



HANLEY MATTERS

the newsletter of
The Hanleys' Village Society

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FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

31 March 2006
*Talk on the Malvern
Hill Forts by Deborah
Overton.*
Village Hall, 7.30 pm.

3 June 2006
History open day.
Village Hall, 10-5.

27 June 2006
*Guided walk on the
Malvern hill fort site of
Midsummer Hill by
Deborah Overton.*
Gullet Quarry car park,
7 pm.

29 September 2006
*AGM & Talk by Mick
Wilkes on the history
of the RAF in
Worcestershire.*
Village Hall, 7.30 pm.

30 September 2006
*Guided tour of four
local churches by Tim
Bridges.*
Village Hall car park, 2
pm - approx. 2 hours.

17 November 2006
*Talk by John Pinnick
on the history of
Worcester porcelain.*
Village Hall, 7.30 pm.

LOCAL HISTORY OPEN DAY

To coincide with an Archives Roadshow at which the County Record Office (CRO) will show examples of material from its collection relating to the Hanleys, the Society will mount another Local History Open Day on Saturday, 3rd June.

People are invited to exhibit any historical material of local interest – photographs, albums, postcards, prints, paintings, scrapbooks, letters, deeds, family trees, archeological finds. Please contact the Secretary, if you would like to display something.

The occasion will also mark the unveiling of a display case donated to the Society by Mrs Anne Portsmouth in memory of her uncle and mother, John and Betty King, formerly of Gilberts End Farm.

LECHMERE PAPERS CATALOGUED

Lechmere family papers dating back to the 13th century have been held in the CRO for many years, but until recently it has been difficult to identify precisely what was in store. The CRO has just spent 6 months listing the contents in detail and this catalogue has now been added to a national online website – www.a2a.org.uk.

On 3rd June, as part of the Open Day, Paul Hudson, head of the History Centre in Worcester, will bring examples from the Lechmere archive to the Village Hall and give talks on the archive at 11 am and 3 pm. He will also explain how to use the website.

COUNTY VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

In her talk on the vernacular architecture of Worcestershire, Shona Robson-Glyde, County Historic Buildings Archaeologist, explained that by vernacular she meant buildings built by local people for local people. They include industrial structures, such as kilns, mills and warehouses, as well as a wide variety of domestic and agricultural buildings.

Worcestershire's vernacular architecture dates back to medieval times, when houses and cottages made use of elm, lias stone foundations, wattle and thatch.

At Wychbold, Old Astwood Farm is a good example of a large farmhouse that began as a timber-framed building in the 1580s, added brick wings in the 17th century, replaced its core with a new hall in the 19th century and was extended in late Victorian times – all using local materials.

West Lodge Farm at Upton Warren also started life in the 16th century, but as a hunting lodge before having various brick structures added in the 18th century as it was adapted for farm use. The diamond-shaped ventilation holes in its threshing barn are unique to Worcestershire.

There used to be a church house in every parish – some 500 in Worcestershire alone – but today only two survive. At Arley Kings, near Stourport, the largest building in the parish was built in 1536, serving as a community centre, to stage plays and hold parties, ale being brewed by the churchwarden.

WORCESTERSHIRE CHURCHES

In a fascinating and well-illustrated talk, Tim Bridges, Collections Manager at Worcester City Museum, introduced members to the treasures of Worcestershire churches.

He pointed out that many churches were built on pre-Christian sites of spiritual significance, such as Roman temples, as may have been the case at Hanley Castle. The remains of an Anglo-Saxon gravestone, known as the Lechmere stone, indicates that a Christian church existed in Hanley by about the 10th century.

In the 1670s the Lechmere family rebuilt a chapel at the east end of the church in brick, a rare early use of this material.

The cathedral-scale church of Tewkesbury Abbey, with its mix of Anglo-Saxon and Norman styles indicates what Worcester cathedral would have looked like when Bishop Wulfstan rebuilt it in the 11th century.

Norman features can also be seen at Earls Croome, which has a particularly fine south doorway.

Hidden away north of Defford at Besford is a church with a remarkable 14th century timber-framed nave – a feature now unique in Worcestershire. The chancel is divided from the nave by the medieval rood loft, a rare survival in the county.

At Martley with its striking orange red sandstone tower, an 11th century incense boat and sacring bell were found underneath the pulpit, rare survivals of medieval worship. When the interior was restored in 1909, the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement led

to an attractive blending of medieval and modern, with plain whitewashed walls and a quarry tile floor.

Ripple is known for its 15th century misericords, which are carved with images of village activities during the year, including hedging, sowing, reaping and killing a pig.

Pershore Abbey has one of the most beautiful interiors in the county, a soaring forest of moulded ribs rising from the chancel to a lierne vault. Carved bosses include Green Men.

That most English of architectural styles, perpendicular gothic, can be seen in Malvern Priory, which is justly famous for having one of the greatest collections of stained glass in England.

Little Malvern Priory, founded as a daughter house to Worcester cathedral in 1125, was partly demolished after the Reformation, but Little Malvern Court contains the 14th century refectory and in the grounds are the remains of medieval fishponds.

In the 16th century the Reformation removed all colour from churches, but the gallery at Strensham still has canopied panels with painted figures, which give an indication of the richness of medieval church furnishings.

What a medieval church would actually have looked like can be seen by visiting Newlands where, in the mid-19th century, Earl Beauchamp of Madresfield Court built an unusual group of almshouses and a church lavishly decorated with medieval-style frescoes. The interior recreates the effect that a medieval church, with all its paintwork and ornamentation,

would have had on those entering.

Mr Bridges said that no discussion of the county's churches could be complete without reference to that unique example of English baroque style, Great Witley, the most magnificently decorated Georgian church to be found anywhere in England. Lavish paintings cover the ceilings and glass bought from Canons, the Middlesex home of the Duke of Chandos, fills every window. The organ case, also from Canons, is believed to have been used by Handel.

More typical of the period is the small church at Croome d'Abitot designed for the Earl of Coventry by Capability Brown and with a canopied pulpit attributed to Robert Adam. It contains an outstanding collection of Coventry family monuments.

The church at Hanley Swan by Sir George Gilbert Scott and Stanbrook Abbey, Callow End, by Pugin are examples of the gothic revival style that became popular in the 19th century.

Mr Bridges said that in the 20th century, although many churches had been adapted for other use, some had installed new works of art, such as stained glass windows in Hanley Swan, Martley and Malvern Priory, all by the artist Tom Denny whose work at the Priory incorporates a view of the sun rising above the Malvern Hills, and the Worcestershire pear.

Tim Bridges brought along some copies of the revised edition of his *Churches of Worcestershire* and they were quickly snapped up. Further copies are available from Beacon Bookshop in Malvern.