

FAIRHOLME FARM

BARBY



BARBY LOCAL
HISTORY GROUP
OCTOBER
2021



FAIRHOLME FARM lies on the west side of Daventry Road, opposite its junction with Kilsby Road. It is no longer a farm; today the property consists of several buildings, some of them former farm buildings, and garden areas, together with a paddock, the total area amounting to just over 3 acres.

A datestone is set high in the East wall of the house. A date of 1768 is decipherable.



A century before this, on 11 August 1669, George Clerke, Esquire, of Watford, Northants, sold to Richard Marriott, a mason of Norton, Daventry, 'a messuage lands and hereditaments in Barby'. On 2 May 1689, Marriott bequeathed this property to his son, also Richard, a yeoman of Barby, on the occasion of his marriage to Elizabeth Bennett of Thurlaston, Dunchurch. When Marriott died childless in 1721, he left his property in Barby to the son of his sister Rebecca. This nephew was John Edmonds, a collar maker of Braunston. After his death in 1744, Edmonds' property was transferred to his 'kinsman' Thomas Lee, a yeoman of Kilsby.¹

Edmonds' inheritance consisted of two messuages, two closes, a yardland and a half of a quarter yardland in Barby's open fields. In 1745, Lee sold one of the messuages with some buildings and a small piece of land, this being the plot on which the present *Lilac Cottage* stands. This left him with another messuage, buildings and land, part of which formed the plot on which *Fairholme* stands today.²

Fairholme's datestone suggests that Lee, or his son Joseph, replaced or rebuilt the original cottage on the plot. Joseph had married Mary Boyes at St Mary's in 1767 and was baptised there on 31 May 1769, aged 35, six months after the baptism of their first child, Elizabeth.³

Joseph was the occupier at the time of Enclosure in 1778. He was granted nearly 57¹/₂ acres in Wood Field in place of his '1 yardland and 1 half quarter of 1 yardland called customary land with right of common thereto belonging' plus (like all the owners on the main road) the piece of land in front of his house up to the road, which was bought from Lumley Arnold, Lord of the Manor, his nextdoor neighbour. As part of the settlement, Lee had to pay £12 12s towards the cost of fencing and ditching the lands of the Rector and Arnold, plus £51 1s 6d towards the expenses of the Commissioners.⁴

¹ Barby Local History Group (BLHG), Deeds of *Lilac Cottage*, Docs 1 & 3

² BLHG, Deeds of *Lilac Cottage*, Docs 1 & 3

³ Dates of births, marriages and deaths are taken from Barby Church Registers unless otherwise noted.

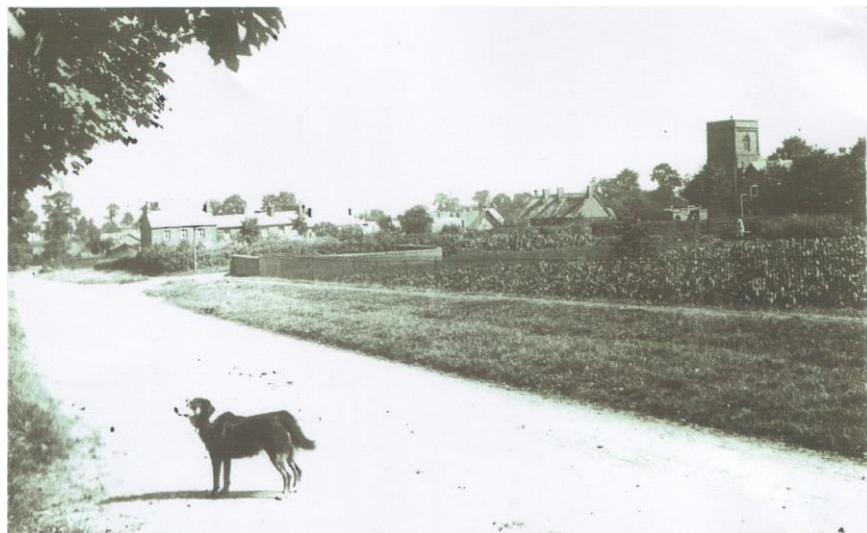
⁴ Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO), 24P/211

In 1798, Thomas Lee was charged Land Tax of £2 8s 4d, assessed at 4s in the £; he was one of 32 land owners who were farming their own land. Joseph was not charged, so it was Thomas farming at Fairholme; he was the eldest son (born in 1773) of Mary and Joseph (who died in 1802).⁵ Thomas had married Sarah Lord, daughter of Sarah and Richard, in 1797. Their son Richard married Sarah Howard, and Richard Lee was the owner in 1835, the earliest date mentioned in the title deeds of the property; Thomas had died the previous year, leaving an estate valued at less than £450.⁶ Richard also owned the *Lilac Cottage* plot.⁷

Richard took out a mortgage for £1700 that year, with William Reeve of Braunston. When he died in 1850 he left the property in trust to his eldest son Richard Thomas Lee, who inherited it in 1866 at the age of 25 and then took out two more loans with William Reeve for £300 in 1867 and £500 in 1868. By 1890 none of these mortgages nor the accrued interest had been paid off and, following the deaths of both William Reeve and his wife Ann, their son John put the estate of 62 acres up for sale.

During Richard Thomas Lee's ownership the farm was inhabited by Thomas Frost and then Thomas Frost's widow.

At this time, on the far side of Daventry Road from the farmhouse, there was a traditional watering hole for livestock, probably used by farmers driving their stock on foot to market in Rugby. It became known as Lees Pit. By the 1950s, it had become a dumping ground for rubbish and it was filled in. Following a bequest from Audrey Pittom, the Parish Council installed a bench and mounted a plaque on the wall.



A photograph showing the surrounding wall of Lees Pit in the 1920s BLHG P02/015

⁵ The National Archives, IR/ 23/63

⁶ BLHG, Deeds of *Fairholme Farm*, which provide all subsequent references to ownership, mortgaging and costs; NRO, Will of Thomas Lee proved 19 September 1835

⁷ BLHG, Deeds of *Lilac Cottage*, Doc 23

The plan contained in the 1890 conveyance document shows the 57½ acres granted to Joseph Lee at the time of Enclosure, stretching down to the parish boundary, together with the Home Close and buildings, which make a total of about 62 acres. In a later conveyance, dated 1900, the area of the land, which had heretofore amounted to 62 acres 20 perches, has been amended to 62 acres 3 roods 26 perches, following an ordnance survey.

The Schedule above referred to

N ^o on plan	Description of property	Quantity		
		s	r	p
364	Grouschill Road on ditto	13	2	12
		"	2	33
368	Parsons Tongue	14	1	5
369	Parsons Piece	3	3	38
370	Top Rodwell with Hovel and yard	7	3	8
371	Bottom Rodwell	7	"	33
372	Plantation	6	1	27
373	Big Plantation	"	1	6
374	Wash pit	"	2	14
375	Bank Earth	4	3	"
376	Far Ground	5	"	18
412	Spinney	7	3	33
413	Home Close	"	1	22
414	House outbuildings yard gardens and Orchard	2	1	29
		"	3	27
	Acres	62	"	20

The schedule describing the individual plots making up the 62 acre property in 1890

Thomas Cox of Churchover bought the property for £1750 in 1890. He sold it back to John Reeve ten months later for the same sum. John Reeve then took out a mortgage for £2000 in 1893 with Jane Haswell of Rugby and William James Crofts of Stretton under Fosse.

John Reeve sold the property for £2137 18s 6d to Lucy Ann Bunting in 1900. She was a milliner and dressmaker, born in Braunston in 1870, but in 1900 she was living at Braunston House, Bowness, Westmoreland. The day after purchasing the property, Mrs Bunting took out a mortgage with George Joseph Plevins (gentleman), Wilfred Maurice Plevins (gentleman), both of Woodford House, Thrapston, & John Gilbert Bradbury (gentleman, solicitor) of Birmingham, for £800, which she paid off in 1903. She sold the property in 1921 to Joseph Burton, of Stanground, near Peterborough, for £3000.

Joseph Burton had moved to Stevenage, Roade, by the time he sold the farm to Leslie James Pittom in 1932 for £1925. Since 1929, the farm had been unsuccessfully managed by Basil Dean Collett.⁸

⁸ 'Discharge From Bankruptcy', *Rugby Advertiser*, 18 April 1939

In 1961 Leslie Pittom sold the property to Alexander Ripplingham, who sold off about 45 acres to Basil Ismay in 1969, retaining the 14 acres of Grousehill and the close behind the house. He grew fruit and vegetables on this remaining land and used the barn fronting Daventry Road to the north of the house for housing battery hens. He sold the eggs, together with the fruit and vegetables, on a stall outside the house, run on an honesty basis. He became fruit & veg manager at Waitrose in Daventry after leaving Barby.



Fairholme Farm in the 1970s, with its fruit, veg and egg stall in the driveway and the hen barn to the right

Meryl and Glyn Roberts bought the house and barns, with paddock, in 1977. A small corner of the paddock was sold to the owners of *Lilac Cottage* and the last of the land was sold separately.⁹



⁹ BLHG, Deeds of *Lilac Cottage*, Doc 49

The Roberts gutted the poultry barn and turned it into a shop. They also planted a Christmas tree in the front lawn. *The Barn Shop* sold mainly sheepskin coats.



Inside *The Barn Shop*

When the Roberts sold the property in 1992 to Anthea and John Cockburn, the property became a private dwelling.