

A snapshot of Sapey history

Residents of Upper Sapey might agree that it is a scattered parish, but would they agree that the Sapey brook is romantic? That was the view of Littlebury's Directory and Gazetteer of Herefordshire in 1876-7, which decided that the parish was pleasantly situated near the borders of Worcestershire – indeed, it is hard to persuade some people even now that it is actually in Herefordshire. In 1861 the parish population was 357, which rose in 1871 to 383, in 82 houses, making a living from the “clayey and loamy” soil and producing wheat, barley, hops and fruit. It had its own wheelwright, George Hodges, two carpenters, John Kitchen and Peregrine Perkins (who apparently also sold beer), James Lane, the blacksmith, and plenty of farmers, of course. Sir Francis Salwey Winnington of Stanford Court was the lord of the manor, with William Barneby of Saltmarshe Castle one of the main landowners. The Rev Phipps Onslow was the Rector from 1859 onwards, and the church, dedicated to St Michael, was entirely restored in 1860, at a cost of £1,200. The church, called “a handsome edifice in the Norman style” had an east window of stained glass as a memorial to the late Mr Towers. It was not the only place of worship in Upper Sapey however – there was also “ a small dissenting chapel” with “Ministers various” attending to its congregation. The new parochial school in the parish catered for 70 children and was headed by Miss Mary Jackson; there was a school in Upper Sapey until at least 1961 – perhaps you went to it and could tell us more about it and its closure? RE