



FRIENDS OF LITTLE GIDDING NEWSLETTER

Winter 2020



Work is ongoing in Ferrar House and it is likely to remain closed until May 2021. On Saturday 5 December 10.30-12 noon, our Nicholas Ferrar Day and Friends' AGM will be via a Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85001437664?pwd=VHpJcXVlVknUc2hKd3BLRHhRncVJGQT09>

Meeting ID: 850 0143 7664

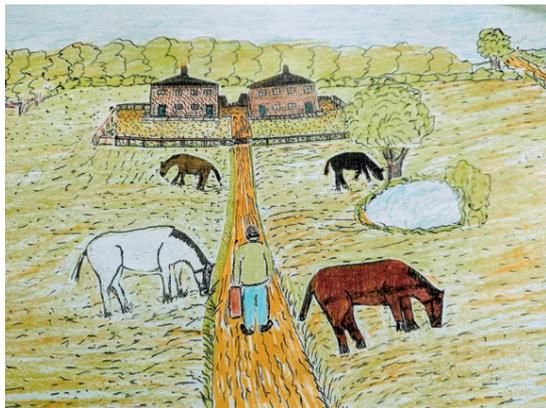
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Or phone access

0203 051 2874

Harry's Story: Life at Steeple Gidding 1955–1957

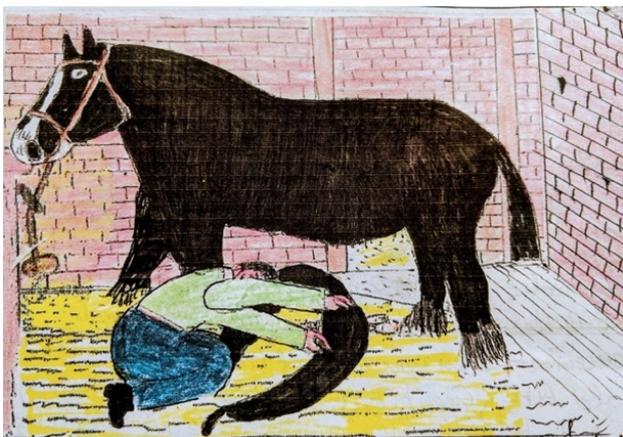
Harry Milford has sent the Friends his memories of working on a farm in Steeple Gidding. A copy of his first book, **Harry's Story**, about his youth in Great Gidding, has been donated to our Library.



Harry arrived on March 15th 1955 after leaving the Army. *"I had got my job back for the Co-op Bakery in Peterborough till I received a letter from my Mother, who promised Mr Burnham her son would work for the House, one in a row opposite the Church. I became a Horsekeeper."* He lived with his Mother and four siblings at Number 2, The Row. Eight cottages

were built in 1880 on the site of the old Mansion. In Harry's time there were only four dwellings left in the middle two blocks.

"I liked living at Steeple Gidding. We had a nice view from our front door as this field was a kind of park with fish ponds, two small ones and one large one. Behind the house was a spinney. We used to leave our gate open so the horses could eat the grass in our fenced area."



There were five carthorses: Gypsy, Tiny, Duke, Smart and Ginger. *"Horses are not daft, when a new horsekeeper starts work the horses try you on, they hope to see how you are."* Duke would not lower his head for Harry to put on the collar, so Harry had to stand in the manger, landing in a heap on the floor. *"Duke then put his head*

down to let the collar on. I must have passed the test anyway, the other horses gave no trouble."

One day, the horses decided to bolt down the lane to Little Gidding – through a five-bar gate into the meadow with a brook at the bottom. Harry gave chase carrying the halter to no avail. Eventually he remembered the horses had yet to have their breakfast and rested on a log until they came to him.

In 1957, when Harry was 21, he set fire to the John Deere tractor by accident. *"I had tried to put three gallons of petrol in a two gallon tank. Eric the farmer's son helped me put the fire out."*

Harry would have stayed, but new neighbours threw food on to the grass near the cottages, encouraging rats. After finding a rat on his bed (and chasing it down the stairs), the family relocated to 31 Infield Road, Glatton, where Harry worked for ME Hunting & Son. He never forgot his time in Steeple Gidding and the history of the place.



In later life Harry and his wife Fliss became members of the Sealed Knot. For 17½ years they took the roles of Musketeers. They now live in Ibstock, Leicestershire. Harry hopes to visit The Giddings in due course and relive memories of his time there.

Illustrations and words reproduced by kind permission of Harry Milford.

*The photograph "A lost cottage of Steeple Gidding" is reproduced from **Steeple Gidding The 20th Century: A Parish Story** by Michael Halford.*

A Gidding Menu: in the hand of John Ferrar

Browning Fruite Viniger

Gesse [Guests]

Mr Chidley & wife 2

Bro: Collett & Sist 2

N.F & Ferrar 3

Mr Mape[ltoft] & wife.. 2

***4..... 4

Mr Grose 1

16

Dinner.

1 peace Boyled Beife Carrotte

1 Legge mutton Boyled

2 Puddings

Six minse pyes

A Pigg

A gouse and Sause

A Pasty mutton

Supper.

A necke Mutton

plumbroth

A Loyne and

Shoulder Mutton[n]

2 Capons

2 cold Minc pyes



Photo from BBC Children's History website

Garden News from Head Gardener *Jane Page*



A new open vista Photo by Jane Page

The car park has been CLEANED right into the corners and re-gravelled so now the first impression of Little Gidding is GOOD. Now the first sighting from the tidy, functional car park has transformed from the muddled grotty sight through messy hazels past sterile lawn and odd pillars to tatty blocking hedge to what I hope we all feel is peaceful, welcoming place: . . . "please come in, sit down and relax". This new 'vista' has developed bit by bit as people and ideas and happenings, in other words, as serendipity has dictated.

Where to put the rose given by a visiting group, what to do with a depression in the ground, which bough to take off so the mower can get round more easily, where to put all those spare Crocosmias and find a spot to intrigue the noses of the arriving car drivers with the Incense Rose? Then the wonderful gifts of Birch trees, with Ian and Verity's red Acer which was too large for the pot. Somehow the new rose-beds 'happened' and Ron found two pots now with red Sedums (needing little watering).

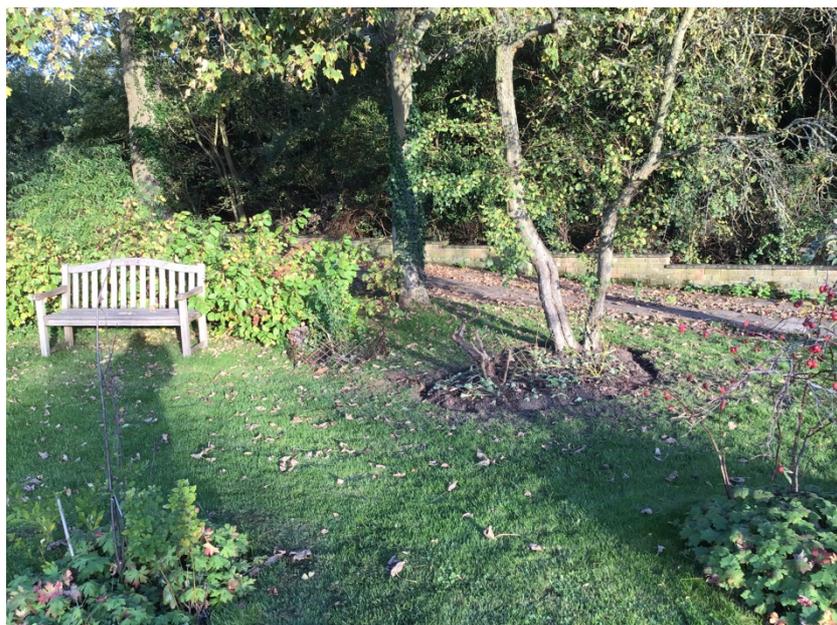
The kitchen bed has mostly been cleared (much effort and clanking from Jason and the mechanical digger getting the Bay out). I have ordered a straddle stone bird bath and had planned to keep the planting low but

'bright idea in the night', will plant four Cotoneaster 'Juliette' trained to three foot and then weeping stems with small variegated leaves and red berries in the autumn. Berries much loved by birds but more importantly they give somewhere for the birds to perch before braving the bath!

Then the fence needed treatment; two honeysuckles, a rose to come, fronted by six Cornus Midwinter Fire for year round colour, Ligustrum Lemon and Lime, still more colour, and Sarcococca confusa for lots of early scent.

Ron and I have moved the Bay (plan for a bird bath in its place: no more trimming back(!) I propose to surround the Bay with three Exochorda 'The Bride' for spring white and three Hydrangea 'Annabelles' for late summer white. This brings the Church area into the garden. Then I am planting the smothering geraniums round all the shrubs and trees in the grass so no weeding and easy mowing. The white rose from the dining room window bed will hopefully establish under the 'blasted' wild plum. And we now wait to see what else needs to be moved for a drainage channel under the walls to prevent damp. I need to order further shrubs to make it all work. Kitchen window bed mostly cleared, stone base for a bird bath, planting to stay LOW.

We hope for a Grand Opening on 1st May, the Garden on 9th May; possibly have plant sale on both days - any interesting cuttings welcome so I can plant up to raise funds?



Dates for your diary:

In the current circumstances all dates are provisional following Government advice. At the present time all Church services have been suspended. Ferrar House is currently closed for refurbishment and damp proofing the ground floor. A provisional date for reopening is May 2021.

A recorded service from Little Gidding is available from noon each Friday via links from the North Leightonstone Benefice website under YouTube videos; Friends of Little Gidding Facebook page; North Leightonstone Benefice Facebook Group or just click on this YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWZUrcG9C0s&t=33s>

The Revd. Canon Fiona Brampton is additionally planning an online programme of events.

Saturday 5 December: **Nicholas Ferrar Day** and **AGM** of the Friends of Little Gidding via Zoom link 10.30 – 12 noon.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85001437664?pwd=VHpJcXVlVknUc2hKd3BLRHRncVJGQT09>

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Saturday 15 May 2021 **Annual Pilgrimage** from Leighton Bromswold to Little Gidding led by the Revd Malcolm Guite

For further information, please contact the Hospitality Manager, Mrs. Sue Capp, at Ferrar House, telephone:01832 293 383; email info@ferrarhouse.co.uk

For an updated calendar and diary of events, see www.littlegidding.org.uk and www.ferrarhouse.co.uk Information is also shared on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/littlegidding - 'like' this page to receive updates. For further event details or to arrange your own event, please contact the Hospitality Manager, Mrs. Sue Capp, at Ferrar House, telephone:01832 293 383; email info@ferrarhouse.co.uk

Membership

A big thank-you to everyone who has renewed their subscriptions for 2020. May we encourage you to support the work of the Friends of Little Gidding by remaining a paid-up member: Individual: £20; Household: £30; Patron: £70.

A cheque made out to 'The Friends of Little Gidding' can be sent to Sally Seaman: 12 Bayswater Avenue Bristol BS6 7NS or for Standing Orders and online banking information to membership@littlegidding.org.uk.

This Newsletter has been compiled by Susan Waters, who would be pleased to receive your stories about your experience of Little Gidding – what brought you there, your impressions of the place... Please email contributions and suggestions to susanwaters144@gmail.com or by post to: NL Editor, FOLG, c/o Ferrar House, Little Gidding, Huntingdon PE28 5RJ.

This email has been sent from newsletter@littlegidding.org.uk to people on the contact list of the Friends of Little Gidding. If you would like to be removed from our list please email chair@littlegidding.org.uk

The Society of the Friends of Little Gidding is a registered charity, number 1102857