

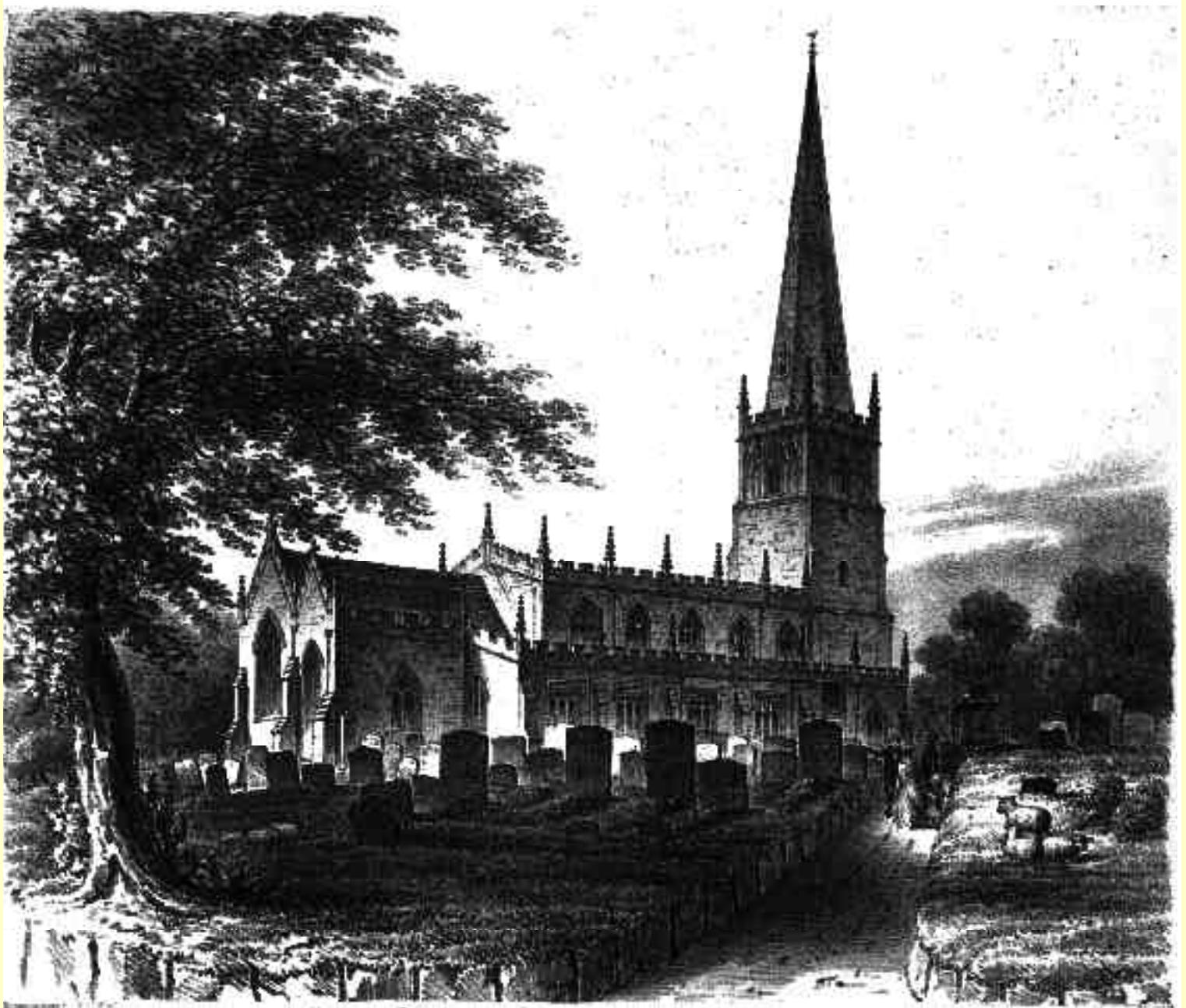


The Bromsgrove Society
NEWSLETTER

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75p



***St. John's Church c.1840
- A Bromsgrove Landmark***

The Bromsgrove Society

Reg. Charity No. 510542

President:

Graham Reddie MBE

Chairman:

Tim Harris, Church Green Cottage, 44 Church Road, Bromsgrove B61 8QH

Tel: 01527 872451

Hon. Secretary:

Mrs Marion Lancaster, 5, Carnforth Road, Harwood Park, Bromsgrove. B60 2HS

Tel: 01527 871874

Hon. Treasurer:

John Rowlands, 34 Pine Grove, Lickey, Birmingham. B45 8HE

Tel: 0121 445 3017

Subscriptions are due on June 1st of each year and should be sent to:

Membership Secretary:

Mrs Jill Palmer, 37, Fordhouse Road, Bromsgrove B60 2LU

Tel: 01527 871340

Individual Membership	£7
Family Membership	£10
Pensioners & Students	£5
Pensioners Family Membership	£7
Corporate Members	£25 Minimum

Newsletter Editor:

Anne Maguire, 6 Broad Street, Bromsgrove B61 8LW

Tel: 01527 871354

The Newsletter appears three times a year in March, June and September The Editor welcomes letters and short articles on topics related to the Society's aims and interests. Please submit copy (typed if possible) by the last day in January, April and July for each respective issue. Suitable Photographs to illustrate articles are a great help, and will be carefully returned to the owner after use.

*Front cover picture by courtesy of the Vicar and Churchwardens
of St. John's Church*

From The Editor

If you are a Bromsgrovian you will immediately recognise the picture on the cover of the newsletter - St. John's Church. It looks down on all the developments that have happened over the years and it is on the feast of St. John the Baptist that our annual fair is held. We are all aware of the appeal for funds to repair structural damage and some of you are probably thinking up ingenious ways of making that money.

Other buildings feature, or should I say, the designer of many buildings around the area. Read the review of the book about John Cotton and I am sure some of the bookshops will be inundated with orders.

Thank you to the people who have volunteered to take photographs and remember that letters to the editor are always welcome.

Anne Maguire

From The Chairman

Our townsign has finally been erected on the Stratford Road. Vice Chairman, Des Clarke, and his subcommittees are to be congratulated on overseeing the project. Our M.P. Julie Kirkbride unveiled this fine sign at a ceremony attended by members of the council and our executive.

The Autumn meeting with the council was conducted in a constructive and friendly atmosphere various points brought up by the executive were answered and both sides felt the meeting beneficial.

Talks are continuing between the Local Authority, conservationists, and the Church regarding the state of the "48 steps" to St. Johns and its repair.

St. Johns itself, a thirteenth century landmark of the town, is in a sorry state. An appeal has been launched for funds to renovate the fabric of this important Bromsgrove building and your Chairman has attended meetings to discuss raising the necessary half Million pounds needed to fund this work.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the vice chairmen, subcommittees and executives for giving their time to do all the hard work in running the Society.

Tim Harris - Chairman

P.S. Tickets are available for the Society's annual lecture - tell your friends and come along!

From The Membership Secretary

Welcome to the following new members who joined in recent months:-

Mr. & Mrs. H. Andrews, Mr. D. Best, Mrs. H. Blackburn, Mr. & Mrs. M. Brett, Mrs. J. Edwards, Carol-Anne Hamilton (Canada), Mrs. J. Jennings, Mr. & Mrs. B. Leavesley, Mrs. M. Shaw, Mr. W. Sheffield (Australia), Mr. K. Sherlock, Mr. & Mrs. D. Slater and Mr. M.R. Tilt.

You will have seen my letter enclosed with this Newsletter regarding the rise in subscriptions. Can I urge those members who pay by Bankers Order and those who covenant their subscription to please deal with the relevant forms as soon as possible, and to members who pay income tax and have not already made a Gift Aid Declaration so that the treasurer can reclaim tax on your subscription from the Inland Revenue.

I can supply you with a form should you wish to do this.

Jill Palmer (tel: 871340)

Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor

I have just received the June 2002 Newsletter which brought back memories of Fockbury Farm, the place that was the first job I had when leaving school at the age of fourteen years.

Starting from the top of the picture was a smallholding which was farmed by a gentleman by the name of Mr. Eades

Through the centre along the hedgerow was a lane called Bumble Hole Lane which led to the Clock House owned by who I believe was a Colonel Morcom which was a small mansion and on one of the outbuildings was a clock which I think chimed every quarter of the hour, I know at that age I was only interested in the one o'clock chime, Lunch time or dinner time we called it then.

On the far left is the farm house owned by the Crawford family. Then the mill was next in which a Lister engine was kept to drive a dynamo that supplied the farm with electricity.

The road leading to Worms Ash is next and on the other side of the road was a small building used for storage of whatever was in season, potatoes, carrots, swedes or mangolds for the cattle, there were no such things as freezers in those days. The houses down below were built for two farm workers, one was a Mr. Wallace and his family and the other was named Ossie Peplow who I think lived on his own. The fields through which the road is being constructed was called the Morass Fields on which the horses from the farm grazed and we often picked mushrooms from there which tasted altogether different from the rubbish we get today.

I hope these few memories are of interest to you.

Best Wishes *Arthur Stanton*

Since writing this Arthur Stanton has died but his family has given us permission to print his letter.

Enquiry about The Clock House - Bournheath, Bromsgrove

I am writing to ask whether you can help me to locate the current whereabouts of the Egyptian Fireplace which my mother created for Egyptian dining room of Mrs. R.K. Morcom, The Clock House, Bromsgrove, Worcs. The attached photo is the only record I have. I estimate that the fireplace was made sometime around 1930. I believe that The Clock House has been replaced with a modern building so I guess the chances of locating the fireplace are slim.

All replies to Tim Parkinson, 0117 - 950 8033



Buildings & Environment Report

Since my last report we have held three Committee Meetings, attended meetings with District Council Representatives on 17th October, their Best Value Team on 9th December and attended Council Meetings in November and December regarding the finalisation of the Bromsgrove District local Plan, and on 29th January met the new Conservation Officer for Bromsgrove to explore how he felt the Society and BDC could best co-operate to preserve/improve Bromsgrove's built environment.

At our last meeting on 16th January we were pleased to welcome David Slater onto our Committee.

Discussions on The Society's project to recognise the Queen's Golden Jubilee continued on behalf of the Executive Committee, resulting in the unveiling of our sign by Julie Kirkbride M.P. on 15th November 2002.

During our meeting with BDC on 17th October we discussed proposals for improvements for Sanders Park, church steps at St John's, street furniture in town centre, toilets in Market Street, cleanliness of town centre/fly posting, grass cutting, Arts Centre, UEF Science Park and Railway Car Park. Details of the unveiling of our Jubilee Sign were discussed and we congratulated BDC on their Bandstand and programme of events organised for next year.

Seventeen objections/comments to planning applications were lodged by the Society and particular concern was expressed about:

(1) 38 Bittell Road, Barnt Green. The proposal to demolish this property has caused considerable concern, particularly relating to its connection with Sir Granville Bantock.

(2) Upper Cottage Farm, Old Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove. The proposal to use this property for the sale and storage of building products and parking of forklifts and delivery vehicles, together with the continued use of The Retreat as a Saleroom is again another emotive topic.

(3) 6 Fininstall Road, Bromsgrove. The proposal to demolish this single storey 18th/19th Century ex-stable block and turn it into a car park would remove the last link with the original "Dragoon" and every effort should be made to preserve it.

(4) The Paddock, Kendal Drive, Rednal. Construction of earth-sheltered dwelling in the Green Belt. We have no objection in principle but have recommended that BDC impose certain caveats on planning permission, if granted.

(5) Holy Trinity Church, Greenhill, Blackwell. (Listed Building) Consent being sought to partly strip interior to allow it to be used for commercial purposes. Again no objection in principle, but recommend that certain caveats be imposed.

We are currently awaiting the publication of BDC's reply to the Inspector's Report on the District Plan and their proposals to alter them if they see fit, by the inclusion/removal of any ADR'S (Areas of Development Restraint). It is our intention at that stage to contact and arrange a joint meeting with the Chairmen (or their representatives) of the Parishes affected by the ADR's to see if we can help them in any way.

Jim Griffith, Chairman.

St John's Church - Its Past and Future

The St John's LANDMARK Appeal, launched on 9th February, will raise £500,000 to restore the roofs, stonework and organ at Bromsgrove's Parish Church of St John the Baptist. The largest appeal in 150 years, it aims to put right many years of erosion and weathering, and to ensure the long-term future of Bromsgrove's prime Grade 1 Listed Building.

All Bromsgrovians know St John's, whether as a place for regular services, for concerts or as the central landmark of the district. With its 198ft tower and spire - the highest in Worcestershire - dominating the countryside for miles around, it appears an unchanging and permanent feature of the landscape. And yet this building has been growing and changing since the day the first stone was laid, and every generation has re-interpreted it for the needs of the day.

From the outside, St John's looks largely 15th century. Its battlements, tower top and spire, porch, clerestory and some windows do date from this period, when a major programme of works unified the various disparate structural elements. But inside, the story is more complex. Step inside with me for a moment and discover why St John's looks as it does.

The early history of St John's is obscure. Although the core of the present church seems to date from the late 12th Century, it probably replaced a pre-conquest church on this ancient hilltop site, perhaps the *Bremesbyrig* of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which was fortified by King Alfred's daughter, Aethelflaed, against the Danes in 910 AD. There was certainly a priest here in 1085, when William the Conquerors' surveyors catalogued *Bremesgrave* for the Domesday Book. What shape the Saxon church was, and whether it was stone or timber, we do not know. The site may already have been significant, whether as a pre-Christian sanctuary or Saxon *Burh*. But its prominent location dominating the old Roman Upper Saltway made it an obvious place to plant a church, and a village grew it its feet.

As far as we can tell, the 12th century church was cruciform, with a short chancel, a nave with transepts and narrow aisles, but no tower. The roofs were steeply pitched - as the surviving wall marks show - and probably thatched. This typically Early English layout suggests the replacement of the old church in a single building phase, perhaps following the granting of the market charter by its Royal Patron in 1200. St John's served an enormous parish of around 23,000 acres, stretching well into what is now Birmingham; so much so that a chapel of ease was established at Kings Norton - the "King's North-town" - to serve the isolated northern end of the parish.

King Henry III granted the church to the Prior and Canons of Worcester Cathedral in 1232, in memory of his father, King John. The church's new patrons seemingly took the opportunity to make their mark with a general reconstruction in the latest style, forming much of what you see today. They rebuilt the chancel, widened the aisles and rebuilt the arcades and chancel arch, all over a number of years. Royal Rectors were replaced by Vicars, and a Vicarage was established in 1292 on the site of the present St John's Nursing Home, formerly the Vicarage of 1848.

The 14th Century gave us the north-east Chantry Chapel, (now the vestry) perhaps for an early member of the Stafford family of Grafton Manor. Some aisle windows were also enlarged and a beginning made on the enormous tower. Work on the latter

may have been brought to a halt one or more of the plagues that ravaged England from 1348, as the upper stage and spire are around 100 years later in style. At some point a large wooden Rood Screen was installed across the chancel arch, with a Loft over to carry the Rood - or crucifix - and on which plays and music were performed. The walls were brightly painted with geometric and pictorial decorations while a large Doom - or Judgment Day - painting over the chancel arch provided a graphic sermon for the largely illiterate congregation. This survived until 1858, when its last vestiges were scraped off.

The mid 15th Century external “makeover” also made the biggest impact on the interior. The old steep roof was removed and a high clerestory was installed, capped by a flat leaded roof carried on timber trusses. The south aisle was considerably modernised with high square-headed windows and the old south arcade made way for a slender row of columns with four-centred arches, bringing much needed light into the by-now spacious interior. The enormous cost of this work can only have been covered by major donors and, again, the Staffords and their successors the Talbots may be our patrons. Certainly, Alianora Stafford paid for a fine chantry chapel in 1478, in memory of her husband Humphrey, who was killed in Jack Cade’s rebellion in 1450, although its ornate oak roof was sold for firewood by the churchwardens in 1814! Elizabeth Talbot, whose alabaster effigy of 1490 lies by the chancel altar, may be another patron.

It is tempting to leave St John’s at this high point and avoid the succeeding centuries of Dissolution, decay and damage. Indeed, the 16th and 17th centuries are something of an architectural Dark Age, as a building designed for Catholic ceremony accommodated itself to the Reformed Church. Altars lost their significance, as did the whole East End, as preaching assumed a dominant role in services. A growing population, and the need to counter the pernicious allure of the Non-conformists, led to the installation of timber galleries, first at the West End in 1756, followed by the North Aisle in 1768 and South Aisle in 1824. A maze of box pews in the nave and aisles was dominated from 1744 by a giant three-decker pulpit in the centre of the nave, topped with a large sounding board hung from the now-plastered over ceiling. Pews were bought, sold and claimed as of right, and the church acquired an unenviable reputation as one of the least friendly in the area.

This decay was finally halted, after some delay, by Sir George Gilbert Scott’s decent restoration of 1858, at a cost of around £5,500. While one can criticise Scott for his “academic” approach to the work, the building was in a perilous state and much had to be underpinned or strengthened against collapse. Scott saved the best of the old while repairing the worst of the damage and, by all accounts, copied fairly accurately what he could not save. Only his curious little arch in the North Arcade is an obvious Victorian invention, although Scott’s ornate iron chancel screen proved too much of an obstruction and was removed in the early 20th century.

Since then, the parish has cared for its ancient church in an increasingly secular and pluralistic age, while tithes (which went in 1936) and pew rents no longer provide the once-comforting financial cushion against physical decay. St John’s was always the town’s church. It now needs the town’s help once again, to face the next stage of its long existence.

Simon Henderson, Churchwarden

John Cotton: The Life of A Midlands Architect 1844-1934 **by Jennie McGregor-Smith.**

Book review by Jim Page

This is a book that everyone with the slightest interest in Bromsgrove should read! Its insights into the times in which John Cotton lived are fascinating, and the story of his life is told with such élan by Jennie McGregor-Smith that she draws the reader in from the moment he is born. The description of Worcester Road paints a grim picture of the realities of life then, but the accounts of the sights that John Cotton would have seen as a curious youngster exploring the dairies, the shops, the tradesmen in the alleyways, the sawmills, the gas works, the Spadesbourne Brook and the Cotton Mill are fascinating to read.

One is soon reminded just how hazardous life was in those days when it transpires that four of John Cotton's brothers and sisters died before reaching the age of four. Later he wrote to the Bromsgrove Messenger condemning the town Board's reluctance to install an efficient sewage system and it was such a long letter that it had to be printed in two parts. John was a healthy child and survived all the epidemics which caused so many infant deaths, and with a go-ahead father the Grammar School was the obvious choice for his schooling. However Catholics were not eligible for entry so, at the age of eleven, he was sent away to Sedgley Park, just outside Wolverhampton. In spite of very limited schooling before, John progressed well and although he found life lonely and difficult - he was just thirteen when his mother suddenly died - he survived and the door was opened to books, drawing and learning.

The story continues with John Cotton's father setting him up to be articled to a vet, a profession which did not suit him at all. But he stuck it for four years before finally he sets off on the road to becoming a successful architect, a struggle which is told in fascinating detail as is his unusual personal life, his early retirement and the rather sad last years.

Part Two goes on to record in extremely well documented detail the many buildings which John Cotton designed, and non-specialist readers will be wrong if they think this is not for them. It is, for if you know Bromsgrove you will be amazed at the number of buildings which you are familiar with but did not realise that they were designed by John Cotton of Cotton Collection fame! Speaking personally I was intrigued to find that two houses a few doors away from my home in New Road were Cotton designed, and that Bromsgrove School's "Big School" was his. Each reader will find buildings which fascinate him or her and many are the Bromsgrovians who will have passed through Finstall First School without knowing anything about John Cotton!

For each of these and 115 other buildings details are given of the location, the date, the history, the client, the contractor, the cost, the construction, the size - where relevant, as in a church - and where it is recorded. It is a sad indictment of our past

care for old buildings that nearly half have been demolished and it is very relevant that it was the demolition of the fine Institute building of 1893 that started the author off on her researches into John Cotton. And what researches they must have been, for the area map at the start of Part Two shows his buildings ranging from Wolverhampton and Walsall in the north, to Longford and Fillongley in the east, Much Cowarne near Hereford in the South, and Ludlow and Tenbury Wells in the west.

The greatest of care has been taken with the illustrations, the majority of photographs being by the author, and for many of them thought has gone into getting the lighting conditions right to show up the architectural features. They are profuse and those in colour at the start of the book give a fine impression of the best of John Cotton's work, including the church of St Thomas at Hockley Heath (1873) and Bromsgrove's Institute (1893) and the School of Art and Science (1876). It's a pity there is not a colour picture of All Saints Church, for it is one of Cotton's best buildings - he himself described it as a "labour of love". JC was not able to attend the consecration ceremony; he obviously missed a glittering affair with flags flying, the afternoon a general holiday and the Parish Church bells ringing out as Lord Lyttelton led the procession (including three bishops, twenty-two neighbouring clerics and many local gentry) from the workhouse to the church.

Particularly pleasing is the layout and design of the book. There is a wide margin to the text enabling the invaluable and almost always interesting footnotes to be read without turning the page, and where the footnotes do not fill the column, there are small but very clear photographs of relevant people or buildings. The layman has been considered throughout and, although the specialist will find it a mine of information about the buildings and other architects, there is an admirable lack of jargon and sparing use specialist terms. To understand those that are used one can turn to the glossary natively placed on the inside cover of the paperback.

Reviewers usually delight in concluding their piece with a host of nit-picking criticisms, but this one has found only a couple of small mistakes (not worth citing) and a random check of the very full index found no errors, which in such a big book is praise indeed.

The design and setting are Jennie McGregor-Smith's own work and her computer skills make those of us who think we are fairly competent blush at the realisation of what could be achieved on one's own machine! It is very good that the printing of this book has been kept local too and nothing but congratulations go to GS Print and the author for the handsome finished product that they have achieved. Altogether this is a fine addition to the increasing wealth of local history books and it fills a serious gap by cataloguing the life and work of Bromsgrove's most famous architect. It is one which the Bromsgrove Society can feel proud to have supported.

John Cotton: The Life of A Midlands Architect 1844-1934 by Jennie McGregor-Smith.

Coombe Cottage Books, Bromsgrove. ISBN 0 9538288 2 4. Paperback £20.00. Available from Ottakars Bookshop, 66 High Street, Bromsgrove or by post from Coombe Cottage Books, 52 Alcester Road, Finstall, Bromsgrove B60 1EW.

Memories of Dodford

1920-30

Colonel Hart lived just above Kenwood where Norman Deeley now lives and Sid Collins (who lived just opposite Geoff Wyrill's bungalow) used to hang a white bucket in Randan Woods. They dug a small trench in the garden from where they used to fire with a 303 rifle at the bucket. Col. Hart, at some time, fell on a rusty nail which then turned septic and caused his death. The property was put on the market by his relatives and Mr. Norman Deeley senior bought it. During renovation work and when burning a load of rubbish, lots of bullets exploded hitting Mr. Deeley senior in the leg. He needed hospitalisation but the injuries were not life-threatening.

Mr. Booth in Middle Road (now Victoria Road) at Rose Cottage, we believe, used to charge the locals three old pence a time for hair cuts which took place in his brew house. Alf Goff, who lived at Roseville, Victoria Road used to buy parts and assemble push bikes and put his name A Goff on the front. Norman Deeley's mother bought one of these bikes. When his house was cleared some blacksmith's bellows were found in the outbuildings. Mr. Hopkins moved to Yarnold Lane, Dodford with his wife but she

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disliked the village so much he told her to go back to Birmingham which she did. He then invited his brother to live with him but he was mentally unbalanced so Mr. Hopkins built a wall around the house to keep him in. Hence this house was known locally as 'the prison'.

Tommy Leeson lived at Wayside. He generated his own electricity and also repaired push bikes. He ran the local taxi service using a Singer 9 car.

War Years - Home Guard

Dr Coaker held the Home Guard headquarters at Battlefield House, Kidderminster Road (his home). It then moved to a barn at Fosters (now George Martins) at the top of Alfreds Well. Guard duty involved manoeuvres at night and rifle practice in the day. A target was hung on the end wall and shot at with a 303 rifle. Gradually bullets hitting the wall went right through and a Police Constable arrived to complain about bullets flying over Sidemoor (a rifle bullet can travel one and half to two miles) A bullet was found in someone's doorpost. Everyone enjoyed target practice and luckily no one was ever shot.

Ted Woodhouse, at one practice session, gave a short burst with a Browning

automatic rifle at a galvanised shed roof not realising that Mr. Holsten was inside. He soon came running out believing the Germans had arrived! Mr. Holsten lived on Kidderminster Rd just down past the bridge.

It wasn't just the target attached to the wall that target practice concentrated on. Many other things unwittingly became targets including foxes and chimney pots. The rifles had open sights not telescopic. You could see a fox jump and run.

At the top of Battlefield Hill near Battlefield House was the site where a steel cable could be stretched across the drive leading to the Home Guard HQ if and when a road block became necessary. One night, when the block was in place, a Home Guard despatch rider, George Giles, unwittingly rode into it on his dimly-lit bike. After much swearing he picked himself up.

Hand grenade practice took place at Elmley Lovett and also live mortars were fired over the heads of the home guards. They were told to just lie still and keep their heads down but they felt the ground shake.

Local resident Mr. Roderick who lived in Rookery Cottage, Warbage Lane was a bit eccentric and wore strange clothes and had a ponytail. He kept a menagerie of parrots and various live stock. He used to sell chicken feed which was said to be mixed with sawdust. On one occasion at the Dodford Inn when the Home Guard were present in full dress and everyone had had a few beers, Bert Jones from Worms Ash (a bit of a lively lad) decided to cut Mr. Roderick's ponytail off. He drew his bayonet and advanced but was finally dissuaded by his companions.

During the War

The local ARP Warden (Joe Wicks of Roseville, Victoria Road) came round regularly telling people to keep their curtains drawn to avoid the enemy seeing the lights. He rode a pushbike. In Timberhonger there were two searchlight battery units in Cobbler's Coppice scanning the sky for German planes. Robinson the baker, who was also known as the "midnight baker" delivered bread by horse and trap at around 10pm. It was suspected that he was so late because his round would be interrupted by frequent stops at public houses. He used to sing hymns and curse and thrash his horse.

Mr. Arthur Fletcher was the local 'knacker man', he lived at the bottom of Yarnold Lane and would collect dead cattle and horses from local farms with his horse and cart. It was a pitiful sight to see dead limbs hanging from beneath the carts' covers.

The local milkman was Mr. Tommy Rushton known as Daddy Rushton. He came from Crowfields Farm in Fockbury Road and walked the village with his bucket of milk ladling pints into waiting jugs. Often his milking cows would be driven down the Kidderminster Road from Fockbury Road to grazing fields by Brookside - over a bridge to a pasture sling field which is now a woodland area.

Groceries were delivered in a motorised vehicle with an open back by Mr. Taylor (known as Gaffer Taylor) who came from Broad Street, Sidemoor. As well as groceries he also sold vegetables and paraffin.

A bomb dropped in a field behind Park Gate Inn. It was unloading bombs after a bombing raid on Austin Motor Co at Longbridge. The old toilets were destroyed and innkeepers Mr. and Mrs. George Harris were blown out of bed by the blast. Fortunately there were no serious injuries. Of the bombs that were dropped one did not explode but a loud thud was heard. Ted Woodhouse an officer in the Home Guard searched local fields by torchlight without success. As far as is known the bomb has never been found.

Ken Marsh, a Dodford resident employed at Crossroads Garage, returned to a field in Clattercut Lane owned by farmer Mr. Meredith to find the field he had been ploughing the previous day had bomb craters in it, one very close to an electric pole which had fortunately not affected the electrics. These bombs were destined for Hartlebury dump (night time bombing). The camouflage was excellent and Hartlebury dump was never hit. Daytime bombing was carried out on Austin Motor Co. Sid Parker was ploughing a field adjacent to the factory which was being bombed which forced him to shelter underneath his tractor.

Ray Parker, who was working at Woodcote Manor with his tractor, was summoned to return home and collect his rifle, as it was feared a German invasion had taken place following an observation of parachutists. An immediate roadblock was implemented near Battlefield House and the Home Guard lay in wait for several hours. However this turned out to be a false alarm. The parachutists were in fact the crew of a German bomber that had been shot down.

Ted Woodhouse built an air raid shelter by burying a caravan in his field. All the family trailed into it when the air raid siren sounded. It was very cosy inside. The air raid siren was located at Bromsgrove Fire Station (where ASDA is now).

Bacon, eggs and pork were bartered in exchange for car parts during and just after the war. A new car took around 12 months delivery time. Crossroads Garage bought new parts and assembled a new Ford van in 1952.

VJ night

VJ was celebrated at the Dodford Inn. Ted Woodhouse and his workers Ray and Sid Parker and Ken Marsh used their Guy Quad to timber fallen trees out of the woodland to build a huge bonfire to celebrate the event. On the night the piano was brought out of the inn on to the car park along with many of Mrs. Evans' excellent sandwiches. Whilst the merriment was in progress the locals were helping themselves to free beer as Mr. and Mrs. Evans both thought the other was serving in the bar. A whole barrel of beer was drunk before it was realised. Mr. Evans was not too happy about this. The fire burned for two days.

Around 1945

One of the village lads hid the local Policeman's bike under the bridge at the bottom of church bank because the Policeman had clipped him under the ear for getting up to mischief. The bike was there for ages before it was found.

1947

Deep snow caused havoc in Dodford. The only vehicle able to get about was the 4 wheel drive Guy Quad owned by the garage. Yarnold Lane was covered in snow from hedge top to hedge top from Dingle side where Professor James lived up to Fiveways. It was totally blocked to vehicles. People walked along the top of the hedge to get bread from Catshill.

Crossroads Garage

Crossroads Garage was built in 1950 by Ted Woodhouse. From the Garage was run a motor repair business and also agricultural work with three tractors ploughing and doing local farm work. Tree felling was also undertaken with a Guy Quad (ex Army vehicle).

Everyone in Dodford relied on their own well until about 1950 when water was piped into Dodford homes. Crossroads Garage and Parkgate Inn generated their own electric. Whenever Ted Woodhouse deepened his well it affected the well water at the Parkgate and the same happened the other way round when the Inn deepened their well. The lower part of Dodford had no electricity until the council houses were built in the early 1950's.

During the 1960's Crossroads Garage became the main dealers for Renault cars. Ted Woodhouse was a dealer for BMC Riley Cars. Graham Woodhouse drove a Renault Gordini in the 1969 RAC Rally of Great Britain. Later on the Garage became dealers for Reliant Scimitar and Robin Reliant cars under the new ownership of Karl Banner.

Dodford School

The children from Woodcote were brought by Neales of Bromsgrove in a charabanc called 'The Skipper', they were dropped off at Dodford school and the older children were then taken to Watt Close school in Bromsgrove. Rose Chinn was the teacher at Watt Close for many years and when she was on the bus the children were all very subdued. After Neales stopped running the school bus another company from Sidemoor took over. They were Wards and were situated where All Saints, Broad Street is now.

During the 1940's there took place a sports day on One Tree Hill. This was a competition with the children from Chaddesley School. Rosettes were pinned onto Dodford school children to identify them from the children from Chaddesley. Races included the egg and spoon, sack race and 3-legged race. Access was along a footpath by Little Dodford Farm and over a bridge, which has since disappeared. A fine day was had by all.

Around 1945 a teacher (Miss Mason), to enforce history lessons, arranged a day when all the boys had swords and shields and were separated into two sides for a battle. They had wooden swords and shields with crosses painted on them. The girls lined up to watch. The exercise got a bit out of hand and ended up in a skirmish.

Lots of naughty schoolboys kept climbing onto the school buildings roof to ring the school bell (which had no rope and was consequently never rung at this time). Stones fired from catapults also served this purpose. Ted Shaw was a regular culprit.

Dodford Football Team

During the 1950's Dodford Football Team (Dodford Wanderers) used Mr. Fosters ground at Fockbury for a football pitch. The Rev Frank Marks allowed the players to cut some fir trees from out of his woodland to use as goal posts (there were no nets) Dodford Wanderers played against Dodford Scouts, Bromsgrove army cadets and other Bromsgrove youth club teams. The home pitch was shared with a herd of cows which sometimes made for a mucky game! Graham Woodhouse was team captain at this time with Tony Harber as vice captain.

One of the players, Derek Wicks from Roseville, Victoria Rd had new football boots one day and during the game another player kicked and damaged his new boots. He was so annoyed and upset he decided to go straight home taking his football with him which prematurely ended that match.

A cricket team was also formed during this era. Tony Harber, who lived at Hawthorn Cottage, (which incidentally also had a caravan site in its orchard) was captain with Brian Shelton, who lived at Stapleford, Victoria Road, as his vice captain. The same field was used but a small area was mowed for the wicket. Finding the ball often proved a problem.

Youth Group 1950's

The Youth Group was run by Mr. Edwards who lived in Fockbury Road in the houses that were originally council houses. One year the group tidied the vicarage garden in preparation for the church fete. Members of the Youth Group were taken in the Vicar's car on a visit to Worcester Cathedral. The Reverend Frank Marks also had a Vincent HRD motorbike that he used to get from Dodford to his other parish in Upton Warren, he could often be seen on Sunday riding the bike with his black cassock/ robes trailing behind him.

Scouts (1950's)

Dodford also had a regular Scout Group meeting at Dodford Lodge, the scoutmaster was Wilf Foxall, he lived in the cottage at the top of Whinfield Road. Camping took place in Mr. Bache's field.

Dorothy & Graham Woodhouse

“Town Signs - Proposed Concert.

The Society has received a generous offer to fund a further town sign. It is proposed to present a Concert entitled “Roll out the Barrel” during the Autumn of this year. This popular concert is performed UK wide by locally based artists.

Please watch for a notice regarding ticket sales.”

The Bromsgrove Society

Officers and Members of the Executive Committee 2002-2003

Officers:

President:	Graham Reddie, MBE, 41, East Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2NW	01527 872055
Chairman:	Tim Harris, Church Green Cottage, 44 Church Road, Bromsgrove B61 8QH	01527 872451
Vice-Chairmen:	Des Clarke, 19 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove B60 1NZ	0121 453 3034
	Jim Griffith, (Chairman - Buildings & Environment) 24 Ragley Crescent, Broom Park, Bromsgrove. B60 2BD	01527 833252
Treasurer:	John Rowlands, 34 Pine Grove, Lickey, Birmingham. B45 8HE	0121 445 3017
Newletter Editor:	Anne Maguire, 6 Broad Street, Bromsgrove B61 8LW	01527 871354
Secretary:	Mrs Marion Lancaster, 5, Carnforth Road Harwood Park, Bromsgrove B60 2HS	01527 871874

Committee:

Cyril Baker	551, Birmingham Road, Marlbrook Bromsgrove. B61 0HY	0121 445 3633
Neville Billington	(Chairman - Local History Group) 46, Arundel Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2HN	01527 870383
Roger Brazier	36 Harvington Road, Bromsgrove B60 2BA	01527 878889
Richard Guest,	(Secretary - Landscape Committee), 36 Church Road, Bromsgrove. B61 8QH	01527 831580
Mrs Isobel Jarrett	28 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove. B60 1PA	0121 453 2100
Miss June Longmuir	Hill Farm, Woodcote, Bromsgrove, B61 9DY	01527 832288
Ray Meredith,	“Hillborough”, Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove. B60 3AX	01527 831083
Mrs Jill Palmer	(Membership Secretary) 37 Fordhouse Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2LU	01527 871340
Robin Shaw	78, Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove B61 7LD	01527 831426
John Sketchley	16, Brueton Avenue, Bromsgrove B60 2AW	01527 876626
Ron Skidmore	12, College Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2NE	01527 880196
Tony Turpin	89 Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove. B61 0AL	01527 876659
John Weston	Breakback House, 20 Sunningdale Road, Bromsgrove. B61 7NN	01527 873483
Ex-Officio Committee Member:	The Bailiff of the Court Leet	

Coming Events

Tuesday 18 March

“Bromsgrove and Sir Edward Elgar”
David McBrien

**All meetings are held at the Methodist Centre, Stratford Road,
Bromsgrove and commence at 7.45.p.m.**

Admission: Members £1.50 Non-Members £2. All are welcome to attend

The Bromsgrove Lecture 2003

The Bromsgrove Lecture 2003 will take place on Wednesday, 16th April 2003 at Bromsgrove Junior School, Conway Road commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The speaker is Walter Wilde, M.A. (CANTAB), M.LITT., on

“The Genius of Capability Brown”

Mr. Wilde is an International Lecturer with a research degree in designed landscapes and lectures extensively across the Atlantic and in New Zealand. (Please note the change of day to Wednesday and the change of venue to Bromsgrove Junior School)

Tickets: £5 each can be obtained from:

Baylis & Co, Furnishers, High Street, Bromsgrove.

Wilson's Pet Centre, Market Street, Bromsgrove.

Anne Maguire, 6, Broad Street, Bromsgrove. Tel: 01527 871354

Advance Notice:

The Bromsgrove Society A.G.M. will take place on Thursday 10th July 2003 at the Guesten Hall at 7.30 p.m

This newsletter and past editions can also be read on the Internet at:

www.bsoc.co.uk