

Living History

Yarpole Group Parish
2000



Volume I (2003)



Living History.

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2003.

Welcome to our second NEWSLETTER.

The resident Tawny Owl in the Bell Tower has obliged us with a photo opportunity that just had to be taken.



Ravens, which have been described as the largest species of *perching* bird in the world, can be seen and heard in the grounds of Croft Castle and occasionally down in Yarpole.

The most recognisable feature, apart from their size, is their very loud croaking ! Also, when in flight, their diamond shaped tails distinguish them from the smaller crows; they fly higher than crows, sometimes performing acrobatics.

Occasionally ravens will nest in a tree, but usually choose a sheltered rocky ledge in a crag or cliff. Ravens raise only one brood each year, starting very early in spring, in February or March. Both sexes build the large nest of sticks – reinforced with earth; the cup is thickly lined with grass and moss with an inner layer of hair and wool.

Submitted by Frank Cotton



Seen outside the shop in late October was the “uncommon” Humming Bird Moth.

Is this another sign of global warming ?

Picture taken from The Reader's Digest, *Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain.*

Included with this Newsletter is a relevant extract from Kelly's Directory of 1895 and also an article on *The Early Settlers*, which is one of a series on the early history of the Parish and should be read in conjunction with the authoritative articles now on the Web-Site of Herefordshire Archaeology at www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk/hist_periods

Those who do not have access to the Internet can borrow a printed copy of the web-pages from Ian.

Possible future articles will include;

- (1) An account of Croft Ambrey;
- (2) Medieval Floor Tiles in Croft Church;
- (3) The Roman Era;
- (4) 'Doomesday'.

Three previously published articles, "The Landscape" (geological history), "The High Brown Frittilary" and on "Badgers", are still available as is the special L.H. Ring Binder at a cost of £2.00, from Ian on 780 788.

Do you want to start your family history but don't know how? In the Living History Group we have several members with extensive experience in this area and who would be willing to point you in the right direction. We are particularly interested in families with a local connection but can help anyone who has got the "bug".

If you are interested, contact Rhianon Turrell on 780 677.

REMINDER

If you wish to receive future issues of the NEWSLETTER would you please contact our chairman, John Gunson on 780701.

Also, as we intend to build our own web-site, if you have Internet access would you inform us by e-mail, gunson@gn.apc.org

Other contacts:- If you have any relevant information, interest or old photographs, please contact us:

Projects – Ron Shaw (780 770) or Ian Mortimer (780 788)

Photographs – Graham Brookes (780 564)

Family History – Rhianon Turrell (780 677).

**Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 20th of January at 8pm,
at The Bell: All friends and members welcome.**

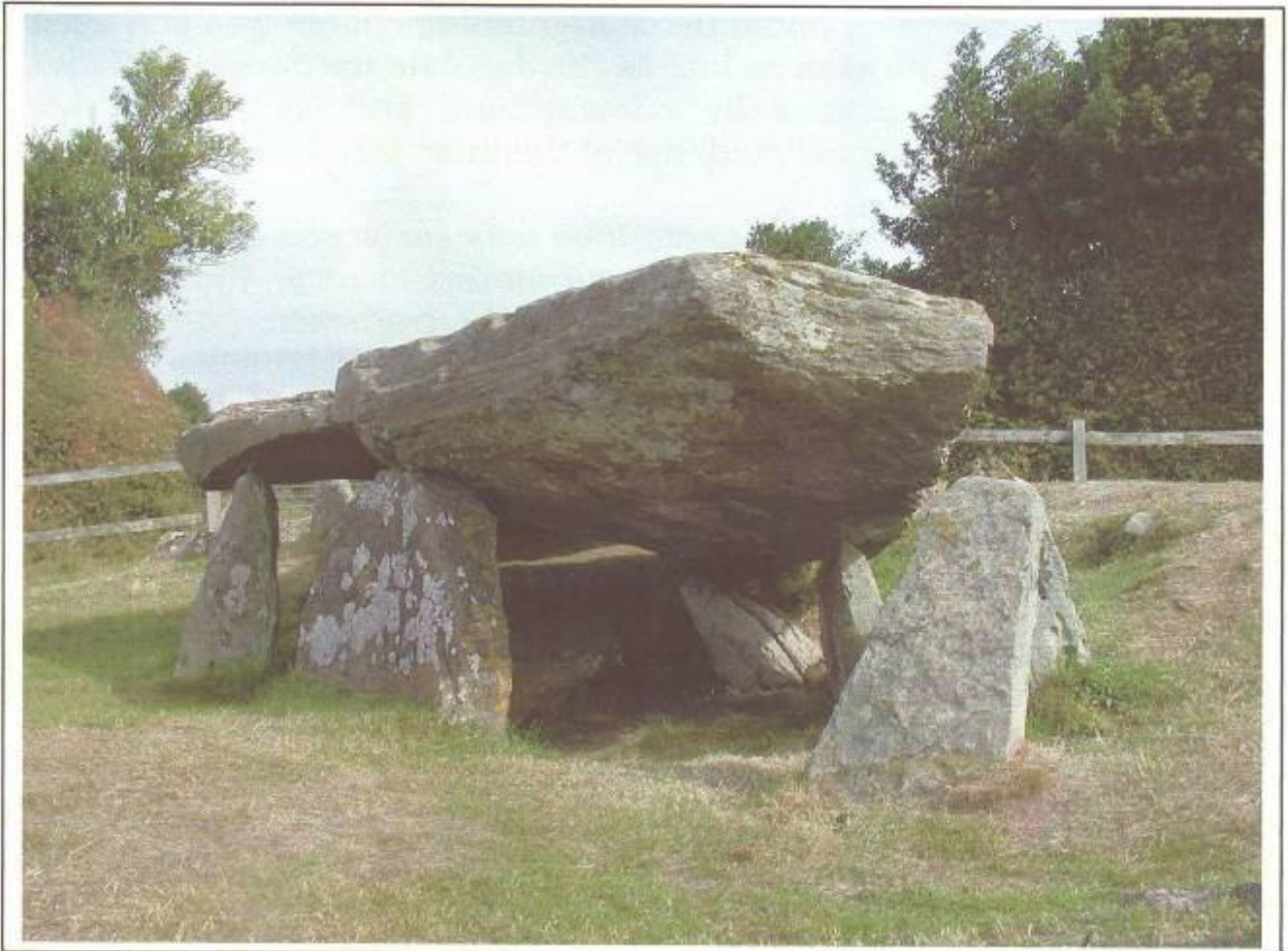
The Early Settlers:

Living History

The end of the Last Glaciation (Ice Age) was about 10,000 BC and was discussed in a previous article on the "Landscape", but it also marked the end of the Palaeolithic Age (100,000 to 10,000 BC).

Up to about the middle of the Mesolithic Age, (10,000 to 4,000B.C.), Britain was still joined to the land-mass of the European Continent, and during the summers, Mesolithic man would have crossed, on foot, from the Continent to hunt and gather, and those who chose to stay would have selected caves in which to over-winter. Then, as the temperature rose and more ice melted, the sea level rose and the British Isles became separated from Europe.

Evidence of settlement in Herefordshire in the Mesolithic Age has been found in the far south of the County in King Arthur's Cave at Whitchurch in the Wye gorge (as well as evidence of habitation there during the Palaeolithic Age). At Dorstone, near Hay-on-Wye, there is evidence of habitation during the later Neolithic Age, (i.e. 4000 - 2000B.C.), at 'Arthur's Stone' which is an exposed stone tomb, covered by an enormous capstone, some 18ft by 10ft and 18ins thick and estimated to weigh 40 tons, standing 6ft from the ground, and which originally would have been covered by a long earth mound or 'barrow'.



The "Beaker Burial", discovered near Aymestrey in 1987, and now on display in the Leominster Museum in Etnam Street, would confirm that there was some settlement in this area during the early Bronze Age (2000 to 800B.C.)

The Bronze Age culture was brought to Britain by people from the Rhine plain. These people introduced the tanged and barbed arrowhead in place of the simpler form of leaf-shaped arrowhead used by Neolithic Man, they also brought a knowledge of metalworking. It was their use of a 'beaker' type of drinking vessel that gave rise to them being called the "Beaker Folk"; and it was their practice to include a beaker in a burial.

By the beginning of the Iron Age (800 BC to AD 43), Celtic speaking peoples were probably to be found over a wide area of Europe stretching from modern Austria to the Bay of Biscay, as well as into Britain and Ireland. Though they were divided into many different peoples and tribes, the Celts were united not only by common culture and beliefs, but also by a similarity of language. They were skilled farmers and metalworkers, and their religious belief in the gods of nature, the seasons and sources of water, was related to their dependence on agriculture.

It has to be said that our knowledge of the Celts is based on Greek and Roman sources, which were biased against them, for the Celts were seen as 'barbarians' being less intellectually cultured and fiercely aggressive in conflict; (their tactic of an initial fierce frightening charge was still used to good effect by the Scots even as late as the Jacobite uprisings of 1715-45). They were seen as irrationally superstitious and as having savage religious practices under the guidance of the inter-tribal Druid priesthood.

The social structure of the Celtic tribe was composed of a King or Chief, probably chosen from a warrior aristocracy; those with specific skills or specialised training as the craftsmen, bards and Druids and then the freemen farmers, (the basic economy being mixed farming). Their aesthetic qualities were expressed in their artistic designs, music and their oral tradition of stories, poetry and song. The Druids underwent a long training in Celtic religion, tradition and culture; they comprised an inter-tribal 'Brotherhood' with an elected Arch-Druid; they were the priests, teachers and judges and as such wielded great power.

The distribution of the various Celtic tribes across Britain was 'mapped' by the Roman, Claudius Ptolemaeus, otherwise known as Ptolemy, and his maps have been continually reinterpreted over the years; MAP 1, dated 1997, gives a modern interpretation which would suggest that the area of land we now call 'Herefordshire' was occupied by the Silures, whose territory extended from the Severn, westwards, to include all of South -East Wales.

MAP 1

PTOLEMY'S GEOGRAPHY TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION ENGLAND



However, based on archaeological evidence, Dr. S. C. Stanford (see later re- Croft Ambrey) has suggested that 'Herefordshire' was occupied by a separate tribe (or sub-tribe), mentioned by the contemporary Roman writer Tacitus as being on the Welsh Borders, called the 'Decangi'.

Dr. Stanford suggests that the Decangi found the topography of the land in this area to be particularly suitable for the creation of their style of fortified settlement; choosing natural defensible sites, on the tops of hills or along ridges, which were readily protected by ramparts and ditches. Indeed, there were some twenty-six such hillforts across 'Herefordshire', each settlement being self-sufficient and self-defensible in times of attack.

The largest of the 'Herefordshire' settlements was Credenhill, just to the west of the present day City of Hereford, indeed it was one of the largest hillforts in Britain, its single rampart and ditch enclosing an area of some 50 acres; and it, possibly, could have been the capital of the Decangi, with which there would have been regular communication with social, cultural and trade links amongst all the settlements in 'Herefordshire', *including Croft Ambrey.*

Compiled by Ian Mortimer.

(DECEMBER 2003)

Reference:

www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk/historical_periods/index

is the web site of the Archaeology Services Unit of Herefordshire County Council.

Further Reading:

Prehistoric Sites of Herefordshire - George Childs and George Nash:

The Archaeology of the Welsh Marches, 2ND Edition - S.C. Stanford:

The Welsh Border: Archaeology, History & Landscape, T.Rowley, 2001.

The Welsh Borders - Roy Millward and Adrian Robinson, 1978.

History of Herefordshire - John & Margaret West, 1985.

Other titles in this series to be issued in the future;

Croft Ambrey

Hillforts in North Herefordshire

The Roman Era

The Anglo Saxons

The Domesday Survey.

Extract from Kelly's Directory:

Yarpole is a village and parish near the junction of the roads from Ludlow to Kington and Leominster, 2.5 miles west-by-north from Berrington and Eye station on the Shrewsbury and Hereford (Great Western and London and North Western Joint) railway, 5 north-north-west from Leominster, and 18 north from Hereford, in the Northern division of the county, Wolphy hundred, Leominster union, petty sessional division and county court district, rural deanery of Leominster and archdeaconry and diocese of Hereford. By a Local Government Board Order, dated 24 March, 1887, a part of this parish has been transferred to Luston.

The church of St. Leonard is a building of stone in the Decorated style, consisting of chancel, nave, south porch and detached tower with spire, standing south-west of the church, and containing 3 bells: the pulpit is of carved oak : in the south wall of the chancel are a piscina and double sedilia: the stained east window was given in 1864 by Mrs. Dunne, of Bircher Hall, in memory of Thomas Dunne esq. J.P. who died in August 1854: in 1853 the chancel was rebuilt at the cost of the Governors of Lucton School. The church was completely restored in 1864 by the late Sir G. G. Scott RA.; a north aisle added, and the whole re-seated, at a cost of £1,700: there are now sittings for 276 persons. The register dates from the year 1561. The living is a vicarage annexed to the rectory of Croft, gross joint yearly value £333, including 78 acres of glebe, in the gift of the Rev. William Trevelyan Kevill-Davies of Croft Castle, and held since 1892 by the Rev. Ernest Langham Boughton Kevill-Davies, who resides at Croft.

There are Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist chapels, the former in the village, erected in 1891, at a cost of £235 to seat 130 persons and the latter at Bircher common. There are charities of about £7.10s. yearly value, arising from the rent of land in the township, left in 1709 by Edward Smith of Bircher, and by Elizabeth Walwyn in Kingsland parish, distributed principally in bread.

Bircher Hall, the residence of Cuthbert L. Tyerman esq. is a modern mansion, pleasantly situated, with attractive pleasure grounds. Highwood House, occupied by the Hon. Mrs. Humphrey de Bohun Devereux, is a small modern mansion, pleasantly situated on an eminence within the parish commanding a pleasing and picturesque prospect. Bircher Knoll, the residence of Mrs. Cuninghame, is a small mansion, pleasantly situated, commanding extensive and delightful views. The Lodge and Byecroft are pleasant villa residences within the parish, the former, occupied by Major Russell and the latter by Mr. K. H. George.

The Rev. W. T. Kevill-Davies, who is lord of the manor, Mrs. Dunne of Gatley and James Francis Merryweather esq. of Hereford, are the chief landowners.

The soil is clayey; subsoil, clay and gravel. The chief crops are wheat, beans, barley and oats, hops and apples. The area is **2,534** acres; rateable value, £3,632; the population in 1891 was **512**.

Bircher is a township and village, through which the road from Ludlow to Presteign passes, and is three quarters of a mile north-east from the church.

Parish Clerk, Enoch Chamberlain.

Post office—Miss Mary Mason, sub-postmistress. Letters arrive by mail cart from Leominster at 8am.; dispatched at 4.55 p.m. 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

National School (mixed), for the parishes of Croft, Lucton & Yarpole, built in **1851** at a cost of **£1,400**, chiefly defrayed by the Rev. W. T. Kevill-Davies J.P. patron of the living; the school will hold **140** children, average attendance, **107**, & there is a house for the master; William Powell, master; Miss E. Franks, infants' mistress

Carriers: Leominster- Mrs. Goodman, Tues. & Fri.; Mrs. Leek, Tues. & Fri. & Mrs. Worthing, Tues. & Fri:
Ludlow- Mrs. Leek, on Mon.

YARPOLE.

Marked * receive their letters via Bircher.

*Devereux The Hon. Mrs. Humphrey De Bohun, Highwood house

*George Miss, Mortimer's cottage

*Russell Major Lechmere, The Lodge

Commercial.

Bassett Henry James, farmer

Bengree Thomas, beer retailer

Bevan Henry, gamekeeper to Rev. Rd. Evans MA. Croft lane

Broadway James (Mrs.), laundress
Chamberlain Alice (Miss), farmer
Chamberlain Enoch, parish clerk & assistant overseer
Connop Harley, farmer, Pound house
*Evans David, farmer, Cockgate
Gittus Jane (Mrs.), farmer, Deadwall
Gough Mary Ann (Mrs.), farmer, Bicton pool
Holl Robert, estate carpenter to Rev. W. T. Kevill-Davies, of Croft castle
Humphreys John, farmer, Upper farm
Humphreys Samuel, farmer, Church ho
Jones J. farmer, Brook house
Mann George C. shopkeeper
Mason Mary (Miss), Registrar of births & deaths, Kingsland sub-district,
Leominster union, Post office
Pinches George, farmer, Enemore fields
Pinches Jn. farmer, Lower House farm
Powell William, farmer, Bicton Pool
Price John, farm & hop grower, Lady Meadow
*Pyefinch William, farm bailiff to Mrs. Kevill-Davies, Cockgate
*Shipton Thomas, cottage farmer, Plains brook
Wilkinson Richard, wheelwright
Williams James, carpenter.

BIRCHER.

Cuninghame Mrs. Bircher Knoll
George Richard Henry, Byecroft
Tyerman Cuthbert L. Bircher Hall

COMMERCIAL.

Breeze John, farmer, Bircher common
Brooks John, blacksmith
Brown Wm, cottage frmr. Bircher com
Darrell Geo. Edwd. haulier, Bircher com
Davies Thomas, farmer, Copy house, Bircher common
George Richard Henry, auctioneer & valuer, Byecroft
Hamer Henry, farmer
Jones John, farmer, Court House farm
Leek Ann (Mrs.). shopkeeper & carrier, Bircher common
Lloyd Wm. estate carpentr. Bircher com
Lock Daniel, gardener to Mrs. Cuninghame, Brick house
Meredith Jas. Cottage, frmr. Bircher com
Pound John, farmer, Highwood

Powell Richard, farmer, The Leys
Pugh Charles, farmer, Yew Tree farm, Bircher common
Pugh Thomas, farmer, Gate House farm
Sargent Reuben Frederick, gardener to Cuthbert L. Tyerman esq. Brick ho
Seale James, horse & trap on hire, Rose cottage
Small Benjamin, cattle dlr. Bircher com
Small Richard, carpenter
Smith John Broad, frmr. Stone Ho. frm
Smith William, farmer, Leys lane
Trewin Jn. Hy. frmr. Bircher Hall farm
Vale Elizh. (Mrs.), farmer, Bircher com
Williams William, farmer, Woodend, Bircher common

CROFT is a parish, adjoining the road between Ludlow and Presteign, 4 miles north from Kingsland station on the Leominster and Kington branch of the Great Western railway, and 6 north-north-west from Leominster in the Northern division of the county, Leominster union, petty sessional division and county court district, Wolphy hundred, rural deanery of Leominster (second division) and archdeaconry and diocese of Hereford.

The church of St. Michael, which adjoins Croft Castle, is a picturesque building of stone in mixed styles, consisting of chancel and nave, north and south porches, and a western turret containing a clock and one bell: in the church are monuments to the ancient family of Croft, and some brasses: against the south wall of the chancel, which retains a piscina, is a marble tablet to the Rev. Richard Smith M.A. 50 years rector of the parish, vicar of Yarpole and Eye, and a prebendary of Hereford, who died 6 July, 1796; against the same wall is a tablet to the Rev. Whittington Landon D.D. Dean of Exeter, provost of Worcester College, Oxford, and for many years rector of Croft, d. 1839 : on the north side of the chancel is an alter-tomb of freestone, with recumbent effigies of a knight in armour (supposed to represent Sir Richard Croft, knighted in 1471) and his lady; the sides and ends of the tomb are divided into compartments containing various figures; against the same wall is a Decorated monument of stone to the memory of the Knight and Johnes families, former residents at Croft Castle: in the chancel are inscribed floor stones to the Croft family: the oak carving of the pews was executed by the Rev. Joseph Edwards M.A. rector, 1839-86.

The register dates from the year 1565. The living is a discharged rectory, with the vicarage of Yarpole annexed, joint gross yearly value £333, including 78 acres of glebe and residence, in the gift of the Rev. William Trevelyan Kevill-Davies, and held since 1892 by the Rev. Ernest Langham Boughton Kevill-Davies.

Croft Castle, anciently the seat of the Croft family, is within this parish: the estate remained in the possession of the family from the time of Edward the Confessor till the beginning of the last century; this family is now represented by Sir Herbert Croft, 9th bart. of Lugwardine Court. Thomas Johnes esq. the learned translator of Froissart's Chronicles*, who was born at Ludlow in 1748, subsequently held the estate, and sold it to Somerset Davies esq. son of Somerset Davies esq. of Wigmore Hall, in 1785, from whom it descended to his grandson, the Rev. William Trevelyan Kevill-Davies D.L., J.P. the present proprietor and occupier the principal front is lighted by circular and pointed windows, and has an embattled entrance tower and there are four embattled towers at the angles : attached to the castle is a park of 250 acres, famous for its ancient oak and beech trees: on an eminence in the park is Croft Ambury,

a camp of elliptical form, with double ditch and ramparts, the prospect from which is very extensive, including within its range portions of thirteen counties; this is said to have been a camp of the British King Aurelius Ambrosius (481-508) {now proved to be unfounded}. The Rev. William Trevelyan Kevill-Davies is lord of the manor and sole landowner.

The soil is clayey; subsoil, gravel.

The area is **1,057** acres; rateable value, **£1,159**;

The population in **1891** was **27**.

National School, in Yarpole, for the parishes of Yarpole, Lucton & Croft.

Letters are received by foot post from Railway Sub-Office at 8 a.m.;
dispatched at 5.30 p.m.

Kingsland is the nearest money order & telegraph office

Kevill-Davies Rev. William Trevelyan D.L., J.P. Croft castle

Kevill-Davies Rev. Ernest Langham Boughton, Rectory (letters via
Leominster)

Bishoprigg John, farmer, Croft farm

Edwards Charles, head gardener to the Rev. William T. Kevill-Davies,
The Garden

Andrews Richard, head gamekeeper to Rev. William T. Kevill-Davies

* (Editor's note) Froissart, Jean (1333 - 1400), French poet and historian, whose *Chronicles* of the 14th century remain the most important and detailed document of feudal times: Froissart served both French and English royalty: The main subject of his *Chronicles* was the "honourable adventures and feast of arms" of the Hundred Years' War (waged intermittently between France and England from 1337 to 1453), and he urged his readers to aspire to the ideals of chivalry.

LUCTON is a parish 1 mile to the north-east of the river Lugg and on the road from Ludlow and Tenbury to Presteign, 2.5 miles north from Kingsland station on the Leominster and Kington branch of the Great Western railway, 7 north-west from Leominster, and 9 south-by-west from Ludlow, in the Northern division of the county, Wolphy hundred, Leominster union, petty sessional division and county court district, rural deanery of Leominster (2nd division), and archdeaconry and diocese of Hereford.

The church of St. Peter, founded by the Wigmores soon after the Norman conquest, is an edifice in the Early English style, consisting of chancel, nave, vestry and south porch and a western tower with small shingled spire containing 2 bells: the chancel window is stained, the gift and design of the late Charles West Cope esq. R. A. to whom a memorial brass has been erected by his daughter, Mrs. A. C. Auchmuty, 1880: on the chancel floor are brasses to R. Pierrepont, 1684, John Pierrepont, donor of the church and founder of the school, 1711, and to Frances Benedicta Cutler, relict of Thomas Cutler and sister to John Pierrepont, 1724: on the floor of the nave is a brass to the Rev. Robert Simpkinson A.M. 40 years vicar of this parish, d. 1 Nov. 1801, and Elizabeth, his wife, d. 3 Oct. 1806, and one to the Rev. Joseph Heath, vicar of Wigmore, d. 23 Feb. 1831: against the south wall is a richly designed memorial with a long inscription to John Pierrepont, mentioned above, who died Nov. 15th, 1711: against the north wall is a fragment of a tomb of the Wigmore family, once placed in the chancel, and consisting of a marble tablet, with inscription: the church was repaired and restored in the year of our Lord 1675 by John Pierrepont, founder of Lucton school: it was taken down in 1850, rebuilt on the old foundation, partly at the cost of the parishioners, but mainly by the governors of Lucton school, and reopened in 1852.

The register dates from the year 1711. The living is a vicarage, gross yearly value £158, including 5 acres of glebe in this parish, and about 7 acres at Pentre, Radnorshire, in the gift of the governors of Lucton School, and held since 1873 by the Rev. Arthur Compton Auchmuty M.A. of Lincoln College, Oxford, who resides at Kingsland. Here is a Friends' Meeting house. Charities :—A sum of £2, left by Mrs. Frances Benedicta Cutler, and derived from land in the parish of Eardisland, is distributed in bread to the poor at Christmas; Mrs. Joanna Pierrepont left funds producing £1 3s 8d. yearly, which sum is also given to the poor. The Rev. W. T. Kevill-Davies, of Croft Castle, is lord of the manor and principal landowner.

The soil is clayey; subsoil, gravel. The chief crops are wheat, barley, oats, beans and hops.

Area is **1,051** acres; rateable value, **£1,096**. Population in **1891** was **204**.

Sexton, Richard Crump.

Letter Box cleared at 6 p.m Letters through Kingsland R.S.O. which is the nearest money order, post & telegraph office

Lucton Grammar School, situated on the road from-Ludlow & Tenbury to Presteign, was founded & endowed in the year 1708 by John Pierrepont esq. vintner & citizen of London : the endowment consists of £1,500 a year, derived from funds, tithes & land : a scheme was settled by the Charity Commissioners in 1882 & additional buildings were erected in 1885 for 72 boarders & 60 day boys, from plans by F. R. Kempson esq. architect, of Hereford, at a cost of £8,000: there are scholarships tenable at the school, open to Lucton, Croft, Yarpole, Aymestrey, Eye, Kingsland, Shobdon & Orleton, and a having exhibition of £50 a year, for two years, tenable at a place of higher or technical education: the fees for boarders are 27 to 33 guineas a year : the present number of boys is 58 boarders & 50 day boys : Rev. William Ireland M.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge, head master (honourman in mathmatics, classics & theology); Frank Reginald Harris, Robert Squires, Gilbert William Redfern, Robert Plane Middleton & Edward Lowes, assistant masters

The children of this parish attend the united National school at Croft

Assistant Overseer, George William Prichard, jun

Carrier to Leominster. John Reynolds, on fri

Brown George, blacksmith

Davies Elizh. (Mrs.), farmr. Stocken farm

Evans John, shopkeeper

Hellaby Charles, miller (water), Mortimers Cross mill

Lucton Grammar School (Rev. William Ireland M. A. Trinity college, Cambridge, head master; Maurice Nightingale Asterley M.A. Frank Reginald Harris, Sidney Robert Squires, Gilbert William Eedfern, Robert Plane Middleton & Edward Lowes, assist. masters), Lucton house

Lewis John, farmer, The Hall

Payne Wm. estate stone mason to the Rev. W. T. Kevill-Davies, of Croft castle

Prichard George William, farmer & hop grower, The Court

Prince Hy. woodranger to the Rev. W. T. Kevill-Davies, of Croft castle

Rees Cornelius, farmer & hop grower, New farm

Reynolds John, carrier & farmer

Thornton John, cowkeeper

Weaver George, carpenter

transcribed by ian mortimer

(DECEMBER 2003)