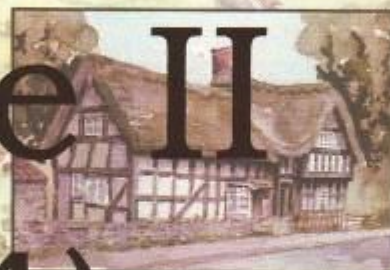


Living History

Yarpole Group Parish
2000



Volume II
(2004)



Living History.

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2004.

Welcome to our third Newsletter: we have attached two articles;

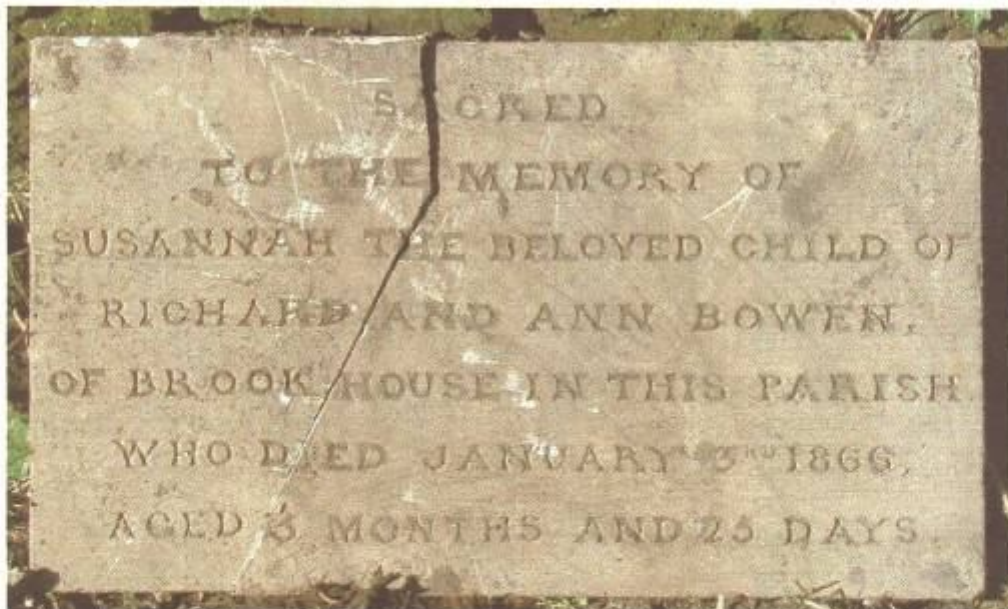
- (1) the God's Acre project at St. Leonards;
- (2) the first of a series of stories from the Parish Chest.



The *Living History* Group is interested in both the past and the present. So, we recorded this photograph of all the effort going into the production of a 10-year plan for the parish in 2004, created by local people, alongside one of the oldest buildings in Yarpole. Is it 'The Bakehouse' or 'The Gatehouse' or 'The Lock-up'? Can you help us?

The Bell Tower: The 'Faculty' has now been obtained to remove the Victorian match-boarding, which will be done once the remaining contents are moved into the proposed storage shed.

Nick Molyneux, of English Heritage, who has a continuing interest in the Bell Tower will be giving a talk on the History of the Bell Tower and guided tour, at the church on Saturday the 8th May.



This child's gravestone was uncovered during the clearance in preparation for rebuilding the west perimeter wall.

With the permission of the P.C.C., the Yarpole Living History Group are going to **record the inscriptions off all the legible gravestones in the St. Leonard's Churchyard**. The older ones are deteriorating rapidly, and we wish to preserve as much information as possible. We intend to link this into other work we are doing on Census records, Parish Council records, and potentially the Parish Register. At the moment, we have no plans to record the graveyard on the west side of Green Lane.

We are going to start this project on: **SATURDAY 17th APRIL**, starting at **11 a.m.**

Full instructions will be provided, as well as advice about what to bring with you. If you would like to help, please call John Gunson on 780701.

Leading the way for web history:

HEREFORDSHIRE has helped lead the way in making data on local history accessible in the computer age - It was the second county in the country to put its Sites and Monuments record online at www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk

Now the Herefordshire SMR website has been updated and anyone delving into local history and going to www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk will see a search menu that enables any researcher to look up a keyword, author or year. "The database contains all published books on Herefordshire and a large amount of unpublished material so it is a quick way of finding what Information is available about a building, person or place in the county," said SMR manager Rebecca Roseff..

Date of Next Meeting:-

Tuesday 18th May, 8pm at the Bell. All Welcome.

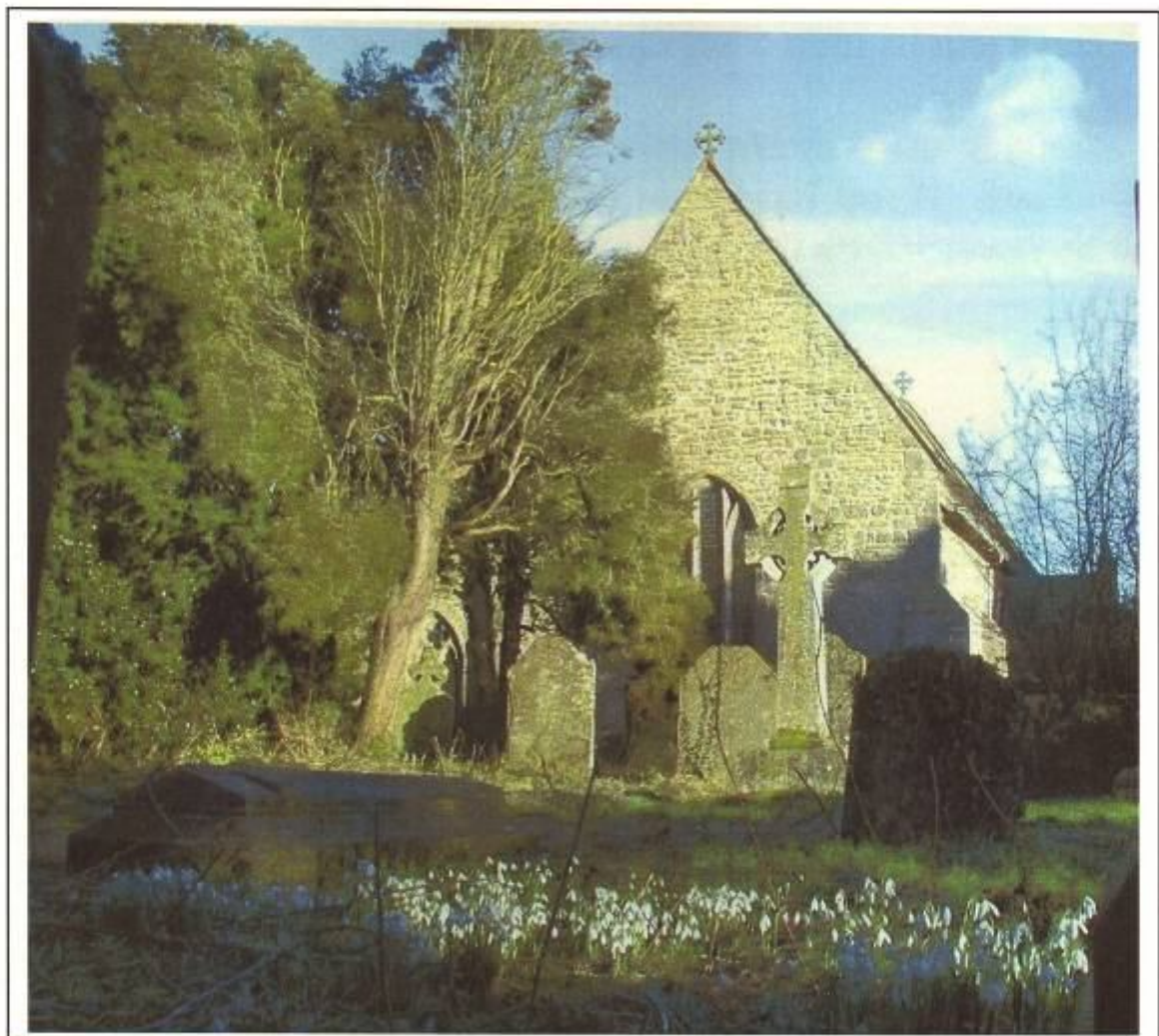
Caring for God's Acre:



Caring for God's Acre (C.F.G.A.) is an innovative project to encourage conservation in churchyards, for churchyards are havens for wildlife, often containing old grassland, distinctive trees and stonework covered in colourful lichens.

For a number of years now our aim has been to develop Yarpole Churchyard as a conservation area of historical and ecological interest to local people and to visitors. The balance between smart mown regions and rough wild ones has varied over the years and changes through the year as wild flowers come and go.

Our aim is to control the dominant plants such as nettles, brambles, docks, ground elder and tree seedlings in order to encourage wild flowers and grasses to flourish and set seed. Through C.F.G.A. and the Teme Valley Rural Challenge we were offered a comprehensive ecological survey of churchyard flora, grassland and trees, with management recommendations and also a specialist tree survey.



In Autumn a group of volunteers give the churchyard its annual clearance which is very necessary to encourage ecological development and a pleasant appearance. During the year many volunteers take their turn on the weekly *mowing* rota, maintaining a tidy approach to the church and also paths around the rest of the churchyard.

In January there are lots of snowdrops which, in February, are joined by primroses and celandines. By March the blue violets are blooming and the



blackthorn trees are in blossom until by mid-April at least twenty varieties of wild flowers can be seen which increases to over thirty during May.

If you walk along these mown paths you may be surprised how many wild flowers you see. If you have time to rest awhile on one of the seats you may also be rewarded by the sight of various wildlife

We may have, here in Yarpole, the very old species of pink primrose, called 'rhubarb and custard', which is often found in old churchyards.



We wish to care for the churchyard in a way which provides a pleasant, reflective place for people and a haven for grasses, flowers, birds and wildlife while still maintaining a fit setting for a church.

STORIES FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL CHEST - No. 1

This is the first in an occasional series taken from documents in the Parish Council Chest – a sturdy tin box, purchased by the Parish Council from Alexander & Duncan, then in Broad Street, Leominster.

The parish council was formed in 1894, as a result of the Local Government Act. The first meeting of the “Parish of Yarpole & Bircher” was held on 4th December 1894, at the School Room. There were at least 42 people in attendance at this first meeting. The main purpose was to elect the parish councillors. W. POWELL [*the schoolmaster, who lived at School House*] was elected to chair this first meeting.

The preliminary vote was a show of hands. However a poll was demanded by one of those present, and the meeting finished at that point, with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

They reconvened the next meeting for 31st December 1894, by which time the poll must have taken place. The second meeting was taken up with electing the various officers for the council.

Chairman - JOHN H. TREWIN [*farmed Home Farm, Bircher*]

Vice Chairman - J. PRICE [*lived at Ladymeadow Farm*]

Clerk - *postponed, while Mr. Enoch CHAMBERLAIN, the assistant Parish Overseer, he asked*

Treasurer - HARLEY CONNOD [*lived at Pound House, Yarpole*]

Temporary Waywarden - W. SMITH

Charity Trustees - Col, RUSSELL, Mr. MANN, Mr. BENGREE, & Mr. WILLIAMS (*to replace the Churchwardens & Overseers*) [*lived at Croft Lodge, Cockgate, the Bell Inn, & Woodend Farm, Bircher Common respectively*]

Other Councillors present -

R.H. GEORGE [*lived at Byecroft, Welshman's Lane, Bircher Common, and was an auctioneer,*

J. BROOKS [*the blacksmith who, lived at Brook House, Bircher*]

Note – A Waywarden was appointed to look after the roads.

At the next meeting on 26th February 1895, the Treasurer resigned, and Mr. V.W. HOLMES of the National Provincial Bank of England, Leominster, was elected.

GEORGE W. THOMAS, a parish clerk from much more recent times, has annotated the early meeting with information about those people who were mentioned in the Minutes, and where they lived.

Other parishioners present at the first meeting included:

J.B. SMITH [lived Stone House, Bircher Common], J. CROSS [Bircher Common], T. CRUMP [painter, Bircher Common], JAMES JONES [of Brook House Farm, Yarpole], J. POUND [of Highwood Farm], T. PUGH [of Gatehouse Farm, Bircher], W. ROLLING [of Bircher Common], R. WILKINSON [of Yarpole, estate carpenter at Croft Castle], Messrs. B. SMALL & W. SMITH.

The early meetings covered a number of administrative details. These included: the agreement to pay the Assistant Overseer 5/- per meeting as Clerk; and that the Rate would be set at 1^d in the £, to cover the costs of the election & general expenses.

The two issues that exercised the early councillors the most were: the diversion of a footpath across Ladymeadow Farm to the Orleton-to-Luston road (known as Ladymeadow Turnpike); and the fencing of the quarries on Bircher Common, which involved writing to the Lord of the Manor twice (1895/6), to get him to complete it by 1st April 1896.

The Minutes were recorded in a Minute Book. This book also contained detailed instructions for the conduct & dates of the first meetings of any new Parish Council. It was supplied for the purpose by:

*"Hadden, Best & Co., Printers and Publishers of the BOOKS and FORMS of ACCOUNT prescribed by the Local Government Board.
Account Books of every description made to order
West Harding Street, Fetter Lane, London E.C."*