Herefordshire Past

The Newsletter of The Trust for the
Victoria County History of Herefordshire
Registered charity no. 1070427

Series 2, No. 22, Autumn 2016
Chairman’s Letter

As most readers will know, I took over as Chairman of the Herefordshire VCH at the AGM in May. I am Professor of Rural Geography at the University of Nottingham and undertake research and teaching on the history of landscape and forestry. My research on Herefordshire, where I was brought up, has focused on landscaping in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Herefordshire VCH has become reinvigorated under the very successful chairmanship of Janet Cooper over the last nine years. Following the two excellent books on Ledbury, we have in the last three years had the publication of the histories of Eastnor, and very recently Bosbury. The research and writing of these has been very much a team effort between volunteers and VCH staff. This will continue with the writing of the next VCH parish history of Colwall over the next year, with the recent appointment of the contributing editor Dr James Bowen who will work closely with volunteers.

Charles Watkins

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The Herefordshire Victoria County History Trust has recently appointed me as the Contributing Editor for the Colwall short. I am an historian/historical geographer with research interests in the environmental, economic and social history of the British Isles, specifically rural agrarian history, landscape studies, local and regional history and public history. My previous research covers a broad chronological span and has covered a variety of geographical areas: country carriers, deer parks, model farms and estate landscapes, disputes over common land in the 16th and 17th centuries and the prevalence of cottage or squatter settlement on commons.

Currently I am a Postdoctoral Research Associate based in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Liverpool, working on an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Care for the Future theme funded project, ‘Spaces of Experience and Horizons of Expectation: the implications of extreme weather events past, present and future’. The project investigates extreme weather events in the United Kingdom since 1700 and explores the social and cultural history of weather and climate. Recently I have been researching the Buildwas earthquake of 1773, frost fairs in provincial England, weather recorded in parish registers, the influence of weather on Hebridean life as described in 19th and early 20th century school log books and the impact of the 1962-3 winter on Dartmoor and the South West and the Elan Valley in Mid Wales. Last December I undertook a period of research for the project at Herefordshire Archive and Record Centre (HARC) and was extremely impressed with the new facility.

Since October 2014, I have worked closely with Professor Richard W Hoyle in successfully relaunching the VCH in Shropshire along the lines of a modern public history project, acting initially as secretary of the county committee and local organiser. Through this I have gained experience of providing in-county advice and support and scoping research for the short on Wem, a small market town in north Shropshire. I have led a volunteer group based in the town working on 19th and 20th century trade directories. I have enjoyed working with these enthusiastic volunteers with a range of backgrounds and skills and devising resources and methods of data collection so that research can be gathered effectively.
I am looking forward to continuing where Sylvia Pinches left off and working closely with members of the county committee, building on the considerable progress that has been made since the Herefordshire VCH Trust was formed in 1998. I am excited to be working on the history of Colwall, nestled on the western flank of the Malvern Hills, an extensive area of common land and an area of outstanding natural beauty. I am looking forward to studying the Iron Age British Camp, the parish’s relationship with the market towns of Ledbury and Malvern, the construction of the Colwall Tunnels (1856-60) as well as features of the built environment, such as the mock Tudor Colwall Park Hotel built in 1905. Having an interest in trains and narrow gauge railways, I am delighted that the history will include an account of the Downs Light Railway!

I will be starting work on Colwall in January 2017 and am looking forward to working with volunteers. An informal meeting has been arranged for 24 November 2016 between 10:30 and 12:30 at HARC. Anyone interested in contributing is encouraged to attend. I intend to meet with volunteer researchers on a one-to-one basis, or regularly as a group, and to lead a field visit to Colwall for volunteers and supporters in spring 2017. I was pleased to meet several volunteer researchers at the recent launch of the Bosbury short.

I am based at Market Drayton in north Shropshire and have a long Herefordshire connection. My grandfather, Hubert George Dance was born on 21 November 1923 at Lower House, Millhalf, near Whitney-on-Wye. His family can be traced back to his great, great, great grandfather, Samuel Dance, who in the 1861 census was recorded as a ‘Farmer of 20 acres’ at Midsummer Hill, Eastnor, having been born at Berrow (Worcestershire) seven miles east of Ledbury in 1815/6. His son, Thomas Dance was born on 18 October 1849/50, later becoming a gamekeeper on the estate. His confirmation book, which survives, is signed by William Pulling, Rector of Eastnor, who features in the religious history section of the Eastnor short published in 2013 (pages 74-5, 79). And Samuel Dance’s daughter, Elizabeth Ann Dance was a servant at Eastnor Castle according to the 1871 census. The female line of my grandfather’s family tree can similarly be traced back to Pixley.

I will be working regularly at HARC and attending meetings to report on progress. Please do not hesitate to contact me: j.p.bowen@liverpool.ac.uk or on 07800 530416 (mobile).

James Bowen
Notes from the Treasurer

As you’ll have read above, we have appointed James Bowen to write the history of Colwall during the course of 2017. The Trust has sufficient funds to pay his contract, but if we wish to progress work in the remaining parishes that will form the long awaited red book on the Ledbury area and to start planning work elsewhere in the county, we need more funds. Although our volunteers perform a sterling role in various respects such as transcribing wills, gisting sources and writing sections of a parish’s history, we do need to pay an experienced historian to pull the contributions of volunteers together into a coherent role and to go through certain sources, particularly those from the medieval period, where our volunteers don’t have the relevant expertise. Therefore, the Trust would be very grateful for any contributions however small or large. Equally if you know of a charity or an individual who is likely to be supportive of our aims and might be willing to donate money to the Trust, please let me have their details and I will approach them. To achieve our aim of the Ledbury red volume by 2020, we need to raise about £20,000 a year.

The latest Herefordshire short on Bosbury has just been published. Copies should be available from either of the Ledbury bookshops or from HARC reception for £12. Copies can also be ordered from me at a reduced price of £10, plus postage, unless a mutually convenient hand transfer can be agreed upon.

Late September saw the launch of the latest VCH red book, volume 13 on Gloucestershire, covering the parishes of Ashleworth, Bulley, Elmore, Hartpury, Lassington, Maisemore, Minsterworth, Norton, Rudford and Highleadon, Sandhurst, Tibberton, Twyning and Upleadon, some of which adjoin Herefordshire.

Boydell & Brewer are offering a 25% discount off the RRP of £95, making the price £71.25 plus postage and packing, until the end of 2016. Orders can be placed by phone on 01243 843291, online at www.boydellandbrewer.com, or by email at customer@wiley.com. Quote the offer code BB041 to ensure that the discount is given. Alternatively, I am willing to collate orders, which should reduce the postage and packing costs, and books could be collected from me at Woolhope talks, my house or at HARC on a mutually convenient occasion. I also have copies of Eastnor at £7 and Ledbury: people & parish before the Reformation at £10.

I can be contacted at jonathan.comber@easynet.co.uk, by phone on 01684-577134 or by post at 49 Old Hollow, Malvern WR14 4NP.
The Worcester and Hereford Railway opened on Friday 13 September 1861 with little drama, just a small newspaper advertisement of its timetable, confusingly headed ‘West Midlands Railway’. To celebrate the sesquicentenary anniversary of the opening of this railway line, Gordon Wood wrote a booklet in 2011, which included much detail of the construction from Worcester, across the River Severn to Malvern, Colwall and Ledbury and on to Hereford.

During the building of the railway there were deaths and injuries, including some involving the boring of the tunnel through Colwall, others during its later maintenance. Victorian railway building involved much manual labour; it was pick and shovel work – no JCBs, hard hats or steel toecapped boots, and long before today’s health and safety measures.

Boring the tunnels involved using gunpowder to blast through the granite and other rock of the Malverns; the much safer dynamite was not invented by Alfred Nobel until 1866. In September 1857 an accidental spark triggered an explosion, as a result of which one man lost his left hand and the little finger of his right hand; many of his workmates escaped seriously bruised. A year later another miner, James Field, a married man with four children, was killed instantly when a flying rock struck his head – the fuse was a little too short, so that he had been unable to reach the safety barrier before the explosion.

On Wednesday 4 April 1860 a fatal accident occurred in a cutting near the Wyche, when a ton or more of soil slipped from the top of the embankment onto George Williams aged 35 years, a navvy employed by the railway contractors. He was badly crushed and taken back to his lodgings in Colwall Green, where the Railway Chaplain, Rev E W Culsha attended him. A messenger was speedily sent to Ledbury for the surgeon, Mr. William Griffin, who came as quickly as he could, but on seeing the patient, immediately said that the injuries were beyond his medical skill. Mr. Williams died within an hour and a half of the accident, and a verdict of ‘Accidental death’ was returned at the inquest the following Saturday. That same evening he was buried in Colwall churchyard, where an impressive address was delivered at the graveside by Rev Culsha.
In May of 1861, only a few months before the official opening, there was an accident at the Colwall end of the Malvern tunnel. Several workmen were laying bricks near the No 3 air shaft, when about five yards of stonework gave way and fell in, burying two of the men. Thomas Peacock and J Bray were miners from Leicestershire. It took 45 minutes of hard labour to unearth the first man, Peacock who had severe chest and body injuries and was carried to his lodgings and attended by a doctor from Malvern and duly recovered. Bray was not found until some three hours after the fall, but amazingly he had only minor injuries.

Only a year after the opening of the railway, in September 1862 one of the ventilation shafts collapsed, falling some 15 feet into the tunnel below. Luckily no train was in the tunnel at the time, but it took four days to remove the debris and repair the tunnel arch before trains could run again. This caused quite a sensation among the visitors to Malvern, a fashionable resort at that time. The following February another small section fell but was repaired within a few hours. The problems with the Malvern to Colwall tunnel continued; sometimes carriages emerged from the tunnel with a brick of two on their roofs, and eventually, early in the 20th century, it was decided to build a new tunnel.

Boys have always been fascinated by railways. In February 1886 two boys – James Goode and Ernest Whatmore, both aged about 16 – were charged with having thrown iron bars down a ventilation shaft onto the rails within the tunnel between Malvern and Colwall, with intent to endanger the safety of passengers. The offence was reported by a train driver whose train ran over them, fortunately without derailing. Although only teenagers, at the end of the court case the following May they were sentenced to four months hard labour each.

In July 1896 a spark from the engine was thought to be the cause of a fire on a goods train truck full of tar sheets; fortunately it was noticed when halfway between Ledbury and Colwall. On reaching Colwall station the truck was quickly unhooked and the fire extinguished. Considerable damage was done to the truck, and the sheets were completely destroyed.

In November 1899 a further fatal accident occurred at Colwall station. James Gittins, a labourer, had been sent to get some coal from the coal merchant’s yard there. While he was waiting, a heavy storm began, and he sheltered under the end of a truck. Unfortunately a goods train began shunting, and he was crushed between the buffers, being killed instantly. The inquest returned a verdict of ‘Accidental death’, exonerating those involved from blame.

These various incidents were all found by searching the British Library’s website of British newspapers, which are also available on ‘Find My Past’.

Celia Kellett
Launch of the Parish History of Bosbury

On October 24th over 50 guests gathered in Bosbury Parish Hall for a party to launch a new history, *Bosbury*, the second parish history to be produced under the auspices of the Trust for the Victoria County History of Herefordshire. Like its predecessor *Eastnor* published in 2013, *Bosbury* is a stand-alone history but will eventually form part of a VCH ‘red book’ on Ledbury and the neighbouring Malvern Hills parishes. In addition to witnessing the formal launch and enjoying the drinks and nibbles, guests were able to view a magnificent exhibition on the history of the parish, put together by Bosbury’s own historian, Barry Sharples.

The event was hosted by members of the committee of the Herefordshire VCH Trust. It was good to see that many of the guests were residents of Bosbury, including some of the householders who had generously allowed a VCH architectural historian access to their homes. Others attending included several of the VCH volunteers who had worked on Bosbury, and indeed on previous parishes; they were joined by some of those who have supported the work financially. It was very good to see Dr Sylvia Pinches, who recently retired as Team Leader for the Herefordshire VCH, and who had not only written part of the book but led the volunteers with their research.

In his welcoming speech, Professor Charles Watkins, chairman of the Trust, complimented Bosbury’s residents on living in such a ‘scholarly’ village which had already had two histories written about it by the Rev Samuel Bentley: a short version in 1881 and an expanded volume in 1891. He thanked Barry and Sue Sharples for their enormous help in supporting the production of the new book. Barry in particular had done a tremendous amount of work, including taking many of the photographs for the illustrations and leading the ‘wills group’ of the volunteers who transcribed all the 16th- and 17th-century wills relating to the parish. In addition he has created a website containing a wealth of material on Bosbury. Charles Watkins presented the first copy of the book to Barry and Sue. He then presented to Rhys Griffiths, Senior Archivist, a copy for Herefordshire Archives, in recognition of the great assistance the Archives staff have given during the writing of the volume.
Next, he introduced Dr James Bowen, who is to start in January in the post of Contributing Editor for Colwall. He will be directing the researches of the volunteers and writing up the history.

In conclusion, Charles emphasised the importance of fundraising, if the Trust was to continue to produce histories like *Bosbury*. He gave advance notice of a planned visit to Perrycroft, Colwall, next June.

Dr Adam Chapman, editor and training co-ordinator in the VCH central office at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, gave a brief history of the national Victoria County History project, which was founded by the publisher Arthur Doubleday in the period immediately after Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. The first volume (on Hampshire) was published in 1899; the only Herefordshire volume, covering natural history, archaeology and Domesday Book, was published in 1908.

Dr Janet Cooper, former Chairman of Herefordshire VCH Trust and editor of the history of Bosbury, thanked her fellow authors Jane Adams, Jonathan Comber, Sylvia Pinches and David Whitehead. She was particularly pleased to see the publication of *Bosbury* after some unavoidable delays, including the closure of the Record Office before and during its relocation to the new Herefordshire Archives and Record Centre, although she was grateful to the staff for allowing VCH researchers some access to the records during that time.

During the evening there was an opportunity to buy copies of the book and to enjoy refreshments while browsing Barry’s magnificent exhibition with its variety of displays taken from his collections: fascinating maps, ancient documents and photographs with subject matter ranging from Bosbury at War to a 1909 Ladies vs Gents Cricket match. The clergy (Rev Samuel Bentley) and Philip Clissett (chairmaker) were well documented, as were buildings, bell ringers and bull attacks. There was also a small but informative exhibition about the Herefordshire VCH Trust and its work.

Amanda Simons
The Growth of Population in Victorian Colwall

When we think of population change and migration in Victorian England our thoughts immediately turn to the rapid growth of London, the industrial cities of the northern and midland regions and our coalfield settlements. In contrast the period after 1851 is seen as one in which rural parishes were characterized by declining populations and net out-migration. Jobs in agriculture declined in the face of gradual mechanization and the rapid growth of food imports from the ‘new world’, while the low wages paid for farm work inevitably encouraged many to seek greater rewards for their labour in urban locations. The fall in the agricultural labour force also meant a decline in the demand for traditional village crafts, a sector already struggling in the face of competition from factory-produced goods.¹

Unlike Bosbury, Eastnor, and many other Herefordshire parishes, however, Colwall increased its population by 73% between 1851 and 1901; indeed the number of parishioners more than doubled between 1841 and 1911, before stabilizing at around 2000 for much of the 20th century. Emma Mawby’s article in the last newsletter provides an analysis of the changing employment trends that underlay this growth.² Farming jobs certainly seem to have fallen in number, but they may be underestimated due to the difficulty of classifying the many men whose occupation was simply recorded as ‘labourer’ in 1901. Nevertheless, whatever the loss of agricultural and related employment, it is clear that Colwall benefitted greatly from the existence of a railway station and the initiatives of a small number of local entrepreneurs. Foremost among the latter was Stephen Ballard, the contractor when the railway was built, who – with his sons - later provided jobs in a large vinegar brewery, a sawmill, a brickworks, a gas works, and an ice works.³ Schweppes opened a mineral water works in 1892 after Ballard had demonstrated the purity of water from springs on his land.⁴ Another brewery and water bottling plant, named after the Royal Well, had been built in the far north of the parish in 1870.⁵ These sources of employment, were supplemented by the opening of the small Temperance Hotel built by Ballard close to the Stone, and the horse racing course opened by Roland Cave-Brown-Cave in an attempt to encourage tourism and improve the income of the Barton Court estate.⁶

Important though these initiatives were, other developments outside the manufacturing or hotel sectors were to become more significant in the 20th century. Of particular note was the growth of private, preparatory schooling. The Elms School, for example, had 26 pupils in 1901 compared to the Grammar School’s six in 1851. The newly-established Downs School had only four pupils in 1901, with the headmaster’s family and servants raising the number to nine.

Yet the most significant growth sector was almost certainly domestic service. The figures arising from census returns need to be treated with care here because in
some cases owners of large properties were staying in their other homes on census night, leaving only a skeleton staff permanently resident in Colwall. Moreover, it is easy to underestimate the number of staff serving a particular household, since staff recruited locally would often remain at their original place of residence, particularly gardeners. Notwithstanding these caveats, however, the numbers of recorded domestic servants and gardeners rose from 66 in 1851 to 211 in 1901, an increase of 220 per cent! In addition the total of laundresses and charwomen rose from 23 to 50, a rise of 117 per cent in the same period. Some of the gardeners and laundresses may have been self-employed because they were recorded as working on their ‘own account’ presumably for more than one customer.\textsuperscript{7}

What lies behind these hefty increases? One major factor was the arrival of in migrants, wealthy and successful people who could build new houses or modernize others in a country environment away from, yet well connected by the railway to, their normal home or place(s) of business. Emma Mawby’s article mentioned the chocolate manufacturer George Cadbury in this context, although in his case the acquisition of Wynd’s Point was driven in part by his admiration for its previous owner - Jenny Lind, ‘the Swedish nightingale’ - and his desire to preserve the house as it was left after her death in 1887.\textsuperscript{8} When the new owner was at home, as he was in 1901, there were ten family members plus five servants in the house and lodge. In 1851 the site had been occupied by an inn keeper, his son and daughter-in-law and one servant. Incidentally Cadbury retained his house in Northfield, Birmingham, close to his factory and garden suburb of Bournville.

In some respects a better example of a wealthy newcomer to Colwall is the manufacturing chemist John William Wilson, a resident of Edgbaston, Birmingham who worked for the family firm (Albright and Wilson in Oldbury) becoming Chairman before joining the Boards of the Great Western Railway and Bryant and May Ltd.\textsuperscript{9} The 1891 census records him and his wife in a shared villa in Hanley Castle, but two years later he bought land along Jubilee Drive and commissioned C F A Voysey to design a small country house later known as Perrycroft. Completed in 1895, the year Wilson was first elected to Parliament, it became his summer retreat.\textsuperscript{10} So, in 1901, the census records the new MP and his wife in their Westminster flat, while in Colwall seven servants remained in the house and its associated cottages along with a further 11 of their dependents.

Many more examples could be quoted of folk ‘living on own means’ who made Colwall their only home: Edward Conder, the building contractor who left London for New Court (7 servants and 7 dependents); Tamsin Williams, the widow of a colliery owner in Liverpool, who moved to Redlands Lodge (6 servants and 4 dependents); and Stephen Ballard Senior, originally of Malvern, who bought the Winnings estate in 1837 before building a new house for his wife and family from 1856 onwards.\textsuperscript{11}
The sheer volume of upper middle class migration into Victorian Colwall, which continued during the interwar years and beyond, represents a form of counter-urbanization akin to that noted in many advanced western economies since the 1960s. In Victorian times it would have appeared in most rural parishes as a minor trend against a backcloth of mass working class migration to the cities. But in a few particularly favoured parishes it was sufficient to lead to population growth. The same phenomenon has been observed in parts of Surrey and in three Berkshire parishes during the interwar years; all three were particularly attractive to incomers in terms of both landscape and access to nearby towns and/or railways. Colwall’s magnificent scenery, its railway station and proximity to Malvern surely puts this Herefordshire parish in the same class.

John Fagg

1. On these points see J Saville Rural Depopulation in England and Wales 1851-1951 (London, 1957)
2. E Mawby ‘Colwall census: times of change’ Herefordshire Past Series 2, No 21 (Spring 2016) pp 8-9
4. S W C Stringer ‘History of Colwall’ p 43 (manuscript at Malvern Library)
5. T B V Marsh The Commercial Complex – now residential – on the West Malvern Road (Colwall Village Society, Local Topics, 2002)
7. Employment figures require checking and should be regarded as provisional at this stage.
8. Mawby, Colwall census, p 9
11. S W C Stringer ‘History of Colwall’ p 33

Brief News from Other Counties

The last few months have seen three new VCH books. In July Oxfordshire published its 18th volume, on Benson, Ewelme and the Chilterns (in the south of the county). Then in September Gloucestershire published its volume XIII covering 14 parishes in the area between Newent and Gloucester, which Jonathan Comber describes on p 5 of this Newsletter. Also in September, the Hampshire VCH launched the history of Steventon, a parish principally known as the birthplace of Jane Austen, whose father was rector of the church there; it was there that she drafted her early books, including Pride and Prejudice. For further information on all these books see the VCH website.
Brand Lodge, Upper Colwall

The discovery of the ‘waters’ at Malvern Wells in the mid-18th century is well recorded in contemporary literature, but its impact upon Upper Colwall, just over the Hills, is less well known. The Georgian delight in ‘prospects’ soon brought tourists to the top of the Hills where they discovered the lost land of ‘Old Siluria’ rolling away towards the Black Mountains. The story of the settlements along the western side of the Hills is usually told in terms of creeping sub-urbanisation from West Malvern and the Wyche cutting, and, following the example of Jenny Lind at the Wynds Point, several fine Arts and Crafts villas were constructed below Jubilee Drive, which was completed in 1887.

However, there was at least one much earlier property, providing accommodation for discriminating gentlefolk, set in a small area of parkland at the top of Evendine Lane – Brand Lodge, where today there is a fine mansion designed by Ernest Newton (1866-1922), an occasional collaborator with William Morris, and Perrycroft, one of the finest Arts and Crafts houses in Herefordshire. It was built in 1911 but was not the first house on the site. The Hereford Journal makes frequent references to the amenities of Brand Lodge and its genteel occupants throughout the 19th century, commencing in 1810 when the ‘modern built house’ was for sale, having lately been the residence of Lady Ann Hamilton and Miss Beckford. The former seems to have been the daughter of Archibald, the 9th Duke of Hamilton, who later (1814) became lady-in-waiting to Caroline, princess of Wales.

The long advertisement shows that the house was well-suited for a genteel life, with a dining parlour and drawing room on the ground floor, serviced by a house-keeper’s room and a butler’s pantry. Upstairs there were ‘four best bedrooms and outside a double coach house and stabling for six horses’. Most notably there was ‘an excellent cold bath and dressing room with a fireplace thereto’. This facility, whilst very appropriate for a gentlewoman taking the waters of Malvern, was quite a novelty among the minor gentry of Herefordshire. It is known that Uvedale Price of Foxley and Richard Payne Knight of Downton, both MPs and men with strong metropolitan connections had cold baths on their estates, and the latter also enjoyed the luxury of a heated dressing room. In addition, recent archaeology at Harewood Park, near Ross, has led to the location of another bath.
house located below the terraces of the demolished Georgian house, adjoining a fishpond. Cold bathing was recommended for good health in the 18th century, accompanying other outdoor activities. It appealed to active men but was increasingly being taken up by advanced and blue-stocking women. One of the most lurid divorce cases in this period concerned Lady Worsley, whose regimen for good health included her ‘whim’ of regular-bathing both at home and at the public baths at Maidstone. A similar facility was available on Castle Green at Hereford in the early 19th century, where men and women were segregated. However, the times were changing, and it was quickly killed-off by emerging Victorian prudery.

At Brand Lodge the bath house was probably fed by a natural spring, and today there is still a water garden on the south side of the house, presumably continuing to exploit a natural water source. At The Lodge, just south of Ludlow, the Salweys also constructed a water garden to accompany their Georgian bath house, which has recently been restored. In total the grounds at Brand Lodge extended to ten acres in 1810 and included a pleasant shrubbery walks and several pieces of meadow and pasture. The owners also enjoyed grazing rights on the Hills, which was no doubt useful in providing herbage for hungry coach horses. The advertisement also has a lyrical description of the location of the house ‘delightfully situate on the south-west side of Malvern Hill, commanding a most beautiful and picturesque view over a very fine extent of country’. It was also one mile from ‘the celebrated waters of Malvern Wells’ and close to the turnpike road from Worcester to Ledbury, where London mail coaches passed every day except Sunday, and in the midst of fine sporting country with several packs of fox and hare hounds within a short distance.

From a later advertisement in September 1813 it seems that Brand Lodge was bought by Henry Singleton Esq, whose ‘elegant furniture … purchased new within two years’ was for sale together with the ‘truly desirable villa’. There is a detailed description of his tasteful furniture, mostly in mahogany and including à la mode ‘tent bedsteads with check (sic) hangings and matching window curtains’. There is no mention of the bath house, but this is still there in May 1826, associated with a kitchen garden not referred to previously. The villa at that time had been in the occupation of the Hon Colonel Cocks, the brother of Lord Somers of Eastnor. Again the setting is eulogised and the situation ‘within a few hundred yards of the delightful terraces of Malvern Wells, to which it has easy access’. Viewing could be arranged via Mr. Joseph Barnett of the Winnings, Colwall.

Within a few months a new tenant had been found – Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783-1848) and Llewellyn, his 22-year old son, who had spent the summer negotiating with the ladies of Goodrich Manor for the purchase of Goodrich Castle. Llewellyn was in fragile health and probably came to take the waters and enjoy the
walks in the bracing ‘wind coming from the Cambrian Mountains’. He found the house quiet and ‘on the most beautiful spot to be found on earth’. During 1827 some significant visitors called at the Lodge to visit the Meyricks, these included Francis Martin, recently returned from Russia where he conferred the Garter on the new Emperor, Nicholas I and John Chessell Buckler (1793-1894), artist and architect who shared with Rush Meyrick a passion for gothic architecture and was at this time building Halkyn Castle in Flintshire in the Tudor Gothic style. He had also been sketching at Goodrich Castle. (Rosalind Lowe, *Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and Goodrich Court* (2003), p 108).

In 1818 Brand Lodge had makes an appearance in *A Malvern Guide* by John Chambers and is described as ‘a neat villa….the front painted white, and shaded by a range of evergreens which give it a picturesque effect’. Col Cocks was occupying the property, but it now belonged to Mr. Bright, presumably a member of the family settled at Brockbury Hall to the south-east of Colwall church since the 17th century. Chambers is equally flattering about the setting of the house ‘in a romantic spot (with) a fine view of the Camp’ (British Camp) and a ‘very extensive prospect to the westward’. He ends on a down-to-earth note that the house, being protected by the north and east winds, is not affected ‘with that greater degree of cold peculiar to elevated situations’.

In March 1830 Brand Lodge was available to let ‘furnished and in good repair’ with particulars available from a Ledbury solicitor or Joseph Barnett of the Winnings. It was still in the ownership of Mr Bright and within a few years was occupied by the legendary ‘Misses Brights’ whose social graces, philanthropy and cultural patronage brought Brand Lodge to the attention of the readers of both the Hereford and Worcester papers in the next few decades.

David Whitehead

(To be continued in the next issue)
The Committee

The chairman is Professor Charles Watkins, Nottingham University. The other trustees are Dr Janet Cooper (formerly Editor of the Essex VCH and a member of the central VCH committee), Professor Chris Dyer (Leicester University, formerly chairman of the VCH central committee) and the Herefordshire historians Ron Shoesmith and David Whitehead (our Vice Chairman), plus Jonathan Comber (Hon Treasurer), Dr Keith Ray (Hon Secretary), Gill Murray (formerly of the 6th Form College, Hereford) and Tom Davies (formerly Hon Treasurer).

They are joined by two committee members: local historians Valerie Goodbury and John Fagg and archaeologist Tim Copeland.

Our Herefordshire patrons are: Mr Lawrence Banks, CBE, DL, representing the Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire; Sir Roy Strong; Mr James Hervey-Bathurst, CBE, DL; Mr Edward Harley, DL.

The Trust’s aim is to support the writing of the history of the towns and parishes of Herefordshire as part of the Victoria History of the Counties of England. The VCH, ‘the greatest publishing project in English local history’, is managed by the Institute of Historical Research, University of London. It is renowned for its scholarship but also aims to be accessible to the growing number of local historians throughout the country.

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This Newsletter is published in May and November. Back copies can be viewed on our website:

www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/herefordshire