

Snippets from the Parish Records

Baptisms Marriages Burials

Many of us are familiar with birth, marriage and death certificates. However, such certificates have only been around since the start of civil registration in 1837. The parish church records have been a source of information for much longer. SAVA has summaries of the parish registers for baptisms, marriages and burials from the mid 1500s. What can these tell us about the lives of the people in Steeple and Middle Aston?



One entry in the baptism register reads:

1625 Jul 15 FOX Katherine d John M.A.

recording the baptism of Katherine, daughter of John Fox of Middle Aston.

Most of the records at that time have no further details; the date of birth was not included, and it was usual for just the father's name to be given, with no mention of the mother. However, in this case, there is a small addition to the entry:

at the same time her mother was buried

Although the register cannot confirm Katherine's birth date, it was customary for babies to be baptised soon after birth. This suggests John's wife died around the same time she gave birth to Katherine. The burial register confirms his wife's burial:

1625 Jul 15 FOX Katherine w John M.A.

Cross-referencing with the marriage register confirms Katherine as John's wife (differences in spelling of names is not unusual) with the entry:

1619 Nov 28 FOXE John M.A. DEENE Katherine S.A.

So John's baby daughter was named after her mother. Whether this was done with the mother's knowledge we can only speculate. It is to be hoped the baby Katherine brought some joy to the bereaved John, and provided him with good memories of his wife. However, scanning further down the burial register, we come to the entry:

1626 April 22 FOX Katherine d John M.A.

Within just a few months, John had lost his daughter too.

Further scanning through records reveals no other baptisms of children of John Fox in the period 1619 to 1626. It seems that Katherine was the only child of the marriage. Delving further into the records may enable us to discover more about John Fox and Katherine Deene, their parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. From just a few basic entries in the registers, you can start to piece together a family story.

This short example illustrates how old documents can provide us with a glimpse into the past.

If you have any documents related to Steeple Aston which you would like to be saved for future generations to browse, please contact SAVA (Chairman Martin Lipson 01869 347046, or drop into the Village History Centre on a Saturday morning, between 10am and midday).

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