

## Information Sheet for PT 310 Middleton Cheney

**Church of St Mary Warkworth:** The church is of 14<sup>th</sup> century origins and is a listed building. Inside is the memorial below.



Five brave men gave their lives from the village. The population at that time is unknown but given the current population is only 31 it would have been a substantial portion.

### **National Filling Factory(NFF) No9 Banbury**

The area you are now entering is Unit 1 part of the NFF. The factory consisted of two units however Unit 2 was part used by the M40 & warehouses on opposite side. Unit 1 was made a National Monument and therefore cannot be built upon and must remain only pasture land.

On the outbreak of the Great War it was identified that the country was short of munitions factories so four new ones were constructed, Banbury being one of them.

The factory was commissioned in November 1915 and operational in April 1916 at this stage it was only Unit 1. The buildings were primarily timber construction on concrete pads and built by local tradesmen. At the centre was a total of 22 melt houses supplying 8 filling sheds. Some total of 1400 locals were employed of which 33% were women filling up to 100 tons of lyddite explosive into the shells per week.

Within a year the factories capacity was doubled by the construction of Unit 2 meaning the whole site covered an area of 132 acres.

In May 1917 a notice was issued that British batteries on the Italian front were only to use shells from Banbury such was the high quality of production. Later that year after TNT came into use parts of the NFF

were used for navel mines, shrapnel shells & chemical shells (mustard gas). At the end of the war it was sold & used to break down surplus ammunition until 1924 when it closed. Large parts were deliberately burnt to clear any explosive residual.

A point to note due to the chemicals used a lot suffered skin discolouration with the skin turning yellow. The women were known as “canary girls” and indeed later had babies born yellow known as “canary babies”.