

Living History

Yarpole Group Parish
2000



Volume III
(2005)



Living History.

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2005.

Saturday 23rd April was a **red letter** day in Yarpole's retailing history.



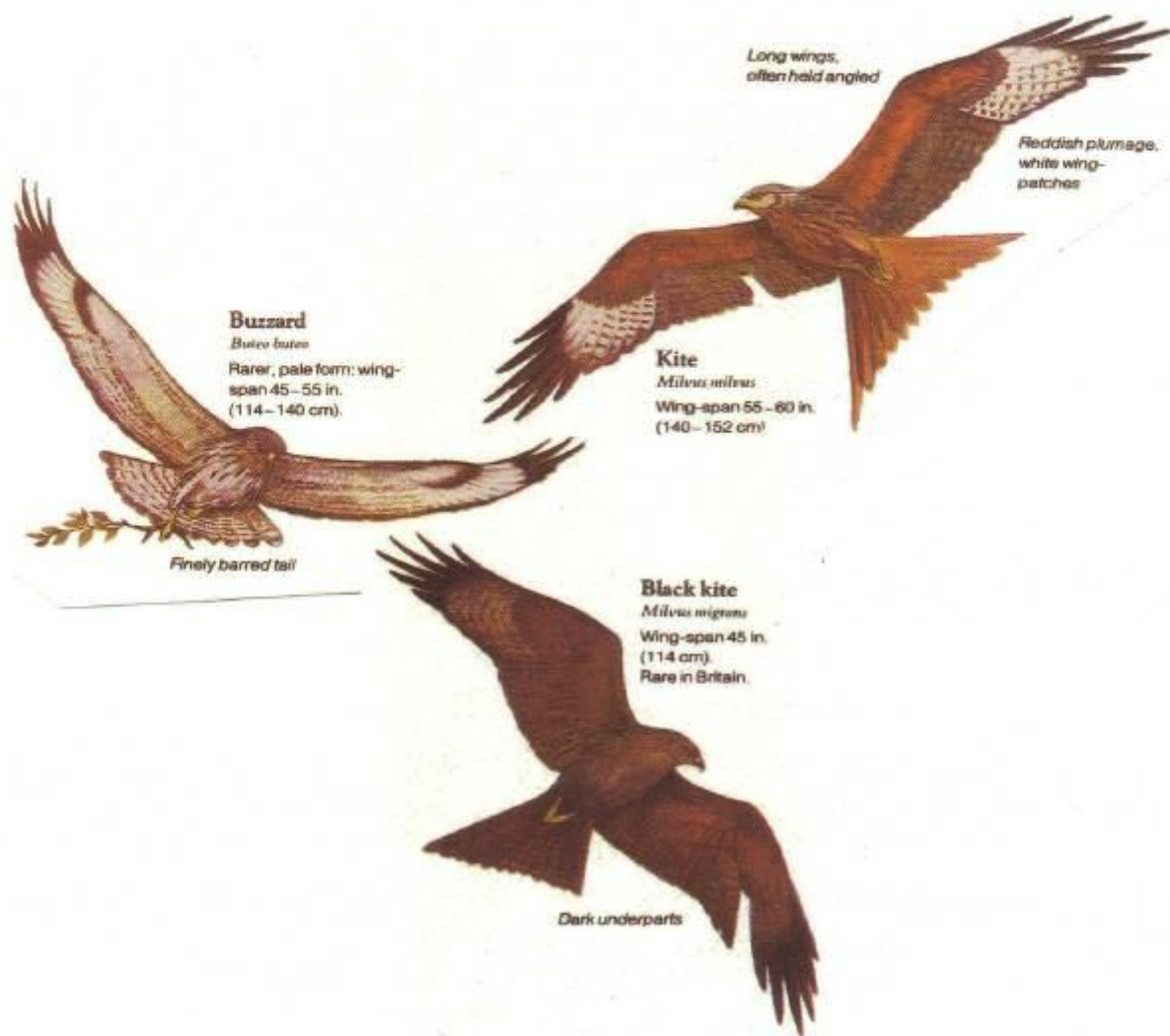
The old Stores & Post Office having closed on Wednesday 2nd February, the new shop, and in due course Post Office, opened for business in a new location and a new building. The new shop, in a temporary building, is situated in the paddock behind the Bell Inn. The site was generously suggested by Caroline & Stuart Gargan, who are only charging a peppercorn rent.

Following press releases and consequential visits from interested journalists over Yarpole's community shop, a good many of us discovered the truth of Andy Warhole's, "In the future everyone will enjoy 15 minutes of fame." Pete Blench of *The Hereford Times* and Judith Burkin of *The Leominster Journal* gave us great local coverage and Fiona Duffy from *Full House* magazine also turned up. *BBC Radio Heref' & Worcs'* Lizzie Lane did us proud over the local air waves while Catherine Mackie of *West Midlands TV* broadcast our efforts far and wide throughout the region.



We have many old photographs of the old shop, going back to the turn of the previous century and we intend to produce an article for publication, with the reminiscences of previous shop-keepers and Post Masters / Mistresses.

Friday 1st April 2005, about 4pm, a black kite was seen over Yarpole:
very dark in colour, smaller and with a less prominent forked tail than the red kite:
rarely seen in the U.K.



Copyright: To ensure that we conform to copyright conventions, members and Friends are reminded that these *Living History* Articles and Newsletters may only be reproduced, by photocopying or 'scan and print', for the sole purpose of personal research.

Correction: In the last Newsletter, it was stated that the chapel on Bircher "ceased to function in the 1960s"; in fact, the chapel continued actively into the 1980s. We hope, sometime in the future, to compile a history of both nonconformist chapels in the Parish.

The three Articles, with this edition, cover a wide span of the history of the Parish – from AD 440, when the Romans left (The Anglo-Saxons), through 1461 (the Battle of Mortimer's Cross) to an account of the 18th century Limekiln in the Fishpool Valley which we hope will stimulate an interest in the Industrial heritage of our Parish.

Date of next meeting is Tuesday 26 July 2005, 8pm at The Bell; but will see you before that, at the Fete, on Saturday 25th June.

The Anglo-Saxons.

When, in 426, the Roman army finally withdrew to defend Rome against the Goths and the Huns, Britain was left defenceless against the subsequent incursions, not only by the Picts and Scots, but by new invaders from the Continent, namely the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes; without the Roman Army, there was no effective, cohesive resistance from the re-emerging disparate Celtic tribes.

It is in these troubled times, when events are confused and history is patchy, that we hear of Celtic tribal leaders, such as 'Vortigern' (425-466), who emerged first as leader in Powys and the Central Marches, and then of all Celtic Britain, in the resistance against the invaders.

'Vortigern' (being a title meaning 'the high chief') at first sought the help of the Saxons, under Hengist, and even confirmed the alliance by marrying Hengist's daughter. However, in return for their help the Saxons usurped more and more authority; the Celts tried to resist, led by King Ambrosius (466-496), followed by the legendary King Arthur who was killed in battle against the Saxons in 537. Thereafter, Celtic resistance crumpled and, by 585 or so, most of England was under the control of the invaders who, initially, had been a motley collection of many different tribes under many chieftains but now, by the end of the 6th century, had established their three rival Kingdoms of Northumbria, Wessex and Mercia.

In 626 Penda became king of Mercia, which, by the 'assimilation' of the area of Gloucestershire/Worcestershire occupied by the Hwicca, now extended up to the Severn.



Since the departure of the Romans, 200 years previously, the native Celtic population in Herefordshire had remained reasonably stable, owing its

allegiance to hereditary ruling families; the area south of the River Wye, known as Ergyng (Archenfield), being a minor kingdom associating with the kingdoms of South-East Wales, whereas the area north of the Wye, occupied by a people called the 'Magonsaete', associated more with the kingdoms of Mid-Wales.

*There is a division of opinion as to whether the Magonsaete were a native Celtic tribe or Saxon invaders who had gradually encroached and integrated with the native population, for there is no evidence of any warfare, and from archaeological evidence of the excavation of burials, dating from this period, (lying east/west with **no** 'grave-goods'), the population was Christian.*

Herefordshire now found itself sandwiched between the pagan Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia on the eastern boundary and the Christian, Celtic kingdom of Powys on the west.

At this time, the Magonsaete were ruled by Merewalh (650-685), ('Merewalh' means 'Illustrious Welshman'), whose centre of power lay in the Lugg Valley, 'the Land of the Lene', 'District of Streams', or as in the Welsh 'Llanllieni', today's Leominster; indeed, he had a castle at Kingsland which would have stimulated the development of Kingsland into a considerable township at that time.

It appears that Penda, who had already formed an alliance with the Welsh leader Cadwallon, in his war against Northumbria, made overtures to Merewalh who colluded with Penda, to establish an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom across all Herefordshire and South Shropshire, (an area still recognisable as the Diocese of Hereford, established in 693).

Herefordshire was then ruled as a sub-kingdom of Mercia, and the process of 'Anglianisation' was peaceful, with the population of the Marches remaining predominately British, (i.e. Celtic); although there was a gradual replacement of the Celtic ruling class by Saxon landowners, and the introduction of Saxon place-names, i.e. with the suffix 'ton' as in Lucton, Luston, Eyton.

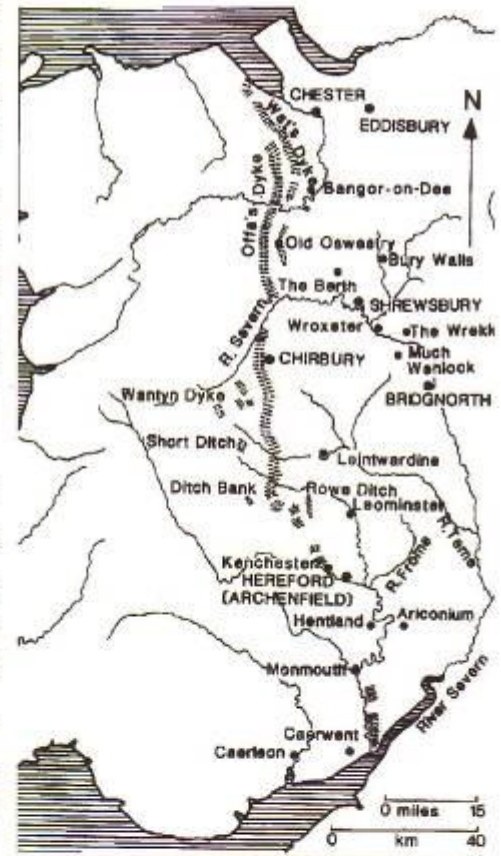
Although Christianity had been recognised in the Marches since early in the fourth century, with many of the very early churches being dedicated to Roman Saints, it was the 'conversion' or 're-confirmation' of Merewalh, following the interpretation of a dream by a the Northumbrian missionary, Edfride, which led, in 660, to the founding of a religious community at Leominster, possibly on the site of a church founded, 100 years previously, by the renowned Welsh missionary, Saint David. Merewalh bestowed the new foundation with considerable endowment of his own land in the Lugg valley including a small estate in Yarpole.

A poem, written by a monk in the early days of the monastery at Leominster, indicates that, following the completion of the monastery, 'within a short space of time, many more churches were built near the mother church'; suggesting that a church may have been built in Yarpole as early as the 7th century.

The founding of Leominster Monastery was just prior to the Synod of Whitby, 663, which agreed that the English Church should conform to the Roman Catholic practices rather than the Celtic/St.Columban.

The border between Anglo-Saxon England and Celtic Wales was ill-defined, and was continually breached by marauding incursions by the Welsh, and this Parish would certainly have been affected: It was against such incursions that Offa's Dyke was constructed. Offa was the king of Mercia from 757 to 796; he came to terms with the Welsh princes in regard to 'their respective spheres of influence', and the frontier between England and Wales was confirmed by the remarkable earthwork, still known as Offa's Dyke, which ran from Prestatyn in the north to Chepstow in the south, passing just to the west of Lyonshall, with the nearest point in the Dyke being only 14 miles from Yarpole.

Traffic through the Dyke was regulated, for it was built, not so much as a defence, but rather as an obstacle to the return passage of rustled cattle and sheep and there were in place very draconian laws against unlawful intruders, whereby a Welshman, caught illegally on the east of Offa's Dyke, would lose a hand on the first occasion and his head on the second.



Saxon rule introduced a period of relative stability and security, and with the growth of trade and craft industries so there was a shift of population from the countryside into the expanding townships, such as Leominster. Wealth accrued and Leominster flourished both as an ecclesiastical centre and a market town, specialising in the wool trade.

There were changes in the countryside as well; under Saxon control, there was a move towards more independence for the peasant-farmers; the

small intensively cultivated fields on the higher marginal land were abandoned, leaving them to the common grazing of sheep, and the large 'open-field' system was established. Each village of three or four farms, was surrounded by three large open unhedged arable fields, each divided into a multitude of individually owned or tenanted 'strips'; each strip, being 22yds wide and a furlong in length, measured one acre.

Two of the fields would be ploughed and cropped by common agreement; the third field, in rotation, left fallow each year. There would be common land for grazing, and 'Lammas' fields for winter fodder. This system, initiated by the Saxons, continued under the Normans, and was ended by the Enclosure Acts (1829).

Although Offa had been the first to be called 'Rex Anglae' (King of the English), after his death in 796, the relative importance of Mercia declined, and the kingdom of Wessex became the dominant power in the continuing war against the invading Danes. By 829, Egbert, King of Wessex, was acknowledged as King of all England and the Wessex system of local administration, which had proved to be efficient, was imposed across the whole country.

And so it was in the early 9th century, that we see the introduction into 'Herefordshire' of the concept of the 'Hundred' as an unit of local administration; each 'Hundred' was a geographical area, within the 'Shire', of 100 'Hides'; a 'Hide' (being 120 acres of cultivated land), was the basis of their taxation and for the mustering of the militia (the 'fyrd'); each 'Hundred' consisted of a variable number of 'Manors'; a 'Manor' being an estate held under hereditary ownership, comprising an area of one or more villages.

Each Hundred had a Court, usually held in the open-air or in the 'Hundred House', at which private disputes and criminal cases were settled by customary law. The Court met once a month, and in the beginning, all those living in the Hundred were expected to attend; later, attendance was restricted to the landowners. Twice a year, the Sheriff of the 'Shire' would attend (his 'tourn'), and act as judge.

Herefordshire was divided into twenty Hundreds and the geographical area of our present-day Parish was in the 'Wolphy' (from the Mercian King Wulfhere) Hundred, and, as recorded in the Domesday Book, 1086, consisted of the Manor of Croft and the larger of two Manors of Yarpole; the smaller one being included in the 'ecclesiastical' Hundred of Leominster.

Throughout the 10th century, under such stable conditions, the people of Herefordshire prospered and wealth accrued. So much so that the Danes, in 980, attracted by Leominster's reputed wealth, had plundered the town

and monastery; after which, the town was re-peopled, the monastery rebuilt and prosperity regained, only to be subjected to frequent cross-border raids by the Welsh.

In 1016, at the battle of Ashingdon in Essex, the Danes under Cnut defeated the English, (it is recorded, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, that men from Herefordshire were in the English army), and Cnut was crowned King of England.

Under King Cnut (Canute), (1016-1040), Herefordshire was identified as a separate Earldom, and was held by Leofric (husband of Lady Godiva of Coventry), who was particularly generous in his support of the Monastery at Leominster. However, when Edward (the Confessor) came to the throne in 1043, being indebted to Godwin, the powerful Earl of Wessex (as King-Maker), he married Edith, the Earl's daughter, and made Swegn, her brother, Earl of Hereford.

The Welsh under Gruffydd ab Llywelyn, had been particularly active in raiding into Herefordshire and Swegn embarked on a campaign against Llywelyn; however his improper involvement with the Abbess of Leominster (possibly wrongly interpreted), brought him into disgrace and he was forced to flee the country.

Edward, son of Aethelred (the Unready) and Emma (sister of Richard II of Normandy), who had spent 28 years of his formative years in Normandy, took this as an opportunity to introduce Norman knights to bolster the defences against the Welsh; he appointed his nephew, Ralph de Mantes, as earl of Hereford, and deployed these Norman knights across the Welsh Marches by giving them the land of displaced Saxon landowners, on which to build a defensive line of 'Norman' castles. The first two such castles to be built in England were at Ewyas Harold and 'Richard's Castle'.

As to Richard's Castle, this was built by Richard, son of Scrob, who had been given the major manor of Yarpole (**see below), and the then manor of 'Auretone' lying to the north-west of our Parish in which he chose to build his castle. In 1067, this Richard Scrob, in association with the other 'Castellans' (governors of castles) of Herefordshire, resisted the uprising by the Saxon Edric, the Wild.

***The area of our present Parish consisted, at that time, of three manors (or estates) - - (1) 'The Manor of Croft' held by a Saxon by the name of Edwin; (2) a small 'manor', probably the land lying to the east of Turnpike Lane and which was included with Luston, in the Great Manor of Leominster, and held directly by Queen Edith for the benefit of the Monastery at Leominster; and (3) the larger portion of Yarpole held by Richard Scrob.*

These must have been turbulent times for the people of this Parish, being, as they were, in the very midst of a prolonged period of conflict, which continued, but to a lesser degree, after 1066.

Compiled by Ian Mortimer.

(JUNE 2005)

Acknowledgements: The map of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, on page 1, was taken from *British Kings and Queens*, (1999) by Mike Ashley, and the map of Offa's Dyke, on page 3, was taken from *The Welsh Border*, (2001) by Trevor Rowley.

For those wishing to learn more about this period in our history, I would recommend *Mercia* by Sarah Zaluckyj, published by Logaston Press, which is available through Leominster Library.

Sir Richard Croft and the Battle of Mortimer's Cross (1461)

Not many of us will have stopped and read the inscription on the pedestal by the old Monument Inn at Kingsland, which was erected in 1799, and 'marks' the southern limit of the battlefield. Another 'marker' is Blue Mantle Cottage at the junction of Hereford Lane (the old Roman road) and the A4110 - "Blue Mantle" was the name of Edward's herald who was treacherously killed.

The Lancastrian army, under the command of Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, and the Earl of Wiltshire, included Irish, French and Breton mercenaries as well as Welsh troops; whereas the Yorkist army, under Edward Mortimer, was composed mainly of Marchmen, such as Herbert, Devereux, Lingen, Vaughan and Richard Croft who was not only Lord of the Manor of Croft

(including Lucton) but also held the Lordship of Yarpole, and so would have been in command of men from across the whole of the Parish.

The battle was, to all accounts (two quoted overleaf), very bloody but decisive for "After this vengeance Edward marched to London and was crowned King as Edward IV".

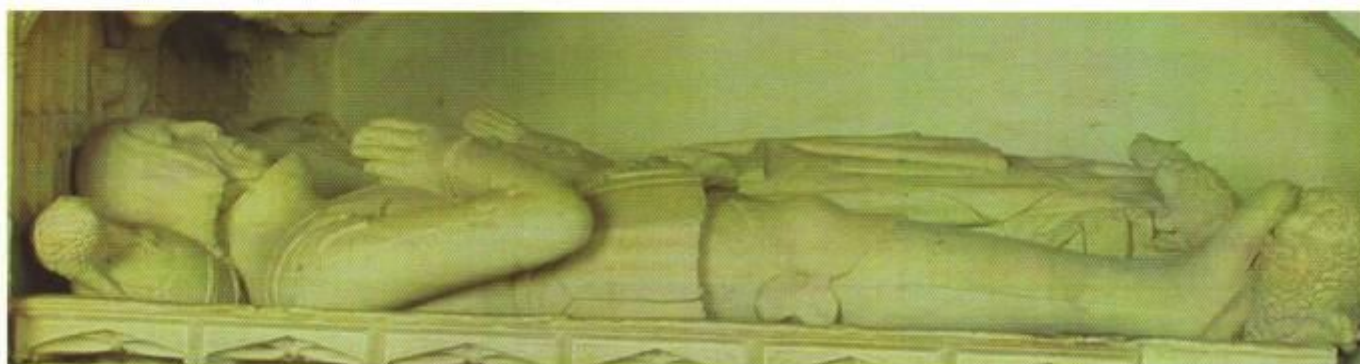
Sir Richard Croft's loyalty to Edward Mortimer was duly rewarded after the accession of Edward to the throne in that he was appointed general receiver for the Earldom of March in the shires of Hereford and Salop, and in the lordship of Wigmore, Radnor and Melleneth, and 'parker' of Gatelegh. In 1487, he was made Knight Bannerett..

He died on the 29th July 1509 and his tomb is in St. Michael's Church at Croft Castle.

This pedestal is erected to perpetuate the Memory of an obstinate, bloody, and decisive battle fought near this Spot in the civil Wars between the ambitious Houses of York and Lancaster, on the 2nd Day of February 1461 between the Forces of Edward Mortimer, Earl of March, (afterwards Edward the Fourth) on the Side of York and those of Henry the Sixth, on the Side of Lancaster.

The King's Troops were commanded by Jasper Earl of Pembroke. Edward commanded his own in Person, and was victorious. The Slaughter was great on both Sides Four Thousand being left dead on the Field and many Welsh Persons of the first distinction were taken Prisoners among whom was Owen Tudor (Great-Grandfather to Henry the Eighth, and a Descendent of the illustrious Cadwallader) who was afterwards beheaded at Hereford

This was the decisive Battle which fixed Edward the Fourth on the Throne of England who was proclaimed King in London on the Fifth of March following.



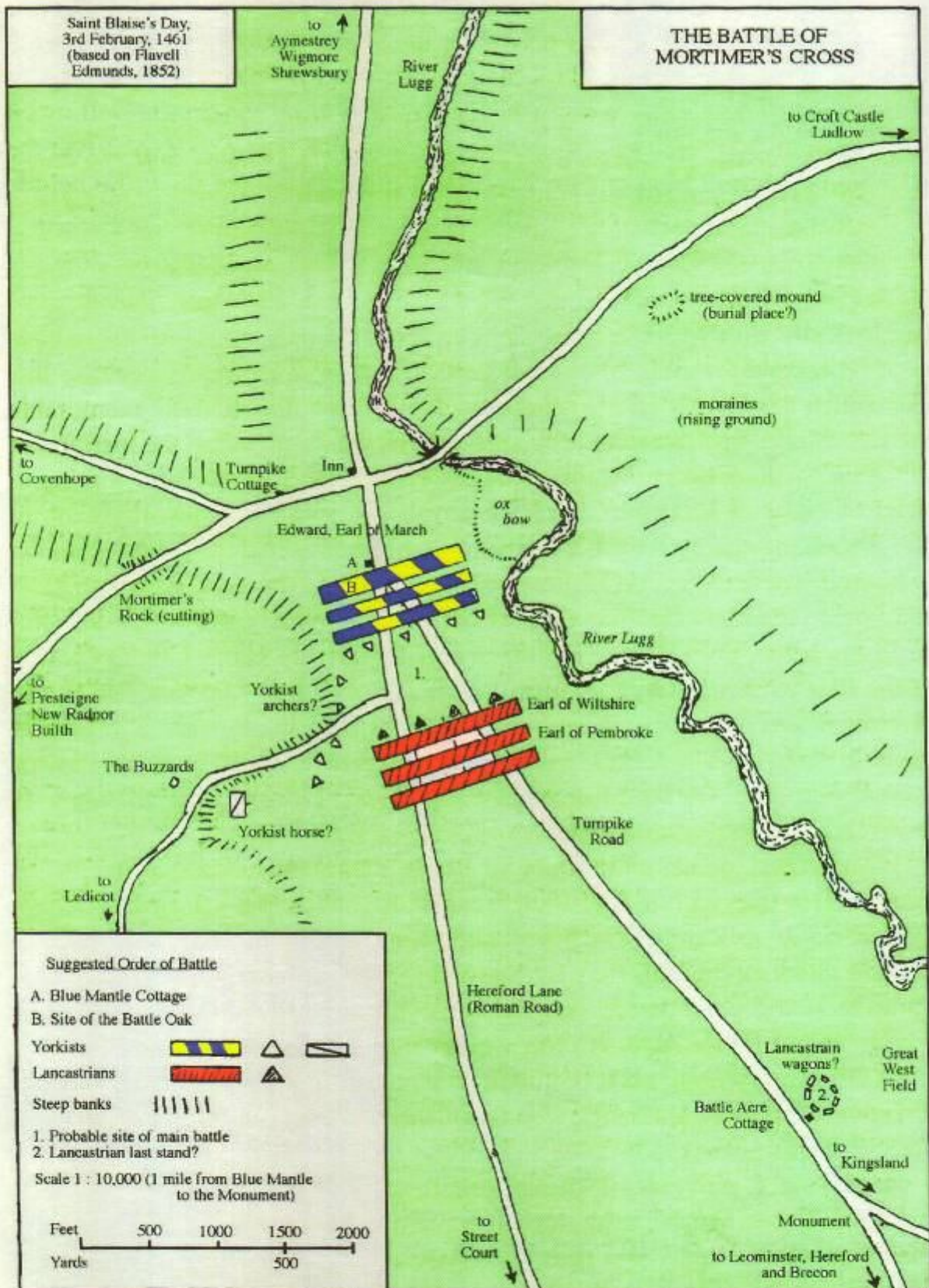
Two accounts which record the ferocity of the Battle.

(1) "Upon the Virge of this Shire betwixt Ludlow and little Hereford (sic), a great battail was fought by Jasper, Earl of Pembroke and James Butler, Earle of Ormond and Wiltshire against Edward, Earl of March. In which 3800 men were slaine. The two Earls fled and Owen Teuther taken and beheaded. This field was fought upon the daye of the Virgin Marie's Purification in Anno 1461. Wherein before the battel was strok, appeared visibly in the firmament three Sunnes which after a while joyned all together and became as before: for which cause (as some have thought) Edward afterwards gave the Sunne in his full brightenes for his badge and cognizance." (Extract from Map of Herefordshire performed by John Speede in 1610.)

(2) "The great and decisive battle of Mortimer's Cross took place on Candlemas Day. In the early morning, Edward Mortimer posted his men with great care on what is now called the great west field. It was rather foggy and the hazy state of the atmosphere produced one of those curious illusions which are called "parhelia," that is the appearance of mock suns along with the real luminary. To the astonished eyes of Edward's army facing, as they were, South East, it appeared as though three suns were rising, which gradually grew into one. He was equal to the occasion, 'Yonder three suns' he said 'are the three Lancastrian leaders, the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Owen Tudor and the Earl of Ormond, whose glory shall this day centre upon me,' and in memory of this he took as his badge after the battle the sign of 'the sun in his strength.'

"The Lancastrians attacked in three bodies, the first headed by the Earl of Pembroke, son of Sir Owen Tudor, rushed in a headlong charge upon the right wing of the Yorkist army, scattering it, and pursued it for three miles in the direction of Shobdon. But Edward left that part of his force to shift for itself and moving forward, poured all the rest of his army upon the enemy. They met the Irish soldiers of the Earl of Ormond first, and these, half naked as they were, could not stand against the bills of the Herefordshire men, and fled in the utmost disorder. Next came the turn of Sir Owen Tudor and the Welsh and, with them, every Herefordshire man no doubt felt that he had plenty of accounts to settle for past forays, but though deserted by his son, Pembroke, who was in wild pursuit of one part of the Yorkist army, and left by the flying Irish, Sir Owen made a splendid fight and only, step by step, was driven back into Kingsland village. But there he met with a new enemy. Leominster was really a Yorkist town and, as soon as the Lancastrian garrison had left, the friends of Mortimer mustered, armed and sallied forth to help him. Thus, surrounded on every side, Sir Owen was compelled to yield himself a prisoner. It was now afternoon and the battle seemed over, when suddenly Pembroke returned from his wild pursuit to find, to his astonishment, his father a prisoner and the Lancastrians scattered. There still seemed a chance, however, for a brave man and, with infinite difficulty, he rallied the flying Welsh and Irish and made a last terrific assault upon the Yorkist line. The second battle was as fiercely contested as the first, but Mortimer and the Herefordshire men were too strong for their enemies and, when at last the sun set, the Lancastrian army had ceased to exist and over 4000 men were left dead or dying on the stricken field. Edward, the victor, pressed on with his prisoners to Hereford, and there next day, in revenge for the death of his father at the battle of Wakefield, had the aged Sir Owen Tudor beheaded. His head was put upon the steps of the market cross and a curious story is told how a certain madwoman in Hereford washed the face and combed the hair and lit, and left burning round it, more than a hundred candles".

The suggested Order of Battle (opposite) is taken from *Ludford Bridge & Mortimer's Cross*, (2001) by George Hodges, which gives a very comprehensive account of the Battle and is available through Leominster Library.



I wish to thank Mrs G. Hodges for granting copyright permission to reproduce this diagram from *Ludford Bridge and Mortimer's Cross* by the late G. Hodges.

With acknowledgements to my three main sources;

- (1) *Ludford Bridge & Mortimer's Cross*, by Geoffrey Hodges, 2001;
- (2) *The House of Croft of Croft Castle* by O.G.S. Croft, 1949;
- (3) The web-site of the UK Battlefields Resource Centre:

Compiled by Ian Mortimer.

(JUNE 2005)

Our Industrial Heritage:

Living History

The Limekiln in the Fishpool Valley :

The remains of this 18th century limekiln are situated, in a disused limestone quarry, close to the first pool in the Fishpool Valley; it forms a large ovoid shaped earth mound some 10x18 metres (11x20 yds.) by 3 metres (10 ft.) high.



This photograph was taken from the top of the mound looking down into the circular chamber (the 'pot') 2 metres (6ft 6ins) in diameter, in which the limestone was burned:
Note - the stone lining.

This is the south portal, leading into a short lobby, the roof of which has collapsed. The floor level has built up burying the lower 2/3 of the arch.



This is the north portal, now only 5ft. high, leading into a short lobby, the back wall of which is the bottom of the pot:
Note - that it is much narrower than the south portal.

Limeburning:

(1) Chemistry:

(a) 'calcining' / burning:

When limestone (calcium carbonate - CaCO_3) is burned at a temperature of 900°C , carbon dioxide (CO_2) is driven off and 'quicklime' (calcium oxide - CaO) is produced:- $\text{CaCO}_3 \rightarrow \text{CaO} + \text{CO}_2$

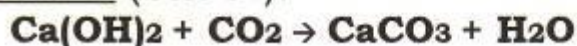
(b) 'slaking' / hydration:

The addition of water (H_2O) to quicklime (CaO) produces 'slaked lime' (calcium hydroxide - Ca(OH)_2):- $\text{CaO} + \text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{Ca(OH)}_2$

slaked lime, with the addition of excess water, becomes 'lime putty'

(c) 'reversion' / hardening:

As the lime putty (Ca(OH)_2), mixed with an aggregate (e.g. sand) dries out, carbon dioxide (CO_2) is absorbed from the atmosphere and water (H_2O) is given off and it reverts to 'limestone' (CaCO_3):-



(2) Geology:

Herefordshire is predominantly on Old Red Sandstone, but there are a few outcrops of limestone across the county; in the south around the Forest of Dean, on the western side of the Malverns and in this area.

'Cornstones' which are found more widely, are not limestone but nodules of lime bearing rock, the lime having leached from upper layers of rock. They are so called because their presence improved the fertility of the otherwise acid (sandstone) soil.

(3) Economic Value:

(a) Agricultural: Used to counter the acidity of the soil it increased fertility and was used in huge quantities for this purpose. It was also used to reduce the incidence of infectious disease in hops and turnips.

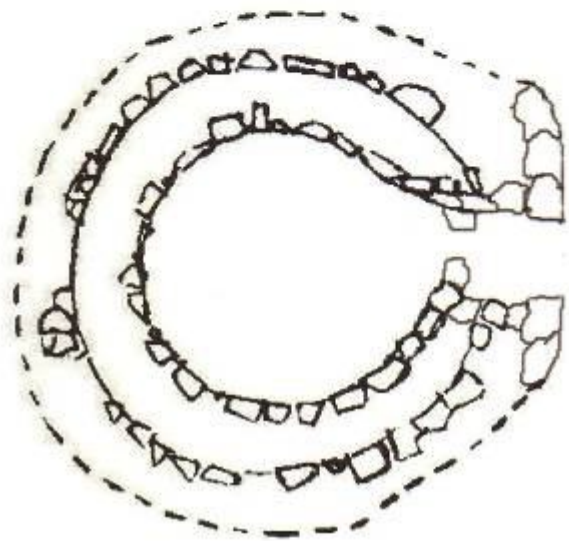
(b) Industrial: The recent use of lime mortar in the building of the church wall reminds us of its value in such circumstances for it allows water to be absorbed and released without damaging the structure; it allows small amounts of movement without cracking; it yields to pressure. Cathedrals and castle walls depend on it. As a lime wash, it was used as a disinfectant, to waterproof walls and to lighten the interior of buildings. Other industrial uses include the preparation of animal hides for tanning and the bleaching of paper.

The limekiln in Fishpool Valley is marked on the estate map of 1798 and is known to have been working in 1891.

Structure of a Limekiln:

There were various designs of limekiln – from the very basic ‘farmer’s clamp’ which was built into a bank with alternating layers of limestone and wood (or coal if it was available) and simply sealed with earth. This produced a very coarse form of lime and was contaminated with ash – but for agricultural use this would not have been a disadvantage. In the process of burning lime for industrial use, the ash and the lime were kept apart and the commonest design which ensured such separation was the ‘intermittent periodic’ or ‘flare’ kiln, as described in these diagrams.

(a) plan: showing a single portal/entrance lobby, (with an arched roof), which gave the worker access through the ‘draw-hole’ into the pot to light the fire and withdraw the lime.



(b) section:

S = earth bank for insulation and support

P = the ‘pot’ to be filled with lumps of limestone resting on the ‘dome’ - A

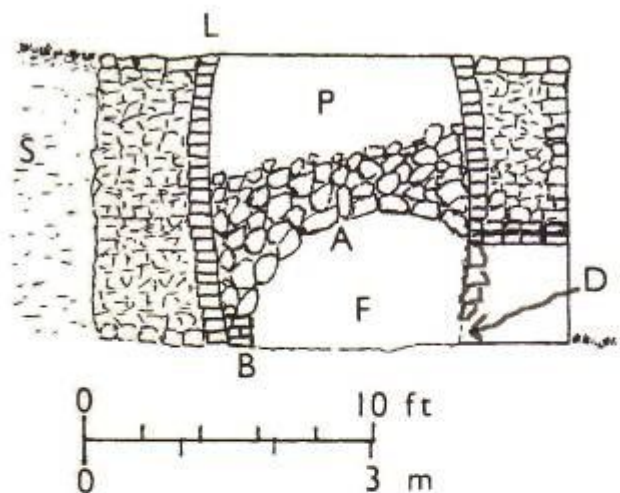
L = the stone lining of the ‘pot’

F = the fire cavity – wood/charcoal

D = the draw-hole through which the fire is lit and the ash withdrawn

A = ‘dome’ of large slabs of limestone

B = ‘bench’ on which the first layer of the ‘dome’ rests.



The limekiln in the Fishpool Valley is a flare kiln with two portals; we believe that in the south portal the draw-hole was at a high level (above the ash) so as to draw out clean lime and was wide enough to allow the worker to pack (into barrels) and load the lime onto a wagon. Whereas in the north portal, the draw-hole was at a low level through which the ash and contaminated lime could be drawn out and used for agricultural purposes.

With acknowledgements;

- (1) for the outline of the illustrative sketches – *Limekilns and Limeburning*, by Richard Williams, a Shire publication, which gives a very comprehensive account of the subject;
- (2) for the geology – *Field-Name Survey in Relation to Lime-Kilns in the Golden Valley*, by Beryl Harding, Woolhope Transactions 1996.
- (3) for the history – Sites and Monuments Records, Historic Herefordshire on Line, who are planning to put a section on limekilns on their web-site.

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(JUNE 2005)