

## The Meeks Shall Inherit the Wychwoods

You may have seen them trooping up and down the High Street in Milton-under-Wychwood in April. This father/son duo looked very much alike, except the son's hair was longer.



Steve in Milton

And just what was the Wychwood intrigue that kept them asking questions of the locals and snapping so many photos? It seems they had heard about this lovely, rolling terrain called "The Cotswolds," and oh yes, the father knew that this English village was the location of his first home on this earth. But he had left "Milton" when only an infant, fifty-three years before.

The son, quite a talented American rugby player had been invited to play and teach rugby at Nottingham, so the father/son duo decided to discover for themselves the mystique and charm of the area. The Wychwood was working its magic on them.

### **With the USAF at Brize Norton**

Armed with directions from us - Steve's parents, Steve and his own son Tyson Meek ventured into virgin territory with excitement and curiosity. They went first to Lower Farm in Milton, hopefully to meet the Terry Hartleys. You see we - Stan and Pat Meek, had lived in the Hartley's rental flat while I was stationed at Brize Norton with the Strategic Air Command of the USAF. Although it had

been more than a half century, and involved people they had never met, they did indeed find Mr. and Mrs. Terry Hartley who received and welcomed them in a royal fashion. Terry's first wife, Rachel, had died twelve years

earlier.

Terry Hartley's nephew and wife, Justin and Sue Whitehorn, the new current owners of Lower Farm, were also great hosts and showed them all through the farm home and the flat where we had lived. The warm, genial welcome and kind spirit of the Hartley family was no surprise at all to us. We remembered well the magnanimous spirit and cordiality of the Hartleys during our two years there. It had endeared the British people to the Meeks forever.

### **Do You Know Heather Cottage?**

I am now a retired pastor. Pat and I had purposely chosen to live in this English village rather than in colonies of American servicemen near Brize Norton. We wanted to experience life as the citizens of our host nation did. One very dear experience us older Meeks delighted in was taking tea with the Hartleys as they watched on the television the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

When Pat progressed in her pregnancy, I became concerned about her climbing the stairs to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor flat and we moved to Heather Cottage in Milton. Steve and

Tyson were unable to locate this cottage, and would be grateful for any information. This cottage would have been Steve's first home.

Pat and I remember that an elderly Miss Pargeter, whom we believed had been a district nurse, owned it. We were also told that the cottage had once been a part of a lodge that served royalty upon their hunting excursions to the Wychwoods.

The young father/son duo returned home to America to share with us their observations and experiences and to compare 53 year old photos with their latest digital camera images. Us older

Meeks had put many miles on our 1952 Morris Minor visiting places like Stow-on-the-Wold, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Warwick Castle. Pat loved to walk around the Wychwood villages and enjoyed watching the colourful ritual of an English foxhunt. The Cotswolds will always be a favourite with the Meeks.



Stan and Pat at Lower Farm 1952

We were delighted that our British-born son and

grandson were able to explore our old trails and to reminisce over what they call a "two-year honeymoon in the Cotswold Hills of England." We will celebrate our 56<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this August.

**Stan Meek**

*If anyone can help Stan and Pat, Steve and Tyson locate the Meeks first home, or has any other reminiscences, we would love to hear from you **Editor***

## **Coffers and Candlesticks Reading Wills and Inventories 1600 – 1640**

Wills and probate inventories are among the most personal documents used by local and family historians interested in the seventeenth century, showing us the everyday lives of families in the past. Instruction will be given in reading seventeenth-century handwriting. No previous experience is needed and beginners and non-members will be welcome.

**Course tutor Adrienne Rosen**

*A course of 8 classes to be held at the New Beaconsfield Hall, Shipton under Wychwood, Oxfordshire OX7 6BQ*

**Fridays 10 am to 12 noon. Starting Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007  
Course fee £45 including registration fee £5**

For further information call Sue Jourdan on: 01993 830179  
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**Sue Jourdan**