

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2015

**Colwatts
Village
Society**

Revealing Our Heritage



The Will of Charles Dickens and The Malvern Connection – Part Two by David Hodgson

In September 1851 Charles Dickens came to Malvern with his family for a short holiday and wrote an account of it in October 1851. This is a resume of the article.

“To spend two days out of the smoke having lived in it for five years is a momentous event. Visits have been made during that time to Manchester, Newcastle and other towns but these visits are merely from one density of smoke to another.

Today is a brilliant September day, looking out from the noisy rail road which steals away under the trees we see hidden villages, in the cornfields geese are waddling in the stubble, partridges are perking up their heads here and there or skirring together over the yellow field.



Abbey Road, Malvern

There is a band of reapers at work on the high arable ground all stopping work together to glance down at the train as it passes by, a moment later all back to their work as the train enters the tunnel. Out of the tunnel and we arrive at quiet Worcester where shadows the shadows of the Cathedral architecture are cut sharp by the strong sunlight. Even the central streets of the city are quiet compared to Birmingham, the clean red brick houses within the precincts, the pavements seem never to be soiled by less dainty feet than those of ladies and clergy.

In the cloisters the shady side of the cathedral contrasts with those that are sun flecked and how brilliant is the square carpet of green in the middle.

Leaving Worcester we are wondering at sensation of coach travelling after years of rail roads, how beautiful are the first hop grounds with tossing clusters and waving streamers of the freshest green, little avenues open between the poles to quench the thirst of the eye and mind long parched in the town desert.



Knotsford Lodge, Malvern

There are pear trees where the pears cluster on the top most boughs fifty feet high, these are the pears from which the famous Barlam perry is made. As for the apples the imagination aches with the question of what is to become of so many.

Behind these however is something much better than them, the clear outline of the Malvern Hills.

First the blue mass growing brown and greener with every minute, the rich woodland and then the long straight row of dwellings with their white walls shining in the sun, here is the playground for our three days holiday.

We are sure to be tipsy with water after a few days trial of the sparkling water.

Whatever the woes of the world in general Malvern is always merry, that is the water patients are, and when we speak of Malvern now we mean water patients.

Once more we glance down upon Great Malvern before we turn toward the Wyche, the old church looks well through the square top, the roof of the tower is the most conspicuous part of it to us. How gay the white houses look with their gardens. The parterres, one rose coloured with verbenas another scarlet with geraniums are bright to the eye. The white road looks terribly dusty but this is decidedly the best way to the wells to those not in a hurry.”

Catherine and her sister were the daughters of George Hogarth a Journalist. The children of Charles and Catherine were:-

Charles Culliford (Boz) Dickens 1837-1896

Mary (Mamie) Dickens 1838-1896 named after Catherine's sister Mary who died in 1837.

Kate Macready Dickens 1839-1929.

Walter Savage Landor Dickens 1841-1863.

Francis Jeffrey Dickens 1844 -1846.

Alfred D'Orsay Dickens 1845-1912.

Sydney Smith Hardiman Dickens 1847-1872..

Henry Fielding Dickens 1849-1933, later Sir Henry

Dora Annie Dickens 1850-1918

Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens 1852-1902

Looking at the will of Charles Dickens in 1869 he made several bequests.

He gave £1000 free of legacy duty to Miss Ellen Tearman. Mrs Anne Cornelius his faithful servant 19 guineas also 19 guineas to her daughter. All servants in his employment at the time of his death also received 19 guineas each.

To his daughter Mary £1000 and an annuity of £300 a year during her life, as long as she was unmarried, with a proviso if she did get married.

He gave his dear sister in law Georgina Hogarth £8000 together with all his personal jewellery, objects from his writing table and room together with his private papers, he described Georgina as the best and truest friend a man could have.

His son Charles was given his library of printed books, engravings and prints.

£8000 was given to his sons Charles and Henry upon trust to invest the same and to pay an annual income to his wife until her decease. Upon the death of Catherine the sum of £8000 and the investments thereof was to be put in trust for his children subject to the proviso relating to his daughter Mary.

His trusted and dear friend John Forster was bequeathed his gold repeater watch together with his chains seals and appendages also manuscripts of his published works.

Dickens wished it to be recorded that since the mutual separation from Catherine she had been in receipt of an annual income of £600 from him and all the great charges of a numerous and expensive family had been devolved wholly upon himself. (Dickens and Catherine had ten children.)

It was the wish of Dickens that no public announcement be made of the time and place of his burial, that no more than three plain mourning coaches be employed and that those attending his funeral wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hat band or other such revolting absurdity.

A codicil was added to the will in 1870 giving his share and interest in the weekly journal "All the Year Round" to his son Charles Dickens the younger.

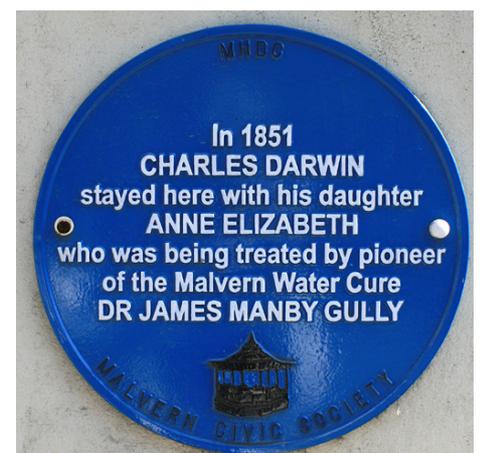
Who was Mrs Ann Cornelius? She was the former trusted servant Ann Brown. Ann married Edward Cornelius a Pianoforte Polisher at Marylebone in 1855, the daughter referred to in the will was Catherine Georgina Ann Cornelius born in 1857 presumably named after Catherine Dickens, Georgina Hogarth and her mother.

Catherine Cornelius married John Alexander Romer, a Precious Stones Dealer in December 1873. Catherine and John had seven children.

8 January. The Will of Catherine Dickens late of 70 Gloucester - crescent Regent's Park in the County of Middlesex Widow who died 22 November 1879 at 70 Gloucester - crescent was proved at the Principal Registry by Henry Fielding Dickens of 7 Crown-Office-row Temple in the City of London Barrister-at-Law the Son the sole Executor.

Catherine died in 1879, her personal estate was under £800, the Executor was her son Henry Fielding Dickens.

Another visitor to Malvern for the Water cure was Anne, the daughter of Charles Darwin, sadly she died in 1851, her memorial stone is at the Priory.



Information about the German Pilot who may have been a pupil at Malvern College

I received an email from the Malvern College Archivist, Ian Quickfall, who had seen the article by Barbara Eagles about a German pilot shot down near Colwall. I reproduce the text below:

"I am the archivist at Malvern College and Jane Hill forwarded the latest edition of your newsletter to me, drawing my attention to the last paragraph about the Luftwaffe plane shot down at Malvern Wells in 1942 and the alleged Malvern College pilot.

It's a good story but it may not be quite as your correspondent tells it. I have read the accident report and it is true that Junkers 88 M2 +AK was brought down on July 31 1942 by a Mosquito night fighter (quite possibly using the new radar developed at TRE at the College) of 264 Squadron piloted by S/L CA Cooke with navigator PO R E McPherson.

The four crew members were taken prisoner and are named as Gangl, Nisch, Wohlers and Sihorsch. I have checked the College databases and none of them appear to belong to us but it is just possible that one of them might have been at the College with an anglicised form of his name - your report suggests that it was the pilot, Lt. Gangl.

Nevertheless it is a fascinating piece of history and I am investigating further with the appropriate authorities. If I do find out more I will forward the details to you but in any event I hope that what I have found out may form the basis for an article in your next edition."

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Colwall Bird Survey (www.birdsurvey.colwall.info)

The Colwall Bird Survey is a group of local volunteers who provide their time and energy to watch and record the species of birds that come into their gardens. Whilst we are a small group we do collect interesting data on local birds which can then be compared against national figures collected through other organisations. This article presents some of the findings from our observations. For full details of the trends both locally and nationally, please see our web site.



Recordings within Colwall over the last few years have shown a significant rise in Buzzard and Goldfinch, whilst species such as Raven and Stock Doves are showing healthy increases. A number of other species are showing a more gradual but steady increase, for example Chiffchaff, Cuckoo, Magpie and Kestrel. Overall, the trend is around 22 species showing moderate to significant increases in numbers.



However, there are a number of species showing a pronounced long-term downward trend, in particular, Mistle Thrush, Greenfinch and Starling. The House Sparrow and several of the Tit family are also showing a marked drop in numbers. Overall, around 26 species of birds are showing moderate to significant decrease in numbers.

The recordings for Colwall do show some differences to those observed nationally. For example, nationally Long Tailed Tits are increasing in numbers but locally they appear to be declining. However, Tawny Owls are showing a slight increase in Colwall as compared to no overall increase across the UK. Unfortunately, the House Sparrow and Greenfinch are on the decline in Colwall and Nationally.



Joining the Colwall Bird Survey is easy – you just record which bird species you see each month, no need to count them or look every day. Perhaps keep a bird recording form next to the kitchen sink. Bird recording forms can be downloaded from our website.

Future Talks

14th September 2015

NB: Cancelled due to ill health

16th November 2015

An Auden/Britten/'Night Mail' evening.
(Film, Music and Narration)

25th January 2016

Cora Weaver on 'The History of Malvern Water'.

18th April 2016 AGM

Ron Shoesmith on 'Alfred Watkin'.

20th June 2016

Gary Butler on 'The Restoration of the Ledbury Master's House'.

From the Editor

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!**

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