

MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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PROGRAMME OF PAST EVENTS

1997 Nov. Gloucester Cathedral
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Farley

1998 Jan. The Hampton Car
Mr. Trevor Picken

March With Rolls Royce and Camera
Mr. Trevor Allen

May The Legacy of William Morris
Mrs. Jacqui Sarsby

July Guided Walk around Nailsworth
Mrs. Betty Mills

Sept. Ancient Woodlands
Mr. Bill Dixon

MINCHINHAMPTON AND THE TROLLOPES

Peter Grover

Behind the existence of a modest gravestone in Minchinhampton Parish Churchyard lies an intriguing story. It marks the last resting-place of Rose Trollope, widow of the great Victorian novelist Anthony Trollope, their eldest son Harry and Harry's daughter Muriel. In the adjoining grave lie Harry's wife Ada and her mother. All died at Harry and Ada's home, "Greylands", in Minchinhampton High Street.

Anthony Trollope, then a minor Post Office official and struggling part-time author, married Rose Hestletine, the daughter of a seemingly respectable bank manager in Rotherham, Yorkshire. But this apparent pillar of society was, in fact, a crook. Visiting inspectors discovered that over the years he had embezzled more than £4000 from the bank; he escaped gaol by fleeing abroad where he subsequently died.

Rose, on the other hand, proved a model wife – scrupulously honest, faithful, lastingly affectionate though firm in domestic matters, and even tolerant of her husband's too-keen eye for a pretty girl. She advised him on the feminine ways of his female characters, who form such a striking feature of his stories, on their way of speaking to each other on intimate matters, and the details of their dress, and he is said to have modelled some of his characters on her. She carefully checked all his manuscripts before publication, and kept his financial affairs in order.

They had two sons – Henry Merivale (Harry) and Frederick – neither of whom made much of a mark upon the world. Frederick emigrated to Australia, where he became a sheep farmer. Harry never had a real job. He dabbled in publishing, writing magazine articles and French translating, being an ardent Francophile. Like most of the Trollope tribe he also wrote a novel "My Own Love Story" which even his wife described as dull!

Anthony died in 1882 and within a few months Harry proposed to Ada Strickland, whom he had known since she was a small girl. As a child Ada had been introduced to the family circle by Harry's cousin Florence, and she became a firm favourite, especially with Anthony, who took the girls riding

in Hyde Park and to see the sights of London, and enjoyed joining in their rumbustious horseplay.

Ada, in turn, clearly had a girlish crush on the bearded man old enough to be her father. Years later she was to write to a friend, "I knew Anthony intimately as a young girl and was head over heels in love with him and use to have a furiously gay time with him."

Why did Harry wait till after his father's death to propose to her? Had he proposed before and been refused? As Victoria Glendenning remarks in her biography of Anthony, "It was as if he had been waiting for the order of release." After Harry's death in 1926 Ada wrote, "I was good to my husband and LIKED him because he was Anthony's son and only married him because he said if I refused him fifty times he would ask me fifty times again!" This indicates a good deal more enthusiasm on his part than on hers. It all sounds remarkably like a scene from one of Anthony's novels!

Ada and Harry had two children, Tom and Muriel, neither of whom married and so the direct line died out in England, leaving it to be carried on by the Australian branch of the family. In 1908 the widowed Rose sold her house in London and moved in with Harry, Ada and Muriel at "Greylands". Ada's mother Sarah was probably there too.

Victoria Glendenning remarks that Rose saw things Anthony never dreamed of – motor cars, aeroplanes, short skirts, world war. She died on May 25th 1917, aged 96. Harry died in 1926 aged 80, Ada in November 1936 and Muriel in 1953. Thus ended the Trollope connection with Minchinhampton. Why Harry and Ada came to live in this then remote Cotswold town is not known, as there appears to be no family connection on either side. Can anyone provide a clue?

Miss Gladys Beale, a long time resident of Minchinhampton, remembers visiting the family at "Greylands". Occasionally dances would be held in the hall to the music of a wind-up gramophone. Muriel was tall, dark and statuesque. She eventually moved into a cottage in Well Hill, which she named "The Small House", possibly in contrast to the much larger "Greylands", or even a reference to Anthony's novel "The Small House at Allington".

WALLS QUARRY, BRIMSCOMBE

Claire Forbes

In “Minchinhampton and Avening in the 20th Century”, the supplement to A.T. Playne’s book, Frank Simmonds states “Wall’s Quarry was said to belong to a man called Wall, and was worked by him.” Further research has revealed more about Wall’s Quarry and the Wall family.

Wall’s Quarry was originally known as Wall’s Hill or Scarry Hill, as shown in deeds of private houses in Brimscombe. The first reference the author has found to Wall’s Quarry is from the Hampton Rent Role of 1844.¹

The first reference to a member of the Wall family residing in the Brimscombe area is of Joseph Wall, listed in the Manor Rolls of Minchinhampton 1651². However, in the Hearth Tax Record of 1671³ A Peter Wall is listed in the Brimscombe section as having one hearth. He was baptised in Minchinhampton in 1620, the son of John Wall whose place of birth has not yet been identified. Peter married Mary Gardener of Stroud in 1653. The 1690 Tax Assessment shows him as a highly rated taxpayer. He was obviously skilled as his will states him as being a Freemason. (A Freemason worked the best quality freestone i.e. stone that can be worked in any direction.) In his will of 1706 he bequeathed to his daughter Mary Kinnets of London his close of pasture ground called “The Mores” at Swell’s Hill. He had a house in Kingscourt, which he left to his wife, that after her death, was to go to his daughter Martha Workman of London. His son Jeremiah had died at the time of Peter’s will, but he left his son’s widow 1/- and their children 5/- each. He had a sister Jane to whom he left £5.

It appears that subsequent descendants of the Brimscombe Wall family continued to work as stonemasons. James Wall, born in 1768, was a Master Stonemason living at Field Cottage, Butterow, at the time of the 1851 Census. Joshua Wall of Kings Stanley had a high reputation as a sculptor, and when the Parish Church of St. Lawrence, Stroud, was rebuilt between 1866 and 1888 he designed and executed all the carvings inside and out, including the font

¹ G.R.O. D1198/2

² G.R.O. D1198/1

³ G.R.O. D383

and pulpit.⁴ The 1851 Census shows many other stonemasons by the name of Wall in the Stroud area.

The building firm of Wall and Hook were based in Brimscombe from 1849 to 1908⁵. They were the builders of the new Stroud Parish church, as well as many other important local buildings.

Although much research has been undertaken to discover the origins of the name “Wall’s Quarry” there is insufficient evidence to prove conclusively any one theory. If anyone has any further information that would help in the search, I would be most grateful to hear of it.

⁴ D. Verey – “Gloucestershire, the Cotswolds”

⁵ “New Stroud Directory” 1908

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE CLOCK

Hilary Kemmett

On 8th April 1897, a public meeting was held in the Market House to consider how to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The Rector of the day put forward a scheme for "a permanent and useful parish memorial" to commemorate the occasion. As the existing church clock was old and nearly past repair, he proposed purchasing a new clock to replace it. The Parish Magazine of the time states, "With a view of seeking the best advice [the Rector] had consulted Lord Grimethorpe, whose opinion is sure to be valuable, seeing he was the designer of the famous clock in the Parliament Tower at Westminster". Lord Grimethorpe replied with brief emphasis, "Smith of Derby will clock you in the best way, and as near to eternity as possible." A member of this firm had accordingly visited Minchinhampton, inspected the tower, and sent in three estimates "for a clock with a 6ft. skeleton dial constructed in the best manner" and guaranteed to vary less than four seconds a week. The highest estimate was £138.

The meeting voted unanimously in favour of the clock, and to use any surplus funds collected for "parochial festivities". The clock fund already stood at £8.6s.6d and a committee was then elected to collect further subscriptions. By early June, £188.7s.6d. had been raised, sufficient not only for a clock with "Cambridge" quarter chimes on four bells, but also for a parish event to take place on Jubilee Day, 22nd June 1897. Not only had residents been most generous but money had also been raised from entertainments by amateur talent, including a trio of Minor Canons from Gloucester Cathedral and Mr. Somerset Playne ("a most amusing singer and actor"). Familiar names appear in the list of sponsors – Mr. F.H., Mr. Edward and Mrs. Arthur Playne, Major, Mrs. And Miss Ricardo, Mr. Ralph and Mr. James Simmonds, and Mrs. Beale to name but a few.

The Jubilee festivities duly took place and were later described by the Rector in a sermon as "Commemorations which, in one form or another, lasted from early dawn till nearly midnight".

After some months a reassuring paragraph appeared in the Parish Magazine, "People are asking when the Jubilee Clock will appear. Messrs. John Smith and Sons say (in a letter dated 8th October 1897) :Your clock is well in hand but we cannot yet tell when it will be finished. No time is being lost, excepting

THE JUBILEE CLOCK



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that we have some difficulty in keeping our men at work during this busy Jubilee Year.” It was stressed that the delicate workmanship could not be hurried and the clock should last for 200 years “if it suffers no accident and is properly treated”.

The installation of the clock was finally arranged and the inauguration ceremony fixed for Sunday morning, 27th March 1898. In spite of rain, many people assembled outside the West door and at five minutes to 11 o’clock the pendulum was set going and the chimes and stroke of the hour were heard for the first time. The congregation went into church, while the choir sang the National Anthem. The theme of the sermon was the “Discernment of Time” from Ecclesiastics VIII, 5, 6. The Rector went on to say how delighted he was at the good sense of the parishioners who had decided on the purchase of the clock, which “*showed an improved and enlightened public spirit*” and “*will be a lasting adornment to our town*” as well as a reminder to be punctual in our religious duties.

The clock has only three faces – there is no North face. Legend has it that one face was omitted to prevent use by the devil, but it seems there is a more mundane explanation. The estimate for the clock had been for two faces only, but due to the energy of a local parishioner, William A. Harman, enough additional funds were collected to add the third, West face. Since then, the only modification has been the installation of an electric mechanism in 1963 – before that it had been laboriously wound by hand twice a week.

The clock has now been in use for over a hundred years and is expected to continue for another hundred varying by “*less than four seconds a week*”.

Thanks are due to Hilary for the permission to use this article which first appeared in the Parish Magazine and a programme for the Stuart Singers, raising funds for the clock refurbishment

IN MEMORIAM

Since the publication of our last Bulletin we are sad to announce the deaths of three of our strongest supporters:

Mrs. Joan Grover – Committee Member

Mrs. Brenda Robson – Committee Member

Mr. Leslie Eden – former Secretary to the Group

They are sorely missed by their many friends in the L.H.G.

FEATURES OF MINCHINHAMPTON COMMON

John Cooper

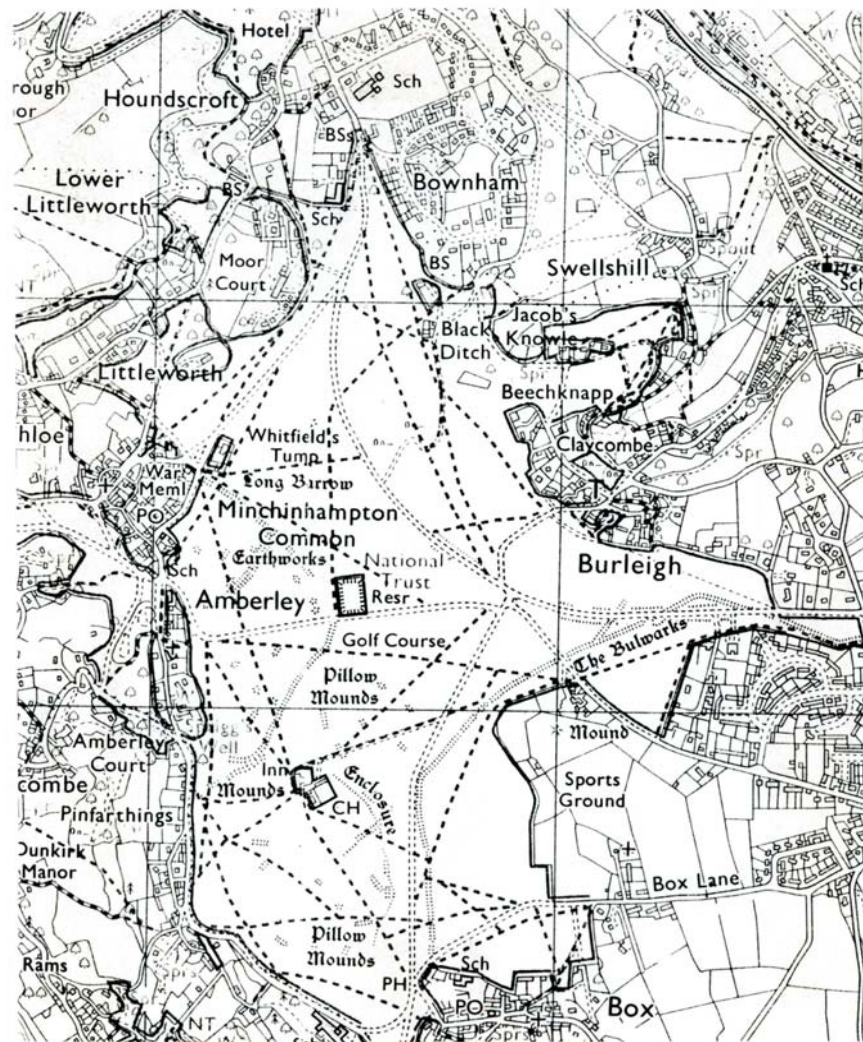
A few years ago the Local History Group made a series of walks across Minchinhampton Common, sharing its history with other societies. These are some of the main features which were shown on those walks, and you can trace them for yourself, starting from the top of Windmill Road.

The Bulwarks are a massive Iron Age bank and ditch, which almost encircle the present town of Minchinhampton although their outline is less clear towards the east. When they were excavated in 1937 by Mrs. Clifford they were found to consist of a ditch 7m. across and 2m. deep, with a stone revetment on the side of the rampart facing the ditch. Finds of pottery suggested a date of about 40 to 60 A.D., and a coin of Bodovoc, King of the Dobunii, was found in Camp Field. The purpose of the Bulwarks is far from clear. They can hardly be a defensive feature, as the ditch is on the inside. The legend that this was the headquarters of Caractacus against the Romans is, therefore, very unlikely to be true. Probably they formed a large cattle enclosure or corral.

Crossing the road to Nailsworth you approach the Old Lodge Inn, once the headquarters of the Golf Club. This was built in the early 17th Century, and was associated with an extensive rabbit warren. The meat of rabbits was a valuable addition to the diet, and the "pillow mounds" around the Old Lodge represent the artificial burrows from which the animals could easily be caught. It is also possible to pick out the remains of the anti-glider ditches excavated in World War II; it was thought this part of the plateau was most likely to see a Nazi invasion, and concrete blocks were put in place, as well as the ditches.

Northwest of the Old Lodge, towards the reservoir, there is a linear embankment. This is now thought to be of mediaeval origin, possibly a woodland boundary. The whole area of the Common was once tree-covered, and ownership was jealously guarded, as not only was timber, large and small, obtained, but there were also valuable rights of pasture. The embankment extends in an arc from Sprigg's Well in Pinfarthings towards the War Memorial at Amberley. A similar embankment also starts near Sprigg's Well and encircles the Old Lodge in a clockwise direction towards the Halfway House Inn.

MINCHINHAMPTON COMMON



Based on the Ordnance Survey Map

There is an older earthwork, similar to the Bulwarks, which runs from Amberley School to the linear embankment. Mrs. Clifford also excavated this, and declared it to be an Iron Age construction.

Whitfield's Tump is a Neolithic long barrow, so called because the famous evangelist George Whitfield preached from it in 1743. It has not been properly excavated, and is in somewhat poor condition, but appears to be similar to others in the area such as Gatcombe and Hetty Pegler's Tump.

Crossing the main Stroud road it is possible to see two faces of the Crane Quarry, which has been re-opened to illustrate the type of bedding and quality of the stone. It was one of the larger quarries which operated on the Common until early this century, and was named because of the large steel jib crane used to extract and move the large blocks of building stone. These quarries on the Greater Oolite provided high-quality weather stone, but work stopped in the 1920s and most have been filled in.

Tom Long's Post is probably the best known, and most photographed feature on the Common. It is said to commemorate either a notable highwayman or the burial place of a local suicide, and is the meeting place of four important roads. The Cirencester to Stroud turnpike was the first in the locality, built in 1752, but its use was somewhat superseded by the construction of a new road along the Chalford Valley and up Cowcombe Hill in 1814. Until that date travel was much easier on the drier plateaux, and many tracks climb up to join the earlier road. Since the opening of the Ebley bypass this road has again seen an increase in traffic, as lorries and cars seek to avoid congestion in Stroud. In 1758 a turnpike was constructed to Tetbury, via the Cross in Minchinhampton and Avening. The road to Brimscombe was built in 1785 by the Thames and Severn Canal Company to transport goods to and from the canal junction at Brimscombe Port.

The road to Nailsworth is comparatively new. The old route was either via Well Hill, or into Box by the Halfway House. The route from the top of the Nailsworth "W" to Tom Long's Post was constructed in the late 19th Century as part of an agreement with the owner of "The Highlands" (now Beaudesert School), in return for the closure of a public right-of-way through his grounds.

Returning to Minchinhampton the route takes you across the Great Park, which was first recorded in 1187. The wall that surrounded this, and the gates, were taken down early this century, but traces of the boundary ditch can still

be seen along the Cirencester road. The Park was attached to the old Manor House, which stood where the new Primary School is to be. The house was demolished in the early 1800s after the Sheppard family, then Lords of the Manor, moved to Gatcombe. For a long time the Golf Club owned the rights to the Great Park, but it is now part of the Common, in the care of the National Trust.

The Common has a long history of land use, possibly dating back to 3500 B.C. and Whitfield's Tump. Most woodland clearance dates from post 1100 A.D., and then it has undergone transformation by quarrying, the construction of warrens, roads, the golf course, and regulated grazing. It now has its own importance as an area of limestone grassland, maintained by years of grazing.

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John Cooper