



# HANLEY MATTERS

the newsletter of  
The Hanleys' Village Society

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## FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

### 18 November

*Talk on the Buildings  
of Worcestershire by  
Shona Robson-Glyde,  
County Historic  
Buildings Officer.*

Village Hall, 7.30 pm.

### 27 January 2006

*Talk on Reading a  
Worcestershire Church  
by author Tim Bridges.*

Village Hall, 7.30 pm.

### 31 March 2006

*Talk on the Malvern  
Hill Forts by Deborah  
Overton, County  
Historic Environment  
Records Officer; to be  
followed in June by a  
conducted tour of the  
sites.*

Village Hall, 7.30 pm.

## AVONCROFT HISTORIC BUILDINGS MUSEUM

A coachload of 46 members visited one of Britain's leading open-air museums for a guided tour one evening in June. Set in a 15-acre damson orchard, Avoncroft museum of historic buildings was opened in 1967 following the rescue of a 16th century timber-framed merchant's house from Bromsgrove. Since then the museum has saved and restored more than 25 buildings.

The oldest and most spectacular project has been the re-erection of the medieval Guesten Hall roof. Originally built next to Worcester cathedral in 1330 to house the Bishop's guests, the hall was demolished in 1862 and the magnificent roof was reused for Holy Trinity church at Shrub Hill. When in 1969 this church became redundant and was demolished (now the site of the Shrub Hill station car park), the roof was moved to Avoncroft. Twenty years later a new brick structure was built to support it and then, between 2000 and 2003, 14 wooden carved-head corbels were added, each being someone who has made a significant contribution to the museum.

Among the farm buildings at Avoncroft are a 16th century cruck-framed barn, an 18th century granary, stable and wagon shed, and a 19th century cider mill.

Two contrasting wagons on display are the only road-menders' cart in Britain, still in a very dilapidated condition, and a luxurious early 20th century showman's carriage clad in Spanish mahogany with painted ceiling, cut-glass windows and electric lighting.

Small buildings rescued from around the Midlands include a square cockpit, later used as a theatre; a three-cell prison with a barrel-shaped roof cleverly designed to absorb noise; and a toll house of 1860 from the Little Mlavern-to-Upton turnpike, complete with printed charges ranging from sixpence for each horse drawing a coach to a farthing for a sheep.

From the Black Country came a chain shop where 14 men and women used to spend their days making chains, and from a house in Leominster came a rather superior three-seater earth closet.

Two prefabricated buildings can be seen: an example of the temporary housing put up after World War II and still occupied in many parts of the country, and a corrugated-iron-clad church built in 1891 of a type that was exported all over the world.

Finally, for *Dr Who* enthusiasts, Avoncroft houses a blue police telephone box, or Tardis, in its national collection of telephone kiosks, including Giles Gilbert Scott's first box of 1924.

## **THE NATURE OF THE MALVERNS**

A slide of a spectacular sunrise over the Malverns taken by Malvern Hills Conservator Dudley Brook introduced his entertaining and impressively illustrated talk following the Society's AGM.

He began by showing a cross-section of the geology from East Anglia to the Welsh coast, with the Malvern Hills seen as a section of pre-cambrian rock pushed up 150 million years ago through the limestone formed by the Silurian sea. These rocks can be clearly seen in Gullet Quarry and other parts of the Malverns.

Beautiful photographs of the hills in mist and with patches of water reflecting sunlight included one showing shadowy indentations that few people realised were in fact stone age sites of habitation.

A selection of slides of fungi revealed the wide range that can be found feeding on dead wood, including Earth Stars, Puff Balls and others named after their appearance – Candle Snuff, Hedgehog, Jew's Ear and King Alfred's Cape.

Using a macro lens for close-up work, Dudley Brook has captured many tiny creatures not normally seen, including death-watch beetles, which get their name from the tapping sound they make – heard in old buildings during the watch kept over the dying.

A swarm of bees in a tree, a bumble bee's nest in the ground, ladybird grubs, crane fly larvae, a death's head moth, the striped caterpillar of the cinnabar moth, and the digger wasp with its

gruesomely efficient habit of paralysing a caterpillar and then laying eggs in it so that the larvae can eat their way out, were among other extraordinary sights he has captured on camera over the past 40 years.

But perhaps most amazing were the two slides of the chameleon-like crab spider that turns itself the colour of what it is sitting on in order to pounce on passing flies.

In a discussion afterwards, it emerged that humming bird hawk moths have been blown into the area this summer and glow worms have been seen along Gilberts End.

## **NEW DOWSING GROUP SUCCESS**

Fifteen members joined the Dowsing Group following its launch in the Summer and an average of nine have attended the three sessions so far. Work has concentrated on the area of Booth End, perhaps better known as the junction of Roberts End with the Upton-to-Worcester road.

Success has been beyond my expectation. All members are now able to work independently and the amount of information gleaned has been extraordinary. We have been very lucky with the weather thus far.

We have been mapping roads, enclosures, buildings, large and small and a maze of ridge and furrow cultivation patterns. One excitement was the location of the Cross situated near the Upton road Post Office. This was later matched exactly with the site shown on the 1886 Ordinance Survey map. Our thanks are due to all those property owners who gave us access

to their land and provided liquid refreshment to keep us going.

This group is open to further membership, no experience necessary, ownership of strong footwear essential. If you would like to join us for the 2006 season, please give me your name at the next meeting, when this year's results will be on show, or contact me on 01684 561702.

**Peter Ewence**

## **COMING YEAR**

The Society is building an archive of written, oral and photographic material about the Hanleys to be used as a research source and to mount periodic displays. Some old photos have already been copied, but others are wanted, particularly if they can be dated and people in them can be identified. If members know of anything that might be of interest, please contact the Secretary, Malcolm Fare, or bring it along to the next meeting.

## **REMINDER**

Members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions are reminded that payment was due on 1 September. Direct debit forms are available from the Treasurer, John Boardman.

## **NEW CARD**

The new membership card enclosed with this Newsletter contains a gremlin. The next talk on Buildings of Worcestershire will be given by Historic County Records Officer Shona Robson-Glyde and not, as inadvertently printed, by Dudley Brook.