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## Editorial

Contributors to Journal 18 have given us a varied content this year. It is a pleasure to publish the concluding part of the detailed investigation of the Clun Poor Law Union by *Alan Goff* (Part 1 Journal 15; Part 2 Journal 16). Editorial comment in Journal 17, concerning articles on local family history, has stimulated a response from *Brian Dill Jones* in Canada and his brother *Maurice Jones* in Staffordshire with information about their family in Cefn Einion, which has resulted in the published article. *Malcolm Redgrave* has contributed a light-hearted and practical approach to reading the census returns. *Alan Wilson* has provided an interesting article on place and land ownership which extends some themes in Journals 16 and 17. Book reviews this year come from *Janet Presbous* for 'Norbury Homes and Families' by Joyce Pinnock and *Maurice Young* for 'Crumbs From the Table of Your Learning' by Chris Train.

Research is the seed-corn of any publication and I am very pleased to include *Marion Roberts'* report on research in progress from the SWSHAS Research Group and another on the Medieval Market Hall Project: the Madge Moran Challenge. Journal 18 also covers news of Society events and activities. My thanks as always to *Janet Presbous* for a chronicle of Society events, proof-reading the final draft of the Journal and to *Sarah Ellison* for producing Journal 18 in its completed form.

Our President, *David Presbous*, has written an appreciation of Chris Train. Your editor will greatly miss his support and encouragement; he was a chairman sensitive of the need for promoting our society to a wider audience.

Patricia Theobald

## Christopher Train, CB: An Appreciation

This space in *The Journal* would normally contain the Chairman's Annual Report. Chris's untimely death on 7<sup>th</sup> May has been a great sorrow to all our members – the Society has lost a well-loved and eminent leader.

*The Times* obituary (24 May) rightly concentrated on Chris's most distinguished professional career as Director-General of the Prison Service. Those of us, who only met him later when he retired to live in Clunbury in 1991, knew relatively little of that distinction. Chris was such a modest and unassuming man, enjoying a completely new 'career' of involvement in the life and history of rural communities.

The village of Clunbury soon knew that Chris was one of the best of 'newcomers', someone who truly appreciated living in one of Housman's '*quietest places under the sun*'. He was deeply involved in the local church and deanery and wrote authoritative books on the history of the village and its primary school. He became a member of the Ludlow Historical Research Group, and chairman of SWSHAS. His lectures and his writings on local history were widely admired and a source of inspiration to many. He loved Wales, studying its history and poetry, and learning the language. His Christmas lecture on 'Welsh Castles' was a revelation to us all.

With his background of classics teaching and government administration, Chris always insisted on high levels of scholarship, and SWSHAS gained wide respect for the quality of its lectures and publications. Sometimes his high personal standards made him appear quite stern, but his acute sense of humour and kindness always shone through.

Chris was keen to ensure that local history should be accessible to all, especially the delights of 'living history' – the reminiscences of the small and settled communities in this deeply rural area. None of us will forget the *Proudest Salopian* contest, when Chris excelled as a fair and unruffled Arbiter between the shades of a belligerent Wild Edric, a drunken Jack Mytton, a pompous Robert Clive, a smooth and sinister Judge Jeffreys, a tight-lipped Mary Whitehouse, and a gentle and engaging Edith Pargeter!

Chris Train was, in his 'third career', a man of wide interest and unflagging energy, a talented scholar and a prolific writer. But here *In valleys of springs or rivers / By Onny and Teme and Clun* we have been privileged to know him as

an inspired leader, a kind and considerate neighbour, and a very dear friend. We know that Sheila and her family have appreciated the thoughts and support of our members.

David Preshous, SWSHAS President.

**The Committee is keen to find some more permanent way of commemorating Chris's outstanding contributions to SWSHAS. Members are asked to consider appropriate ways of doing this.**

**Ideas, please, to the President as soon as possible.**

## **SWSHAS Events: September 2006 – June 2007**

**Sept. 2006:** Nearly 600 people visited the SWSHAS *One For The Road* Exhibition at Bishop's Castle Michaelmas Fair, featuring over 100 pubs and former inns and alehouses in the area. The heyday of the town pubs had been when the Borough sent two MPs to Parliament and rich landowners bribed voters with '*meat & ale for the Burgesses*' to support their candidates. Records show '*Dinners & Ale for the Navvies*' at the opening of the Railway in 1865. Members had also researched alehouses frequented by lead-miners, and pubs indicating the old drovers' roads.

**Oct. 2006:** Dr. Jennifer Chambers from the **National Ice Age Network** at Birmingham gave an overview of several millions of years of prehistory, reporting on studies from the West Midlands including Shropshire. She covered Ice Age evidence of human, animal, dinosaur and fossil finds as well as climate change and glaciation.

**Nov. 2006:** At the AGM the Chairman thanked those responsible for the '*One for The Road*' exhibition, and Patricia Theobald for a fine issue of the SWSHAS *Journal*. The work of the officers, and the special contribution of Graham Jones (Vice Chairman), retiring after many years, were warmly acknowledged. The Committee was re-elected with Heather Williams (already co-opted) and Dr. Nick Howell welcomed as members. Three Committee members then spoke about their own research. Mike Greene,

Chairman of the Lydbury Field Group, spoke about the programme of field-walking, helped by grants of equipment, describing work on local maps, and some of their recent finds. Janet Preshous had researched some Bishop's Castle photographers and showed slides of portraits by W.L.Foster and S.C. de Medewe, and drew attention to the collections of Emmanuel Beddoes, Isabella Bremner and Madge Strawson who had taken pictures of their contemporaries and local events and scenes. Malcolm Redgrave shared his methods of exploring the history of Little Brampton, where he lives, through the archives, the National Aerial Survey, field-names, estate maps and court records.

**Dec. 2006:** David Preshous gave his President's Lecture entitled '*To the Bay of Quails*', illustrating a journey around the remote Mani peninsula in Southern Greece, notorious for centuries for pirates and brigands, and subject to invasions from Venetians, Turks and (in the Second World War) Germans. He showed slides of the dramatic landscape, with castles, Byzantine churches, and tower houses built by feuding families. A large audience then enjoyed seasonal refreshments.

**Jan. 2007:** Peter Reavill, Liaison Officer for the **Portable Antiquities Scheme** in Herefordshire and Shropshire described the scheme to report and record all finds and showed excellent slides of *Finds from the Past*, with interesting local examples. Anyone discovering any kind of artefact is urged to take it to Peter at Ludlow Museum for identification and recording.

**Feb. 2007:** Stella Mitchell brought a selection of items from the immense collection which she displays at her *Land of Lost Content Museum* in Craven Arms. She is a mine of information on the everyday life of the last century, and she is completing an archive of memorabilia for a web-site. Her lively approach and humour delighted her audience. Her museum is a treasure trove of memories which everyone should visit.

**March 2007:** Neil Clarke of the Wrekin Local History Forum and Broseley Historical Society spoke on *Early Visitors to Shropshire*, with particular reference to Gerald of Wales (C12th), John Leland (C16th), Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe (C17th). He used interesting and amusing extracts from travellers' diaries on the hazards of their journeys and the standards of accommodation, and the landmarks they noted in the countryside.

**April 2007:** Dr David Lloyd gave the **Seventh Annual Ritherdon Lecture**, on *South Shropshire and North Herefordshire in the Eighteenth Century*. He used early censuses and contemporary documents to summarise the economic and social conditions of the area. Using attractive contemporary paintings, as well as diary extracts and letters from a group of local families, he vividly evoked the lives of well-connected people in the area in the Eighteenth Century.

**May 2007:** A concert by The Corndon Singers: *A Thousand Years of Song* in Bishop's Castle Parish Church was generously given on behalf of SWSHAS to meet Madge Moran's challenge to raise funds for the dendrochronological dating of the possible original Market Hall off the High Street in Bishop's Castle.

**June 2007: The Society's Summer Outing.** On Saturday 9th June, a coachload of members enjoyed the annual outing. Coffee in Hay-On-Wye, a picnic and tour at Tretower (with additional bonus of a musketry display, during which our C.O. and organiser, Colonel Maurice Young, was placed before a firing squad!), a brief excursion into Abergavenny Castle and Museum, and finally a most informative tour of the church with its splendid monuments. Thanks to Maurice and Malcolm for their preparation of this excellent day out.

This year's  
SWSHAS Exhibition at  
Bishop's Castle  
Michaelmas Fair

in the Cadet Hall on  
22nd and 23rd September 2007  
will be

**GATHERED TOGETHER**  
Churches, Chapels and Village Halls  
in S. W. Shropshire



**If you have any pictures or memories of these please contact  
David & Janet Preshous at The Paddock, Lydham,  
SY9 5HB Tel: 01588 638 363**

# The Clun Poor Law Union

## Part 3: The Workhouse 1900 - 1948

### 1900-1929

During much of the nineteenth century, conditions in the workhouse had been Spartan. However, photographs of various workhouses taken at the end of the century and on into the twentieth century show that changes were taking place. That there were still many whose feelings had not significantly changed is reflected in the evidence of Alfred Marshall, Professor of Political Economy at Cambridge to the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor in 1895 stating that, *'It seems to me that whenever I read Poor Law literature of to-day I am taken back to the beginning of the century; everything that is said about economics has the flavour of that old time.'*

While there were still those who were thinking that change in the direction of the 1834 Act was needed, there were also many whose views were going in the opposite direction. For example, George Sims published his popular poem, *In the Workhouse: Christmas Day* in 1877, William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, published *In Darkest England and the Way Out* in 1890, Friedrich Engels work *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, although published originally in Germany in 1845 was finally published in England in 1892, but perhaps the greatest achievement was the study of poverty in London begun by Charles Booth in 1886 and finished in 1903. Contrary to his original views, he produced figures to show that poverty was not generally due to profligacy, but to inadequate wages. Change was in the air.

In 1894, The Local Government Act replaced the ex-officio J.P.s with members of the committee chosen by the Board, effectively retaining some local J.P.s including familiar old names such as Plowden but also newer ones such as the Sykes family from Lydham Manor. Late in 1904, the Registrar General instructed unions to give a name for their workhouse for the registration of births (and deaths in 1919) and in December of that year the Clun Union Board agreed to name their workhouse, Stone House; the first time the name occurs in the history of the workhouse.

The Conservative government of the day decided to set up a Royal Commission, in 1905, to investigate fully and report on the state of the Poor

Law,. However, a circular of 1907 from the Commission drew a '*no comment*' from the Clun Union Board when it was presented to them. The Commissioners delivered their reports in 1909. There was however, no unanimous conclusion, although all parties agreed that the present state of affairs was in need of fundamental review and that poverty was generally no longer a voluntary state but one for which the social and economic organizations should take most responsibility. They agreed that specialist institutions would better serve the needs of their clients and that there was still a need for an institution to deal with the drunkard and the idler. The Majority Report however, was for control of the Poor Law to be in the hands of Public Assistance bodies of County and County Boroughs with voluntary support, while the Minority view was that such control should lie with publicly funded social services.



*Fig. 1: The Workhouse, Ladies' Infirmary Ward circa 1904*

The result - Governments failed to act until 1928! Although in their favour the Government's first major action was the introduction of public pensions for those over 70 in 1911 and not in receipt of money or services from the existing Poor Law bodies. In

1919, responsibility for the Poor Law was passed from the Local Government Board to the Ministry of Health, when workhouses became officially to be known as Poor Law Institutions; not a great change for the better. Through the first quarter of the century, however, there were continuing problems - namely late payments of the parish poor rates and issues regarding the parish of settlement for inmates, along with the running sore of vagrants.

How did this all affect the poor of the Clun Union? Photographs taken between 1900 and 1912 do show a modicum of humanity in the building,

with pictures on the walls, gardens and flowers on the frontage, but no carpets or floor covering (fig 1). A report in 1901 was critical of staffing levels, arising from the fact that there were few able-bodied inmates and that more staff were needed. Workhouses were now largely becoming homes for the aged and infirm, some mental defectives and a few children, although there was criticism in reports of that era that the workhouse in Bishop's Castle was not doing sufficient to remove its younger element into children's homes. But although the Workhouse was still run on a fairly rigorous regime, there were growing signs of its use and acceptance by the local community. In the early years of the 20th century there was increasing demand on the workhouse stock of chairs, which were hired out for local meetings. The Sykes family, among others, became increasingly generous to the Workhouse, initially with the gift of plants to beautify the frontage and later with entertainments funded by them. By 1926 inmates were given free admission to the Bishop's Castle Agricultural Show. Food provision was still not generous but there were dietary reviews keeping the matter alive.

In spite of ladies being eligible for election to Union Boards from the 1880s, in the Clun Union none were so elected and it was not until 1910 that Mrs Arthur Greenhous was invited to become a Lady Visitor and at their meeting in February 1912, it was proposed that 14 local ladies be approached to see if they were willing to be nominated to the Board's Boarding Out Committee for children.

Most of the 20th century inspections focussed on shortcomings in terms of the buildings and their equipment rather than the control, supervision and behaviour of inmates. Shortcomings in the buildings enabled residents access to areas they should have been excluded from. An inspection in 1913, for example, produced a report highlighting certain inadequacies, including:

- ❖ There was a lack of baths, although the Guardians' view was that there were sufficient to provide baths for adults at least once a month, elder children once a week and children under 4 daily.
- ❖ There were 6 children in the workhouse, all of one family, who were expected to leave as their father was now out of prison.
- ❖ Two boys were seen taking their dinner into the Women's Day Room, a practice the Master had now been instructed to stop.
- ❖ Women were reaching their dormitory through the Boys' dormitory, and action had now been taken to put a stop to this 'objectionable practice'.
- ❖ There had been mixing of the boys and girls in their day rooms and the

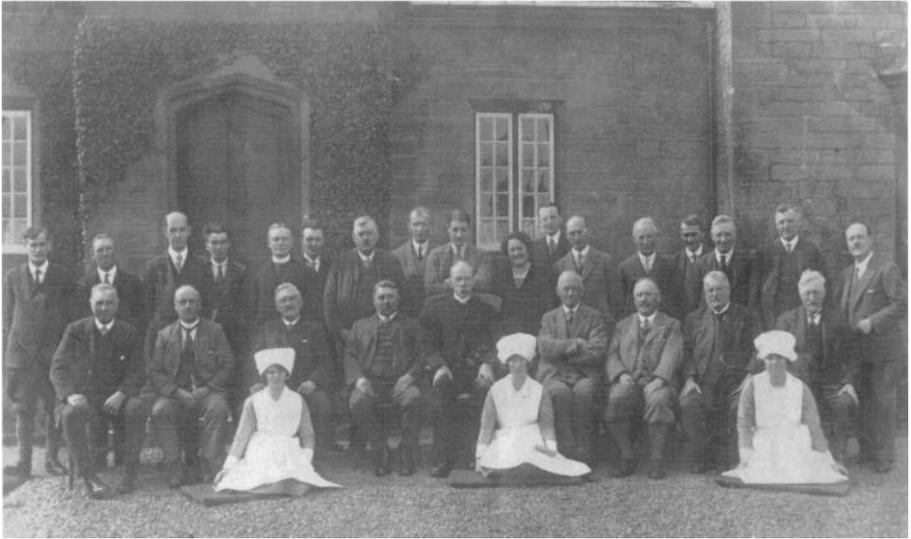
Master had now been instructed to see that the sexes did not mix.

- ❖ The Master had been mistaken and that all dirty mattresses had been disposed of.
- ❖ The Guardians would consider the giving of male vagrants a bath on entry and providing them with a nightshirt each.
- ❖ The Master had been instructed to see that all fire exits and their access would be kept clear.

By 1923, a similar type of report highlighted failings in the buildings but it was now recommended that straw mattresses for adults be replaced with flock ones.

In 1900, Frank Leonard Davies (a great uncle of Ron Davies, ironmonger in Bishop's Castle) and his wife Martha were appointed master and matron, remaining for over 10 years until taking up appointment at the larger workhouse in Ludlow. They were followed by a succession of four more husband and wife teams, the longest serving for only just over 5 years, before the appointment of Mark and Annie Cousins in May 1923. Although they did on at least one occasion leave to attend elsewhere for interview, Mark Cousins lasted until the end of the workhouse was in sight in 1947, but Annie did retire a little earlier in 1944 due to ill-health.

The Guardians were a tightly run group. Newspaper reporters did not attend their meetings until March 1896, only to be removed in 1901, before being re-admitted in March 1906 after a vituperative campaign by the editor of *The Bishop's Castle Advertiser* in their 'What They Say' columns. Their sympathies lie more with the residents and ratepayers than with the Guardians and there were accusations of the '*secret Board*'. Their reports do add a new dimension to the Guardians' meetings. In January 1901, there is an engaging report of the New Year's Dinner, at which there were quite a number of subscribers and '*a large number responded positively to the Master and Matrons' invitation to be present*'. There was a Christmas tree from the Garnett-Botfield estate, from which each inmate was given a small gift and the supper provided and served by the ladies present was described as '*fit for a king*' and included, '*... ham, chicken, vegetables, plum puddings, mince pies, tea, jellies, blancmange, oranges, sweets, crackers ...*' However, the same article provides a rather different side of the equation. When John Roberts, owner of the Three Tuns, proposed inviting the inmates to an afternoon performance by the 'Prince of Wales Choir', the Guardians refused to allow anyone to go, the paper commenting that '*... Christmas only comes once a year, and that it is the only*



*Fig. 2 The Guardians at their last meeting on 28th March 1930. The Chairman, seated in the middle of the front row is Rev W.E. Glenn*

*time the inmates appear to enjoy themselves'*

In 1908, Major Whitaker declined to take the chair, and amid much expression of regret, was to be replaced by Rev. W. E. Glenn, Rector of Mainstone but a resident of Bishop's Castle at The Elms (now High Trees). He remained as Chairman until the Board finished in 1930.

Vagrants were always a problem for the boards. In Bishop's Castle, *The Advertiser* noted the queue of vagrants waiting for admittance down Welsh Street. Various measures, national and local were employed to reduce the numbers of vagrants. In 1904, it was resolved that 4cwt of stone be broken instead of the 1½ cwt of stone then required. The problem with the vagrants was not relieved until the 1914-18 war years, when the search was on to sustain the war and particularly to recruit soldiers and seaman. However, vagrant numbers continued to rise again after the end of the war.

The behaviour of inmates seems to have be/en generally good. There was a punishment book, but there is only one record of it having been produced at a Board meeting and it is now lost. One was the case of Ethell Phillips. In September 1910, she was reported in *The Ludlow Advertiser* under the heading 'JUVENILE VIRAGO'. It appears that this young lady had been in trouble with the Guardians and was put on a punishment of bread and water for 12 hours after refusing to get up one morning, having to be forcefully dressed,

then refusing to work. When brought the bread and water by the master, she responded by throwing it at him. Finally she was brought to the Bishop's Castle magistrates' court by P.C. Bufton after a violent struggle. It was decided by the court that she needed firmer discipline and was ordered to attend a reformatory school as soon as practicable. She reappears in the Workhouse Minute Book in 1915 and 1916, after having been sent on service to various households; each soon returned her to the Workhouse. Finally in September 1916, after having seen Dr. Hughes she was transferred to the Farmfield Institute for her own care, protection and control.

The Minton family were also a cause of trouble to the Union. They first appear in the records in December 1912 when it was reported that six Minton children had been admitted to the Workhouse as their parents were both in gaol in Worcester. George Minton was released from Worcester Gaol on 7 April 1913, but on 3 July he was again gaoled for 14 days for neglecting to support his children. As the years pass by, the name of Minton recurs again and again as claims for the children are placed by Unions in Bridgnorth, Kidderminster and Dudley, and the parents are again charged with neglect of their children. In June 1919 it was decided that the Guardians should assume parental rights over the children and thereafter it is to be hoped that the children eventually had a better future.

### **1930-1948**

In 1928, the question of the Poor Law was again on the political agenda, culminating in a decision to put before the House an Act to change the Poor Law, in line with the majority report of the 1905-09 Royal Commission which recommended the abolition of Governing bodies. In 1929, the Act was passed transferring authority from local Governing bodies to County Councils under newly formed Public Assistance Committees. Some commentators viewed this as a show of strength rather than achieving major reform, because the same personnel were in place in the new Area Guardians Committees to oversee the work of their local Poor Law Institution.

However, in this area, the formation of a new committee, partly of members appointed by the County Council, partly by local Rural District Councils (RDC) and also because of some changes in the area, brought in new members including, for the very first time, two women. The first meeting of the new Committee was held on 9 April, 1930 and consisted of sixteen

	Maj. W. E. B. Whitaker (Chairman and son of former Chairman, William Whitaker)
E. C. Davies (Vice-Chairman)	R.F. T. Hamar
E. E. Beavan	R. Kilvert
R.T. Chapman	Col. C. F. Pryce-Davies
Mrs A. Chelmick	Sir H. W. A. Ripley
Mrs P. Dugdale	Maj. H. R. Sykes
Rev. W. E. Glenn	T. M. Wainwright
E. L. Jones	Sir Offley Wakeman.
A. E. Hamar	

members who at this time were,

Of these, three represented Clun RDC, two Chirbury RDC, and one Teme RDC

In order to keep a monitoring watch on the buildings and inmates, the 16 members were allocated to a rota, in pairs, who were to visit the institution twice between meetings and report to the board at their next monthly meeting. There was also to be a Boarding Out Committee, comprising of the chair, the vice-chair plus 3 members and 16 co-opted men and women, to meet once every three months to oversee the performance of children boarded out. There was also a Relief Sub-committee appointed for each of the two districts.

The main issues of this time were the state of the building, its furnishings and pressure on accommodation which reflects on changing standards. When it was opened it was built to hold 150 inmates; now with numbers rising a little to some 50 odd in the House a visitors' report, among others, describes the House as *'very clean and satisfactory'* except for the *'congested state of the Institution'* and it was urgent to dispose of at least some of the 17 children

present, including 2 mentally defective who were having '*a demoralizing effect on the younger children*'. The Isolation Hospital, built in 1872, had never been used for such purposes and accommodation in this building was rented out to Clun RDC surveyors and others.

The 1930s were not a good time to be searching for money to bring an out-of-date building up to the standards of the day and in spite of pressure from Board of Control Inspectors most of the work done was on replenishing and updating furniture and equipment. The County Architect was now responsible for the building and in 1944 he expressed concern about the poor state of the Male Infirmary Wall, which if left, would constitute a danger. However, it was left to the Committee to request tell-tale slips to be fixed and a watching brief kept. Certain jobs were done, for example the complete rewiring by the local electricity board was agreed in December 1933, replacement of water tanks, resurfacing of the yards, clearing fire exits, resurfacing old worn stone floors. In 1935, the Public Assistance Officer reported that all outstanding matters would then be included in a comprehensive scheme of improvement of the old building. Sadly, nothing was done and in 1945 the laundry was unable to cope and in the future the main washing was sent to the Ludlow Institution. With the lack of able-bodied persons, it must have come as some relief for staff in 1948 to have an electric floor polisher purchased to remove the taxing job of polishing all wooden floors by hand. Cooking facilities also became under increasing pressure as numbers rose and electric cookers were installed before a new 'Esse' type cooker was finally purchased in 1945.

Although staffing was becoming a problem through these years, especially with nurses coming and going, there was little help from the Public Assistance Officer who declared that the same was true nearly everywhere. There were, however, compensations. For example in 1934, when there was a vacancy for a Relieving Officer, 80 applicants applied, many more than in earlier years. At this time Mr J. H. Round was appointed from Stalybridge, Cheshire, and in December of that year Mr Cousins, the master was allowed an assistant, Mr R. J. Bussey. Sadly in July of the following year, Mr Round left for a similar post in Suffolk. After receiving 39 applicants for the post, Mr. T. E. Stafford of the Post Office, Forden was appointed. Unfortunately, the job was beyond his capabilities, and he resigned in 1937. Later that year, Mr F. C. Willis was appointed from Hadley, and he stayed to see matters through to its conclusion in 1948. Mr Bussey resigned in 1938, when J. B. Cadwallader was appointed as assistant to Cousins.

The war years seem to have affected the working of the Institution very little; J. B. Cadwallader was called up in 1939 but happily returned to be re-instated as master's assistant in 1946. In July of 1945 Canon Smith retired, to be replaced by Rev. A. M. Watson as Chaplain. Cousins' appointment was extended to 30 September, 1947 and during that month, the Public Assistance Committee, with help from the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Lady Ripley, appointed Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Sanders to commence on the 1st October. Cousins' appointment lasted for just over 24 years, the longest serving master, and at his last meeting a vote of appreciation was passed for his '*long and faithful service*'. With the war over, services were again enhanced by the appointment of Mrs Staines as an Occupational Therapist in March 1947, and a Mr Brooks appointed as a district Chiropodist in January 1948.

As the years from 1930 passed by there was the inevitable but slow progress in activities for the inmates. Gifts of eggs, sweets and tobacco, tea and sugar at festivals and small presents at Christmas continued, with fruit and vegetables during harvest time. In August 1932, the local Vicar and Chaplain gave a tea party at the vicarage and there was free admission to the local Carnival and May Fair with occasional free cinema shows. In 1934, Mrs Sykes started an annual summer outing to the seaside, with a special tea for those unable to go. For the May Fair in 1946, it was announced that Mr and Mrs Bernard Hall had made available 120 dodgem tickets! However, the Public Assistance Committee were not always as generous as they could have been. In 1938 it was announced that the government had empowered County Councils to allow up to 2/- pocket money per week to patients over 65, but at that time it was not proposed to adopt this option in Shropshire, although the minutes show that this decision was repealed, as in 1942 the comfort allowance was increased from 1/6 to 2/- per week.

As would be expected, during the war years the patients suffered the same economies in food and supplies that those outside had to bear, and numbers were rising to the maximum of 87 recorded in 1944 and 1945. These included in the early years of war a few evacuees who were sick or in need urgently of a bed. Numbers began to fall slowly after the war, although the winter of 1947 was extremely bad with a lot of sickness about and numbers in the Institution in February were still in the 70s. However, there were occasions when the master was pleased to record thanks for jam from the W.I. including in February 1942, 161 pounds of plum and apple jam at 6d. per pound from Worthen W.I. and 37 pounds of sub-standard gooseberry

jam from Bedstone W.I. later that same year. By 1943 a Board of Control inspection noted that patients were bathed weekly and that those able to do so were given a certain amount of simple work to do including housework, messes, odd jobs and laundry. Patients were also taken for walks, went occasionally to the local cinema and also attended the Parish Church.

In December 1944, a County dietary conference of lady members had been called and in February 1945, it was announced that a new County dietary service would be introduced in all the Shropshire Institutions as agreed at the Conference. The garden was a great help in providing fresh vegetables. In 1947, there were about 1½ acres with ¼ under cultivation, and ¼ acre of lawns and flower beds. At that time there was one full-time gardener plus one part-time gardener/handyman. Pig keeping was also a profitable exercise, consuming kitchen waste and they made a profit of nearly £95 in the year.

Frequently there was criticism of the number of children in the Institution, although the Committee did take action to try to keep them to a minimum, by boarding them out either at local homes or in Children's Homes, but there was a shortage of suitable accommodation in Shropshire. Indeed, one lad in 1933 was transferred from Wellington Children's Home to a Children's Home at Shap, where, fortunately, he did well and was described as *'a fine horseman and able to plough'* by a local farmer. In 1946 it was announced that volunteers would be requested from local parishes to seek out local homes able and willing to accommodate young children. A County Summer Camp for children was started after the end of the war in 1946, when in that year at Dyserth, *"Despite inclement weather the children appeared to have derived benefit from and enjoyed the holiday."* In November 1947, the County had opened a Home for children to the age of 3 at Cruckton House to which 8 from Bishop's Castle were transferred.

After 1930, there was closer supervision of workhouse labour and the Ministry of Health (MoH) were asking for assurances regarding stone breaking employed for vagrants and stating that it should be performed by time rather than quantity. The last recorded note regarding broken stone for sale was in July 1935 after which time presumably there were no further demands for hand-broken stone and the practice ceased. Although numbers passing through the Institution in these years were regularly in excess of 200,



*Fig.3: Buildings old and new, 1964. The old building bottom left represents most of the original workhouse built in 1844*

it is not known what work they performed. Certainly numbers decreased during the war years and in 1948 numbers were down to single figures per month, with those able to work being allowed to be retained, regardless of any question of their settlement.

### **After 1948**

In 1948, the old Poor Law was finally and formally abolished and the Institution became a dual user Home for the elderly and the sick, known as the Stone House. In 1949, the County Architect finally managed to get the infirmary gable wall replaced. However, in 1954 it was reported that '*... there is some indication that the external stone work is perishing*' and after much deliberation between the parties involved, the present building, shared between what are now Coverage Care and the Primary Care Trust was opened and the residents transferred on 21 April, 1964.

Alan Goff

*Principal resources*

*My thanks in this article are due to Janet Presbous for the loan of figs. 1 and 2 and Rita Coxall for the loan of fig. 3.*

*Most of the information on which this article are based is from documents in Shropshire Archives, namely*

*Guardians Minutes, 1898-1927, PL6/32-3*

*Guardians Committee Minutes, 1930-1948, SCC1 [SC16/4A, 1/1-4]*

*Bishop's Castle and Ludlow Advertisers*

## **When the Adams lived at Cefn Einion**

Everyday life in South-West Shropshire 1829-1943



*Cefn Einion and its inhabitants, circa 1905*

In the mid-eighteenth century England was still an agrarian society and most Englishmen lived in villages or very small towns. King George III 'Farmer George' had reigned since 1760 and the French Revolution had yet to come.

This was a period of relative prosperity in British agriculture lasting until the mid-nineteenth century, although it was not reflected in the wages of the farm labourer. South-West Shropshire had long been an area of hill-farming, with small and scattered communities. Cefn Einion (Grid Ref SO 285861), a hamlet in the township of Ediciffe, is one of the fifteen townships in the Clun parish and near to the market towns of Clun and Bishop's Castle.

Families are the backbone of social structure and the story of this particular family actually began in Bishop's Castle on December 29 1774 when **Edward Adams**, a maltster and innkeeper, married **Mary Hotchkiss**. They continued to live in Bishop's Castle rearing eight children between 1775-1793, but six years later Mary their mother was dead. **Richard Adams** (their fifth son), born in 1787, also became a maltster and may have worked for his father before striking out on his own account. It is known that he took on at least one apprentice, Charles Jones of Mainstone in 1820. Richard moved to Cefn Einion, just south of the parish of Mainstone, in 1829 to run an inn called The Greyhound. By the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 1841 Richard, now a widower, had married **Mary Ann Owen**, a widow, of Reilth Cottage in the parish of Mainstone. They were married by special licence in Mainstone parish church where they both signed the marriage register witnessed by the parish clerk. Theirs was the twelfth entry in the new marriage register begun in 1837, the year of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. Richard and Mary Ann had one son, Charles, who was born at Cefn Einion in 1842. In January 1850 Richard entered into a legal agreement, concerning the property at Cefn Einion, with Benjamin Beddoes, Mary B[uck] or B[rook] and Andrew Meyrick. Of these signatories, Benjamin Beddoes was a farmer at Mainstone House Farm, where he and his family lived for much of the nineteenth century, and Andrew Meyrick had an interest in the buildings at Cefn Einion. This Andrew Meyrick may have been a descendant of Andrew Meyrick, tailor of Cefn Einion, whose will dated 1793 is amongst the Adams Collection of Cefn Einion papers. This surname can be traced to landowners and 'pewsitters' in Mainstone parish during the eighteenth century and



*Water filter used at The Greyhound*

earlier. However, a family connection cannot be established in the nineteenth century.

Census returns for Clun 1841-1861 record Richard variously as maltster, innkeeper or beerhouse keeper; so do the trade directories. The Greyhound was a popular sign for an inn. In the 1840s numbers 4, 5 and 6 Cefn Einion were one building and included The Greyhound and the malthouse, but its history in the previous century is unknown. In the family collection there are some photographs of the building and a recipe: *'To Brew a Hogshead of Porter'*. An eighteenth century water filter, used at The Greyhound (height 44cms) decorated and inscribed: *'Royal Filter. George Robins patentee. London.'* has survived and is on display in Clun Museum. According to nineteenth century trade directories the whole township of Edicliffe contained 35 houses with 157 inhabitants. Over the period 1851-1891 Cefn Einion residents included 12 farmers (at various times), 2 blacksmiths, 1 carpenter, 1 miller, 1 shoemaker, 1 shopkeeper and, rather curiously, 1 florist. A considerable amount of stone quarrying was carried out in the area and doubtless the quarrymen would have needed to slake their thirst. According to Archdeacon Plymley the adjoining parish of Mainstone did not have an inn or ale-house in 1792/3. Although there were two hostelries in the north of the parish on the Kerry Ridgeway during the nineteenth century: 'The Dog and Duck'(SO269896) and 'The Shoemakers Arms' [The Britannia] (SO266895) there was nothing centrally. Mainstone farmers and employees could have patronized 'The Greyhound' and there must have been passing trade. Richard's wife Mary died in 1859 after nineteen years of marriage. He continued to sell beer until at least 1863, two years before he also died in 1865.

The young **Charles Adams**, unsurprisingly, followed the family occupation and became a maltster and innkeeper. He was recorded as an agricultural labourer at the 1871 census, yet trade directories for 1870 and 1874 advertise him as a 'beer retailer'. However, both sources are dependent on the information given and can provide only a 'snapshot' in time. Charles married **Elizabeth Williams**, who lived in Clun and was eleven years his senior. Between 1864-1874 they had a family of four sons and two daughters; their daughter Fanny lived for less than three months. Charles recorded family life-cycle events in small books, one of which has a cover advertising *'T. Chester bookseller Bishop's Castle'*. Intriguingly, these entries include a Samuel Adams who does not appear on the family tree and this Samuel died in Chatham on 24 September 1850. Another entry includes a recipe for the relief of

Consumption.

In 1868 a Wesleyan Chapel was built at Cefn Einion, some nineteen years before the rebuilding of the Anglican Church in Mainstone and twenty four years before its Primitive Methodist Chapel in 1892. Methodism in Shropshire spread from Shrewsbury to Bishop's Castle and Clun during the mid-nineteenth century. Members of the family attended services at the chapel and 'quarterly tickets' with religious texts published by the Wesley Methodist Society during the period have survived in the Adams Collection papers. The presence and influence of the Wesleyan Chapel may have contributed to the closure of The Greyhound, but whatever the reason by 1885 Charles is described in trade directories as a farmer owning 12 acres, probably at Cwm Colebatch, close to the houses in Cefn Einion. The deaths of Elizabeth on December 23 1898 aged 62 years and Charles on 31 January 1923 aged 80 years, are entered in Charles's book, by a different hand. At this point the Adams' association with brewing and innkeeping at Cefn Einion came to an end and the property was sold.

PARISHES OF  
**CLUN and MAINSTONE.**

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SALE OF FREEHOLD PROPERTY  
SITUATE AT  
**CEFN EINION**  
2½ Miles from Bishop's Castle and 4 from Clun.

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**Four Stone-built and Slated Cottages  
Numbers 4 to 7, CEFN EINION,**  
WITH STABLE, PICKET AND EXCELLENT GARDENS  
ALSO A  
**USEFUL ORCHARD and a piece of GARDEN GROUND**  
ADJACENT THERETO.  
**A FERTILE FIELD OF MEADOW LAND**  
2 A. 1 R. 39 P. or thereabouts.  
AND  
**THREE FIELDS OF PASTURE LAND**  
5 A. 3 R. 31 P. or thereabouts.

the whole approached from the Colebatch Road, with possession at March 25th, 1923.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION BY

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**MESSRS. JACKSON & McCARTNEY**

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at THE THREE TUNS HOTEL, BISHOP'S CASTLE, on  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 23rd, 1923.**  
at 2-00 for a drink, subject to Conditions of Sale, which will incorporate the Common  
Form Conditions of the Shropshire Law Society.

To view, apply to Mr. Samuel Adams, The Guest House, Cefn Einion, and for  
copies of these Particulars or other information to the Auctioneers, Cross Arms and  
Bishop's Castle; or to

**F. LAVENDER, Esq., Solicitor, BISHOP'S CASTLE.**

J. C. Adams & Son, FRANKLIN, 23, Broad Street, LONDON (W1) 3G.

**Samuel Adams**, youngest son of Charles and Elizabeth, was born on March 9<sup>th</sup> 1874. As a child he may have attended the National School at Churchtown for the effects of the Education Reform Act 1870 had yet to reach Mainstone. As a young man he would have worked in The Greyhound but there is no record of him becoming a maltster. In 1906,

when he was 33 years old he married **Jane Elizabeth Davies**, 37 year old daughter of the tenant farmer at Trelerney, close to the Wesleyan Chapel and the Cefn Einion cottages. Their wedding cards 'Just a Note for You' were ordered from Edward Oldbury of Broad Street Knighton at a cost of 9s.3½d . In 1905, whilst still 'Miss Davies of Trelerney', Jane had purchased a Singer Sewing Machine from the agent in Ludlow for £5.10s; an expensive item indeed, but maybe she was thinking of the future. There are many invoices and receipts from shops in Clun and Bishop's Castle surviving from the decades of their marriage. Samuel and Jane Elizabeth lived at No.2 (top row) Cefn Einion after their wedding and their only child Gladys Elizabeth was born there in 1913. This small family remained at Number 2 until 1920, when they moved to the Goat House on Colebatch Hill (SO 297868) - on the Garnett-Botfield Estate - with Samuel as the tenant smallholder. The Goat House on Colebatch Hill, was part of the Manor of Colebatch which Sir Francis Charlton auctioned in 40 lots at the Castle Inn Bishop's Castle in 1786. It was purchased by Lord Clive and is mentioned in the Enclosure Act 1799 and on the 1841 tithe map. The house and smallholding, now increased to 22 acres, was once again auctioned in 1843 at the Castle Inn and this was probably when Garnett-Botfield purchased the property.

The Garnett-Botfield family appears to have had a good relationship with its tenants and employees. Two letters addressed to 'Sam' Adams in 1921 have survived. One letter is to thank him for attending a Garnett-Botfield funeral and the second, written from Buckingham Gate London S.W.1, concerns the reluctant decision to sell the remainder of the estate. This letter offered Sam the opportunity, as a tenant, to purchase the Goat House through Knight, Frank & Rutley, London. After World War I many estates countrywide were broken up as a result of changes in economic and practical circumstances for the landed classes. Earlier, in 1915, the Garnett-Botfield family had already sold off 3,722 acres of estate land in Mainstone and Lydham on 22 September at The Three Tuns Bishop's Castle. Sam's decision to purchase the cottage and smallholding in the 1920s must have changed the family life.

By the 1920s Samuel had become a gamekeeper for the estate, with timesheets to hand in at the estate office down the hill in Colebatch. Like his father before him, Samuel kept a notebook. But he recorded sales of stock items for rearing or 'bringing on'; for example, eggs, fowls, ferrets, ducks and rabbits at prices between 4-6 shillings. During the 1920s-1930s receipts and certificates were kept, illustrating the economics of smallholding

management. Sam was granted a gun licence at 12.50 p.m. at Clun in 1920, whilst resident at No.2 Cefn Einion. Tithe rent for Goat House was paid half yearly at 6/7d between 1926-41. Rent charges due to Garnett-Botfield were £7.10s between 1921-1937 and tithe rent also needed to be paid to the Powys Estate between 1926-1935. Sam's half yearly income tax returns between 1926-1936 were usually less than £3.00. Fire insurance certificates from the Norwich Union and Pearl Assurance were filed for most years from 1924-1940. Rate demands for 1934-1940 varied from 17/9d. to 18/6d. War damage contributions were assessed at 7/6d for the Goat House and 9/- for No.2 Cefn Einion.

Samuel attended local sales and returned with purchases for the smallholding such as a harness and a fender, but bidding for a bell tent was somewhat more surprising. He kept almost all his dog licences between 1909-1940, yet only one vets bill for £1.7s.6d from Trevor Howells M.R.C.V.S. of The Porch House Bishop's Castle has survived. Buying locally for the smallholding would have been the usual practice and during the period 1920-1940 Sam bought regularly from Shropshire Farmers. He also made purchases from Woosnam Corn and Seed Merchant in Union Street Bishop's Castle and later at their Station Street outlet. Woosnam's was eventually taken over by South Shropshire Farmers Ltd., 'Farmore.' Coal was purchased from different outlets in Bishop's Castle over the years including Gough & Beddoes and W.S. Gwilt. But he also bought from further afield and in 1922 took delivery of twelve hundredweight of 'special' turnip manure in one bag, at 11/- net, and delivered via Mr. E.C. Davies of Bishop's Castle. One receipt for works on the cottage has survived, dated 1938, for work carried out by J.W. Leech of Colebatch '*Builder, carpenter, wheelwright and coffin maker*' at £4.19.1d. The same receipt includes delivery of post, piles and pea poles on behalf of a Mrs Greenall and a Mr Dodson.

On a social level, Samuel would almost certainly have purchased a suit for his wedding in 1906. By 1912 he purchased another suit from Charles Meredith in Clun at £4.5s 4d and in 1923 a suit at £4.2s.6d. During this time there were a variety of receipts for items of clothing and lengths of material charged by Meredith to Mr. S. Adams. Then, just to increase our curiosity, in 1931 Sam purchased an accordion from Williams and Co of Manchester. Paid for over seven months it may have been a Christmas present or perhaps for Sam himself. Purchases were made, at 16/8d and £1.7s.0d, from the Watkins Pomona Cider Company at Holmer in Herefordshire during 1938-9. Then in 1939 he bought a Marconi portable radio from H.J. Coxon Ltd., of

Liverpool at a cost of £2.5s plus carriage of 3/11d.

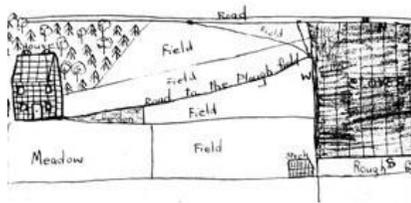
Gladly Elizabeth Adams, only child of Samuel and Jane Elizabeth, was born in 1913 into a world on the brink of war. Everyday life in this tiny corner of South-West Shropshire would, to a large extent, have been protected from the distant political rumblings. Life was very much 'business as usual' and Jane Elizabeth continued to shop locally, albeit now with an extra member of the family to consider. From some receipts in the family papers for 1911-1918 accounts were held at shops in Clun and Bishop's Castle including: Charles Meredith of Market Place and 14 High Street, Clun for items such as cambric, shirting, calicos, sateen, cord trousers, a corset and some wadding. Eight yards of material at 1/3d per yard cost 10 shillings and £1.6s.11½d settled one quarterly account. Shoes were bought at Ross and Son and in 1916 J.T. Luther of Clun, who was a taxidermist, framed three pictures. One interesting grocery receipt, dated October 2 1918, concerns 15lbs of sugar at 8/9d bought of Gaius Smith & Co., Clun branch and sold under a 'domestic order' restriction in force during the war.

Little appeared to change in the pattern of local purchasing from the 1920's to 1940s. Ladies' shoes were again bought from Ross and Son, who also had a shop in Bishop's Castle, for 8/11d and repairs were carried out by Martin Luther '*Boot & Shoe Maker of Clun*' '*Repairs Neatly Executed with Promptitude and Despatch*'. There was also a choice of butchers and grocers in both towns; Charles E. Wells, Clun sold '*only best English meat with corned beef and pickled tongues a speciality*' whilst in the 1940s W.Edwards, Butcher 23 High Street, Bishop's Castle liked to vary the illustrations on his bill heads. W.H. Hutchinson sold bread and cakes in Bishop's Castle as did Arthur Morris in Clun; Mr. J. Edwards The Square, Clun was a family grocer and B.O. Burd and Son continued their firmly established grocers in Church Street, Bishop's Castle.

With a small child in the household there would be occasional need to seek the advice of the local medical practitioner. A National Health Service for All was not introduced until 1946. The National Insurance Act of 1911, introduced by Lloyd George, covered only employed persons earning less than £160 per annum up to the age of seventy years. During the 1920s invoices came to the Goat House from Dr. Cross of 'Caradoc' in Clun for attending to the health needs of the family at a fee which varied from 19/- to £3.15s.6d, indicating that someone was rather unwell. In the 1930s, at a time when a farm worker's weekly wage was around thirty shillings each week, the fees varied between £1.00 and £2.00.

The Education Act of 1902 brought the Mainstone Board School, built in 1881, under the control of the Local Education Authority as Council School No. 146. From 1920-1930 the school, in the charge of Margaret Metcalfe with her assistant Beatrice Morris, was recognised as a well-run school with an excellent pupil-teacher relationship. Miss Metcalfe *'strict but fair'* was small and dark, drove a pony and trap and in later years was remembered with affection. Gladys Elizabeth became a pupil and her school slate, together with some of her exercise books, form part of the Adams Collection. Everyone walked to school and she travelled approximately three miles each day, which was short in comparison with another pupil, from Argoed, whose daily journey was eight miles.

The surviving schoolbooks reveal something of the topics learned and observations made during part of her life at this all-age rural school. A glimpse at the work of Gladys the 13-14 year old schoolgirl paints a word picture of life in a country community during the 1920s. Of the agricultural year she recorded her view of the threshing machine when it came to local farms in 1926: *'We had some fun on threshing day... The boys threw chaff at the girls... faces were blackened... rats were caught by the men... There was a lot of dust and people caught colds... Lots of men are needed to complete the threshing swiftly... sometimes the drive-belt on the machine broke and precious time was lost.'* Learning about crop rotation and local farming geography was part of everyday life for these children. Gladys recorded that *'our rotation [at the Goat House] is as follows: 1925 Roots (turnips, swedes, potatoes); 1926 Oats (Black Tartarians); 1927 Clover.'* She also wrote about a total eclipse of the sun which had taken place in circa 1727, was due to happen again on 29 June 1927 and would not be experienced again for another seventy two years in 1999!



*Drawing from Gladys' schoolbook*

Transport in the countryside in the early twentieth century had not changed significantly; despite the invention of the car, most people still travelled by horse, pony and trap, bicycle or walked. The rhythm of life in a rural economy was a seasonal matter. Walking to school in winter was an entirely different experience to the lazy days of summer. Gladys wrote, *'I do not like a snowy day to come to school as it is very nasty.'* She recorded the fun to be



Gladys Elizabeth Adams, aged 18

enjoyed playing snowballs and tobogganing for four school friends – using a school bench with one standing up as the guider! On one snowy occasion a goat followed some boys to school, jumped the playground wall and a hedge, chased the children and entered the classroom. Christmas presents for Gladys remained uncluttered by technology. In 1927, with a bad cold and no Christmas snow she recorded with evident pleasure: *'I had a pair of stockings, silk and cotton handkerchiefs[sic], silk to make a dress, handkerchief case and a book called Anne Veronica. Heaps and heaps of Christmas cards. Four boys called New Year's gifting on New Year's morning.'* By contrast at midsummer 1927

Gladys recorded what she observed on her way home to the Goat House from school and included a map of her route. She described an idyllic summer afternoon with wild flowers in abundance and cattle sheltering under the trees or standing in a brook. By-passing Cefn Einion she continued along the lane observing bushes and undergrowth, where trees had been previously been before felling; the area now was covered in yellow broom cloaking everywhere in gold.

Cefn Einion and nearby smallholdings were several miles from Clun and Bishop's Castle. Going to town on market days, meeting people and buying things would, for Gladys and her parents, have been made by pony and trap. The pony would be stabled whilst the shopping was accomplished. Gladys observed: *'you must have somebody who wants to buy stuff before you can sell it.'* Her view of a market town was that nearly everyone kept shops to service the people who lived a long way from the town. Different religious denominations co-existed in the area and many inhabitants attended Church and Chapel. Services were not always held indoors and Gladys wrote about an open-air service held in a quarry at Acton on June 27 1926 which attracted a congregation of about two hundred people. The service was led by Mr. Luther from Clun and Mr. Bartlett from Lydbury North and the Clun

Band was transported by bus.

Fairs of all kinds have been held in towns and villages for centuries. The touring May Fair with its attendant side-shows would have been special. Gladys in describing the May Fair of 1927 evokes all the youthful pleasures of rides and stalls. *'Marshell[sic]-Hill's motor cars were there and chairplanes, swing boats, cake-walk and small bobby horses for the little children to ride on'...2d. a ride and a whistle was blown when Miss Marshall-Hall thought it was long enough.'* The 'mysteries' of the fairground can be revisited through the eyes of this 1920s child. She saw *'a lot of gypsies in the town'* and the unusual sight in Bishop's Castle at that time of *'a black man with a black child dressed in a green silk dress.'* Later he was seen, dressed in a costume with a red sash and black hat, playing a ukulele in the streets and public houses; his wife was white and *'they had a living van in Station Street.'* According to Gladys there were also a lot of gypsies in the town: one man sold balloons and rubber animals, whilst another sold giant pencils *'a pencil and a walking stick complete. The biggest wonder of the fair.'* Another exotic treat was when Bronco Bill's Circus came to Bishop's Castle in 1926, but no mention is made about the cost of seeing elephants called Salt, Saucy and Daisy performing comic and skilful acts, a marksman, acrobats and a tightrope walker. Gladys was much impressed with this experience and drew another of her delightful thumbnail pictures to embellish her account of these visits.

Gladys Elizabeth's life, after she left school, cannot be reconstructed through the everyday bills and correspondence, apart from that already described. The story can only be taken up again in 1939 when the medical services of Dr. Hamar of Clunton were required for Mrs. Adams at £3.12s. during August, October and November. Then again in March and June 1941 with a bill for £6.6s. some of which was paid in the customary instalments. In 1941, at the age of 27, Gladys took an active part in running the Goat House smallholding to support her parents who were no longer young. She ordered 125 'Rhode Island Red' chickens, from J.W. Ahead Poultry Breeder of Westbury, at 85/- per hundred for £5.6.6d. A delightful note was added to the invoice: *'chicks will be ready on Tuesday next. I'm afraid they will have to go to Craven Arms unless Mrs. Deakins fetches them. We shall start them on the 9 o'clock train at Westbury Station. I do hope they arrive safely.'* We shall never know the outcome! By January 1942 Samuel Adams, aged 67 and the fourth of the characters in the history, had died leaving Gladys to care for her mother Jane Elizabeth and the smallholding. Later that year one of her purchases of livestock included 7 lambs, bought of Jackson & McCartney for £16.16s

with commission to the auctioneers at 6/4d.

By this time she would have known her future husband John Jones of The Red House Farm, Colebatch for some years and there may have been an 'understanding or engagement.' But this was for the future and early in 1943 Gladys applied for a licence to sell the produce - potatoes, eggs, poultry, rabbits and fresh fruit - from the Goat House smallholding. Licence number: 125/422 was granted to her by the Clun Rural District Council Food Control Committee, whose office was in The Square, Bishop's Castle. However, her mother became ill during the summer and on 31 July 1943 Jane Elizabeth Adams died aged 73 years. Gladys was with her mother at Goat House until the end, registered her death on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and doubtless made all the necessary arrangements. She decided to sell Goat House Farm and correspondence from this period included a registered letter from Jack Clee near Llandrindod Wells dated October 1943 with condolences and concerns connected with some farm equipment. Jack had loaned some seed harrows and was anxious to have their safe return before the date of the farm sale. This event must have been tinged with sadness for Gladys at saying farewell to the home she had known with her parents for so long. In November 1943 Gladys Elizabeth Adams, married John (Roly) Jones of Colebatch at St. John the Baptist Church, Bishop's Castle and they began a new life together on a farm not far away at Lower Woodbatch, Bishop's Castle.

Brian Dill Jones and Maurice Jones  
*Collated by PT*

*Sources:*

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR JOURNAL ARE WARMLY WELCOMED**

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*Archdeacon Joseph Phymley's Visitation Records 1790-93 (Bishop's Castle, Clun, Mainstone)*

*Census Enumerators Books 1841-1891*

*Education in Mainstone, Parts 1-3, Patricia Theobald, This Journal, Nos 7,8,9*

*Notes on the Mainstone Charities, ibid. No. 4*

*House Deeds for No. 5 Cefn Einion*

*Parish Registers (Bishop's Castle, Clun, Mainstone)*

*Remembered knowledge of Gladys Elizabeth Jones*

*Tithe Apportionment and Field Map Cefn Einion 1841*

*Trade Directories 1851-1917*

*William Woosnam's Family book*



## You can Enjoy Reading the 1841-1901 Census Returns

The title of this little article may seem a contradiction in terms, but these returns are not the dry statistics they at first seem and if

read can provide both amusement and food for thought. They are also good research tools and may be a boon for parents having to sort out that most fearsome variety of *Homo sapiens* - the 'orrible teenager who has to do a history project.

I thus present a gentle stroll through the census returns of the old parish of Clun, which in the early 19th century included the outlying hamlets of Newcastle, Bicton, Whitcott etc. and concentrate on the occupations of the residents. For those who are not too familiar with these documents may I just say that that the 1841 census return, although there were earlier numerical returns, was the first national return to identify people by name, age and occupation. The big failing, for the historian, is that it did not really identify the place of birth accurately. The enumerator simply asked whether the person was born in or out of the county but this was rectified for the 1851 census when people were asked to give their exact place of birth and for those who use the census for research, many people had a funny idea of

where they were born.

In the 1841 census return, the occupations do make rather dull reading, most people being agricultural labourers or in trades associated with agriculture, blacksmith, wheelwright etc. Whilst this does reflect fact one wonders if people were cautious about detailing their specific work for this new fangled government nosiness or possibly the enumerators were not too sure about obscure trades and it was easier to put down 'labourer'. There were a surprising number of shoemakers and tailors but nobody calling themselves a clog maker.

Women were almost always 'of no occupation', 'housekeeper' or 'daughter'. One woman, Lusay Jones of Clun who called herself a charwoman, made me realise that long perceived ideas can be totally wrong. Being a good 'saarf eas' London boy, I was quite under the impression that the term charwoman related to early morning office cleaners in cities and was a contraction of the term charabanc women i.e. those who went to work on early morning buses. Of course when you look into it, the term appears to be a 19<sup>th</sup> century one, mentioned in Dickens' Christmas Carol, and refers to non-resident women house cleaners. The obvious conclusion is that it is a contraction of charcoal women i.e. those who clean out dead or low wood fires and become covered in charcoal but initial searches show no references which really prove the point.

The 1851 return is much better as it is more detailed and gives the place of birth of the person. Almost all are local to south Shropshire and north Herefordshire but how did Thomas Ward, born at Whitten near Lincoln and his wife May, born in Grimsby, end up at Bridge Farm, Mardu? At Lower Spoad, Martha Morgans must have been a very satisfactory housekeeper for John Price. She was his housekeeper in the 1841 census, when they resided at a property called Bromago, Lower Beguildy, Radnorshire, was still his housekeeper for the 1861 return but appears to die before the 1871 return. In all census returns she claims to have been born at Beguildy, Radnorshire. However, John Price is clearly attached to the name Martha as by this time (the 1871 census) he has married a woman with a Christian name of Martha (but about the same age as Martha Morgans) but who claims to have been born at Pulverbatch. Is Martha Price really Martha Morgans with Pulverbatch thrown in to cover their tracks? Only some extensive searches in the marriage and death registers would resolve this matter.

In Clun township, variety abounds and one wonders how the enumerator enjoyed visiting Smith's Houses to interview George Kifsley, a rag dealer,



James Gower a sweeper (born incidentally at Horncastle, Lincolnshire) and Henry Warnal, a grinder and tinker. Probably less smelly than in Bull Lane, at the house of William Beaumont, a skinner and mitten maker – did any grand ladies of the town walk around wearing their pet cat? Early signs are here that even humble people did move around the country. In Castle Street lived James Paston, a rag dealer: he was born in Clun but his two sons were born in Paddington, London, and in the local hostelrys did he

tell tales about the Great Wen?

At the other end of the social scale, in Market Square, we have Richard Thomas a druggist and grocer and Thomas White, a veterinary surgeon and in Frog Street lived William Downes, at 25 years of age quite young to be the town relieving officer, and Robert Shield, a GP. Shield is interesting as a possible early example of location, location, location – get away from it all. He is sadly a widower, born in Bromley, Kent, his son is born in Rochester, Kent, and his mother in Deal, Kent, and there is no obvious connection with Shropshire.

Local farmers were accorded that title even with very small holdings – at Whitcott, George Selley has 6 acres and at Tergin William Sterry also farms 6 acres. At Bicton, Rowland Southern must have had a grand operation as he, his son and 10 labourers, farmed 700 acres.

I have already noted that there are quite a few boot and shoemakers but strangely very few clog makers although the local riverside alder trees were used to make clogs, so it may be that the wood was shipped elsewhere for conversion into clogs. In this context it is interesting to note that at Argoed, Henry Eatough, aged 29 years and noted as a lodger, is a clogmaker and was

born in Lancashire.

There is no obvious explanation for clusters of some occupations and in the area around Weston, Bicton and Argoed there are no less than 10 men calling themselves carters, including Richard Pugh, Thomas Morris and John Bird.

In 1861, even in sleepy south east Shropshire, there is an influx of people from Ireland and Liverpool, for example James McDermot, born Sligo, Ireland, living in Newport Street and in Buffalo Lane, William Rafling, a plasterer from Ireland. Just as the English were hated tax collectors in Ireland, we have the reverse with George Kilsoe, born in Ireland and living in Broad Street, being the first identified Inland Revenue officer.

One entry made me smile and again reminded me that too many things are taken for granted. At Eddicliff, Nathaniel Lloyd aged 12 years, quite accurately called himself a 'cowboy' and I suddenly thought – why did those rough tough men from the wild west call themselves cowboys and not cowmen or something more stylish. No local answer seemed available and so I consulted (please excuse me) the horse's mouth in the form of the Library of Congress in Washington and the answer is nobody really knows. The first known documents using this term are written by Texas Rangers in the 1850s after arresting cattle thieves. The culprits refer to themselves as 'cowboys' but why nobody knows. As an aside, I can recommend the Library of Congress Internet information service if you have a difficult American inquiry.

By 1871, most modern occupations can be identified. Locally born tax collectors are few and far between, presumably either not wanting or not being trusted with the job. As a result, Alexander Hodge, a riding officer for the Inland Revenue, comes from Campletown in Scotland and Charles Langford of The Villa, and born in Clun, probably only makes the tea as he calls himself 'an assistant second class Inland Revenue officer'.

Religion and education begin to make their mark. Quite a few people double up their daily employment with being Methodist/Primitive Methodist preachers, though others give the latter term as their employment, two being Richard Harris of Salop Street and William Thomas of George Street.

The Education Act of 1870 was the main basis for the formation of National Board Schools and so we see the Bog School, in the Knighton Road/Vicarage Road area of Clun, with William Humphrey master of the boys'

school and Elizabeth Darvoll mistress of the girls' school.

The subsequent returns continue to provide interesting items, too many to list here, but to finish I quote but a few. In 1881, John Gittins of Castle Street is a coal haulier, no doubt reflecting the fact that coal can now easily be stored at stations on the new railways and it would have been interesting to get the life history of Elizabeth Hardy, aged 79 years and born in Middlesex, who was a vagrant and lived in a shed at Pentre Hodre House.

Whilst I think they are now out of fashion, Simon McGregor an Ordnance Survey surveyor, lodging in the Flour Mills at Newcastle, could have written an interesting 'compare and contrast' essay on food and lifestyle – he was from Dingwall in Scotland.

By 1891 modern life has really arrived. At the Post Office in Market Street, Eliza Cooke is the telegraph clerk; at The Old Gate Cottage in the High Street, Philip Chelmick is the gas lamp lighter; staying in the Crown Inn is George Weston, a portable engine driver (a steam engine for driving threshing machines) and at the School House, Herbert Lawrence is a life insurance agent.

I hope you have enjoyed my article and will have a look at these census returns in a new light. They are easily accessed either at the Shropshire Archives in Shrewsbury or on the internet.

Malcolm Redgrave

## **Antiquities of Anchor: Wheeling and Dealing in Land**

Anchor (grid ref: SO175851) is a small and remote community in the parish of Bettws-y-Crwyn Shropshire, at the head of the Clun Valley, which lies 400 metres



*Early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of the Anchor*

from the border with Wales, situated on the road between Clun, England and Newtown - in Wales. Anchor is the most westerly settlement in England on the English -Welsh border. The public house for the area, known as The Anchor Inn, is the second highest in the county at 386 metres above sea level. A small



*Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century view of the Anchor*

river, the Nant Rhuddwr, runs along this part of the English-Welsh border traversing the road at Anchor Bridge. One meaning of Anchor, formerly spelt Anker, and relevant in the light of subsequent use, is for an old measure of liquid: eight and a half gallons.

Land enclosure, which took several centuries nationally, changed the landscape and life in the countryside forever. Significant enclosure came to the Clun Valley during the nineteenth century. I was fortunate in having access to some documents relating to sales and purchases as a result of this enclosure for the district of Anchor. An indenture, dated 27 December 1839, 31 by 25 inches on parchment (Stamp Duty three pounds ) records the acquisition of land by Rees Lloyd. The Party of the First Part is William Eyton, Commissioner overseeing the enclosure of Clun Forest. Rees has just handed over £405 for 'about 50 acres 2 roods and nineteen perches'. There is a Party of the Third Part; William Lloyd engineer of Tredegar. Four hundred and five pounds seems an enormous sum for the ground; the best of it is open forest land, with some waste, and the remainder marsh - Foes y Rhes - the source of the river Clun. Perhaps William Lloyd put up some security; he is mentioned elsewhere as a trustee.

The place had no name; the area was called Rhos Goch (Red Moor). It had been auctioned at the Buffalo Inn, Clun with eight other lots, having been advertised in the Salopian Journal. 'The sale to defray the expenses of enclosure'. The bottom two inches of the release are folded up and carries three seals, one signed by William Eyton. A second endorsed: 'The Mark of Rees Lloyd+': Rees Lloyd was a tailor living in Bettws; he had four sons and two daughters. Towards the end of the release there are some conditions: 'Rees Lloyd his heirs

*and assigns shall and will to the satisfaction of the said Commissioner make and erect all such boundary hedges, ditches and fences adjoining the roads and the waste surrounding’.*

Although these hedgers and ditchers can be heirs, Mrs Lloyd is excluded. ‘*Any widow of his who shall happen to survive him shall not be entitled to any Dower out of or in said lands’.* It also makes clear the purchase of the land does not give any Right of Common. On the same day, 27th December 1839, after the release of the 50 acres, the land was mortgaged to Richard Davies of Presteigne for £200.

The two fields to the north of this land were purchased by William Jones of Shrewsbury of whom more below. Those to the east were purchased by Joseph Young of Stourbridge and became Amblecote Farm - not a Bettws sort of name. Next to Stourbridge is a district called Amblecote. It seems the name came west with the new owner.

The next record of Rees is the 1841 Census. He is still a tailor at Anker, (Anker, because the census taker may have worked phonetically) with son George a farmer and daughter Anne, independent. There are also eight other persons recorded including three farmers, one with family, and two masons. Their accommodation has been built next to the new road from Newcastle made by William Eyton. This road is often mentioned in the enclosure documents, apparently with pride. Instead of building on open ground one end of the house burrows into the hillside. Stone is just under the surface and several houses in the area are constructed in this way, the wedge of rock removed contributing to the build. Over the road in the rising ground there is a quarry earmarked in the enclosure allotments to the Surveyors of Highways for stone. Other categories of allotment in the enclosure were for turbarry and for public watering places for cattle - one over the road from the pub. Did Rees have that traffic in mind when he set up shop? It appears the place is offering accommodation, the masons working on nearby new building and the farmers, passing trade. A later sale document describes: ‘*A stone built dwelling house containing two cellars in basement in one of which is an excellent baking oven and boiler. Parlour bar, two kitchens and back kitchen on ground floor and three bedrooms and club room above’.*

In 1845 there is a conveyance of the Anchor Inn, (the first mention of its spirituous status): ‘*the said Rees Lloyd being now grown old, (59) in consideration of their dutiful behaviour towards him of his two sons Henry and Thomas wishes to transfer all that Messuage or Public House Farm lands for the use of them their heirs and assigns.’* There are three seals at the bottom, one cross and two signatures; Henry and Thomas,

two of his sons, can write.

This conveyance was made on the 2nd January 1845. On 25th March Rees took out another mortgage with Richard Davies for another £200, interest at over 4% for both. This no doubt reflects the improvements made to the property. The money was not, however, to finance a gentle retirement to the seaside because the 1847 Electoral Roll has Rees Lloyd enfranchised by land at Rhos Goch. His neighbours on the list are: Charles James Hanmer (house and land at Rose Grove ), Joseph Young (land at Rhos Goch) and Edward Mortimer Greene of Ashby de la Zouche (land at Kevincalminock/Chandlers). E. M. Greene was preparing the way for a number of Leicestershire immigrants to Anchor. Kevincalminock is a phonetic rendition of the Township, now written as Cefn Calanog. The Chandlers, also from Ashby de la Zouche, were farming Castle Cefn Vron for Greene just up the road from the Anchor Inn. Perhaps the masons staying at Anker in 1841 were building the farmhouse?

Rees Lloyd now departs the scene, but the mortgage is passed from pillar to post. Firstly, Richard Davies needs the money and Caleb Stedman, farmer of Stow, buys it in 1848. Thomas Lloyd is now a tailor in Hereford and Henry Lloyd is a farmer at the Anchor Inn. The mortgage transfer is on an enormous three-sheet document. Apart from the obscurity of the legal language and its tedious repetitions, there is difficulty in moving the eyes accurately two feet to the left for the start of the new line. One hundred pounds having been repaid, the debt is taken up for £300 by Thomas Brown, a farmer of Spoad in 1856.

This is a glimpse of the wheeling and dealing necessary to take advantage of the enclosure; a success in this case because in 1863 Henry bought Rose Grove, his neighbours immediately north. (Rose Grove, a pleasing assonance with Rhos Goch, the red tastefully paler and the moor civilised to a grove). The vendor was the Reverend Richard Gwyn of The Elms, Shrewsbury, heir to Nathaniel Betton of Abbey Foregate. Betton had bought the property from Charles James Hanmer, Boot and Shoe manufacturer of Shrewsbury in 1846. In that year Rose Grove is described as *'that newly effected messuage with stables, cowhouse, outbuildings, pieces and parcels of land and plantations'*. Hanmer purchased the Grove for £1035 after some difficulty at a second auction of the estate of William Jones esquire, banker of Shrewsbury. Jones had died with his estate in sufficient confusion and debt to be administered by the High Court of Chancery. This second auction was held at the Lion Inn, Shrewsbury on 21st December 1844 *'with the approbation of Sir Guffin Wilson, Master.'* In contrast to the Anchor, Rose Grove was owned remotely for the

first twenty years of its existence. William Jones purchased 81 acres for about £10,000 at a Buffalo [Buffalo Inn, Clun] auction but died without getting the release from the Commissioner. His estate obtained it in 1844. Henry Lloyd bought it in 1863 for £900 on 23rd October; on the 24th he mortgaged it and the Anchor to David Kinsey a draper in Llanidloes for £900.

In the enclosure, existing farms in Clun Forest, most owned by the Earl of Powys, were compensated for loss of Common Right by allotments of the residue. The nearest of these to the Anchor, a mile down the new road to Newcastle, was Weal's Old House. The Earl was allotted a considerable area but he also purchased more, making over 200 acres. This pattern was repeated across the Forest. I expect he obtained his mortgages from the bank.

The name Weal suggests an Anglo Saxon origin, but in the Hearth Tax Roll there is a John Weal of Keffin Calminocke paying for one fireplace. (Johannes Weal Sep. at Bettus Dec 4th 1675 ). Other places in the area named for their early occupants are Haycocks and Barrats, the latter recently renamed Amaranth. Unstable names, especially in the census, can be a puzzle.

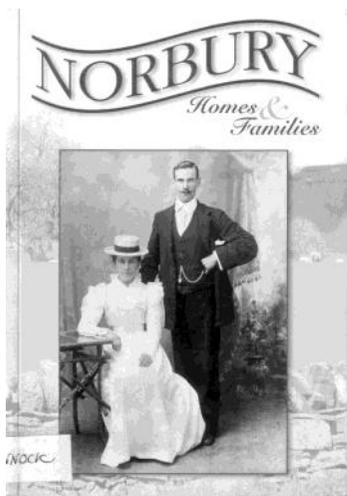
The Anchor has no alias but Anker. I hoped there would be an explanation of Rees' choice of name in the deeds, alas no. Usually the most unexciting reason is the true one. Rees was fourteen in 1800 and old enough to have gone to sea, as many did from Shropshire, following Nelson but there is no record to hand. Not many 'Anchors' are to be found in the Marches - perhaps this was his favourite pub of that name.

I am indebted to Keith Richards of The Moat for sight of these valuable and interesting documents.

Alan Wilson

## **NORBURY-Homes & Families** **By Joyce Pinnock**

*NORBURY – Homes & Families'. Price: £7.50. All profits to Norbury Church. On sale at Wentnor Shop, or direct from Mrs. J. Pinnock, Lea Farm, Norbury, SY9 5DX.*



In 2001 Joyce Pinnock produced *A Place in the Sun – An Historical Study of Norbury Village and Parish* which was very well-received as an excellent portrait of a small S.W. Shropshire parish.

Mrs. Pinnock has followed this up with *NORBURY – Homes & Families*, well-illustrated with photographs. The scene is set, starting with the Church, the Chapel, the School and the Village Hall at the centre of social life, followed by an extremely detailed study of each house in the district and generations of inhabitants. This has been

compiled mainly from census returns, but also through extensive research and deep personal knowledge of the area and the families who have lived there. It has all the hallmarks of a love of place, immense patience and attention to detail, an affectionate interest in neighbours and friends, and a pride in the achievements and distinctiveness of a particular village.

The book was launched in September 2006 at a splendid day in which the heritage of Norbury was celebrated (especially the restoration of its famous stone walls). The village was sealed off from cars, allowing visitors to step back in time to a perfect village scene with a couple of shire horses contentedly grazing outside the old smithy.

Mrs. Pinnock's two books and her dedicated research provide a very sound archive which can be recommended to anyone interested in village life or the history of individual families. Every parish should have a Joyce Pinnock!

J B P

## **‘Crumbs from the Table of Your Learning’ By Christopher Train**

*‘Crumbs from the Table of your Learning’*: Published by Ludlow Historical Research Group, 2006, price £6, ISBN 0-9536113-1-0

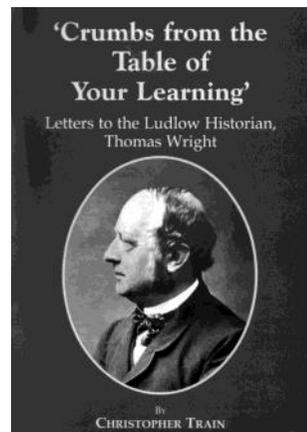
When I was first asked to write this Christopher Train was fit and full of energy and there was no thought that this might be his last published work. It is with great sadness that I will be reviewing this piece for publication after his death. The loss to the SWSHAS and to local history in Shropshire is incalculable.

An unpromising bundle of assorted letters seems an equally unpromising start to a piece of research leading to a new book. Christopher Train's name on the title page however leads the reader to expect better than that. One is not disappointed.

An old established Ludlow family, the Southern, gave the letters in question to the Ludlow Historical Research Group. The author was asked to write up a diary which was among the papers but he found more interest in a bundle of assorted letters that came with the diary.

These letters were associated with an eminent Old Ludlovian antiquarian, Thomas Wright who had shown much promise when he attended Ludlow Grammar School and found a sponsor to support him through Cambridge where he gained his MA in 1837. He produced a great number of written works even writing a book 'Early Christianity in Arabia' at the age of eighteen. His books and contributions to antiquarian magazines led him to an author's way of life making his living purely by the pen. In order to be where he could be in contact with the literary scene he lived in London. There he was a member of and founder of a number of learned societies in whose magazines he published articles. However he kept contact with his Ludlow friends one of whom, Fanny Lloyd, later married into the Southern family.

Fanny collected autographs and it was this collection which Christopher Train had brought to light. The letters were from eminent Victorian literary and antiquarian figures among them Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Gladstone and Charles Kingsley. It was a letter from the latter to Wright which contained the quotation which forms the title of the book. It indicates how highly Wright was held in contemporary opinion. Not all the letters were of great substance being for example of quite small matters between publishers and authors but



notable for the signatures of their famous writers.

Wright took a great interest in Shropshire and its affairs. In particular his interest was aroused by a visit to Wroxeter. Excavations had been undertaken intermittently since the time of Thomas Telford. Wright helped to secure funding for further work on the site and to oversee excavations. He identified the purpose of the ‘Great Work’ as the remains of a bathhouse and published ‘Uriconium’ about the town. He also used his influence to secure the funding of the purchase by the British Museum of a large collection of Roman “finds” which had been discovered during the dredging of the Thames.

Christopher Train had an admirable capacity for detailed research and has once more contributed significantly to the written record of the history of South Shropshire. His last work will do much to perpetuate the memory of an eminent local man who should enjoy a greater reputation. Wright’s output was prodigious and he deserves to be better remembered.

There were other works which Chris was expecting to publish. His “retirement” had been filled with a great application to local history. Regretfully it seems we will no longer enjoy the output of his scholarship and his gifted pen.

*MY*

## **Research in Progress: 2006-7**

### **SWSHAS Research Group**

No report can begin without a mention of the very grievous loss sustained by the death of Chris Train, my fellow tutor, and a major contributor to the work of the group. We greatly miss his presence and help. Chris was working with Malcolm Redgrave on a photocopy of the first, early seventeenth century, Bishop’s Castle Corporation minute book, extracting all the references to the making of burgesses and the offices they subsequently held. This needed considerable palaeographic skills, especially as the copies are very dark in places. By sheer good fortune this had been completed by the time Chris was taken ill and Malcolm is continuing the work of compiling an alphabetical list of the burgesses up to at least 1900. It was decided to add details on the individual burgesses taken from the parish

registers, which are now published up to 1837. The index to these is now at the press. Mrs Margot Daniel has returned to the group and is continuing her work of identifying Linley Estate properties mentioned in leases.

**Parish Registers.** The Clun parish registers have now been transcribed up to 1837 and their index has been nearly completed by Mrs Ivy Evans. These registers will almost certainly be issued on CDs as the cost of printing is so high, but it is the intention of the Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society, which is publishing them in this form, to put a few paper copies in strategic centres such as libraries and Shropshire Archives. Alan Wilson is working on the Mainstone registers, which are nearing completion and will similarly be put on CDs as will the Wentnor registers completed last year.

**The Town Hall Papers.** A box of papers relating to the leasing and sale of Bishop's Castle properties on which chief rents were reserved to the Corporation has been catalogued. These date from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century and reveal that these properties were not just on Moat or Burgesses Hill but related to quite a few properties elsewhere within the town and borough. These are variously described as 28 & 30 Station St, Jasmine Villa Station Road; 1,2,3 & 9 Castle Green; 4 properties in Welsh St including No. 45; a cottage in Stank Lane; property in Church Lane, at the Dog Kennel, the little house at the bottom of the Town Hall, vacant ground for standings at the bottom of the Market House, houses adjoining the Guildhall, 1 & 12 Bull Lane, Pound Street houses, Pound Cottage, Pound House & brewhouse, workshops adjoining Union St, Cunnary Cottages, properties in Kerry Lane and Back Lane, Ivy Cottage and turnpike house both at Wintle Pool. Further research is required into how the Corporation obtained an interest here. More is known about their acquisition of Moat Hill as the Corporation had to prove its right to this land when the Lord of the Manor, Lord Powis, claimed it as manorial waste and wanted to enclose it.

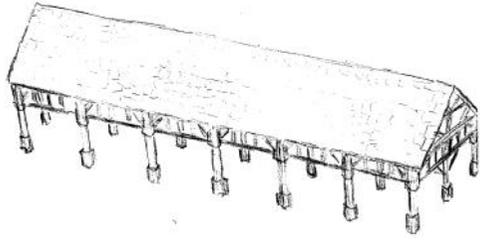
The group is to reconvene in *Enterprise House at 2 p.m. on Thursday September 13* when new members will be very welcome to join the group. New projects will be the checking of the early registers of Lydbury North against an early nineteenth century transcript, and listing the Nursing Association records still at the Town Hall.

*Marion Roberts*

## **A Medieval Market Hall**

In 2006 SWSHAS accepted a challenge by Madge Moran - leading expert on

medieval vernacular architecture - to raise half the cost of carrying out the dendrochronology on timbers which may assist identification of the medieval market hall in Bishop's Castle.

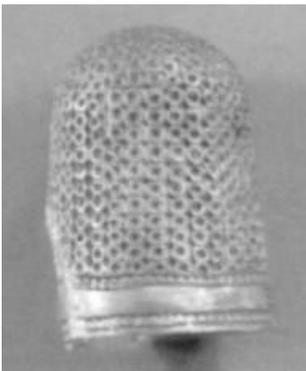


Early in 2007 Madge and Henry Hand – medieval architectural plan illustrator – began their research on Number 28 High Street (immediately in front of the Railway and Transport Museum in School Lane) by taking photographs and measurements which will result in project drawings. In 2006 a survey of the building which houses the Railway Museum Collection produced encouraging results and a further investigation may be conducted in that building to discover whether a central post is earth-fast. Timber samples will be taken for dendrochronological analysis and a search will be made for supporting documentary evidence. Madge Moran will provide a full report at the end of the project.

SWSHAS is facilitating access to the two buildings concerned and acknowledges the generous co-operation of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Screen (owners of the buildings) Emrys Jones, Solicitor (occupier) and the Bishop's Castle Railway and Transport Society (occupier).

*Ed*

## The Lydham Thimble



In January 2004 an interesting discovery was made during a search exercise with a metal detector in Lydham, near Bishop's Castle, Shropshire. This find was identified as a post-medieval silver thimble. The decoration is described as having *'regular indentations in the form of small circles on the body, plain band at the opening with engraved initials on the outside 'E.B.' for the original owner. The thimble is torn at the opening and has been mended recently. A second mark is stamped on the plain band, possibly 'CS', perhaps a maker's mark.'*

Silver thimbles were used increasingly by European nobility and gentry during the seventeenth century, and when worn out were likely to have been melted

down for their bullion value. In England, during the Civil War, silver thimbles were donated by women on the Parliamentary side for this purpose. Even later seventeenth century English silver thimbles are rare,

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with a few pieces in the national collections in the British Museum, and the Museum of London. The Lydham thimble, authenticated by the British Museum is now in the collection of the House on Crutches Museum, Bishop's Castle.

*Source: The Treasure Annual Report 2004, Department of Culture Media & Sport*

*Ed*

## Officers and Committee 2007

22 September	Saturday	SWSHAS Exhibition at Bishop's Castle Michaelmas Fair:
23 September (in Cadet Hall, BC)	Sunday	GATHERED TOGETHER — <i>Churches, Chapels and Village Halls in S.W Shropshire</i>
11 October	Thursday	<i>SW Shropshire in Old Photographs</i> David Trumper
14 November	Wednesday	A.G.M. followed by <i>Clun Museum</i> Kent Tomey
11 December	Tuesday	To be announced
15 January	Tuesday	<i>Ludlow Merchant House</i> Jonathan Wood
14 February	Thursday	<i>Hopton Castle- results of recent research</i> Mark Bowden
13 March	Thursday	<i>The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Midlands</i> Malcolm Pollard
20 April	Friday	<b>8<sup>th</sup> RITHERDON LECTURE</b> <i>Domesday.</i> Dr Philip Morgan

Election of a new Chairman and Vice Chairman will take place at the Annual General Meeting on November 14 2007. Nominations by members, duly seconded, for officers and committee, may be sent to the Hon. Secretary not later than 31 October.

*If you would like to join the contributors to this Journal please contact the Editor, Patricia Theobald, at Old School House, Mainstone, Bishop's Castle, SY9 5LQ,  
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