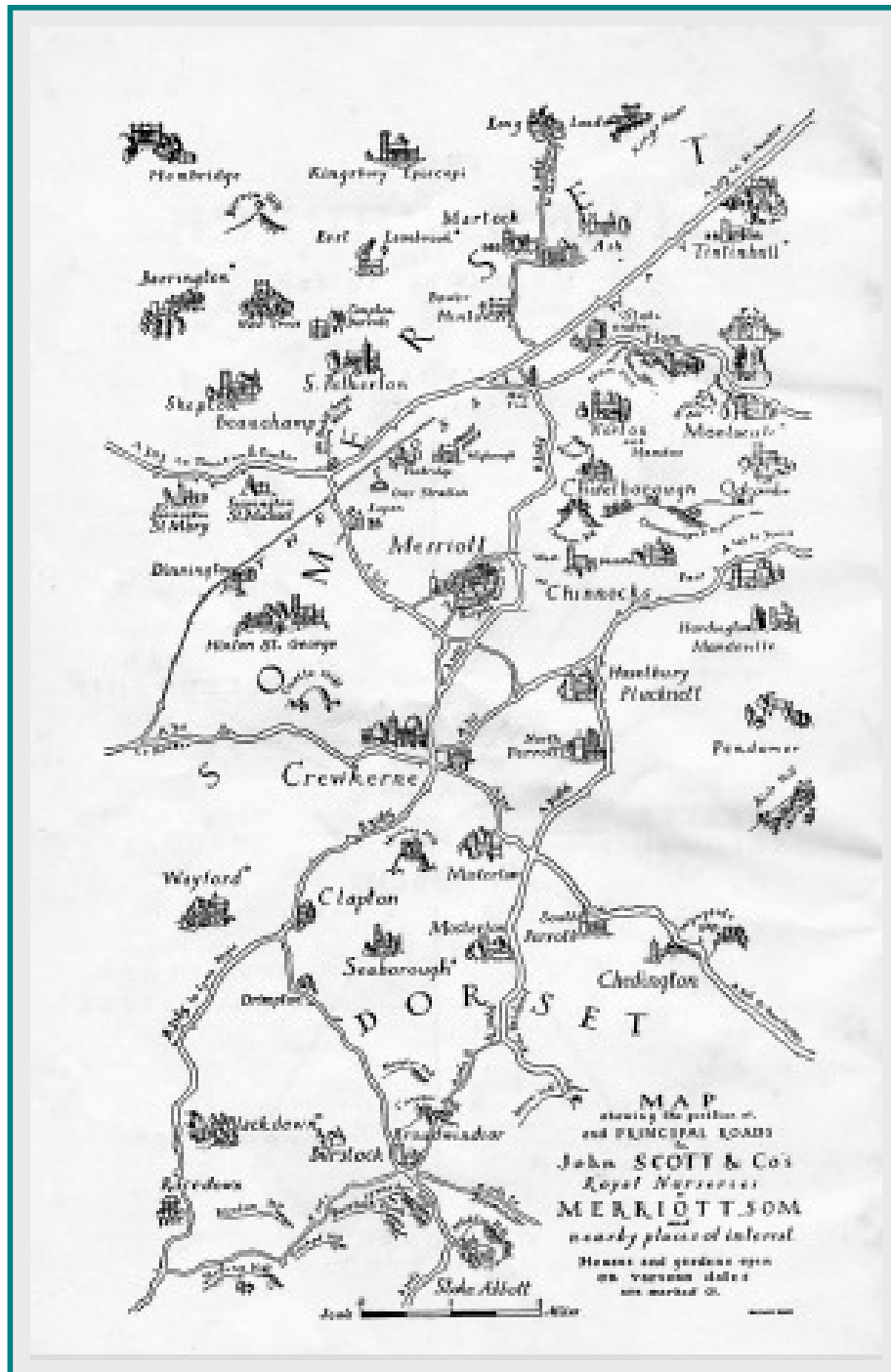


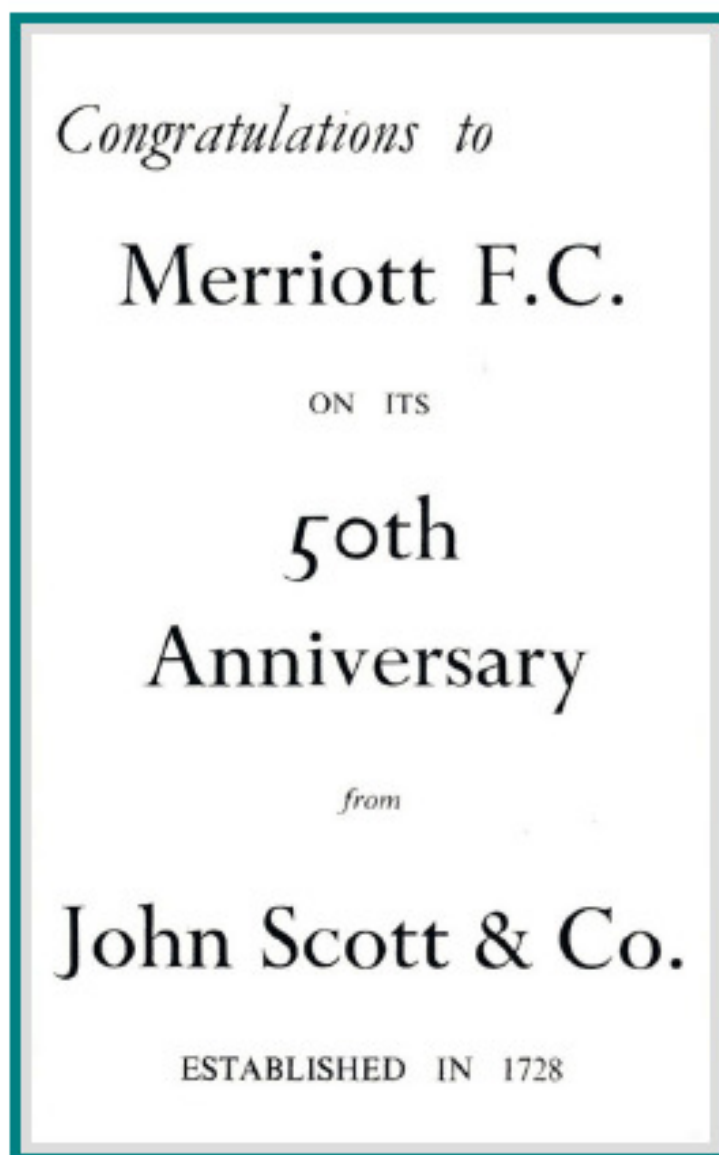
Scott's Nurseries

Text: David Gibbs Site photographs: Alan Keene

It could be argued that the widely renowned Scott's Nurseries put Merriott on the map, not only by reputation and expertise but also literally, as is evident by the advertisement below, which appeared in a 1960s booklet Merriott Its Church And Parish, published in the 1960s. It's an example of Scotts, a business firmly rooted in the community, supporting a local cause, as they often did.



Another example of Scotts supporting a local initiative is this next advert, which was placed in a booklet commemorating the 50th anniversary of the village football club.

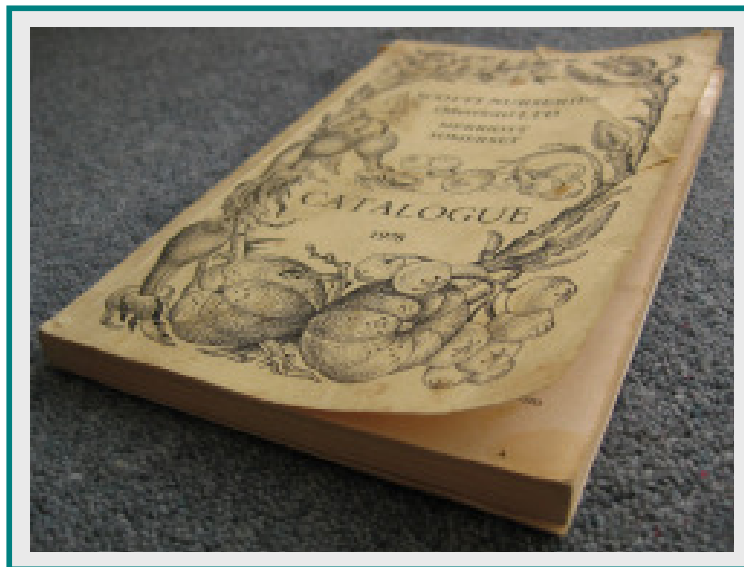


It is often stated that John Scott, a Scotsman born in Perth, came to the village and set up his business in 1852, yet from this advert it can be seen that the business was established 1728. It would be nice to know more about the earlier business but perhaps now we never will.

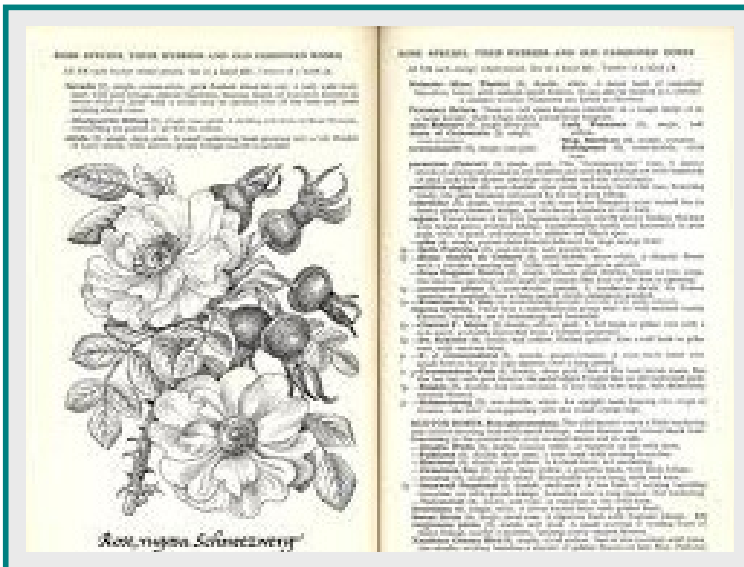
Over the years, John Scott became an expert both nationally and internationally with regard to the cultivation of fruit trees, so much so that in 1870 he published a book, 'The Orchardist'. Google the title today and you will still see mention of the book. On one website someone said he had an original copy and

that it was the best reference book on the subject that he had ever come across. No second-hand copies for sale on Amazon, though.

In 1923, the business changed hands and was bought by Robert Wallis. It remained in the hands of the Wallis family until it went into liquidation in 2009. There are a number of postings on the internet by horticulturists and others expressing regrets at the closure. But for many years before, Scott's Nurseries traded successfully, with a nationwide, perhaps worldwide, reputation for quality, service and expertise. It was once commonplace to see Scotts recommended in the gardening sections of the quality newspapers and magazines by journalists who were expert in their field.



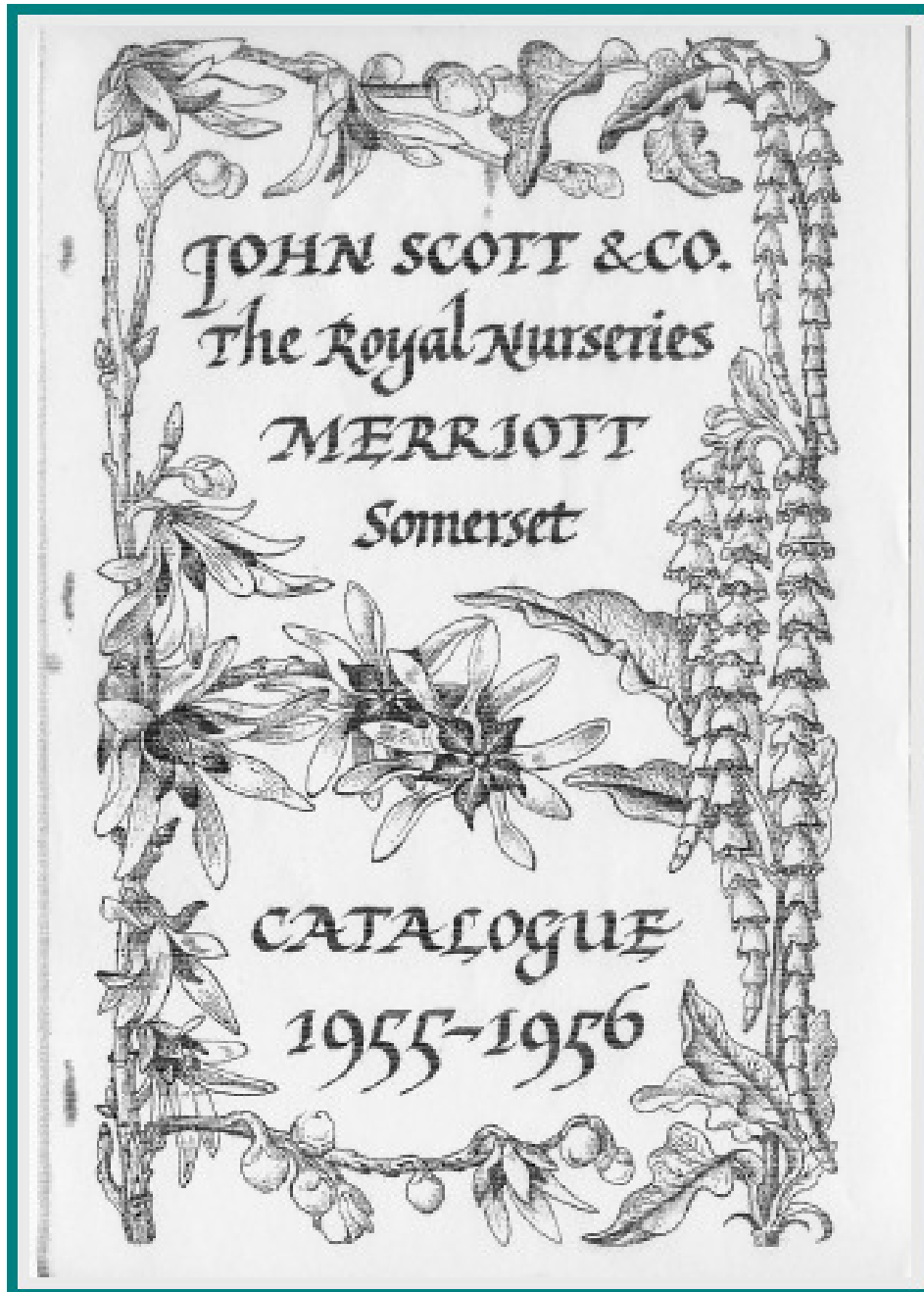
Scott's Nurseries catalogues during the Wallis years were very elaborate affairs, almost like a textbook, packed with information and heavily illustrated with black and white drawings by Robin Tanner. (Google Robin Tanner for more information about a very talented artist.)

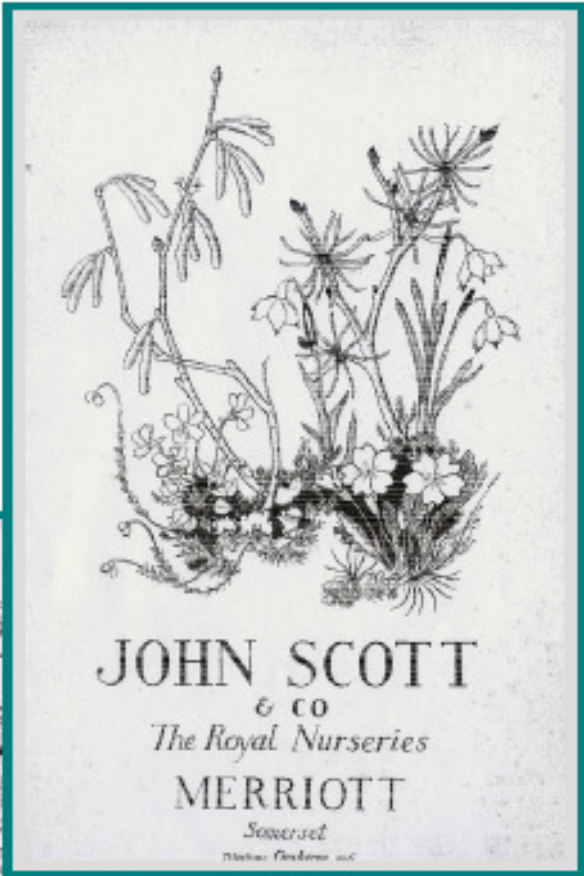


I bought my copy of the catalogue (pictured here) in Farnham, Surrey, Oxfam shop a few years back, for 50p. Various forums on the internet suggest the catalogue is as much sought after as 'The Orchardist' . One chap was prepared to pay £20 for a copy. I wouldn't sell him mine, battered as it is, for double that.

The image above is of typical inner pages and on

the next pages are more examples of front covers.





For many local people, the closure of the nurseries in 2009 was certainly a matter of great regret. For so long it had been one of the main employers in the village. Most long-standing village families had a relative or two who worked there at some time or other, some spending the whole of their working lives there. But now it's gone and there are many who would agree that somehow Merriott no longer seems quite the same without Scott's Nurseries.

Below are a few pictures taken in recent times that serve to convey the extent of the business. Needless to say, they don't do justice to what was for many, many years a very successful business.







