

## A slice of life in Tedstone history

Across our parish, there are many marks of our history – our churches, and some of the houses are among the most obvious. New families move into and out of the parish, but some names crop up time and again – war memorials, local history books and even the parish magazine show us that some families have been here for at least 200 years.

Before the advent of the telephone and the Yellow Pages, trade directories offered information on areas so that tradesmen would know who the wealthiest inhabitants were, what trades were already offered in an area and also gave some of the history of a place. Tedstone Delamere is covered by Littlebury's Directory and Gazetteer of Herefordshire, which gives information on "private and commercial residents" for 1876-7.

The Gazetteer described Tedstone as "a picturesque parish", whose population in 1871 was 235, including "James Lane Wight, Esq., of Tedstone court, who is lord of the manor, Edward Bickerton Evans, Esq., of Whitbourne hall, William Barneby, Esq., of Saltmarsh castle, Stuart Knill, Esq., and Major Baker, are the principal landowners.

For those who question the origin of the name, the Gazetteer suggests: "Duncombe, in his 'History of Herefordshire', gives 'Toddesthorne' as the ancient spelling of 'Tedstone', and accounts for 'Delamere' by a 'William de la Mere, who held Tedston (sic) in the reign of Henry III. by the service of one knight's fee, as of the Earl of Hereford'".

Tedstone residents will be pleased to know that the climate then was "soft, though fine and



bracing" and that the area's history possibly includes a battle during the Wars of the Roses, fought close to Tipton farm.

There is a good deal of information about the church – the Gazetteer says: "The situation of the church, as also of the Court and Parsonage house, is highly interesting, and commands very extensive prospects in the counties of Worcester, Stafford, Warwick, and Gloucester. The celebrated hills of Malvern form a leading feature towards the south-east. One of the very few instances which are to be found of the mistletoe growing on the oak, is to be seen in this parish.

It covers the rebuilding of the church (above) in 1856-7, paid for by the former Rector, the Rev I Smith, but with "liberal contributions" from parishioners. The rebuilding was overseen by none other than Sir George Gilbert Scott, keeping much of the old character of the building as well as some of its older features, including the chancel screen of carved oak, probably Tudor, and the old Norman font.

The Gazetteer notes: "Oak, the timber par excellence of this district, was used largely in the rebuilding, not only in the ordinary fittings of the church, but also in its shingled spire and gable-crosses. The western wall of the nave is one of the very few specimens extant, of Saxon masonry. The church is richly adorned with small columns of Serpentine marble from the

Lizard Point, and with several painted windows, among which the east window, with three tall slender lights filled with one of Hardman's most successful imitations of mediaeval glass, the offering of James Lane Wight, Esq., of Tedstone Court, is conspicuously beautiful.

"Altogether, although on a very small scale, the church of Tedstone Delamere represents fairly enough the type of parish church which belongs to this border land of Celt and Saxon." There is a note of disappointment in its observation that "the parish registers only date from the Revolution of 1688", but the parish did at least have its own school, whose master was William Price, with Mrs E Preece running the infants section.

The commercial residents listed include names that are familiar today – T Benbow was the parish clerk for the neighbouring Tedstone Wafer (the Gazetteer's spelling), and the Evans family's gamekeeper Richard Jones lived at Lay farm. James Gough, Thomas Herring and Charles Hill all worked for James Wight at Tedstone Court, while Samuel Pitt farmed and was the miller at Horner's Mill. George and Thomas Wilson farmed at Winley and Lamb Green, James Ward farmed at Tipton Hall, William Smith at Wood End, Joseph Pantall at Upper Grounds and Henry Moseley at Hedge House. Most grew hops as well as farming. The parish had a blacksmith in Richard Powell, who was also Tedstone Delamere's parish clerk, and a carpenter in James Hodges.

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