

Living History

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2008

Visitors to the parish

Visitors to the parish sometimes have an interest which stems from their own family history and are interested in finding out more about their connections with the area. Two recent visitors are good examples of that.

Edward Payne was interested in finding out more about his 'Aunt Dolly' who was employed as the organist at St. Leonard's in 1912. This was in addition to her duties as governess to the children of the vicar at the time, the Rev. Thomas Ward. He was introduced to the present owner of the old rectory where his aunt would have spent much of her time.

The second visitor was Mrs. Gough who is researching her husband's family tree in Yarpole. She has asked for our help with this. Details of the family can be found in the article accompanying this newsletter.

Extracts from the news

From the Times Archives of 60 years ago

October 2nd 1948 – 'Social news'

Brigadier and the Hon. Mrs. Copland Griffiths have arrived at Bircher Hall, Leominster, Herefordshire, which is their permanent address. Telephone Yarpole 218

Articles

Attached to this edition of the *Newsletter* are three articles:

The History of Croft 1800-1923 pages 3 & 4 by Ian Mortimer to complete the article. Pages 1 & 2 were issued with the June 2008 *Newsletter*

The Parish Armoury by Ian Mortimer

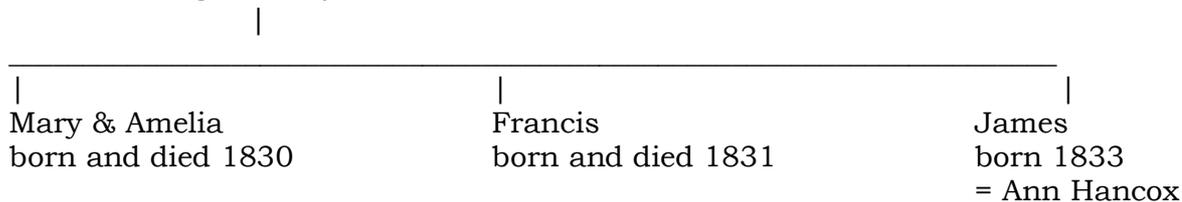
The Rye Way by Richard Fletcher, Ian Mortimer and Norman Taylor

The Gough Family

Contact has recently been made with a Mrs. Gough who is researching her husband's family tree in Yarpole.

She is looking for the family of **Thomas Gough** and **Mary (nee Jones)** who were married at Yarpole in 1828. They had one known surviving child, **James** who was born at Orleton in 1833. She wondered if there might be a connection between this family and the Goughs on the War Memorial. After some basic research it appears unlikely, or at best distant, as there are many Gough families in the area.

Thomas Gough = Mary Jones



The two on the War memorial are:

Arthur Henry Gough, born 1878 at Eye, christened at Lucton, who married **Jane Hannah**. He was 39 when he died. On the Commonwealth graves Commission site Hannah's address is given as Sunny Cottage, Leiston, Leominster. Could this be Lucton or Luston?

Edward, born 1881 at Eye, married **Mary**. He was 37 when he died and her address is given as 406b High Street Cheltenham. They had at least 5 siblings recorded on the censuses

- **William** born circa 1882 at Eye
- **Frederick Ernest** born circa 1884 at Eye
- **Albert** born circa 1886 at Eye
- **Francis Benjamin** born circa 1890 Eye
- **George Joseph** born circa 1894 Eye

Arthur and Edward's parents were **Arthur Edward Gough**, christened 1850 in Yarpole and **Jane** (probably **Taylor**), born circa 1851 in Wellington. Arthur Henry appears to be staying with his mother's parents at the Village Court House, Eyton on the 1881 census - possibly because his brother Edward was still a baby.

Arthur Edward Gough was one of at least 7 children all born at Yarpole. The others were:

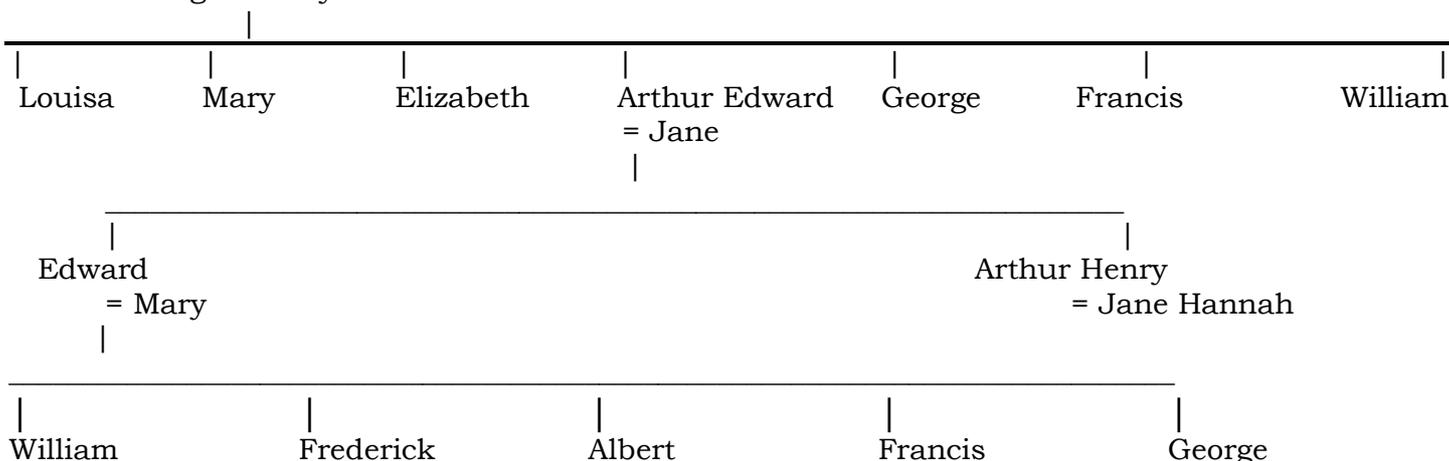
- **Louisa** born circa 1842
- **Mary Ann** born circa 1846 christened at Eye
- **Elizabeth** born circa 1848
- **George** born circa 1853
- **Frances E.** born circa 1860
- **William H.** born circa 1862

Their parents were **Edward Gough** born about 1810 at Leintwardine, buried 1872 in Yarpole graveyard and **Mary Anne (nee Mathews)** born 1823 at Yarpole. They were married at Yarpole in 1841. She is also buried in Yarpole graveyard.

Edward is described as a blacksmith at their marriage and as a farmer of 60 acres. He is described as a landowner on the 1871 Census. After Edward's death, Mary Anne is described as a farmer of 40 acres at Bicton Pool on the 1881, 1891 and 1901 censuses. By 1891 Arthur, her son is also farming at Bicton Pool, and is still there in 1901.

If you have any further information on these families the Living History group and Mrs. Gough would be most interested and further research may fill in some of the gaps.

Edward Gough = Mary Ann Matthews



Sale of The Manor House and The Gate House

This property was sold on the 25th September 2008. Both parts (Manor House & Gate House) are independently Grade 2 listed. Readers will be aware that there has been continuing concern about the condition of The Gatehouse. It is a great relief to know that it is now in active ownership.



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Correction

With the last issue of the *Newsletter* we included a corrected version of the article on *Milestones* originally published in September 2006. Please remove the original article and replace it with the corrected version.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 13th of November at 8pm in the Committee room of the Village Hall
Living History October 2008

The History of Croft 1800-1923 continued.

It is therefore somewhat surprising to see that, although Lord of the Manor, he made no contribution to the restoration of Yarpole church in 1864; for it would appear that William T. Kevill-Davies had argued in favour of rebuilding the church at Cock Gate, the geographical centre of the whole parish, but was out-voted; indeed, we understand that there was some acrimony involving litigious correspondence.

It is said that he enjoyed entertaining guests at the Castle and as a consequence – overspent and was declared bankrupt in 1896; but in spite of this, the estate survived.

As to his family, he married an Ellen Marta O'Brien from Ireland and had a very large family; his eldest son and heir, William Trevelyan Somerset Kevill-Davies was born in 1847 but died in 1896, thus predeceasing his father; and so when William Trevelyan died in 1906, the Croft Estate passed to his grandson, William Albert Somerset Herbert Kevill-Davies; seen here being presented with, and holding, a silver tray on the occasion of his marriage in 1908 to Dorothy Lacon, by the "tradespeople of Leominster".



The memorial window, in the Lady Chapel of St. Leonard's, contains the Coats of Arms of their respective families:-



The Arms on the left are LACON and KEVILL-DAVIES are on the right with the top left quarter being DAVIES and the top right quarter being KEVILL.

William Albert Somerset Herbert Kevill-Davies, known as 'Herbert', was born in 1877, schooled at Haileybury, followed in the footsteps of his father who had served with the 17th Lancers, by taking a Commission with the 7th Hussars and served in the South African Campaign (1900). He subsequently served in the First World War with the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers; He was killed in action at Ypres in 1915.

The two regiments in which he served, the 7th Hussars and the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, are represented by their respective crests in the East Window of Croft Church.



With the death of William A.S.H. Kevill-Davies in 1915, the Croft Estate passed to his widow, Dorothy, who decided to rent-out the property to the Atherley family but retained Highwood House where she remained in residence, with her three sons, Geoffrey, William and Christopher, until after the Second World War. Tragically, William was killed in 1942 whilst serving with the 7th Hussars in Burma.

It is therefore particularly poignant that Dorothy Kevill-Davis should have given to the Parish the land for the two War Memorials and for them to be on such prominent sites

In 1923 the Croft Estate was put up for auction: Split into lots, tenanted farms, cottages, agricultural land and even the school (rented to the County Council at £50 a year), went under the hammer, allowing tenants to purchase and The Trustees of Sir James Croft to buy back (a somewhat diminished) Croft Castle Estate after an absence of 177 years.

Compiled by Ian Mortimer who is indebted to the Rev. Christopher Kevill-Davies, grandson of William and Dorothy Kevill-Davies, for his help and support in drafting this history (2008)

The Parish Armoury:

From the days of Edward II (1284-1327) every parish was obliged to provide fully equipped soldiers to serve at home or overseas. The necessary armour was usually kept in the church, perhaps in a room over the porch if one existed, a vestry or a specially built room, which had then to be equipped with the appropriate security.

Could the bell tower have been the armoury?

There is no doubt but that the bell tower, throughout its 800 years of existence, would have served many diverse purposes in addition to supporting the bells.

Most recently, up until 2005 when it was finally cleared, it served as a general store; indeed part had been used as a coke store for the coke-fired furnace which had been installed in the cellar as part of the major restoration of the church in 1864.

In 1864, the interior of the tower was partitioned by close-boarded panels fixed to the main timbers;

The central floor area was re-laid with brick and floor tiles (from Godwins of Lugwardine) reclaimed from the remodelled chancel; in the area behind the panelling, the original cobbled floor still remains.



The coke which was stored behind the 'west panel', was delivered through the west window from which an iron bar had been removed. Iron bars are still in-situ in the other two windows – suggesting a defensive purpose.

In previous article, *Bell Tower II* (July 2006), it was shown that the door had been 're-cycled' and its width reduced; however the cross-bracing (buttressing) the back of the door was clearly made to fit the reshaped door; again suggesting a defensive purpose.



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Sometime between 1322 and 1366 (dendrochronologically dated) the height of the wooden tower was raised to accommodate a mediaeval bell frame and it was around this time, we believe, that the present-day church was built and the walls of the bell tower constructed, using materials from the pre-existing Saxon church; and there is no doubt but that it was built to be impregnable.

The Pembridge bell tower, in its published history, is said to have been, in its early days, used as a place of refuge; however, these bell towers are relatively small for such a purpose and the church itself would have been a more appropriate place of refuge, indeed, just behind the great south door of St. Leonard's, are the sockets for a defensive drawbar.

Therefore, and in line with the Edict of Edward II, it is probable that the bell tower would have been used as the armoury; indeed it may have been the prime reason for the construction of such a substantial building and, as an unforeseen consequence, protected the timbers of the bell tower, thus ensuring their survival to the present day.

Compiled by Ian Mortimer (2008)

'The Rye-way':

Today's B4362 runs eastwards across our parish for just over four miles, passing Lucton School and through Cock Gate and Bircher village, round Bircher Turn to join the B4361 at Rosebank Farm. It was part of one of the Drovers Roads from Mid and South Wales into the Midlands and onwards to London and was known as the 'High Way' in contrast to the lower-lying 'A44' which would have been busier, muddier and subject to flooding.

Isaac Taylor's Map of 1756 shows that the route of the 'B4362' from Cock Gate, instead of turning right in Bircher, carried straight on, round The Forge at the junction with Leys Lane and down the track, across the ford where there was a milestone ('14' on the map) and up the other side to join the 'B4361', close to the turn-off to Orleton, then onwards through Woofferton.



This Estate Map of 1811 shows how the old B4362 ran past the original entrance to Bircher Hall ('X' on the map) and then through Old Home Farm (marked '10' on the map) directly in line with 'the old track' towards the B4361 and Ludlow. With the increase of traffic at this time, the condition of that part of the route from Bircher to the 'B4361' (the old track) would have seriously deteriorated.



As the condition of 'the old track' deteriorated so the traffic on the 'B4362' was forced to find an alternative route; from the evidence available, we think that the green lane (now closed) which runs from the B4361 up towards Bircher Turn and marked on this map with

However this diversion away from 'the old track' created an obviously difficult right-hand turn with a severe adverse camber which had to be rectified.

This Estate Map of 1845 shows how the line of the road was altered to the way it is today (the line of the old road is shaded-in in yellow).

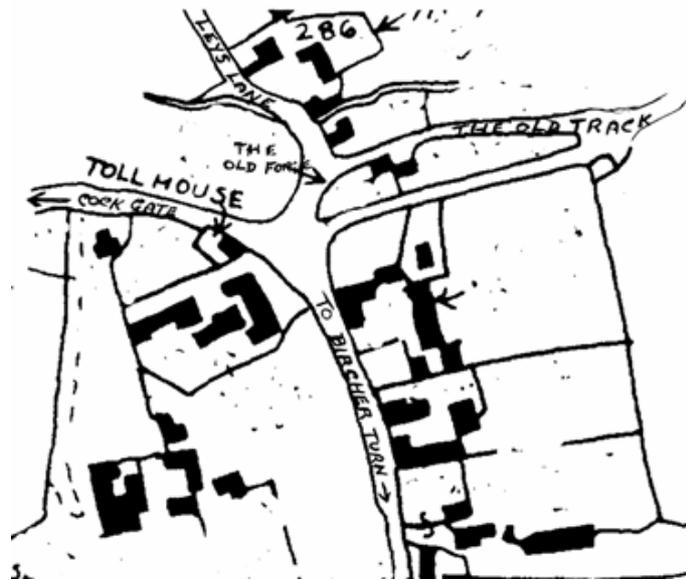


One can see the remnant of the old road as the 'lay by' on the right as the road veers to the left to take the turn into Bircher.

Because of the lie of the land the new road had to be built up on an embankment.

As seen from Leys Lane. The road runs behind the hedge.

This 'Detail of Bircher', taken from Gwatkins Tithe Map of 1841, shows the site of the toll house.



***The Rye Way Act:**

Anno vicessimo-nono
GEORGII II. REGIS.

An Act for Amending, Repairing, and Widening, the Roads leading from THE RYE-WAY, in the parish of YARPOLE, in the county of HEREFORD, to PRESTEIGNE, in the county of RADNOR; and from thence to LEINTWARDINE, and from PRESTEIGNE aforesaid, to the top of TRAP HILL; and from THE RYE-WAY aforesaid, by the MAIDENHEAD to WOOFERTON, in the county of SALOP.

WHEREAS the Roads leading from *The Rye-way*, in the parish of *Yarpole*, in the county of *Hereford*, through *Birchal*, to the *Cock Gate*; and from thence, through the parishes of *Croft* and *Luckton*, to *Mortimer's-Cross*; and from thence, through *Shobdon*, to *Milton House*; and from *Shobdon* to the *Woodhouse*; and from thence to *Staple*

Research by R Fletcher, I.Mortimer and N.Taylor.
 (2008)