

Living History

Yarpole Group Parish
2000



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Living History.

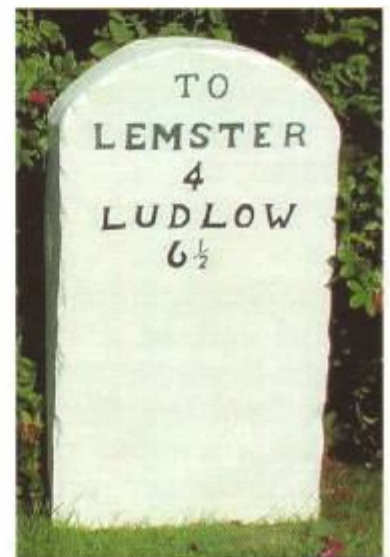
NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2005.

Living History, as a concept, was exemplified recently when after forty years the restored 100yr old wheeled bier was again used at two funerals in the Parish.

It is therefore timely that we should be issuing with this Newsletter, an Article describing the wheeled bier and its 18th century predecessor, the trestle bier.

The identification in the 2nd Article of the locations of the old milestones along the B4361 and B4362, offers an opportunity to consider the possibility of their reinstatement; in fact, there is already an interest in doing this in other parts of Herefordshire.

However restoration is not always appropriate and conservation is, more usually, the most we should aim for; and so, although we are pleased to report that the limekiln (June 2005) is to be 'conserved', we are concerned about the continuing deterioration in the condition of the icehouse, also in the Fishpool Valley, which will be the subject of a future Article.



Dating of Articles: From now on each Article will carry the 'date of publication' as of the accompanying Newsletter; all reprints will be backdated and Members may wish to amend their own copies; Members are reminded that Articles should only be copied for the purpose of personal research.

Phenology: Gardeners are natural phenologists (even if you didn't know you were!), observing and noting the timing of events in Nature's calendar.

The UK Phenology Network wants to hear from you – it is helping to track climate change, especially in relation to the start of spring and autumn. Whether it be the earlier flowering of snowdrops, the oak trees coming into leaf, or the date that you see the first swallow or hear the first cuckoo. If you are interested in contributing your observations, we as Yarpole Living History would like to know – we are already recording wild flowers and common butterflies.

You can record directly online via: - phenology.org.uk

This web site gives you recording forms and live tracking maps.

Do have a go – how are the seasons changing in Yarpole, on Bircher Common, or at Lucton?

Stone-lined wells: The majority of the wells in the Parish are dry stone lined and predate the 'modern' brick lined wells which, as Fred Dibnah illustrated in a TV programme, are constructed from the top down.

In contrast, a stone lined well has to be built from the bottom up.

The depth of these wells varies, the deepest in the Parish that we know of, is 60ft, and the majority all seem to be about 3ft wide.

The lining is constructed as for a retaining wall, with a double skin, tight joints without mortar; the inner facing stones 'dressed' to present a neat and tidy appearance.

Some wells earned a reputation for water quality, as the one which served the church, or reliability, occasionally there is a requirement written into the deeds of a cottage to supply its neighbours in time of drought.



Water Extraction: In November 2004, the Living History Group recognised the potential damage to the environment of an application for a licence to extract water from the Brook, halfway between Yarpole and Lady Meadow Farm; reassurances were sought from the Environment Agency; when such were not forthcoming, a formal objection was submitted.

After a prolonged period of investigation and negotiation with the Applicant, the Environment Agency, in July 2005, granted a licence with conditions which, if implemented and properly monitored, should satisfy our main concern namely that the method of extraction during the winter months would ensure that there was an uninterrupted flow past the extraction point and that the ecology of the stream would not be adversely affected.

Notice of Annual General Meeting:-

Tuesday 25th Oct. - 8pm at The Bell.

- (1) Chairman's report;
- (2) Adoption of Accounts;
- (3) Election of Officers;

Chairman
Vice-chairman (honorary)
Secretary
Treasurer

- (4) Any other business.

A regular meeting of the Group will follow the closure of the AGM.

The Wheeled Bier:



This bier was in use up to the 1960s, and it was the practice in this Parish for the priest to attend the home, where the body would have lain since death, pray with the bereaved and then lead the cortège to the church.

The design and method of construction are very similar to that of the Kingsland wheeled bier, which was built in 1907, and it was probably made by the same local craftsmen.

The oak trestle top with its three rollers and brass side rails is demountable and would have been used to carry the coffin to the graveside.

The oak 'articulation', onto which you will see that the handle sides have been forged to fit, still moves very freely being centred on a ball (bearing) race.

It has traditional leaf springs and the solid tyres are well worn.



One distinguishing feature on the Yarpole bier is the name "ARIEL 49" stamped into each of the wheel hubs, presumably from the Ariel Pram Wheel Works Ltd., Court Road, Balsall Heath, which was a subsidiary of the famous Ariel Motorcycle Co.

The wheeled bier has been restored and is on display inside the church.

The Trestle Bier:



The Yarpole trestle bier is in a surprisingly good condition considering that it is over 200 years old and has been in store for the last 100 years, when it was replaced by the wheeled bier.

Notice (above) the mortises on the top rails, which would have housed the struts of the canopy (or **hearse**) still present on the Pembridge trestle bier.

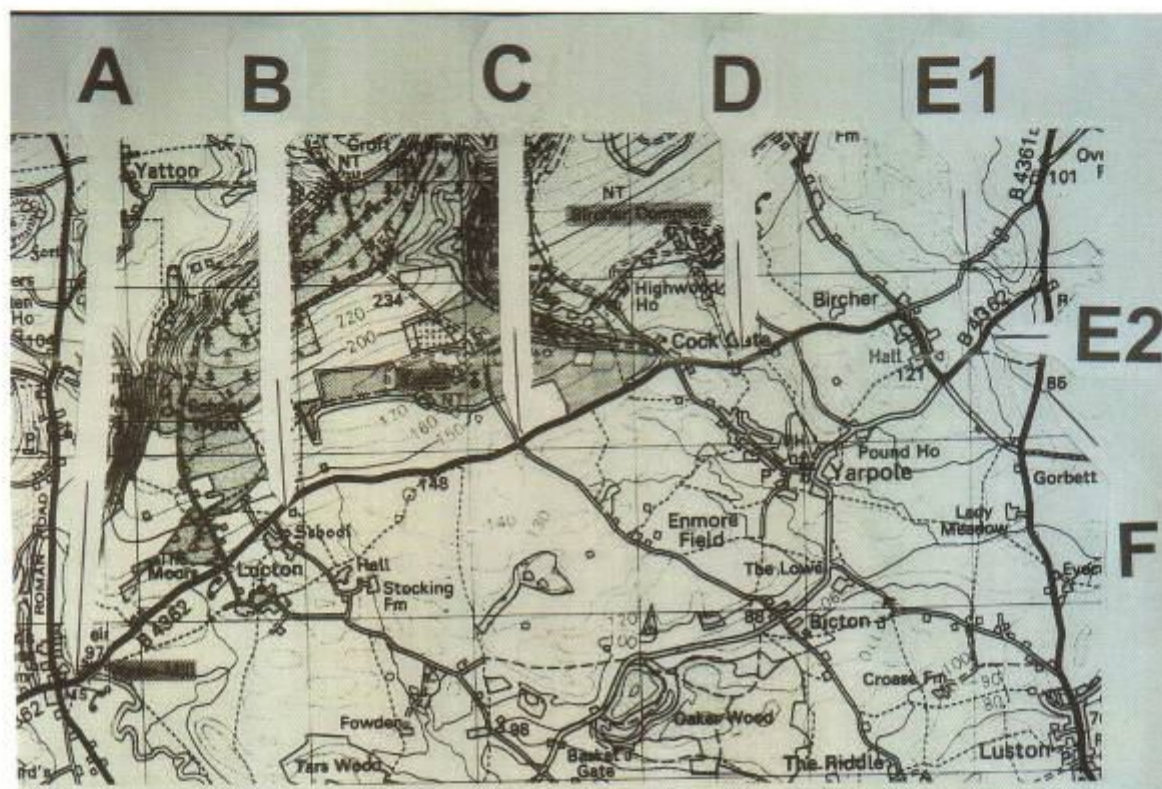
The long handles, which would have allowed the bier to be carried on the shoulders of the bearers and which fold down, have interesting hinged joints, notice the stub tenon on the outer face (handle side) which locates into a mortise on the inner face, thus 'locking' the joint; the mortise and tenon do not extend across the whole face and therefore do not show when the joint is closed; notice also the moulding on the frame and the turning at the base of the handle. This style of carpentry, when compared to the trestle bier at Pembridge, would suggest that the Yarpole bier is of a later date of construction, probably towards the end of the 18th century.



The trestle bier is on display in the Bell Tower.

Milestones:

There were six milestones within the Parish, strung along the two main through-roads, now known as the B4361 (Luston to Richards Castle) and the B4362 (Mortimer's Cross to its junction with the B4361).



Ref	Road	Location	as on 1903 OS map
A	B4362	MORTIMER'S CROSS	WOOFFERTON 6½ MORTIMER'S CROSS 1
B	B4362	LUCTON SCHOOL	WOOFFERTON 6½ MORTIMER'S CROSS 1
C	B4362	JUNCTION WITH CROFT LANE	WOOFFERTON 5½ MORTIMER'S CROSS 2
D	B4362	125YDS WEST OF WAR MEMORIAL	WOOFFERTON 4½ MORTIMER'S CROSS 3
E1	(B4362) old road	at the ford	- -
E2	B4362 new road	BIRCHER KNOLL	WOOFFERTON 3½ MORTIMER'S CROSS 4
F	B4361	BETWEEN GORBETTS BANK AND JUNCTION WITH B4362	LUDLOW 6½ LEOMINSTER 4

A Short History of Milestones:

From the days of the early settlers, stones have been used as markers on tracks and paths – standing stones, boundary stones, stepping stones, way-markers and cairns to mark the route.

The Romans rationalised their use as milestones – measuring each thousand (Latin mille) two-step paces (equal to some 1618 yards); interestingly they used a large wheel with calibrated cogs as a measuring tool and a similar, though smaller, instrument was used in the 17th century by John Ogilvy (see cartouche); an even smaller wheeled version is used today.



After the Romans left in the 5th century, their roads progressively deteriorated and there was no incentive for the local population to maintain these main thoroughfares.

However as more and more travel and trade developed, a national network of roads began to evolve and the creation of the General Letter Office in 1660 which introduced the post-coaches which traversed the country, highlighted the poor condition of the roads.

In 1593, the 1760 yard statute mile was introduced to correct the widespread variations in the length of 'customary' or 'long' miles (up to 2600 yards in Yorkshire) and to standardise the system of charging for distance travelled.



The first road maps were drawn in 1675 by John Ogilvie and he marked distance on his strip maps in statute miles; the "68", "69" and "70" mark the miles from Bristol.

As travel continued to increase so the complaints about the condition of the roads became more vociferous and the government introduced a system for road improvement by way of the Turnpike Acts; under these Acts tolls were to be charged for use of the roads and the income, thus raised, was to be used for the improvement of the roads; in 1766 it became obligatory for milestones to be placed along each 'turnpike'.

Most of the surviving milestones across the country were removed or destroyed during the 1939-45 War (to confuse any enemy parachutists) but a resident of the Parish remembers seeing milestone 'F' in its position as indicated on the 1903 OS map.