

Living History

NEWSLETTER October 2009

Chairman's Report September 2009

Once again we have produced a variety of interesting and erudite articles and newsletters mostly from Ian Mortimer's pen!

Thanks are due to all the regular members of the group who have worked hard to get out the newsletter and put on excellent displays at the Church Bazaar and the Fête. The Fête seems to have engendered even more interest than usual with Graham's photographic displays, Ian's Shop project and Ron's display on houses in the parish producing particularly enthusiastic responses.

This year we face some different challenges - especially in relation to the Community Project in the Church, which will make us review our growing collection of records and artefacts, their storage and access for members and the public

As last year we do need to see more articles coming from a wider variety of sources to keep the supply constant without relying solely on Ian!

Thank you all again for your hard work throughout the year.

Rhianon Turrell

Community Building Project Reaches Completion



The Community Building Project reached completion in September with the remodelling of the Church to accommodate the Community Shop and Post Office and other facilities.

The picture shows the church ready for its reopening with Harvest Festival on September 20th 2009.

The Community Shop and Post Office reopened for business in its new premises within St Leonard's Church on Thursday October 1st 2009.



Nature Notes

Season confusion in Bircher? Several apple trees were seen in blossom during October 2009. Has this happened elsewhere?

Squirrels have been very busy laying in stores for the Winter but in a very haphazard way. Hazel nuts only partly buried in scrapes in the ground or sometimes left on the surface after a cursory scratch at the grass.

Articles

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

Field Names in the Parish of Yarpole by Rhianon Turrell

The Bell Tower - Summarised by Ian Mortimer

2009 Subscriptions

Subscriptions are now very overdue for payment. It was agreed at the February Committee Meeting that there would need to be a slight increase in subscriptions to cover increased costs in producing the newsletter, the accompanying articles and the hire of the village hall meeting room. Subscriptions will be £6.50 for 2009. Country member's subscriptions remain unchanged at £12. Please send your payments to the Hon. Secretary - Ron Shaw at 3, Green Lane Crescent, Yarpole, Leominster HR6 0BQ or leave it at Yarpole Village Shop for his attention.

Copyright

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Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Committee room of the Village Hall on Thursday November 12th 2009 at 8pm.

Field names in the parish of Yarpole Part 1 *Living History*

Since the production of the excellent map produced as part of the Millennium Project based on the tithe maps of 1842-4 some of the field names have intrigued me. The names on this map are a snapshot in time of what the names were then, but such names are not static. Some will be recent names, some will be corruptions of names while some will have much older origins. With the help of the texts given below I have endeavoured to work out some of the more intriguing names but realise that this is an ongoing project and that many people may know different names for some of the fields or have documentary evidence of different spellings which may suggest other derivations to the ones I suggest. A lot of names are self explanatory: usually if a field is called four acres it is, or was originally, that size, if it is called Banky piece that is exactly what it is. Some are humorous denoting fields a long way from the village such as Botany Bay.

Calder's Copy

The copy part is land by or containing a thicket coppiced to provide new growth. Calder is either a personal name, which is not uncommon in Herefordshire, or could usually referring to a spring, well or pool.

Cockshut Croft

A field or enclosure where woodcock are found or there is a device for catching them

The Yields

Sloping land

The Plock

A small piece of land or a worthless plot

Show

This would need further spellings to be sure but could be a version of *shaw* meaning a small wood or copse (and it is next to Lime Coppice) or a narrow piece of land the breadth of a shovel

Temple field Belonging to the Knights Templar/Knights of St.John. The order whose local base was at Dinmore held lands in several parishes including Orleton (Blount) and as this field is right on the Orleton Boundary this seems the most likely derivation.

Watley Meres

Could be wheat field or a personal name followed by *meres* either meaning pools or boundary

Hannetty Walls, Dead Walls

Walls denotes either ruins or a decayed wall has been found in the field. Hannetty defies derivation unless it is somehow a corruption of the Welsh *hen* meaning old or contains the element *han* derived from OE *healfan* meaning half.

Dead in this name either means disused or worn out land or possibly where a body has been found at some time.

Long Fridays

Unlucky or unproductive land or, possibly, connected to manorial service

Little Bowls, Large Bowls and Bowmore

Probably describe the curved bowl shape of this land, more meaning marshy land

Hand Piece

Land near a signpost - likely because this is in the triangle made by the Bircher road and the Leominster road and there is a fingerpost marked on various maps.

Wardens

Watch hill or an enclosure

Knives

Land assigned to the young men or servants or difficult or infertile land

Dryshells

Narrow (shovel width), dry piece of land, shelf of land

Worm shells

Snakes (or dragons!) or OE *wyrma* purple dye, narrow piece of land

Anter shell

Ant infested narrow piece of land

Garbett Croft/Piece

The breadth of the gore, a triangular piece left when boundaries of two fields or furlongs meet at a sharp angle

Stocking

Land cleared of tree stumps

Linsmoor

Wet or marshy place where flax was grown

Great, Upper, Middle and Little Hareshores

Either a nook of land or piece of land enclosed by a hedge where there are hares

Croft

Small piece of enclosed land usually attached to a dwelling

Mere Stone Furlong

A boundary stone on a division of a common field literally the length of the furrow but applied to a block of strips all the same length

References

Yarpole Group parish map 2000

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A Glossary of Provincial Words - Herefordshire. Murray, J. (1839) reprinted by Bibliolife

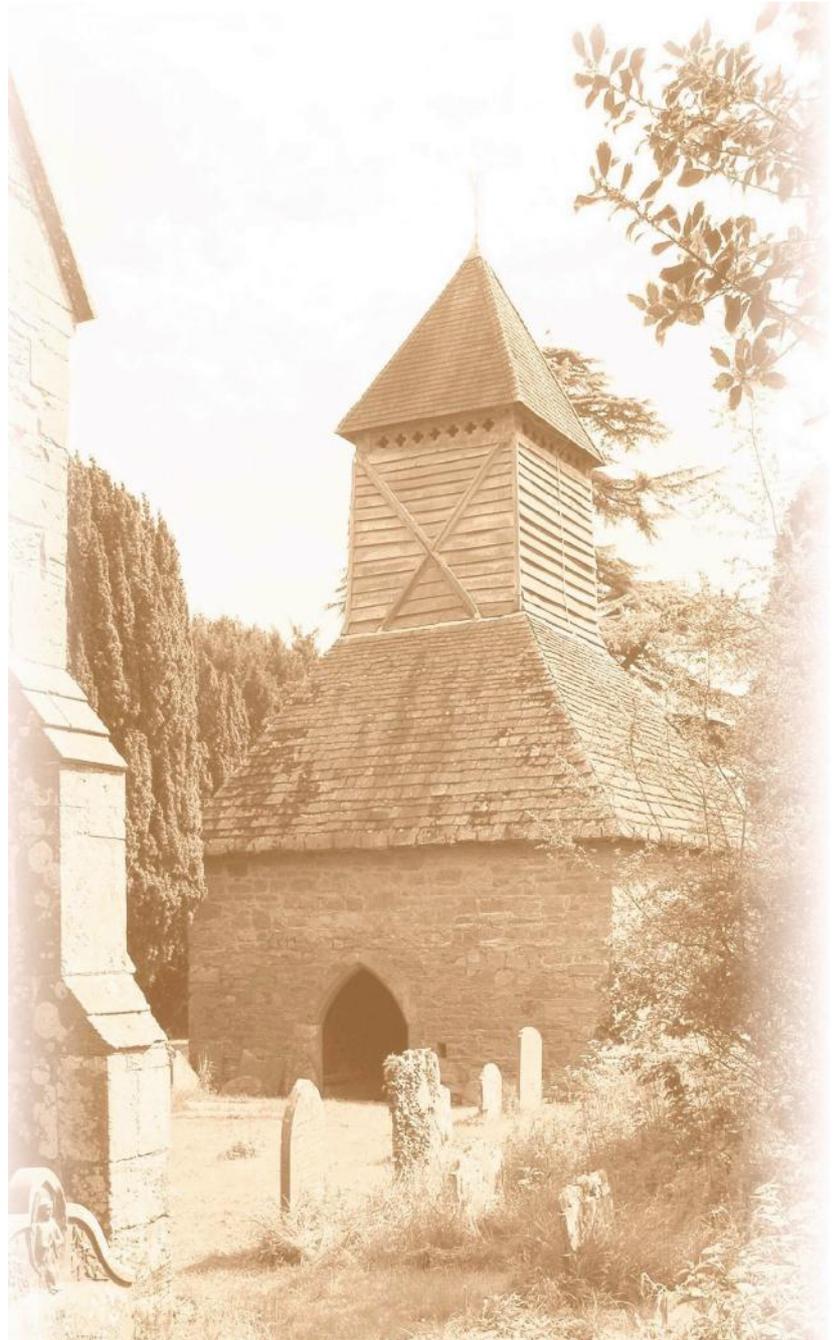
The Bell Tower - summarised:

The Yarpole Bell Tower is one of the oldest surviving timber structures in Britain. It is one of a group of four timber bell towers in this area, in Pembridge, Mamble and Knighton-on-Teme; of these Yarpole is the most complete and is thought to be the oldest, having been dated by dendrochronology to a precise date - the winter of 1195/96.

The tower is made of four massive oak posts, framed together, each formed from a single slightly curved tree, squared into shape by axes, the marks of which can still be seen. The timbers are 9.2m (30ft) long and 0.75m (2ft 6ins) wide at the base; the dendrochronology samples showed that they came from trees which were more than 200 years old when they were felled.

It is interesting to speculate how the tower might have been erected. We don't know how this was done, but any theories have to take into account the difficulty of raising these huge timbers and stabilising them in a sufficiently controlled manner for the various joints to be fitted together.

Sometime around the middle of the 14th century the tops of the main timbers were extended by 3.1m (7') by scarf jointing with timbers with felling dates from 1322-1366, which form the upper stage of the tower. These are framed together and would probably have supported a medieval bell frame, with the bells hung for chiming. The horizontal boards, with the quatrefoil decoration visible at the top of the tower, belong to this period; for it was at this time (the middle of the 14th century) that the skirt wall which forms a square enclosure, was built using material which had been reclaimed from the old Saxon church which would have been demolished when the present church was built.



The six-planked door with its diagonal bracing on the inside, which had also been reclaimed from a previous use, together with the thickness of the walls and the iron bars in the windows would have made the building impregnable - giving rise to the suggestion that the Bell Tower was used as the Parish Armoury.

The bell frame, designed for full circle ringing, at the top of the tower, dates from the late 16th or early 17th century, and today carries three bells. The first bell is a mid 15th century treble, cast at Gloucester foundry; the second was cast in 1605. The third, tenor, bell is dated 1652. Having fallen into disrepair in the 1960s, the bells were restored in 1996 and are 'dead hung' and 'chimed' regularly for church services, thus carrying on an 800 year tradition.

In 1790, the original, taller spire was reduced in height and the current weathercock was installed.

In 1864, as part of the major restoration of the church, when the north aisle was added, the tower was modified to provide for storage and a meeting room.

Facing the back of the door is a remnant of the Victorian matchboard panelling which was fixed between the main timbers to provide storage space between it and the walls for, amongst other items, the coke for the church furnace. The central space contained within the panelling was a small meeting room. The original cobbled floor, still present round the edges, was replaced by early Victorian encaustic tiles which had been removed from the chancel as part of the restoration.

In 1910, major restoration work on the oak framework (obvious as 'new wood') was carried out at a cost of £75.



In the spring of 2004, the Victorian panelling was removed thus allowing this magnificent wooden structure to be properly viewed.

Compiled by Ian Mortimer (2009)