

Living History

Yarpole Group Parish
2000



Volume V
(2007)



Living History

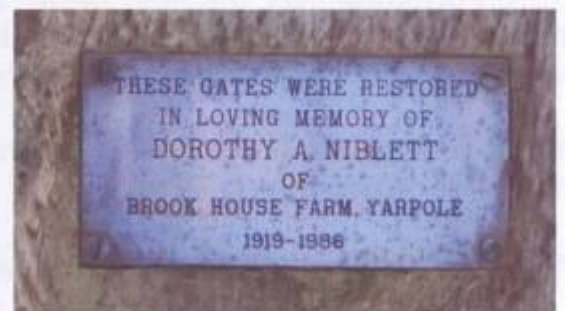
NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2007.



The removal of the gates and gateposts has not only opened up the view from the road of the bell tower and church but has also revealed two 'markers' in the history of the church: See that piece of red sandstone on the left (western) side and the inscribed "18" up-side-down; now look on the other (eastern) side and find the matching piece of red sandstone inscribed with "64"; together they would read "1864", the year of the restoration of the church, under Sir George Gilbert Scott, when this gateway was built and a new path laid up to the porch. (Previously the main churchyard gate was the one by the east-end of the church).



The other 'marker' was this small brass plate which was on the back of the right-hand gatepost. It commemorates the restoration of the gates in the 1980s and was part of a major project of repair, renovation and refurbishment, carried out in the 1980s, the extent of which we now intend to research and publish in a future Article.



The Five Years of Publication of these Newsletters and Articles was celebrated in our display at the Advent Fayre together with a special feature of the venerable trees in our parish but the highlight was, as usual, the computer slide-show of our collection of over 200 photographs.



The Old Gatehouse: Following up on our report in the Easter Newsletter, it looks as if it has been made 'wind and weather' proof.

The Articles: Some will have seen, others will have heard about the 'Article in Herefordshire Life'; for a different view of the village, we enclose a copy without the additional photographs. The title of the other Article, "Liturgical Colours", is the excuse to display the exquisite embroidery of the Altar Frontals and the vibrancy of the Vestments – created by a parish-wide initiative.

Apologies are due from the editorial team for some 'typographical errors in the redrafting' of the Interview with May Talbot, issued in October. We have printed a corrected version and would ask you to destroy the earlier edition, thank you.

Chairman's report 2006-2007

This has been a very unusual year with unprecedented floods in June and July and many unseasonal events in the nature jottings.. However, the Living History Group continues to produce high quality articles and newsletters documenting the past and present in the parish.

We had a very successful display at the Christmas Bazaar in the church where the slide show and photographs generated a lot of interest. The display in the church for the Fete was truly remarkable having been valiantly rearranged at the last minute in far from ideal conditions! It was so successful that we are thinking of staging more rain for next year just so we can put up a display in the church again! (Joke)

Another highlight was the completion of the recording of the gravestones in the burial ground, which drew in a wider group than normal which was excellent.

We look forward to using the CAP for Newsletters and recording the changes in the church building over the next twelve months.

Many thanks to everyone involved throughout the year, but especially Ian, Ron and Graham without whom there would be no group and no newsletter.

Subscriptions for 2008 will remain unchanged and we are pleased to have your continued support.

***The next meeting will be held on THURSDAY 17th January 2008
at 8 p.m in the C'tee Room of the Village***

Liturgical Colours:

Liturgical colours are those colours which, within the Christian Church, are invested with a symbolic significance (see explanatory footnote), and are displayed in the Altar Frontals, the Falls on the Pulpit and Lectern and the Vestments.

The Altar Frontals: Prior to 1986, the altar in St. Leonard's was draped with a plain cloth and it was in that year that Joan Baker proposed that the then small sewing group of seven should, with the agreement of the Vicar, the Rev. Frank Rumball, and the PCC, embark on a major project to embroider a full set of Altar Frontals.

Two years later, on Easter Day 1988, the 'White' Frontal was displayed and on Sunday 29th May 1988, together with other refurbishments of the church, the four Frontals were blessed.

WHITE



RED

GREEN



PURPLE

The New Vestments: During the interregnum, in the early 1990s, between the time the Rev. Frank Rumball left and the assumption of parochial responsibility for the parish by the Team Ministry, the pre-existing Vestments were 'mis-laid'.

In 2001, following discussions amongst interested parties, the Rev. Elaine Goddard instigated a community-wide project to replace the 'lost' Vestments. Financial support was obtained from the Elmley Arts Fund which endorsed the concept of involving a wide range of groups and individuals across the whole parish. And so, under the guidance of Pam Blythe, the project was launched with community wide support and two years later the new Vestments were completed.



On Sunday 9th February 2003, at a service of Holy Communion, the Rt. Revd Michael Hooper, Bishop of Ludlow, blessed our new Vestments

Explanatory footnote: The early Christian Church did not have such a system of colours and it was Pope Innocent III (1198) who introduced the colour sequence for the seasons and specific celebrations. The Anglican Church, on the whole, followed the Roman Catholic sequence, but in recent times there has been some variation, indeed relaxation, and although the appropriate liturgical colours are suggested, they are not mandatory and local traditional use is allowed.

The four main liturgical colours are:

White (albus) symbolizes joy, celebration, gladness, light, purity and innocence. It is used for Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter. It is associated with festivals of Christ and of those saints who are presumed to have died a natural death.

Red (ruber) symbolizes fire and blood. It is used for Pentecost and for days commemorating martyrs. It is also appropriate for festivals of renewal in the Spirit like church dedications and ordinations. It is used for the Passion of Our Lord, from Palm Sunday to the Wednesday of Holy Week, suggesting deeper intensity, triumph, victory.

Green (viridis) is the colour of growth, foliage, fruit and life, suggesting a time of spiritual growth. It is the neutral colour, used for the season after Pentecost called Ordinary Time i.e. outside any special season.

Purple (violaceus) symbolizes penitence and self discipline; it is worn in Advent and Lent, and on Rogation and Ember Days (except those of Pentecost when red is worn).

It is of interest to note that, although St. Leonard's follows the orthodox Anglican liturgy and calendar of colours, the Priory at Leominster follows the 'Use of Sarum' (the Liturgy of Salisbury) put about in 1087 by St. Osmund, Bishop of Sarum; based on Anglo-Saxon and Norman customs, it is seen as more 'Western' than 'Roman'.

It has Blue, Saffron, Red and 'Ash' (unbleached linen – sackcloth) as its liturgical Colours.

Compiled (with a little help from his friends) by Ian Mortimer (2007)

“Yarpole” – A View from the Outside.

“Long ago and far away from Herefordshire, I spent a summer working in a solicitor’s office. On the wall was a calendar entitled “Glorious English Villages” or something. The picture for August showed a group of ducks posing prettily in the sunshine alongside a brook. It was captioned “Yarpole, Herefordshire”.



I thought it looked lovely, and said so to the girl sitting next to me. She agreed. I asked her if she might like to go to the cinema. She said that would be nice. So we went.

And we fell in love, and we married and we moved to...

Nah, just kidding about that last paragraph. She left the office the following week, and I never saw her again. Still, as Bogart almost said to Bergman, we’ll always have Yarpole.

Or at least I will. It took decades, but on a glorious October Indian summer’s day I went to find the spot. “I know the picture you mean,” said Ian Mortimer of the Yarpole Living History Group. Almost everyone in Yarpole seemed to know it, and one resident, June Skyrme, showed me a framed version that she had taken off a chocolate box – Keiller’s, she thought.

Ian Mortimer walked me to the spot where it was taken, at least 40 years ago, by a passing photographer called Kenneth Scowen. The years had not been kind. It was impossible even to attempt a similar picture. We were next to the 14th century manor house, now empty and unloved; the building in the background was the bakehouse,

now decaying; the brook itself was overgrown, and the banks were crumbling. There were not even any ducks.

This all gives a misleading impression of Yarpole. It isn't really a chocolate box village: there are too many 1960s bungalows for that. But then it certainly isn't unloved or decaying either – the very reverse.

Yarpole sits quietly in a dip in Herefordshire's north-west corner, about four miles from Leominster. "Until recent times, it was a farming village with an uneventful history," according to the village guide. I think that means it's now a village with less farming and an uneventful history, rather than a place where something earth-shattering has happened.

Its main claim to fame is the bell tower, separate from St Leonard's church itself. This is a curious county sub-tradition: there are only about 30 in England, but Herefordshire has seven of them. Examination of the oak, according to the guide, dates it back to 1195, making it "the tenth oldest timber structure in the country". A surprisingly specific claim, this.

The people have shallower roots. There are few long-established families in Yarpole, and newcomers don't feel they're intruding. "We were worried at first that we might not be welcome," said Selwyn Payne from Smethwick, who retired here with his wife Barbara. "But we play whist, and we've never made so many friends."

"We've got all the key amenities," said Rob Ralph, an IT trainer who commutes to Droitwich, "a church, a shop and a pub. And not many villages can say that." It doesn't have a school, and it isn't especially handy for anywhere except Leominster and Ludlow, which might make it more attractive to older incomers. One recent property ad called it "a well-respected village", which is a charming formulation.

The pub is The Bell, which serves "confit of Gressingham duck leg with ragout of Puy lentils and smoked bacon" and "fricassee of Herefordshire snails". It is a successful outpost of the Ludlow gastro-culture and its customers come from far beyond Yarpole. The shop actually closed three years ago, but then re-opened, under community control, in a Portakabin behind The Bell. These ventures can be fraught, but this one seems to be holding its own. "We're probably not as busy as we were at first," said Patricia Riedi, one of the volunteers. "But it's pretty steady. People try to be loyal."

However, the shop is not meant to stay in the Portakabin. The plan is that it moves to what you might call old premises. Very old: the west nave of the church itself. Of all the schemes to revive old churches in Herefordshire, this must be the most imaginative: a historic rapprochement between God and Mammon. "We wanted both the shop and the church to be used more," said churchwarden and architect Robert Chitham, "so this seemed like an answer."

This might even make the shop a tourist attraction, which is some achievement in a quiet village. As the improbable sun blazed down, the peace was broken only by an occasional potato lorry and a woman yelling into her mobile in The Bell garden. But as far as I can tell, the sun always shines on Yarpole, as it did the day Robert Scowen and the ducks showed up, all those years ago."

We are grateful to Mr Matthew Engel for his permission to publish this article from the November 2007 issue of the *Herefordshire Life* magazine. (2007)