

224 is the newsletter of the Deddington & District History Society. During our season we meet at 7.30 on the second Wednesday of the month, normally at Deddington's Windmill Centre. Membership is £10/18 pa singles/couples or £2.50 at the door for visitors, who are equally welcome. The editor actively encourages contributions to be sent to 1 South Newington Road, Barford St Michael OX15 0RJ. Email [history@deddington.net](mailto:history@deddington.net)

## Researching the researcher: the story of Mary Vane Turner

Jill Adams researched much of the material that was used in the introduction to the D&DHS edition of *The Story of Deddington* last year. Since then she has undertaken still more work on the life of its author, and we have devoted an enlarged issue of 224 to the results. It is a great example of just how much can be found out these days, even with virtually nothing known to start with, using a combination of traditional leg-work and the internet: even if it could have been achieved without using the internet the work could have taken many years rather than just a few months.

We hope that members now and in the future will learn how such biographical and genealogical research can be carried out, in addition to gaining an insight into the book's author.

Colin Cohen, Editor

The republishing of *The Story of Deddington* by Mary Vane Turner in December 2008 marked both the 10th anniversary of our society and the 75th of the original book. We hope members, and indeed everyone who bought it, have enjoyed reading it.

At the onset of this project virtually nothing was known about the book's author Mary Vane Turner, though we knew that she entered Deddington life during the 1920s and 1930s from reports in the *Banbury Guardian*, the *Deddington Deanery Magazine* and the publication of her book in 1933. I asked a number of old Deddingtonians if they remembered Mary, but of course they were children at that time and had no recollection of where she might have come from. All they could say was, 'She was a tall lady who wore furs and was always seen with a small dog!' Well, certainly as we can see in the photograph used on the back cover of the book (and overleaf) she had the small dog: a pug. We knew that her daughter Muriel had married Dr Jones as his second wife and the memorial windows in the church have been researched and studied in connection with this. The connection to the WI was also known. But we had no idea to whom Mary was married and when exactly she might have arrived in Deddington.

Throughout her time in Deddington I found no mention of her husband Vane Turner in any of the records consulted so I had to start from scratch.

It was suggested that Mary may have been related to Dr Thomas Turner who was practising in the village until his death in 1933 but I researched his family and although she would have known Dr Turner, she was not related to him.

I found Vane Turner a difficult name to research on the computer, but eventually after finding the right combination that the search engines liked, ie

## From the Chair

In September's 224 I announced that we would mark the Society's first decade and the 75th anniversary of Mary Vane Turner's *The Story of Deddington* with a reprint. I wrote then that our members would be first in the queue for the book: I hope they seized the opportunity because *The Story of Deddington* has indeed now sold out. I wonder how long it will be before the first copy appears on eBay? As Colin Cohen points out elsewhere, this enlarged issue of 224 is given over to Jill Adams's carefully researched article on Mrs Turner, who is now receiving the attention she deserves. Jill continues to unearth previously unknown material; her work is becoming a major study that we hope to make available more widely. There are two relatively short nineteenth-century histories, by Edward Marshall and William Wing, that we would like to reproduce: in their case we will perhaps do so electronically.

A date for your diaries: on Sunday 14 June we are organising a trip to Naseby for the 350th anniversary of the Civil War battle, which will be marked by a re-enactment by the Sealed Knot. In addition, we have arranged an exclusive tour of the battlefield site for members of our Society. You should all have received separate notification of the arrangements. Please let Moira Byast know if you intend to join us for what should be an outstandingly interesting day out.

Chris Day



Mary Vane Turner—and her pug.

dropping the Vane, I found a marriage. Initially this marriage was found on the FreeBMD web site but in order to glean more detail without sending for the certificate, I found an announcement in *The Times* for 28 March 1890:

'On 27 March 1890 at Christchurch, Ealing by the Rev W Petty MA, Vicar of St Andrews Ealing, Hugh Vane Turner MA, third surviving son of the late Albert Turner of Sevenoaks to Florence Mary Hodges, only daughter of H W Hodges of Ealing'.

More recently I have been able to look at the marriage entry in the register at Christchurch in Ealing. Florence's father Henry Wickens Hodges is described as a Gentleman. Her mother Ellen was a witness along with Hugh's brother Sidney H Turner.

When first seeing this marriage, it was the name Hodges that gave me the clue to a connection with Deddington. I guess many people will know that yet another doctor, George Montague Hodges, was practising in Deddington and became a partner of Dr George Horatio Jones. It was an obvious thought that Florence Mary was a relation to Dr Hodges in much the same way previously thought to Dr Turner. Was Florence Mary the Mary Vane Turner we were searching for?

## Help from the Census returns

The census is taken every 10 years and from 1841 proved very useful in tracking these families down. It is important to remember that movements, births and deaths between censuses continually occurred, so sometimes vital information can be missed, which can be misleading. For example Florence Mary's age was always recorded in the census returns taken in April which was before her birthday in August. This meant that the age given was correct but gave us a birth year of 1867. The same occurred when she died in June of 1947 at the age of 80, but her birth year was actually 1866.

Prior to 1911, the 'household schedules' were destroyed once the details had been transferred into the enumerators' summary books. But for the 1911 census both sets of records have been preserved, which means you can see the census documents filled out in the head of household's own hand (complete with mistakes and additional comments), in addition to the edited version in the enumerators' summary. By far the biggest cause of people missing from the 1911 census was civil disobedience, which as we shall see may be relevant.

Looking at the census I found Florence Mary living with her parents on the 1871 and 1881 returns. So what relation was she to Dr Hodges? I looked at the Hodges family and in particular Dr Hodges' father George William (*b* 1844, London) who I was hoping would turn out to be a brother to Florence's father Henry W Hodges (*b* 1840). They shared the same parents and were born in the same place: this is the moment when the computer came into its own. They did turn out to be brothers; one with a daughter Florence Mary (*b* 1866, Norwood) and the other a son Dr George Montague (*b* 1881, London). In other words the two were first cousins. This relationship explains how Florence Mary might

have first come to the village and I felt at this stage that Florence Mary and Mary Vane Turner were one and the same person, and thus the author of *The Story of Deddington*.

In order to find more about the Deddington Hodges family using the parish registers, I drew up a pedigree. It showed Dr Hodges' son, Henry Woolmington MacKenzie (*b* 1920) and baptised in Deddington. I decided to search for him on the internet, hoping he might still be alive. However although he died in 1997, his widow Jane is still living at the family home in Sussex. I telephoned her and this was a real turning point as she was able to confirm some of the details on Florence Mary. She also possessed a copy of *The Story of Deddington*. More importantly though, she was willing to give me the name of Florence Mary's great grand-daughter, Jo Warren, who lives on the Island of Gozo!

Initially when I spoke to Jo on the telephone, she told me she had a photo of her great grandmother which she would be willing to let us reproduce for the reprint. At that time Jo told me that she knew very little about Florence Mary. We have spoken a few more times since and I have learned more and used that information as a springboard for further study. Without the help of Jane and Jo, the research would have been a lot harder so we are very grateful to them.

So how did Florence Mary meet Hugh Vane Turner? I discovered that the Hodges and Turner families were both living in Sevenoaks, Kent, in the 1881 census. In fact Albert and Fanny Turner were recorded there as early as 1871. Both families were living in the same road: London Road, Tubs Hill. Henry and Ellen Hodges lived at number 2 Tubs Hill and Albert and Fanny Turner at Mill House, Tubs Hill, close by. One imagines that these families knew each other socially and quite possibly through business.

Albert Turner was a solicitor in the City commuting from the nearby

*Flossie (née Hodges) and Hugh Turner*

Sevenoaks railway station, and Henry Wickens Hodges was a fire insurance manager who may well have been commuting to London too.

In 1881 Florence Mary was 14 and her brother Leonard 12. I had also found another brother John Wall born in 1870 but he only appears on the 1871 census. I also recall being told by Jo Warren (Florence Mary's great granddaughter on Gozo) that there were two other girls in the family, but again they have not shown up in the census returns. I do not know what happened to these three siblings, but fear they had died.

Living with the family in 1881 was Frances Maddison, a governess, and two domestic servants. To date I have not researched any other education that Florence Mary might have received, apart from finding an entry in *The Times* for 14 February 1889 'The Royal Female School of Art: The National Gilchrist Scholarship was awarded to Florence Mary Hodges'. She would have been 21 or 22 years old. This was a technical school 'established to enable the middle classes to be so thoroughly trained as to win in connection with art creditable to themselves and of benefit to the community'.

However on 1 June 1889 a tremendous sadness overtook the Hodges family; Florence Mary's brother Leonard Harry Edmeston died aged 20 years. He is buried in the churchyard of St Mary's, Perivale. This must have been a great loss to Florence's family, especially if the three missing siblings had also died and it came just months before Florence's marriage to Hugh.

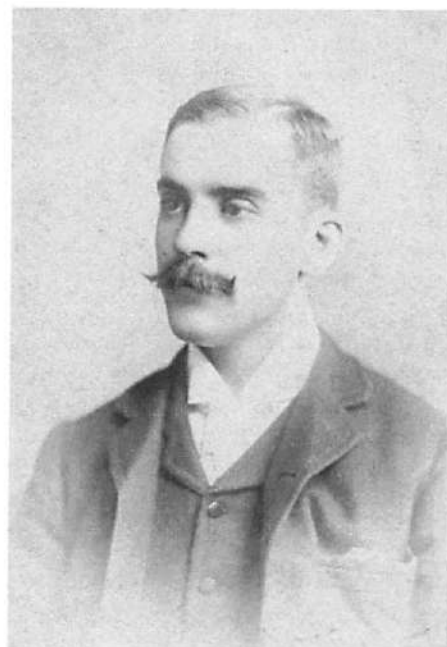
Hugh was not at home on the night of the 1881 census. He was instead a visitor along with his elder brother Howard Blake Turner and a lodger, Dr George Turner who was a cousin; all staying with Mr Blunden a grocer in Hoddesdon, Herts. Hugh was aged 20 and gave his occupation as 'Commissioner of Coll (Oxford)



(Coll Keeper) (Messenger)'. From my research I think Hugh would have been a student at this time and even though we can find no clear explanation of these terms we can conclude that he may have had some kind of work from his Oxford College.

What is known about Hugh is the fact that he did matriculate in 1878 as a member of the Non-Collegiate-Delegacy. This enabled young men to join the University without becoming members of a college, which was normally a pre-requisite. Access was provided for the less well-off whose families perhaps could not afford college fees, or for those men who were married and others for whom colleges were inappropriate. This is strange in Hugh's case as his father Albert was probably well able to afford to send Hugh to a college.

However Hugh did graduate in 1881 as a member of Exeter College and records from the archive at Lincoln's Inn state that he was admitted there on 1 July 1881. Although he successfully passed a public examination there in 1887 which was announced in *The Times*, he was never called to the Bar. His graduation was announced in *The Times* on 11 April 1881 'Oxford April 9th, BA Hugh Vane Turner, Exeter'. The 1881 census was taken on 3 April: one wonders if Hugh had been funding him-



self by working as a 'Commissioner'. *The Times* announced on the 25 October 1889: 'OXFORD, Oct 24. The following degrees were conferred in a Congregation held this morning:- MA Hugh V Turner, Exeter ...'

After his marriage to Florence Mary in 1890, Hugh at some point became a schoolmaster which is recorded on the 1891 census. They were living with Florence's parents in Ealing, at 9 Montpelier Road in the parish of Christchurch where they were married. The house is a large and comfortable Victorian one. The Vicar, Rev W Petty, who had married them was at that time a close neighbour.

Hugh and Florence Mary had two children: Leonard James Vane (b 1891, Islington) and Muriel Vane (b 1894, Westgate-on-Sea, Kent). Muriel of course eventually settled in Deddington.

By 1901 Hugh and Florence Mary had moved to 38 Sunnyside Road, Ealing, and their daughter Muriel Vane was six years old. Hugh was working as a secretary to a land company. They had one domestic servant. Florence's mother Ellen was living next door at 36 Sunnyside Road; her husband Henry Wickens had died in 1893. On the evening of the 1901 census her grand-son Leonard James Vane Turner was aged nine and staying that night with her. The family was close.



Ealing suffragettes parading with posters to advertise one of a series of weekly demonstrations held on the Common on 1 June 1912. From other photos we know that Mary Vane Turner is the lady in front, second from the right and her husband is the tall man at the back with a moustache.

During those few years Hugh and Florence continued living in Sunnyside Road, Ealing. I have found them on the 1911 census, and Kelly's street directories show they were there up until 1918. Florence's father Henry Wickens had died in 1893, but his wife Ellen still lived next door to her daughter and son-in-law until her death in 1918.

The 1911 census reveals that Florence Mary was working. She is described as a journalist and 44 years old. This, I would suggest, was fairly unusual because it might not have been the kind of job a woman, especially a married woman, did at that time. To me this was a staggering piece of information because of the questions it posed. When and where did she acquire the skills to become a journalist? To date I can only surmise that she obtained the training, the shorthand and typing, at night school or perhaps before she was married when she won her scholarship at the technical college. The census filled in by Hugh revealed that they were both 'workers'. I was intrigued to know who Florence Mary was writing for! Hugh's work was described 'Investigator into Rural Condition'.

## Votes for women

I then set out to find where she might have reported and the newspapers she might have worked for. It occurred to me that her writing might have more significance because of being a woman especially at that time. I telephoned Jo Warren and asked if she had known that her great grandmother had been a journalist because to me this was exciting news! Jo responded by saying 'I think she was'. Pressing Jo further I asked the inevitable: 'Do you think



she was Suffragette?' Jo replied, 'Yes, I think she might have been'.

As part of the protest against the government's continued refusal to grant women the vote, the suffragettes organised a mass boycott of the census but as we can see Florence Mary did not join them. Thousands of women may be missing from the 1911 census and will be untraceable because they deliberately stayed away from the family home all night. Many heads of households refused to list the female members on the form.

It looked to me then that Florence Mary had had a very full life and interesting career before she ever set foot in Deddington.

## Traditional leg-work

Ealing seemed like the place to begin the search for evidence of this. In the Ealing Central Library, the local newspapers of the early 1900s are available on microfilm. I began by looking at the *Middlesex County Times* for 1911. Would there be mention of her as a writer, reporter or suffragette?

Amazingly it was not long before her name appeared! In the week of 21 January there was a headline on page 2 'Florence Nightingale—Suffragist'. This report was the '... first Suffragist "at home" of the New Year. The speaker made the point towards the end of her lecture that

Florence Nightingale 'who had earned the universal respect and gratitude of the nation, was a strong suffragist and a life member of the London Society for Women's Suffrage'.

I was pleased to see Florence Mary's involvement with the London Women's Suffrage Movement. 'Mrs Vane Turner then gave expression to the appreciation felt by all of a lecture which had brought home and made real to the audience the personality of "the lady with the lamp" and not her ministry among the soldiers alone, but also her childhood and girlhood spent in tending sick dollies and hurt animals and her long and severe technical training in nursing'.

There were a series of similar articles about the meetings, 'at homes', held in private houses and gardens with marches, pageants, open-air gatherings and letters to the editors of the local papers on women's suffrage.

Mrs Vane Turner was President of the Ealing and Acton Women's Suffrage Society (law abiding and non-party) officially listed in the *Ealing and Hanwell Year Book* for 1911. These were women who did not believe in violent means to achieve the vote. Florence Mary was a Suffragist not a Suffragette, so she was not a likely candidate for evading the census or for civil disobedience.

There are a number of articles which were signed with a pen name which

could well be written by her; however there was a lecture given by her towards the end of April 1911 reported in the *Middlesex County Times*, on Journalism. In it Mrs Vane Turner states 'Taking the phrases, "Journalism for Women and Women for Journalism", Mrs Turner emphasised the fact that women are now a necessary part of the journalistic world and no paper of high standing can manage without employing at least one woman on its staff.' She passes on to outline the every day life of a reporter on a London daily, 'the lecturer sounded the warning of several snares which beset the unseasoned interviewer.' She gives examples of some pitfalls and I wonder is she talking from her own experience from working on a daily newspaper?

At the close of her lecture she says: 'Journalism is a good if a strenuous career; good because of the many opportunities it affords of seeing life and events, men and manners and whose, after a life spent in active journalism, retires to the quieter and less stressful existence of book writer, carries with him interesting stories of experience and many happy memories'. The lecture went down well apparently from the vote of thanks: 'to judge from the animated faces of the audience, no formal matter, but a very real expression of feeling.'

I wonder if she was talking about herself and thoughts of retiring? She would have been about 44 at that time. Coming to Deddington and writing its history through the newly formed Women's Institute was still a number of years away.

A popular place to hold the Suffrage meetings was Buols Café which was originally known as 'The Grandvoinet-Buol Theophile Restaurant, 1, Sandringham Parade, Uxbridge Road and near to Christchurch where Mary and Hugh were married. The café is long gone as that part of Ealing was bombed in WWII, including parts of the church.

It was reported in the *Acton Gazette* on 18 October 1912 that the 'Local

non-militant suffragists' would begin their autumn campaign of work by the annual general meeting of their society (the Ealing, Acton and Bedford Park Branch of the London Society for Women's Suffrage) which will take place in Buol's Café.

The report went on to state that 'the chair will be taken by Mrs Vane Turner, president of the branch ... Suffragists are asked to make strong muster, not only to ensure the meeting being as successful as gatherings held at this café have been in the past but also for the sake of standing shoulder to shoulder in the propaganda work to be carried on during the forthcoming months'.

The AGM was held on 21 October in Buol's Café and after the business where Mrs Vane Turner was re-elected as President and the speeches, two resolutions were proposed calling on the local MP, Mr Nield a) to vote for Mr Snowden's amendment to the Home Rule Bill, to secure the inclusion of women and b) this meeting calls upon the House of Commons to include women in the forthcoming Franchise and Registration Bill and urgently requests Mr Nield once more to support the cause of women Suffrage by voting for the amendments ... These resolutions were put to the meeting by Mrs Vane Turner and carried by 'unanimous consent'.

I am still working to find Florence Mary working on newspapers or journals such as the *English Women's Review*, but she was very active with the Suffrage movement judging from a number of reports in the local press. She was certainly still President of the local branch in December 1913. Women's Suffrage was heavily supported in the Ealing area and much money was raised locally. Her work as a journalist and her membership of a very active movement, all seems to show a powerful combination of heartfelt belief and practical application.

## What of her husband Hugh?

Hugh, in the 1911 census, was aged 50. I imagine he supported his wife in her work. In Ealing Library I was shown a picture of 'A Poster Parade of Ealing Suffragettes advertising a meeting on Ealing Common on June 1st 1912'. Behind the group of women with their posters are three male supporters! Whilst no one is named, it looks as if Florence Mary is one of the ladies at the front and Hugh is there at the back to lend support.

The census describes their son Leonard as a solicitor's articled clerk aged 19. With a promising career ahead, he was completely unaware of the horror looming. Leonard Vane joined The London Regiment (London Scottish) the 1st/14th Battalion and went off like so many young men to serve his country in the First World War. He died on the 21 December 1914 in Givenchy near La Basse, France and he was buried at Cuinchy aged 23. His memorial is at Le Touret and his parents included a memorial on the west side of the family grave in St Mary's, Perivale inscribed: 'Lift up your hearts. Leonard Vane Turner, A Coy. 1st Batt. London Scottish 14th County of London Regt. Only son of

*Leonard Turned who died in the Great War*



Hugh Vane & Florence Mary Turner & Grandson of H W & E M Hodges, gave his life for his country and for freedom ... aged 23 years & 7 months'.

In her book, Mary mentions the Great War with some feeling due, no doubt, to her personal loss; 'but material anxieties must never dim for us what were its glories—the spirit of honour and chivalry that answered the call of 1914, the dogged duty that carried on'. Mary also writes about the men called up from Deddington; The Oxfordshire Hussars; the Yeomanry and the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire 1/4 Battalion of Light Infantry. The first detachment of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry landed in France on 18 September 1914, 'three days only after the London Scottish who were actually the first territorial regiment to disembark'. Mary is including her personal and special knowledge of her son's regiment known to those at the time of her writing perhaps, but not to us now without research. Leonard Vane Turner is also commemorated in the North Chapel of Christchurch (now Christ the Saviour), Ealing.

Florence Mary was further bereaved by the death of her mother Ellen Mary Hodges in 1918 and her parents are buried at St Mary's Church Perivale.

## Four doctors and a lady

However there was a twist in the Hodges story in Deddington. Dr Hodges' mother Alice Clode Hodges (née Williams) had a sister Emily May Williams. She had come to Deddington as the wife of Dr George McNair. They had married in 1890 in Lambeth. Dr McNair had come to Deddington as a medical assistant to Dr Edward W Turner (father to Dr Thomas W Turner) and was living with the family at The Poplars in 1881.

By 1891 Dr McNair and his new wife Emily were living in New Street, at Ilbury House. The 1891 census also

shows Emily's mother visiting along with her grand-children, George Montague Hodges (the future Doctor) aged ten and his sister Alice aged seven. The family link to Florence Mary is beginning to emerge.

Things take a further turn for the worse when Dr McNair died two years later in 1893. Poor Emily! They had only been married for three years and there were no children. I am only guessing that Florence might have known Dr McNair and his wife through her cousins, the Hodges.

Emily McNair married Dr George Horatio Jones in Lambeth in 1897. Dr Jones also bought the practice in Deddington. Together they entered into the busy life of Deddington's society. Dr and Mrs Jones were always part of activities in the school, the church and other village events. Emily Jones died in 1923.

On 8 October 1924 Dr Jones married Muriel Vane Turner, only daughter of Hugh and Florence Mary. The marriage took place at St Peter's, Eaton Square, London.

That, then, was the family background of Florence Mary Vane Turner and her links to Deddington.

When Mrs Vane Turner was mentioned in Deddington and locally in the newspaper and deanery magazines, her first name is not generally used and from now on I will call her Mary. On some occasions her name is hyphenated but Vane was Hugh's second name. However the combination 'Vane Turner' did work well and that is how Mary was known in Deddington. Since it's now known that Mary had been a journalist and suffragist, perhaps she was always called Mrs Vane Turner or Mary Vane Turner.

However Jane Hodges told me she was affectionately known within the family as 'Flossie' and when I decided to further my research on the Turner family someone else also knew her as Flossie. I thought there had to be a Turner descendant that I could find in this country. Hugh had

five brothers and two sisters so it seemed a real possibility. Using the internet, I searched for the marriage of Hugh's brother Sidney Hyde Turner who had been his witness when he married Mary. I found the marriage to Frances Ellen Rudd in 1893. They had one daughter Audrey. I then found Audrey's marriage to Edward R Luxmoore-Peake in 1928 and looking for their children, I managed to find a son living in Wiltshire. Using 192.com, his telephone number came up on the screen!

It was very exciting when I telephoned Dr Hugh C Luxmoore-Peake because he immediately knew about the family and quickly mentioned Ilbury House of Deddington and Dr Jones! It turned out that Hugh has a collection of Turner family photographs and he very kindly sent me pictures of 'Flossie' her husband Hugh, their son Leonard amongst others. Leonard appears in his uniform so this must have been taken just before his departure to France, his fate so poignantly decided. It is also wonderful to see the author and her husband when they were young. I have been imagining what they might have looked like. Now our thanks are due to Hugh for sharing the pictures and allowing them to be reproduced here.

Mary, Hugh and Muriel probably visited Deddington fairly frequently perhaps during the First World War. They may have stayed at The Blocks (now Featherton House) with the Hodges family. Her cousin, Dr Hodges, was away in France from 1914-1916—as was Dr Jones from 1916-1918—on active service both serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps with Dr Thomas Turner. He held the rank of sergeant in the Volunteers, remaining in the village throughout the war. After the marriage of Muriel to Dr Jones in 1924 Mary stayed with them and probably lived with them in Ilbury House until she bought Beeches in Earl's Lane. Hugh was ill sometime in the late 1920s and was in hospital until





*Hugh Luxmoore-Peake and Martin Jones with Hugh's father 1938; see text below*

his death in 1933. Sadly there are no memories of Hugh in Deddington, but at that time Mary and her daughter Muriel were rapidly becoming part of Deddington's community. It must have been a great joy for Mary when her grand-children were born in Deddington. Lesley Muriel in 1926 and George Martin in 1928. Hugh Luxmoore-Peake has also sent a photograph of his father, himself and Martin Jones taken in the summer of 1938. 'My one and only photo of Martin Jones. A snap which must have been taken by my mother (using the old family Brownie) of my father, me and Martin (on the right; the occasion was half-term Martin and I were at Stubbington House, near Fareham, Hants. I remember we were in the sickroom together during a measles epidemic in my first or second year at the school. He went on to Stowe, and I (for my sins) to Cheltenham. The school no longer exists, I'm afraid; it was the only one I didn't loathe. The school was evacuated, first to Lewes in Sussex and then to Polapit Tamar, a fine country house with masses of grounds on the Devon-Cornwall border, during the war.' Martin's mother Muriel Jones had died in 1936 two years before

this photo was taken.

In 1925 there was a poignant entry in the *Deddington Deanery Magazine* 'Gift to the Church—A beautiful copy of Guido Reni's 'Ecce Homo' (1575-1642) has been presented to the church by Mrs Vane Turner in memory of all who fell in the Great War, and in particular of her son, Leonard Vane Turner, who fell on December 21st 1914'. The picture was copied by L H E Hodges who had died in 1889 aged 20. The picture of course was copied by Mary's brother Leonard Harry Edmeston Hodges.

Mary first appears on the electoral roll of Deddington in the autumn of 1926 as living in Ilbury House. She mentions her cottage which is presumably Beeches in her book which means she had this property by 1932. 'I am privileged to live in a Deddington cottage built in the same stone as the rocky outcrop—a ferruginous marlstone quarried nearby, which shines richly gold in the sunshine'. However I think she stayed in Ilbury House (from the electoral rolls) with her daughter at various times up to 1936 until Muriel's death. After this Mary lived at Beeches until 1943 when she became ill. She went to live in the Nursing home 'Madora' in the Oxford Road, Banbury where she was looked after by Nurse Gillette until her death in 1947.

Apart from her village history what other contribution did Mary and her family make to Deddington? The societies, fundraising efforts and church events that she was attached to, had their activities announced in the *Deddington Deanery Magazine*. Very often these were not included in the local newspapers. I couldn't find any mention of the publication of her book apart from the few words in the deanery magazine from the vicar: 'The Story of Deddington—Congratulations to Mrs Vane Turner upon the publication of her story of our Parish. It is excellently produced and most interesting. As only a limited number have been

printed it would be as well for those wanting copies to get them as soon as possible. Only those who have ever tried their hands at such work know how much laborious research is required to collect the information'.

Praise indeed! Mary was the first person to compile and write a full village history of Deddington. The people she drew some of her information from had written notes and pamphlets but not a book, so her research was a big achievement in the early thirties. Perhaps her earlier work in journalism helped the process of research and aided her interviewing techniques. The people to whom Mary spoke gave a real insight into Deddington's past and much of this information gleaned from people whose memories would have been lost without her efforts. As we know, Mary and her daughter were members of the Deddington Women's Institute and Muriel had been its first President.

Mary was President in 1933 and 1934. There were reports in the *Banbury Guardian* with most of the monthly meetings recorded with Mrs Vane Turner presiding either in the British Legion or Ilbury House. Several garden parties were held; one in Dr Hodges' gardens at The Blocks and the other at the Hermitage 'where Mrs Vane Turner, the President took a splendid lead in all the activities'. Her grand-children won prizes in the fancy dress and children's decorated pram competitions. It seemed like a very happy day, but it was also the year Mary lost her husband Hugh.

It was recorded too that Mrs Vane Turner laid a wreath at the Remembrance Service in November. Deddington and many people in the district mourned the death of Dr Thomas Turner early in 1933.

In November 1934 the deanery magazine included a letter by Mary advertising the forthcoming Missionary Exhibition. This was to be held in Banbury's Church House (now a restaurant facing St Mary's).

Mary was the 'Editorial secretary' to the Exhibition and in this piece she is inviting all the local church-goers to attend and offer their talents, time, services, practical help or donations to further its work abroad. 'It should be happy work, which may, like other occasions of the kind, lead to actual involvement of recruits for the mission field'. She signed herself 'F M Vane Turner'. There are numerous occasions when Mary involved herself with more local good causes, whether it was improvements to the church, the waifs and strays (Children's Society), entertaining the school children to tea parties or acting as collector and treasurer to various groups in the village. She gave gifts to the church. In early 1936 she gave as a 'thank offering' a new white altar frontal to add to the new improvements at that time. After the death of Muriel, it was recorded in the *Deddington Deanery Magazine*, 'Mrs Vane Turner has most kindly given all the school children copies of the New Testament in memory of her daughter.'

Her son-in-law Dr Jones died in 1939. I understand after the death of their mother, Lesley went away to Westonbirt School and George Martin went to Stowe. Lesley married Leonard Warren in 1948 and they farmed at Evenley, Northants. Whilst on a holiday in Malta in the early 1960s, they decided that they would sell up the farm and go to live on Gozo. Their sons Christopher and Timothy did not wish to farm and were probably still at school when Leonard and Lesley and their daughter Jo settled on the Island. Christopher died in about 1986 and Timothy lives in Australia. Lesley's brother George Martin farmed at Evenley until he went to live in Portugal in 1954, returning to London where he died in 1963. Jo said that her parents died in 1984 and 1985. They are buried in the cemetery on the island.

The *Deddington Deanery Magazine* offered the following in 1947: 'Burials—July 3rd Mary Vane Turner,

(Committal at Oxford). 'By the passing of Mrs Vane Turner, Deddington has lost one of the links with the past. Her history of the parish, now unfortunately out of print, enshrined not only the details of the past but also her own loving interest in the town, its church and social activities'. (The Rev Maurice Frost).

Mary's ashes were scattered on the lawn at Headington Crematorium. She was 80 years old and truly was a remarkable lady. Jo Warren described her as a gentle but strong-minded person. She had lived through very challenging times and despite all her personal losses, she devoted her life to the benefit of others. As she states in her foreword, 'The old bygone folk lit the torch of progress, which we hold for a little time then pass on'. Her legacy, for the rights of women was clear, but I conclude this article with much admiration and gratitude to Mary for *The Story of Deddington*.

## Postscript

Since completing this article about Mary Vane Turner, I have discovered more about her mother Ellen Mary's family. Her grandfather, father and brother were architects in London, all named James Edmeston. Her grandfather, son of a clergyman, had set up his practice in 1816 and in 1827, took on the soon-to-be-famous architect and also the son of a clergyman, George Gilbert Scott as an apprentice! However James was also interested in the welfare of children during that time and often visited the London Orphan Asylum and was a strong supporter of its work. He also wrote many, many hymns notably 'Lead us heavenly father lead us'. It was said he wrote a hymn every Sunday and it was reputed to be up to two thousand in his life time! Did Mary inherit some writing skill from him? He served as the church warden at St Barnabas in Homerton and died in 1867.

Interestingly Scott designed Christchurch, Ealing 1852 where Mary married Hugh in 1890. James had

complained when Scott was his pupil, that he was wasting his time sketching medieval buildings!

The quest for finding these families and more information about them is insatiable; I feel there is much left to uncover. Mary Vane Turner's story will continue.

Jill Adams

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