

Living History

NEWSLETTER June 2012

Nature Notes

Early summer has been very changeable with periods of warm/hot days followed by days of incessant rain and cold temperatures. The following sightings were seen around the Parish in this period.

Polecat activity noted around Cockgate.

First Cuckoo heard on 30th April.

20 or so large Koi & Goldfish taken from garden pond in Yarpole, no sign of the predator or the remains of the slaughter; mink, otter or polecat?

Community Building Signage



The temporary sign that has been erected for a 6 month consultation period.

Golden Jubilee Celebration

We put on a display in the Bell Tower as part of the Parish Diamond Jubilee Celebration in late May early June.

This has resulted in more information regarding the Silver Jubilee in 1977 being forwarded for our growing archive.

Articles

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

Lucton Church Account Books by Rhianon Turrell

The Parish Coffin by Ian Mortimer

We have an expanding programme of articles for future issues and we always welcome proposals for articles. Please contact the *Newsletter* editor – Ron Shaw on 01568 780770 if you would like to discuss possible articles or if you have contributions for the Newsletter.

Autumn Fair

We plan to have a display based upon the **1841 Tithe Map** at the proposed Autumn Fair.

Open Meeting

Our Open Meeting on Wednesday 18th April at the Parish Hall was well attended with over 40 locals enjoying Peter Holliday's speech on Victorian Leominster. A donation of £50 was made to the speaker's nominated charity.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2012 are now well overdue. They can be paid to Audrey Bott either by leaving them at the shop addressed to her or sending them to Audrey at Horizons, Green Lane, Yarpole (tel 01568780489). Cheques for £6.50 should be made out to "Living History".

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Date of next meeting

Thursday 6th Sept at 7.30 in the Village Hall C'tee Room.

Living History:

The Living History Group currently has access to a trunk full of items from the Parochial Church Council relating mainly to the history of Lucton Church.

The article that follows is the first of these, based on the quite fragile notebook of Lucton church accounts from 1847 to 1868 and some notes and letters found in the same file. At the front of the book is a careful copy of the Church Baptism Registers for 1711 to 1740 which has been scanned if anyone wishes to refer to it.

Lucton Church Account Books

The accounts start with the delightful statement that Charles Colleys Walkey, (the Vicar and Headmaster of Lucton Free Grammar School) has recorded in this book and the previous one (sadly not in our possession) the sacrament money as an even sum having made it up to the next sixpence above out of his own pocket.

(Charles Walkey died in 1887 worth over £9000.)

The next statement is that the rent of £1.6s 0d (less 9d. income tax) due from Cobwall, Allensmore, is payable by John Griffith, the tenant, on April 6th every year. In 1854 it is noted that the Cobwall money is paid by Mrs. Nash, as Mr. Harris the tenant at the time lives at Hereford and seven years arrears have been paid. The previous payment was in 1847, when six years were paid, indicating that this was a normal pattern. Once again in 1861 Mr. Harris pays up, but after that payments are more regular. This rent provides the income for a bequest from Joanna Pierrepont (the sister of the founder of Lucton School) who died in 1727 and left the poor of the parish of Lucton 6d per week for ever to be distributed in bread. By 1847 this was distributed once a year at Christmas.

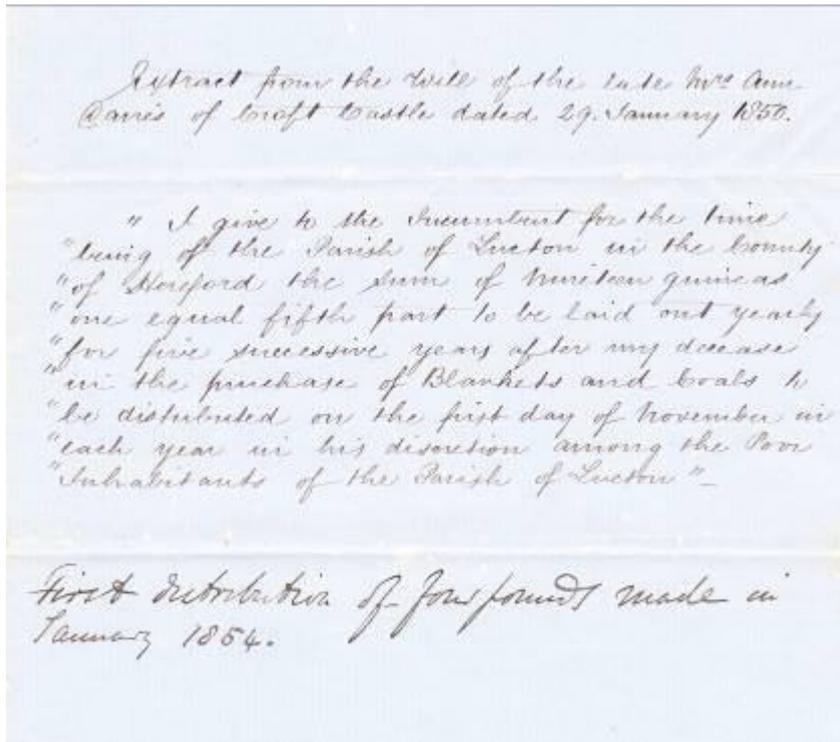
The rent from Mill Moors, Kingsland, is £2.0.0 due 1st November each year. The tenant in 1847 is Thomas Lewis but the rent is usually paid by John Gethin. This is the source of income for Mrs. Cutler's Charity (Mrs Cutler was another sister of John Pierrepont who married Thomas Cutler in 1694 in Lucton) giving the poor of Lucton forty shillings yearly to be distributed in bread by the occupier of the land at Arrow Mills Moor, Kingsland which by 1906 was Col. Clowes of Burton Court.

The parish also owned some glebe land at Little Pentre, Llanvihangel-nant-Melan, Radnorshire. This was sold in 1910 to provide funds for the new burial ground.

The accounts then go on to detail bread distribution at Christmas 1847 to 17 parishioners of varying values from 6d to 4s. This was distributed every year at this time from the various bequests left to the parish.

In 1865 it is noted that the £1. 5.11 from Joanna Pierrrepoint each year has never been expended by itself, like Cutlers £2, it has been mixed up with the other charity monies but does not specify what these are.

The poor were also supplied with clothes and blankets in January of each year from another bequest by Mrs. Davies of Croft Castle who left nineteen guineas of which "one equal fifth part was to be laid out yearly for five successive years after my decease in the purchase of blankets and coals to be distributed on the first day of November in each year." (extract from her will among miscellaneous papers from Lucton dated 29 January 1850)



The first distribution was made in January 1853. The last was made in 1857 when it states "The bequest of Mrs. Davies was expended this year by a fifth payment of four pounds."

As well as bread distribution the Church seems to have helped the parish by buying large amounts of peas and distributing them to the poor of the parish, and by

buying 12 bushels of seed potatoes in 1848 and distributing them in varying amounts e.g. 2 or 3 pecks.

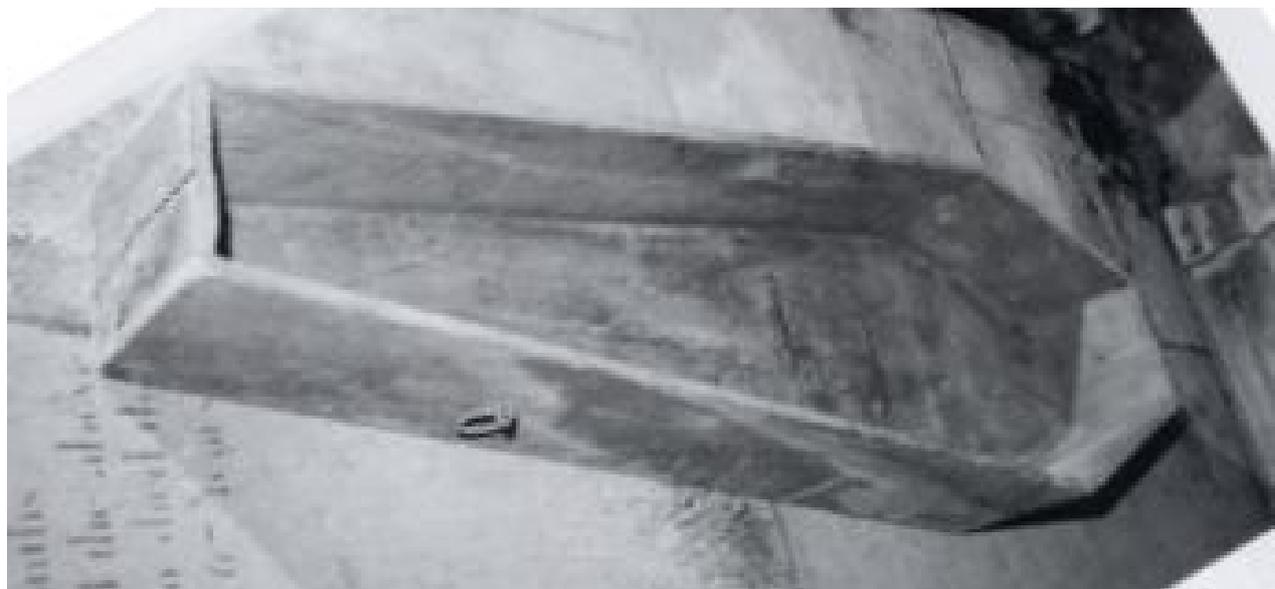
A subscription was raised in 1848 for coal and there was also a distribution of "sheets and calico" by Mr. Hammond. Coal subscriptions crop up every year, often from the Davies family, but in 1865 it notes that from 1858 Mr Walkey has given away a load of coal annually instead of subscribing to the general fund.

In 1849 beef was distributed from the "Cholera Subscription"

This group of charities give a rather different picture of the help available to poorer people in the nineteenth century than is often perceived. There will, of course, have been those in the Parish who had to resort to the Workhouse but there was at least some help available in Lucton Parish.

Rhianon Turrell April 2012

The Parish Coffin:



*The up-turned top (or 'shell'), of the Howden Parish Coffin. **

Up to the middle of the 17th century the majority of the dead were not buried in coffins but simply laid to rest in a shroud or sheet knotted above the head and below the feet.

In 1660 an Act of Parliament was passed (to support the then flagging wool trade) which required all shrouds to be made of woollen material and in 1668 a strengthening Act was passed requiring that this be certified; and so we see in parish records the declaration "Buried in wool".

The shrouded corpse would have been carried from the home to the church in the **parish coffin**. The term 'Parish Coffin' is applied to those coffins which were used on repeated occasions for the purpose of transporting the shrouded corpse from the home to the graveside.

Across the country, there would have been a variety of designs of parish coffin, each with its own procedure at burial, such as a coffin with a hinged lid from which the shrouded corpse would have been lifted out and laid in the grave, or with a hinged foot-board as for a burial at sea.

The commonest design, I believe, would have been a coffin top, or 'shell', resting on a false base such as the parish coffin (1664) preserved in the Minster at Howden in the East Riding of Yorkshire (see above*).

Stoutly built in oak, it has four well anchored iron rings appropriately placed on the sides for the attachment of ropes by which the shell could be removed from the grave, after the burial ceremony, leaving the 'false' base in the grave under the shrouded corpse; thus only the relatively inexpensive base was expended.

Prior to the Reformation in the 16th century, it had been the practice for the parish coffin to be carried directly into the church and placed on coffin stools at the entrance to the chancel. However, the Act of Uniformity (1558) introduced significant changes to the burial service in that the coffin had to be met by the priest at the churchyard gate and that the Celebration of the Holy Communion was to be omitted and the Liturgy was to be reduced. All of which had the effect that the coffin need not be taken into the church and the new limited burial service could be carried out at the graveside. Provision then had to be made for the parish coffin to be supported at the churchyard gate and at the graveside for the duration of the service; this requirement was met by the introduction of the trestle bier.

The Yarpole trestle bier has been conserved and is on display in the bell tower; it was the subject of a previous Article published in September 2005.

The use of the parish coffin was phased out towards the end of the 18th century and in 1819 our Parish had a contract with Mr. A. Mason of Bircher Common, to supply such coffins as were required for the poor of the parish. This was at a cost of 10/6 each (52½p); presumably made from elm which would have been plentiful then.

Compiled by Ian Mortimer (June 2012)