

# MAIDS MORETON CONSERVATION GROUP

## Capt. Starlight

### He Died As He Had Lived

Buckingham Advertiser 13 Jan 1940

Buckingham has lost a well-known and a quaint character by the passing of Mr. Richard Jones, aged 63, who lived for many years in a dug-out in the fields at Maids Moreton, but some months ago went under cover of a shed.

Mr Jones, who had been engaged by Mr R Stopps on some casual carpentering work, apparently died at his work on Tuesday from a sudden heart failure. It is understood that he had been working with a hammer, and Mr Stopps, after hearing the hammering cease, went, after a time, to see how Mr Jones was getting on. The police were informed and PC Slatter, who often used to pass a little time in conversation with the quaint old character at his lonely haunt, was called to the scene. After a post mortem examination an inquest was deemed unnecessary.

#### **REFUSED A RATION CARD**

A native of Maids Moreton, Richard Jones lived for a time with his mother, Mrs Mary Ann Jones, (in Duck Lake), before adopting the "dug-out" method of life. Independent, he refused help from local charities and even refused to have a ration card. At night he studied the stars and could talk about them! He served in France during the war (WW1) and was badly wounded. It is re-corded that in recounting his experiences on returning home he became so excited that he pushed his bayonet through the ceiling of the Wheatsheaf Inn. He died, as he had lived, in the open air, with the fields around him.

#### **Roll of Honour**

Buckingham Advertiser Nov 1916

Private RICHARD JONES, single, aged 40. He joined the Oxon & Bucks L.I. last March. His mother, Mrs Mary Ann Jones, Duck Lake, Maids Moreton, has received a letter from him stating that he is lying in a hospital in Wales. He was wounded in four places and that the poison from the shell was retarding the healing. He was to undergo another operation to remove a piece of shell from his thigh. He was always cheerful and his letters to his widowed mother are full of hope in recovery and a visit to his native village.

(Ed). It is said that, in WW1, he saved his unit from annihilation in France, due to his knowledge of the stars, by advising officers they were marching, at night, towards the German lines.

He became known in the village as Capt. Starlight.

(From Beris Slack). Yes I do remember Captain Starlight, known to us as Dick Jones. The pit that he lived in along Chackmore Farm road was known as Dicks Pit. He lived in a hovel with a faggot of wood as his front door. He was a very clever man and used to study the stars, hence his title. As a very small child I can remember him coming into our bakery, he and my Dad were friends, and he would ask dad to leave a loaf of bread in the oven until it was burnt black, with that he would grind it up and make his coffee. I don't really remember a lot about him except that if the faggot of wood was not in place he was at home if not he was out.

Compiled by Reg Doble

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