

# MALPAS HISTORY

NUMBER FIVE

DECEMBER 1985

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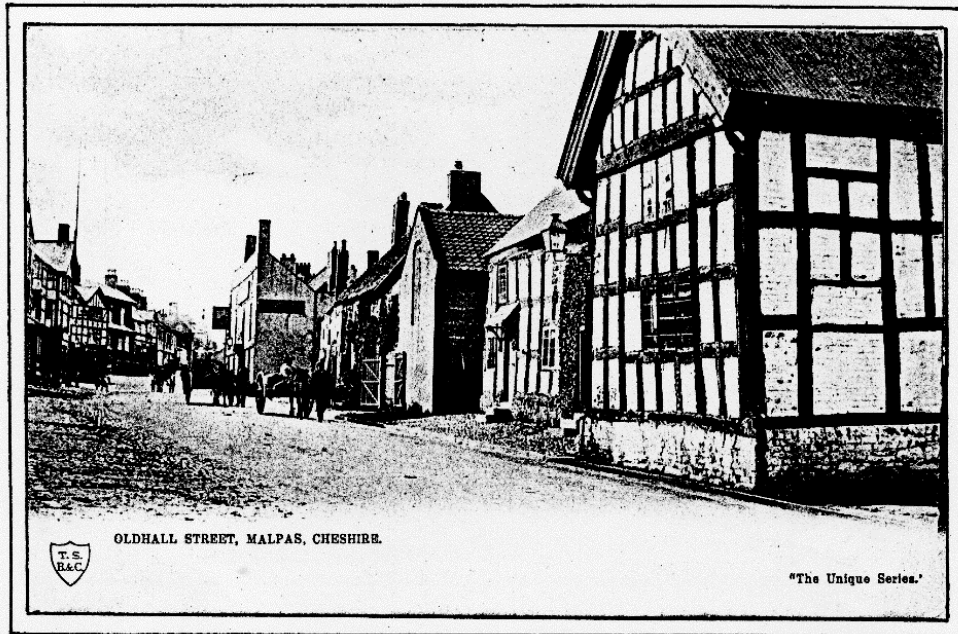
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# MALPAS HISTORY

NUMBER FIVE

DECEMBER 1985



OLDHALL STREET, MALPAS, CHESHIRE.



"The Unique Series."

A magazine for the Malpas area including the townships of Agden Bickerton Bickley Bradley Broxton Bulkeley Chidlow Cholmondeley Chorlton Cuddington Duckington Edge Egerton Hampton Iscoyd Larkton Macefen Malpas Newton Oldcastle Overton Stockton Tushingam-cum-Grindley Wigland and Wychough, all in the ancient Parish of Malpas, and Threapwood

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COVER PICTURE Old Hall Street around the turn of the century, the period remembered in the first article in this issue. Note the 'Red Lion' without its present facade, the building which was Bebington's cake shop in the 1970s and more recently a motor cycle shop, in the centre of the picture, and the timber framed house known as 'The Nest' (now demolished) in the right foreground.

BELOW Church Street, in the 1930s / 1940s (?). Can anyone date this postcard for us, perhaps from the lorries shown parked in the street? Note the Tithe Barn, on the left, before it was converted for domestic use.



BACK COVER Rules for the Maesfen Reading Room, which housed the Parish Library in Maesfen Hall. See the reference in Mr Moore-Dutton's article on Page 18.

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## EDITORIAL

I was delighted to receive, in October, a letter which stated "My nephew John Wycherley told me about your magazine and said you would be interested to have some early Malpas happenings from a native, so I have had a few pages typed of my life in Malpas around the turn of the century". Many thanks to Mr John Wycherley, our local saddler with a world-wide reputation, for spreading the word. The letter was from his uncle Frank Wycherley, born in Malpas in 1893 and now living in Gatley. His "few pages typed" appear as the first article in this issue.

Frank Wycherley must be one of the oldest surviving natives of the parish. One of the younger ones is Matthew Hollins of Bradley Farm and we are pleased to print a short article by him, with the hope that it might encourage other young people to produce contributions to the magazine.

At their October meeting, members of the Field Club were fascinated to hear a talk by Richard Hughes of Ash, near Whitchurch, whose family has lived at Ash Wood at least since the 1500s - this much is authenticated by documentary evidence. A branch of the family came to farm at Barhill in Tushingham at the end of the 18th century. The farm account book kept there by William Hughes from 1798 to 1837 provides the subject for another article. In fact, this issue focuses on the Tushingham/Bradley/Macefen (or should it be Maesfen?) area of the parish, with other articles by Mr Moore-Dutton on the now demolished Maesfen Hall, once the scene of great social and educational activity, and on Old St Chad Chapel.

The latter article is a reproduction of the booklet written by the previous vicar of Tushingham with Whitewell, Rev T M Hearn. It has been included here at the request of the present vicar, Rev P Winchester, and of the parochial church council. It is available separately as an attractively printed booklet at £1.00, from Tushingham Vicarage (Hampton Heath 328). Profits from the sale of the booklet will go towards the restoration of Old St Chad, which is seriously threatened by woodworm and death watch beetle. It is likely that the cost of repairs that will have to be raised by local supporters will be in the region of several thousand pounds. Contributions may be sent to the addresses at the foot of page 26. St Chad is one of the gems of the old ecclesiastical parish of Malpas - it would be very sad to see it decay.

David Hayns



# A MALPASIAN'S CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Frank Wycherley

Why 1899? Well, that was the year when Mafeking was relieved and the writer, then a boy of six, was a pupil at Miss Danbury's infant school.

On this particular day word came through from London by telegraph that Mafeking had been relieved. Several locals were in the Army in Africa, having joined up to fight the Boers and to see life abroad, as many of us did later, in 1914.

At school, Lady Bountiful, a School Governor from Ebnal, arrived in a smart horse drawn trap to celebrate the event, as she too had a relative out there. So we pupils were marched down to Hesketh's Confectionery Shop and each given a free bun, a fig pie or what was available, and a half holiday followed.

Incidentally, when the men came back, including a Chesworth, a Done and a Mercer, the local fire engine, drawn by Hesketh's horses, went to Malpas Station to collect the heroes and decorations galore appeared in the streets.

How did we youngsters amuse ourselves in those early days? Many of us kept rabbits in home made hutches, the best source for dandelion feed being the filter beds down by the Whitchurch Road. My transport was two boards mounted on four pram wheels. Rabbits were bought and sold at fourpence each for a brown specimen six weeks old.

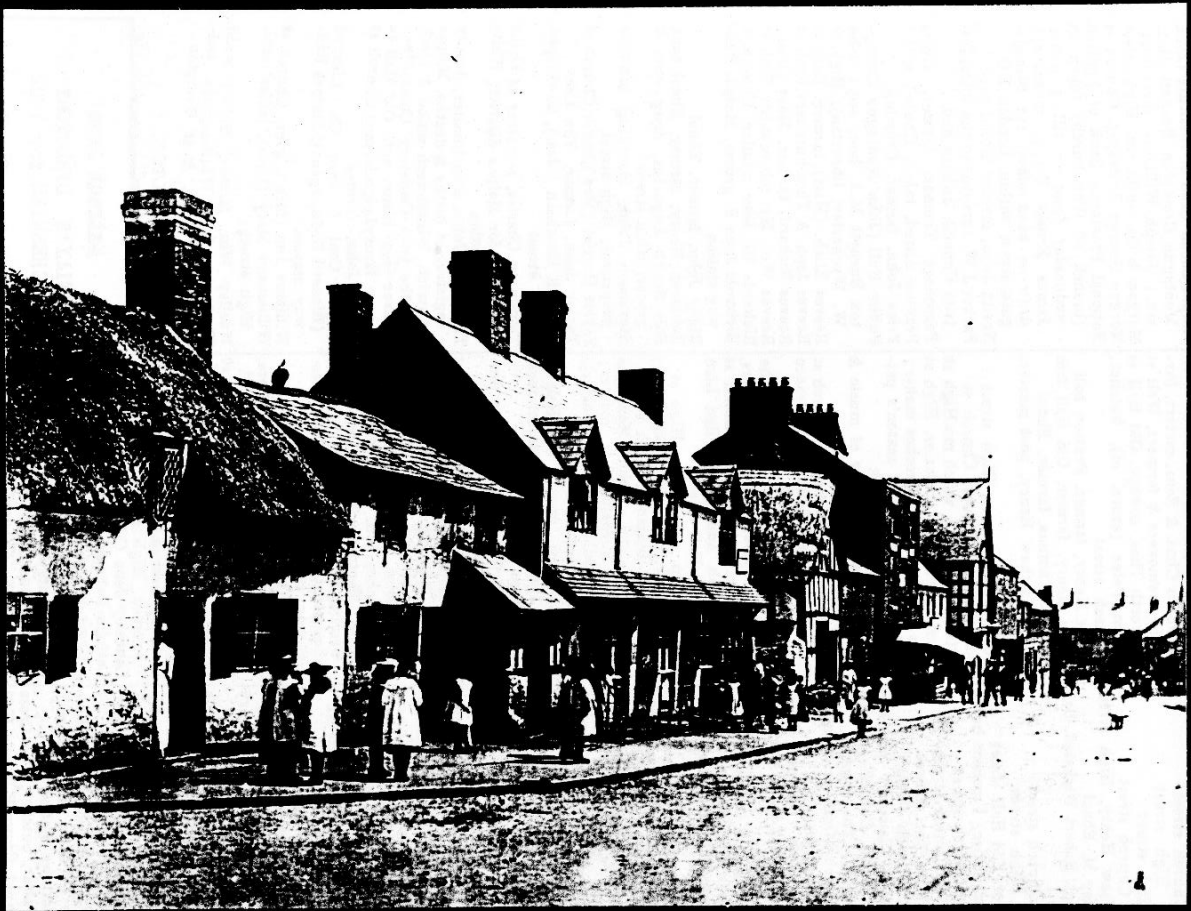
There was no Parish Council collection of garbage so shopkeepers and others took it, in all forms, to the tip at the far end of the lane off Church Street, bordering on Mount View Farm. It was a favourite haunt for some of us on Saturdays, when we sorted through pram wheels, nails and other usable bits, including glass marbles from empty ginger beer bottles. The marble was a seal against a rubber washer and a special wooden plug was used to push down the marble and let the gas out before drinking.

By the way, Mrs Furber the Blacksmith's wife sold her special nettle beer in bottles for a penny a time, with a rebate for return of empties.

Another pastime was pit fishing in the neighbouring clay pits, in which roach were the most plentiful fish. Other pits held tench and one held carp and perch. The meres were for grown-ups, where pike, tench and bream predominated. Our tackle was of the simplest order, strong cord called 'clewkin' for the line, a float and eyed hook and a rod cut from a hazel bush. However, made-up lines were available, from twopence to sixpence each, each wound neatly on a short piece of bamboo cane split in half.

When in season it was thrilling to pick mushrooms in certain fields round about, where they grew from buttons at dusk and two inches at dawn, and oh! what a blessing it would have been if wellington boots existed then instead of very wet boots and socks, which was normal.

Of great interest at that period was the 'Pipe Track'. This was a second continuous line of four foot cast iron water pipes that ran through Cheshire to Liverpool from a lake in Wales. The track passed through the 'Beeches' grounds up Tilston Road and went across to the reservoir. The pipes were hauled from Malpas Station by traction engine, on trucks, four to the load. The 'navvies', in their mole skin trousers, more or less lived with the project and many slept in an unlaidd pipe. Each pipe was reputed to weigh five tons, so it was some achievement to dig and lay each pipe about eight feet down and to seal it. Some difficulty occurred at Peckforton Gap where trees



MALPAS HIGH STREET AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS CENTURY  
William Henry Reeves' shop is the black and white building  
on the site of the entrance to the modern car park (page 6)

MALPAS.

PRIVATE RESIDENTS.

Arnulstead Rev. Lawrence M.A. (curate), High street  
 Barnes Henry, High street  
 Blantern Thomas, Rock house, High st  
 Burnett John Montague Crompton M.A. (head master, Grammar School), Church street  
 Cooke Mrs. High street  
 Cope Mrs. High street  
 Cox Misses, Church street  
 Danily Matthew Henry, High street  
 Dennis Stanley M. Ebnal  
 Ethelston Capt. Robert Wicksted, Boling house  
 Evans Mrs. Church street  
 Howell Mrs. High street  
 Huxley George, Old Hall street  
 Jordison Christopher, Prospect house  
 Leigh Albert, Church street  
 Macaulay Miss, Church street  
 Macnamara Mrs. The Groves  
 Mate Henry, Church street  
 Medlin Thomas (assistant master), Grammar school, Church street  
 Moore Robert C. The Groves  
 Morgans Rev. John Ogmore (Congregational), The Manse  
 Ormsby-Gore Hon. George Ralph Charles M.P., J.P. & Lady Margaret, The Lodge  
 Parker Mrs. Church street  
 Parker Rev. the Hon. Algernon Robt. M.A. (rector & surrogate), The Rectory  
 Parsons Charles Saml. Laurel bank  
 Rasbotham Mrs. Assheton, Ebnal grange  
 Robinson Mrs. Myrtle cottage  
 Simpson George, Rock cottage  
 Stevenson Mrs. Church street  
 Tomkin Frederick, High street  
 Welch Mrs. Rock villas

COMMERCIAL.

Early closing day, Wednesday.  
 Aingworth George Harry, Wyvern hotel & posting house, Church st  
 Allman James, bill poster, Well st  
 Allman Jas. frmr. Cross-o'-th'-Hill  
 Arnold John, cheese factor, High st  
 Austin Philip, farmer, Belle Vue  
 Baker James, blacksmith, Church st  
 Barlow Edward, boot & shoe maker, Church street  
 Barlow James, shoe mkr., Well st  
 Barlow John, farmer, Crosshill  
 Barlow Ann & Mary Elizh. (Misses), dress makers, Rock villas  
 Barlow William, farmer, Well st  
 Barnes Henry M.R.C.V.S. veterinary surgeon, Ebnal  
 Bathrbee Frederick, beer retailer & wine & spirit merchant, Church st  
 Bell's William, shoe maker, High st  
 Bently William, boot-dealer & stationer, tax collector, assistant overseer & clerk to the Parish Council, High street  
 Billington J. H. & Co. coal & lime merchants (William Edge, agent), Malpas Railway station  
 Bradbury Walter, butcher, The Cross  
 Bradley Samuel, Crown P.H. Old Hall st & coal merchant, Malpas Railway station  
 Rokeby Japh. fishmng. &c. Old Hall st  
 Galdecott, Thomas Cheers, former The Hough

Callcott Arthur Drummond, watch & clock maker, High street  
 Carter Thomas, farmer, Well street  
 Cemetery (John Tomlinson, clerk to the joint committee), Station road  
 Cheers & Hopley, chemists & druggists, & agents for W. & A. Gilbey Limited, wine & spirit merchants, Church street  
 Chesworth Chas. & Sons, carters, furniture removers & farmers, Well st  
 Chesworth Thos. cowkpr. Old Hall st  
 Clutton Peter (exors. of), butcher, Church street  
 Cooper Henry, farmer, Preston hall  
 Cornes Henry, farmer, Old Hall frm  
 Craddock Thomas, farmer, Ebnal  
 Danily Matthew Henry, post master, High street  
 Dobson John, grocer, High street  
 Dodd Thomas, farmer, Church st  
 Dutton John Fredk. watch mkr. High st  
 Eaton Jn. plumber & glazier, High st  
 Edge John, tailor & breeches maker; a large assortment of season's patterns always in stock  
 Edwardes Henry, teacher of music & organist, High street  
 Edwards John, stone mason, Church st  
 Fletcher Arthur Edward, insurance agent, Church street  
**Fletcher Alice & Sons**, "The Mart," drapers, printers, stationers, booksellers & boot drs. Church st  
 Foster Sarah Ann (Mrs.), Red Lion hotel, Old Hall street  
 France Philip, nail maker, High st  
 Furber Fredk. blacksmith, Old Hall st  
 Gill Walter, tinman, Church street  
 Grammar School (John Montague Crompton Burnett M.A. master; Thomas Medlin, assistant master), Church street  
 Hartshorn Thos. grocer, Old Hall st  
 Hesketh Harvey Thomas, confectioner, The Cross  
 Hesketh Martha (Mrs.), carriage proprietor, Church street  
 Hewitt George, boot mkr. Church st  
 Hewitt Joseph, hair dresser, High st  
 Hughes John & Son, shopkeepers, Church street  
 Huxley John, tailor, Church street  
 Huxley John, jun. tailor, Church st  
 Huxley Thomas, builder & wheelwright, Old Hall street  
 Independent Order of Oddfellows (Geo. Poyntz, sec.)  
 Jounson Wm. plumber, Church st  
 Jones & Mercer, painters & plumbers, High street  
 Jones Wm. Albt. hair drsr. Church st  
 Jordison Christopher E.R.C.P. & L.M. Edin., M.R.C.S. Eng. surgeon, Prospect house  
 Lancelley George, registered veterinary surgeon, High street  
 Lancelley Jane (Mrs.), cowkpr. Well st  
 Latham Rebecca (Mrs.), draper, The Cross  
 Leigh Albert, L.R.C.P. Lond., M.R.O.S. Eng. surgeon & medical officer & public vaccinator for the Malpas (Shoeklach) district, Thryn union, district of Whitchurch union & Church street  
 Lewis John, Parker, station master & goods agent to the L. & N.W. Railway, Malpas Railway station

Lloyd Frank & Sons, cattle auction, Malpas Railway station  
 McCaffry Hugh, licensed slaughterer, Well street  
 McCaffry John, saddler & cycle agent, High street  
 Malpas Gas Co. Limited (Thomas George Wycherley, sec.), Church st  
 Malpas Social Club & Institute (John Montague Crompton Burnett M.A. sec.; Joseph Williams, caretaker)  
 Morgan & Co. outfitters, High street  
 Morgan George S. draper, Church st  
 National Provincial Bank of England (branch of Whitchurch) (open on wednesday from 11 till 2 p.m.; James Ernest Bacon, manager); draw on head office, 112 Bishopsgate street within, London E.C.  
 Nevitt John, farmer, Ebnal bank  
 Parker J.W. surveyor to the Rural District Council, Jubilee hall  
 Parsonage Thomas, farmer, White  
 Pearson Alfred, tailor, Church st  
 Price John, farmer, Crosshill  
 Public Hall (John Montague Crompton Burnett M.A. hon. sec.; John W. Wycherley, librarian), High st  
 Reeves Elizh. (Miss), farmer, High st  
 Reeves Josph. & Thos. butchers, High st  
 Reeves Richard, farmer, Moss farm  
 Reeves Wm. Hy. tobacconist, High st  
 Richards Hy. beer retailer, Church st  
 Richards John B. grocer, Malpas Railway station  
 Rigby John, farmer, Ebnal  
 Robinson Henry, farmer, Ebnal bank  
 Salt Smith Augustus, drug store & grocer, High street  
 Stevenson John, threshing machine proprietor, High street  
 Taylor Harriet (Mrs.), baker, Church st  
 Taylor John, farmer, The Lees  
 Thelwell Elizabeth (Mrs.), cowkeeper, Well street  
 Tomlinson Charles, registrar of births & deaths for Malpas district, Whitchurch union  
 Tomlinson John, schoolmaster, deputy registrar of births & deaths, Malpas district, Whitchurch union & clerk to the joint Cemetery Committee  
 Weaver Geo. insur. agt. Old Hall st  
 Weaver Henry Leigh, farmer, Church st  
 Welch John, farmer  
 Wigan Coal & Iron Co. Limited (Richard Dodd, agent), Malpas Railway station  
 Williams Ann (Mrs.), grcr. Church st  
 Williamson Mary (Miss), ladies' sch. High street  
 Woolley Wm. farmer, Hollow wood  
 Wycherley John Whittingham, saddler, Church st. & at Hampton

CHORLTON.

Extract from:  
**KELLY'S DIRECTORY OF CHESHIRE for 1902**  
 Note Malpas Gas Co. Ltd and John Whittingham Wycherley, saddler.



were uprooted to a sizeable track width, the route being visible for years afterwards.

Another item of particular interest then was the 'Fire Call'. A fireman went up and down each street blowing on a bugle the then familiar fire call of "there's a fire, there's a fire". Almost always it was a farm stack or a building at Hampton, Nomansheath, Kidnal or Agden. On two occasions it was in Malpas itself. First a chemist's shop in Church Street at midnight and then a thatched cottage at Cross-o-the-Hill where I recall the salvaging of Mrs Cartwright's son's tin trunk, burnt out but containing fourteen gold sovereigns intact. One Saturday night the fire was at Kidnal and Hesketh's horses had already done a hard day's work round the countryside so it was "enough is enough". The horses jibbed and would not move the engine. The upshot was that the horses were pulled out and firemen and others manhandled the machine to Kidnal uphill and downhill for most of the route.

About our shops, we had many for the size of the village - Hesketh's, Hartshorn's, Gladdy's, Williams; Mrs Taylor, Hughes and Richards, all selling bread and buns and many shops sold home made black puddings. Chester cakes were one halfpenny each, made of stale cakes and treacle with a layer of pastry top and bottom. One of these sufficed as lunch for many schoolboys living in the countryside.

Mechanical aids comprised Stevenson's traction engines and the threshing machine, also farm implements. Cars were appearing and there were three or four Malpas owners, including Doctor Jordinson who owned a chauffeur driven Wolseley. It had a chain drive, was a four seater and had a hefty spike that could be lowered to the ground to stop the car if it stalled on a hill, making it easier to get moving again with the brakes off.

Not only traction engines and steam rollers scared trap and other horses severely but so did these motor cars, so much so that drivers would have to get out and hold the petrified horse's head. Believe it or not, my Father had a young Irish horse that shied at meeting a cyclist, in fact it damaged a bike and hurt the rider slightly. The road dust too was terrific and the main road hedges were covered in dust, as roads were not tarred. As a car passed there was a cloud of dust from the rear end and many breakdowns between Broxton and Hampton.

A Malpas character was bearded Mr Bentley, who kept a shoe shop, and his collection of early car models was really something. Kept in a shed at the strawberry field off Tilston Road were models propelled by belts and fast and loose pulleys, some with solid tyres and some without tyres. They never went on the road and were just Mr Bentley's hobby collection. Motor bikes too were in their infancy about 1900 and were designed with battery ignition and not very good on the not so steep banks. Every bike had its rubber bulb operated horn, as did motor cars. Sometimes a wicker seat chair was mounted at the front for a passenger, steering being most difficult and the whole outfit a bit crude.

Cycles in the early days had their brakes to press upon the front tyre and too much pressure tended to throw one over the handlebars but not much later the calliper brake was introduced. Punctures were frequent after hedge clipping on the roadside.

Although many farmers made cheese, some sold their milk to a Liverpool wholesaler, hence the milk train from Whitchurch at 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. This entailed transport to the station by float, by farmers or employees, of 17 gallon tankards from a big area around Malpas. In addition there was

the Malpas bus based at the Red Lion and driven by Johnny Johnson. Johnny met every train, from both Whitchurch and Chester. The fare was sixpence each way and at the same time Johnny collected and brought to Malpas all railway parcels and newspapers.

Our enjoyments were elementary. Marbles provided many happy hours and most boys had a bag of coloured glass and clay ones, which had their unit value according to size and colourings. Another popular pastime was the bowler and hook in various diameters in iron. One could run miles with the bowler as company on country paths and roads. The local blacksmiths used to be the makers in many cases. For some hefty grown-ups, quoits was played with six inch steel rings and a wet clay bed twenty yards apart, with a white feather in the middle. The venue was the Castle Hill footings where there was a sunken gully, eventually filled in with church demolition stone and debris after some restoration. This land belonged to a brewery and the Ainsworths were the tenants who catered for the business travellers who stayed overnight from Liverpool and other places. The Squire Drake's rent audit was also catered for and a sumptuous meal laid on.

William Henry Reeves, part-time butchers' delivery man for miles around, had his cottage shop for cheap sweets, ginger beer, cigarettes and ice cream. It had a lean-to chip shop at the back. One halfpenny per portion was his minimum charge for chips. His premises were almost opposite the present fire station. In fact, a day out with him on a Saturday in his horse and trap was of great interest. Separate fluted cabins in the shade at the houses of the gentry housed half a sheep and joints of prime home killed beef on the bone. No fridges then, and no daily deliveries, just these cabins and a cold cellar as an alternative at farmhouses.

A strange happening one summer's day, at noon, was the vacating of thousands of bees from their home in a hole beneath the church clock. They swarmed on churchyard trees, near Fletcher's fancy goods shop, and eventually dispersed to goodness knows where. Too many Queens a possible cause for the move.

Cigarette card collecting was a popular craze. Most cards showed pictures of Boer War Generals, both sides of the opposing forces, and swapping cards was frequent. Every packet of 'Ogdens Guinea Gold' and 'Tabs' held a card and smokers were pestered for these shiny cards, which went into specially designed albums.

During these years of review came the death of Queen Victoria and the following of Edward VII's coronation.

Then, of course, there was no electric light or power. Although we had the local Gas Works and some of the better houses had some gaslight and perhaps a griller. But illuminations were nevertheless displayed on the Jubilee Hall and shops, etc. These took the form of glass 'fairy lights' in various colours, lit by stubby candles and mounted on wire frames with hooks for hanging. Also there was a fireworks display in a field, Church Street way, and, of course, each child had a Coronation Mug. In Malpas there were no electrical installations but some large residences had their own oil engines and electric generators with batteries to maintain light continuity. However, Malpas had its wall mounted incandescent gas burners for parlours and the like. These used a Wellsbach mantle that cost fourpence halfpenny. When new and lit they became untouchable but glowed wonderfully bright. Gas meters for one penny in the slot were plentiful too. My father emptied the meters and packed the money in five shilling rolls for shopkeepers' change.

Before telephones existed, an interesting place was the Post Office. Real sovereigns were weighed on counter scales and two telegram delivery boys sat on chairs ready to deliver a telegram on their bikes within a three or four mile radius. The postmen too did big country areas, on foot and bike.

Coal and coke were very cheap. Even so, the poorer people bought coal at sixpence a pram load and augmented it with peat blocks that came on a huge cart weekly from Whixall. Some folk had their bread dough baked at Taylor's for fuel economy and maybe for lack of cooking facilities. At one Malpas farm where I was a very frequent play visitor, they baked their bread in a 'stick oven'. Briefly, the long oven burnt faggots and when reduced to ash, in went the dough and the end result was super long tasty rolls of bread.

Two village characters were the tramps, Dick the Nailer and Red Harry, who slept rough on farmers' haystacks and were sometimes blamed for causing a fire. Harry had a long flowing beard and was a likeable fellow, not so Dick.

Of great interest on a winter's night, was that thick Gamage's catalogue of toys, etc., with nearly every article illustrated. Steam engines for as little as tenpence halfpenny were on offer. Electric bells, shocking coils and all sorts of cheap items, sent to the customer postage paid. But there was a snag, as pocket money weekly was not customary and pennies were hard to come by.

There were annual events that stirred the village. First the 'clubs', when the hobby horses came and Oddfellows Friendly Society members, juniors included, marched down the street wearing sashes and carrying banners. It was followed by a meal in a marquee on Ainsworth's croft. A dance in the evening followed, on the Castle Hill, the usual band being in attendance for the day. The Wakes followed in August when again the hobby horse contingent and the Agricultural Show livened up the village. There were exhibits of cheese, vegetables, wild flowers, eggs, etc., and show jumping added to the general interest. Sometimes the show was in Cornes' field, off their stackyard, and sometimes on Charlie Dodd's land down Church Street, opposite to Mount View Farm, where the horses and traps of visitors were stabled. On one occasion Maggie Collins brought from Chester her second class outfit and had partly erected the hobby horses when competition arrived in Cornes' field down the Whitchurch road. A Cocks and Hens outfit appeared, owned by Greatorex. Maggie, being alert, dismantled her merry-go-round and brought along her best set, not to be outdone. It was one penny a ride in daytime and twopence after dark when the scene was lit up with her own electric generator, mounted on a traction engine, and with paraffin flares.

Billy France's part-time activity is worth recording for he made malleable iron floorboard nails in a tiny hut up Tilston Road, near the 'cock fight' path. The hut, of brick and windowless with a two-piece door, contained his fire, bellows and a tiny anvil. It was "tap, tap", fashioning red hot slender bars into tapered nails with sloping heads. I watched him at work for many hours. It was a slow job and no doubt in those days worthwhile.

A story, false or true, was that many years before my time was the 'Barrel Fall' at Bickley. The tale then was that on the way from Bickley to St. Chad's Church at Tushingham, a footpath passed through a spinney and one day some worshippers passed through the spinney on their way to church. But on the return journey they found that the spinney had disappeared and a huge pond of uncertain depth had appeared, trees, etc., having sunk out of sight. Some people said that there was water connection with



Bar Mere. All I can vouch for is that a large pond certainly existed in my time as the pond was not far from a farm where I had holidays. Incidentally, the farmer told me the story. The description 'Barrel' was taken from Higgins the Barrel Farm.

Lasting memories are of the walks in the summer before evening church with my parents and younger brother. Sometimes we went through the Ox Heyes, down Overton Common and a circuitous route home. These walks were by footpath in all directions when larks would sing high in the sky, peewits would make their calls on grassland, waterhens would scatter away from their nests in the pond rushes and probably the corncrake caused most noise with its low pitched penetrating call in a cornfield. These scarce birds were later decimated by corn cutting machines and maybe now are birds of long ago in that area.

In 1909 I left friendly Malpas for good and an apprenticeship in a City. City life has mainly been my lifetime lot, not without major events in Industry.

<u>Expenditure</u>	
Gas Co for 21 Lamps	19 8 6
Mr Wycherley Storming Lamps	. 5 .
Oil & Wick	. . 8
Marquis of Cholch Rent of Lamp on Mrs Lancelley's House <sup>18 months</sup>	. . 9
Mr Muscley for New Ladder	. 10 .
James Allman for Lighting & Cheaning Lamp	} 5 5 .
Mr Furber for Repairs	. 3 6
Mr John Eaton for Repairs	1 8 4
Balance in hand	<u>2 5 5 ½</u>
	<u>£ 29 7 2 ½</u>

EXTRACT FROM THE 'MALPAS TOWNSHIP BOOK 1831-1938' (CHESTER CITY R.O. RP/10/1)

This shows the expenditure for gas lighting in the town in 1894/5. Lighting was the responsibility of the Vestry Meeting, which was the predecessor of the Parish Council. It was in this year (1895) that the Vestry started to hand over responsibility for civil affairs to the newly formed Parish Council. Note the reference to Mr Wycherley (father of the author of the above article) - see last paragraph on Page 6.

Reproduced by kind permission of Miss A. Kennett, Chester City Record Office.

## FARMING AT BARHILL 1798-1837

Richard Hughes

There had been a great upsurge in farming at the beginning of the 1800s, which affected my ancestors as much as other farmers. Nationally wheat prices were rising rapidly, partially due to the Corn Laws, whilst labour costs were only increasing slowly. The population had doubled during the previous century. The William Hughes who inherited Ash Wood in 1801 left a number of documents. He was Richard of Ash Wood's eldest son, born in 1771. His brother, Richard junior, was born in 1779 and the boys had a sister Margaret who was christened at Whitchurch on 21 March 1782.

Margaret seems to have been somewhat of a black sheep. She was married as a minor on 15 October 1802, when she was 20, to a Joseph Price. Nothing further seems to have been recorded about this couple - whether they went to live away or not I do not know.

William, while still a bachelor of 25, took a farm just over the Cheshire border, about ten miles from Ash Wood. This was called the Barhill, situated in the township of Tushingham-cum-Grindley, forming part of the estate of George, Lord Cholmondeley. The farm still exists, as an experimental farm for Spiller's Cattle Foods, and at present is about 200 acres in extent. I have William's farm account book, which he opened in the late autumn of 1798 with an entry 'to enter on 2nd February 1799 having the liberty to work before the time of entry'. He then records the ingoing of £379-0s-0d but does not record just what this sum covered or what work was done. The labour he was employing was being paid about 1s-6d a day - seven new pence!

When William lost his father and inherited Ash Wood in 1801 he was well established at Barhill so he left his younger brother farming, and paying rent for Ash Wood. Perhaps this was because, so far as I can find out, Ash Wood was only about 90 acres in extent and the Barhill probably about the same as today - about 200 acres. In any case Richard, who was five years his junior, remained at Ash Wood and William carried on farming the Barhill for the rest of his life. About nine years after taking the farm he married a farmer's daughter from Ash. He had known her from the time he first moved to Barhill, as he records her selling butter for him at the various markets. I am not sure exactly when he married her but I have a letter written to his wife using her maiden name of Mary Jones on 2 September 1807. William's first born, a son, arrived when he was 35 and was christened Richard in Whitchurch on 29 March 1809. William farmed on, having two more children, both girls, Sarah and Jane, the latter born on 12 March 1812. He was still farming Barhill at the age of 67 when, on 14 October 1841 he set up a trust for his three children, giving up active farming and the land but retiring into the old farmhouse at Barhill where he had lived for the greater part of his life.

After being opened in 1798, the Barhill farm account book gives a very detailed daily cash account until 1802, after which there is a break until 1810, just after his marriage. Another full year's details are given up until May 1811, when there is yet another break, followed by a half year's entries in 1824. The last entry is in 1837, prior to William's retirement in 1841. In between these cash accounts the old book was put to a variety of uses and I think that it is all these odd items that have secured its survival to date.

There are records of a payment and contract with a blacksmith for a year's work at a fixed sum and the same for a ratcatcher, Thomas Fouls, to kill rats for 10s per year. He was to be paid every Christmas for five years running, for attendance once a month through the year until he had killed

them all! There are agreements for piece work harvesting, 'to cut it up within six inches of the bottom of the ground, clean and upright, and not to cut it in the wet, and to keep it up whilst they are in the field, I am to give them bread and cheese every day and two quarts of ale to the acre'. For all this the workers were paid 7s per acre. William's school fees for his children are recorded, as well as the rent from his brother Richard for Ash Wood. He records his clock being moved and set up again when he moved into the farmhouse at Barhill. He also records the cleaning of his watch, and a record of the other watches in the family, together with their serial numbers and makers' names. The old book is also used to record 'those we have known and their deaths', instead of the family Bible fly leaf.

I studied the various entries of income in the Barhill Book with the idea of finding out what kind of farming had been undertaken, how many cattle William had been running and how and where he disposed of the produce. All this gives a very good idea of local farming at the turn of the century and the prices involved. Later I read through all the items of expenditure which had been put on to the account some ten years later and, finally, the brief one twenty five years after he had started to farm Barhill. I was looking for items that had been dropped, indicating that they had not been paying, or a shift, for example from milk production into pig farming.

One of the main products was milk but farming was very general and almost everything was given a try, even the cultivation of a good garden. Most of the milk was made into butter and, although he made cheese all through the period, most seems to have been distributed amongst the family and his men. He does record starting to make 'factors' cheese but that entry is dated 20 April 1829. Most of his calves were sold but I expect he kept the best, replacing about 15% to 20% as one would indeed probably do today. I was surprised at the relatively small amount of cash going into the house up until his marriage. During these nine years he had a housekeeper and at least three girls living in as well, as far as I can tell. There were also some men living in. The income tax, land tax, tithe, the payment for constables, the highway upkeep and the poor levy are very interesting and could well be the subject for further examination.

The £379 I mentioned, though listed for 'work done', must have included stock. He could, of course, have taken some with him from Ash Wood, where he started farming alongside his father, as he was 25 when he took Barhill and moved out of his old home. However, almost immediately sales of cattle started. The cows sold were described as 'barren' or 'old' and during the first three years, which I took as the initial sample, he sold four bulls - probably changing one each year both to improve his stock and to avoid in-breeding. As for the prices, in 1799 a bull and six cows made a total of £54-12s-6d, giving an average of £7-15s-6d per animal, and the 23 calves sold that year made £14-14s-0d - an average of 12s-9d each. In 1800 six cows were again sold and two bulls, at an average of £8-8s-6d per animal. The calf sales had gone up to 31, making £22-14s-0d. This gave a better average of 14s-6d each. After the third year he sold eleven cows and one bull for a total of £107-12s-6d. The average had now gone up to £8-19s-0d a head but the calf sales had gone down to 25, which made £25-1s-6d putting the price obtained to just over £1 on average. Looking at the figures, I do not think that this rising trend in prices was due to inflation but rather to the fact that he was improving the general quality of his stock.

The other stock consisted principally of pigs, sheep and fowls, for which I carried out a similar analysis of the accounts. There was a large acreage of arable land, sown with oats, barley and wheat. An acreage of pasture was required for milk production and a large proportion of the milk produced.



was converted into butter. On reflection, given the state of the roads, and the fact that the transport of goods was difficult, butter production was a good way of preserving a perishable product, particularly as the buttermilk and whey could be fed to the pigs. All that was lost of the latter, as a farmer said to me recently, was the grunt! There were also pork, bacon and other pig products for the table as well as a good deal of meat salted down. Beef cattle were being killed twice a year, together with the odd lamb. There were fowls for producing eggs and the odd roast, with ducks and geese also available. No wonder cash for 'things into the house' was so low, despite the number of mouths to be fed. There was plenty of ale to drink too. I then looked at the rest of the expenditure to see how everything was kept going. I checked to see how much labour was involved; the extent of the sub-contracting; what the labour costs were; and the general outgoings including taxes and tithe.

Labour seems to have been paid at odd times and in some cases there was a delay of up to three months between settlements. They were sometimes paid weekly but payments were certainly erratic. This leads me to believe that those men living in, and having all found, just requested cash when they needed some. I have not visited Barhill as yet to see how many bedrooms would have been available but it is rather a large house and there were girls as well as men living in. In the early days, William himself and his housekeeper 'Moly' Mathers lived there. I can find only one record of an actual lease being granted and have yet to check what the tied cottage situation would have been, for it certainly existed in those days.

Two names, however, crop up right through the period. These are Thomas Vaun and Thomas Ely and at least seven others seemed to have been employed on a contract or part time basis. Vaun worked for about 292 days in 1799, for a total wage of £19-10s-0d. Several checks of the account book indicated 1s-6d a day for a skilled man, so the time involved works out at 5½ days a week for 52 weeks. This dropped in 1800 to 193 days for £12-17s-11½d, which would work out at just under four days a week for 52 weeks, and in 1802 this dropped yet again to only 178 days worked for £11-17s-9d. A check on Thomas Ely showed that he worked only 187 days in 1799, being paid £10-18s-7d, but then increased in 1800, when he worked for 262 days earning a total of £17-9s-7½d, dropping back again in 1801 to only 162 days, making £12-3s-9d. If we take £3 per hour for a forty hour week today as a comparison, the increase is the most dramatic of all the costs and even on this fairly low rate shows an increase by a factor of some 356 times. The only reason I can think of for having men living in and yet working such a varied amount of hours could be that they were also hired out and then paid by the hirer directly, William having first call on their services. All the other labour that I checked worked far less hours or days - mostly about 40 to 50 days a year. As mentioned before, there was only one record of a lease being negotiated in the period I studied, or indeed in the 25 years that the book covers. There were no agreements for tied cottages or wage deductions in lieu of rent. I suppose most of the cottages had a pigsty and, in some cases, the tyings for a cow or two. Thus a married man could have been self employed and, using the Barhill occasional work as security, perhaps take on contracts. The blacksmith and ratcatcher are examples of this and it would be most interesting to find out the terms of employment in those days. There are several records of the harvest, men cutting corn and hay by contract.

Most of the other labour seems to have been employed in very specific jobs, the ratcatchers and blacksmiths being examples. One entry in the account book reads 'agreed with John Anson for my blacksmith from February to

1799 Cash paid Brought forward £ 1.9

July	7 <sup>th</sup>	P. <sup>d</sup> James Vain	0	1	4
		D. <sup>d</sup> for Soap	0	9	4
	8	P. <sup>d</sup> at the Bell for ale and gave Jack Jones	0	0	4
	10	P. <sup>d</sup> for two Sills Smeaks	0	1	6
		D. <sup>d</sup> Paid Marget Stone for looking after y <sup>e</sup> Calf	0	1	0
	11	P. <sup>d</sup> Tele for 2 Sheep	0	0	2
	12	P. <sup>d</sup> M. <sup>r</sup> Gills man for assisting with Catchen Rabbits	0	1	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> Tho. <sup>s</sup> Pugh for Treacle	0	2	9
		D. <sup>d</sup> Laid out at Whitchurch market	0	8	7
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> M. <sup>r</sup> Hawalls Bill	3	18	2
	13	P. <sup>d</sup> Tho. <sup>s</sup> Eley for Work	1	9	10
	15	P. <sup>d</sup> farmer Jewell for curring the bull	0	5	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> Tho. <sup>s</sup> Pugh for Bwams and Tea	0	1	6
	16	P. <sup>d</sup> Jm. <sup>s</sup> Edge for earnest for hire in	0	1	0
	20	P. <sup>d</sup> for two load of Coles	1	1	7 1/2
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> at Whitchurch	0	1	6
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> Thos Vain for work	0	12	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> Jo. <sup>s</sup> Dymelo	1	10	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> Tho. <sup>s</sup> Eley	0	7	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> William Grifet	0	6	6
		P. <sup>d</sup> for average load of Coles	0	14	11 1/2
		D. <sup>d</sup> for a cart load of Coles for Jm. <sup>s</sup> Edge for his father	0	7	9
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> for a pound of Sugar	0	10	0
	25	P. <sup>d</sup> Samuel Kopywood for Drawing toe	2	6	2
	28	P. <sup>d</sup> for average loads of Coles	0	14	4 1/2
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> Moley for hire in Servants and Bwams	0	3	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> Jm. <sup>s</sup> for Ernest	0	1	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> at Malpas fare	0	1	9
159.10.9		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> M. <sup>r</sup> Sparrow for a bull	5	5	0
1810.14.0/2		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> for a load of Coles	0	14	4 1/2
August 2		P. <sup>d</sup> M. <sup>r</sup> Green for boards	0	5	0 1/2
		D. <sup>d</sup> William Jewell one days work	0	1	6
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> M. <sup>r</sup> Large spoon lay at 1 in the pound	3	17	6 1/2
	6	D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> M. <sup>r</sup> Ankers for a cow	1	10	0
		D. <sup>d</sup> P. <sup>d</sup> at Whitchurch for things in to the house	0	8	4
	7	P. <sup>d</sup> for 2 quarts of Vinegar	0	2	0

February for the sum of £8-8s-0d and two measures of wheat for to do all my work except iron for the wheels'. After that agreement the blacksmith took four payments on account through the year and is also recorded as having a cheese weighing forty pounds, exactly the size of a Cheshire cheese today but then valued at 6½d per pound, as part payment. If we use this cheese as an example and take today's price as being in the region of £1 per pound weight, that only represents an increase of some 37 times and serves to put the labour quoted earlier into some sort of perspective. Another entry reads 'agreed with Thomas Fouls to kill my rats for 10s per year, and to be paid every Christmas for five years running, to attend once in every six weeks the year round till he has killed them all'. Yet another agreement runs 'agreed with Edward and John Fisher for the Bickley field of wheat, to reap it at 7s per acre and to cut it within six inches of the ground, clean and upright, and not to cut it in the wet, and to keep it up whilst they are in the field. I am to give them bread and cheese each day, and two quarts of ale to the acre'. After that a small foot note, with what I take to be an advance in kind, reads 'Edward Fisher a meal of wheat, and John Fisher half a meal of wheat'. This, I suppose, was taking the 'earnest' shilling when hiring labour, though this too is on record.

There were many other men who were employed for specific jobs. Some worked for not more than a few days in the year and others up to as much as forty or fifty days. Some of the names were William Edwards, William Purcess, William Griffiths, William Hallmark and Thomas Daniels, apart from the spinners and weavers, etc. A Thomas Dod was the 'moul' man. I recall, when I was a boy, a molecatcher named Hobson used to call at Ash Wood twice a year and was paid a penny an acre for each time for the entire acreage, regardless of whether moles were caught or not. The moles he did catch were skinned, the pelts being part of the perks, and the carcasses were hung up on the barbs of a wire fence, usually at a gate, as evidence of the catch.

Hiring of labour was not without its difficulties, even in those days, and on 20 December 1799 a payment of 10s-6d was made to Reece the Attorney for 'ousting' John Lee. On 6 December that year a lease was drawn up for another worker, Dimelo. This cost £1-9s-6d and, as already mentioned, this is the only time in the 25 year span of the account book that a lease is mentioned. Dimelo had worked part time earlier in 1799 and carried on working part time from his leased property.

#### FACING PAGE

#### A PAGE OF ACCOUNTS FROM THE BARHILL FARM ACCOUNT BOOK 1798 - 1837

This shows 'outgoings' for 7 July - 7 August 1799. Among the items are 'catchen rabbits', 'curein the bull', 'dresing toe (tow?)', 'beesams' (besoms) and 'pd at Malpas fare'.



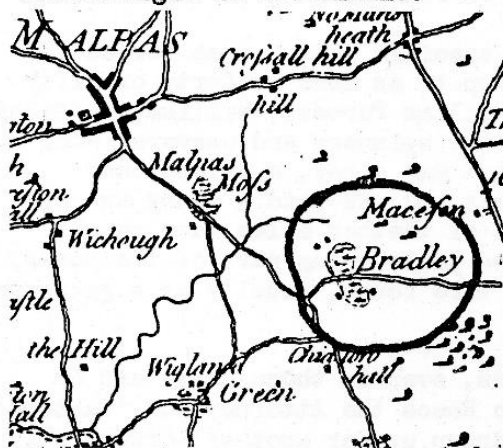
# THE TOWNSHIP OF BRADLEY

Matthew Hollins

This article is part of a project on the local history and natural history of Bradley when the author, a pupil at the White House School, Whitchurch, was aged eight. We would be very pleased to receive similar articles on other parts of the parish of Malpas, written by young or old.

Bradley is a rural civil parish where nearly all the land is used for farming, mainly dairy farming but also some sheep and corn. The parish is 1825 acres in area. Most of it is in one big block with a piece on one side which goes nearly as far as Malpas village.

A railway line goes through the middle of the parish. It used to go to Chester and Whitchurch but no trains go on it now because the track was pulled up in 1965. Also two roads go through the parish and there is a Common right in the middle.



Bradley has twenty eight houses and seventy inhabitants. On this map, which was published in 1777, Bradley is shown circled.

The name Bradley probably meant 'a broad clearing' because 'brad' was the Saxon word for 'broad' and 'ley' the word for a clearing in a wood. Many years ago, most of Britain was covered by woodland.

In the twelve and thirteen hundreds the Manor of Bradley was part of the Barony of Malpas and belonged to the Sutton family.

In 1527 it was sold by Edward Sutton, who was Lord Dudley, to Rowland Hill. In 1528 Rowland Hill sold it to George Robinson. In 1531 it was bought by Sir William Brereton, who owned a lot of land in this part of Cheshire. Soon after this he sold it to another land-owner, Sir William Drake. The Manor of Bradley was owned by the Drake family until the 1900s.

In Ormerod's 'History of Cheshire' there is a page about the Dawson family, who lived at Bradley:

"In 1625 the Pestilence appears in a more horrible form. The entries commence with the deaths of Gefferie, servant, Thomas Dawson of Bradley and Richard Dawson his son buried in the nights of the 10th and 13th of August, after which occurs the name of Ralph Dawson, also son of Thomas, who "came from London about 25th of July last past and, being sicke of the plague, died in his fathers house".

Then followed the burials of Thomas Dawson, August 15th, at three o'clock after midnight, Elizabeth his daughter, August 20th, and Anne, his wife, the same day.

Richard Dawson, brother of the above named Thomas Dawson of Bradley, "being sicke of the plague, and p'ceiving he must die at y' time aros out of his bed, and made his grave, and caused his nephew John Dawson, to cast straw into the grave w'ch was not farre from the house and went and layd uppon, and so dep'ted out of this world this he did because he was a strong man and heavier than his nephew and another wench were able to bury. He died about XXIV<sup>th</sup> of August. This much I was credibly told he died 1625".

No-one knows for sure whereabouts in Bradley the Dawson family lived but it could have been at Bradley Farm, where I live.

Most people who lived in Bradley would have gone to the Markets and Fairs in the nearest town. These were days when everyone went out to enjoy themselves, buying and selling things and eating and drinking in the ale houses. The only way to get there was to walk or ride on a horse and after their day out they would have to walk or ride all the way home - the roads in those days were just dirt tracks with big pot holes.

Malpas was the nearest market and it was granted its market charter to hold a market every Monday, on July 13th 1281.

Many years ago there were no schools for the children to go to. There is no school at Bradley now and there never was one. The only things that the children had to learn in those days were the jobs that had to be done in the fields by the boys and the jobs that had to be done in the house and the dairy by the girls. These things would be taught to them by their mothers and fathers. In the 1600s a grammar school was started at Malpas. The parents had to pay fees to send their children there and so only the rich people's children could go. It was not until the 1800s that it became law that all young children must go to school and so a school was also started at Tushingham, which is nearer to Bradley and to which the Bradley children had to go. And so for the first time most children were able to read and write but even then not very well. Many children still had to leave school when they were eleven or twelve because they were needed to help on the farm or to earn money for food for the rest of their families.

Bradley is such a small place that it has never had its own church. The main church was St Oswald's at Malpas, where the Bradley people were baptised, married and buried since before parish records were kept. In those days everybody had to go to church every Sunday or else they got into very serious trouble.

Because Malpas church covered such a big area and it was such a long way for some of the people to walk to church, smaller churches or chapels were built much nearer to their homes. The one that was built nearer to Bradley is called Old Saint Chad Chapel in Tushingham. The man in charge of this Chapel was called a curate and he was sent out by the Rector of Malpas. The first known records of baptisms and burials that took place at Old Saint Chad's date from 1571.

Many years ago the road went right past Old Chad's but at some time the route was changed. This means that the Chapel is now right in the middle of the fields and there is no proper road to it. It does not have any electricity for lights or heating and Mrs Dawson, who plays the organ, has to press a big pedal up and down with her feet while she plays the notes with her fingers.

This Chapel is now only used once a month in the Summer because in 1863 a big new church was built by the main road and all other services are held there. In 1884 another chapel was built actually in Bradley, when a man called Thomas Crump gave some money to build a small Congregational chapel.

# THE STORY OF MAESFEN HALL

F Moore Dutton

The Domesday Survey takes no notice of this township. Its early history can be found in George Ormerod's "History of Cheshire". The township consists of a scattered district of houses, two miles from Malpas. On John Ogilby's strip map of 1675 the area was shown as Mason, with two dwellings.

The Manor was formerly part of the Great Barony of Malpas. In the early times it was possessed by the Stockton family, whence it passed to the Eatons and Grosvenors. By the latter family it was sold in the year 1782 to Lord Kenyon who sold it to his brother, the Hon. Edward Kenyon, who later built the Hall. This was a handsome brick mansion, the estate of which extended in all to about 394 acres, consisting of The Residence, with outbuildings and grounds, Millmoor Farm, The Home Farm, Malt Kiln Farm and many small holdings and cottages.

The residence had a vestibule, entrance hall, four reception rooms, eighteen bedrooms and dressing rooms and complete domestic offices.

The Hon. Edward Kenyon was the second son of George, Lord Kenyon, by Margaret Emma, daughter of Sir Thomas Harmer, second Baronet, of Bettisfield, born 11 June 1810. He married first, on 19 September 1840, Caroline Susan Catherine, youngest daughter of General Lord George Beresford. She died 8 March 1866. In 1880 he married Catherine Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev. George F J Marsham.

Mr Kenyon, who was educated at Harrow, was a Justice of the Peace for Cheshire, Shropshire and Denbighshire and D.L. for Cheshire. He was also a Captain in the Earl of Chester's Yeomanry. He died on 21 October 1894. His daughter Emma Jane Anne, born 1847, married on 26 April 1877 the Hon. Algernon Robert Parker MA, born 17 November 1849, third son of the Earl of Macclesfield. He died on 20 May 1940. They had six sons and two daughters. Mrs Parker had died on 17 May 1933.

In 1896, as a memorial to the Hon. Edward Kenyon, his widow paid for a tower to be built on to St Chad's Church in Tushingham. The architect was Mr C Hodgson Fowler FSA and the builders Messrs Bowman and Son of Stamford. The peal of bells was subscribed for by his friends. For nearly forty years he was a kind friend to the Parish and was beloved and respected by all who knew him.

On the retirement of the Hon. William Trevor Kenyon MA, son of the third Baron, as Rector of Malpas, the Rev. The Hon. Algernon Robert Parker MA was appointed Rector and Rural Dean. He came from Bix, near Henley-on-Thames, where he had been Rector since 1877.

Mr Parker's wife Emma Jane Anne had inherited Maesfen on the death of her father, The Hon. Edward Kenyon, in 1894. Her brother, who married a Roman Catholic, inherited property at Swinley in Lancashire but went to live at Gillingham in Norfolk and was cut out of Maesfen. Mrs Edward Kenyon, her stepmother, died in 1903 and on Mr Parker's retirement as Rector of Malpas in 1904 they both came to live in the Hall. He retired as Rural Dean in 1917.

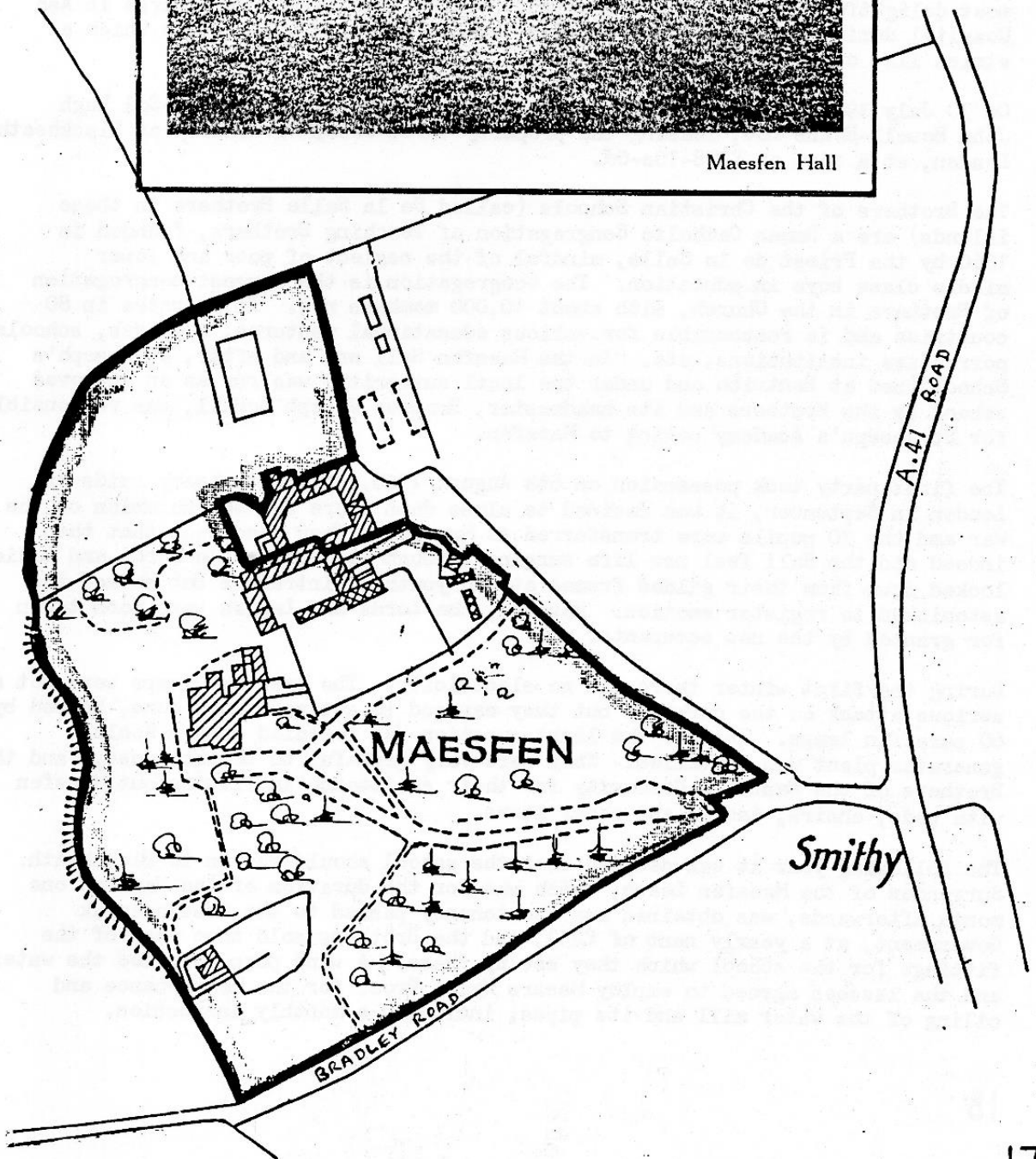
Mr Parker was very popular and an extremely keen sportsman and was a director of the Chester Race Company from 1897 until 1927. He bred terriers and when there was a complaint that a fox had taken poultry he and the locals he ferreted with would dig out the fox and remove it to another part of the country.

There was a staff of six servants in the house, including a hall boy and a coachman whose livery was dark green, a peaked cap and leggings, who drove the coach and pair. When a car was purchased he became the chauffeur. There were six gardeners, the head of whom lived at Kiln Cottage.





Maesfen Hall



When Mr Parker went to Smith's of Chester to order a new suit, Kelly, a good salesman, said "May I suggest this cloth, suitable for hunting parties and the church?", with the emphasis on hunting. When invited to tea he would stress "everyday cups". When asked if he would have some preserve he replied "No jam, damn it!" A friend of his in his later years tells of accompanying him back to Maesfen after church, where they browsed through Debrett's Peerage and drank peach brandy, possibly made from his own excellent peaches.

Chester Races was a great occasion and the house was full of guests. So many coaches arrived that his stables and those of the Kiln Farm were full.

A very successful tennis club was allowed to use the tennis courts and the annual church Fete was held in the grounds. Opposite the church there was a cricket and football ground which was ploughed up during the War.

Mrs Parker ran a Bible class and on giving it up she donated the organ to Old St Chad's. For many years she had Miss Louise Evans, known as Fluffy, a most delightful person, as a companion. Fluffy also served as a nurse in Ash Hospital during the War. One room was used as a Parish Library, in which a strict list of rules was posted.

On 30 July 1940 a lease was signed by the Hon. Henry Parker and Lt-Col Hugh John Howell-Evans DSO, leasing the property to St Joseph's Academy of Blackheath, London, at a rent of £278-10s-6d.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools (called De la Salle Brothers in these islands) are a Roman Catholic Congregation of Teaching Brothers, founded in 1860 by the Priest de la Salle, mindful of the neglect of poor and lower middle class boys in education. The Congregation is the largest congregation of Brothers in the Church, with about 10,000 members now. It operates in 80 countries and is responsible for various educational ventures, colleges, schools, corrective institutions, etc. In the Maesfen Hall era and after, St Joseph's School (now at Nantwich and under the local authority) was run as an approved school by the Brothers and its headmaster, Brother Joseph McHall, was responsible for St Joseph's Academy coming to Maesfen.

The first party took possession on 6th August 1940. Owing to heavy raids on London in September, it was decided to close down there for the duration of the War and the 70 pupils were transferred to Maesfen. They recollect that then indeed did the Hall feel new life surging through it. The noble Lords and Ladies looked down from their gilded frames at the youthful intruders but seemed too astonished to register emotion. However, the Lords and Ladies were soon taken for granted by the new occupants.

During the first winter there was no electricity. The pressure lamps were not a serious attack on the darkness but they managed to get some work done, helped by 60 paraffin lamps. In 1941 the light question was remedied when a Kohler generator plant was installed. They were very grateful to Brother Joseph and the Brothers of the Nantwich Community for their assistance in fitting out Maesfen with beds, chairs, tables and other items.

The following year it was decided that the school should return to Blackheath. Surrender of the Maesfen Lease, which was for the duration of the War and one month afterwards, was obtained and the tenancy passed to the Czechoslovak Government, at a yearly rent of £253, and the Brothers sold them many of the fittings for the school which they set up there. A wind pump supplied the water and the lessees agreed to employ Messrs Wyatt Bros. for the maintenance and oiling of the water mill and its pipes, including a monthly inspection.

So the Blackheath Academy was in Maesfen from 6 August 1940 until 1 September 1942. The Czechoslovak Government also rented the Malt Kiln farm house. The farm buildings of brick included the Old Malt House. Unfortunately the Kiln, with its perforated bricks that heated the barley, has been removed. The malt cured there no doubt supplied breweries which at that time existed in Tattenhall and elsewhere.

On 9 July 1943 the Maesfen Estate was offered for sale but it failed to meet its reserve and only a few cottages were sold and the remainder withdrawn. The auctioneers were Messrs Knight, Frank and Rutley.

The Czech children at the Hall soon picked up English and when Mr Norman Wycherley, the air raid warden, took them gas masks they formed a ring around him, singing "Here comes the gas mask man!" On 15 June 1945 Miss Margaret Worthington enrolled nine Czech girls into the Girl Guide movement, at the Hall. The Czech school departed in July 1945.

Afterwards the Rev. Elias Morris Jones, Rector of Tushingham, ran a school consisting of 26 boys and one girl for two terms, which was taken over by the Rev R H Duncan, who took on Miss Patricia Laya as matron. In 1948 he transferred the school to Cloverley, near Whitchurch. The Hall was then purchased, it is reported for £1,000, for an hotel by Miss Mabel Manley, who was previously at the Swan Hotel in Whitchurch.

She was a character and cats were everywhere. She kept hens in a room in the servants' quarters which laid their eggs on the three piece suite. Mr R Williamson remembers as a boy being paid a tin of fruit once a fortnight for cleaning them out.

The house was completely riddled with dry rot. The Rev Duncan stated he had never known a case where it spread so rapidly.

In 1960 the Hall and six acres were finally purchased by the late Mr Bellis, of Whitchurch Salop Contractors Ltd., who demolished the Hall. He applied to build 48 houses on the site but there was an objection on the grounds that there was no sewerage, etc.

Now happily there is a charming estate of a few houses. Four Firs was practically built out of materials from the Hall.

On the other side of the A.47 there used to be a blacksmith's, run in 1860 by John Baker. At this same period, Mr William Blantern was the leading farmer.

Maesfen School was in the cottage opposite the present one, the teacher living in the cottage nearest to the Hall. Children were charged 2d a week.



An excerpt from JOHN OGILBY'S strip map of 1675, showing 'Mason'

The Rules for the Maesfen Reading Room are reproduced on the back cover.





## Old St. Chad Chapel, Tushingham

by

THE REV. T. M. HEARN

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**T**HIS work has been produced in response to numerous requests from parishioners, friends and visitors, who have expressed the hope that something of the history of Old Chad could be made readily available for all to read.

In compiling this brief history the writer has in some places taken the liberty of making his own observations. But for the most part it is the piecing together of items of information and knowledge from various wholly authentic and reliable sources. Gratitude is hereby expressed and due acknowledgement made to all sources of information, with particular reference to the following : Mr. and Mrs. F. Moore Dutton for sight of the Vawdrey family records; Wakeman's "History of the Church of England"; Richard's "Cheshire Churches"; "York Minster Historical Tracts", 1927; Francis White & Co.'s "History and Description of Cheshire", 1860.

# OLD ST. CHAD CHAPEL TUSHINGHAM

(A brief history)

**B**EFORE looking at the chapel itself, it might be of interest to consider something of the life and character of St. Chad, the patron Saint of this parish.

St. Chad lived in the 7th century and was one of four brothers, all ordained priests. The eldest brother, Cedd, who became Bishop of the East Saxons, founded a monastery at Lastingham, Yorkshire, and was its first Abbot. About the year 664, Cedd, returning to Lastingham after visiting his diocese, fell ill of the plague and died. Chad succeeded his brother as Abbot of Lastingham and it is from this time that the story of St. Chad really begins, as little seems to be known of his whereabouts or what work he was actually engaged in before this time, apart from the one fact that he was a mission priest.

At the time of Cedd's death, Wilfred became Bishop of York. However, he insisted on going to Gaul for his consecration and remained there for nearly a year before returning to his diocese. But in the meantime, because the people had complained about being so long without a Bishop, Chad was called from the quiet of his Abbey to replace Wilfred and he was duly consecrated Bishop of York in the year 666.

From accounts of this period it is evident that Chad was a person of great humility and he ruled his vast diocese with singular zeal and winning love. Bede says of him that "his rule was of a high standard. His teaching was based upon the true and pure doctrines of the Church. In his own life he was humble and chaste and assiduous in study. After the example of the Apostles he went everywhere on foot, preaching the Gospel in town and country, in cottage and village and castle."

Chad, however, was not to remain long as Bishop of York, for in 669, Wilfred, having been back from the continent for some time, was reappointed and Chad retired to Lastingham. Shortly afterwards, however, there came a request from Wulfhere, King of Mercia, for a Bishop of Mercia, so once again the humble saint was called from the quiet of his Abbey to become the founder and first occupant of the great Midland See of Lichfield. Here he spent the remaining years of his life and died on the 2nd March, 672.

For many years Cheshire was part of the vast Diocese of Lichfield which stretched from the Severn to the East Coast and to Lancashire in the North, and it was not until 1541 that the Diocese of Chester was founded. For that reason, no doubt, there are many churches which bear the name of St. Chad, scattered over a wide area, a number of them very ancient dedications.

We know that Chad was a great visitor and it is not inconceivable that he visited this part of the country. It is said that such was his godly influence that a Christian community was soon formed after his visits and in many places a place of worship was built and named after him. We shall never know, of course, if Chad ever really visited the hamlet of Tushingham, but it is again not inconceivable that the present chapel of St. Chad has replaced former edifices, built, rebuilt and restored at various intervals throughout the centuries far back beyond recorded dates.

What we do know for sure is that such was the example and godly influence of St. Chad that his name was honoured not only within the limits of his old Mercian Diocese—vast as that was—but far beyond it. He has been truly named “the Apostle of the Midlands”, for by his untiring work, by his episcopal rule, by his character and temperament and by his earnest devotion and humility, he brought the Angles and Britons together into one Church for the first time.

The little chapel of Old St. Chad, as it is now known, stands alone in a field surrounded by its churchyard which is still the burial ground of the church and parish. A small edifice of brick, it is reached by traversing a narrow lane, known as Chad Lane, off the A.41 road about four miles north of Whitchurch, Salop, but actually situated within the boundary of Cheshire. Apart from holding Funeral services, Morning and Evening Prayer and Holy Communion is held here one Sunday each month from May to September, commencing on Rogation Sunday. In addition, traditionally for many years, special services have always been held on Ascension Day and Rushbearing Day, usually the first Sunday in August. In very bad weather the chapel is almost inaccessible and there is no lighting or heating, but on a fine spring or summer day a more delightful and ideal setting for worship would be hard to find. Churchings and Baptisms may also be held in the chapel, but since the building of the parish church requests for such are very rare.

The chapel was rebuilt in the years 1689—91 (see wooden plaque on north wall), largely with funds given by John Dod. This benefactor, who was born at Tushingham in 1644, married Mary, daughter of Richard Thorogood, Alderman of London. John Dod went to live in London and became a prosperous merchant. Webb's itinerary, written in the year 1621, tells us that “this place called Chadwick Chapel is very probably of very ancient date, as the ‘chapel field’ and the ‘chapel meadow’ are mentioned in a deed dated 1349.”

The manor of Tushingham was originally held by Robert Fitzburgh and before the reign of Edward the Second it became the property of the Stockton family who held it under the Malpas Barony. At a later date it passed into the hands of the Grosvenor family and in 1636, Sir Richard Grosvenor conveyed, for £600, to Thomas Nevitt of London, Goldsmith, “all that Manor or lordship of Tushingham and chapel of Tushingham called Chad Chapel and all that waste ground called Willey Moor and also one annual rent of fourpence or one pair of gloves yearly issuing out of or payable for the lands of John Dawson of Tushingham, Gent, and also one annual or yearly red rose issuing out of and payable from the



lands of William Gwimde of Tushingam, Yeoman." By 1657 the property had become the possession of an Edward Nevitt, presumably Thomas's son, and in 1715 it was sold to Edward Haulsey. In 1778 the manor came into the possession of Susanne Churton and apparently this lady set up her claim to the chapel, but without effect. Subsequently, the manor was held by the Boydell family and in 1814 it was purchased by Daniel Vawdrey. This gentleman was the great great grandfather of Mrs. Margaret Moore Dutton who, together with her husband, Mr. Francis Moore Dutton and their family are the present owners of Tushingam Hall and estate.

The present chapel of brick probably took the place of an earlier timber framed edifice. The remodelling of 1689—91 remains mostly intact, as does the unique fittings. The roof is a very unusual example of its period, with two sections between the collar beam and the tie beam occupied by carving of a local character. The filling is designed in squares with a quarter circle in each corner, with slightly elliptical centres. These are also elaborated with triangles so placed as to form a pattern. Whether the pattern is meant to represent something is not actually known, but it could be said that it roughly represents a repeated crown of thorns.

The furniture of the chapel is all original and made of good 17th century Cheshire oak, with the exception of the gallery which is of a later date. The 17th century Holy Table has turned legs to the front and a carved top rail. On each side of the Holy Table are two highbacked square family box pews, both panelled and taking up much of the limited chancel space. It is evident from this and from examination of the outside of the East wall, that at one time there was a small sanctuary beyond the chancel.

The finer of the two box pews is the one on the South side, with its carving on the panels. Above it are memorial tablets to the Vernon and Murhall families. A marble memorial over the North box pew is to the Stephens family. The hand-made hinges of differing designs fixed with nails on the box pew doors and the clerk's reading desk door are well worth noting. The plainly panelled pulpit is supported on one side by the stump of a tree, which also forms a seat for the clerk's assistant or the lesson reader, and immediately in front is the low chancel screen dividing the small chapel. This interesting screen has a panelled base surrounded by a terrace of good shaped slats. The chapel has three square headed windows on either side with square lead lights. Some of these are of old greenish coloured glass which were able to be retained during the last restoration. The two round headed windows at the East End form a memorial and are filled with mid-19th century stained glass.

The pews in the body of the chapel are unique. They are formed of stout planking without any kind of moulding or grooving and the uprights are secured by rough iron angle plates. The gallery at the West End is also quite unique as it can be reached only by an exterior stone staircase built against the North corner of the West wall. How the gallery came to be built is quite interesting. In 1822, Old St. Chad was endowed by subscription and made a perpetual Curacy and the



The Chapel decorated for Rushbearing and Flower Festival, 1970.

Rev. R. B. Brocklebank (one of the Malpas curates) was presented to it by the Rectors of Malpas. Mr. Daniel Vawdrey, however, laid claim to the chapel as passing to him with the Manor, but, being advised by Counsel that he could not establish the claim, he came to an arrangement with the Rectors that he should erect a Gallery for his own use and make a vault free of any fees. This was done and, although the actual date of the building of the Gallery seems unknown, we can presume that it was not long after the year of 1822, if not in that year. The Rev. R. B. Brocklebank remained in his office until his death in 1859, that is, for 37 years. To serve for so long as a perpetual curate in one place must surely be a near record. He was buried in Old Chad churchyard and his grave may be seen situated a few yards from the South wall of the chapel. Before his appointment, the Rectors of Malpas or one of their Curates did duty at the chapel every other Sunday.

But to return to the chapel itself. The movable font is an item which is quite remarkable and worth examining. It is fashioned entirely of oak with the exception of the removable pewter bowl which fits into the hollowed top. It has a heavy cover of oak and the elaborately carved baluster pedestal measures four feet in height. The carving is very rich and would suggest local craftsmanship of the late 17th or early 18th century. In fact, the carving is rather unusual for a font, and one expert in these matters has tentatively suggested that the baluster pedestal may be a post from a four poster bed of that period !

A rare pewter collecting tray belonging to the chapel is kept at the main church. It is over 6in. square with a short handle also of pewter, and is inscribed, "Samuel Grafton, Freeman of London and Mayor of Whitchurch, gave this box for the use of this parish 1673." There is a duplicate kept at Malpas Parish Church.

The chapel bell is inscribed "G. Mears, Founders, London, 1861".

Set in the outside South wall of the chapel towards the East end is a stone step and a small doorway. It has an oak door without lock or handle. It is, in fact, a false door and doorway since the other side within the chapel has been filled in and plastered over, so there is no trace of it to be seen in the chapel. By some repute this was once a lepers' door, but this cannot be authenticated. It seems unlikely that in those old, old days a leper would be allowed to enter the chapel and take a seat. On the other hand, if it was a door through which lepers were merely meant to gaze and listen and not to pass through, then why make an actual doorway? From the position of the doorway inside the chapel, it seems much more likely that it was a small private entrance for the families who would occupy the box pews, or maybe for monks or trainee priests who would no doubt occupy the long seat the back of which also forms the chancel screen on the South side. This is only conjecture. It may well have been a lepers' door, but it would be unwise to categorically say it was such.



Old St. Chad has been a chapel of ease to Malpas Church from very early times and, as already mentioned, was served by the Rectors of Malpas or their Curates until it became a perpetual curacy in 1822. In the year 1859, after the death of the Rev. R. B. Brocklebank, the Rev. Job Lee was appointed perpetual Curate, but served for only a short time as in the following year, 1860, when the new Church of St. Chad was being built, Tushingham and its immediate surrounding townships was constituted a separate cure and became a "District Chapelry of St. Chad, Tushingham, in the Parish of Malpas." In that same year the Rev. H. J. Mackenzie was appointed to the living, subsequently becoming the first incumbent and Vicar of Tushingham when it was made an independent Parish after the building of the new church was completed in 1863. Thus dawned the history of the Parish Church of St. Chad, as yet still to be recorded and written.

Like many ancient places, the very early history of Old Chad lies buried in time. Thus, although we know that a chapel existed in 1349, and probably even earlier, we can only refer back to the earliest records available. The registers of Malpas Church contain many specific entries mentioning Chad Chapel, the earliest recorded being Baptisms and Burials in the year 1571. The earliest grave which is still visible is that of a monk which lies just a few feet from the South East corner of the chapel.

Throughout its long history, all kinds of repairs must have been carried out on the old chapel, but there is, it seems, no record of major work or renovation being carried out between the years 1689 to 1841. In the year 1847, the Upper Rector of Malpas at that time has recorded that "in 1841 the Chapel of St. Chad at Tushingham was repaired and the interior completely renovated and improved. This was done chiefly by the Churchwardens under the direction of the Rectors and from parish funds generally." It is not known exactly what was done at that time, but it is of interest to note that the date 1841 is carved in large figures on the back of the chapel door.

The chapel as it can be seen today was completely and very beautifully restored by Mrs. J. Vernon to the memory of her late husband, Captain John Vernon, formerly resident in this parish, a descendant of a family who for long have been benefactors to St. Chad's church and parish. The date of this restoration, 1960, is commemorated by a memorial plaque, together with the Vernon coat of arms which may be seen on the South wall just above the chancel screen.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this account of St. Chad and our chapel named after him and found it of interest. We have purposely excluded anything of a legendary nature which so often becomes attached to old places, because legend is not factual history. However, for the sake of those who love to conjecture on the past and speculate on the unknown, we conclude this narrative with the following poem. It expresses what Old St. Chad may have been in the past, what it now is, and what it means to those who love the place and delight to worship there whenever possible.

We are grateful to Mr Arthur Hewitt for the loan of the booklet from which this article was reproduced.

Donations towards the restoration fund may be sent to:  
Mr Andrew Dawson, Bickley Wood, Malpas SY14 8EE or  
Rev P Winchester, The Vicarage, Tushingham, Whitchurch, Shropshire.  
Cheques should be made payable to 'Tushingham P.C.C. (Old St Chad's)'

## MALPAS TOWN BAND



This picture of George Harrison, with his baritone (?) horn, was taken on 20 August 1922. A member of the Malpas Town Band, he lived in Cobblestones Cottage in Church Street (home of the late Mr Oliver Griffiths).

We know that there are still a number of former members of the Band still living in the area. Would any of them be willing to write an article on the Band's history, for inclusion in a future issue of this magazine, or alternatively to provide the material for us to put an article together?

# MAESFEN READING ROOM.

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## COMMITTEE :

Rev. LL. B. VAWDREY (Chairman).

Mr. W. Prior (Treasurer),

Mr. John Elson,

Mr. T. Lea,

Mr. James Miles,

Mr. C. Raymond,

Mr. R. Vawdrey, Junr.

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## RULES.

1. This Reading Room is to be open from the first Monday in September to the last Saturday in April, on every evening in the week (except Sunday), from 6 p.m. to 9-30 p.m.
2. Every member is to pay 8d. per month to the Treasurer on the first Monday in each month during the time that the room is open.
3. A member may bring a friend to the room on any evening by paying one penny to the Treasurer or some member of the Committee.
4. No one can become a member who is not over 14 years of age.
5. No intoxicating drink is to be brought into the room, and no drunken person is to be allowed in the room.
6. No bad language is to be allowed in the room.
7. No gambling is to be allowed in the room.
8. Smoking is allowed, but members must not spit in the room.
9. No article belonging to the room to be taken out of it.
10. If a member, or any person introduced by a member, shall break any of the above rules, he must pay a fine of sixpence to the Treasurer, or some member of the Committee present; and if he declines to pay the fine, he must be expelled from the room. Any member of the Committee is to have power to enforce the above rules and to keep order in the room.