

Special Feature

Happy Birthday Min!

Minnie Pratley was born Minnie Pittaway on the 11th June 1917 in Myrtle Cottage, Leafield Road, Shipton, the cottage that she lived in for so many years. Min's father had three children by his first marriage and married Min's mother after the death of his wife.

Min had a very happy childhood, attending St Mary's School until she was 14. In those days there were five or six classes in the little school and Min can still remember the names of many of her classmates. She was taught to play the piano by Miss Gillingham, who boarded at Kelcot in Church Street, Shipton.

When she left school she went straight into service at Kidlington Vicarage, where she stayed for a couple of years. From there she moved to Burford Grammar School, caring for the boys in the boarding house. From there Min went to work in the NAAFI canteen at RAF Little Rissington, where she remained throughout the war years.

White Wedding

Min was married to Horace Siford Pratley on 1st February 1947, a day remembered for the deep snow as well as the wedding celebrations. A small party at her parents' house followed the service.

Horace was a carpenter and joiner by trade and also had a licence as an undertaker. He had trained with Mr Alf Miles, grandfather of Barbara Pearce.



Sadly Horace died of peritonitis, leaving Min a widow after just ten years. Min continued to live in the home they had made together in the bungalow in the Swinbrook Road. After her mother's death she went back to live in Myrtle Cottage, her childhood home. Min had to return to work and took a job at Smiths' Industries in Witney, where she

remained until retirement at 60. In those days workers were transported to the factory by company bus.

Playing the Organ

Since playing the piano as a child, Min had dreamed of playing the organ for church services and had her own Hammond organ at home, which she played regularly. She was encouraged to fulfil her dream by the Revd and Mrs Lindley. Mr Johnson, the then organist at St Mary's, taught her to play the church organ and she achieved her dream, playing regularly for church services and funerals until Stuart Taylor took over the role.

About four years ago Min decided to move into sheltered accommodation at Bowerham, where she enjoys the company of her many friends in the flats. She will be celebrating her 90th birthday with a party, arranged by the other residents, which she will be sharing with her many friends in the village.

God bless you Min and may you have a birthday to remember!

Christine Halliday