

170 Reservoir Road  
Gloucester  
GL4 6SB

Monday, 11 September 2000.

Dear Editor

As a former resident of the Wychwoods, I was saddened to see notice of the death of Eric Moss in May of this year. I got to know Eric late in his life whilst he was living "in exile" from the Wychwoods in a mobile home in Fulbrook. Eric nominated me to stand in local Council elections as the Labour Party Candidate. Over a few short years I was privileged to know him and to understand some of the pride which he took in being a descendant of the Ascott Martyrs. His Great Aunt was Jane Honeybone and he was directly related to six of the other Martyrs commemorated on the seat on Ascott village green.

The seat commemorates the brave action of the wives of agricultural labourers who stood up for the rights of their husbands in 1873. Local farm workers had joined Joseph Arch's Agricultural Workers Union and were asking for a decent wage. A Robert Hambridge of Crown Farm had brought in labourers from Ramsden in an attempt to prevent the Union from winning their demands. A crowd of women from Ascott picketed the field and 16 were arrested and sentenced to prison by magistrates in Chipping Norton. After a public campaign led by Joseph Arch the women's cause achieved national coverage and on their release they received £5 each which had been raised by the Union.

I took Eric to an annual commemoration of the life of Joseph Arch that is organised by the Transport and General Workers Union near Arch's birthplace in Warwickshire. Eric was so pleased when mention of the Martyrs and their contribution to the early trade union movement was made.

Eric always rejoiced in the stands he made against authority when he knew they were in the wrong and some of the spirit of the martyrs seemed to live on in him. I feel that notice of his death should have made mention of Eric's connection with the Ascott Martyrs and maybe you could publish this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Luetchford.