

## Mary Celebrates her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August saw the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of a Milton - under - Wychwood resident of 49 years. Mary Hedges (née Large) was born in 1929, the second youngest of five girls and three boys who grew up in *Bowden Cottage*, Nether Westcote.



### War Memories

Mary has happy memories of her childhood: helping with harvests, strawberry picking, playing cricket with her brothers and walking to Kingham station to catch the 'Chippy' train to go to the pictures. She recalls the night when a WW2 German bomber crew on a mission to 'Rissy' Aerodrome missed their target and flattened the Dutch barn next door:

*"Lucky no one was hurt; my brother Peter leapt out of bed and dived his feet into slippers only to find that they were filled with broken glass. By the next day news had spread and boys on bikes arrived from all around to witness the damage."*

Mary joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in 1947 and was posted to Lincoln, Nottingham and Chester, with the British Army Medical Corps, caring for injured servicemen returning from action in Palestine. In 1952 she married a Milton man, Sidney, and they began life together in a tiny cottage in Fifield, moving to the larger cottage next door after the birth of their second daughter, Ann, and in 1960 settling into 21 The Sands, where she still lives. 'Original Miltonians' remember Mary from the days when The Sands were full

of growing children, others from when she worked at the Co-Op or from her dancing days when the *Wychwood Country Dancers* were a fixture at summer fetes.

### The Sands of Time

In 1974 Mary's mother, Ursula, moved into The Sands living to the good age of 92. Today Mary no

longer has an extended family in the village but at various times other family members also lived on The Sands, Sid's brother, Ern and his wife Stella at No.14 and Ann and her family at No 13. Despite inevitable changes, Mary comments:

*"Village life remains intact, with each generation enjoying the same pleasures; playing on 'The Green', walks down the 'back fields' to 'Dog Kennel' and spotting the first primroses in Bruern Wood."*

After Sid took early retirement they gardened and relaxed together with long walks in the Welsh mountains. After 42 happy years of marriage, Sid sadly died and Mary rebuilt her life, taking over the household tasks that they had previously shared. In her leisure time, she tends her beloved flower garden, solves crossword puzzles and completes jigsaws whilst listening to favourite music and Radio 4.

Mary celebrated her birthday with her daughters, grandchildren and family members, who travelled across the country to be with her and to share fond memories of life in this Cotswold village.

**Janet Wiltshire (née Hedges)**