

Eric Weston

Eric was the son of William Weston and Mary Elizabeth, nee Keen, daughter of Henry Keen and Sarah, nee Bonham. Henry and Sarah lived at The Old Thatch (then three cottages), Ford. Henry Keen was Sunday School Superintendent at Ford Baptist Chapel. There were three families of Keens living in Ford, all distantly related.



Henry James Keen (1852-1930) and Sarah Ann (nee Bonham) (1853-1932)

Eric was born 31st August 1914 at Varneys Farm, Kimblewick. Eric's parents were married in Ford and lived in Rivey Cottage, where Eric's older sister, Gladys, was born in 1910.

In 1912, Eric's paternal grandmother died and Eric's parents moved to Varneys Farm to look after Eric's grandfather, Henry Weston. When Eric was a baby, the farmers who lived opposite, Millers, left to take Wootton Farm, Westlington, and Eric's parents moved into their house. When Eric was 5, his father and grandfather took Chadwell Hill Farm, between Longwick and Kimble, and Eric spent the remainder of his childhood there. He attended Monks Risborough School. His first teacher was Miss Williams, who had also been Eric's father's first teacher. Eric's cousin, Ada, who was born in 1930, also attended Monks Risborough School and Miss Williams was also her first teacher. She eventually retired, after nearly 50 years at the school, and got married!

Eric left school at the age of 14 and went to work at Ernest Turners in High Wycombe. When World War 2 came, anyone working at Turners was not called up. They made parts for aircraft, so it was a reserved occupation. It was not a soft option, though, as they had to work 12-hour shifts six days a week, including night shifts, and it was very heavy work. Whilst working at Turners, Eric met Olive Smith, who worked in the office, and they were married on 19th July 1941. They lived in High Wycombe, where their son, Alan, was born 21st September 1942.

Olive came from Wycombe Marsh and was the 7th of 9 children born to Ernest John Smith and Sarah Elizabeth, nee Stallwood. Ernest was born at Sheepridge, near Flackwell Heath, and was the 11th of 12 children. Sarah was the youngest of 12. Most of Sarah and Ernest's siblings had large families, as was the norm in those days, and Olive calculated that, if all her first cousins were alive, there would be well over 100 of them. Olive did extensive research into her family tree. Both Smith and Stallwood families originated from Bledlow Ridge and the surrounding villages. Despite her grandfather's name being John Smith, Olive managed to trace her family tree back to the early 1600's.

On the Weston side, the farthest we have traced back is Eric's great-great-great-grandfather, also called Henry Weston, who was married in Tetsworth in 1769. Most of the Weston family remained in Tetsworth until the late 1800's, but Henry, Eric's grandfather, left in the 1860's. He worked for a time at Wheatfield, then moved to Longwick, where he met and married Ellen Brown. Eric's father, William, was the fourth of five children and was born in a cottage, now demolished, off Bar Lane. William's younger sister Florence, married Lewis Newton and lived at Haddenham. Their son Ivor was apprenticed to Walter Rose and took over his woodcarving business when he retired. Ivor's son, Roger, now runs the business.

Eric left Turners in 1950 and worked at a number of engineering companies over the ensuing years. His last job was with Parker Knoll in High Wycombe, where he worked on machine maintenance. Eric retired in 1979, and enjoyed 30 years of retirement.

Having lived in several houses in the High Wycombe area, Eric, Olive and Alan moved to Dinton in February 1967. Shortly before Eric's retirement, he and Olive were walking by Dinton Church, when they noticed a crack in the door of the shed on the Ford side of the Church. Peeping through the gap, they saw an antique fire pump and cart. The shed roof leaked and the fire pump and cart were in a dilapidated condition. Eric contacted the Parish Council and offered to do some restoration work on the fire pump and cart. He had it at his house for several months, gave it a thorough overhaul and repainted it. It now resides in the Milton Keynes museum, where Eric has visited it a couple of times recently. This photograph was taken there on Eric's birthday in 2007.



After a short illness Eric died on the 19th May 2010 aged 95 years of age.