

## THE WALTERS FAMILY

Walking along Goring towpath one day, I started chatting to Tony Walters, Membership Secretary of Goring Fishing Club. I have lived in Goring for 24 years, but how many residents can say that their family has lived in this area for over two centuries? Tony can, and after some research I have managed to glean some information on the Walters family.

Joseph Walters was born in Dorchester, Oxfordshire in 1811. He married a local girl Maria West, two years his senior. The next record I can find is the family living in High Street Dorchester in 1861, registered as a cooper (journeyman) with three sons aged 10, 12 and 13 as plough boys and a further three aged 2, 3 and 7.



*Joseph Walters' home in Dorchester [Gill Cranshaw]*

*Dorchester toll house, closed 1873 [Gill Cranshaw]*



Dorchester must have been a bustling place, the toll house was in operation, and there would have been the mail coach from Oxford and London stopping at the Red Lion which was opposite the house. The drapers shop and the grocers shop were situated either side of them plus a private school which was run by 35 year old Catherine Fisher.

Joseph died in 1887 and Maria in 1878.

### **Police Constable Walters**

Further records revealed that one of the sons, Ebenezer, married Alice Davis from Dorchester and joined the Police Force. He and his family resided at Whitchurch, Lewknor and Caversham, finally living at the Police House, Goring (corner of the High Street and Cleeve Road) with 11 children (unfortunately two later died). From local newspaper reports of 1888 he attended a fatality when a gentleman who was swimming in the weir pool at Goring, drowned. The deceased was recovered and under the superintendence of PC Walters, was taken to a carpenter's shop in Station Road (which is now a house opposite Bellême Mews). The Inquest was held at the Temperance Hall (now the Library).

It seems as though it wasn't a quiet life for PC Walters in that year, for he was assaulted by a 'drunk and riotous man' in Goring. In another case, 'The Landlord of the Rifleman Beer house was summoned for being drunk there on 24 November. Police Constables Yates and Walters both spoke of visiting the Rifleman at 7.30pm and found the defendant drunk and at 9.20 paying a second visit, found the defendant 'speechless drunk' and quite incapable of even giving change and people doing as they liked, and that when a customer gave the defendant a shilling to pay for a pint of beer, he offered 2s 6d change. The defendant was fined 5s and 15s costs. The owner of the Rifleman undertook to find another tenant.

PC Walters had to deal with a gipsy for allowing her donkey to stray at Woodcote, a hawker who allowed his two horses to stray on Christmas Eve and three trespassers in search of game. There was also the theft of 12 bottles of ginger beer behind the Queens Arms public house in Goring. The fine was £1 each.

One notable case involved a suicide in the Thames near Hartslock Wood.

Alicia Douglas, a 'Gaiety Girl' from London, together with a gentleman friend had travelled by train to Goring and spent four weeks in a lodging house. The gentleman returned to London and the girl became depressed. On discovering her bag and some letters on the river bank, the Gatehampton ferryman found her body in the water nearby and alerted PC Walters.

Alicia's body was taken to the Miller of Mansfield and an inquest was held at the Temperance Hall. PC Walters sent a telegram to the girl's gentleman friend asking him to attend the inquest.

Although the Coroner thought the girl was suffering from great depression, the jury

returned an open verdict. Jerome K Jerome must have read this article because he includes the story in his book *Three Men in a Boat*. The lady who drowned is buried in Goring Churchyard.

Apart from police duties, Ebenezer was a keen gardener and was awarded a first prize for the 'Best Kept Garden' at the Goring and Streatley Cottagers' Show in 1889.



*Left:  
Police House,  
High Street, Goring  
[Gill Cranshaw]*

*Below:  
Ebenezer's home  
in Dorchester [Gill  
Cranshaw]*

In 1901, at the age of 52, Ebenezer was back in Dorchester, now registered as a Pensioned Constable and living with his wife Alice and sons Joseph aged 15 (servant domestic), Jonathan (11) and daughter Ethel (8). The other children must have left home. They lived in the High Street next to the Fleur de Lys Inn. Ebenezer died in 1915 and Alice in 1933.



### **Other members of the family in Goring**

One of the couple's sons, also named Ebenezer, was born in 1871 and in 1895 married Caroline Abigail Horne, born in Assendon. They all lived at No. 3 Sloane Cottages, attached to the old Sloane pub. His father's expertise in horticulture must have influenced his choice of employment as Ebenezer was a gardener.

*Right: Ebenezer and Caroline  
[Tony Walters]*

*Below right: Sloane Cottages,  
Goring [Gill Cranshaw]*

*Underneath: Goring Football Club,  
1936 [Tony Walters]*

They had nine children, the youngest being Sidney who was born in 1915; he was Tony's father.



Sidney played football for Goring as shown in the photo which was taken in 1936. Sidney is in the back row second from the right, standing first right is Fred Hewitt's father. The second from the left back row is Ernie Joslyn. First row, left is Titch Hunt. First from the right is Jack Clark and next to him is Dennis Strange.

Sidney was a plate layer on the railway (he is the third from the right in the photograph). This group used to walk to Cholsey Station and back through Goring to the water troughs at Gatehampton and back to Goring & Streatley Station, inspecting the tracks every day.





Right:  
Platelayers at  
Goring Troughs  
[Tony Walters]



Below:  
Caroline  
Walters with  
six sons and  
one daughter,  
Sidney is second  
from the right  
[Tony Walters]



Sidney married Dorothy May Rose and they had two children, Tony and Rosamond. Sidney died in 1983 and Dorothy in 2000.

At the age of 17 Rosamond travelled to Paris to become a Bluebell Girl at the Lido, Champs-Elysees. She then toured Switzerland, Oman, Greece, Tokyo, Athens and America. As for Tony, there lies another tale, especially of his childhood.



*Left: Rosamond [Tony Walters]*



*Right: Tony [Tony Walters]*

From 1886 to 1993 there were over 30 members of the Walters family living in the village. Tony is now the only one left in Goring.

**Gill Cranshaw**

### **Acknowledgements**

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#### **Sources**

Census returns ([www.Findmypast.co.uk](http://www.Findmypast.co.uk))

*Berkshire Chronicle*