

CURATOR'S NOTES #3

(An occasional series of notes from the Curator of Bampton Heritage & Visitor Centre)

LORNA ARMSTRONG SHIELD

I have been quite overwhelmed with memories of Miss Armstrong since I published a picture of the shield (and a picture of the cleaned shield was published by Humphrey on Facebook). My thanks to Eileen, Colin, Ann, Wendy, Eileen, Ann, Chris and others. It seems that she was a very popular teacher, who died in 1977 of cancer, when still young. She taught domestic science (including needlework and cookery – the latter even to boys!) and sports – netball particularly. She lodged at various addresses, including 14, Briton Street, New Buildings and in Brook Street.

The shield is dated November, 1977 and was presented by the “Home and School Association”. This was a Parent – Teachers Association formed when Michael Truman was head teacher. Barbeques, dances and summer fetes were held to raise money for the school. At that time it was a middle school and took children from all the neighbouring villages. Thanks to Mary Tucker for this information – she was Secretary – Frank Coles was Chairman. The shield was awarded for “outstanding achievements” – unspecified.



STILL PUZZLED BY...

The shield with many little shields and the two pottery items from Bampton Studios. If anyone can tell me more, I would be very grateful.



THE WISHING WELL

Many of you know the café that was the Wishing Well just out of Bampton on the Shillingford road. But how many of you know the legend?

“Once upon a time there was a Fairy Queen whose subjects suffered from the hatching of evil plans by the Cornish Earth Demons, who were controlled by two witches.

The BLACK WITCH was lazy, dirty and very old. She was responsible for the calling of Evil Powers to afflict the fairy folk. She was aided and abetted by the GREY WITCH who had fallen upon hard times, and, being mercenary, preferred the higher pay of evil rather than the joy of doing good. Such power had the Cornish Earth Demons in Devon that many Fairies fled to the borders of their county (Bampton) where lived the WHITE WITCH in the old castle grounds.

Tis said:

*“She was sweet and kind and fair of face
And longed to help this Fairy race
In Bampton town she cast a spell
And built a powerful Wishing Well”*

Around the well, assisted by her pixies, she built a fortress of kindly deeds which so surrounded her with the powers of good that the Earth Demons were surely defeated, and their king and his army were transformed into the Brown Trout swimming in the water not many yards away. The BLACK WITCH perished, because to her water was death, as she never washed. The GREY WITCH fishes desperately in the river for the Demon King, still in her cloak of grey, living with her curse of solitude (that of the Heron).”



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