

Newsletter

JUNE 2020

Colwall Village Society
Revealing Our Heritage

Colwall Village Society Update

Our April AGM had to be cancelled because of the lock-down imposed by the government due to Covid-19. It looks as if the restrictions on social gatherings may last for some time. With that in mind the committee has decided that the Annual General Meeting will be held by correspondence this year.

You will find included with this Newsletter a copy of

- a) The Minutes of the 22nd Annual General Meeting
- b) The Chairman's Report to the 23rd AGM
- c) The Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31st March 2020

which you will be asked to vote on as described in the Chairman's covering letter.

The Officers and Committee Members retire at the AGM and are eligible for re-election. The following have indicated their willingness to stand for the year 2020/21, as indicated.

Chairman: Liz Hill

Committee Member: Margaret Matthews

Treasurer: John Atkin

Archive Co-ordinator : Susan Bond

Newsletter Editor: Andy Ball

Secretary: Vacant

The committee has the ability to co-opt members on to the committee at any time of year, and we would welcome any member who would like to join us as it would enable us to do more. Please contact Liz Hill at cvsmember@colwall.info if you would like to find out more about the committee. Due to the current uncertainties surrounding social gatherings, the committee has agreed that members whose subscriptions ended on the 31st March 2020 will be extended until the 31st March 2021. No further payment is required. Please let Liz Hill know of any changes to your details.

John Atkin
Chairman



A Tale of Two Parishes

Occupational Change in Colwall and Cradley, 1851-1901

One of the problems facing the writer of a parish history is the need for context. It is all very well to report the value of a Victorian rector's stipend, the size of the largest estates in 1913, or the foundation year of a village school, but the reader can rightfully be expected to think 'so what?'. Without some form of comparison with similar information at a national, county or neighbouring parish level, she or he will usually have little idea of the significance of the material in question.

Recent and ongoing research by VCH staff and volunteers in Colwall and Cradley parishes provides an interesting comparison between what might be regarded as an exceptional case (Colwall) and a more normal one (Cradley). In many ways they are similar, of course, both being large parishes at similar distances from the rapidly growing Victorian town of Malvern. Yet, while the railway arrived in Colwall in 1861, heralding the development of a number of commercial and recreational activities over the next half century, Cradley had only the Worcester-Bromyard turnpike road to provide access further afield. In addition, while Colwall's magnificent scenery and spring water began to attract a growing population that included many wealthy households and retinues of servants, Cradley's more subtle rural landscape registered a decline in residential numbers.

Much of the evidence for what appear to be contrasting nineteenth-century histories can be found by comparing the occupational data for the two parishes as recorded by the census enumerators in 1851 and 1901. This source of information is not ideal, however, particularly with regard to females whose occupations are often described as 'farmer's wife', 'clergyman's daughter', 'agricultural labourer's wife', 'teacher's daughter', etc. It is likely that in many such cases the wife or daughter concerned actually contributed to the work of the farm, parish, or school, but a further complicating factor is that this sort of designation tended to be far less common by 1901 than it had been hitherto. For the purposes of this article, therefore, only women described as farm workers in their own right have been included in the tables. An additional complication is that some enumerators used the term 'general labourer' without specifying the industry or tasks involved. Thus in 1851, whereas three of Cradley's four officials used the term 'agricultural' or 'farm labourer', the fourth used the more general designation. Careful examination of the data suggests that all 'generals' in 1851 and 1901 can be safely added to the farm worker category, but this is not necessarily true elsewhere.

Tables of figures for Cradley's male and female occupations between 1851 and 1901 have been compiled, counting men with two occupations as 0.5 in each category and excluding data for the North Hill district (which was part of Cradley in 1851 but which had become part of West Malvern by 1901). The numbers make it immediately apparent that, whereas Colwall's total of working men increased by two-thirds, the Cradley number - like much of rural England - declined by 21 per cent. About two-thirds of male employment in both parishes in 1851 had been directly in agriculture, and both experienced heavy job losses in this sector. At a national level this decline in the farm workforce has been ascribed to a combination of factors: the decline in prices following a rise in imports from the 'new world', a gradual increase in mechanisation on the farm, and the higher wages that attracted rural folk to the rapidly-growing Victorian cities. In Colwall, however, the loss of nearly 80 farm-based jobs was more than compensated for by the growth of other sectors. In manufacturing, for example, the brewery, vinegar works and mineral water bottling plant were important new ventures, while the railway created a need for station, signal and track maintenance workers. The arrival of wealthy in-migrants created jobs in construction and domestic service while also adding to the list of those in professional practice.

In Cradley the range of off-farm occupations was so severely limited that, despite heavy job losses, the agricultural sector in 1901 retained over 60 per cent of the total male workforce. Manufacturing, only seen in the form of traditional 'cottage' trades like shoemaking and tailoring, declined markedly too. Most other sectors grew very slowly, often in response to national developments in policing, compulsory schooling or the Post Office.

A similar situation applied to female occupations. The number of agricultural workers, for example, fell by nearly 60 per cent, yet the sector actually increased in terms of its relative importance! The decline in 'cottage industries' was catastrophic, however, with a massive loss of 144 jobs in glove making arising from foreign competition and the tendency of Worcester firms to take on more sewing work 'in house'. Colwall gloveresses were similarly affected, but their number in 1851 was less significant. Moreover, while the dressmaking trade in Colwall appears to have grown in relation to a rising and more affluent population, that of Cradley suffered from declining local demand. The same patterns can be seen with respect to jobs in the few local shops and in domestic service. Only public services showed any modest signs of growth, albeit in more aspirational occupations.

By comparing mid- and late-Victorian occupational structures in Colwall and Cradley, the local historian is made acutely aware of the exceptional nature of the former's economy. The coming of the railway is an obvious factor in

its metamorphosis, but one that unlocked the potential residential and recreational use of the Malvern Hills environment and fostered the development of local entrepreneurship. Employment growth occurred *despite* the heavy loss of jobs in agriculture. Cradley's must have been the more normal experience of Herefordshire parishes, where a cycle of agricultural decline, the collapse of some important cottage industries and net outmigration led to, at best, the relative stagnation of local services.

Table 1. Male Occupations in Cradley in 1851 & 1901

Industry Group	Occupation	1851		1901		Change	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	Farmers, Farmers' Sons & Bailiffs Farm Labourers (inc. Waggoners) Other land-based manual workers	334.5	67.6	243	62.1	-91.5	-5.5
Extractive	Quarrymen	8	1.6	10	2.6	2	1
Manufacturing	Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights Shoemakers and Tailors Millers Other Manufacturing Trades	61.5	12.4	23	5.9	-38.5	-6.5
Construction	Bricklayers, Builders & their Labourers Carpenters and Sawyers Stone Masons & Cutters Other Construction Workers	43	8.7	47	12	4	3.3
Distribution	Butchers & Bakers Grocers & Other Shop Workers	8	1.6	12.5	3.2	4.5	1.6
Transport	Carters (off farm), Cab & Stable Staff	4	0.8	5.5	1.4	1.5	0.6
Public & Professionals	Teachers Clergy & Other Professionals Police & Post Office Workers	4.5	0.9	13	3.3	8.5	2.4
House Servants	Butlers, Coachmen, Grooms, etc Gardeners	15	3	17	4.3	2	2
Hospitality	Publicans, Innkeepers & their Staff	3	0.6	3	0.8	0	0.2
Other	Labourers not elsewhere specified Roadmen Other, non-Manual Workers	13	2.6	17	4.3	4	1.7
Total	All Occupations	494.5	100*	391	100*	-104	0

* Does not add up due to rounding

Table 2. Female Occupations in Cradley in 1851 & 1901

Industry Group	Occupation	1851		1901		Change	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	Farmers	48	16.2	20	19.4	-28	3.2
	Farm Labourers (including Waggoners)						
Manufacturing	Dressmaker, Needlewomen, etc	183	61.9	18	17.5	-165	-44.4
	Glove Makers						
	Other Crafts						
Public & Professionals	Teachers	4	1.4	8.5	8.3	4.5	6.9
	Nurses & Midwives						
	Post Office Workers						
Servants, etc	Domestic Servants	53	17.9	46	44.7	-7	26.8
	Laundresses & Washerwomen						
	Charwomen						
Hospitality	Publicans, Innkeepers & their Staff	1	0.3	2.5	2.4	1.5	2.1
Other	Other, non-manual workers	0	0	2	1.9	2	1.9
Total	All Occupations	295.5	100*	103	100	-192.5	0

*Does not add up due to rounding

[Editors Note: The tables have been edited to present the top level figures, not details of each category]

Sources include: Census Enumerators' Books for Colwall and Cradley parishes in 1851 and 1901, accessed via Ancestry.com; E. Higgs, Making Sense of the Census (London, 1989); D. C Lyes, The Leather Glove Industry of Worcester in the Nineteenth Century (Worcester, 1973); P. J. Perry, British Farming in the Great Depression (Newton Abbot, 1974); J. Saville, Rural Depopulation in England and Wales 1851-1951 (London, 1957).

John Fagg

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EDITORS NOTE: There are more articles from the VCH Magazine on the CVS web site detailing "Occupations" by Emma Mawby (January 2017 Newsletter) and "Population Growth" by John Fagg (September 2017 Newsletter).



Finally ...

Your new Editor, Andy Ball, has already contributed to the Newsletter in the past and he will make sure the Newsletter will continue to be the prime method of communicating to Members and also publishing varied local articles.

As outgoing editor, I wish to express my warmest thanks to all the many contributors for their varied and well researched articles I have been sent over the last 11 years - Derek Rees.

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!**

Future Newsletter Editor: Andy Ball, [REDACTED]

email: cvsnewsletter@colwall.info

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