

Contents

Chairman's Introduction
The Altar Frontals of St. Mary's Church
The Staple Shaft Accident - Alveley Colliery
Grove House
Memories of the Home Guard
The Nicholls Family of Alveley
Memories of Alveley
Holidays in Alveley
The Red Lion Inn, a brief history
The Alveley Tunnels
Mr Bill Molyneux
More Evacuees to Alveley
Thomas Whiting of Turley Green, Alveley
Memories....Mavis Harris (Surrell)
The First Parish Councillors for Alveley
Alveley 1882
The Bell Inn

Chairman's Introduction

As the Society Chairman this year it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this years Transactions. This year's articles include: "A holiday in Alveley", "A history of the Red Lion", two articles on the Mining industry, The Nicholls Family History, "The Home Guard" and the first of a series of extracts from the Parish Register. I hope that you will find them all interesting and enjoyable, and would welcome your views on the content of our publications, perhaps to be printed in next years Transactions along with other "Letters to the Editor".

The society continues to go from strength to strength with a membership approaching 60 and over 150 copies of our Transactions sold last year.

In April the Society organised the Village Quiz, our reward for being last years winners! My sincere thanks to everyone who helped to organize an excellent evening, which was enjoyed by everyone present, and congratulations to the Tennis Club, who will be next year's organisers. During the summer we have been for a guided tour of the fisheries in the grounds of Poole Hall, a most interesting and informative evening for which I would like to thank Sid Matthews. We attended a Saxon Weekend at the Severn Valley Country Park in June, and at the same location in September we helped to organise the "Miners Memories" reunion day. This was as lively and enjoyable as ever and people were heard to say "see you next year" as they were ushered out at closing time. Also in September Bill and Penny Sheridan arranged for John Evans to give us a talk and to display items that he had found with his metal detector in and around Alveley. In addition to Roman coins found in the Parish we were allowed to examine other interesting items found further afield. In October Keith Beddowes gave an excellent presentation on the history of the Nautical William on our behalf to members of the Ladies Guild.

As you can see this has been a busy year in which members have been actively involved with the Village and local community groups as well as preparing items for publication. 1999 promises to be an even busier year with so many special events being planned as we lead into the new millennium. High on our list is the long awaited book of photographs. It was hoped to publish this book this year, but with the high initial cost of printing it has had to be delayed until 1999. With our limited resources there will be a print run of only 300 copies, which are expected to be available at a little over £10 each. If you are intending to purchase a copy our Treasurer, (Tim White 01746-781182) would be pleased to accept advance orders with a £10 deposit. This will guarantee your copy, and will help the Society overcome the temporary cashflow problem that a publication of this size and quality could cause.

As I mentioned at the start of this introduction this years Transactions contains a wide variety of articles by members and preparation of next years Transactions will start in February 1999. We would welcome any articles for publication however long or short on any subject connected with the Parish, or even your letters to the editor. Our deadline for the Transactions is the end of September and we look forward to receiving as wide a range of articles as possible for inclusion in this last edition of the 20th century

Finally I must thank all the members of the committee for their hard work this year and everyone who has supported us, including of course yourselves for purchasing this, our latest Transactions.

Keith Stanton
Chairman.

The Altar Frontals of St. Mary's Church

Within the church are two historic altar frontals, the first and original being made in circa 1470, the second and copy of the original made in the late 1870's.

Perhaps the most important treasure of the church, the 15th Century frontal, was discovered in an old chest in circa 1865. It was later exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries and a report appeared (copied below) in the proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in 1880. Drawings of the cloth appeared in a book "Some Drawings of Ancient Embroidery" dated 1880, London. The second altar frontal was made by Sister Agnes of Wantage and is also a beautiful piece of work, based on the original design.

A few months ago, two of our members, Bill Pryce and Thelma Maderni, brought to the attention of our Society and the PCC, the condition of the two frontals. A report was commissioned on a description and the proposed conservation treatment for the 15th Century masterpiece (part copied below).

It was also evident that after 100 years, the replica is in need of urgent repairs and, with this in mind, the PCC has set up a working party in order to raise funds for the restoration project of both cloths.

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, 1880, reads as follows:

"The Rev Benjamin Webb, FSA, communicated the following account of an Antependium or Altar Frontal, which was exhibited by Sister Agnes of Wantage:-

This ancient altar-frontal, or antependium, was found some years ago by the rector at the bottom of the parish chest in the church of St Mary, Alverly (sic), near Bridgnorth in Shropshire. It is remarkable as being undoubtedly an original altar-cloth, and not (as often is the case) an old chasuble or cope cut down to form a frontal.

This antependium in its present state measures 8 feet 10 1/2 inches in length and 3 feet in height; but as one stripe, a red one, is missing from one end, the original length must have been not less than 9 feet 9 inches. This length, unless the chancel is unusually broad, seems excessive, even for the high altar of a parish church. The design of the frontal is not a common one. It is made up of thirteen vertical stripes of silk, red and white alternately, each stripe being 9 inches broad. The central stripe is red, and the frontal would be described as a red one, red being, as is well known, the most common ecclesiastical colour in the Sarum sequence. The red and the white silks are damasks of the same pattern, a crowned pomegranate. The colour of the red has almost disappeared with age.

Upon this frontal, thus composed, have been worked in gold and coloured silks, on a regular system, some of the flowers with long spangled tendrils commonly used in the ecclesiastical embroidery of the fifteenth century. Excluding for the present the three middle stripes, it will be seen that each red stripe bears a fleur-de-lys above two pomegranates, all disposed vertically. But the intervening white stripes have only two flowers (the lower series being somewhat larger in scale), a lily below and a pomegranate above. The three middle stripes, a red between two white ones, are treated differently as forming a centre to the design. This circumstance is an argument, of course, that the original purpose of the hanging was to serve as an altar frontal. In the middle of the middle stripe, the exact centre of the whole composition, is a small embroidered standing figure, cleverly designed and unusually well executed, of a royal personage, crowned and nimbed, clothed in a long vesture of cloth of gold with an outer cope lined with ermine, and having an ermine tippet. The two arms are extended, throwing the cope open, and they hold the ends of a kind of linen cloth in which are seen three small nude half-figures with hands uplifted in prayer. There can be no doubt that this is a representation of 'Abraham's bosom'.

It appears also, from a statement in Haine's Manual of Monumental Brasses (p. vi.) to which my attention has been called by our Director, Mr Franks, that such representations 'occur over all the figures of the large canopied foreign brasses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.' One example from the palimpsest brass at Mawgan, Cornwall, is figured in Haines, p. xvi. Below this remarkable figure of Abraham, and on each of the adjacent white stripes, is an embroidered cherub, standing on a wheel with expanded wings holding a label charged with the legend 'Da gloriam Deo.' These cherubic figures are as ugly as they usually are in old embroidery, and I may add as badly worked. Above the central figures of Abraham and the cherubims are some pomegranates and fleur-de-lys, two of the latter being worked over the original seams joining the stripes, showing that the first design has not been tampered with.

There are some traces of a fringe or lace having been, at some time or other, sewn on under the topmost range of flowers, as if to give the appearance of a superfrontal. This was probably not an uncommon arrangement. In the treasury of the church of St Ursula at Cologne, there is shown a late mediaeval antependium which may be compared with the one before us. It is embroidered with flowers, but not striped; and it has no centre-piece. But a fringe, giving at a distance the appearance of a

superfrontal, runs along its whole length just where the fringe of a separate superfrontal would have hung. The famous picture of the Adoration of the Apocalyptic Lamb, by the brother Van Eyck, in the cathedral of Ghent, shows an altar properly vested with a separate fringed superfrontal and stoles.

This frontal has been exactly copied by Sister Agnes of Wantage, one of the most skilled embroiderers of our day, for present use in Alverly (sic) church. The original, which I am enabled by Sister Agnes's courtesy to exhibit to the Society this evening, will be carefully preserved under glass in the chantry of the restored church, belonging now to the Wakeman family. The loops have been added for the purpose of suspending it without risk from folding. I understand that a drawing of the antependium, made to scale, will appear very shortly in Mr Butterfield's Edition of an illustrated work on ancient embroidery, of which most of the materials were collected before her death by the late Mrs Barber."

The following is an extract from "Report on a late 15th Century altar frontal examined at the Church of St Mary, Alveley, on Tuesday 13th January 1998":

"Description

An altar frontal measuring approximately 116" (2970mm) wide by 35 1/2" (909mm) deep. The frontal is formed from twelve strips of silk damask fabric, seamed vertically, alternative pale rust and cream, starting at the left side with a pale rust strip. The frontal is decorated with fleurs de lys and two types of conventional flowers. In the middle of the frontal the figure of Abraham holds up a cloth containing three souls while to either side and below him stands an angel on a wheel holding a scroll that bears the words "Da Gloriam Deo". The flowers and figures have been worked in polychrome silk and gold- and silver-wrapped threads on a base of plain weave undyed linen and have been applied to the frontal. They are surrounded with tendrils worked in silk and gold-wrapped threads, twisted together and couched in place direct on to the frontal; the tendrils are embellished with small stamped metal spangles. The frontal is hand stitched throughout. The right edge, most of the lower edge and part of the upper edge are trimmed with a silk braid striped with pastel colours in the warp direction. The frontal is lined with plain weave blue-dyed linen fabric.

It seems likely that a thirteenth silk damask panel is missing from the right edge of the frontal. A line of stitch holes running across the width of the frontal below the top row of motifs may be evidence of a lost length of fringe, which would have given the impression of a frontal and frontlet. The margin of blue linen lining that protrudes at the lower edge of the frontal may once have been concealed by fringe.

The frontal is displayed in a glazed wood case attached to the north wall of the north aisle. The back board of the case seems to be made from wooden slats, the gaps being covered by some sort of tape. The back board is covered with blue plain weave ?linen (sic) fabric, held in place with drawing pins. The frontal hangs in the case from a metal rod that passes through thirteen tabs of blue and white patterned tape sewn along the upper edge of the frontal.

Condition

The frontal is generally in fair condition. The fabrics and embroidery threads are faded. The damask fabric is spotted with small stains and is holed in places. The largest holes have been patched. Repairs to the holes and to other tears and loose threads have been worked through both the damask and the lining fabrics, causing the silk fabric to pucker. Portions of several of the flower motifs and the whole of the upper left corner fleur de lys are missing. The embroidery on the remaining motifs is generally in fair condition, with only isolated threads coming adrift. Some of the spangles are missing, some of those remaining are loose. The hanging tabs along the upper edge do not provide adequate overall support; the frontal sags between the tabs. The lining has been patched in places. There is no evidence of mould growth but the frontal is soiled overall, especially on the lining."

The Staple Shaft Accident - Alveley Colliery

David Poyner

Alveley Colliery was a relatively safe mine in which to work. However, fatal accidents, although rare, were unfortunately not unknown. The worst incident in the history of the mine came in November 1962, when two men were killed in a shaft sinking accident, and memories of this remain fresh.

To understand the background to the accident, it is necessary briefly to review the history of mining at Alveley. The shaft at Alveley was sunk in 1935/6 and the mine came into full production in 1940. However, it was connected underground with the old Highley workings and the shafts at Highley were maintained to allow emergency exit from the mine and also for ventilation. Air went down the Alveley shaft, around the workings, and out of the Highley shafts.

The Alveley workings were, apparently, limited to the east by the Romsley Fault; an ancient slip which had thrown the strata up by many yards. In the mid 1950's the National Coal Board (NCB) examined this area by a series of bore holes and discovered coal reserves under 2 1/2 square miles; enough to last the pit almost to the end of the century. As can be seen in the

illustrations, the coal at Alveley slips to the east. The Alveley shaft had originally been sunk 356 yards to hit the Brooch coal and then the workings became progressively deeper as the seam was followed under Alveley village. When the plans were laid for the New Development to reach the coal east of the Romsley Fault, it was decided that a horizontal road should be driven from Alveley shaft to intersect the Brooch seam beyond the fault. However, such was the effect of the dip of the seam, that to achieve this, Alveley shaft had to be deepened to 377 yards. The new road driven horizontally first panned below, then through, the old workings and ended up nearly 300 feet above them by the time the fault was reached. At this point, it was more or less level with the seam on the far side of the fault.

Although the new road simplified haulage arrangements and access to the new workings, a way had to be found to ensure adequate ventilation. The air current came down Alveley shaft, along the new road and out to the new workings. To allow it to return, a parallel road was constructed back through the fault (the return airway). This, in turn, was connected with the old Alveley workings by a vertical shaft - the Staple Shaft. From, there, the air could travel all the way back to Highley where a fan drew it out. The term 'Staple Shaft' is applied to any shaft wholly enclosed within a mine and it was, literally, a pit within a pit. It had its own winding gear, allowing men to descend between the two levels if a connection should ever be necessary in an emergency.

The construction of the Staple Shaft was entrusted to outside contractors; the Cementation Company. The plan was to bore a hole some 32 inches in diameter upwards from the old workings for the 280 feet necessary to intersect the level of the planned return airway. Rubble from the sinking was to be thrown down this and taken away by trucks at the bottom. Unfortunately, not enough stabilisers were used on the drilling rig and the hole went badly off course (by 20 feet according to one ex-miner). The overman in charge of the new development gave orders for it to be filled with stone and packed. Work started from the top with three men cutting their way down through the strata to excavate the 14 feet diameter shaft. Disaster struck one night in mid-November when they intercepted the course of the errant bore hole, just 30 feet down. The packing gave way and Walter Robb (36) and Colin Prime (30) fell down the hole. It seems that safety harnesses were not being worn. The third man managed to pull himself clear.

Immediately, the mine rescue team, led by Ben Crowther, was called into action. Crowther was an inspirational leader who was to be awarded the BEM for his services to Mine Rescue; unfortunately, it was obvious that all he and his team could do on this occasion, was to recover the bodies. The depressing task took many hours, emptying the bore hole from the bottom. The dead men would have been killed instantly by their falls.

The year 1962 was a particularly bad one for Alveley; earlier, 'Jock' Holliday from Bridgnorth, had been killed by a roof fall. Only one other accident in the mines of the Wyre Forest coalfield this century claimed more than one life - in 1930, at Highley, when two men died in a roof fall. In fact, I have not been able to discover any accidents in the entire history of the coalfield which claimed more than two lives.

Work was resumed on the Staple Shaft and it was quickly completed, fulfilling its task. The final irony was that, far from the mine enjoying 50 years of life, changing patterns of fuel and energy use meant that it was to close after barely six more years.

References:

- Abandonment Plan, Alveley Colliery, 1969.
- NCB Colliery Profile, Highley Colliery (no date)
- Bridgnorth Journal, 16th November 1962.
- Information ex Mr Harry Bache and the late Mr Ben Crowther, BEM.

Note:

The diameter of the Staple Shaft is variously described as 14 or 15 feet, its depth as 80 to 100 yards, and the diameter of the borehole as 20 or 32 inches. I have taken figures from the Bridgnorth Journal report of the accident. Readers can decide for themselves the reliability of this source.

Grove House

The following is a brief history of Grove House as researched by Margaret Sheridan:

Grove House was situated on the roadside opposite The Three Horseshoes, often referred to as "22 Alveley" or "The Vicarage". It was built several centuries ago of Alveley stone in Queen Anne style.

During the late 1800's it was the residence of the village priest. According to documents of 1871, Reverend Augustus W.Considence and his wife, Mary, lived at the house with their two servants, Eliza Carey (Housemaid) and Mary Verner (Cook). Records of 1891 show Reverend H.M.Wickham (aged 37) and his mother, Emma (aged 75), lived at Grove House with his sister Sarah (39). Their servants were Mary Hay (Cook) and Fanny Hay (Housemaid). It continued to be a vicarage until about 1903 (when a new one was built near the Quarry).

During the 1920's, Emma Cresswell (born in Alveley in 1857) lived at the house - she died there in March 1928. Her daughter, Katherine, continued to live there until about 1933.

On October 9th 1933, Grove House was auctioned at an Auction of Alveley Properties held at the Squirrel Hotel. The auctioneer was G.Herbert Banks of Kidderminster. The house was auctioned in aid of the John Grove Pension Trust and described as "a well commodious house in the Queen Anne style, erected in stone with a slate roof and containing:: Entrance Hall; Dining Room with hob grate; Drawing Room with open grate, oak cupboard and bookshelves; Kitchen with range and fixture cupboards; Back Kitchen with sink, furnace and baking ovens; Larder with shelving. First Floor Landing: 3 Bedrooms with WC. Second Floor: 2 Bedrooms. Good dry Cellar in Basement. Outbuildings included a garage with roadside entrance; Domestic Yard with Coal House Store with Workshop. Electric Light and Water laid on; soft water supply for large tank with force pump for Lavatory. Two Pleasure Lawns with Summerhouse - Gardens with fruit trees. The property was sold to Mr T.Webster for £400.

During the late 1930's, George Thomas France and his wife, Mary Grace, and their children lived at the house. Alveley Church records show Winifred Mary France, aged 25, of Grove House, married George Jenner Gittin (Labourer) at Alveley Church on December 5th 1938. Documents of 1945 show that George Edward France and Bertram and Robert were in the Forces. The France family continued to live there until Autumn 1967, when it was demolished.

In place of Grove House was built 1, 3 and 5, Daddlebrook Road (much of the original stone was used to construct the exteriors of the properties).

Stan Scriven - Memories of the Home Guard

In November last year, the Society lost one of its most avid supporters, Stan Scriven of Peacock Hill.

I remember spending many hours talking with Stan about the 'old days'; Stan gave and lent many old photographs and newspaper cuttings to the Society and I don't think he ever missed any of our photographic displays and exhibitions. At last September's 'open day', Stan spent all afternoon educating us on the names of people on our photographs.

Stan, of course, spent much of his working life at the pit. He joined the Home Guard in the early years of the war and had many a story to tell about those days. Last year, I recorded a brief interview with Stan about his memories of the Home Guard and, with the permission of his wife, Olive, the first part of the interview on 29th May 1997 is transcribed below:

Tim What was it called - the Home Guard?

Stan Yes.

Tim Was that the proper name?

Stan Yes, it was LDV to start off with; the Local Defence Volunteers.

Tim When did you join, Stan?

Stan 1940, when they first started.

Tim What platoon were you in.

Stan Ours was 'F' Platoon, 'F' Company. We were the fifth platoon of 'F' Company. This was the Highley mob; there were four over Highley side and us this side.

Tim Who was your Commanding Officer when you started?

Stan The main one?

Tim Yes.

Stan It was Major Smith from Highley. He was the schoolmaster; yes, he was the Headmaster at Highley School - he taught the wife.

Tim Did he come out with you, or was there a Lieutenant or somebody in charge?

Stan No, we had our first officer, Sid Sorrell - well, he was a Miner, but he had served as a regular in the Army before the war - so he had a good idea of military; anything to do with military. I mean, arms drill and everything - he taught us all that.

Tim How long were you in it, altogether? What was it, five years?

Stan Four years.

Tim And they were all Miners, were they, in your Platoon?

Stan Yes. The biggest part of them, the majority were miners. Sid Sorrell was Senior Sergeant to start with, and then he was promoted to Second Lieutenant, so he was our Second Lieutenant. Our Officer was Captain Downing and he lived the other side of Hampton Loade somewhere. He was a good Officer, he used to come over most weeks, one night a week, to inspect us, to see what we were being taught and everything.

Tim Where were you based?

Stan Well, when we first started, we had the Parish Hall (the Village Hall), but we had our Headquarters down at the pit. We had an old electrical, well it was the electrician's hat, and it was just above where Digwoods is now, our

old lamp room, and we had bunk beds and everything in there. We had a big combustion stove in there as well. Well, we used to go on our manoeuvres, we used to operate from there. You'd do two hours on duty and two hours off, when we were on all night. When we were there, there used to be two on guard every night down at the pit. There used to be two of us and I got picked on more times than anybody.

Tim You're talking about this side of the river - all in Alveley?

Stan *Yes, we used to patrol from the pit down to the bridge, and when we first started off we had arm bands and we had a truncheon (it was like an electric cable with about three cables inside it). We hadn't got any rifles or anything and we used to go down to the pit and most of us had never handled a gun before.*

We had some 2.2 rifles and we used to practice; they made us some targets down there so that we could practice on. Then we used to have five goes, five shots each and I can always remember when I started, I'd never fired a gun before, and I was firing this 2.2 gun; this 2.2 sort of rifle which wasn't much more powerful than an air gun now, and they couldn't make out why I wasn't hitting the target. Their Officer said "I can't understand it", and I said "Well, I'm looking through the sights". They found out I was looking through the wrong eye - I was closing the wrong eye. Well, I mean, it was alien to us because I'd never even fired a gun.

Tim How many of you were in the Platoon, altogether?

Stan *I think it was about 20, 24.*

Tim Did you go straight from the pit at night, to the Home Guard?

Stan *No, if we were on shift, well naturally somebody else, if we were on nights, had to go to do the watch. Well, there was always two of us on and they supplied us with two Lee Enfield rifles which were the top rifles of the army at that time. We had two rifles and bayonets; they were the short bayonet if I remember right. They were a modern gun - they were the most modern gun the British Army had at that time. Whoever was allocated to go on duty had the guns. They were kept with just five rounds of ammunition in the mag and you weren't allowed to push that into the breech because you put your safety catch on and you couldn't push that up until your safety catch was off and push your bolt on.*

After a time, they gave us all denim suits and, of course, they weren't very good fitting suits; they were a bit baggy.

Tim What were they - uniforms?

Stan *Yes, they were uniforms, but they were denims. They had the tunic and the trousers with the pockets, and we had capes - proper khaki capes at first. Then, eventually we had the regular army uniform after.*

Tim Did everybody end up with a rifle?

Stan *Oh yes, we were all allocated a Canadian rifle - crikey me, they were about 7ft long!*

Tim Did you go out on manoeuvres often?

Stan *Oh yes, when we were on duty at the pit, we were on three hours in the summer and five hours in the winter. Well, we were up and down from the pit to the bridge and everybody had to be stopped and recognised, and if their raid siren went, we used to have to see that everybody put their lights off, you know.*

The Nicholls Family of Alveley - Matthew Nicholls

The earliest known descendant was James Nicholls of Wolverhampton who married Mary Jordan on 30th June 1728 at Alveley. Little is known about this man, but he did have a number of children who were to become more prominent in the village. James's son, William Nicholls, who was baptised in November 1767, was a mason. He married Elizabeth Ayres and they had three children, before she died in 1812. His second marriage was to Mary Poulter.

As a mason, William was given the task of demolishing and rebuilding, in 1799, the old school at Alveley. This he completed, from start to finish, within six weeks. One of his sons, William, the first son by his marriage to Elizabeth, was also a mason and lived at Allum Bridge with his wife, Anne Turner. This William remained in the locality until he died in 1851.

Descendants from the marriage of William Nicholls and Mary Poulter included Thomas Nicholls, my great-great-grandfather, who married Esther Thatcher (nee Lawley). Thomas was a labourer and lived at 'The Finger' where his son, Henry, was born in July 1875. Henry, or 'Harry' as he was more commonly known, worked the majority of his adult life as Head Waggoner at Bow Hills Farm.

Alfred Nicholls, my grandfather, had a twin brother, Fred, who later lived at Shatterford. The family was quite large, with seven brothers and five sisters. Alf married Catherine Banks. Her father was Alfred Banks, who originally came from Aston Eyre, Morville, and later resided at Stockhall Cottage, Romsley, working as a stonemason.

Alfred started his own removal business in 1946, carrying goods to market. By 1950 he had gained a removal licence and began furniture removals under his own business of A.J.Nicholls and Son, a business he continued to run until his retirement. Although some of the Nicholls family moved out of the area, Harry's son, Robert, still lives in the village.

Memories of Alveley

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From a letter by Agnes Gould

Mr J T Gatliff was vicar when I was there. Mr Legge was schoolmaster, he died there in the fall of 1905. His sister was headmistress for a time, followed of course by Miss Smith. Mr W Roebuck was the next schoolmaster (after a short time when Mr T Tinner filled in temporarily). Mr Roebuck introduced the keeping of May Day. Mr Shepherd followed after I left. Stella [Ritchie] knows the Davies family, now farmers, [descendants of Mr Davies] who was headmaster before Mr Legge.

There were many really good class people in my young days (quite a few were farmers). Colonel Wolseley lived at the large house nearly opposite to where Harold [Jennings] lives. Mr W Cross from up Astley Bank was warden for over 50 years, very tall and important looking.

Mr Thomas Warder lived at The Hay Farm down by the river (Stella says they built a new house at The Barns); he had 3 girls, his wife had religious mania. Richard Warder lived at Moorhouse Farm - no family. Someone told me Cecil Warder from Church Farm (son) went up Cheshire way, so you see that family died out of Alveley.

Mr Will Webb of the Hadleys Farm owned the quarry. A new pulpit made of Alveley stone was made when I was young, also either at the end of the last century or very early in this one the vicarage was built of it. The old vicarage was a large house (only demolished a few years ago) right at the top of Daddlebrook bank opposite the Three Horseshoes. This, I think, Mr Gatliff objected to.

Miss Riddle came to Alveley with a vicar and stayed on when he left. Short and stout she reminded me of Queen Victoria; she kept an eye on the children in church for any slight misdemeanour, especially during the sermon which was usually half an hour and quite above our heads. I used to memorise hymns especially any new ones. She helped in other ways too.

Mr & Mrs Brooks kept a shop, he, besides just being a cobbler, made shoes; he made my mother's. They had 2 sons. Mrs Lewis had a typical village sweet shop; a very nice old lady who also had 2 sons. These were quite a good class of people. Mrs Scriven also had 2 sons. All the sons of these 3 families went away to business, there was nothing in the way of business for them in Alveley. So you see there were no descendants left there either. Mrs Scriven was tall and straight, her back like a ramrod, and was always called "The Queen". She used to make small bouquets with a lace paper doily and the bouquet in the centre with the lacy part up round it. You may have seen something like it on an old fashioned valentine. She was always outside the church door with at a wedding to sell them to the bridal party. One of her sons and another man in the village went to the Boer War. Both returned and were presented with marble clocks, by the villagers I expect. There was a queer character (what village hasn't one ?) who used to blow for the organ before they had electricity installed, which was long after my days. I don't know much after I went from Coton at the age of 15.

The Hayward family at the Hill House farm near Hampton Load was another rather superior family and I have seen their home mentioned in some book I read about Shropshire. Two men and two girls none of whom married; after their deaths since this past war the house was left empty and was burned out by boys.

The Elcocks family, one of them, William, lived in the Red House. They were trying to trace their relationship to people of the same name mentioned on a stone plaque in the church wall just round the corner from the porch door and facing the farm. I think it dates back to 16 hundred something. Now these Elcocks all left Alveley and are now dead, so after all those years I think the name must be extinct there now.

I did tell you about Col. Wakeman's relation (possibly his brother) who wrote the best history of the Church of England ever written. He died at the end of the last century and is buried in Alveley Churchyard.

The Monks were a very nice family who built a nice new house in the village. The girls taught painting, the piano and, I think, singing. I don't know what happened to them.

[Part of a letter from Agnes Gould to Dorothy Yardley]

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Biographical note :

Agnes Gould (nee Hemmings) was the daughter of William Hemmings, keeper of The Bell Inn in Alveley, and Mary Jane Tolley. Her father died when she was young and she was raised by her Aunt, Pheobe Elizabeth Jennings (nee Tolley), at Coton Farm. When a young woman she emigrated to Canada to join three of her sisters, there she married William Gould, an Englishman who originated from the west-country. Their only son Gordon, born in Toronto, became a doctor and returned to England. Agnes returned to Shropshire later in life living in Bridgnorth for many years. Towards the end she moved to Southend to be near Gordon and died there in 1996 at the age of 103.

John Jenning

Holidays in Alveley

The Bridgnorth area has always proved popular for people from the Black Country and Birmingham to take their holidays, Alveley has also had its fair share of holiday makers, the following three letters are the result of a letter to the Birmingham Evening Mail requesting memories from its readers of holidays spent in the Alveley area...

Mr J A Toon,
Erdington
Birmingham.

Dear Sir,

I have read your letter about memories of Alveley Village and thought I must write to you. I've told my children and grandchildren about our August holiday weeks before the war. Me and my mates, Bert Swann, Albert Hall, Teddy Murphy, Joe Driver, Charlie Surplice, my brother Douglas, would catch the train to Arley station for our week camping holiday. We camped on a farm just walking distance from the Nautical William. We loved the village, I often wonder what its like today. We would go the village pub and drink cider, they had a piano at the pub and Joey Driver was a good piano player. We would drink and sing and be merry.

The end of the night we would go back to camp and sing round the camp fires for Joey Driver always took his accordion, he played that well. One favourite song was "South of the border, down Mexico way". We used to visit the slaughterhouse for our maggots for fishing in the Severn, sometimes we would go to the Lido or the Nautical or the other pubs. We would leave our camping gear in store till the next year at the farm. I think we went about four years running then the War started, we all split up, went into the forces and that was the end of our happy Alveley days.

Yours Sincerely
J A Toon.

Mrs E Baker

Rawnsley
Cannock

Dear Mr White,

Years ago my mother and father had a bungalow in the orchard of Jo Knowles Snr. We, my brother and twin sister, were quite small when we first came to camp at Alveley. We either came by bus from Bearwood where we lived, then to Kidderminster and then the 2.00 pm bus from Kiddy to Alveley or by train. We spent many happy years down by the river. My sister and I at the age of 13 actually swam across the river by the pit bridge.

My parents were good friends of Jo Knowles and his wife also Bett Turford and Bill, their daughter and her husband, they had two boys Alan and Roger.

During the last war we were evacuated to Alveley to live with the Knowles in their house by the river, Jo Knowles had a horse and cart with which he used to deliver the coal allocation from the pit to the village miners houses. We went to Alveley school down Daddlebrooke. It was a terrible Winter while we were there. My mother bought us all some hob nailed boots so that they would last. They were good for sliding in the frost. We used to go with Bett to fetch groceries from a shop opposite the Squirrel pub, on Mondays Bett and her mom made bread for the week, and some of the dough was boiled and called barmy dumplings, we used to have to go home on monday luch time to have these barmy dumplings for our dinner with black treacle on. It was filling but then we had to go back up the meadows, back to school.

As young as we were, we were asked to help children at the school with their sums. At home we had been on £.s.d., they were only on H.T.U. The older ones at school used to lay traps on the school grounds to catch moles, poor little things. Yes they did catch some for their pelts.

Bill Turford used to be in the Home Guard and he had the job of guarding the pit bridge across the river. My father used to come to see us on Sunday. He caught the fishermans train, there and back home. We didnt like seeing him go home because it would be another week until we saw him again.

There was a farm up the lane from us which belonged to Jones, we used to fetch milk from there. They had two sons Percy and George, it was a big farm, they also had a daughter named Cybil. In the village were two or three shops and one pub, the Three Horse Shoes. The one grocery shop belonged to a Mrs Webb and her son and daughter used to help in it, also the one butcher, Jimmy Beddows, we used to watch him make the sausage and then make it nto links.

We actually stayed as evacuees about twelve months, but our bungalow was there with others about ten years, when it was sold to some other people, then the pit took over the ground for the rubbish from the pit and its all just a mound now. I have recently been on the Severn Valley Railway and it brought back a lot of memories.

I hope I have been of some use to you, its been good to write about Alveley again.

Yours faithfully
Mrs Eillen Baker (nee Giles).

.....
Mr R Hill,
Shard End
Birmingham

Dear Sir,

In reply to your recent letter in the Birmingham Evening Mail I am writing to say my wife and I have fond memories of Alveley. I was a comparative newcomer -1950s- but my wifes memories go back to 1936 due to local family connections.

Her mother Minnie (1896 - 1964) was born in a Lowe Lane cottage to the wife of John (Jack) Knowles who was a road sweeper. After leaving school she became a domestic servant in Birmingham where later she met and married James (Jim) Dossett a businessman in Aston, the union blessed with six daughters.

In 1936 farmer Jones allowed Jim and Minnie to build a weekend wooden bungalow in the corner of one of his fields off Ferry Lane. They named it "The Nest" and due to an expanding family it got bigger over the years. In 1954 they retired from business and lived permanently there until old age and illness forced them back to Aston.

Five of the daughters married Brummies, the youngest, Pat, married Colin Davies (a Highley lad) in Alveley village church, Colin worked at the pit. My wife and I used to visit "The Nest" quite often on an old two stroke motor bike spending happy weekends and longer holidays and a family crowd of us would occasionally socialise in the "Squirrel" or the club enjoying a few jars.

Milk and eggs were brought at the farm and fresh water was carried in buckets from Percy Jones "Springpiece" field. My mother in law slipped on a cow pat one day and broke a leg and spent a few days in Kidderminster hospital.

Jim Dossett eventually sold the bungalow for demolition to a young chap called Jack who drove a bulldozer on the pit bank. This was around 1963 I guess, when excavated spoil from the pit was causing massive earth movements, effectively wrecking several holiday chalets further down the lane. We visited the site of the old place a few years later and found the track off Ferry Lane overgrown with brambles and almost impassable, very sad. Sometimes best not to revisit places you loved, better by far to get out all the old photographs to remind you of the happy days.

Jim and Minnie Dossett are still there in spirit, we are certain, because years ago we scattered their cremated ashes, as requested, along the hedgerows where honeysuckle thrives.

In a further letter Mr Hill continues.....

As promised please find enclosed photos which I hope will be of interest. The picture of the bungalow taken about 1940 shows a family group with Jim and Minnie Dossett. The bungalow was larger inside than it looks, four bedrooms, living/dining room, kitchen and washroom plus out buildings (storage sheds, workshed and garage). The dining table was one that converted into a snooker table and a means of enjoyment in wet weather.

We picked mushrooms in Percys adjacent field in season, huge things like dinner plates. Minnie like most country folk was dab hand with home made wine, fruit juice (plums, damsons, whatever, from the Jones farm) started into fermentation by floating fresh yeast on a piece of toast on top of the brew. She taught me wine making although I rapidly discovered more hygienic methods. It seems I had an artistic talent because I still make a modest forty odd gallons of plonk all these years on.

The second photograph shows my wife Joan outside "The Nest" in the 1960s. I hope the above information is of interest to your readers.

Best wishes
Ray and Joan Hill.

The final letter printed below was received from Joan Hills sister, and brother in law, Pat and Colin Davies.

Mrs. P Davies
Kempsey
Worcester.

Dear Mr White,

Your book (1995 Transactions) did stir a few memories. My husband and I both remember the Post Office in the bungalow at Hall Close and the post box. I myself recall the smell of confectionery as you walked in, to a child a lovely sweet sickly smell. Is the Gwen Williams that lives there the one whose father worked at Beddows the butchers?

There was a small quarry at Hall Close, I used to wonder how they got those round stones for the entrances to the cow sheds and everything in the farmyard, walls, steps, paths and pigsties were built of stone, of course the quarry was overgrown with brambles by then so we would not know if the stone came from there, but it was an ideal place to pick your blackberries.

There was also another village store run by an elderly lady and later by two retired nursing sisters from Kidderminster General, Miss Evans and Miss Wilmot that would be in the early sixties, it was next door to Mr and Mrs Bint who sold the

newspapers. The ice cream from Webbs now that was lovely, until I read your book I thought I had surmised some of these things.

My Great Uncle Knowles ran the ferry and they lived in a stone cottage. If you called on a day they were bread making you could not face the heat from the range, but fascinated to watch the dough being worked.

I can recall Walter Jones going by our bungalow on his horse and trap after he had milked his cows. My husband worked at Alveley Colliery for 15 years, we went to live in Highley in 1961. I would walk over to my parents at "The Nest" going via the pit to Alveley village, do shopping for them, walk to the bungalow then walk home again when my husbands shift was finished.

Hope you can make use of the above ramblings !

Yours Sincerely
Mrs P. Davies.

The Red Lion Inn, a brief history.

LICENCEES - Beerhouse / Homebrew.

c 1835 William Attwood
1838 John Head Snr
1891 John Head Jnr
1901 Samuel Haycox
1936 Jane Haycox
1938 James Edward Haycox
1946 Edward Richard Haycox
1967 Ethel May W Haycox
1981 Charles Andrew Rhodes
1982 Jonathon Mark H Booton
1.7.1985 Richard Steven Tweedie

On the 13th May 1834 William Attwood bought a 1/4 acre of land in the parish of Arley from Mrs Ann Gunn, a widow from Nordley. The field, bounded by the new Bridgnorth to Kidderminster turnpike road which was opened seven years earlier in 1827, was called Hooks Plock and cost William Attwood £30.

He was allowed to build one dwelling house only on the land, and this he did in 1835. The land was protected by a covenant and the penalty for building another house on the land was £20.

However, in the year of 1835 William Attwood took advantage of the Duke of Wellingtons Beer House Act, paid two guineas to the authorities and opened the Red Lion Beerhouse. The name, Red Lion, was the most popular of all beer house titles and was named after John of Gaunt.

The outhouse was converted into a simple brewery which was operated by a travelling brewer. The beer would no doubt have been mild, dark and strong. The strength was brewed into the beer to resist infection. Records show that the average specific gravity in Bridgnorth and Kidderminster was 1060, the second strongest in England.

Local mole catcher John Head (born 1815) was the first tenant paying a yearly rent of £10. John Head was the landlord for 53 years and after him his son ran the Red Lion for a further 18 years, after which it was managed by the Haycox family who ran the pub for a total of 72 years. Remarkably these two families ran the Red Lion for a total of 143 years.

However, back in 1838, William Attwood sold the Red Lion to William Steward, the owner of Lower Farm and it remained in his possession for some 40 years before he accepted an offer of £300 from Thomas Lester an established wine and spirit merchant from Dudley, in Worcestershire.

Lester sold the Red Lion after 13 years to Buckleys Kidderminster Brewery, Blackwell Street, Kidderminster, in 1891. Buckleys were absorbed into the Worcestershire Brewing Company formed in 1896. They were in turn acquired by Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries in 1913.

The Red Lion remained in the possession of Banks until 1982. In 1985 Richard and Pamela Tweedie bought the Red Lion with its rich history spanning over 155 years.

The Alveley Tunnels - more news

In our 1996 Transactions I gave some details of the "Alveley Tunnels", and asked the question, do they really exist ?

The following newspaper article was sent to me by one of our members from North Wales, and perhaps it goes some way to answering the above question.

The Birmingham Mail Thursday, January 9, 1947.

"Plea to Mr Shinwell to save Ancient Church, coal digging threat to foundations."

The fine old Saxon church at Alveley, near Bridgnorth, the foundations of which are threatened by an application from the

Coal Commission to extract coal from underneath, may be "reprieved" as a result of an appeal to Mr. Shinwell.

Strong protests, supported by the Bishop of Hereford (Dr Parsons), and from Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis, the noted architect and authority on the preservation of ancient monuments have been followed by a direct appeal to the Fuel Minister, who has promised to give the matter his consideration.

A bombshell descended on the little Shropshire village a month ago when the Coal Commission made its application. Compensation was offered should the building be damaged, and when the application was refused by the church council the Commission asked for £650 plus loss of profit.

Prime mover in the objection to the proposal is Mr. Howard Thompson, of Coton Hall, Bridgnorth, patron of the living, lord of the manor and peoples warden at the church. Mrs. Thompson told the "Mail"

"We are hoping we have won the day. The church is mentioned in the Domesday Book and we mean to fight for its preservation. Hundreds of pounds have lately been spent on it. Its foundations are already threatened by hidden passages, and the wall of the chancel, which is the property of my husband as lord of the manor, is leaning the wrong way. We think the church should be scheduled as an ancient monument, and we hope to have the Fuel Ministers reply when we hold a special vestry meeting in a few days time".

Mr Bill Molyneux

In October last year (1997), the village lost one of its oldest residents, William George Molyneux aged 86 years. Born in the village and educated at the local school Bill started his working life as an apprentice to a local wheelwright and carpenter, later on Bill helped with the construction of the colliery bridge in the late 1930s. During the second world war Bill helped to build Army camps in the district. Afterwards he left the building trade and went to work at the Alveley pit, moving later to work for CMC, Kidderminster, until his retirement in 1965. Bill was a keen musician and in his younger days played with the local dance bands. A lover of church music, Bill played the organ at the Methodist Church for 10 years and at St Marys Church for 43 years.

Bill and Molly married during the war, in 1941, and celebrated their golden wedding in 1991.

The Historical Society would like to thank Mrs Molyneux for the kind donation of a set of photographs, showing the colliery bridge in various tages of construction. The photographs (two of which are printed on the following page) make a welcome addition to the photographic history of our village.

Bills funeral service took place on October 20th at St Mary's Church.

More Evacuees to Alveley

In our 1996 Transactions we printed the memories of an evacuee to our village, Bill Poland from Liverpool. Since those memories were published Bill has become an active member of the society and has worked hard to try and contact other evacuees from the Liverpool area, after receiving the 1997 Transactions Bill writes.....

Dear Tim

Thank you for this years Transactions, yes I did find Dennis Evans contribution interesting, (very much so) especially as I knew him and many of the people he wrote about. I would like to add that I think Alwyn was right to persuade him to do it.

Although I especially liked the part of his life at Lady Pitt Farm, I really enjoyed the whole article; it was most descriptive.

Dennis, being in his early twenties when I arrived in Alveley, had little to do with youngsters, but I remember him quite well. His stories of life at Lady Pitt brought back many memories. I too, learned about fruit picking, poaching, pig feeding, etc, in my many visits there. The uncle he wrote of was probably Winnies husband, Jenner, who was quick to express his annoyance at some of my attempts to catch rabbits.

Dennis (and Alwyns) Mum was a wonderful lady; the first day I met her (which was the morning of the day of the declaration of war) I felt immediately at home with her, and I never forgot her kindness to me.

Lady Pitt Farm was a place of adventure for me. Dennis youngest brother, Geoff, was just a little older than I, and we "knocked around" together after school and at weekends. It was he who taught me to ride a bike, snare rabbits and adapt to country life.(I taught him to make a "steerie", but thats another story).

Winnie and I would go to Lady Pitt almost every Sunday for tea, and stay to listen to "Happidrome" on the radio before making our way home. I remember Mrs Evans opening her "best" room at Christmas time, when we would stand around the piano singing Christmas carols...lovely days.

Mrs Evans had, for a while, two young ladies, with babies, staying at Lady Pitt Farm.(They may have been relatives). At the same time, there was a hefty "cade" lamb that considered the farm yard to be its own private domain. No one was safe from its buffeting, least of all the two young ladies I have mentioned. Whenever they wanted to go to the outside "privy", they would

ask someone to check the farmyard. If Geoff, or I were asked to reconnoitre, we would usually say we couldn't see the lamb, true because we never looked, but mainly in the hope that the young ladies would "chance it" and get chased. The screaming and scampering of those two young ladies kept Geoff and I entertained for many days.

Best Wishes
Bill Poland

P.S. Would you like me to contact the Liverpool Echo and ask if there is anyone left here who would like to contact the A.H.S.?.....

The following two letters were received in response to that request.....

Mrs E Tinsley
Walton
Liverpool

Dear Mr White,

In answer to your request re evacuees, I was evacuated to Alveley, I stayed with Mr and Mrs Bache on their farm, I think it was called Moorcroft Farm (Moorhouse Farm), they had two daughters named Mavis and Marlene and we attended a small village school. I am now 70 years old, my name at that time was Edna Williams and attended Walton Lane School.

In a second letter Mrs Tinsley continues...

Dear Mr White,

Thank you for the information about Alveley, I have often thought about this over the years. I remember arriving in the village in September 1939 and being taken to the village hall, we were all carrying gas masks and a box containing a tin of corned beef, a bar of chocolate, soap and a few other bits and pieces. My sister and I along with another young girl were taken to a small cottage by an elderly lady, but a few days later we were moved to the farm, I remember one room was full of apples and pears which we later helped to pick from the orchards, we also helped with the swilling out of the pig styes and other farm duties.

Mr and Mrs Bache were very nice people, I remember my mother knitting cardigans for their daughters Mavis and Marlene and bringing them to the farm when she came to visit with some other parents. They had to cross the river on a wooden type of barge pulling themselves across by a rope over head.

The farm was away from the village but we were taken to and from the school by car, I think it belonged to a large house not very far from the farm, they had an evacuee named Dorothy Woodcock, I have never been back to the village, but I hope to next year. I remember Mr Pye and Miss Williams at school, we used to go on country walks and pick blackberries. There were two boys in our class who were twins, they used to play all kinds of tricks on the teachers until they found out that one had a tooth missing and that put an end to the tricks, they were David and Tommy Parry who also had a sister Ruby. I remember the music teacher and every time I hear the song "Where air you walk" I always think of Alveley because we sang that song every day in school. I

hope this will be of some use to you and your readers.

Yours Sincerely
Edna Tinsley nee Williams

Mr F. Bolt
Weston Super Mare
Somerset.

Dear Mr White,

I have been sent a cutting from the Liverpool Echo of 20th December in which you are asking for information about the evacuees who arrived in Alveley on 1st September 1939, from Walton Lane and Priory Road School, Liverpool. What I have in memory may be of some use to your Historical Society.

As a young teacher of 26, I was in my fourth year on the staff of Walton Lane school. When we returned to school after the summer holidays, the Priory Road school had just opened for the 11+ boys and girls in two departments for boys and girls separately, and Walton Lane school became a junior mixed, with separate infants dept. So we were almost at once organised into preparations for evacuation in the event of war, and the children were given instructions about clothing essentials to be got ready in rucksacks and cases.

Then came the labels and armbands (yellow and red) and the gas masks in their cardboard boxes, so all was ready for the 1st September. I suppose Poland had already been invaded by the time we assembled at school that morning and marched in a crocodile down to Sandhills Station. We were packed into a compartment type train, about ten to a carriage and started off. I can't recall much of the journey except that I fancy we stopped at Crewe and maybe some of the children went to the toilet (I cant imagine how they managed to hold it otherwise?)

Half of the school went onto Wem, but I was with the half which carried onto Bridgnorth, and we certainly used the toilets there, a set of camp style canvas loos we have seen so much of since. I imagine we must have come onto Alveley by bus, because we certainly didn't walk from the station at Hampton Loade which I used once or twice later on, however, we disembarked at the Alveley school hall, where the "Queen Bee" was said to be Neville Chamberlains sister, and handed out iron rations (corned beef, baked beans, sugar and a big slab of Cadburys chocolate).

The billeting officer was a "classy gent" who lived in a big house outside the village which had a fish (trout?) hatchery, and there was a big chap called Joe, who seemed to do all the running about. I think he wore an ARP armband. The children were all allocated, in families as far as possible, to homes around the village and even beyond, as I have cause to remember, for we had to recall some of them back into Alveley on the Sunday "the day war broke out". I heard Mr Chamberlains famous statement that we were at war with Germany in a kitchen at Coton, where two of our little girls had been taken.

Tearfully they came back to Alveley and were accommodated by two ladies in a cottage quite near to the school. I myself was lodged with Mr Len Benson, headmaster of Alveley school in his detached house in the Woodlands? I have forgotten his wife's name, but his 6 year old daughter was Shirley (named after the district outside Birmingham, now in Solihull, where they had families.) He later left Alveley and had a headship in Luton, but I lost touch with him during the war. There were three classrooms in the school, for the infants, juniors, seniors, and we had to take turns to use them for half day teaching. We also used a village hall down the road, a wooden building we would have called an Army hut, so we had half days in each place.

The older people might remember that we had an Indian Summer that September in 1939, and we spent most afternoons out of doors on "country walks". As a young teacher I had a hard job to keep the city lads off the apple trees, but I do remember a great occasion up the hill across the main road to a copse where we collected hundreds of conkers. Did they actually grow on trees?

Some of the names I can recall are Miss Haynes, who was the newly appointed headmistress of Priory Road girls and was in charge of our detachment, Miss Murray, who was deputy head of Walton Lane junior mixed and was left in charge when Miss Haynes recalled to Liverpool, two lady teachers from Walton Lane, Miss Williams (infants) and Miss Dean (seniors), two men from Priory Road, Tom Capstick, who brought his wife and child, and Mr Jones, who wore a peace pledge union badge. The Alveley juniors teacher I think was Miss Richards, but I can't remember their infants teachers name (she was quite a young lady, but as I was recently engaged I didn't take much notice!)

Of the pupils I can only remember Bill Buttery, who was Len Bensons right hand man, Dickie Wynn, Mary Nolan, Parry brother and sister, who were billeted at the pub on the main road, and two sisters, Dorothy and ?, who were at the fish hatchery with the "classy gent" I now fancy was called Pitt.

Two other events I can recall: we thought we should take the kids to church, but we only went the once for it was to Matins and the Vicar raced through the service like a dose of salts. It was a nice idea, to get the children together on a Sunday morning, but that was enough! The other is that Len Benson organised a keep fit class for men in the evenings and I liked to mix with the local young men of my own age once a week.

In the new year of 1940 came the great snow and frost, we certainly had not seen anything like it before in Liverpool. A lot of the children had already been taken home by their parents due to the "phoney war", and I was recalled towards the end of January. We then carried on what was called "home teaching" before the school was re opened for class teaching. I was back there until December 1940, when I was called up for the RAF. The school building received a direct hit during the Blitz of 1941, so I never returned to Walton Lane, but was directed elsewhere. I served to the end of my 40 years teaching, and retired in 1973, so a good many children have passed through my hands in all that time.

One last thought has occurred to me while writing this, Len Benson was one of the Registration Officers and I went round with him, getting details of occupants and residents and issuing registration cards. If there are any residents remaining from 1939, their code letters are likely to be OJEH, which was Mr Bensons allocation.

I'd be glad to hear of any other replies you get to your advert.

Yours Sincerely
Fred Bolt.

In a further letter Mr Bolt continues,

Dear Mr White,

Many thanks for your letter and enclosure. I was very interested to read the account by Bill Poland of his stay in Alveley, and I hope he will write to me after hearing from you.

I do remember the two boys who were billeted with the Gittins in Lowe Lane. I did hear afterwards that one had stayed on in Alveley and had become quite a "country boy"...that must have been Bill Poland. He must be in the late 60s by now, as I will be 85 in March this year.

I still keep in touch with four of my former colleagues, and have taken up an association with a couple of dozen of my former pupils.

Sincerely Yours
Fred Bolt.

Thomas Whiting of Turley Green, Alveley.

In November 1997 one of our new members, David Lewis of Sutton Coldfield wrote to the society with information concerning his great, great, grandfather, Thomas Whiting of Turley Green, Mr Lewis letter reads as follows....

Dear Sir,

My great, great, grandfather Thomas Whiting lived in Alveley (Turley Green) at the latter end of his life and died there in 1906. His will, copy enclosed, appointed Arthur Ellis of the Squirrel Inn as joint executor. I am doing my family history and have visited Alveley on several occasions, trying to locate the various places mentioned in his will. I would be happy to send you more details and if you could put me in touch with anyone who could pinpoint the cottages and the people I should be grateful...

Thomas Whittings will.....

This is the last and only will of me Thomas Whiting of Turley Green in the parish of Alveley in the county of Salop yeoman of which I appoint my son in law George Lewis and my friend Arthur W Ellis of the Squirrel Inn, Alveley, aforesaid innkeeper executors and trustees.

I desire to be buried in the churchyard at Letton Parish Church in the county of Hereford where my first wife lies buried and I empower my executors to outlay not exceeding fifty pounds upon my funeral, including a suitable tombstone or monument. I give to my said executor A W Ellis five pounds for his trouble free from estate and legacy duty.

I bequeath to my sister in law Elizabeth Franceis, spinster, such of the household furniture and effects as formerly belonged to her and which shall or may at my death be in or about my dwellinghouse or the outbuildings or grounds thereof the same to be free from estate or legacy duty.

I also bequeath to the said Elizabeth Franceis for her life the cottage at Daddlebrook situate in the said Parish of Alveley and now in the occupation of Handley (a collier) and also that freehold messuage and land containing three acres or thereabouts known as Turley Green in the said Parish of Alveley and in which I now reside, and also four cottages and land at Alveley called The Orchard and also my pony and trap and harness and I also bequeath to my said executor A W Ellis one pound per year for collecting rents and etc for the said property for the aforesaid Elizabeth Franceis.

The above property at her decease to go as follows, Turley Green and the four cottages at Alveley to my daughter Elizabeth Lewis and the cottage at Daddlebrook to my grandson Thomas George Whiting. I bequeath the following pecuniary legacy to my friend Elizabeth Cook widow and now landress at Letton Cowl, Letton aforesaid nineteen pounds nineteen shillings free from estate and legacy duty. To my brother William Whiting fifty pounds, to my grandson Thomas George Whiting fifty pounds free from estate and legacy duty.

I desire and bequeath the residue of my real and personal estate unto my said daughter Elizabeth Lewis absolutely in witness whereof I have hereunder set my hand this fifteenth day of September one thousand nine hundred and five.

Thomas Whiting

Signed by the said Thomas Whiting as his will in the presence of us present at the same time who in his presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as attesting witnesses

William G Massey

Arthur W Ellis.

On the 15th day of December 1906 probate of this will was granted at Shrewsbury to George Lewis and Arthur William Ellis the executors

Gross value of estate £972. 0. 7
Nett value of personal estate £341.19.11

In a further letter Mr Lewis gives additional information...

Thomas Whiting was a Herefordshire man and his family have been in the villages around Letton, Alveley and Eardisly for many years. His background as was that of his family was in farming and he is variously described as a labourer, agricultural labourer and only at the latter end of his life as that of a farm bailiff.

His first wife Catherine died in 1879 when he was about 57 and is buried in the family grave in Letton churchyard. Afterwards he lived at Brickmans House in Letton until at least 1881 (in the census). I then lost touch for a while and was intrigued when he "re surfaced" re married and living in Alveley in 1889 and so far I have been unable to discover the link between Letton and Alveley.

When in Alveley he married an Ann Jennings (see 1997 Transactions, Jennings family tree) a widow (nee Francis) whose father was Thomas Francis a weaver presumably in Kidderminster. They were married in the parish church of St Marys, Kidderminster on 26th May 1889.

Ann died in 1903 and is buried in Alveley churchyard with a gravestone giving details.

I suspect that from the wording of the will the properties left were originally in the possession of the Jennings or Francis families or at least some of the possessions. There being no issue it passed on down to the Whiting and Lewis families.

Incidentally it seems that both Ann Jennings and Thomas Whiting were being economical with the truth about their ages on their marriage certificate. He was 67 and she was 38..I don't know how they got away with it.

A little more background..in the 1881 census of Alveley was the following entry..

Alveley no. 50 The Village, Jennings, Ann; Head; widow; age 38; female; beer retailer; born Kidderminster.

Francis, Elizabeth; sister; unmarried; age 25; female; dressmaker; born Kidderminster.

(note..from the above information, it is more than probable that Ann Jennings was a beer retailer at the New Inns).

If any reader can give further information on the Whiting family, or indeed the location of the properties mentioned, please contact any Society member .

Memories....Mavis Harris (Surrell).

I was Mavis Surrell born in 1926 at Bridgnorth hospital. My father (mentioned in your 1996 Transactions, page 18) was a stone mason at Alveley quarry, one of my earliest memories was taking a can of tea and food to him with my mother. Sid Surrell was my step brother. My father was a widower for many years after Sid was born , and Sid left home at 15, joined the army before my father married my mother.

I started school at the old school until the new one was built, I did not enjoy school and I do remember Miss Richards making me unravel a jumper which had taken me a year to knit, even though she waited until I had sewn it together.

I remember the evacuees arriving and we had three girls, Margaret Macdonald, Annie McLellan and Lila McKay, but they did not stay for long. My father was disabled because of silicosis and we lived next door to Stan Scriven, opposite The Shoes. Stans mother Rose used to do the washing for Baileys and at the end of the day she took the blue water home to swill her own washing, as everyone had to fetch water from standpipes or use rain water butts

In the summer coach parties came to the pub and my father had four leaf clovers on a pot by the front door and I had many a shilling given to me for the sale of these.

I left school at 13 to come to Birmingham, my aunt paying for me on a secretary course, but the first night here was the night that the Market Hall was bombed, so after a few weeks I went back home to Alveley and worked for a short time for Mrs Beddoes and then as maid with Lily Jones at the Lowe Farm, Mr Attwoods.

As it was war time I was not allowed lights on my bike but I did use paraffin ones and if I rode fast it used to smoke and I then had a very black face when I got in, as most evenings allowed to go home from 6 - 10pm after work was done.

While still at school I used to collect milk from Masseys by the church and take it each day to the vicars wife for 6 pence a week. We had to leave our house which I remember the rent was 3/9 a week and my dad had only 16/- including 10/- pension. He tried for compensation but was refused the full amount as the Dr Jones? insisted he also had bronchitis which was untrue. We lived for a while in a chalet bungalow and eventually in the house which is now church house, it has since been converted.

I was married to a soldier, Johnno Jones and Daisy were the match makers. I was married thanks to Daisy Jones and Nell my sister in law, and I was given away by Sidney, and was very happy for 43 years until Den died suddenly in 1990.

I have memories also of my dad tending the war graves for years in the cemetery. When I was upset I would frequently run to the church cemetery to a little girls grave with the four angels on each corner, I remember her name was Beverage from the farm down the lane.

I feel quite sad that I lost touch with everyone from the village, I did come to the village when I was driving, in fact it was the first place I drove to after passing my test, but I no longer have a car and my family live in Yorkshire I still have a book and a handkerchief which was given to each child at school on the King George VI coronation, provided by Mrs Kendrick who I believe was from Romsley and was a relation to Mr Chamberlain (Neville)

I wonder if anyone else also kept these items.

The First Parish Councillors for Alveley.

The following is a brief outline of how Parish Councils were formed, taken from the excellent book "Grass Roots Democracy", a century of civil parishes in Shropshire 1894-1994, compiled by Peter Icke and published by the S.A.P.T.C., it gives a detailed account of the growth of democracy in our county.

We are also fortunate to have in our archives the minutes of those early Parish meetings, and the first ten years are transcribed below...

The formation of Parish Councils was part of a package introduced by the late Victorians to bring rationality to a system of local government that was chaotic, corrupt and inefficient. In rural areas responsibility for such things as education, housing, road and bridges, poor law relief, policing and the courts had been spread amongst a number of boards. None had been democratically elected and they had been able to act virtually as they pleased. Only a minority of male adults had been able to vote but not in secret and only in Parliamentary elections. Most of the important decisions affecting local people had been taken by large landowners sitting as justices at quarter sessions.

It was the Local Government Act of 1888 that brought local democracy to rural Shropshire by setting up the first county councils. Nearly all the responsibilities previously resting on the justices of the peace and the various boards were transferred

to the county council.

The 1894 Act

Six years after the county council was formed came the act that set up not only parish councils but also urban district and rural district councils. Shropshire had 17 rural districts and nine urban districts. There were also six municipal boroughs. It was only in the rural districts that civil parishes were given powers under the 1894 Act. It was the Parish Council sections of the Bill that proved controversial and the Government had a long struggle getting the Bill through Parliament. Vested interests were reluctant to give up powers and there were fierce arguments over charities, allotments, use of schools, and the size of parishes.

The First Meetings

"The first parish meeting will be convened by the Overseers to be held on Tuesday, the 4th of December, 1894, whether a parish council is or is not to be elected for the parish."

The 1894 Local Government Act set up two new forums for democracy in rural areas: one was the Parish Meeting and the other was the Parish Council. The Parish Meeting was intended to be a regular gathering when all the electors could meet and discuss any matter relating to the parish. In some senses it was superior to the Parish Council because it had the powers to elect councillors and to control parish council expenditure.

Every parish council that was set up under the 1894 Act had to be preceded by a Parish Meeting held on 4th December 1894 for the sole purpose of electing parish councillors.

At those first meetings before nominations could be taken a person, who was not standing for the council, had to be chosen as chairman for the meeting. He or she would then invite nomination papers to be handed in. These had to state the candidates full name, place of abode and description, and whether qualified to serve as an elector or by residence: it had to be signed by two electors of the parish.

Not less than fifteen minutes after taking the chair, the chairman had to be read out the nominations and invite the meeting to put questions and hear answers from the candidates. If there were more candidates than seats the chairman would then take votes for each candidate by a show of hands. He would then announce the figures and declare who had been elected. However he then had to give electors ten minutes to decide whether to demand a poll. If just one elector, perhaps a disappointed candidate, demanded it then a poll had to be held so that every voter in the parish had a chance of taking part. If no poll was demanded then the Parish Council was supposed to have its first meeting on 13th December; if a poll had to be held then the first meeting was on 31st December.

Voting in councillors by a show of hands at a Parish Meeting was a cheap way of doing it; the only costs might be some coal for the school stove and some oil for the lamps. Whether it was democratic is debatable. Most of the electors in rural areas at that time were employed locally and it would have been a brave, if not foolhardy, gamekeeper or waggoner who openly did not vote for the squire who employed him. Despite its faults the open voting system lasted until the elections of 1949.

Terms of Office

The term of office of those very first councillors was from December 1894 until 15th April 1896. Subsequently it was just for the twelve months between each 15th April, and each year there would be a Parish Meeting to elect the new Council. However in 1899 Parliament passed the Parish Councils (Tenure of Office) Act which gave Councillors a three year term of office.

Parish Meeting or Parish Council

Every parish had a parish meeting but not all parishes had a parish council. Under the 1894 Act parishes with a population of over 300 automatically had a parish council; parishes with over a hundred could demand a parish council if the parish meeting so resolved; and parishes with less than 100 could only have a parish council if the county council allowed it.

Cash Limits

In order to get the 1894 Act through Parliament the government had to make many concessions and eventually the Act was passed with very strict limits on parish council spending. On its own a council could only fix a general rate of threepence in the pound. With the permission of its parish meeting this might be raised to a maximum of sixpence in the pound. It could only raise a loan with the permission of its parish meeting and of the county council and of the government.

The First Clerks

The 1894 Act was very precise about the appointment of a clerk of the council. First the job had to be offered, without remuneration, to one of the councillors. If no councillor was willing then the assistant overseer had to be appointed and his salary re-assessed. If there was no assistant overseer then the collector of the poor rate could be appointed at whatever remuneration was thought fit; and finally there was the possibility of "some other fit person".

Parish Documents

One paragraph in the 1894 Act gave County Councils the power to inquire into the manner in which parish councils and parish meetings were looking after their minute books and their documents. In Shropshire the County Council Clerk and Deputy Clerk were given the task of visiting every parish and checking what books and documents were held and making comments on whether or not they were being looked after in a proper manner. The books and documents were kept in a wide variety of places.....

"in a fire-proof safe at the Chairmans office" (Romsley).

Grouped Parishes

There is a difference in the pattern of parishes in the north of the county compared with the south. In the northern half of the county small parishes with parish meetings have been amalgamated with neighbouring parishes to give new larger parishes which are strong enough to sustain parish councils. In the southern half of the county many small parishes have been allowed to retain their separate legal identity but have been grouped with other parishes to form parish councils. Each parish in the group has its own electoral roll and is able, if it wishes, to hold its own annual parish meeting but it operates almost entirely by having representatives on a group parish council which is virtually a joint committee.

The following is a true record of the First Gentlemen to be elected onto the Alveley Parish Council, December 1894, and the subsequent Annual General Meetings. There was very little business from the villagers recorded at these meetings....

The first Parish meeting to elect councillors for Alveley Parish, 4th December 1894. The meeting assembled at 7.30pm. Mr Wakeman proposed, Mr Cross seconded that Mr Moses Davies be chairman of the meeting (carried). The following Gentleman were duly nominated as candidates for the Parish Council.

1 G.B.Clark	9 H.G.Meredith
2 J.I. Clark	10 Richard Morris
3 William Cross	11 Henry Page
4 M.H.Cross	12 C.H.Roden
5 William Elcock Jnr	13 Thomas Warder
6 Charles Lea	14 G.M.Wakeman
7 Rev W.Lewis	15 Thomas Walker
8 Charles Massey	16 Edward Williams

None of the candidates addressed the meeting and no questions were put to them. On a show of hands being taken the result was as follows...

1 G.M.Wakeman	63	9 John I.Clark	36
2 Rev W.Lewis	61	10 C.H.Roden	28
3 Charles Massey	59	11 William Cross	27
4 William Elcock Jnr	58	12 Thomas Walker	26
5 Thomas Walker	51	13 Charles Lea	18
6 Edward Williams	50	14 Henry Page	11
7 Richard Morris	46	15 G.B.Clark	9
8 Henry G.Meredith	40	16 M.H.Cross	8

No poll being demanded the chairman declared the first gentlemen duly elected. Mr Wakeman proposed and Mr Cross seconded a vote of thanks to the chairman which was carried.

Signed Edward M. Wakeman. 19th Dec 1894 Provisional Chairman of the Parish Council

Parish of Alveley

Notice is hereby given that a Parish meeting will be held at the National School Room, Alveley on April 1st 1895 at 7.30pm.

Signed on behalf of the chairman of Alveley Parish Council
W.Lewis vice chairman

Minutes of a meeting held this 1st day of April 1895 pursuant to notice as above. No business was transacted.

M.Davies, chairman.

Alveley Parish Meeting, March 9th. 1896

The meeting assembled at 7.30pm.

Mr Cross proposed and Mr Warder seconded that Mr Moses Davies be chairman of the meeting (carried). The following gentlemen were duly nominated as candidates for the Parish Council

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Clark John Inston | 6 Meredith Henry George |
| 2 Elcock William Jnr | 7 Morris Richard |
| 3 Jennings John | 8 Wakeman Edward Malhby |
| 4 Lewis William Llewellyn | 9 Warder Thomas |
| 5 Massey Charles | |

There being no other nominations the above were declared duly elected. Mr Cross proposed and Mr J I Clark seconded a vote of thanks to the Chairman, which was carried.

Signed Moses Davies March 31st 1896.

Parish of Alveley

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish meeting held this 31st day March 1896 at 7pm in the school room, Alveley. Present Messrs M. Davies, N.J.Neale, William Warder, R Warder, John Creswell.

Mr N.J.Neale proposed and Mr R Warder seconded that Mr Moses Davies be chairman (carried).

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Signed G.B.Clark
chairman
18th March 1897.

Alveley Parish Meeting, March 18th 1897

The meeting assembled at 7pm. Mr Moses proposed and Massey seconded that George R Clark be chairman of the meeting, carried unanimously. The following gentleman were duly nominated as candidates for the Parish Council.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Clark John Inston | 6 Meredith Henry George |
| 2 Elcock William Jnr | 7 Morris Richard |
| 3 Jennings John | 8 Wakeman Edward Malhby |
| 4 Lewis William Llewellyn | 9 Warder Thomas |
| 5 Massey Charles | |

There being no other nominations the above were declared duly elected. Mr John Haycox called the attention of the annual assembly of the Parish Meeting to the bad state of the footpath leading from the village to Potters Load Ferry.

Mr Wakeman proposed and Mr Wm Elcock Jnr seconded a vote of thanks to the chairman which was carried unanimously. G.B. Clark 18th March 1897.

Parish of Alveley.

The Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting was held at the school room, Alveley on Monday the 14th day of March 1898 at 7.30pm.

Mr Wakeman proposed and Mr Llewellyn Morris seconded that Mr G.B. Clark be appointed Chairman of the meeting, carried unanimously.

The following gentlemen were duly nominated as candidates for the Parish Council.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Clark John Inston | 6 Meredith Henry George |
| 2 Cross William | 7 Morris Richard |
| 3 Elcock William Jnr | 8 Wakeman Edward Malhby |
| 4 Jennings John | 9 Warder Thomas |
| 5 Massey Charles | |

The Chairman proposed and Mr Cross seconded that a vote of thanks be accorded to the retiring Councillors, carried unanimously.

The Chairman of the retiring Parish Council laid a statement of the charities accounts for the year ending Dec 31st 1897, before the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting.

Mr Neale called the attention of the meeting to the desire expressed by some of the parishioners to have a recreation ground provided by the Council. Mr Wakeman proposed and Mr Cross seconded a vote of thanks to Mr G.B. Clark for presiding over the meeting, carried unanimously.

Signed G.B.Clark 6th March 1899.

Alveley 1882

(from a newspaper article..a buiding project that "never got off the ground")

A concert and ball...on Monday evening last a cocert and entertainment was given in the National Schoolroom, Alveley in aid of the fund for building an outer staircase to the tower of the parish church (St Marys) which has been lately restored through the kindness of a gentleman in the district. The church is rebuilt of Alveley stone, which is obtained from a quarry a few hundred yards away, now being worked by Mr Webb. The stone is very highly esteemed for building and mill purposes. It is now being used in the re-erection of a handsom villa residence for R.H. Boycott, Esq. of Oldbury near Bridgnorth.

Before the concert a Merry Peal was rung, the entertainment given was a capital character, it commenced with an overture, "Caliph of Bagdad", Mr Wedley on the violin and Mr Clowley on the pionoforte.

The Kidderminster Glee Company followed in "Hail to the chief".Miss Bennett then sang very sweetly, an Irish song, Mr Whitehead gave the "Bridge of Sighs" (Tom Hood) in a remarkably pleasant manner, showing thorough appreciation of his recitation, and clear enunciation. Mr William Mountford sang "The Little Brown Jug", Mr Bennett "Never mind the rest", and "The doctors boy", by Mr Armitage, brought the first part of the programme to a conclusion.

In the second part Mr and Miss Bennett gave "Matrimony" (duet) capitally, and the Kidderminster Glee Company gave "Sleep Gentle Lady", Mr George Moutford sang "The Pilgrim of Love" Mr Whitehead followed with a recitation "The Quack Doctor" and Miss G. Bennett gave, charmingly, "True Hearts", Mr W. Mountford sang "Pretty Polly Perkins", Mr Armitage gave a thoroughly good comic song which showed his inimitable powers capitally, The Kidderminster Glee Company gave "Kitty Was A Charming Girl", and Miss Bennett gave a song that called forth loud applause, Mr Whitehead followed with "Faithless Nelly Grey".

Mr W.H. Foster M.P. sent the committee £5 towards the laudable project, and £1 was received from the Rev. E. Hardwick. The concert closed about 10 o'clock when an invitation ball took place in the same room, under the Patronage of Sir Offley Wakeman, Bart., E.M. Wakeman ,Esq., H. Wakeman Newport, Esq., Rev. F.H.W. Whitmore, Rev. C.W .Mackey, Rev. E. Hardwick, and R. Woodward, jnr., Esq.. The consequence of the continuous downpour of rain all day, not so many were present as would otherwise have attended. The following had accepted invitations,:- Mrs Bently, Mrs B. Webb, Mr. Webb, Mr. E.Walling, Miss Walling, Mr. and Mrs Marrian, and Mr. Marrian, jnr.,Mr. T. Preece, Miss Price, Mr. and Miss Webster, Mrs. and Miss Miles, Mr Miles jnr, Miss Marston, Miss E. Griffiths, Miss Fanny Jones, Miss Florence Jones, Mr.F.Roberts, Mr.C.R.E.Cresswell, Mr Cross jnr., Miss Jasper Talbot, Mr Stewart, Miss Kirkham, Mr. Partridge, Miss Hodges, Mr J Burton, Miss Burto, Miss Worrall, Mr.J.Jarratt, Mr. Kolloway, Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Armitage, Mr. Barrett, Miss G. Barrett, Mr.W. Elcock, Mr. S.Cresswell, Miss Price, Mr.C.Lawley, Miss Lawley, Mr.Gillam, Mr.T.Parkes, Miss Parkes, Mrs Pooler, Miss Fletcher, Mr.C.Roden, Mr.J.Cresswell, Miss Cresswell, Mr.Z.Cresswell, Miss Harley, Miss A.Jones, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Mapp, Miss C. Dowell, Mr.C. Dowell, jnr., Mr. Richards, Mr. Bently, Miss Hazeldine, Mr.R. Webb, Miss Webb, Miss Jasper, Miss Dicks, Mrs J.Griffiths, Mrs Pugh, Mrs Clark, Mr .A. R. Roden, Mrs Bigmore, Mr Jolham, Mr. Comber ,Mr. Thompson, Mr. T. Brewster, Miss Weaver, Mr. G. Smallman, Mr .J. P. Davies, Mr. G. Clark, Miss Clark, Mrs J. Clark, Mr .J. Roden, Mr Harley, Mr H. Lawley, Mr. Warden, Mrs Mapp, and Mrs Jones (Tenbury The conductor of the band was Mr. Pickon, of Kidderminster, who played the piccolo, Mr Crawley the violin, and Mr Ayres the harp. The ball was kept up until very late the next morning.

Note....as we know the outer staircase to the church tower was never built....we assume the funds collected were not sufficient for the project and that any money collected went into the church funds.....

The Bell Inn

Over the past three years I have tried to detail the history of this building, with very little information to go on and without any written records to turn to it has proved a very difficult task...early this year the society agreed to authorise a survey on the architectural construction of the building together with dendrochronology to a number of the timbers, the survey was carried out by Madge Moran and the dendro... by Dan Miles, some may know Dan from the T.V. series "Time Team".

The report which proved very interesting and informative has been published by the society as a seperate book, the main reason for this being that it contains many A4 size drawings of the building and of the famous carved stones, to copy them into these transactions would not do them justice...

Extracts from the report.....

From the front the Bell is a building of low profile and modest proportions, one and a half storied, whitewashed, and with a large central chimneystack. The back has three single storied outshots, and two out built stacks. There is a further stack outbuilt on the north gable, and at one time the kitchen too had a rear stack, making five in all.

At first glance the Bell gives the impression of being a seventeenth century building, but its origins are probably earlier. Timber framing is evident internally and it is possible to suggest a development sequence which takes account of this. Positioned as it is, close to the church, the present building is unlikely to be the first on the site.

Development sequence...

1. A building of which some of the stonework in the kitchen area are the only remains.
2. A box framed hall house of fifteenth century date and contained a two bay open hall with further accommodation to the north of the hall.
- 3 The lower end of the house was converted to housing for animals, a large beam was inserted to support the floor of a croglofft and the house became a longhouse in effect, this would be in the 17th century. The house underwent a major phase of development. A bay was added to the northern end, the hall was floored over, a large chimneystack was inserted into the cross passage and the animals were moved out, their accommodation providing an additional room which was then used as a kitchen with cooking facilities provided by the new chimneystack.
- 5 In the eighteenth or early nineteenth century upper crucks were inserted and at the same time the "granary" (malt house/Bell room) was built or, if it already existed, it underwent alterations. It was probably at this time that the horeceived its stone casing and the sculpted stones were incorporated into the fabric.

The final conclusion of this report states "there are a number of out buildings at the Bell, all, presumably, relating to its use as a "FARM" at one time, and all built of the local red sandstone. The most interesting of the out buildings is called the "Malthouse/Bell room" although there is no evidence of malting ever having taken place there. It could, however, have functioned as a granary!"

It is anticipated that the report by Dan Miles on the dating of the timbers, should be ready in December. Details will be published in next years Transactions.

Some "Bell" Licensees

- 1850 Thomas Giles
- 1861 Thomas Giles
- 1863 John Giles
- 1870 Thomas Yardley (Blacksmith of Blue Bell)
- 1880 Richard Bennet (Freehold House)
- 1886 Richard Bennet (Freehold House)
- 1900 William Bill
- 1913 Ernest Lloyd Evans
- 1917 William Elcock (also sec of and headquarters of Oddfellows Lodge. Also farmer thrashing machine driver and assistant overseer.
- 1917 William Benjamin Wood (named as a farmer)
- 1922 William Benjamin Wood (Bell)
- 1922 William Elcock (named as a farmer)
- 1922 to 1936 William Benjamin Wood

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