

Living History

NEWSLETTER June 2011

Nature Notes

A Red Kite was seen above Niblett's Farm on the 26th March 2011. One was also seen at Orleton and at Croft Ambrey on the May Bank Holiday weekend. Swallows and House Martins were seen before the middle of April and, further afield, Sand Martins were seen on the river banks near Leominster. There was also a rare siting of a pair of Peregrine Falcons behind Oldfield Cottage.

Yarpole Spring Festival

The Spring Festival took place in Yarpole from 27th – 30th May 2011. The activities included the Flower Festival (see picture of church interior, below), music, drama, a croquet competition, open gardens, beer festival, 'Antiques Roadshow' and bell-ringing.



Community Shop Award

Yarpole Village Shop was selected as National winner in the Countryside Alliance 2010 Village Shop & Post Office category and presented with the plaque (photo below) at the awards ceremony at the House of Lords on Wednesday, 30th March 2011.



Articles

The following articles accompany this edition of the *Newsletter*:

Yarpole Post Office (1) by Ian Mortimer

Local Place Names (2) by Rhianon Turrell

We always welcome proposals for future articles. Please contact the *Newsletter* editor - John Turrell on 01568 780677 if you would like to discuss possible articles or if you have contributions for the Newsletter.

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Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Committee room of the Village Hall on **Thursday 9th June at 7.30pm.**

Parish History

Yarpole Post Office:

Living History

A formal Sub Post Office was first established in Yarpole in 1860 under the control of the Head Post Office in Leominster and, for the first 100 years, it was run by just two related families - the Mason family and the Richards family.

The first Sub-postmaster was a Mr William Mason (then aged 52 years) who was already established as a shopkeeper, boot and shoe maker and Registrar of Births and Deaths; his shop was the front room, to the right of the front door, of the stone built house on the north-west corner of The Square, now known as 'The Old Stores'. The Tithe Map of 1841 confirms that William Mason was the owner of the property which was to be the home of the Yarpole



Post Office for the next 146 years except for the 20 years between 1971 and 1991. Sometime around 1880, when William Mason would have been aged 70 years, Mary, his younger, unmarried daughter, took over as Sub-postmistress and continued to run the business for the next 30 years. (Note the inclusion of 'Yarpole' in the sign.)

The 1881 Census shows Mary as the head of the household which included an Emma W Sealy, aged 13 years who, we understand, was Mary's niece, who would have been helping in the shop, and was later to inherit the business.

1895 Kelly's Directory: *Post Office — Miss Mary Mason, sub-postmistress. Letters arrive by mail cart from Leominster at 8 am.; dispatched at 4.55 pm. Postal orders are issued here, but not paid. The nearest money order & telegraph office is at Orleton. Wall Letter Box at Bircher, cleared at 4.50 p.m.*"



In 1911, the Telephone Exchange came to Yarpole; the exchange was manually operated which meant that Mary would have had to make all the necessary connections for each and every call. The first telephone number, which was issued to the post office, was Yarpole 201 and the number for the public telephone box was Yarpole 251. In 1940, the exchange was automated and moved to its present site 200yds further up Green Lane.

Maryy died in 1913, having bequeathed the business to her niece Emma who had, by this time, married a Mr Tom Richards. Emma retained ownership of the business and ran it in her own name. On this photograph you may just make out the name, "E. Richards", on the sign above the shop window which you will also see has been widened.

Emma and Tom had two children, William ('Bill'), and Vera who helped in the shop and delivered the mail round the village and up over the Common.

When Emma's health began to fail, sometime in the 1930s, Tom took over as Sub-postmaster and with Vera's help, continued to run the business



Vera married the local constable, a Mr. Alf Edwards, who is remembered as being very supportive to Vera, when, in 1945, her father died and she inherited the business which, with her husband's support, she ran for 16 years.

As a matter of interest, whilst the room to the right of the front door was the shop, the sitting room to the left of the front door was used as the doctor's waiting room first for Dr. Norton and then for Dr Vaughan, of the Kingsland Practice, who consulted in a small room at the back of the house. However, soon after Vera took over the business, the Doctors' surgery moved to Pear Tree Cottage at the top of Green Lane.

When Vera died, in 1961, the business passed, at her bequest, to her nephew, Christopher Richards, the son of her brother Bill, who then ran the shop and post office until he sold it in 1967.

From 1860 up to the time that Christopher took it over, the shop and post office had been run from the front room of the main house and it was, in 1962, as a wedding present, that Christopher's father, Bill, had the side extension built, into which the shop and post office could be moved



During the time Chris Richards ran the shop and post office, he had a small delivery van and it is the sign from the side of that van, which is now on display in today's shop.



In 1967 Chris Richards put the shop and post office on the market and it was bought by a Mrs. Doris Milner with her daughter, Jan.

Ian Mortimer 2011 (with acknowledgement to Tony Mears for confirmatory census research)

Parish History

Local Place Names Part 2

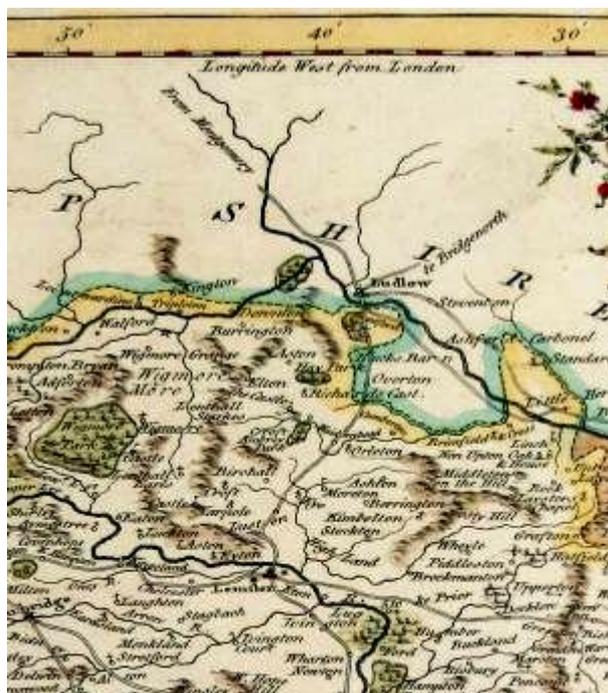
Croft Ambery

There do not appear to be any early records of this name.

A key to English place Names which is being compiled at Nottingham University can only come up with the possibility of the name being derived from an owner or tenant at some time in the past as they have no records relating to it. This is plausible, as there are several Ambrey families in the Marches, but there are no records to support it in this area.

I contacted Richard MORGAN (Glamorgan Record Office) a member of Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland (SNSBI) as he listed an interest in the place names of the English Marches and this is part of his reply:-

“ The first reference I have found is *Croft Ambrey Park* c.1765 on Thomas Kitchin’s map of Herefordshire (online at www.antiquemaps.com/uk) and *Croft Ambrey and Park* on Emanuel Bowen’s (posthumous) map 1775. It is not on an earlier edition of Bowen, on Blaeu or Speed.”



It also appears on Matthew Taylor’s map of 1754 as Croft Ambrey and Park.

In 1831 it appears as Croft Ambery on an ordnance survey map.

Tradition says it was a camp of Ambrosius but without any early spellings there is no evidence of this. However the personal name Ambre or Ambri is cited as an element in the place names of Wiltshire as a possible origin for Amesbury (place names of Wiltshire EPNS 1939 & Dictionary of English Place Names 1991). The element also seems to occur in older spellings of Ombersley, Worcestershire. (Paul Cavill - English Place Name Society)

The second element is very common if spelt as –bury, usually denoting a hill or slightly raised site or sometimes a fortified site from the Old English beorg hill or mound or burh fort or bearu grove

Another possible origin is to look at Welsh place names, as many names in Herefordshire have Welsh elements. Two possible elements are Am- meaning near, beside or around as in Amlwch or just possibly amlwg meaning evident, visible, prominent as in Bryamlwg but it does tend to be a second element rather than a first.

Instead of –bury could it not simply be -bre (similar to the British *-briga*) meaning hill as in Pen-bre and Bredon in Worcestershire, particularly as it is normally said Ambree rather than Ambury?

Other possible derivations given include ambury coming from the aumbry in churches which held holy water and by association came to mean lanes or roads leading to churches or monastries such as the one in Bath, or a soft tumour in horses or cattle. Neither of these seem particularly relevant here.

References

A Key to English Place-Names <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~aezins//kepn.php>