

# *Living History*

*NEWSLETTER May 2016*

## **Nature Notes**

Red Kites have been seen with increasing frequency over Yarpole and Bircher in recent months.

In April, four Redpolls were seen in Yarpole. Quantities of Siskins were also seen but fewer sparrows were noted.



Ralph and Hazel Whitwell have restarted the recording of the flora and fauna of the parish and would welcome more volunteers to help them do this. Please call Hazel Whitwell on 01568 780396 if you are interested.

## **Repairs to Burial Ground Wall**

We are hoping to fund the repairs needed to the wall at the entrance to the burial ground and also to provide a plaque to remember all of those who fought in both World Wars. Our fundraising efforts have already raised a healthy sum towards the cost for this but until we identify a local craftsman who can give us a firm quote for the work we do not know the final cost and whether further fundraising will be needed.

## **Future editions of the Newsletter**

There will be three editions of the Newsletter this year due the lateness of this 'bumper' issue. We are very pleased to have an article from a new contributor - Brian Mitchell - who has written a very interesting and thought-provoking article on the Yarpole baptism registers. We would welcome more contributors so that the next two editions can also be larger issues.

## **Articles**

The following article accompanies this edition of the *Newsletter*:

- *William Kevill-Davies* by Ron Shaw
- *The Yarpole Registers of Baptisms (1857-1918)* by Brian Mitchell

We always welcome proposals for 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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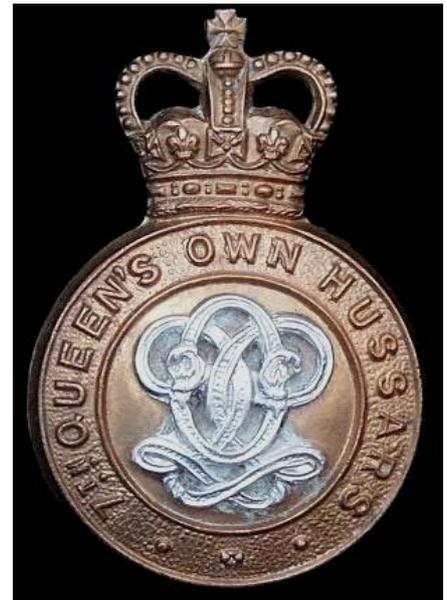
Subscriptions for 2016 are now **overdue**. They can be paid to Audrey Bott either by leaving them at the village shop addressed to her or sending them to Audrey at Horizons, Green Lane, Yarpole (tel:01568780489) Cheques should be made out to "Living History" for £7.50. If you have not paid your subscription you will be asked if you wish to continue receiving copies of the Newsletter and accompanying articles. If you do not wish to receive paper copies of future editions of the Newsletter please let Audrey Bott or Rhianon Turrell (01568 780677) know.

The production and printing of these paper copies is the main cost born by the group along with displays at various functions and the hire of the hall for meetings such as the AGM.

# William KEVILL-DAVIES

## *Living History*

William Albert Somerset Herbert Kevill-Davies was born in Dublin in 1877 the youngest son of William Trevelyan & Dorothy Kevill-Davies, his father was Lord of the Manor of Croft. He attended Haileybury School from 1891-1894, being a boarder in Bartle Frere House.



He was commissioned into the 7th Hussars and saw action in the Boer War in South Africa as part of the 58th Company of the Imperial Yeomanry. For his service in this campaign he was awarded The Queens Medal with 4 Clasps and was also mentioned in Dispatches.

He transferred as a Temporary Lieutenant to the 9th Reserve Regiment of Cavalry in 1914 and served as a Territorial Force representative on Herefordshire County Council

At this time he is living at Highwood with his wife Dorothy and family.



In 1914 he was attached to the 9th Lancers and served in the British Expeditionary Force in France, his Service Record shows he took UK leave in November 1914.



William with brother officers in the trenches.

He was injured on the first day of the Battle of Festubert at Ypres, Belgium on the 15th of May 1915 and died later of his wounds. He is buried at Bailleul Communal Cemetery.

[For more information on this battle please refer to Ian Mortimer's Living History Article June 2009]

The original Burial Cross is now in St. Michael & All Saints church, Croft



In the east window of St. Michael and All Saints Church at Croft are his two regimental crests, the 7th Hussars and 9th Queens Royal Lancers.



There is also a plaque on the East wall



**For his service in World War1 he was awarded the following medals.**



**The 1914/15 Star**



**Victory Medal**



**British War Medal**

In 1923 his old school Haileybury unveiled its War Memorial on which he is remembered along with 740 other old boys who gave their lives in World War One. His name is recorded on the Canterbury Cathedral's Roll of Honour to the 9th Lancers.

[Acknowledgments to Ian Mortimer, Pete Weston, Haileybury School & Wikipedia]

# Yarpole Registers of Baptisms (1857- 1918)

This article is based on one volume of the Register of Baptisms for Yarpole. Henceforth, referred to as the 'Yarpole Register'. It is the subject, along with other related records, of an ongoing project by the 'Yarpole Living History Group' aimed at transcribing the information held in the Yarpole Parish Registers. Held in Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre the Yarpole Register extends over 100 pages. Each page provides for 8 entries, a small number of which are incomplete. The first entry is dated the 26 December 1857, the year in which the Indian Rebellion started, and the last the 1 September 1918, just over 2 months before the end of the First World War. It provides an interesting insight into life of Yarpole during this period, recording, as it does, the names of the newly baptised, the names of their parents, where within the Parish they lived, the father's occupation, and who conducted the ceremony. This article is intended to provide an insight into the information to be found within the 'Yarpole Register' and how it can help us understand the lives of those who lived in Yarpole Parish in earlier times.

The 'Yarpole Register' is not a record of births. It is a record of baptisms and has to be read in that context. It gives the date when the child identified in an entry was baptised. No mention is made of their date of birth in the register. At the date of the first entry in the Yarpole Register the registration of births had only recently been provided for in the Marriage Act, 1836. Registration became a legal requirement from 1 July 1837. Parish Registers of Baptisms, have a much older pedigree. Along with those for marriages and burials they were introduced in the reign of Henry VIII as a means of providing the state with information about those subject to its governance.

The extent to which the entries in the Yarpole Register correlate to those collected as a result of the compulsory registration of births is a matter for further research. At present it is sufficient to note the difference between these two types of register. Another feature of the Yarpole Register, and one that may be considered discordant to modern eyes, is that it prioritises information about the father of the child whose baptism it records. It is the fathers' not the mothers' forenames which are entered first, and although it is not specifically stated to be so, those relating to occupation undoubtedly refer to that of the father not the mother of the baptised child. This, however, is not something unique to the Yarpole Register. Printed registers introduced from the 1 January 1813 standardised the format and content of entries used in Registers of Baptisms, and it is these that are followed in the Yarpole Register.

In spite of their limitations the entries in such registers provide a useful insight into the communities to which they relate. Of particular interest are those relating to the occupation of the father, or as it is referred to in the standardised register, the 'Quality, Trade, or Profession'. A study of the entries for the first 10 years of the period covered by the Yarpole Register shows that the dominant occupations were unsurprisingly those of an agricultural community. Farmers and labourers are the most commonly listed occupations of fathers of baptised children. Also listed, amongst others, are the occupations of; blacksmith, rabbit catcher, game keeper, under keeper, coachman, basket maker, gardener, shoe maker, thatcher, rope maker and cider house keeper.

No. 12.	George	John	Matthew	Joseph	Edith Anne	S. Beard
	Edward	Sarah			keeper	Mrs
No. 13.						
	Samuel	Richard				

There are also entries identifying threshing machine workers, mechanics and builders as occupations pursued in the Parish of Yarpole. The very first entry in the Register relates to a family living on Bircher Common. The father of the baptised child is listed as having the intriguing occupation of spade tree maker. [Spade trees makers were part of the local forestry industry. They made the wooden handles which were subsequently sent to Birmingham to be fitted to spades.]

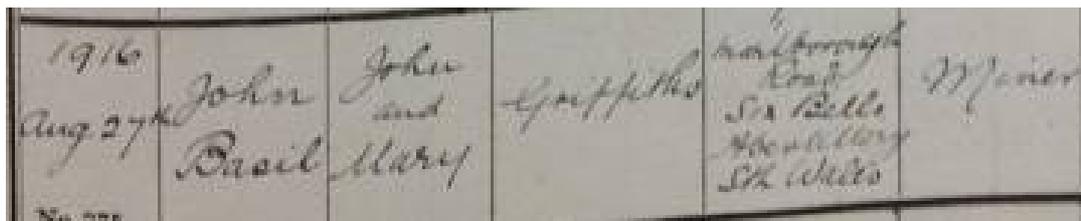
That the Yarpole Register reflects the activities of an agricultural community is not a matter of surprise. It was such a community that was described in Littlebury's Directory and Gazetter of Herefordshire, 1876-7. This stated that the main produce of Yarpole was wheat, beans, hops, fruit, barley and oats grown on soil that was stated to be clayey. The last 10 years of the period covered by the Yarpole Register provides an insight into the extent to which the Parish of Yarpole remained the same or changed in response to changes in the wider world.

The last 10 years covered by the Yarpole Register describes what still an agricultural community is. The occupations of farmer and labourer remain dominant and are accompanied by those of: mason, waggoner, carpenter, chauffeur, groom, gardener, engine driver, tailor's presser, timber feller, water bailiff and miner. As would be expected there are also entries where the father is listed as being in the armed forces. So in 1915 one father is listed as a Sergeant in the Army Ordnance Corps,

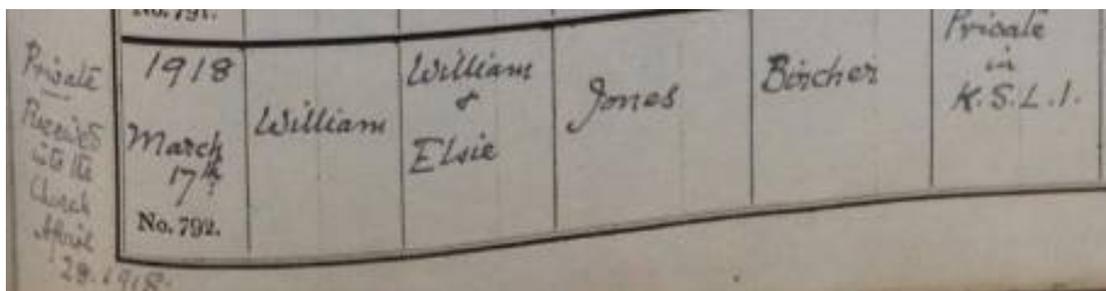
1915	William	Fredoric	Jaine	Kinldon	Sergeant	1915
May	Edward	Alexander			Army	
23 <sup>rd</sup>		and			Ordnance	
No. 764		Minnie			Corps	Year.

another as Lance Corporal in the 3rd Battalion Herefordshire Regiment, and in 1916 a father is identified as a soldier living in Coventry.

The final page in the Yarpole Register makes reference to a Lance Corporal in the Military Foot Police, whose abode is listed as Bircher Common, and a Private from Lucton in the Royal Defence Corps. There are also references to a munition worker and miners. In respect of these entries most fathers are identified as having an abode within the Parish of Yarpole. This is, however, not always the case. A minority of fathers are listed as having an abode outside the Parish. One entry (775) that identified a miner as the father of the baptised child, gives his abode as a town in South Wales.



That which followed it (776) relates to the father referred above as a soldier with an address in Coventry. In another a gardener is identified as living in Coventry. There are undoubtedly stories of great interest behind these and other entries, not least in respect of an entry relating to a baptism on 17 March 1918, where the father is identified as a Private in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, which experienced heavy losses during the Great War.



The entries that make up the Yarpole Register provide an insight into the lives of those who started theirs within the Parish. Of particular interest are those relating to illegitimate children of whom the Yarpole Register identifies twenty-three as having been baptised. In respect of such entries the father is not identified and the child is quite clearly stated to be illegitimate. For some, the abode of the mother is given, but in the main no reference to abode is made. None make reference to an occupation, which is to be expected, given that no occupation is listed for women in the Yarpole Register.

Entries which specifically state that the baptised child is illegitimate are a noticeable but small sub-set of the entries. The majority relate to the baptism of a child for whom both parents are listed.

To be noted are two entries (253 and 255) where only the mother is listed but the child is not stated to be illegitimate. Instead the mother is stated to be a single woman. No explanation is given for the use of this nomenclature.

The baptismal ceremony in these two cases was conducted by the same officiating minister as those where the baptised child was identified as illegitimate. The handwriting of the person making the entries is the same as that of other entries. It is likely that these and other entries were made by the Parish Clerk. His name is not given in the Yarpole Register but it is known that such an office existed.

The aforementioned Gazetteer for 1876-7 identifies the then Parish Clerk as Enoch Chamberlain. Interestingly, given the 1836 requirement to register births, it also makes reference to a William Mason who, in addition to being identified as a boot and shoe maker, grocer and sub postmaster, is listed as registrar of births and deaths for Yarpole. An analysis of the handwriting of those responsible for entries in the Yarpole Register lead to the conclusion that the priest conducting the baptism did not make the entries. For the majority of entries the officiating minister was the Rev. Joseph Edwards MA, who in addition to being vicar of Yarpole (1839-1886), was rector of Croft, rural Dean of Leominster, and prebendary of Inkberrow in Hereford Cathedral. Why the Parish clerk, with the likely agreement of the officiating minister, attached the label of single women to just two of the women identified in the Yarpole Register remains to be determined.

Equally perplexing is the complete absence of entries where only the father of the baptised child is identified. Given high level of maternal mortality during the period covered by the Yarpole Register one would expect such entries to be common. That they are not merits further research. A study of the information contained in the Parish Register of burials in the Parish of Yarpole and the Register of Deaths that was kept from 1837 onwards will be particularly pertinent.

There remains a wealth of information to be extracted and understood from the various sources that document Yarpole and the communities that form part of it. Behind the Yarpole Register there are life stories, many of which will never be fully unraveled. Some baptisms were identified as private (usually because the child was too sickly to be brought to church). Why was an entry, penciled in with Oct 17 as the baptism date, Rawlings as the parents' surname and Bircher as the abode, not completed? What happened to Sarah Anne, baptised on the 20 January 1872, the daughter of a rabbit catcher living at Highwood Lodge? The Parish Registers can help us in answering such questions.

Some will never be answered but in many cases it will prove possible to better understand the lives of those in whose footsteps we follow.

Brian Mitchell 2016