

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2013

**Colwall
Village
Society**

Revealing Our Heritage

The following is an article given to me by David Goodwin, written by his father. Unfortunately some pages are missing but it still a very interesting personal account of life in Colwall in the first half of the twentieth century.

THE RUNT by L. T. E. Goodwin

It all began to happen for me on the thirteenth of September in the year of Our Lord nineteen hundred and eleven. I popped into this wonderful world of ours quite expected by my parents, Thomas and Florence Goodwin, who lived in Wood Cottages, a row of four little houses, known to the locals as the Rookery, halfway up the side of the Malvern Hills. Both my parents were of local stock. My father was a Goodwin, my mother a Baldwin. My mother's family consisted of my grandparents, four boys and five girls, and my father's consisted of my grandparents, eight boys and one girl. It is quite obvious why a census became a necessity, especially for our family. I have no idea how many we are now, nearly seventy years on, for we have not got together for nearly that length of time. It would be interesting to know.



I was informed at the time that I was the third living child born to my parents, but I was to learn differently later, about twelve years later. Charlie was the eldest; he was followed by Jack, followed by a set of stillborn twins. I came later to finish off the family. I rolled up, weighing in at just under two pounds. At first sight Dad asked Mum if I had been worth the trouble, as I was no bigger than a bee's knee. I remember that was his name for me for a good number of years and, no doubt about it, he made me his favourite. There were times when he showed it too, because he would correct my brothers if they did wrong with a clout around the ears, but not young 'bee's knees' — I always got off scot free. From what my brothers have told me, I must have taken advantage of this. However, we were a happy family and were brought up correctly. My mother saw to that; she had no favourites, unless one were under the weather. If you did wrong, you would get two clouts around the ear, and one for good measure. Thanks to her method of bringing up, none of us got ourselves into trouble, although some of our friends sometimes did; nothing serious of course — the village copper would see to that. Kids in those times felt the weight of the stick around their

person, but of course some mothers could not have 'em, no matter how. Subsequently, the village bobby was disposed of and the trouble makers were allowed to run riot. The valuable help of that vigilant policeman started to come to an end; he certainly would be most welcome in the present time.

Having been born so small, I suppose it was only natural that I was born a weakling. I suffered from convulsions and was in a bad way for the first two years of my life. My mother and the good lady who lived next door to us fought day and night to pull me through, which you will no doubt see they succeeded to do. I have lived a very full and active life, but I would have been much worse off if it had not been for their good nursing. 'Nussing' was the name given by the good lady to her attention to me. She was a typical Herefordshire spoken woman. I was passed backuds and forruds hun'til my 'little poor bluddy ass must 'a' bin rubbed raw' and the time wus that I wus in 'er 'ouse as much as I wus in our own. She was a wonderful woman and loved all children. It did not matter to her who they were or where they came from; she loved every one.

I cannot pass on without a mention of the other people who lived in the same row. There were the Tjudges who lived next to us, followed by the family of Wanklyns. We were a very close knit community and all the best of friends, always ready to help each other in whatever way was possible. I am sure that all were a little sadder when we moved to another house, which we did after two years, when I was passed as fit by Mrs Martin. This was another example of her humour; she always said she would not let me go until I could look after myself. We moved to another part of the village after my second birthday, to a thatched cottage just below The Yew Tree Inn, where I was to spend the next twenty years of my life.

My father was the son of Ned Goodwin, who was engaged in the trade of a carter and carrier and who lived at Bank Farm, half way up the Colwall road, where the very sharp bend came to be known as Goodwin's Corner. At the farm he used to keep a number of horses, which were always available to help pull the very heavy loads up the steep side of the Malvern Hills. Normally the ones needing assistance would pull up their teams on the flat portion of road just below the farm. While the team was getting a 'blow', their driver would walk up to the farm and perhaps quench his own thirst, while the home team was put into a state of readiness. It was not usual for the resting teams to be given water. Then the huge horses would be brought out and taken down the lane to link up with the waiting team. All being made ready, with a shout, the crack of the whip and the thunder of the steel shoes as the sparks were struck by the flying hooves, the joint teams would start off up the hill. The idea was to get sufficient speed up to go all the way up without a stop. Some loads were easier than others to take up, just depending on what weight was involved of course. On reaching the cutting or the gap through the hill, the horses would be allowed to stop and rest, probably allowed to drink from the spout, which was a constant supply of water flowing at the side of the road. This was also used by people who did not have the good fortune to own a well on their property, but such is the march of progress that these sources are being eroded by those who want to be paid for anything and everything. After the horses had done their 'tushing', as grandfather used to call it, they would be allowed to come the nearest way home, back to a wisping down with a twist of hay and a good meal. Only on rare occasions would they be called to do a double journey that day. Sufficient horses were kept to ensure that did not happen. Also a strict rota was kept, to see that each team did their share of the work. I always liked to go and see those big horses at work, because I would always be allowed to ride on the back of one of the returning horses of my father's team. I think that was one of the reasons I have had very little fear of horses during my life. Those horses were trained so well that they could have done the job on their own. I have seen some drivers, after starting them off cut up the bank to take a short cut and join up with the team higher up the road. This was not allowed by grandfather, but there were times when the cat was away.

My grandfather also kept a lighter type of horse for another type of work, which was delivering beer for The Royal Well Brewery, situated along the road to West Malvern. The brewery had quite a few private houses of its own scattered around the country. On occasions these deliveries would take a whole week; others would take only half a day. It was usual to keep the same teams of horses on the same rounds, for more reasons than one. The horses knew the rounds as well as the drivers who were employed on the job. If one man fell ill or if he could not turn out for any reason — men did not always turn in for work in those far off days, for many reasons — then the beer had to be delivered in time, or else you can guess the consequences in some of those far flung pubs with no beer delivered for a week. It has been known for the horse to show the new driver the rounds without any trouble at all. The grain which was used in the brewing of the beer, the residue of the malt, was used for the feeding of animals of all sorts, helping to eke out the foodstuffs. These were purchased by various farmers around the locality and were delivered by the workmen employed by Grandad on certain days of the week after brewing days. If they could not be sold, they would be taken to the railway station and loaded into vans used specially for transporting to other parts of the country where they were required. Most people kept a pig in their sty in those days and the grains were used to help feed the pigs, mixing with meal and bran. It was a good, cheap food and some people swore by it that a pig was not finished if was not fattened with the help of the grains. They gave it taste and the 'chitt'lins could be got ready quicker. What thrills we had in the country, what dishes we took to enjoying. No wonder we get that country look about us as described by townspeople, but who would wish to live anywhere else?

My father had always used horses and so perhaps he has passed a part of his heritage down to us, for I do not think any of the family has been frightened to handle a horse at any time. Dad was employed as a groom by a Doctor Smythe, who had his practice in Malvern. There appears to have been quite a competition as to who could keep the best turnout among the doctors. I should imagine that Dad would not be very far behind on that, but I think my father took a leaf out of the doctor's book; he never divulged much about himself at any time to me, or my brothers as far as I know. I can remember seeing some photographs of my father which had been taken by his boss, who was an amateur photographer in his spare time. They were

lovely photographs of a pair of greys, immaculately groomed. I can imagine how pleased he would have been of those two smashing horses.

My father went through the whole of the South African war in the Herefordshire Heavy Infantry, followed soon by his brother John, who joined the Shropshire Light Infantry when the South African war finished, and he went on to serve for over thirty years. But my father came back to help Grandad run the business of farming and carting and to get married to my mother, which did not suit some of the younger brothers. Quite a bit of jockeying for position had taken place while he was away and he returned a bit of a black sheep in the eyes of some of the younger part of the family. This did not worry him too much; he just got on with the job in spite of them. It took quite a lot to upset him. In fact I only once saw him with his dander up. That was on one day when he had sent me to borrow a horse and cart from one of the Brockhill farms to do a bit of ploughing in the allotments, in which we used to grow a few things for the family, in the food line. I had been told that I would not be allowed to take the horse on that particular occasion and he really went up the wall; who the bloody hell did they think they were, who could tell him he could not have a horse if he wanted one? He got on Mother's old bicycle and away he went, cursing flashes. He was not long away and came back with the horse and cart. I pity...

(Here a page is missing – the remainder of the article will be continued in a future newsletter)



[The following complements the article by Marion Percy - published in the July 2010 Newsletter]

"A FAIR FIELD FULL OF FOLK" by Barbara Miller

In his long allegorical poem *Piers Plowman* written around 1379 William Langland tell the story of a man falling asleep on the Malvern Hills and in his dream he sees a "fair field full of folk". Langland whom many scholars believe was born near Ledbury would have known the fields around Colwall. His folk were part of his dream but who were the real people living and working in Colwall in the 14th century?

In Hereford Record Office there are copies of gift and quitclaim transactions that provide an interesting picture of life in Colwall in the 14th century. An analysis of the documents between 1275 and 1360 gives the names of over eighty people involved in land gifts either as givers, recipients or witnesses. The records show that particular families were able to gift land and property to their children and that there was intermarriage between the families.

What was happening in the wider world in which these people lived and how did it affect the people living in the 14th century?

The people living in the first half of the 14th century faced dramatic climate change, famine and the bubonic plague. Some 5-6 million lived in Britain in 1300. These men and women had been born towards the end of two centuries of a mild climate and huge population growth. Between 1290 and 1320 a "Little Ice Age" spread across Northern Europe lasting with some variations until 1870 during which Europe and North America were subjected to much colder winters than during the 20th century. The benign climate from 1150 and population growth led to the cultivation of marginal lands. In 1315 -1322 there was rain of biblical proportions, very cold winters and poor summers (familiar?). The Sempringham annalist notes "there were great floods throughout England, and the wheat was destroyed..." In the spring of 1316 it continued to rain on a Europe (including Britain) deprived of energy and reserves to sustain itself. In March and April 1315 Edward II tried to regulate the price of staple foods, but the *St Albans Chronicle* reports that horses and dogs were eaten. The *Chronicle* reports instances of cannibalism in the north of England, although he hopes they are not true. Many children appear to have been abandoned, giving rise to stories such as *Hansel and Gretel*.

The gift deeds appertaining to Colwall cluster in 1300, none between 1310 – 1320, but are fairly evenly spread through the 1320's to 1350's. After the outbreak of the Black Death in 1348, two large land gifts appear in 1365 suggesting an amalgamation of the land of people who were victims of the plague.

The most prolific gift givers were the Roddoc (Rudduk) family who also appear to be one of the wealthiest. Evidence from *St Katherine's Hospital* legal documents relating to the hospital's properties records:

"Home meadow just beyond Ledbury boundary to the north of Ockeridge which (Sir) Phillip Roddoc, who held 240 acres by military tenure of the Bishop in his Colwall Manor had granted to the hospital"

Phillip Roddoc of Colwall made two grants to his daughter Alice c 1300

- a. 1 freeway at le Barton, stretching from the highway to the spring at Cumbwell , being eight feet wide.
- b. 1 freeway at Middleton in Colewell which leads to a spring called Cumbwell and it being eight feet wide.

Rent: 1 rose on the feast day of St. John the Baptist.

There are a further ten gifts involving the Rudduck family, many involving the Faber's and de Hope families.



Chairman's Report to AGM 22nd April 2013

I am very happy to be able to report another successful year for The Society.

Following last year's AGM our first talk was a highly professional wander amongst "Some Old Properties in Colwall" by Duncan James. This was followed on 29th October 2012 by Tim Bridges discussing the architectural features of several Herefordshire Churches and, in particular, that of Coddington Church.

On 28th January 2013, owner of Perrycroft, Mark Archer, gave us a fascinating talk on it and its Architect Charles Voysey.

All these meetings were well attended and it is pleasing that we are able to arrange so many talks on essentially Colwall's history by such informed speakers.

We mounted a Jubilee exhibition at the Horticultural Show in August 2012 showing photographs from our archives.

Our Newsletter goes from strength to strength and my thanks to the Editor, Derek Rees, for producing such high quality copy from often very little material.

Two more plaques are likely to be put up in the coming few months — one to Stephen Ballard and one to W H Auden.



L-R; David Armitage, Nicky Carless, our Chairman and James Ferguson

The launch of our book "Discover Colwall" in February 2013 was an enjoyable occasion and I would like to thank Nicky Carless and David Armitage for attending and saying a few kind words. The book was the culmination of a tremendous amount of work by James Ferguson and myself, with Derek Rees providing technical assistance. We have had a wonderful response from members and villagers alike, and it is satisfying to record that it is a financial success.

In conclusion, my thanks to you our valuable members for supporting us, and my sincere thanks to our Secretary John Atkin, our Treasurer Margaret Matthews and to the rest of the Committee, Becky, Derek, Barbara, Susan, and Marion — and our custodian of the teapot, Penny.

Michael Milne



Our Membership Secretary is looking for volunteers to deliver the Newsletter in the Crescent (currently 8 addresses) and the Stone Drive/Oak Drive area (currently 17 addresses). If you can help, please contact Margaret [REDACTED] or speak to a Committee member.

Future Talks

16th September 2013:

Amanda Simons: 'British Camp'

27th January 2014:

Gordon Wood: The Building of the Hereford to Worcester Railway.

28th April 2014: AGM

followed by a talk from

Professor Richard (Dick) Bryant:
The Ice Age in Colwall

From the Editor

My thanks to our contributors. Any article on Colwall related subjects (however tenuous!) are always welcome. If you are prepared to receive your newsletters by electronic means, please register with the email address below. Corrections and additions to the information in newsletters are always welcome, as are **CONTRIBUTIONS!**

Newsletter Editor: Derek Rees, [REDACTED] email: cvnewsletter@colwall.info

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