

# The **NEW REGARD**

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Forest of Dean Local History Society



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# ALFRED QUINTON BARTON

## Chemist & Optician 1889 - 1956

Dr. Margaret E. Barton (Daughter)

**I**N August 1920, A. Q. Barton opened a chemist shop in Market Street, Cinderford. Born on the Isle of Wight, he served his apprenticeship on the Island in Newport. Upon qualification he enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was posted to France. After the war he worked as a pharmacist in London and then in Chepstow prior to moving to Cinderford. On the 11th November 1920 he married Amy Elizabeth Child, who had grown up in the Chepstow area; there was no honeymoon.

Hand written cashbooks, receipts, and a record of all prescriptions, including cost survive from the early days of the business and provide a vivid picture of its development over the years – for example, on opening he allowed himself a wage of £2 per week. A representative sample has been copied for this article.

Over the years the business expanded with, in 1926, a move to 14 Market Street. Mr. Barton qualified by correspondence courses etc. as an optician and he also built up a flourishing photographic business.

He had a very loyal staff and took great care in training them in dispensing – two became qualified

pharmacists and were taken into partnership and made managers of businesses in Gloucester and Coleford.

A young assistant, Harold White, left school in 1930 and at the age of 14 started work in the shop. Some of his memories are related after this introduction.

Another assistant, John Pateman, came into the business during World War II and eventually became a partner. Arrangements had been made for him to take over completely at the end of December 1956. However, Mr. Barton died on 16th December that year so did not completely retire – latterly he had concentrated on the optics.

Alec and Muriel Jackson took over the business in August 1970, moving in 1976 to larger

premises on the other side of Market Street. In June 1977 they sold to Moss Chemists Ltd; thus ending the long line of 'Independent Pharmacists'.

The doorstep of 14 Market Street, Cinderford, now a charity shop for the Great Oaks Hospice, still has the name A.Q. Barton in mosaic. The Coleford premises, recently renovated and previously the Tourist Information Centre, still has in two leaded glass panels 'Optician' and 'Animal Medicines'.



ALFRED QUINTON BARTON 1889 -1956  
MPS (Member of the Pharmaceutical Society)  
FSMC (Fellow of the Spectacle Makers Company)

## A. Quinton Barton

(Member of the Pharm. Soc. Gt. Brit.)

WILL SHORTLY OPEN IN

**Market St, Cinderford**

AS A HIGH-CLASS

Family and Dispensing

**CHEMIST,**

BEST LONDON (WEST END) AND  
PROVINCIAL EXPERIENCE.

Look out in this paper for  
announcement of opening date  
1253

ON AND AFTER

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 27th,**

GET YOUR REQUIREMENTS AT

**A. Quinton Barton's**

**THE NEW CASH CHEMIST,**

**Market St., Cinderford**

Depot for National Insurance and Private  
Dispensing, Medicinal Preparations  
of Highest Purity.

**HIGH-CLASS TOILET GOODS, &c.**

**SATISFIED CUSTOMERS —**

1253

**A SPECIALITY !**



Quinton Barton's first premises in Market Street, Cinderford. He moved from here in 1926 to a shop on the same side of the road along Market Street towards the Triangle. The premises later became Louis Arblaster's outfitters and then during the Second World War were the Home Guard stores. After the war Radiolec started up here and then the shop became a newsagents as it still is today although the frontage is much altered and the stonework has been rendered. On the original print it is possible to make out adverts in the windows for 'Cartwrights Lemon Squash Powder' at 3d.; Phosferine; and Foot Salve. Products visible are tins of Water Glass in the bottom of the small window whilst the main display is of 'Enolin' which according to the poster at the far end of the window display was being promoted by means of a competition.

## TAKE IT A SPOONFUL AT A TIME

by Harold White

I left school in 1930 at the age of 14 and commenced work at Quinton Barton's, the chemist in Market Street, Cinderford. My hours of employment were from 9 a.m. until 7.30 p.m., Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday – half day closing 1 p.m. on Thursday, 8.30 p.m. Friday and 9 p.m. Saturday. My commencing wage was 5/- per week, increasing to 7/6 after a month's trial and then to 10/- after six months. After one year it was further increased to £1 per week. Thereafter, I received a rise of 10/- each year, so that when I was called to join H.M. Forces in 1940, I was earning the princely sum of £6 per week.

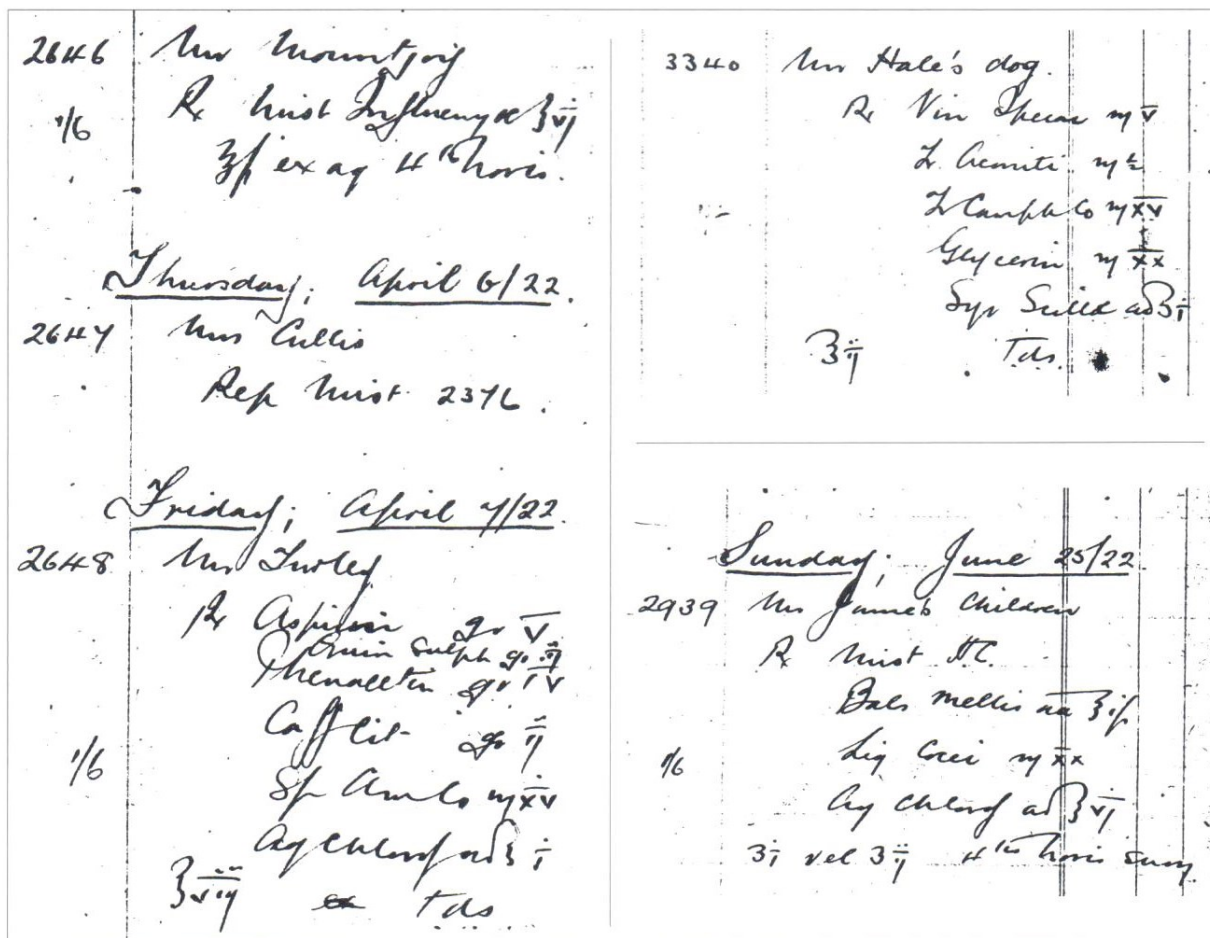
After demobilisation in 1946 I returned to 14 Market Street, where I took up the position of dispensing assistant. Besides dispensing medicines, we also ran a developing and printing service, so during the summer months it was nothing to work until 11 p.m. or later developing films and commencing at 6.30 a.m. with the printing. For these extra hours I usually received a further 2/6

to boost my income. At Christmas time it was nothing to work until 10.30 - 11 p.m, as long as there were people about, we kept open.

In those early years we paid children 2d a dozen for the return of the empty medicine bottles which we cleaned out with hydrochloric acid and then washed well, by the time we finished, they were as clean (or cleaner) than the day they were made. (E.C. regulations would not allow this today).

One of my jobs was delivering medicines to such outlandish places as Flaxley Abbey (then inhabited by Sir Lance and Lady Barbara Crawley-Boevey), to Dr. Hubbard who had a surgery at Pleasant Stile and of course to the Dilke Hospital. Each bottle was wrapped in white paper and sealed with red sealing wax – it was an art in which I became quite efficient.

After about 3 - 4 years my work progressed and I began learning dispensing. Mr. Barton was a really good teacher and I soon learned there was a right way and a wrong way in dispensing. Mr. Barton taught me the 'correct' method and this stood me in good stead during the years to follow. In those days we made our own pessaries and suppositories, pills etc, the pill machine was a



Some selections from the prescription books. The left-hand column shows that Thursday the 6th April 1922 was a quiet day, probably because it was half-day closing, whilst on the right is a prescription for Mr Hale's dog and below, one for a Sunday for Mrs James's children. Prescriptions were all written in Latin, with abbreviations; scruples, grains, minims etc. were used with appropriate symbols, but tds still means three times a day! As well as making up each bottle of medicine, which was wrapped in white paper and sealed with red sealing wax, all pills, suppositories etc, were handmade.

Date	Account	Debit	Credit	Balance
1926				
Sept 20	Cash		5	5
21	Stamp 1/6 - Note Book	12		5
22	Carrage 10 <sup>3</sup> (22) Repairs to Glasses	18		5
23	Cleaning 1/9 - Carrage	5		12
24	Repairs to Glasses - Locum	11		18
25	Miss H King - Lee 1/6 Brobyns	12		18
	House 1/4	4		14
	Bank		33	47
				11
				11
Sept 27	Cash N.H. £ 8 - 10 - 11	6		6
28	Stamp 1/6, 1/6 Geo on Exp. 1/10	5		3
29	Alc B. Repairs 1/6 No Receipts 2/3	5		8
30	Cleaning 1/6, 1/6 1/10, 1/10	8		15
Oct 1	Alc. Repair 1/6 - Lee 1/2, 1/2 Lee 1/6	12		15
2	Brobyns 1/6, 1/6 from 1/19, 1/19, 1/19	14		6
	House 1/3 - 10, 10, 10	4		4
	Bank		9	7
				5
				5
				10
Oct 5	Lee 1/4; Stamp 1/6 & 1/10	5		19
6	Cleaning 1/9 1/10, 1/10, 1/10	3		9
7	Miss H King 1/6 - 1/6, Lee 1/6	11		9
8	Miss H King 1/6 - 1/6, Lee 1/6	19		9
9	Miss H King 1/6 - 1/6, Lee 1/6	12		8
	Bank		35	43
				18
				1

A page from a cash book for 1926. The week 20th - 25th September is in Mrs Barton's hand. All surviving cash books and prescription books, will in due course, be lodged with the Gloucestershire Record Office.



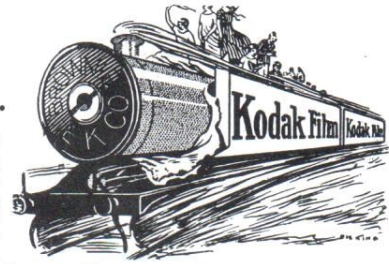
### Your Holiday Snapshots.

These are worth far more to you than their actual cost. Lost or damaged, they cannot be easily replaced. Realizing this, we handle every film entrusted to us with as much care as if it were our own.

We do all developing and printing in our own workrooms and are jealous of the reputation we have made for first-class work.

*Orders received before 10 a.m. are ready the same evening.  
Post orders receive equally prompt and careful attention.*

**A. QUINTON BARTON, M.P.S.,  
CHEMIST & OPTICIAN, F.S.M.C., F.I.O.,  
MARKET ST., CINDERFORD, Glos. Tel. 75**



Same day processing of your holiday snaps is nothing new as the advert shows 'Orders received before 10 a.m. are ready the same evening.' However, this does not indicate that the assistant might be there until 11 p.m. developing the films on the premises and back at 6.30 a.m. to do the prints. Mr Barton also worked long hours, if customers were about the shop stayed open. The photo wallet in which the treasured prints were returned was printed in medium blue on a creamy thin card.

marvellous contraption and is now a museum piece.

This reminds me of the time a young boy came into the shop for two pennyworth of Cochia Pills. These were a penny each and Mr. Barton said "Shall I put them in a box for you?" "Ay", said the boy "What dost think I be guain to do wi um - roll um 'ome!". This again brings to mind some of the messages we received. One note read "Could you please give Tommy something for his face, he's had it a long time and it keeps spreading". No mention that Tommy had a rash on his face, we had to use our own imagination. Another note read "Could you please make up a bottle of medicine for Mary, as she has diarrhoea through a hole in her shoe". No mention that it had been raining and that Mary had been jumping in the puddles of water and caught a chill in her stomach.

I think our motto must have been 'we do the impossible at once, miracles take a little longer!'

As for misquotations, I think these were never ending. First, was the boy who came in for Ostermilk but asked for 'Osses milk'. At times we were asked for PARALYSED LOZENGES, (Iodised Lozenges),

HARMONICA (Ammonia), BARBARIC ACID (Tartaric Acid), POMEGRANATE (Permanganate), DIM WITS POWDER (De Witts Powder), PHILLISTINE TABLETS (Phyllosan), CASTRATED OIL (Camphorated Oil), SAXOPHONE TABLETS (Saccharin) and so on. One customer we had some difficulty with was enquiring for SLACKS TABLETS. We mentioned several different ones, all to no avail until eventually we showed him some EXLAX, to which he replied "Oy"! that's the ones, ya gotta have summat when ya be bunged up".

I well remember the time when Max Factor brought out their range of compact powders to which they had some truly exotic names. One day a dashing young blonde approached me behind the counter and flashing her eyes said "Have you a TEMPTING TOUCH", the name of one of the said Max Factor compacts. Knowing this young lady quite well I played slightly dumb and replied "I don't know, would you like to come up behind and we'll find out". She didn't take me up on the offer, but we both had a laugh. You had to know whom you could have a joke with. For instance, there was the man who asked me if I could give

him something to draw a boil, so I gave him a pencil and a piece of paper.

There are a few things you need in a chemist's shop and a sense of humour is certainly one of them, together with plenty of patience and understanding. I learned many years ago that the same thing doesn't suit everyone. There is a very old saying that 'one man's meat is another man's poison' and this can be very true. There is one

other point, "Never expect the doctor to thank you for saving his patient's life". I wonder how many people realise that if a doctor makes a mistake when writing out a prescription the onus does not fall on him but on the person who dispenses that prescription. You can understand by this that you need to put more faith and trust in your chemist or dispenser than you do in your doctor. I wonder how many people have ever thought of this?



14 Market Street where the business moved to in 1926. Remembered are the mahogany drawers with glass knobs and gold labels, the array of glass bottles, and two steps up to the dispensing room at the back. The opticians and the photographic side of the business were carried on upstairs. Sadly it is not possible to make out what is on display in the window apart from an advertising cards for 'Sanatogen' and 'Genasprin' in the left-hand window. 'Get your Aspro here' is clear on the door whilst a card for 'Glax-ovo' is in the main window.



The mosaic doorstep, still in situ along Market Street.

*Ian Pope*