enclosure, this road was described as "one other private Carriage Road and Drift Way of the breadth of twenty-five feet marked 11 on the said plan, branching out of the said Wickhamford Road in a South-East direction until it enters the third Allotment to John Jones." It has probably been known as Sand Lane since early times as it was the road leading to Sand Field, but it is first referred to as such in the 1891 census; later in the 20th century, the name changed to Sands Lane.

In 1866, Edward Wilson, Lord of the Manor, sold most of his land in Badsey, including a plot on the south side of Sands Lane, half-way along the track. The land was bought by George Byrd, a market gardener of Evesham, who had a house built which he let out to tenants. The first occupant of the house, Thomas Canning, was amongst the first of the market gardeners in Badsey. It was described in 1912 as: "Brick and tile cottage in fair repair: kitchen, back kitchen, small sitting-room (no fireplace), 2 separate bedrooms. Brick and tile wash-house (built since 1909), pump and privy; brick and tile stable and cart shed, timber and iron hovels; 2 new glasshouses; 5 rows of old trees."

The house, known as Craigie, is home to Michael and Pam Barnard, and was bought in the 1920s by Michael's parents. When Michael and Pam moved into the house after their marriage in 1953 and looked at the deeds, Pam was amazed to see her grandmother's signature (Granny Byrd always used to sign for her husband, George Byrd). She did not realise until then that her family had owned the house in the 19th century.



By 1889, more houses appeared following the sale of land on the north side of Sands Lane which had formerly belonged to John Jones. This terrace of four houses was followed in 1893 by a further terrace of four; they were all occupied by market gardeners. The land on the south side of Sands Lane was part of a large estate administered by the trustees of John Pickup Lord; in the early years of the 20th century, some detached houses were built as land was gradually sold off, but then further development did not take place until the latter part of the 20th century.

A Recreation Ground was created on the north side in 1920 and, in 1989, Bob Brown started his plant nursery, Cotswold Garden Flowers, at the very end of the track. This has become a mecca for keen gardeners from all over the country (Bob's article about the land can be seen at www.badsey.net/past/briar).

COMING SOON IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER – WILLERSEY ROAD