



**A Brief History  
of  
Monks Kirby  
and  
Surrounding Area**

# Forward



Old Joey Underwood, The Pailton Miser

Monks Kirby has the distinction of being the second largest parish in England, only Widdecombe-in-the-Moor, in Devon, being greater.

It lies in the north-east of Warwickshire, bounded on the north by Watling Street, which marks the boundary between Warwickshire and Leicestershire. The Fosseway runs through it meeting Watling Street at High Cross, forming one of the so-called centres of England. This is the most northern part of the Parish. Here the Romans had a look-out station, and for centuries it has been a busy cross-roads. In Charles I time a wooden signpost was erected in the middle pointing the way to Lincoln, Bath, Chester and London. In 1700 the Earl of Denbigh replaced it with a stone cross, but as this got in the way of increasing traffic, it was later removed to its present position, in the garden of the farmhouse to the east of the crossroads.

Looking north from here, one looks down on the plain that stretches to Leicester some twelve miles away and beyond; but southward the land is undulating and slopes gently down to Stretton-under-Fosse, the most southerly part of the parish. It is all agricultural land with woodlands here and there. There are four villages in the parish:- Monks Kirby, Pailton, Withybrook and Stretton-under-Fosse, and four hamlets, Copston Magna, Street Ashton, Little Walton and Cestersover.

In the following pages will be found some account of the countryside, the buildings, the people and their occupations which through the centuries have gone to make their history.

-----

## 1. MONKS KIRBY

There are no traces of Stone Age occupation in this area, presumably because the dense forest and thick undergrowth could not be cleared by such primitive instruments, and so the earliest occupants were no doubt what are called the Bronze Age men, probably a branch of the Celtic family.

The first definitive traces we have would be, I think, the mound on which Monks Kirby church is built. It seems that these early people always put up some kind of mound which would serve both for religious purposes, and also for social gatherings. We have similar edifices in the Old Testament, which are called "high places". The idea may be of raising themselves up away from earth, nearer to Heaven, at their worship.

It is also possible that the mound at the church was where the original leader of the earliest inhabitants was buried. The idea would be that he was still watching over his descendants, and by sacrifice, animal or human, on the mound they would be nourishing his spirit within. The shape of the altar used for this purpose indicates this; it being roughly the length of a man, who would be bound on it and slaughtered.

Another possible use of the mound would be for sun worship, which was very prevalent at that period, the priests who conducted the services were also the calendar makers for agriculture, as it was essential to know the times of mid-summer and mid-winter, and the equinox periods. No doubt posts would be put in the ground, marking the limit of the sun's journey either way. No doubt these earliest inhabitants settled here because there happened to be a clearing in the forest, and there would also be the stream which would supply them with water.

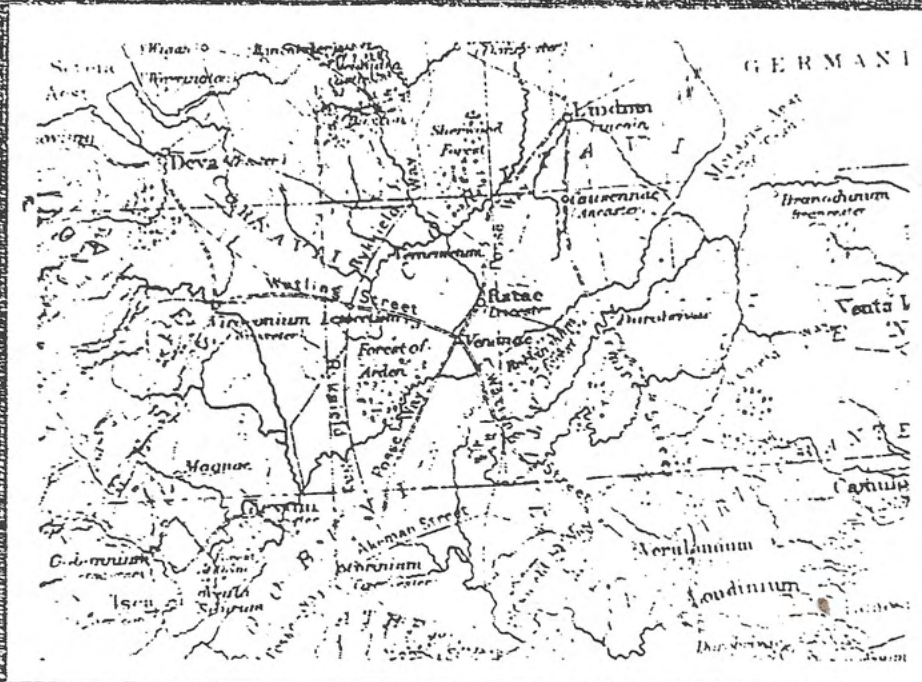
Another very curious point about these ancient church sites, which are on the sites of former heathen temples, is that so many of them are in line with each other. Monks Kirby forms the centre of a cross for a number of aligned church sites: -

Stanford - Swinford - Shawell - Monks Kirby - Withybrook - Bedworth

and the other way: -

Wolston - Brinklow - Monks Kirby - Claybrooke - Cosby - Blaby

It is difficult to account for the exact straightness of these lines. It is may be that ancient tracks connected them, and that the temple site was used to get a true alignment we can assume that all these places were originally Bronze Age settlements, later occupied by the Celtic invaders.



ROMAN BRITAIN  
Showing Venonae in the Centre.



(above, top) ROMAN BRITAIN Showing Venonae in the Centre.

(above, bottom) A SITE AT CESTERSOVER THE NEWBOLD VILLAGE ON THE WARWICKSHIRE AND LEICESTERSHIRE BORDER FROM THE AIR. The layout of the village and medieval steps in the adjoining fields are clearly visible.

The only other definite information we have for this neighbourhood is about High Cross. An ancient inscription there says "Here the Venones kept their quarter". Who these people were we have no information, but it is clear that High Cross and the neighbourhood were occupied in pre-Roman times. Opinions are divided as to whether the Fosse Way and Watling Street were pre-Roman or not. The Watling Street is said to have been called originally "The Irish Way".

Celtic Britons were famous for their chariots. Cicero wrote a letter to a friend who took part in Julius Caesar's invasion, suggesting that he could get one of these famous chariots in which to drive home to Italy. Obviously if the Britons had good chariots they must have had good roads, and so the credit for the making of the so-called Roman Roads should, perhaps, go to the Britons. What the Romans' did was to improve the surface, at which they were skilled.

When the Romans in AD 43 arrived they had very little difficulty in conquering the country as far as High Cross, and one theory is that the Fosse Way was made by them as their Western boundary. They seem to have made High Cross into a sort of fort, or lookout station, and no doubt there would be barracks there, but as soon as the tide of conquest proceeded further north towards Yorkshire, High Cross would no longer be required as a fort, and then appears to have become a posting station.

Roman roads were well organised in this way, as fortunately we still possess a sort of Roman guide book called "The Itinerary of Antonine". He described the Roman roads by mentioning the towns and posting stations and giving the miles between each. In several of his journeys High Cross appears, under, of course, its name of Venones.

Leicester was apparently a chief town of the British tribe of Coritani, Leicester itself being called Ratae. The Itinerary gives the mileage as twelve miles from Leicester to High Cross. These are of course Roman miles, and are slightly shorter than the English ones. In the other direction it gives six miles to a place called Tripontium meaning "three bridges". This place would appear to have been in the neighbourhood of Rugby, and the three bridges presumably would be over the River Avon. North West there was a station at Mancetter.

A posting station like High Cross, after it ceased to be a Roman fort, would contain an inn and stabling for a number of horses and public baths. Besides the Watling Street and the Fosse Way the road to Copston appears to have been of Roman origin and points almost directly for Birmingham, which did not then exist, but the Roman roads go through the site of the present city.

A great deal of pottery and several coins have been found at High Cross. A few miles South West of High Cross near the railway crossing at Willey is a large field still called the Township field. When the railway embankment was made about 1840 much pottery was turned up, but unfortunately no-one took much notice of it. It is very likely that this field was a Romano-British town or large village.

Dugdale in his "Antiquities of Warwickshire" published in 1665, writes:-

"There are certain apparent tokens that the Romans had some station also at Monks Kirby, for by digging the ground near the church my friend Sam Roper has met with foundations of old walls of Roman bricks parts of which I have seen; also three or four

heaps of earth in the adjoining field, apparently graves of some military person of those days”.

There is a tradition that a Roman General, Claudius, was buried at Cloudesley Bush, on the Fosse. This seems quite likely as the first syllable of the name would be pronounced in this way and not as with us, CLORD. The fact that he was buried there implies that he lived in retirement there in a villa, meaning a Manor House with a large estate worked by slaves. No doubt the tessellated pavement and the furnace for his central heating still remain there, about 4-ft below the present surface.

Monks Kirby was well placed between two main roads (equal in importance to two mainline railways today), and would be well populated in Roman-British times (A.D.45- 450) so there must be many remains of villas still to be uncovered. The Roman always liked to put his villa where there was a good south view, as from the present Manor House close to the Fosse.

The worship of Mithras was very popular, especially with Roman Ex-servicemen, who would be given land on which to settle and therefore the remains of a Mithras temple may still be found. The word Temple might give a clue as at Wolvey. On the other hand this might imply the sight of a priory of the Knight Templars.

Christianity no doubt was brought here by Roman Soldiers and Merchants although there are no records of this; and until numbers increased no place of worship could be built.

John Morton, historian of Northampton, describes some burial urns found at Monks Kirby in 1712 at the causeway of pebbles running East and West. One urn had a cross painted roughly on the outside. All the urns contained ashes and burned bones. Was this causeway the original Monks Kirby Street?

When the Saxons invaded the country after the Roman withdrawal about A.D.450 they gradually drove the British inhabitants westward, but sometimes they allowed little pockets of inhabitants to remain. One of these would be Little Walton, which means Little Walestown, Welsh being Saxon word for foreigner. Now if there was a Little Walton obviously there must have been a Great Walton. Was Monks Kirby Great Walton? It is possible also, on the other hand, that the village in Township field near Willey may have been Great Walton, as the old document speaks of Walton on the Street, i.e. Watling Street.

When the Saxons became Christians they would naturally make use of the Monks Kirby temple mound as a suitable place for the little Saxon church, but when the heathen Danes came, about 800 A.D. and over-ran this part of the country they burnt this little Saxon Church, which was probably made of wood. After the conquests of Alfred the Watling Street became the boundary between the Saxons and Danes, and a little stone church was now built at Monks Kirby. Incidentally the word “Church” from the Latin circus means anything circular, as a mound. At the time of the conquest we are told this church was in ruins. The manor was given by William the Conqueror to Geoffrey of Wirche, who gave his name to Warwick (Wirches-wick or village).

The termination BY is the Danish equivalent of BURY or BOROUGH, so that Kirby and Rugby would imply Danish occupation. Going west from Monks Kirby there are no other places ending in BY and Alfred, after his victories over the Danes, made Watling Street the boundary between

Saxons and Danes. Monks Kirby marks the extreme limit of permanent Danish penetration. Through all its vicissitudes Monks Kirby seems to have been an important centre of population and the reason for the Monks deciding to build a Monastery there.

Domesday Book 1085, has the following entry about Monks Kirby :-

“Geoffrey of Wirche holds of the King Chirchberie.

There are fifteen hides (i.e. 1,000 acres). There is land for twenty ploughs. There are thirteen servants and two bondswomen, forty-one villeins, two bordars, with two priests, and have twenty-one ploughs.

There are forty acres of meadow. In this manor the Monks of St.Nicholas of Angiers have two ploughs and twenty two villeins, and six bordars with five ploughs. The whole was worth a hundred shillings, afterwards forty shillings, but now ten pounds. Lewin held it freely. The same Count holds Willey, half a hide, and Fulk holds it of him. There is land for four ploughs. There are forty acres of meadow. It was and is worth thirty shillings. The same man also holds Newnham. There is land for eight ploughs. There are three servants, sixteen villeins, five bordars with six ploughs, twenty acres of meadow worth twenty shillings and now sixty shillings”.

Monks Kirby is in the Hundred of Knight-low but in the reign of Henry IV, when a hundred was considered to be too large, the hundred was divided into four divisions, Kenilworth, Monks Kirby, Rugby and Southam.

In the British Museum there is to be seen the first Ordinance Survey Map made in 1801 when the country was expecting to be invaded by Napoleon. From this map it appears that there were several cottages between Mr. Truelove’s farm and the Park gates. There were three or four houses in front of where the Council houses stand, adjoining the butcher’s shop, now no more. There was a windmill at the vicarage, no house at Foxon’s corner, and the corner, for some reason or other, was called “Worlds End”. Possibly a Public House of this name may have stood there at one time. Pratt’s farm on the Fosse was called “the Hungry Lands”.

There was another windmill between Monks Kirby and Pailton, the mound of which can still be seen. Where the present water pump for Street Ashton House is, there was a brick-yard. There were toll-gates at Street Ashton corner, above Pailton hill at the Easenhall turn, and at High Cross, and also at Cross-in-hand. There was a water mill opposite Pailton House.

The road from Monks Kirby to Withybrook was a “green” road, and there was an old vicarage on the site of the present Withybrook vicarage, which was built by Trinity College about 1850. On the hill below Monks Kirby vicarage opposite Fox Close, there is what was presumably an amphitheatre where the village amusements would take place, such as bear baiting, cudgel fighting, prize fighting, and as the houses which used to stand in the adjoining field were called “The Butts”, presumably this is where the archery practice took place, which was ordered by Edward III during the French War;

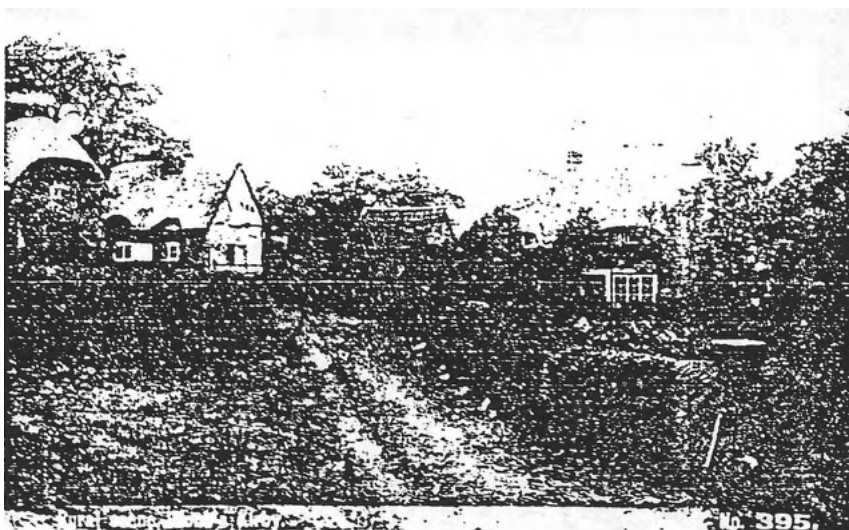




BROCKHURST



BROCKHURST: The thatched cottages on the left are now demolished.



Rural scene: Monks Kirby no.395.



MONKS KIRBY: Children and Joe Busby.



ALMS-HOUSES MONKS KIRBY.

## II. THE CHURCH AND THE MONASTERY AT MONKS KIRBY

After the Conquest Geoffrey of Wirche restored the Church and gave it to the Benedictine Monastery at Angiers in France. These Monks established a Priory here, probably consisting of about four or five monks. The Priory was on the North side of the Church, where is now the Churchyard. The Monks also enlarged the Church to its present size. We do not know whether it as the regular walled-in Monastery, or whether it was a sort of enlarged Farmhouse.

This was called an alien Priory, because it was a dependency of the great Norman Abbey at Angiers. After the Norman Conquest there was close intercourse between England and Normandy. When an Abbey became overcrowded a number of monks would be sent off to found a priory at some place where suitable land was available. One such Priory had already been established on the Isle of Axholme in Lincolnshire and from here a further off-shoot came to Kirby. It is not known why the choice fell on Kirby, but presumably the site was Church property, because it was already called Chirchberie, or Church Town.

In Saxon Times, dating from the reign of Alfred, a Parish was usually the estate of the Lord of the Manor, whose Chaplain was also Rector (i.e. Ruler) of the Church.

Tithe would be bequeathed (i.e. a tenth of all produce) to the Church. One third to pay the Rector, one third for the sick and poor, and one third for the upkeep of the Church building. As Parish boundaries hardly ever alter, the boundary of Monks Kirby, excluding Withybrook, was once an estate, as far as we can conjecture.

For some reason or other the tithe was given or sold to the priory and the prior (and monks) became the Rector, but as they were regulars (under a rule) they would not minister to the Parish, but would appoint a secular (ordinary) priest, who would be called a vicar or vice-rector. He would only be paid a small stipend, about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the tithe. He would be given a cottage near the church to live in.

When the Monks came, about 1078 A.D., the church was small, about the size of Withybrook perhaps, and probably not in very good repair. This was the golden age of ecclesiastical building, many Cathedrals were built then; the reason why so many are now in need of repair is because the stone in our climate does not last very long.

It was also the time when the spiritual life of the Church was very vigorous. Those who were disgusted with the brutality and vice of the world, banded together, under strict vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, for the perpetual worship of God.

During the time when there were novices in the Abbey, they would learn to be builders; also study agriculture, medical work, teaching, etc., so that the priory would be self-supporting.

Their first task would be to build a church "To the greater glory of God", so the present church arose. It is not known whether the size had any relation to the congregation of the town (the name shows it was a town, with a market and a three-day fair) or whether the large size was "for the Glory of God".

When the tithe was given or sold to the Priory, the condition was made that there must be provision for the spiritual needs of the parish. A special part was reserved for the Monks, where

the organ and Feilding tombs now are, with a door into the cloisters; the other door led to the rood screen from which the gospel was read on festivals to the people in the nave of the church.

Monastic buildings usually form a square, like a University college, of which the Church would be one side. There would be a refectory for meals, dormitory, sick room, kitchen and outbuildings. Cloisters would run round the square and a grass lawn, called the Garth in the middle. The main entrance would be from Bond End, which means boundary end. The well was in the Churchyard. Mr. Lowe the sexton found it when digging a grave. He also found two tuning forks as big as pokers, for starting the singing. Seven services would be held every day in addition to the Mass. Prime, Lauds, Matins, Terce, Sexte, None, Compline. Prime would be 2 a.m. and Compline 9 p.m.

At regular times the poor would come for food, the sick to be healed and travellers to get lodging. The poor would be fed at the gate, the sick tended at the Hospital, and the travellers put up at the Guest House, which stood on the site of the Denbigh Arms, behind which can still be seen the fishponds; fish being eaten on Fridays and in Lent.

The Tower was built originally as a look-out, so that those working in fields could be called in when bands of lawless men were seen approaching.

Probably some attempt would be made to teach boys so that recruits for the Priory would be forthcoming. The head monk would be the Prior and the number of monks would be four, five or six perhaps, all doing their special work between services.

The spire was built above the tower as a guide to travellers, and would be seen for long distances, and if necessary, a lantern hung out at night. Signalling could be carried out with Lutterworth Church, Brinklow mound, and other places.

When the Priory began, the possessions would be few, but as their sanctity became known land and other wealth would be bequeathed to them, for perpetual masses to be said for souls of the donors. Gradually large areas of land would become monastic property and as their wealth increased so did their religious work deteriorate.

We now have to turn to Diocesan records to get information about these Monks. The Bishop of Worcester, in whose Diocese Monks Kirby then was, records one of his visits when he found serious irregularities going on, and he made the following orders: -

The rule of silence was to be enforced. Women were forbidden to go in, and the services properly performed, and strict orders were given that the Prior and Monks were to have their meals together in the Refectory. That one Monk of proved and honest life was to choose the meat, and see to the needs of the sick. The Prior was to sleep in the dormitory with the Monks and not to be excused going to the Church services. That four servants of bad character were to be expelled, and that the Vicar, who had been a former servant of the Prior, was forbidden to enter and was not to be received at table.

A grant of Henry I confirmed the Churches of Newbold and Monks Kirby to the Monks, and that forty shillings was to be given them yearly by the church at Withybrook. In 1266 Henry II granted the Priory a weekly Wednesday market, and a three days fair at mid-summer so that by this time Monks Kirby had reached the status of a town.

In 1360 the Prior and Monks of Monks Kirby, supported by the clergy of the city of Lichfield petitioned the Pope “that whereas Christ has wrought many miracles in honour of his Mother in Monks Kirby church, which said church is old and in danger of ruin, we pray for relaxation of dues, and that the penitents who visit the church on Ladyday, Easter and Whitsun should give a helping hand to the fabric”. As the Black Death occurred in 1340 the poverty of the Church was probably due to the de-population of the countryside.

In 1380 we are told the value of the Priory was £34. 2. 4. with two mills, one a windmill, and the other worked by a horse. The windmill was probably on the mound by the Vicarage gate, the road there still being called Millers Lane. Later we hear of damage being done to the fishponds within the precincts. These are probably the large ponds behind the Denbigh Arms. The Denbigh Arms was originally called the Cock Inn. This name was probably a corruption of the Latin word ‘cocina’ which would mean the kitchen or guest house which the monastery would always have for pilgrims and other travellers. The other Inn, the Bell Inn, is probably on the site of the bell tower which would be at the outer gate, and which travellers would ring when craving a night's lodging.

In the reign of Henry VIII Parliament complained that one third of the land of England had been given to Monasteries. Large numbers of servants were kept, and packs of hounds; hawking and other sports indulged in.

Discipline was often non-existent as they refused to obey the local Bishop, claiming to be responsible to the Pope alone.

There were many causes for the suppression of the Monasteries under Henry VIII. Land hungry laymen, whose ancestors had given away their property to the monks, wanted it back; these supported the King's policy.

The Government was bankrupt and wanted the monks' small wealth and there was the danger that in war with Spain, the Pope might order the monasteries to oppose the King. Small priories like Monks Kirby were suppressed in 1536; that is all whose income was under £200. Thomas Cromwell sent round Inspectors who made an inventory and ordered the closure. Most of those “in orders” were given livings, those who were too old were pensioned. Some obtained suitable work, as land agents or secretaries.

We can imagine the scene when the Monastery was suppressed. A cavalcade of armed men under Legh, one of Cromwell's Inspectors, ride up to the great gate in Bond End. Someone hammers on the door and the frightened doorkeeper looks out. Legh orders him to open in the King's name and to fetch the Prior. The Prior conducts Legh and some of his men round the buildings, while an inventory is made. The small door into the Church is opened and their eyes gleam with satisfaction at the jewels and precious stones on the statues and at the rich hangings. Then they are shown the gold and silver vessels for the Mass, the ornate vestments hanging in cupboards, the illuminated service books.

They ascend the tower steps to the mimiment room, filled with chests of title deeds, chronicles and local records. Then after a meal in the refectory, the best the cellarer and cook can supply, the Prior is told when and where he and the brethren are to go, and what provision will be made for them. Anxiously the Vicar craves audience of Mr. Legh and asks what will happen to

him. He is told to carry on as usual. The Church being a Parish Church will continue to be so, in fact, more so, for the whole church will now belong to the Parish. It will, however, be stripped of all its valuables, except one chalice and one set of vestments for the Mass.

It is not known exactly what happened to the monastic buildings. What usually happened was that the lead was stripped from the roof, as it was scarce and wanted for bullets. Then when the rooms were cleared of anything the King wanted, the local inhabitants surged in to take what was left. Stone work and timber would be removed to repair the old dwellings or build new houses or barns.

The greatest disaster was the wanton destruction, through ignorance, of all the books and parchment documents. Monasteries always kept very accurate records of all transactions, so that material was destroyed for compiling a complete local history from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, including the names of the inhabitants, fields and houses.

Possibly the buildings, or some of them, were turned into farm premises. Mr. Wright, of Manor Farm, who died in 1930, said he remembered farm buildings "touching the north wall of the Church", where the entrance to the boiler now is. The painting in the Birmingham Library shows a square farm house standing in the Churchyard, about where the Bonn family graves are. The monastery must have possessed much land, hence the name Kirby Monachorum (of the Monks). The usual practice was for the King to sell some land locally.

The King had decided to re-found a college at Cambridge by combining three small ones into a big one - three in one - so he dedicated it to the Holy and undivided Trinity.

The object of this great college was to produce a "sufficient number of learned clerks to serve Christ's Holy Church". He accordingly endowed it with some of the lands taken from Monasteries. Hence the possessions of Trinity College in the Parish consist of the remainder of the monastic property not sold by the King locally.

When the Monastery was suppressed the King temporarily took over the patronage of the living from the Prior, until Trinity College was ready to function. Trinity was eventually given the patronage of a large number of livings to provide parishes for "the learned clerks" which would be produced by the College of the Holy and undivided Trinity; of which parishes Monks Kirby is one.

The famous plate which the Church possesses was given by Lady Alicia Dudley, daughter of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Lady Alicia gave plate to "Six poor Parishes of Warwickshire". This plate consists of a Chalice and Paten, two breadbowls and a flagon. It was valued in 1930 for £3,000. Some of it is kept in the National Provincial Bank in Rugby.

In the Chancel there are remains of the cupboards in which the communion vessels were kept. There is another chapel on the south side known as the Skipwith chapel, which was used by the owners of Newbold Revel. Here is the hatchment of the last Skipwith to live at Newbold Revel, and the old Elizabethan parish chest containing chiefly old account books. This also contained the chart of the seating accommodation, now on the West wall. There was in this chest a document about the building of the present vicarage, built in 1843, the previous vicarage being now two cottages in the village. The trees at the cross roads in front of the Denbigh Arms still known as Vic

trees, are on the site of the vicarage garden before the road cut straight through in front of the present cottages.

The land on which the present vicarage stands was given by the then Lord Denbigh instead of paying any more tithe to the Vicar, and he exchanged the present Glebe field for a field belonging to the Vicarage somewhere in the village.

It appears that the Vicar, R.H. Simpson, built the vicarage himself at a total cost of £215, which sum he obtained as a mortgage from Queen Anne's Bounty at 3½%, and he or his successors had to pay off the principle in 35 years, the mortgage being secured on the income of the benefice.

The Monks chapel behind the organ, after the Reformation, was used as a place of burial for the Feildings of Newnham Paddox. There are two large tombs here, and underneath there are twelve lead coffins on shelves. The entrance to this chapel is by the radiator outside the Skipwith chapel. A passage led across the chapel; when the last coffin was put in this vault, the villagers were allowed to go in before it was finally bricked up.

When the new heating apparatus was put in, in 1936, about a dozen skeletons were found buried two feet under the floor of the church and doubtless there are many more in various parts of the church, still there, as it was the custom to bury inside the church in olden times.

On the South Porch there is a "scratch Mass dial," so that the priest, by placing a nail in one of the holes would be able to tell the villagers when the service would be. Inside the Porch there are fragments of an inscription which presumably stood above the Holy Water Stoop - "Ye men and women pray for your souls". The large size of the porch is because at one time the first part of weddings took place there, and it was also used for such things as "Church Ales", at which the Churchwardens sold beer for parish purposes, the inns agreeing not to sell beer on the same day.

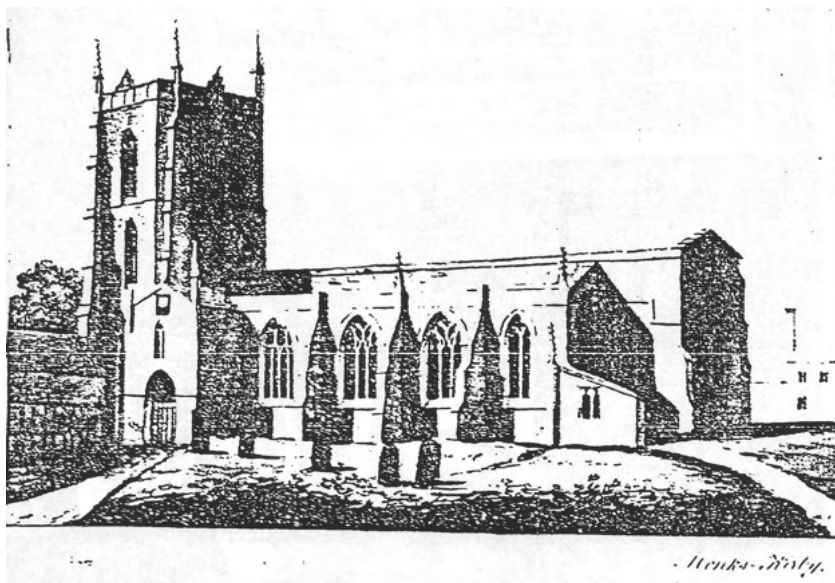
The fumed oak panelling round the Font came originally from the belfry. On the west wall there is a chart of the seating for the year 1752, the days of the horse-box pews, all of which have the names of the owners written inside. There was a gallery for the musicians high up on the west wall; the musicians would be a sort of scratch band.

There is some armour hanging on the North wall of the tower; it is not known exactly why it was placed there; it is only imitation armour, and too small for a full grown man, and it is thought that it may have been put on the coffin of some celebrity being buried, or possibly may have been given to the church by some Knight who watched his armour the night before he was knighted.

In the North West corner there is part of a recumbent figure, head and shoulders, which presumably was on some tomb. On the North wall are the effigies of the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl and Countess of Denbigh, and also of their daughter Augusta, who died young.

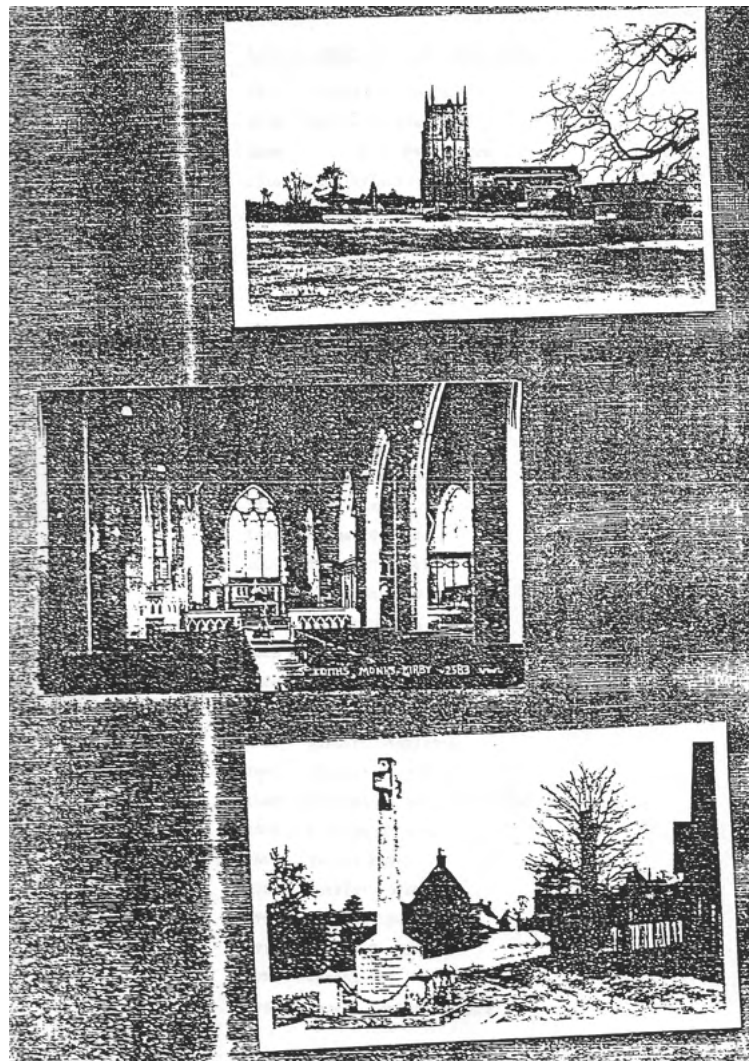
The massive tower houses eight bells, the oldest being cast in the reign of King Charles I. Many parties come in the summer months to ring a peel.

Such briefly is an account of this stately church, famous for its history, admired for its beauty. A church of which the inhabitants of Monks Kirby are justly proud.



Caption: Monks Kirby

Photograph of the Aylesford Collection drawings of Monks Kirby Church, in the Birmingham Reference Library. Probably done about 1821



ST EDITH'S, MONKS KIRBY, 2583



LIST OF INCUMBENTS AT MONKS KIRBY

1252 Richard de Sutram  
 1304 Helias de Stamford  
 1308 Richard de Paylington  
 1316 John Wylmot  
 1342 John de Lewes  
 1346 Robert de Stretford  
 1350 Richard of Wyke  
 1354 William de Walton  
 1361 William Stonely  
 1361 Robert Grafton  
 1414 John Hykkling  
 1421 Richard Hunt  
 1427 Robert Barker  
 1433 William Pepis  
 1436 John Blake  
 1444 Thomas Cowper  
 1503 Thomas Wenlock  
 1522 Henry Sherman  
 1528 Robert Newton  
 1528 William Stockwith  
 1568 Thomas Warde  
 1591 Edmund Battie  
 1593 Richard Stapleton  
 1644 William Stapleton  
 1649 Richard Martin (Intruder. Independent)  
 1679 William Sherman  
 1694 Thomas Rose  
 1702 Charles Forrester  
 1706 William Young  
 1721 Samuel Doody  
 1728 Joseph Key  
 1783 Joseph Frederick Byre  
 1786 Robert Beresford Podmore  
 1791 to Withybrook also  
 1838 Ralph Hutchinson Simpson  
                   with Withybrook  
                   With Withybrook & Copston Magna  
 1878 John Gray Richardson

1885 Garvin Frank Saxby  
 1893 William Edward Jackson  
 1915 Arthur Worsley Smyth  
 1923 Robert Lewis Baillie Oliver  
 1927 Mansel Reginald Peacock  
 1949 Alfred Richard Jones  
 1959  
 1973  
 1975 [Handwritten entries for these three dates are illegible]

Records from the Church

The Rt. Hon. Lady Alice Dudley... did give unto y Vicars of this Parifh Twenty Pounds per ann: for ever in lands lying in the Parifh of Mancetter in this country. She also gave to this Parifh one Gilded Flagon, one gilded Bread Bowl and one Gilded Chalice for the use of the Blessed Sacrament only

Thomas Cooke of Pailton gave by Will an arable land to this church for the maintenance thereof, lying in Pailton field towards Easenhall upon Crofts furlong butting into Rugby way and Easenhall highway. There is another land belonging to this Church in Pailton field towards Newnham called Nether Fenns furlong.

John King gave by will yearly for ever unto the poor of Monks Kirby Town, out of lands in Streettastion landship, called Fatt Furlong y sum of Ten shillings ( ) £00 03s 04d at Christmas, the fame fum at Easter and the fame at Whitsuntide

Mr. Rugby gave by Will the Intereft of Two Pounds to be distributed in Bread to the poor on St. Mathias day for ever.

Mr. Henry Gough servant to the Earl of Denbigh, gave by will the Intereft of Ten Pounds yearly distributed in bread to Poor Communicants at Easter for ever

Mr. William Miller (father & son) gave by Will Gills Close near Pailton ordering rent of it (a cheif of five shillings being paid) to be yearly distributed among the poor of y Constable Ward of Monks Kirby, at y directions of their Executors, as their Heirs for ever

Thomas Sutton late gardiner to y Earl of Denbigh gave by Will the Intereft of Five Pounds to be distributed yearly in Bread to y Poor of Monks Kirby & Brockhurft on Trinity Sunday for ever

William londen & Richard Lee  
 Church Wardens 1334.

Mr. Jos. Bosworth of Brockhurst, Will dated the 20<sup>th</sup> day of December 1805 bequeathed the sum of £63 and likewise the deed enrolled in the High Court of Chancery dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May 1806 granted a certain clofe in the Hamlet of Pailton called Shuckbro-Clofe containing about 3 acres to the Vicar & Church-Wardens of the Parifh of Monks Kirby for the time being UPON TRUST

that the Interest and profits of the same be by them applied of the same to certain purposes in the said instruments cited

In the Priests Room.

This roof was beat down and the middle roof and the two side iles the 25 December 1701

Thomas Crook ) Thomas Bewley

James Buswell ) Churchwardens Plumbor 1702

This Church was restored at the cost of about £8000 by Mr. Street the Arch. and was reopened for public worship Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>. 1869. The Vicar and parishioners desire to record their grateful thanks to the family of the Earl of Denbigh and their friends, to the Authorities of Trinity College and to all other friends who assisted them in the work. Also to Edward Wood Esquire of Newbold Revel, High Sheriff of Warwickshire for his munificence which enabled the Parishioners to include the whole of their Church in the Restoration

R.H. Simpson Vicar

J. Crofts)

J. Wright) Churchwardens.

Copied from a tomb stone

In memory of Eliz; Mott, wife of John Mott, who died October 24<sup>th</sup>. 1726, married 44 years and mother of 42 children.

“A loving wife, a tender mother,  
Scarce left behind her such another”

Copied from tombstone of a sexton who fell into the grave he was digging,

Thomas Lewis, Sexton, 44 years

who died March 4<sup>th</sup>. 1849. Aged 80 years.

The graves around for many a year,

Were dug by him who slumbers here,

Till worn with age he dropped his spade,

And in this dust his bones were laid,

As he now mouldering shares his doom,

Of those he buried in the tomb,

So will his body, too with theirs arise,

To share the judgement of the skies.

The Bells

To the Glory of God

The six bells in this tower were rehung in new frames together with two new trebles to complete the octave and dedicated by the Lord Bishop of Coventry June 9<sup>th</sup> 1921. The oak beams taken from the tower were converted into the Screen and panelling round the Baptistry, the cost being defrayed by public subscription

A. W. Smythe, Vicar  
J. L. Harrison)  
W. T. Crofts) Churchwardens

1.

The oldest bell, about some five or six hundred years, is said to have come from the old and now destroyed church at Stretton under Fosse.

It was probably made in Worcester.

On it are unique ornamentations and words which appear to mean  
"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away sin"

2.

The bell we hear most days in the week was made in 1640, and says "Soli Des Sola Gloria"

"My noble founders they have bene so many,  
Because not al I will not heir name any"

3.

The biggest well, 23 cwts., which we hear when the clock strikes, was made in Leicester by Watts. On it are the words: I.H.S. NAZARENUS REX IUDEORUM. FILI DEI MISERERE MEI  
Date 1618. John Over, of Rugby, rehung it in 1795

4.

Another, has a beautifully marked borer and was made by Joseph Smith, the earliest known well-founder in Warwick, at Edgbaston, 1711.

5.

Another, dated 1741, was made in Kettering, and says in Latin:

"All things are made for the Glory of God. Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit"

This bell has now fallen and is cracked.

6.

The last is like the big one and made at Leicester by Watts.

Dated. 1623.

This account was written at the time the bells were out of order, before the last two were given to the Church. For these our thanks are due mostly to the generosity of Mr. J. L. Harrison (Churchwarden) and others.

The approximate cost of rehanging the six old bells and the two new ones was £1500.

### The Roof

In 1929 the roof of the church was in a very bad state of repair, when it was decided that it must be reroofed. The cost of this being approximately £1500.

During 1955 the organ was repaired at a cost of £255 by Walkers of London, also in the same year, the central heating required new parts at the approx. cost of £150. The fabric of the church is now in great need of restoration, which has been estimated will cost £6000.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was realized that the churchyard would have to be enlarged. The Earl of Denbigh was approached and he gave about an acre of land adjoining the present churchyard. The old wall was demolished and a new one built. The churchyard had been enlarged about 50 years previously. On November 1<sup>st</sup> 1904 the new part was consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester, the Right Rev. Charles Gore, the parish at that time being in the diocese of Worcester. The ceremony took place during the afternoon, attended by quite a large congregation. In the evening the Bishop held a service of consecration at Pailton Church. The Rev. W.E.Jackson was vicar at that time.

### Millers Charity

Millers Charity dates back several hundred years and is still distributed on St.Thomas's Day, December 21<sup>st</sup>. The old people, widows and widowers receive about 7/- according to the number of people. In the old days families with 4 children of school age or under used to benefit by this. During the time that the Rev.R.B. Podmore (1786-1791) was Vicar of this parish, there is a true story told of his transactions with the verger. One Sunday before morning service the Vicar asked the Verger if he wanted to buy some sheep and he put a price on them, the verger said "he would think about it". In those days the verger sat immediately under the pulpit, and during the sermon he looked up at the Vicar and said "Its alright Master, I'll have them sheep".

### The Memorial in the Parish Church

1914-18

In Honoured Memory of the men of this Parish who laid down their lives in the Great War.

#### Monks Kirby

Lt. Com. Hon. Hugh Feilding R.N.

Capt. Hon. H.S. Feilding, Coldstream Guards

Sergt. Bishop (P) Berks Yeomanry

Corpl. G. Busby, R.W.R.

L/Cpl. G.J. Plant 1751. Coldstream Guards.

Pte. W. Harris "

" C. Izzard R.W.R.

" E.C.Lea "

" J.W. Southam "

" T.T. Wright "

Street Ashton

Lt. Col. A. N. Henderson M.C. R.W.R.

Rifleman S. Hammond K.R.R.

Stretton under Fosse

Sergt. R. I. Kenney R.W.R.

Pte. F. Benson "

" G. H. Watkins "

Corpl. of the Horse, W.E. Waspe. 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards

Pailton

Lieut. E. Jackson, R.W.R.

Corpl. A. Peake, The Buffs

L/Cpl. F. Davenport, R.W.R.

" E. Makepeace, "

Rifleman J. Clarke, Kings Royal Rifle C.

" T. Davenport, 1<sup>st</sup> Rifle Bgde

Bomb. T. Morton, R.G.A.

Pte. C. Clarke, Duke of Cornwallis LI

Pte. A. Hill, R.W.R.

Easenhall

Rifleman C. F. Dale, Lt.Rifle Brigade

Pte. P. Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> Btt. Hamps. Regt.

"They died that we might live."

III.: Roll of Honour 1939-1945

Monks Kirby	-	John Haytree
		Victor Foxon
Street Ashton	-	Ian Dick
Stretton under Fosse	-	John Henry Walker
		Reginald Colin
Pailton	-	Michael Skeat

IV Recollections of Monks Kirby

Monks Kirby is an interesting old world village with its noble Church and thatched cottages, also some grand old trees, which, sad to say are gradually decaying. Many of the people have been tenants on the Newnham Paddox estate for generations,

In the days when farm workers earned 12/- - 15/- per week often with a large family to keep, Newnham always gave so generously. Soup was made during the winter months and given away, loads of wood were sent to the village, meat given away to each family at Christmas, they interested themselves in every household, in case they were in need of anything. The good influence of the Newnham family has helped to make Monks Kirby a happy and contented village. Conditions of living have changed a great deal during the last fifty years.

Extracts from Diary of Mrs. William Wright, 1871

- Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>. Began to make the soup  
 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Heath called about the ld readings.  
 Mar. 6<sup>th</sup>. Busy preparing for brewing.  
 8<sup>th</sup>. Brewed 12 Strike of Malt made 150 gals of Ale & 50 gals. of Beer.  
 Apl. 1<sup>st</sup>. Gave soup away for last time this year.  
 2<sup>nd</sup>. Made first factors cheese. Dec. 1. Made last factors cheese.  
 29<sup>th</sup>. Baked, very busy all day.  
 May 26<sup>th</sup>. Went to Newnham to tea Lord Feildings birthday, all the school boys went to tea.  
 June 6<sup>th</sup>. Miss Gibbs gave the Infant children frocks.  
 19<sup>th</sup>. Annual meeting of Womens club, everything went well. All left at 12 o'clock.  
 Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>. Had made 15, cheeses. Sold cheese to Mr. Roberts at 76/- per cwt.  
 9<sup>th</sup>. Cows had Foot & Mouth disease (They weren't destroyed at that time)  
 21<sup>st</sup>. Had telegram from Lady Denbigh to order Christmas meat.

In the days before motors and buses, the only means of transport from the village was the Carriers Cart, or get to Brinklow Station and go by train. The carrier was a very useful person who would take your goods and sell them, do your shopping, also you could go yourself, but had to be careful not to put your feet into a basket of eggs.

After the 1914 war with the advent of motor transport etc., village life changed, with the gradual disappearance of all horse-drawn vehicles. Now we have a Bus Service.

The village is a truly loyal one, and when any Royal events come along which call for a celebration, the people all enter into the spirit of it. In 1881, Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, they rejoiced, and in 1897 her Diamond Jubilee was celebrated. The holiday ended by an enormous bonfire very scientifically built, shaped like a square tower, 30-40 feet high, with a barrel of tar on the top. To celebrate the Jubilee the children were all invited to Newnham and entertained by games, sports, Punch & Judy show etc. not forgetting a delightful tea, waited on by Lord & Lady Denbigh and their family. Always on royal occasions each child was given a suitable memento. A great feature of enjoyment was the fire-escape, fixed to a top window, the children were allowed to

run up flights of stairs and come down with squeals of delight in the escape. One young boy once got lost in the labyrinth of stairs and landings and ventured to open a door to try and find his way, to his dismay there was a lady in the room. The boy was far more perturbed than the lady.

King Edward 7<sup>th</sup> coronation was heralded by a salute of eight guns in the early morning from the top of the Church Tower. The celebrations on these occasions are started off with a Church service, and always peals from the bells. On this occasion there were round-about etc. where the children were given free rides at intervals through the day, the usual sports and finally a torch-light procession all around the village. The torches were made of bags twisted and tied round hedge stakes and dipped in tar. Woe betide the man who got some burning tar down his neck. It was on this royal event, that with their meal the adults 150 - 200 were served with hot plum pudding.

The coronation of King George V June 1911, the usual rejoicings, but no plum pudding, round-about or torch-light procession.

The Silver Jubilee of King George V & Queen Mary was a very happy day, everyone being in holiday spirit. Starting the events with a Fancy Dress Parade, then the great feed, followed by field sports of every description, finishing the day with dancing and a bonfire. The children had tea at Newnham.

The arrangement of the programme for King George VI coronation May 1937 was on just about the same lines as the previous one, The coronation day was the saddest of days for the village, on this day the mortal remains of our beloved Lady Feilding were brought to Newnham Paddox. The Earl of Denbigh had previously sent word that our festivities were to be carried out as arranged, but our hearts were not in our work, or play. Then came the last and great coronation of our beloved young Queen Elizabeth II. It was looked forward to with great enthusiasm, everyone trying their utmost to make the day a great success. The school was fitted up with three televisions to enable people to watch and enjoy the actual proceedings in London. There was a Fancy Dress Parade in the school, but owing to the weather, no outdoor activities. Oh, how it rained, but it did not daunt our spirits, everyone was cheerful and happy, even standing around the bonfire, with the rain running down their necks. Then back to the village hall for more dancing and hilarity until it was time to play "God Save The Queen". Everyone went home feeling like the Village Blacksmith, "Something completed, something done".

#### The Relief of Mafaking

At the joyous news of the Relief of Mafaking during the Boer War the whole community stopped work to rejoice. The church bells were rung and a service of thanksgiving held. A procession was arranged, three farm horses and waggons were decorated for the occasion. Lady Denbigh sent down a lot of clothes for the villagers to dress up and make merry. In the first waggon there was a piano, played by Mary Wright, who accompanied the singers who were gaily all dressed up. In the second "Britannia", (Miss S.E.Kenney) attended by various Maids of Honour. In the third one, 2 calves and 2 sheep all decked out, one tied to each corner. The village was paraded to the strains of piano and singing voices. The procession then proceeded to Pailton followed by nearly the whole



population, stopping at Street Ashton on the way, where one man crawled into a dog kennel and got himself wedged so tightly he may still be there. On returning to Monks Kirby to finish off the rejoicings, a most impressive torch light procession was arranged.

When the Earl of Denbigh returned from the Boer War, the tenants were so overjoyed that they met him at Street Ashton, unhooked the horses and pulled him up to Newnham Paddox in the carriage. This was the second time Lord Denbigh had been pulled home by his people. While still Lord Feilding, in 1884, when he came home with his bride from their honeymoon, the village was gaily decorated with archways and bunting to greet them. When they arrived in the village, the people all in holiday mood, took the horses from the carriage and pulled the happy couple up to Newnham.

#### 1914 - 1918

When the war broke out so many of our men joined up. There were some very sad homes when the war was over, ten men and one girl had lost their lives. We had some celebrations in honour of those who returned, sports, a band, and a hot dinner in the evening, in the Brockhurst School room. The event of the evening was the presentation of silver medals, suitably inscribed, to each man or his relatives, who had served in the war. First Mrs. Heath presented Lord Denbigh with his medal, then Lord Denbigh presented the men with theirs. Mrs. E. D. Miller, vice president of the Rugby Branch of the British Red Cross Society, presented each V. A. D. with a silver and enamel medal. These medals were bought with money from the Monks Kirby War Fund. The evening was a great success.

#### ExService Men

Miss Kenney had put a lot of hard work into all the war activities, packing parcels off to the men, money raising efforts, sewing meetings etc. The Ex service men showed their appreciation by asking Lord Denbigh to present her with a gold watch on their behalf.

#### 1939

When 1939 came bringing with it the second world war, peace was broken once more. The menfolk, and girls this time, having to join up, some on the seas, some in the air, and others to do battle on land. Blackout was a strict order not a glimmer of light must be shown. A school from London was evacuated to Monks Kirby and there were very few houses which hadn't one or two boys billeted on them. As time went on the War Office took over a field along the Fosse on the Manor Farm, this was made into a Gun Emplacement, and huts sufficient to camp approximately 250. With all these new faces amongst us, many friends were made, and they were made welcome in many homes. With the blitz of Coventry our houses were filled to overflowing, a bed was put up in any corner. All the plans that raided Coventry and Birmingham seemed to go over this village. One night a plane was shot down and the Germans were seen to bale out in the beam of the search-light, eventually these men were captured. Another night, a machine came down in flames and all the men killed. There was a search-light at the top of Brockhurst. The Village Hall was used to

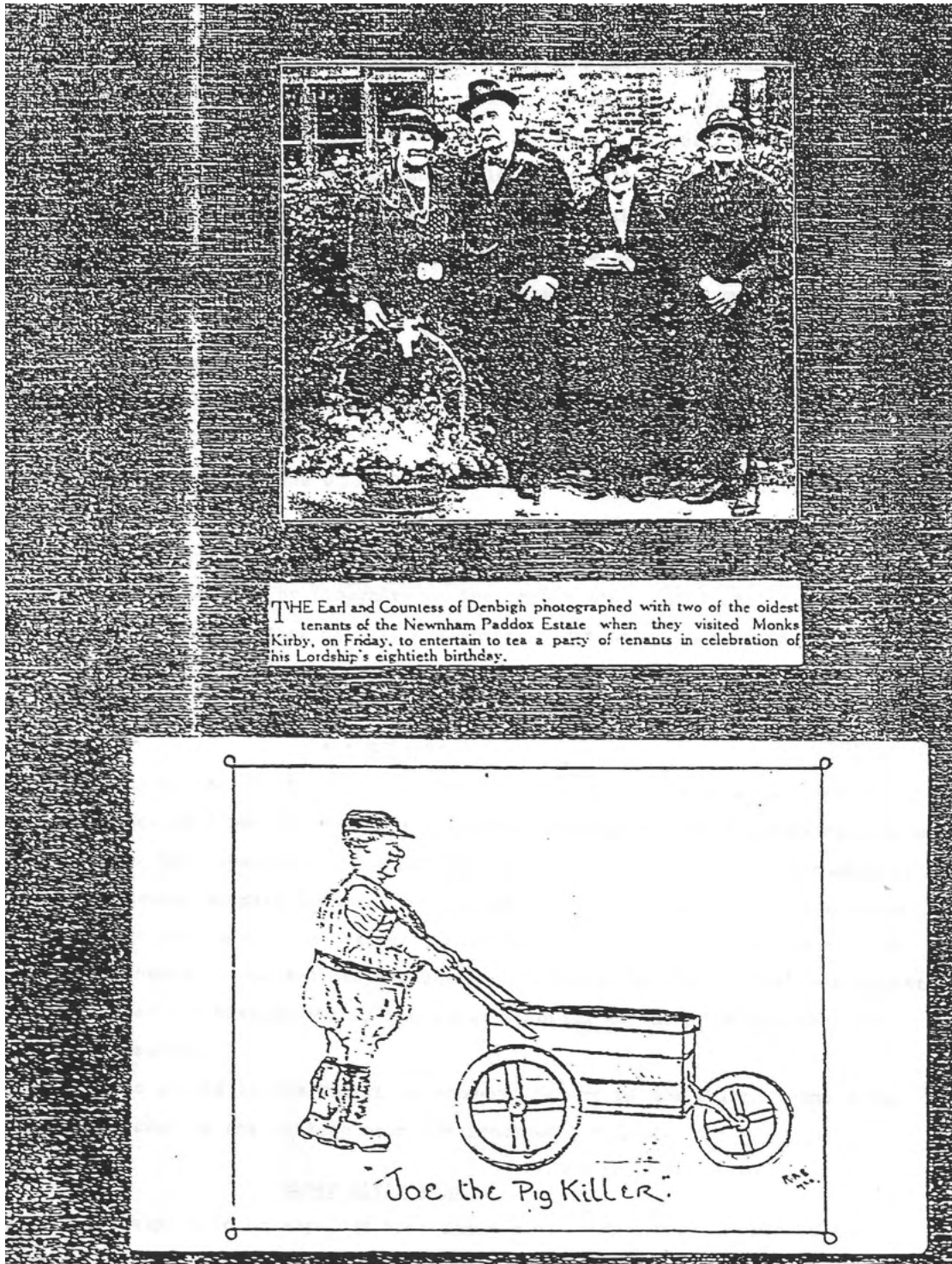
house Mothers and children from London until they were suitably billeted. Oh, the nightmare of blacking out those huge windows. We had various money raising efforts for War Charities, these were always generously supported both in kind and money. Regular collections were made for the Red Cross Agricultural Fund and Monks Kirby's contribution was the highest in the Rugby Rural Area. The amount something over £1000. The use of a room in the village was offered for the purpose of making hospital requirements of every description, this working party met every week. Things are back to normal again now and it is hoped that is how they will stay. Most of the money raising efforts to day are for the church, which needs a great deal of money spending on it.

Oak apple day, the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, used to be quite a day for the school children. The girls dare not go through the village without wearing a sprig of Oak, otherwise the boys would be after them and sting them with nettles.

One of our village celebrities was Joe Busby, he was a big man, abnormally stout, his measurements may easily have been twice the size of the ordinary man. He kept one or two cows and on one occasion Priscilla, his sister, said to Father Van Dillon, "Father, I want you to pray for Joe specially", Father said, "Why Joe, isn't he well"? Priscilla, "Yes, but he is expecting a calf". Father (who had a sense of humour) "I am not at all surprised". Joe was looked upon as the official pig killer for the district, also he used to drive the brougham for the Denbigh Arms, and brew the beer there, he was quite a notable character. He lived with his sisters, they had a laundry where they washed for Newnham and the large houses in the district, in fact, for anyone. There was a large room attached to their house which they used for ironing etc. but it was known as the Reading room and in the evenings it was used as such by the village folk. Joe had a three wheeled truck which he pushed around to deliver the laundry.

There was a room adjoining this Reading room cum laundry, which was used as an out-door beer house, and it was last kept by one named Edwin Coleman.

In the days when people had to make their own enjoyment, Penny Readings were held, probably monthly and there were always local folk kind enough to help the people enjoy the evening, including the Newnham family, the Vicar, Mr. Colban, the School master and his daughter who sang, Father Martin, Mr. Ball the Pailton School master and others. Some would recite, others read aloud, short plays were another form of amusement, singing and music were a great feature.



Caption (top): THE Earl and Countess of Denbigh photographed with two of the oldest tenants of the Newnham Paddox Estate when they visited Monks Kirby, on Friday, to entertain to tea a party of tenants in celebration of his Lordship's eightieth birthday.

Caption (below): "Joe the Pig Killer". Joe Busby (illegible)

Upon the marriage of Lady Jane Feilding to Captain Levett, the Earl of Denbigh gave a ball to his tenants, and during the evening a sumptuous dinner was served. The tenants wanting to show their appreciation and high regard in which his Lordship and all the family were held, decided they would invite all the cottagers wives to a feed. The Schoolrooms were most tastefully decorated by the ladies who were responsible, and on January 30<sup>th</sup> 1856 about 200 sat down to tea. The Earl of Denbigh, Viscount Feilding, Captain and Lady Jane Levett were present. The meal being over many of the husbands arrived and nearly the whole population joined in the dancing to the note of a violin and piano. Lord Denbigh was loudly cheered at intervals during the evening. The happy party ended just after midnight.

Plough Monday was observed up till about 1893, this took place the first Monday of January when the men would blacken their faces and dress up and go round the village taking a plough along with them. Any house they went into where they didn't receive money, they would retaliate by ploughing up the cobble stones in front of the house. This was all done in a sporting spirit, but there is one known case of this taking place.

#### War Efforts

At the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War a Committee was formed to help in every possible way, such as a weekly working party in the village, where hospital requirements were made. There were two Red Cross Hospitals in the district and quite a number of local people attended Nursing lectures and passed their exams to become V.A.D's and help to nurse the patients. Comforts were sent to those serving in the forces, the money was contributed by collections and donations from parishioners. The farm tenants equipped a ward at the Newnham Paddock Red Cross Hospital at which the Countess of Denbigh was Commandant.

A tablet was placed in the Church in honoured memory of the fallen, also a War Memorial was erected in the village near the Brockhurst School.

#### Monks Kirby Wake

This was always held on May 31<sup>st</sup> when there used to be stalls of all kinds and coconut shies etc. under our noted oak trees in the village, and just across the road by the churchyard on a small green would be a Merry-go round, pulled around by a pony. A great joy to the children and grown ups too. Also there were swing-boats in the field known as "Denmark", at the back of the Church.

We have no baker now in the village, but up till 1938 the bakehouse was a very busy place, there was quite a thriving bakery and bread delivery for miles around. The villagers used to take their cakes etc to be baked at quite a small cost. Cake or fruit pie etc. 1d, pork pie 2d. The oven was always going on Sunday morning to cook the Sunday dinners for which they were charged 1½d per joint.

#### Daffodil Saturday & Sunday

For many years Lord Denbigh opened the grounds of Newnham Paddock for anyone to enjoy the daffodils and other spring flowers. It was greatly appreciated and by the advent of cars and motor coaches it brought people in their hundreds or might I say thousands. An urgent appeal was made for money for the Hospital of St. Cross, it was suggested that teas should be provided, a meeting was called by Lord & Lady Feilding who were in residence at Newnham Paddock. There were many offers of help, most people in the neighbourhood took a part one way or other. This was an annual event and the Rugby Hospital, also the Nursing Ass: benefitted considerably. It was owing to the death of Lord & Lady Feilding and Newnham being closed then followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> World war, so that means of helping charities ceased. I think it must have been about 12 years provided these teas at Newnham, enjoyed by everyone, workers and visitors too.

#### The 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Denbighs 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, 1938

In 1939 when Lord Denbigh celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday he expressed a wish that he would like to have a village tea to meet the old people. After the Earl and Countess had been received Lord Denbigh was presented with a buttonhole by the oldest farm tenant, Lady Denbigh presented with a basket of flowers by the oldest cottage tenant. The tenants were so very pleased to have the chance of meeting his Lordship once more. A meat tea and a chat were much enjoyed by all. During the proceedings Lord Denbigh requested that he would like the age of each person present, He was asked "Lady Denbigh too"? yes, ask her but she won't tell you". He had a mischievous smile when she was approached, it was an unsuccessful attempt. It is worthy of note that among others there were 35 old folk aged 65 years and over, the average age of these 35 people was 75½ years.

#### Gleaning

In the days when gleaning was a great feature of village life, mowing was all done with a sickle or scythe, the gleaners always had a leader, usually a masterful dominating character. She decided which fields to go to, as the farmers cleared them. No one was allowed in a fresh field before 8 o'clock in the morning, when they would all go in, in a bunch. If any woman had tried to steal a march on the others, she was forbidden to glean in that certain field by the leader. Wheat was the only corn they gleaned. The heads were tied in bunches and when the corn had dried, it was threshed out on the cottage floor. When it was dry enough for milling, they took it to Pailton Mill near Street Ashton. The flour would be stored, and on Saturday afternoon it was quite the usual thing to see as many as twelve women in the village bakehouse, kneading and making up their own flour into bread, then leaving it there to be baked.

#### The Barn

In the 1880's when the cottagers did their threshing on the house floor, one floor had a huge hole in it caused by the heating of the flails. A small boy in this house when at play jumping from a sofa in to this hole gashed his forehead very severely. (He still has a slight scar) One day Lady Denbigh came into the cottage and asked "Why is the child's head bandaged," when she was told,

she said, "Something must be done". In a very short time the barn in Bond End was built, for the cottagers use, to do their threshing, also the cottage floor was repaired.

#### Bellringers

At Christmas time the bell ringers would go with their hand-bells to the outlying farms. Starting on Christmas Day, first call Newnham Paddock, then on a round finishing at Pailton Fields, where they had a real Christmas feed. For the following ten days or fortnight, they would visit a farm in the evening, where a good spread had been prepared. After the meal, bellringing, singing, reciting, etc., a jolly evening was spent, the family enjoying it all. This was in appreciation of their ringing the church bells through the year.

In some cases the bell ringers were invited to the Harvest Suppers, some of the farmers gave, to thank their men for all the hard work they had put in to get the harvest. The bells helped to make the evening more enjoyable.

#### May Day

The school children looked forward to Mayday. They would get up early to gather flowers and make their garlands, they then went round singing and collecting what pennies they could, which went to buy sweets. Later, Empire Day was observed, when the Convent School & Brockhurst School joined together, and paraded the village with a May Queen and attendants decked out with flowers, headed by the Boy Scouts carrying a banner. They sang songs. A tea was provided for all, partly paid for by the money the children had collected.

#### Letters

There are many outlying farms in the district and before the days of bicycles which meant the postman or postwoman had to walk many miles. The weekly wage for delivering these letters was 4/8

#### Newspapers

Two newspapers came to the village daily by post. The Daily Graphic and another Daily paper, for the use of the Reading Room. Anyone taking advantage of these newspapers had to pay 2/- per year, 1/- in the Autumn and the other 1/- early in the New Year.

#### Roads

Up till about 1890 the farmers of this parish were not asked to pay rates, as they did all the carting to keep the roads in repair, the stone being carted from the wharf, Stretton-under-Fosse, having come there by boat. The Fosse Way had always been kept in repair by putting sand on, Mr. John Wright of Street Ashton was the first man to cart stone onto this section of the road. There was once a Toll-gate at Street Ashton.

#### Bricks

A century ago there was a very busy brickyard here, bricks were fetched for miles around. The remains of the brick-kilns are still to be seen in Kirby Lane.

Monks Kirby was a Rural District Council combined with the five following villages, Copston, Willey, Wibtoft, Pailton & Stretton under Fosse, until the year 1932 when the boundaries were readjusted. Their meetings were held at the Workhouse, Lutterworth.

#### A Christening

When the Rev. Podmore was Vicar, at a christening he was asked to choose a name from the Bible. The poor child was named Beelzebub and was called Beel. Later in life he went to live at Wolvey.

Once when the hunt was near the village, some of the villagers following on foot, Sam Foxon who was noted for jumping among the villagers, jumped the brook in exactly the same place Mr. Will Davy's horse had gone over. Some old cronies went to measure the brook with the result, one of them fell in and had a good drenching.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> World War when a Naval gun was being tested in Dirty Hole Brickyard, some 4 or 5 miles away, the report was terrific, it shook the houses for miles around, Robin, a man living at the Vicarage at that time, took his lantern down to the church to see if it had fallen down.

#### Schools at Monks Kirby

Monks Kirby Grammar School was founded in 1625, by a Charity known as Wales Charity. This certain Thomas Wale walked from Leicester to Coventry. On his travels he begged for food, he received hospitality in Monks Kirby (not Brockhurst) Stretton under Fosse, and some houses in Brinklow. In later life he became a wealthy man, and not forgetting those who had befriended him, he endowed a school at Monks Kirby, to enable the boys to receive a free education, any house where he had been refused assistance, the boys had to pay 1d or 2d weekly for attending this school.

There had been a series of schoolmasters who had given little or no satisfaction, these being appointed by the Trustees of Coventry Grammar School. The villagers were then told they could appoint someone of their own choice. They were anxious to have someone who understood and was interested in agriculture. About that time the Earl of Denbigh chanced to meet some who recommended a learned young man, Edward Colban, he was appointed Headmaster on December 21<sup>st</sup>. 1859, and he retired in 1912. He had outstanding ability as a schoolmaster and turned out some brilliant scholars, he became so noted that at one time, parents from a distance, asked him to

take their sons as boarders, this he did for some years, turning some back bedrooms into dormitories. At this time he was farming on a fairly large scale. He was a very strict master, but very just, he used the cane whenever necessary. A valuable feature of Mr. Colban's teaching, he taught the boys to show consideration for others. In quite a number of cases he taught three generations of the same family. According to the Will of Thomas Wale, the money for this school came from a farm in Leicestershire at (Norton Twycross) and a messuage or mansion at Brinklow. Both these properties have been sold during the last one hundred years.

Mr. Colban was 73 years of age when he gave up teaching and upon his retirement, the Monks Kirby Grammar School Foundation was formed and the income of the Foundation devoted to Grants for Maintenance and Exhibitions to candidates resident in the Parishes of Monks Kirby, Stretton under Fosse and Brinklow.

Composed by Mr. Colban's pupils

Mr. Colban's a very good man,  
 He tries to teach you all he can,  
 Reading, writing, arithmetic.  
 He never forgets to give you the stick,  
 When he does, he makes you dance,  
 Out of England into France,  
 Out of France into Spain, over the hills and back again.

After the summer holidays of 1912 the boys from the Grammar School, had to join the pupils at the new Brockhurst Schools, which had been opened a few months previously. The old school was used for lantern lectures, meetings, etc., and the men held their Rifle Club there. In March 1922 when the Women's Institute was started, the membership grew larger and the room grew smaller. By various efforts, enough money was raised to enlarge the room by taking in a part of the old playground at the back. It was a great day for the village when in 1925 it officially became the Village Hall, at a [page missing].

#### V. Monks Kirby Convent.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Denbigh invited the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy from Holland to make a foundation in Monks Kirby and presented them with a house which is the present Convent.

In 1873 four Sisters and five girls were in residence and in a few years a chapel, school and other buildings were added and housed thirty boarders up to fifteen years of age. Here the Catholic children and others of the vicinity were, as today, educated.

The nuns also opened a house for boys in Pailton in 1878, but this was given up a year or two later and a 'Home' for boys was run by a Miss Pullen (Matron) until 1894.



In 1875 a Mr. Poole started a Catholic School in Pailton with twenty-two boarders and day-boys. Five years later this school moved to Weston Hall near Bulkington. The nuns were brought here to help educationally and socially and are still remembered by the old people especially in the village for their good and charitable work. They left Monks Kirby in 1924 and their place taken by the Sisters of Mercy, two of whom today teach in the original school. They have about twenty eight boarders and fifty day children under eleven from neighbouring villages.

## VI. Pailton

The quiet village of Pailton with an area of 1661 acres is situated close to the Watling Street, which King Alfred made the boundary between the Saxon and Danish kingdoms. As far as is known Pailton has had an uneventful history, until the German Luftwaffe attacked it in June 1940.

The earliest form of its name, Paylington, indicates, by its termination, that it was a Saxon settlement: whereas Monks Kirby, two miles away, has the corresponding Danish ending, “-by”. At some time in the Dark ages the Saxons must have cleared a few fields from the forest land hereabouts, and settled in the sheltered little hollow round the well or spring still marked by the village pump. The settlement would have marked the convergence of several rough tracks from the village of Brockhurst, from Monks Kirby, from the ancient settlement of Cestersover, from the village of Rochberie, or Rugby, to the south and its more important neighbour Dunchurch. Roman civilisation has left few traces here, although a mile to the north runs the Roman Fosse Way, and one of their chief stations at High Cross.

During feudal times Pailton’s history is chiefly that of different aristocratic landowners. The first of these is Geoffrey de Wirce, who, in the Domesday Survey of 1086, held 960 acres in Fenny Newbold, which then included Easenhall, Stretton under Fosse, and Pailton. He is reputed the founder of the great monastic church of Monks Kirby, in which a much mutilated bust opposite the south door is said to be his: and though his name is sometimes erroneously said to be a corruption of Warwick, it was in fact the English spelling of his native Guerche in Touraine; but he may have given his name to Warwick, Wirce’s wick.

-----

Dugdale’s earliest information is from the middle decades of the thirteenth century, when William de Turville was lord of the manor. In 1297 he son Nicholas held 360 acres in Pailton and Harborough, under the patronage of the Earl of Lancaster. At this time, Hugh de Herdbergh (Harborough) and Geoffrey de Charnelles held each 150 acres. In 1304 William Revel, whose name survives in Newbold Revel, seems to have held some part of the district, for he was granted the right of free warren – that is, he could hunt any kind of beast there – over the whole terrain. In 1327 this right was transferred to John Revel, who took over the lands in 1316. For two years during this century the Turvilles lost their rights because of the treason of their patron, the Earl of Lancaster: from 1322 to 1324 the lands were held by the Crown.

In 1324, the year they were restored, the descendants of Hugh of Herdbergh made over all their local possessions to his grand-daughter Alice: and it thus became the property of her

husband, John de Peto, who, in 1361, assigned 150 acres to Maud, the daughter of Lancaster. In 1341 Sir John Revel was given the mill on the Smite Brook by John Daysie of Ashton; and this continued to grind the corn for the village until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the fourteenth century some famous names appear, some still extant. In 1433 Monks Kirby and Pailton passed into the manorial lordship of the Filding (later Feilding) family, whence comes the line of the Earls of Denbigh. In 1461 died Walter Hopton, passing on his holding of four houses and 400 acres of land in Pailton to his sister Elizabeth, wife of Richard Corbet of Somerset. Thence it passed to the great Northampton family of Cave, later Boughton, now Boughton-Leigh. The estate of Newbold Revel was by this time in the hands of the Malory family, one of whom, Thomas, a retainer of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, is famous as the translator of the French tales of King Arthur, printed by Caxton in 1485: and infamous for several very unsavoury crimes in Monks Kirby and Combe Abbey, for which he was imprisoned. He was Member of Parliament in 1456; and died in prison in 1471.

In 1565 the manor seems to have reverted, on the death of the holder, to the crown; and was restored to Edward Boughton the following year, he having then reached his majority.

Manorial records here lose interest. From the early eighteenth century the manor was held by the Skipwith family who then lived at Newbold Revel, and who survive in a hatchment in their private Chapel in Monks Kirby Church, and in the name of a local Friendly Society.

The nineteenth century seems to have been a period of prosperity. During it, the village benefitted from the help of the Denbigh family of Newnham Paddox. In 1848 the school was built by Lady Mary Feilding and her brother, on the only piece of land in the village which then belonged to the Earl. It housed one hundred and twenty children, and sixty infants. This suggests a larger population than the village had a century later, but it may be that many of the children walked quite a long distance from farms and hamlets round about. The school survived until 1940, to meet an end that no-one could have conceived when it was built, as will appear later.

Lady Mary also left to the village, as her Easter Offering in 1862, Pailton Hall. She gave much thought to its use, and finally left it as a place where – “the youth of the Parish could meet for instruction or harmless recreation; where our orphans could be loved, our sick cared for and our aged succoured; where the Heads of our Parish could meet together, whence united help and kindness could flow. It is large enough to contain guests who in various ways may bring direct blessings..... We may exercise hospitality to tired workers in London, and refresh them by our country air to go back in hope once more.....”

In 1884 a part of the garden was used as a site for the building of the Church of Saint Denys. This was intended as a Chapel of Ease for those too old or infirm to walk to Monks Kirby. Built of red brick, a copy of Byzantine Architecture, it cost just under £2,000, and seats a hundred and fifty people. It was formerly within the See of Worcester, now of Coventry. It was opened on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1884. A fearful thunderstorm occurred during the ceremony. Pailton Church was consecrated in the evening of November 1<sup>st</sup> 1904, 20 years after it was opened.

There may have been some decline in prosperity towards the end of the last century: though Pailton's most famous character, who then flourished, was affluent enough. His name was Joseph

Underhill, though he is remembered by the older folk as the Pailton Miser. Born in Lutterworth, and apprenticed to a tailor in Leicester, he ran away to escape harsh treatment, and became a recluse and eccentric, picking up money by any occasional, menial labour he could get; he lived in a hovel, fed upon scraps, including candle-ends, and carried his money about his neck in two bags. When he died a great sum was found on him, in sovereigns hidden amongst his rags.

In the early decades of this century the population seems to have been smaller – it is quite clear from the Roll of Honour, that the first World War further reduced it. Between 1914 and 1918, Pailton House, now the home of the Earl and Countess of Denbigh, was converted to be the first house in the Midlands to act as a convalescent home for soldiers: and in the second great conflict it provided shelter for a short time to children and nuns from London as well as providing a Red Cross centre for making hospital supplies.

However, a new influence had appeared before this: the main works of the British Thompson Houston Company at Rugby, and the several motor works at Coventry caused an increasing number of villagers henceforth to desert the occupations of the land, which had been their staple activity since the seventh century, and to seek their employment in the towns.

The Second World War affected the village very directly. In June, 1940, a German airman released eleven bombs on the village. No life was lost; three people were wounded, and several buildings destroyed or damaged, including the school, which has not been rebuilt. As this was the first raid on the Midlands, there were many thousands who came to see the destruction, especially from Coventry. There was to be an ironic sequel, when that city was so severely blitzed; many of the thousands of homeless people passed again through Pailton in their search for sanctuary. A few found it, and settled.

Today the village is typical of man, except in its lack of an ancient church; the Chapel of Ease is so obviously a modern structure. Two groups of Council Houses have been erected on its fringes; and a Prisoner-of-War Camp also sprang up, housing first Germans, then Italians, and finally displaced persons. It is now demolished. There are several fine old farmhouses: Pailton Hall, the rambling, whitewashed building given by Lady Mary Feilding; three public houses, two of which are large, old buildings; cottages of every age and degree of picturesqueness or ugliness – though only three still have thatch. Some things are modern – the street lights, the 'bus stops, representation by a woman, Mrs. Cunningham, on the Rural District Council – the same Councillor was the first to be elected in parish elections by ballot. Some things remain as they always were – the village still has its own baker, carpenter, builder, and, until recently, wheelwright.

Montiloe Lane, a lonely, meandering way takes its name from a minor engagement of the Peninsular War. Bomb damage has been cleared away from the street. Even those desirable products of civilisation, electricity and water have not entirely ousted the candle and the pump. Though there have been a movement of population, some families have been here undoubtedly since the eighteenth century, and may well have resided here for even longer. Today all the farmers have tractors, and a horse is a rarity, but machinery has not yet broken down those stubborn ridges in the fields to the north and south-east which still show the village's Great Field which in the Middle Ages was divided into strips, leisurely cultivated by oxen.

### World War I - 1914-18

A Red Cross Hospital for men was started at Pailton House in 1914. Commandant Mrs.F.A.Morris, the trained personnel being a Matron, Sister, and Masseuse. The rest of the staff were all local V.A.D. Nurses. It was considered by the men, a very popular hospital.

### World War II - 1939-45

#### War Supply Depot.

A War Supply depot, was set up in 1939 at Pailton House, under the leadership of Mrs. Fielding-Johnson.

A good number of local people joined, and much work was done, including the making of splints, bandages, pygamas, etc.

Later, when Pailton House was let, the workroom was moved to the room over the Parish Room, at Pailton Hall, by kind permission of Dr. & Mrs. Matthews, where already a small emergency hospital was established. Here, it was carried on all through the war, and much sewing and knitting was done. For some time after the war, garments were made for children and refugees.

The small emergency hospital was first established in the Village Hall, with a decontamination room in one of the stables at the White Lion Inn. When the Village Hall was being prepared, a remark was made, that the place was not blacked out, and one of the helpers said "Well never mind" they won't come tonight" and that was the very night - June 24-25, 1940 - that eleven bombs were dropped on the village, demolishing the school and a cottage, and doing some other damage. Luckily, no lives were lost. Needless to say, shutters were made for the Village Hall, the very next day, but as it had to be used as a School, the Hospital was moved to the Parish Room.

The next week-end, hundreds of people came to see the damage, the roads were thronged with cars and bicycles, as these bombs were the first to be dropped in the Midlands.

### Reminiscences of an Air Raid Warden in

#### PAILTON.

It was about the year 1938 when working at Pailton House estate, I was invited by the local constable to join the A.R.P. as a warden. Shortly after enrolling received a course of training at Brinklow Village, we were instructed by the Police who gave us a very thorough training in fire fighting with stirrup pump, also first aid, basic rescue, gas drill and protective clothing against gas. Also we went in the gas chamber on two occasions, reporting messages, and household register. All this was done very thoroughly over a number of weeks in the evening's after a day's work. Shortly after this we had to go from House to House fitting on gas masks and filling in the household register. It was a job to fit some of the people in the village, a number of the older folk were nearly suffocated when we tried to fit them with their gas masks, we had all sorts and sizes to

give out. A day to be remembered was the Sunday when news came we were at war with Germany. A few hours later we had the order to man the post for the next 24 hours, so it meant we had to stay at the Warden post all night. I had to go to my work on the Monday morning at 7 a.m. and when I came up for my breakfast at 8.30 a.m. the post Warden met me and told me to give the warning, he had just received the order from control centre. I was already dressed with my helmet on and service respirator on my back. Off I went on my cycle as hard as I could go through the village blowing my whistle, it was very exciting, people came running out shouting after me to put the whistle up as it was giving them heart failure. I went on and down to Pailton House still blowing my whistle then reported back to the Warden's post waiting for the all clear. Later on the same day a lot of village people who came and told me they were sorry they shouted at me for giving the warning. That was the first and last time we gave the warning by whistle. When we had the next warning we went out and patrolled the village and told the folks that the warning was on and to take cover. We then had to organize a fire watch for every night so that most of the men in the village came in on a fire watch once a fortnight. Two would sleep in the parish room, which had been connected up to the Warden's post. The air raid the village experienced taking place in the early hours of the morning, we were shaken out of bed. The first blast I thought was the battery up Easenhall Lane, the next sounded as if it was very near to us. We got dressed the best way we could and I got the wife and baby to our shelter, then I went out to the Warden's post, but before I could get there I met the post warden, he ordered me to make a survey of the village, after looking round we found two small cottages completely down, the village school had a direct hit and the school house was completely destroyed. Windows were blown out of many houses in the village and telephone wires were all down. We had three trapped casualties. The post warden sent off report to control centre. With the help of the village people we got the casualties to the Doctor's house. Shortly after control sent out a rescue party with first aid and an ambulance, we saw the ambulance and casualties off to hospital, after which we went back on duty. There were women and children who had run out of their homes into the fields just in their night clothes, they came to me, and said "what shall we do nearly all our crockery is broken", the only thing I could tell them, was to go back to their homes, and we would do what we could to help them. The day following we had thousands of people in the village to look at the damage, one could hardly move. I saw some young lads getting bits of old wood from the old places in the village and telling the crowd they were from the bombed houses, would they like a souvenir, business in a small way. This all happened in the early part of the war, and after that we were on our toes nearly every night. We had to go out on the warning, and stood just outside the Warden's post for hours or patrolled the roads, if we saw a light showing, we had to shout "Put that light out". We watched the planes going over night after night, it was a common saying where are they going - Coventry or Birmingham. We began to wonder "How long can we stick this, working all day and up at night". The most heartening of all was the night when the sky was full of our planes going to Germany, and the news came the next day that we had crippled the foe. We realised then our service was not in vain.

## VII. Newbold Revel

This estate was originally part of the possessions of Leavinus, a Saxon. In the Domesday Book it is noted as Fenini-webold or Fent Newbold. The estate was granted by the Conqueror to Geoffrey de Wirce and in the twelfth year of the reign of Henry II it was reputed as a member of Wappenbury. From Thomas de Wappenbury it descended to Revell and from Revell to Mallory. It is believed that it was here Sir Thomas Mallory wrote his 'Morte d'Arthur'

In 1640 the estate became the property of Sir Simon Clarke, First Baronet, who suffered in the cause of Charles I. Next it became the property of the Skipwith family. They removed to Honington Hall and in the 1860's Newbold was purchased by Mr. Edward Wood who carried out great improvements to the estate.

Then came Mr. Leo Bonn who maintained the high traditions of Newbold until he died in 1929.

The Seventh Day Adventists purchased the estate as a missionary college in 1931 and it was used for this purpose until taken over by the Royal Air Force in 1941. The R.A.F. used it during the early part of the war for research purposes and in 1945 for re-habilitation of airmen who had been prisoners of war. Since then the estate has been in the possession of St. Paul's College and is now a Training College for teachers.

#### Stretton under Fosse.

The history of Stretton under Fosse is associated with Newbold Revel. It is not mentioned in the Domesday Book but it is believed to have been much larger in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It possessed a Church until it was destroyed by Henry VIII in 1530. The present Manor House was built on the site after the destruction of the Church.

In 1772 after the building of the Oxford Canal the Enclosure award mentions the Township of Stretton under Fosse.

#### VIII. Withybrook

Withybrook is a small village about 2 miles from MONKS KIRBY, present population about 280. It was so called from the wide brook, beside which withies grew and in the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, was spelt WIDEBROC - WITHIEBROC - WHITHIBROC - WYTHYBROKE - WYEBROC OR WETHYBROC - the correct meaning depends on how the Anglo Saxons who lived here, pronounced the name of their "town". The village and most of the farms formed part of the Wolvey and Withybrook estates owned by the late Baron Overstone, but were sold in 1918 to a Coventry Syndicate and cut up, and re-sold to tenants and others in June 1918. The old church is on low ground near the brook and dedicated to All Saints. About 1880 it was in such bad condition that permission was obtained for Divine Service to be held in the schools, but it was restored in 1893 and services have been held there regularly since that time. The church is of singular design, having a low tower at the West end of the aisle - the nave, North aisle, and chancel and a chapel - the Font of late Norman date is evidence of there having been a church here in the latter part of the

13<sup>th</sup> century. There is a small priests' doorway of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and on the North side of the chancel, is the most interesting feature in the church – the Easter Sepulchre. It was discovered plastered up when repairs were being done to the wall in 1848. The Sepulchre is in the thickness of the wall and has a four centred arched canopy above. On the chancel floor is a large ledger stone in memory of Peter Swain, Vicar and “eminent schoolmaster and preacher” who died in 1713 and Mary his wife 1729. A large arch opens from the chancel to the chapel, now used as a vestry. At the east end, under the window, is a large table tomb with alabaster slab, on which are incised the figures of a Knight and Lady – “Here lyeth the body of Christopher Wright of ‘Hapyford’ in the County of Warwick, esquire, a Justice of the Peace – deceased 1602” and let into the wall of the tomb is an alabaster tablet with the armorial bearings of Sir Christopher Wright and his family alliances. Sir Christopher Wright is said to have been one of the Guy Fawkes conspirators. The present gilded weathercock was carved out of a larger one existing before the church was restored, and the clock is now electric and subscribed for by the villagers in 1955. The organ was presented to the church by Lady Mary Feilding. The first name on the register of priests is WILLIAM de LEONE in 1313 and the last resident curate The Rev. B. RICHARDSON in 1935. After that time the vicarage was let and subsequently sold as a private residence. The vicarage is a square red brick house on the Monks Kirby Road and is supposed at one time to have a spring in the garden, the water from which was considered to be of great medicinal value. The present schools were built in 1857 and belonged to the estate, being let at a nominal rent of 5/- to the curate, for Church of England School. One of the oldest cottages in the village is the Smithy on the hill at the top of the village; a picturesque cottage with its original old oak beams which still have the bark on, which is evidence of it dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Until about 1920 the Schools were used for all Social functions, but after the 1914-18 war an Army hut was erected and is now the Village Hall, electrically equipped and here the Women’s Institute hold their meetings. It was not until 1947 a Women’s Institute was started, and it has been a great asset to the village; there have been three secretaries during the nine years, and one President. Withybrook is rather isolated, and there is no transport except on Saturday and Sunday when two ‘buses run to Nuneaton. Very few of the old families remain, and the cottages are being bought and modernised by workers from the town. The country is undulating and open, and delightful in the Summer, but not so good after heavy rain and snow, when the brook overflows and the lower part of the village is flooded.

#### COPSTON MAGNA.

Copston Magna is a small Hamlet in the heart of England. The village consists of three farm houses, nine cottages, a Church with a Churchyard, and a Village Hall, which used to be the School.

Copston School was erected in 1947 by Lady Augusta Feilding a daughter of the seventh Earl of Denbigh, and endowed at the same time as the Brockhurst School in Monks Kirby. The endowment money is now used for the benefit of the Brockhurst School. Mrs. Martha Rowley was appointed Mistress and Mrs. Wright of Monks Kirby would go to Copston frequently to supervise and settle any accounts, often she would ride a donkey there, Copston

being about 4 miles from Monks Kirby. Occasionally she would go in the carriage from Newnham, the family taking a great interest in the School.

Lady Mary and Lady Agnes Feilding provided the money to build the Church in 1847, which is dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

Copston Magna's only industry is agriculture, it is a beautiful piece of countryside, with the heavy industry which surround it, all far enough away not to pollute the clean air.

Copston Magna is surrounded by ancient history. High Cross stands one mile east of the Village, and claims to be the Roman Centre of England, where the Fosseway crosses the Watling Street, a remarkable point it is, with six roads radiating from it like the spokes of a wheel.

Fosseway is quiet and green, losing itself among the trees.

Watling Street is busy with increasing traffic between London, the Midlands, and the North.

Briton and Roman, Saxon, Dane and Norman, all have tramped these roads, and we may think there can be few spots in England where so many races have trod and so many centuries have passed with so little change of scene.

Copston Magna or Great Copston (to distinguish it from Copston Fields, once a hamlet, called Copston Parva, in the Parish of Wolvey), owes its name to one Copst, who possessed it in the time of the Saxons.

It was also known as Little Copston, and there appears to have been a Church on the present site, although the present Church was only built in 1849.

There were houses opposite where the late Mr. Goodwin used to live, and halfway to High Cross a road led to Smockington Hollow, where there was the Greyhound Inn. There was also a road from Cloudesley to Copston; the road from Copston to the Coalpit Lane ran down by the village pump up to the right by the allotments, and then to the right behind the cottages, rejoining the new road about fifty yards from the top of the School Hill.

#### X. The Lost Village of Cestesover

The present Cestesover Farm, which lies about 3 miles to the N.E. of Monks Kirby, on the Warwickshire - Leicestershire border and less than 1 mile from the Watling Street, was once a Saxon Village. This was anciently of considerable size, but at the time of Dugdale (1658) it is described "as having been long since depopulated and reduced to the condition of a mean manor house"

In Domesday Book the name is written Gama as the Norman clerk could not pronounce the Saxon Wama i.e. water. Later it was given the name Over which means water. It used to be thought that Cester meant camp, but some authorities wrote it Thester i.e. The eastern water - east of Monks Kirby. The most likely explanation is that it belonged to a man called Cester or Chester.



Bartholomews Hospital were the tithe owners, and before the 1936 Tithe Act were liable to make a contribution to the repair of Monks Kirby chancel. Henry Waver a wealthy London Alderman left “an annuity of £20 to the parson and wardens of Monk Kirby to say masses for his soul and that of his father and mother and to make a certain distribution of money to poor people there”. This was in Edward IV’s reign 1460.

It was noted in the Domesday Book, in 1086: there are ten families taxed in 1327; a Church was built; and in the 1420’s one Henry Waver was born there. He made his fortune in London as a draper and in 1460 and 1467 obtained permission from King Edward IV to do what, in the next hundred years many men were to do – some with, and many without permission – namely, to turn the village fields over to another use” To rebuild the Manor House, with turrets and walls embattled; and to enclose five hundred acres of land and pasture, with twenty acres of wood for a park; also to hold a court leet here, with free warren and fishing, in all his demesnelands thereto belonging. This wealthy alderman enjoyed the estate during his life, and at his demise bequeathed it with others to his son Harry. At the dissolution it was seized by the crown, and in the thirty seventh year of Henry VIII’s reign it was sold, by order of his majesty, to Sir Fulke Greville, who possessed it during his life, in whose family, and their legal representatives, it remained for many years.

Ever since the Saxons had first settled there, nearly a thousand years earlier, Cestesover’s fields had borne corn crops. To do otherwise was to risk starvation, for in a bad winter no money in the world would have bought corn.

Other men than Waver must have seen that a transformation to grass would be more profitable, for grass meant sheep; sheep wool; and wool, high profits. Two things made it possible for the change to be made. By Waver’s day a corn market was growing up, and in it the money from wool would be sure of buying from elsewhere, the corn that the sheep pastures were not growing. By this time, too, legal and social ties were being loosened, and landlords were free to buy up their tenants and throw their holdings together to make the large sheep runs. Waver was one of the first to make the change.

What was good for Waver’s purse was bad for his village. The need for the villagers’ services in the cornfields had passed, and one shepherd lived where many villagers had been. With the passing of the villagers to seek work elsewhere the need for the village went. Waver built himself a Manor House and used the Church for a barn. The mud and timber houses of the village fell down, and sheep fed in the street and gardens. Only the name remained, for they still call the field, Old Town Field.

It is probably that the present Cestesover Farm stands on the site of an embattled manor and incorporates part of the village church.

About 50 years ago the only early Saxon burial ground in the Midlands, was found there. It is believed to be in the field known as Godfrey’s Hill.

#### XI. The Farms Around Monks Kirby

Most of the Farmers are registered as Dairy Farms in the Monks Kirby area. With quite a number of Pedigree Herds most of which are now attested, there are Jerseys, Dairy Shorthorns, Red Polls, Friesians, Ayrshires, and mixed herds. Numbers of the farmers have their cows milk recorded and butter fat tested too, it is a great help to the farmer to know if a cow is worth keeping as a milker. Failing this they can be fed out for beef. Several farms now rear the bull calves for beef and some have rearing only, with Herefords or Aberdeen Angus cross. In this area years ago it was quite a competition making the famous Leicester Cheese, most of the milk being used for this purpose. Nowadays all the milk is collected or taken to various centres for bottling and distribution elsewhere. Next comes Poultry even the small holders have large huts or buildings which can be turned into Deep Litter Pens. In winter this idea is a great help to the farmer. It keeps the hens out of the wet and sludge. The modern method is to have Electric time switches, so that the lights go on and off on their own, it also allows a longer feeding time for the hens and thus produces more eggs.

There are not quite so many pig breeders now as there used to be owing to the low price paid for them and feeding stuffs being up in price, the main breed of pigs at the moment are Large Whites and the smaller Welsh pigs.

One of our local farms is known as the Warwickshire Pheasantries. Mr. Harrison breeds quite a number of birds every year and also exports the eggs to various countries, as well as Great Britain.

Most of the fields around have heavy soil, only the fields in the valley by the village are on the light sandy side.

Wheat, Oats, Barley, Peas & Beans are all grown in this district, also Potatoes, Mangolds, Swedes, Kale and other green foods. Sugar Beet is another root grown which provides the feeding for stock and cows at times with the green tops, the root base is then taken to the nearest Station, Brinklow, and from there sent by truck to the Sugar factory at Colwich. After the sugar is extracted the farmer can then buy back some of the dried beat pulp for winter feeding or it can now be had as wet pulp. The grass land is very good on the whole, as during the war farmers were asked to plough up more fields which then gave better results for corn and the new Leys afterwards. If there are any difficult problems about the fields in the County have a very good advisory service, the headquarters being at Leamington Spa.

From a number of the new Leys the farmers make silage of the first crop and then afterwards have it for hay. Lucerne is another crop which yields very well once it is established. It is very good for strip grazing cows on, or making into hay or silage; 4 to 5 cuts a year can be taken from one field, if the weather is favourable.

The modern method of transport and work on farms these days is done by tractors. Very few horses are used for general farm work.

For the last few years more people have got combines harvesters on the farm which is a big labour saving item, it seems slow work at times but it cuts out all the extra jobs of carting and stocking the sheaves of corn when it is dry, and then several days threshing too in the winter. At least three farmers in the district have now installed grain dryers.

Sheep must not be left out as they play a big part in our feeding problems, most of the larger farms have a flock of breeding ewes.

### The Warwickshire Pheasantries

by Patricia Harrison, aged 13.

The Game Farm was founded roughly 30 years ago when my father's brother was marking timber in a wood. He disturbed a pheasant, causing it to break an egg. As he knew the bird would not return to its nest, he took home the eleven remaining eggs, and put them under a broody hen, within a few weeks he was the excited owner of nine young pheasants. My father and his brother went on and bred from the nine birds as a hobby, and now the hobby has become a business. It is one of the biggest game farms in England.

There are four pure breeds of pheasants, Old English Blackneck, Mongolian, Chinese and Melanistic Mutant.

In the breeding season, which consists of two months the main object is the production of eggs, some of which are delivered to estates, however some customers prefer day old chicks and others poults. The pheasants are put into movable pens which are roughly 6 feet by 4 feet in size. In each pen are put 6 hens and 1 cock. The hens lay, and the eggs are collected each day and put under broody hens to hatch. As day old chicks they go out to the rearing fields where they stay until they are sold. Some of them are kept for stockists to breed from the next year. Roughly two months after hatching all the poults are caught and tied. When a pheasant is tied it has a tape tied round its flight feathers, to stop it from rising above 3 feet from the ground. When the pheasants are put into the fields for the winter 6ft wire-netting is erected round the sides of the field to keep them together and to protect them from vermin. An adult pheasant has to be retied every 4 months because of moulting; if this is not done the tape will grow out and the bird will become full winged.

## XII. THE COUNTRYSIDE

### (1) Wild Flowers & Plants

The following wild flowers have been found in the locality by Members of the Institute.

One cannot describe any one of them as growing in profusion, with the exception of Lords and Ladies, Lady Smocks, Buttercups and Daisies, Meadowsweet and the Parsley family. If, however, you know where to look, exciting flowers such as White Violets (heartsease) and Purple Spotted Orchids can be found; a sturdy family of bulrushes has taken possession of an old bomb-crater on the Fosse Way, above Stretton Wharf, and Quaker Grass grows near the old Fish Pond at Monks Kirby.

There always seems to be a good harvest of Blackberries, Elderberries and Sloes; but Cherry Plums and Hazel Nuts are not so plentiful.

How fortunate it is that most wild flowers refuse to grow in cultivation, otherwise by now many would have disappeared from the countryside like the Primrose which has been so ruthlessly uprooted.

Primrose	Pondweed	Blackberry
Violet	Bittersweet	Snowberry
Celandine	Nipplewort	Yellow Rattle
Red Dead-Nettle	Mullein	Garlic
Common Hemp Vetch	Goatsbeard	Woolly Thistle
Furze	Scarlet Pimpernel	Ragged Robin
Buttercup	Dogrose	Burdock
Wild Pansy	Field Rose	Angelica
Shepherds Purse	Red Clover	Meadowsweet
Kingcup	White Clover	Foxglove
Jack-by-the-Hedge	Horseshoe Vetch	Eyebright
Ladys Smock	Bush Vetch	Common Mallow
Daisy	Field Bindweed	Willow-Herb
Queen Anne's Lace	Hedge Woundwort	Ragwort
Cranesbill	Lambs Tongue	Woodruff
Germander Speedwell	Water Cress	Knapweed
Yellow Archangel	Spurge	Honeysuckle
White Violet	Water-lily	Ladys Bedstraw
Ground Ivy	Brookweed	Tufted Vetch
Cowslip	Yarrow	Sorrel
Bugle	Cinquefoil	Hawksbeard
Coltsfoot	Blood-veined Dock	Eggs and Bacon
Bluebell	Hop Trefoil	Redleg
Mouse-ear	Birdsfoot Trefoil	Wayfaring Tree
Red Campion	Poppy	Creeping Jenny
White Campion	Lucerne	(Ivy-leaved Toadflax)
Dandelion	Meadow Vetchling	Heartsease
Palm		

## (2) Trees

Leafy Warwickshire is aptly named the Heart of England. Monks Kirby, noted for its trees, is remarkable in particular for its exceptional ELMS which grace our hedgerows. These, together with the ASH, give grateful shelter to man and beast.

Though the elm is always impressive, and the ash often so, the majestic BEECH is more impressive still: with its delicate shades of leaf, branch and bole, it gives pleasure in summer and winter too.

In the latter season our feathered friends are always grateful to the ELDER & HAWTHORN for their berries.

Not so common as these, but nevertheless fairly plentiful, is the WAYFARING TREE, or Traveller's Joy. In Autumn its lovely clusters of berries are a joy indeed. Decorative, too, in another way is the tall and stately POPLAR. How delightfully their leaves shimmer and dance to every whispering breeze. PINE not only delights the eye with its dark needles, but the nose, too, with its refreshing scent.

It is impossible adequately to describe the beauty of the delicate SILVER BIRCH, with its heart-shaped leaves: or the contrasting majesty of the great COPPER BEECH, with its wide-spread branches.

When March winds blow, the long, yellow "lamb's tails" of the HAZEL flutter merrily. Later in spring Chestnut Lane is a lovely, radiant arc of HORSECHESTNUT. The white, conical flowers nestling among the finger-shaped leaves make the lane look like a fairy glen of Christmas trees.

Despite this, they have little perfume: but, when in bloom, the tall LIME fills the air with fragrance, persuading the busy bees to take their fill of nectar: whilst, dreamily stooping over their own reflections, the WILLOWS round our ponds give sanctuary to the nesting water hens.

### (3) Birds

The resident birds are the crow, rook, jackdaw, magpie, wood-pigeon, coot, chaffinch, green woodpecker, skylark, yellow hammer, robin, bullfinch, blackbird, wren, blue tit, great tit, jay, screech owl, dab chick, songthrush, missel thrush, starling, rockdove, hedge sparrow, house sparrow, green finch, linnet, corn bunting, pied wagtail, nut hatch and partridge.

Rarer birds who are also resident are - goldfinch, long tailed tits, tree creeper, sparrow hawk and great spotted woodpecker.

Starlings are very numerous, particularly in the autumn, and until the last few years a spinney called Rye Hill, now grubbed up and ploughed, was a favourite resting place for hundreds of these birds.

In the summer, swifts and swallows are very numerous and are particularly noticeable in the autumn when they congregate on the electricity cables.

Other summer visitors are the nightjar, pied and spotted flycatchers, lesser and common whitethroats, garden reed and spotted flycatchers, chiff chaff black cap, meadow and tree pipits and yellow wagtail.

The visits of the seagull, both the lesser black backed and the herring gull seem now to be more frequent than they were years ago.

North of Pailton is a favourite haunt of some of the less common birds. There the plover, moorhen, snipe and reed bunting nest. Occasionally, wild duck teal and kingfisher visit the brook. A frequent sight here is the kestrel hawk hovering overhead.

In spring and summer the cuckoo is a visitor and as many as six were seen early one morning. Turtle dove, another visitor, is also seen and heard in the trees.

During 1955 a heron was a constant visitor. The barn owl is often seen round farm buildings though not in great numbers.

The fieldfare and redwing are winter visitors arriving in October. Large numbers are often seen on freshly ploughed land.

Swans come occasionally to the lakes at Newnham though they have not nested there since the war.

Since myxamatoxis has killed off the rabbits the common buzzard has come here from its normal habitat in the wilder parts of the west and south-west.

#### (4) A Bird-Watcher's Notes

The following notes on the bird-life of the district apply particularly to a limited area centred around Foxon's Corner on the Fosse, approx. 3/4 mile from the village church and are the result of 2½ years experience of daily observation.

For one who has lived most of his life in well-wooded areas with sizeable streams in the near neighbourhood, bird-watching on and near the old Roman road is rather disappointing, although in spring and autumn there is a steady flow of small birds passing through the spinneys. These are travelling north at the beginning of the season and in the reverse direction in the later part of the year. At these times there is always the chance of seeing some unusual species.

During the breeding season the following birds are commonly seen:- Willow wren, chiff chaff, common wren, robin, hedge sparrow, meadow pipit, great and blue tits, yellow hammer, chaffinch, greenfinch, bullfinch, blackbird, greater whitethroat, wood pigeon, turtle dove, cuckoo, magpie and carrion crow.

Less commonly seen at this time are the marsh tit, goldfinch, pied wagtail, reed bunting, mistlethrush, stock dove, jackdaw and rook. The one or two pairs of stock dove probably use old crow or magpie nests in which to rear their families. The song thrush which suffered severely in the winter of 1947, has not recovered its position as a common bird and is rarely seen in the winter, and only a few breeding birds are about in the summer. Robins are rarely seen in the winter and starlings (except for an occasional migrating flock) and house sparrows are very scarce indeed, away from farm buildings.

The first summer migrants to arrive are the chiff chaff and willow wren, usually heard before they are seen. Later we have one pair of yellow wagtails, which nest in a nearby field; one pair of Spotted flycatchers which rear their family near the Cottage; and one pair of sedge warblers in the spinney.

In the summer of 1955 a pair of tree pipits nested nearby the house.

Swifts, swallows and house martins are frequently seen in the summer but they nest in or on buildings some distance away. The main electricity cable to the house is used as a communal perch, for family parties of swallows and house martins, shortly before they leave for their winter quarters in Africa.

In the early autumn there is a steady flow of great, blue, coal and marsh tits; linnets, greenfinch, garden warblers, greater whitethroats and an occasional family party of long tailed tits, all passing south through the spinney. Sometimes a willow tit is heard or seen.

Barn and tawny owls are not often heard, but the little owl is common. These probably nest in old rabbit burrows, as there is a scarcity of suitable holes in trees.

In early November 1954, on a clear frosty night, there was an exceptional assembly of this small owl, in an old pasture field on the Fosse. They appeared to be holding a concert and a check of their numbers at the time gave a total of 20-25. The "concert" lasted, with much movement of individuals over an area of 2-3 acres, for a period of approx. 2 hours.

The jay nests in small numbers, but is often seen at close quarters in the winter. So also is the magpie.

During a spell of severe weather in 1955, a flock of 60-80 black-headed gulls stayed in the district for several days.

Fieldfares and redwings arrive about the middle of October, from their northern homes and are frequently seen in bad weather during the winter.

Lesser black backed and herring gulls are seen passing over occasionally and during the hot summer of 1955, 7 gulls were seen one mid-afternoon, soaring at a great height, gradually passing in a S.E. direction. They were so high they could only be picked out by the aid of powerful field-glasses.

Among the unusual species seen or heard have been a grasshopper warbler which stayed 2 days and was heard "reeling" most of the time, and a hawfinch seen only once.

Woodpeckers are uncommon, although all three species, green, greater and lesser spotted have been seen, the first named more often than the other two.

Sparrow hawks and kestrels are rarely seen, but carrion crows are resident and common. On the old pastures and stubble fields, lapwing, skylark and meadow pipit breed.

Along the Fosse spinneys, where it is boggy, moorhens are resident, so long as there is water, but most of them disappeared during the dry spell of 1955.

Reports have been received of interesting birds of prey being seen, but these incidents have occurred a short distance outside our boundaries.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1955, a small party of golden plover passed over flying low in a S.E. direction.

It may be of interest to state that hedgehogs are very numerous in the area and that foxes are commonly seen or heard.

Rabbits, which were very plentiful twelve months ago, now seem to have vanished. The grey squirrel breeds in the spinneys, but our own red squirrel has not been seen and it is practically certain it does not occur here.

(5) Animals

The animals living here are the brown rat, mouse, dormouse, shrew, mole, vole, water vole, stoat, badger, weasel, grey squirrel, hare, hedgehog and bat.

The rabbit was very plentiful until 1954-55 when myxamotosis wiped out most of them.

The fox is another common animal which lived mainly on rabbits until the shortage and is now a very great danger to the poultry-keepers. He does, however afford a great deal of pleasure and sport to hunting people and hounds who meet quite often around these parts during the hunting season which opens with cub hunting in September: hunting begins in November, the closing meet being in March. The Atherstone Hounds hunt this part of the country and they are a very picturesque sight. Large numbers of visitors gather to watch the meets and very many follow them around the countryside hoping to catch a glimpse of the fox.

XIII. The Pailton Miser

Joseph Underhill, a child of chance, was born at Lutterworth and after the somewhat scant education usual to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was apprenticed to a Leicester Tailor who soon afterwards emigrated, and then to a shoemaker. Being ill-treated by big fellow apprentices, he ran away, and for some years his relations heard nothing of him, until eventually he was found to be living in Pailton.

During his early years at Pailton he was a tidy, well dressed farm worker, and on Sundays quite a rustic dandy. In time however, his natural simplicity and self esteem led him to attach himself to a lady of superior station and, although he never offered insult or indignity to the lady, his attentions became such a nuisance that [her] father ordered his employees to eject him from the premises whenever he appeared, and on one occasion chased Joe from the premises himself with a horse whip.

After this Joe transferred his affections to another lady, and even asked the clergyman to publish the banns. When asked if he had the lady's consent he replied, "It don't matter about her, I'm willing". After this several stalwart friends of the lady dragged him through a horse pond. The disappointment of unrequited love appears to have induced a tragic change in him which was completed by his conversion to Mormonism. It is said that he, with twenty others, was baptised in a pond by Brigham Young. After this he regarded Sunday as a day of rest and, refusing to perform necessary farm work he lost his situation.

From this time he lived in hovels, maintaining himself by casual employment, and droving, gradually allowing himself to lapse into the neglected state for which he is famed.

In time his appearance made him an object of curiosity, being of short statue and paddled out with successive layers of filthy and tattered clothing, and he looked bulky, his long black matted hair hung over his shoulders, and his face was dirty and unshaven. He was never seen without an old battered top hat, and always carried a manure fork.



He spent the last few years of his life living in a pig sty on a farm opposite the Plough Inn. In this miserable abode he would occasionally burn a candle and warm himself over the flame.

In Feb. 1890 he was robbed by two boys while working in a field. The boys were subsequently arrested, and during the Police court proceedings the stench from the dirty rags in which Underhill was clothed made it impossible for anyone to remain in the same room with him, so he was placed in the doorway and from there gave evidence. After this robbery the Police insisted that for his safety he gave up the remainder of his hoard. After a deal of persuasion he handed this over to the Police who invested it for him at Lutterworth.

This money was in such a filthy state that it was impossible at first to distinguish gold from silver. On the day of his death the door of the pig sty was found barricaded on the inside, and upon it being forced open, Underhill was found in six inches of filth on the floor, his face was wrapped in an old rag; it was with great apparent reluctance that he allowed himself to be carried on a door to the Plough Inn, whence he died.

His remains were carried in a trap to Monks Kirby Church yard, and there interred.

**PAILTON.**

**GARDEN FETE.**

A garden fete, in aid of the Women's Institute, was held on Saturday at Pailton House. As the weather was exceptionally beautiful it was very largely attended, and the scenes round the tennis courts and the numerous and varied attractions were of the brightest and liveliest.

Mrs. Blyth opened the fete with a few charming and well-chosen words on the importance of the Women's Institute, its far-reaching influence and its need for larger funds. She also congratulated the committee on its far-seeing perspicacity in fixing the date for the fete—practically the only fine day of the year!

The competitors in the tennis tournament had already started at an early hour. There were some excellent matches to be seen, and the finals between Miss Grewook and Mr. Herbert against Miss Dorothy Compton and Mr. W. Temple Pyment were very thrilling indeed. Miss Grewook and Mr. Herbert finally beat their opponents 7-5 after a really strenuous and exciting game. A tennis racket (presented by H. Pratt and Sons, Rugby) was given to the fortunate winner by Lady Betty Feilding. Major Woolcombe-Adams, Miss Young, Miss Marnie Compton, and Mr. Edmund Crompton were among the semi-finalists. A roving trade was done at the jumble sale where every single article was snatched up not long after the fete had started! The gift stall on the verandah of the house was well provisioned with all manner of attractive items. Towards the end of the day the few remaining things were sold by auction. The pony rides in the fields for the children proved very popular, also the skittles and bowling. Mr. H. Kenny won the bowling prize, a fine black pedigree pig. He very kindly gave it back to the committee, who sold it by auction. Lady Feilding presented a lovely ham to the winner of the skittles competition, Mr. Bird.

Various sports for children were held on one of the lawns. The potato race was won by Cecil Tomlinson, the boys' 100 yards by Fred Howes, with Tim Bromilow second. For the girls' 100 yards, Florie Neal was first with Betty Farn second. The skipping was won by Doris Davis.

The beauty competition proved one of the chief attractions of the day, both for the beauties and the voters! There was quite a good number of competitors both in the classes under and above 17. In the first, little Miss Vera Bromilow was nearly unanimously voted for. The prizewinners of the second were Lady Betty Feilding, Miss Nelly Trotman, and Lady Victoria Feilding. Numerous people went to probe into their future in the tiny little house of the fortune-teller, and a happy throng of dancers tripped "the light fantastic" to the strains of the Bilton Brass Band.

The names of the various stall-holders were as follows—Gift stall, Mrs. Richards, Lady Victoria Feilding, and Miss Harrison; jumble stall, Mrs. Smythe and Miss D. Swathe; spinning Jenny, Mrs. James Harrison and Miss Allan; ice cream, Miss Hodgkiss (ices supplied by Howards, Rugby). A very efficient set-down tea was arranged for by a special committee, under the supervision of Mrs. Toone and Mrs. Hodgkiss.



"OLD JOE"

People all over Warwickshire and especially those in the immediate vicinity of Newbold Revel have had their interest aroused by the announcement in last week's *Rugby Advertiser* that Newbold Revel is to become a Mission College. One could not imagine or conjecture a more secluded spot for study, the sylvan surroundings being of entrancing beauty and delight.

Newbold Revel has enjoyed a succession of distinguished owners. The estate was granted to Geoffrey de Wice, and in the twelfth year of the reign of Henry II. it was reputed a member of Wappenbury, being held by the Lords of the Manor. From the Wappenburys it descended to the Lovells and Malroys, and in 1640 became the property of Sir Simon Clarke, first Baronet, who was a considerable sufferer in the cause of Charles I. Next it was the property and seat of the ancient Skipwith family, which was seated at Skipwith, in Yorkshire, at the time the Norman Conqueror invaded these shores. Monks Kirby Parish Church—of which parish Newbold Revel is a hamlet—is the burial place of various members of the Skipwith family and several tablets commemorate the memory of several. When Sir Grey Skipwith, 8th Baronet, M.P., resided at Newbold Revel he was very prominent in county life, and is deserving of mention as being the father of a family of eminent children, his wife being a daughter of Mr. Gore Townsend, of Honington Hall, South Warwickshire. His eldest son, Sir Thomas George Skipwith, who succeeded, as 9th Baronet, resided at The Hill Lutterworth (the present residence of Mr. Reginald Wright, Master of the South Atherstone Hounds). Later the Skipwith family removed to Honington Hall. In the sixties Newbold Revel was purchased by Mr. Edward Wood, who carried out great improvements, not only on the interior and exterior of the mansion, but on the grounds, gardens, and park. To-day his self-imposed task is manifest in many directions. Mr. Edward Wood was a great benefactor to the parish of Monks Kirby. He gave £5,000 of the £8,000 expended on the restoration of the Parish Church. On a brass plate in the Church is the inscription: "This Church was restored, at a cost of about £3,000, by Mr. Street, the architect, and was reopened for public worship October 25th, 1863. The Vicar and parishioners desire to record their gratitude to the family of the Earl of Denbigh, and to all other friends who assisted them in the work, also to Edward Wood, Esq., of Newbold Revel, High Sheriff of Warwickshire, for his munificence, which enabled the parishioners to include the whole of their Church in the restoration—E. H. Simpson, Vicar; J. Crofts, J. Wright, Churchwardens." Mr. Wood also presented to the Church the Communion rails (of brass chandeliers, and a brass lectern).

On his death in 1886, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Mr. Arthur Herbert Edward Wood. He further improved the house and estate, and eventually removed to Lowhead Windermere, having married while resident at Newbold Revel, a daughter of Major Bevil Granville, of Wellbourne Hall, near Warwick.

Mr. Arthur Howard Heath, M.P., was the next owner and occupier of Newbold Revel, and was a sportsman from the crown of his head to the tip of his toe—shooting, hunting, fishing, Rugby football and cricket. He played cricket for the Gentlemen of England, and Rugby football for Blackheath and England.

Then came Mr. Leo Bonn, who maintained the high traditions of Newbold Revel, and he died on November 28th, 1929. For a century or more Newbold Revel has always figured conspicuously in the fixture lists of meets of the Atherstone Hounds, and throughout that lengthened period the various owners have been staunch supporters, and some of them prominent followers, of the White Collar Hunt.

**HALF-CENTURY DAYS FOR CRICKETERS.**  
The older generation of the people of Rugby and district have vivid and pleasant recollections of "the" and sport at Newbold Revel in the halcyon days of Mr. Arthur Herbert Edward Wood. It was a case of "open season" to all comers, year in, and year out. It was in those times a great centre of cricket, and the writer has seen some of the greatest cricketers of the day there—A. E. Stoddart, T. F. Warner, Sir T. C. O'Brien, Bart., Hugh Robertson, H. T. Hewitt, H. J. Merdoun, P. J. or Parvavanti, H. Phillips, E. T. Arnold-Thompson, and a host of others. Newbold Revel in those times (over 35 years since) possessed one of the finest private cricket grounds in England. In the opinion of many good judges, the Newbold Revel cricket enclosure equalled that of Epsom (Lord Stamford's).

**ROUND ABOUT RUGBY**  
**'THE PAILTON MISER'**  
**COLLECTED BOOTS**

NOT many people are left in Rugby and district who remember much about "The Pailton Miser." He died in January, 1891.

His only claim to fame, it seems, came from the way in which he lived, and the injustices done against him. Many tales of the miser are in an old booklet which was brought into The Evening Mail's Rugby office.

The booklet, which has no date, was printed and published by A. Bird, Victoria Printing Works, Church-street, Rugby.

**Not dated**  
Pailton miser's real name was Joe Underhill, known to most people as simply "Old Joe."

He was born at Lutterworth, and considering that education was not compulsory, he had a good schooling. His first job was with a Mr. Tilley, and when his employer left for America, "Old Joe" became apprenticed to a firm of Leicester tailors, but left when ill-treated by his fellow-workers.

"Old Joe" then dropped out of sight for many years, and was eventually found by relatives living at Pailton.

**'Rustic dandy'**  
In his better days he was regarded as quite a "rustic dandy" because he was usually so tidily dressed. His downfall appears was

based on love and Mormonism. Because "Old Joe" persisted in trying to escort young ladies home, he dropped out of favour of the locals, and even two of his stalwart friends dragged him through a horsepond.

His only form of employment was casual. He wore filthy, tattered clothes, had long matted hair, and his only companion was a four-pronged fork.

The last year of his life was spent in a six-foot square pigsty at the back of a house opposite the Plough Inn at Pailton.

**Boys stole £26**

In February, 1890, an injustice took place which added to his fame. Two boys stole £26 from him, and when he appeared at Court to give evidence he was made to stand in an adjoining corridor because of his condition.

As a result of the case, the police persuaded "Old Joe" to put the rest of his money—£170—in Lutterworth Bank. When he died he left precious few possessions. They included a copy of the New Testament, the four-pronged fork and 60 pairs of old boots, for which he had a mania.

He was buried in the Monks Kirby district churchyard and no other chapter of Rugby came to an end.



OLD JOEY UNDERWOOD: THE PAILTON MISER

## XV. CLUBS & SOCIETIES - THE PAST

### Dorcas Meetings

About 1880 Lady Denbigh formed a Dorcas meeting where the womenfolk of the village used to go and make garments or anything they needed. Lady Denbigh presided over these meetings, where she helped and gave advice. When the members had put away their sewing they were given some tea by the kindness of her Ladyship; it was a most popular afternoon with the village mothers.

### Clothing Club

There was a clothing club, another help to the people, where members paid 1d or 2d weekly which went towards buying boots or materials to make up into clothes. This money was taken at the Dorcas meetings in the Reading Room.

### Coal Club

A successful coal club, where members paid a small sum weekly through the year, to help towards the cold wintry days. Countess of Denbigh issued the tickets of these two clubs, according to the amount of money each member had paid in. Of all the old clubs that benefitted the people, the coal club was one of the last to terminate, finishing about the time of the First World War.

### Monks Kirby Female Friendly Society

Young girls usually on leaving school before going into domestic service or other occupations joined this Society and paid a monthly subscription varying from 8d to 10d and for this they had free medical service, and about 5/- weekly benefit should they have an illness. On or about June 18<sup>th</sup> the members had their annual tea (meat tea) preceded by a Service in the Parish Church. They were joined by the President, the Countess of Denbigh, and by other ladies in the parish who had given donations. After tea there was dancing on the lawn of Brockhurst School - where the tea was held and many of the farmers and villagers came and joined in the fun. It was quite a Red Letter day in the life of the village for many, many years.

The Society was wound up when the National Health Service came into force and the funds divided between the members.

### Monkey-licked-em Club.

This was an old custom and comprised three days holiday for the village; this took place about May or June. Someone would be chosen as a judge and a jury was formed. The court was

held in the Clubroom of the Denbigh Arms, formerly known as The Cock Inn. The first day was called "The Scamps", on this day the scamps were sent about the village and anyone they saw in the village street regardless of whom they might be, were arrested and taken before the court. Here they were tried and always found guilty, consequently locked in a stable until they handed over the fine imposed. The more strangers that went through the village that day the better, the money collected went to pay for free food and drink at the Denbigh for the three days of the celebrations. On one occasion an Earl of Denbigh was arrested and imprisoned, and another time the Vicar suffered the same fate. The second day was known as "The Gobblers Up" when the best of the food was eaten with much hilarity. The third day was called "Monkey-licked-em". All the left-overs were cleared up and the platters licked clean.

#### Rifle Range Club.

About 1908 the Earl of Denbigh started the Rifle Range Club, this took place in the Sand Hole, a field near the park gates. A 22 rifle was used, points were scored and totalled each week, and prizes given periodically. The club met on Sunday afternoon. A Sunday paper strongly criticized Lord Denbigh for this, and there was a great battle of words weekly in the newspaper, which went on for some considerable time. Needless to say the Club continued to enjoy their Sunday afternoons.

#### Air Gun Club.

This was a very popular Club starting in the early 1990s. First in the Reading room and then across the road in Mr. L. Clarke's workshop. It was a mixed club and two of the Lady members were particularly good shots, Miss D. Bushill and Mrs. W. Colban, both winning prizes on more than one occasion. Sgt. H. Abbott, a retired police sergeant (an old inhabitant) was often a top scorer. In connection with his club, fortnightly Whist Drives were held for several winters.

#### Rifle Club

Following the Air gun club this too was a very successful one, the old Grammar School was used for their practices and match, they were all very keen shots. Two years in succession 1917-1918 they won the Rugby Area Association Cup. (This cup was insured for £30). On both occasions Mrs. Arthur James of Coton House, presented each member of the winning team of eight with a silver medal, with the year etc. suitably inscribed on it.

#### Ladies Cricket Club

This club comprised of the young ladies of the district, calling themselves "The Magpies", wearing black skirts, white blouses and black and white striped ties. The men's club allowed them to share their cricket ground in the park. There were some quite good all round players.

They were captained by Miss F. Harrison.

#### Tennis Club

Tennis seems to have been played in Monks Kirby since the dim ages. Old photos show tennis and croquet being played on the Vicarage lawn by a large gathering. Then for a number of years we had a club where we were fortunate to get the chance of another private lawn. Now the club is back at the Vicarage again and has been for some years.

#### Cow Club

Some cottagers are known to have kept cows back in 1860, but when they had the misfortune to lose a cow it was difficult to replace it, so the Earl of Denbigh suggested that some scheme should be thought out whereby the people would benefit. A cow club was started, each member had a club card and had to pay a few pence a week towards expenses. Lord Denbigh banked this money. They were only allowed to keep one cow. When a man wanted a cow he would buy it from the farmer he worked for, paying for it by the method of the farmer stopping 1/- or 2/- each week from his wages. A cow in those days would cost £12 or £14.

At first they had one field, Nighting Meadow, near to The Bell Inn. As the club increased, they then had Stocking Meadow. These two fields were mown alternate years, and when the rick was cut, the hay was weighed out to each member. About 1890 when the Lodge Farm changed hands, two meadows down The Hayes were taken from that farm for the use of the Cow Club, these two fields were marked out in acres and when it came to haytime each acre was cut separately (often with a scythe) each member harvesting his own. These fields are known as "The Acres". During the summer months someone in the village, "The Cow Tenter", would take the cows for the day to graze the roadsides, then deliver them up to each house at milking time: for this, he or she would be paid 6d a week for each cow, which the Cow Tenter had to collect on Saturday night. At one time there were as many as 26 cows on the road, many of the cottages having a pen suitable for a cow. Any young stock they may have reared had to be joisted, (out, at keep) at one time they were all taken to somewhere at Coombe, only the cows were allowed in the fields at Kirby. As time went on these rules were somewhat relaxed. One cottage where there was no back entrance, the cows had to walk through the house, in at the front door, out at the back. They were never known to break anything, the old cow leading, taught the young ones how to behave.

### Boy Scouts

When the late Lord Baden-Powell came to Leicester to inspect Boy Scouts in 1909, the Earl of Denbigh paid a visit to Mr. Colbans school and asked if any boys would like to go to Leicester and meet him. About 10 or 12 names were given in and when the day came, they were driven to Ullesthorpe Station and so on by train. The inspection took place in the Market Place and the Kirby boys stood along with the scouts. Very soon after this Lord Denbigh formed a Scout Group and when the uniforms came along they were a very proud bunch of boys, known as "The Owls". Scout leader was a youth named - Andrews who worked at Newnham. On occasions when Lord Denbigh was at home, he would drill them. On May 10<sup>th</sup>.1910, by orders of Lord Denbigh, the Kirby Scouts were taken to London for the Lying-in State of the Late King Edward VII by Mr. W. Harmon and Mr. G. Keyte. By the kindness and forethought of his lordship, while the boys were standing in the queue, various ladies came and gave them chocolates etc to sustain them. Before coming home they were shown a few places of interest.

### Monks Kirby Farmer's Club

This Club was formed in the 1830's but the only minutes that have been found are from October 30<sup>th</sup> 1895 onwards.

At the Annual Meeting & Dinner that was held at the Denbigh Arms, Monks Kirby, on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. 1896, The Earl of Denbigh took the chair being the President of the Club, also present were Capt. Newenham (Chairman of the Club) Mr. John Harrison (Vice Chairman)

The newly elected officers for the coming year were as follows:-

Mr. John Harrison	(Chairman)
Capt. Oliver Bellasis	(Vice Chairman)
Capt. Newenham,	Pailton House.
Mr. J. P. Toone,	High Cross
Mr. J. C. Harrison,	Pailton Fields
Mr. F. Tomlinson,	Wolvey Villa,
Mr. T. Smith,	(Secretary & Treasurer) Brinklow
Mr. G. Beale,	Shelford
Mr. J. E. Lea,	Monks Kirby
Mr. J. Moxon,	Harborough Magna.
Mr. T. Bird,	Harborough Magna.
Mr. T. D. Moxon,	Easenhall
Mr. W. Ferriman,	Copston
Mr. J. Davey,	Newnham Lodge
Mr. F. Ferriman,	Brandon Grange
Mr. W. Beale,	Claybrook.

Mr. G. Ball,	Pailton
Mr. J. Brenchley,	Brockhurst
Mr. Thos. Tuckey,	Newnham Grounds, Brinklow
Mr. J. Oldacres,	Cestersover
Mr. A. Wotherspoon,	Monks Kirby Lodge,
Mr. G. Palmer,	Hapsford
Mr. Lindsay,	Stretton under Fosse
Mr. J. Wright,	Monks Kirby
Mr. Kenney,	Brockhurst
Mr. J. Mason,	Withybrook
Mr. J. Skelton,	Binley
Mr. J. T. Shaw,	Burbage Fields
Mr. W. Henson,	Burton Fields

Lord Denbigh proposed the toast -

“Success to the Monks Kirby Farmers Club”

Mr. John Harrison spoke also and said that he had been a member of the Club for 26 years or more and in those days they used to get prizes for hedge cutting, ploughing, draining, sheep shearing, but he thought now there was too much attention being given to the Stock Show.

In the year 1896 on July 29<sup>th</sup>, the Annual Show was held at Newnham Paddock. Music being provided by the Coventry Silver Band. The Club accepted the Band master's terms of £7. 7. 0. to play for the afternoon and in the evening for dancing on the lawns until 10 p.m. Tickets for entry to the show were 1/- and 6d.

On July 28<sup>th</sup>. 1898, a Mr. Cardill was elected as a member from Pailton Mill the latter being out of existence now.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>. 1900, there was a membership of 200, from various districts around.

At the Show held at Newnham Paddock in 1901 the Farmer's Club had as an extra item of entertainment, Military Tournament, arranged by Major Beech, the men being from the Warwickshire Yeomanry, they had three different items, Heads & Posts, Lemon cutting, and tent pegging. At Heads and Posts seven Yeomen tried their skill. Sergeant W.H. Parsons, with 12 points was the winner, and Trooper Davis came second, the others competing were Corporal John Harrison, Sergt. T. Hughes, Sergt.Green, Sergt.Major Cordery, and Corpl. Kenney - Lemon cutting came next. Nine competed, of whom Sergt.Green was the winner with 15 points. Trooper's Cowley & Davis each had 8 points so Lord Denbigh, the judge called upon them to again test their ability, and on doing so Trooper Davis got the second prize. He also proved himself an adept at tent pegging. Though riding at full speed, he carried off the peg in both rounds, and won comfortably with 15 points. Music for this event was supplied by the Coventry Silver Band who played throughout the afternoon, and evening.

In the year 1903 at the Annual Show in July at Newnham Paddock, Lord Denbigh presented to Mr. Gerald Hardy a portrait of Mr.Hardy in the grounds of Merevale Hall, this portrait was given him



after he had resigned his mastership of the Atherstone Hounds. He was pictured seated on his favourite hounds, Dragon, Challenger, Villager, Demon, Comrade, Trapster, Struggle, Patentate, and Champion. This picture being painted by a well known man Mr. T. Blinks. On the shield at the bottom are the words "Presented by the Atherstone Hunt to Mr. Gerald Hardy, in remembrance of his eight years mastership of the Atherstone Hunt 1903"

In 1909 the Music at the show was played by the Lutterworth Brass Band, conducted by Mr.F.Herbert. The following year 1910 the Club members thought it advisable to forego the Annual Dinner as their funds were getting very low.

A Committee meeting was held on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1910, but after the minutes had been read and signed it was adjourned to see a Mr.Paulham pass on his journey flying from London to Manchester for a prize of £10,000 and a good view was had by all, he successfully completed the journey, and returned the following morning.

On Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>. 1911, Mr.Colban who was the Grammar School master was elected as a Life member of the Monks Kirby Farmer's Club, for his help in the years previous.

At the Annual Meeting in 1911 it was decided to raise the membership fees to 10/- for farms over 150 acres, and 5/- for all farms under 150. The Show was held at Newbold Revel in 1914 and as entertainment they had Mr.Marcus Manton to give a flying display. Early in the day the Hinckley Military Band gave a Promenade Concert and also played for the dancing on the lawns at night.

Being as the war was now on (1915) there was a big discussion as to, should the Club hold the Show or not, after sometime it was decided to have a smaller show on similar lines in the Hurst Field at the back of the new schools. The School was occupied for the Dairy Produce & Flowers. The Club members all agreed to give all the proceeds to the National Relief Fund.

In May 1919 the two secretaries - Mr.Percy Toone and Mr.J.L.Harrison resigned after 27 years, and Mr.Frank Harrison of Pailton Fields was appointed. The next month June, Mr. John Harrison from the Cross-in-Hand offered a Challenge Cup to be won by any animal, bred by any of the Cross-in-Hand horses.

It has been told that at the Annual Show held at Newnham Paddox in 1921 a Mr. Thomas was riding a horse in one of the events, but before doing so he and some other men took the horse behind the licensed bar tent and drenched it with a full bottle of whisky, then it was taken into the ring, when the race started it won the race by 1 complete round, and it was another around before it was stopped, afterwards it cleared the ringside ropes and made for the tent again.

About 1920 to 1921 the Farmer's Club organised a Hedge cutting competition, it was being held on Mr. Harrison's farm, Pailton Fields. The winners were Class 1 (open to all England) to cut and lay a hedge 11 yards long in 4½ hours. 1<sup>st</sup> was H.Judkins (Daventry) Class 2. was for a man nominated by a member, the winner first was W.Frost (Gilmorton) Class 3. was for men under 24 years of age, 1<sup>st</sup> prize winner Mr.A.Holt (Withybrook) At night on the same day a meat supper was held at the Denbigh Arms, Monks Kirby, with a very good discussion by the members of the club and competitors.

The following are a few of the lectures given at different times from 1895 to 1921.

1. New breeds of Cereals
2. Recent experiments in breeding
3. Management of farm fences
4. Fox hunting as it affects the farmer and agriculture
5. Poultry
6. The breeding and rearing of stock
7. The improvement of plants and animals by crossing
8. Agricultural depression, its causes and remedies
9. Agricultural co-operation
10. The nursing of sick animals
11. Experiments in potato growing
12. How to grow a good crop of mangolds
13. Dairy farmers and their grievances.
14. Agricultural holdings Act (1906)

The Monks Kirby Farmer's Club was disbanded in 1933.

At the present day there is a Young Farmer's Club.

Monks Kirby Farmer's Club gave a cup called the Women's Institute Challenge Cup.

Presented by J.R.Harrison.

1<sup>st</sup>. year. 1932 won by Monks Kirby Women's Institute, who have retained ever since.

#### Clubs & Societies

##### The Present

#### Cricket Club

A cricket club was in being as far back as 1875, when Lord Feilding was a member and played a very keen game, and this has been going on through the years sometimes successful, sometimes otherwise. The cricket ground is in the park between the Presbytery & Newnham Paddock. Of course the Club has seen many changes since the old days, but many happy hours have been spent on the pitch. A good programme of matches is arranged for the season.

#### Mother's Union

Monks Kirby has had a Mother's Union almost from the time it was inaugurated, linked up with Pailton, Stretton-under-Fosse and Copston. It is usually organised by the Vicar's wife, there have been periods when others have had to take over. These meetings are always well attended.

#### Nursing Association

About 1902 a meeting was held at Newbold Revel to form a branch of the Cottage Benefit Nursing Association. The Countess of Denbigh was elected President and Mrs. Oliver Bellasis Hon. Sec. and it was called the Newnham Cottage Benefit Nursing Association. Mr. & Mrs. Heath

promised to provide and furnish a cottage at Stretton for the nurses. Nurses had quite a good training usually in a London district, and when they had passed their efficiency examination were allocated to different associations. Members had only to pay a small subscription and could have a resident nurse varying from 3/- to 10/- weekly. At that time it was easy to get young women to train for the work, but with changing times candidates were difficult to get, so it was decided to form the district into four and our local one was called, Stretton-under-Fosse and District Nursing Association. Our first district nurse being Nurse Chilton, she gave devoted service for over 20 yrs. With the present Health Service coming into force all control was taken away from the local committee.

### The Pailton & District Young Farmers' Club

#### History and General Information

The Club originated in 1946 after the Rugby Y.F.C. had been dissolved. Several of the Young Farmers who had been members of the Rugby Club felt the need for a Y.F.C. in the district. Mr. Alan Smith and Mr. Alan Carter approached possible future members with the result that a meeting held at Pailton and District Young Farmers' Club was inaugurated. From this meeting Mr. Alan Smith was elected Chairman, Mr. Philip Weatherall Honorary Secretary, and Mr. Alan Carter as Treasurer. Mr. John Truelove was then approached and he became the Club Leader. The first president elected was the Earl of Denbigh. The meetings were held at Pailton until the beginning of the 1953-54 season when the Club moved to Monks Kirby school.

Pailton and District Young Farmers' Club inclines more to the practical rather than the social events and is one of the few clubs in the County to hold annually Hedging, Ploughing and Sheep shearing Competitions. The first of these was held in January, 1948. For the girls, housecraft competitions are held each year.

In 1953 Mr. Alan Smith presented a Challenge Cup to the Club, to be awarded annually to the member gaining the most points in the Agricultural Competitions. In the same year the Club purchased a Cup to be awarded to the most efficient all-round Young Farmer.

The annual social events include a Whist Drive and a Christmas Social. Square dances have been introduced this year and have proved very successful. At the end of the 1952-53 season a Harvest Supper was held, and it is hoped that this will continue to be a biennial event. Annual visits are made to the County Show, the Royal Show, the Dairy Show or Smithfield. A summer outing takes place annually.

Meetings are held fortnightly on Wednesday evening in the school at Monks Kirby, during the winter, where films, quizzes, lectures and debates take place. In summer, farm walks and visits to places of interest take the place of the indoor events.

#### Achievements

The Club has been very successful in Agricultural Competitions. Various members of the Club have represented the County at the Dairy Show in 1949, 1952, 1953 and 1954.

A Pailton member, Dennis Clarke, was the Champion Y.F. Sheep-shearer at the Bath and West Show in 1953 and has since won thirty awards. At Warwick Show in 1950 four members won £19 and two cups for Sheep shearing. In the same year two members were the first Young Farmers to be televised at a Sheep shearing Demonstration. The most successful ploughman has been Philip Weatherall, who has won twenty three first prizes out of twenty five matches and has reached National Level. There has been similar success in Hedging competitions, and a present day member, George Clark, has had outstanding success during 1954-55. For several years, the girl members have taken an active part in competitions in the East District Rally, and as a result have helped towards winning the East District Cup. In 1952-53 Sylvia Turner shared the Millers Mutual Award with another Young Farmer.

An active part has been taken in debates and quizzes. In 1949-50 the club team reached the semi finals in the Inter-Club County Quizz, when this competition was in its first year. For several years Pailton Y.F.C. members have represented the County in Inter-County Quizzes.

Pailton & District Y.F.C.

Officers - 1956

Club Leader	-	Mr. J. Truelove
Deputy Club Leader	-	Mr. H. Harrison
Chairman	-	Miss Sylvia Turner
Vice-Chairman	-	Mr. R. Weatherall
Secretary	-	Miss J. Lucas
Ass. "	-	Mr. J. Harrison
Treasurer	-	Mr. D. Clarke
Committee	-	Miss J. Griffiths
		Mr. F. Holloway
		Mr. I. Hodson
		Mr. P. Weatherall

The Monks Kirby Women's Institute

The Monks Kirby Women's Institute held its first meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup> 1922 at which the officers and committee were appointed: -

President: The Viscountess Feilding

Secretary: Mrs. J. L. Harrison

Treasurer: Lady Victoria Feilding

Committee: Mrs. Bathgate, Miss Bushill, Miss Foster, Mrs. Holden, Mrs.Reddington, Mrs. Smythe, Miss Truelove, Mrs.F.H.Toone, Miss Wright, Co-opted Mrs.Allen, Mrs. Burns, Mrs. Compton, Miss Hogetts, Mrs.Oakes and Mrs.Rickards.

Miss Simpson, Area Organiser, gave a short address on the duties and responsibilities of members of the committee.

The first monthly meeting was held at 2.0 p.m. on March 7<sup>th</sup>.1922, in the Old School, at which 46 members were enrolled. Six are still W.I. members.

A Garden Fete to raise funds for the New Institute, was held at Pailton House, on August 26<sup>th</sup>. This effort realised £73.15.5.

Membership which started with 46 enrolling at the first meeting, reached 132 in 1930. During 1955 there were 88 members.

During the past 34 years there have been only two Presidents - The Viscountess Feilding and The Countess of Denbigh.

Three secretaries - Mrs.J.L.Harrison, Mrs Chester, and Miss E.M.Allen

Four Treasurers - Lady V. Feilding, Miss W. Harmon, Miss Wright and Mrs.Conopo.

1923. A monthly stall was started for members to buy and sell, anything they wished.

1925. Village Hall opened by Lord and Lady Denbigh at a very successful Social Evening.

1930. A number of members took part in the Warwickshire Pageant, which realised £1,600 for County Funds.

1932. An Entertainment.

Part One. Songs by the W.I. Choral Society.

Part Two. Cinderella. Written and produced by the Misses H.M and N.M.Harrison of Rugby.

All the players were W.I.members and their friends.

Two performances were given at Monks Kirby, and one, at Wolvey.

The Coronation Robes, worn by the King and Queen of Monks Kirby were lent by Lord and Lady Feilding, together with other costumes and properties.

This entertainment was a money raising effort for W.I. funds.

The following year a play "The Social Climber" was written and produced by the same company.

1932. At the Monks Kirby Farmers Club Show, won the Women's Institute Silver Challenge Cup presented by M. J. R. Harrison.

1937. Our President, Lady Feilding, died.

Coronation Oaks planted.

1943. 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Party.

1939-45 Women's Institute Members, helped the War effort by manning two Preservation Centres - one at Monks Kirby, and one at Pailton - in conjunction with the Ministry of Food, to make surplus fruit into jam. Members also ran War Supply Depots in conjunction with the women's Voluntary Services, at both Monks Kirby and Pailton, making bandages, splints, etc. and clothes for hospital patients, and the Armed Forces.

At Monks Kirby, members helped to make camouflage netting.

1947. Members took part in two Maypole Dances, their contributions to the Victorian Pageant in connection with the County Fair, at Stoneleigh Abbey.
1949. W.I. Cricket Team entered Tip and Run Matches, organised by Newbold W.I. Beaten by Newbold in the finals.  
Mrs. Cunningham of Pailton, our first W.I. member elected to the Rugby Rural District Council.
1950. Resolution at Spring Council Meeting, proposed by Mrs. Cunningham, for Monks Kirby W.I.  
“That the Postmaster General be urged to provide a Post Office house in every village, in order to ensure that suitable premises are always available for regular Post Office facilities”  
Nursing Competition.  
Three members gained First Class Certificates with Star.  
Lady Denbigh, Miss Mills, and Mrs. Trotman.
1951. County Handicraft Exhibition, Leamington Spa. Mrs. Conopo and Mrs. Walker had knitting exhibited.
1952. 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Supper Party.  
Miss N. Horncastle passed the Produce Guild Gardening Test, 88 marks and became the first Test Holder in the Institute.  
Produce Guild Exhibition at Stratford upon Avon.
- |                      |               |           |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Co-operative Exhibit | 1 green star, | 81 points |
| Decorative Classes   |               |           |
| Miss Allen           | 1 gold star   | 98 points |
|                      | 1 red star    | 90 points |
| Preservation Classes | 1 green star  | 88 points |
|                      | 1 green star  | 86 points |
- National Federation of Women's Institutes  
Handicraft Exhibition at Victoria & Albert Museum.  
Mrs. Conopo and Mrs. Walker had knitting exhibited
1953. Lady Denbigh elected Vice-Chairman, Warwickshire County Federation.  
Mrs. Davenport attended Press Correspondent's Course at Denman College.
1954. Produce Guild Rally. Floral Decoration.  
Own arrangement second prize Lady Denbigh  
Miniature arrangement second prize Lady Denbigh
1955. Lady Denbigh elected Chairman of the Warwickshire Federation  
Produce Exhibition, Leamington Spa.  
Co-operative Exhibit. Preservation Section.  
Second Class Certificate.  
Lady Denbigh. Mrs. Horncastle and Mrs. Payton gained full marks.  
Mrs. Horncastle attended Home Decorating Course at Denman College.

Preservation Proficiency Test.

Mrs. Walker passed with distinction parts 2, 3 and 4 – Bottling and syrups, Jams and Jellies, pickles and chutneys.

After a lapse of some years, a new Drama Group was formed, and at our usual Christmas Party, they successfully performed a short play, called “A Pantomime Rehearsal”

Cast:-

Producer	B. Bridges
Cat )	
Demon King )	N. Horncastle
Fitzwarren	R. Randle
Fairy Queen	J. King
Captain	O. Leech
Fairy	D. Smith
Props	M. Judd
Cook	M. Sutton
Alice	B. Davenport
Dick	R. Hamilton

XVI. An Amusing “Dunmow” Fitch trial at  
Monks Kirby, Saturday April: 18.1925

Seven married couples, who were claimants for a fitch of Bacon, appeared before a “Court of Law” at Monks Kirby on Saturday, and explained how happy their wedded life had been for at least a year, and a day.

The competing couples were:- Mr. & Mrs. J.L.Harrison, Mr. & Mrs. F.H.Toone, Mr. & Mrs. John Toone, Mr. & Mrs.A.W.Wright, Mr. & Mrs. J. Batey, and Mr. & Mrs. J.E.Bateman.

It was a Dunmow fitch trial being held in the Village Hall in aid of the building fund, for enlarging the Village Hall, and a highly amusing, and witty skit on the method of the law was provided by Mr. Evan Barlow, Official Receiver for Leicestershire who acted as Judge; Mr.A.B.Talbot, (as Council for the fitch; and a number of other Leicester Solicitors.

The jury composed of six spinsters, and six bachelors, as follows:- The Misses K.Wright, E.Rhead, M.Foster, F.Gamble, M.Harrison, and and D.Hayes and Messrs. D. Davenport, S.Truelove, G.Conopo, F.Harrison, E.Oakes, and R.Hodgetts.

The Court was packed to the doors when “Mr.Justice” Barlow took his place, the attendance including Viscount Feilding & Lady Feilding, Major & Mrs.Walter Bonn, Lady Clare Smythe Piggot, and Mr. & Mrs. E.S.Compton, of Pailton House.

The trial was preceded by a procession of Judge, Council, Clerk, (Mr.Arthur Preston) Usher, (Mr.Arthur Harrison) and Police (Messrs. P. Rourke, and Kingston Smith, of Lutterworth) from the Denbigh Arms to the Village Hall. A Trumpeter heralded the entry of the embodiment of the Law.

The Jury were told to hold up both hands while being sworn in, and the same proceedings were observed in the case of the applicants. The oath taken by the applicants was "You and each of you do pledge yourselves on your honour that you are lawfully wed, and have been so, for at least a year, and a day, during that time you have never quarrelled, nor wished you were not so wed"

The first claim considered was that of Mr. & Mrs. J.L.Harrison, who it transpired had been married 18 years. Asked by the Council (Mr.F.Bray) to tell the jury if the 18 years had been "Wedded miz" or "Wedded bliss", the claimant replied "Wedded Bliss"

Council: Can you remember clearly what your life has been?

Mr.Harrison, I don't remember all of it.

"Mr. Justice" Barlow. I'll make a note of that, does not remember, loss of memory (laughter)

Mr.Harrison said he was an auctioneer, and he was also used to knocking things down but he denied that he was accustomed to knocking his wife down.

Next came Mr. F.H.Toone who had been married 21 years, then Mr. & Mrs. Bateman with 16 years married life, Mr. & Mrs. John Toone with 11 years, next came Mr. & Mrs. A.V.Wright who had been married 18 months and lived at that time in Monks Kirby. His Lordship asked Mrs. Wright what "happens when he misses his Kruschens?"

Mrs. Wright's reply was "He never does, I see to that", she also told them that her husband was on the District Council.

His Lordship, "Is your baby a Glaxo baby?" the reply, No. The next applicant was Mr. & Mrs. P. Goodwin who had been married 16½ years, and had also got 7 children, the youngest being only 6 months old.

The last applicants were Mr. & Mrs. Batey, they had been married 13 years. During the questioning of this last applicant a Police Sergeant came in, and told the Judge that a kind friend has sent some neck oil for the Sergeants, "Do you object?" (Loud laughter). His Lordship replied, "Not at all, not at all". The Police drank it up and Silence was restored and proceedings resumed.

#### The Verdict

Following lucid addresses by the Council and an able summing up by the Judge, in the course of which it was suggested that more than one soul had sold their soul for a flich of Bacon, the Jury retired, and after an absence of about ten minutes they awarded the flich of bacon to Mr. & Mrs.A.V.Wright. The verdict was greeted with great applause, and a large crowd waited to see the victors triumphantly carrying the flich slung on a pole, leave the court.

The Flich was presented to Mr. & Mrs. Wright by Viscount Feilding who also proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Barlow, and his friends for such an interesting show.

The answers to many of the questions were of course not true as it was a case of who could tell the biggest stories (or lies)



### XVIII. Newnham Paddox

Newnham Paddox, since 1339 the home of the Feilding family had been called Newnham Parva, Newnham juxta Kirby Monarch, Cold Newnham, and lastly Newnham Paddox. It lies to the north of Monks Kirby, a mile through the park.

After the Conquest it was given by William the Conqueror to Geoffrey de Wirce, who came from France with him and his victorious armies. In Domesday it is rated for one hide (1000 acres) valued at 60 shillings and is written NIWEHAM.

It is probable that Geoffrey had no children and the land reverted to the crown. It was given by Henry I to Nigel de Albani, and descended, sometimes through the female line to Johanna Prudhomme who married, in 1339 William Feilding, son of Sir Geoffrey of Lutterworth. Succeeding generations were conspicuous for the part they took in the various wars; and five holders of the property were knighted for services rendered to their country.

William's son John, fought in the wars in France and was Knighted - His son, William, sided with the Lancastrians and lost his life fighting for Henry VI at the battle of Tewkesbury and was buried there. Everard Feilding, next in succession, was a commander in Henry VII's army. He was made a Knight of the Bath on the occasion of Prince Arthur's marriage at Stoke. He died in Henry's reign and was buried at Black Friars in Northampton. His son, Sir William was employed raising forces for the King from among his tenants; he provided 30 horses at his own expense for war against the Scots, also "with ten able persons, most Archers and gunners in naval preparations under the Earl of Southampton to prevent such attempt as might be exercised by the Pope or his agents whose supremacy Henry VIII had abolished". Henry's third wife Jane held him in such esteem that at the birth of Prince Edward, she "sent a Privy Seal unto him signifying the same with desire of his congratulations and prayers"

The earliest picture of Newnham is an engraving, which shows the house in the shape of an E with a forecourt. To the West is a chapel and burial ground. Avenues of trees and two lakes to the north and one to the East are shown, all of which we know were there much later, the two lakes to the north being still there. Herds of deer are also in the picture.

In Dugdale's history of Warwickshire there is a picture of a stained glass window headed "In the parlour window at Newnham". This depicts Jeferey Feilding with his wife Agnes Napton and the next seven Feildings in succession with their wives. This window was later in the old chapel, behind the altar. It was moved again in 1880 when the house was enlarged and put into a window in the hall. At present it is carefully stored, still in the possession of the family.

In the reign of James I, Sir William Feilding, was created Baron and Viscount Feilding, and Earl of Denbigh, "and having been constituted Master of the Great Wardrobe and Admiral at sea did likewise by his marriage to Susan Villiers, sister to George Duke of Buckingham, not a little enlarge the honour of his family"

In bestowing the title of Earl of Denbigh, the King revived an earldom which had become extinct on the death of Queen Elizabeth's favourite the Earl of Leicester, whose young son, the last to bear it, had predeceased him.

£10,000 was the amount due annually to the Master of the Wardrobe, this sum being charged on French and Rhenish wines. Out of this however he had to pay £6000 to his predecessor. He was, it is stated, entitled to any surplus he could save after paying the heavy expenses obligatory on the holder of the office.

Lord Denbigh was still Master of the Great Wardrobe in Charles I's reign and as such he had to pay for the Queen's dresses. From Michaelmas 1626 to Michaelmas 1627 these cost £1026-12-3, an enormous sum in those days. Even Jeffery the dwarf and the great porter are mentioned in a warrant allowing the expenditure for dresses supplied to them.

It is through the eyes of Susan Denbigh however that we get a vivid picture of life at this time. A devoted wife, mother and sister, she sent many long and anxious days during the wars with France and the agonising civil war in both of which her husband and son took major parts, her husband to lose his life fighting for the king.

Letters, still preserved in the Newnham Manuscripts are poignant records of her affections and anxieties.

Denbigh went to the East as Ambassador in 1631. He departed equipped with credentials to the several Eastern Potentates that the King had commanded him to visit. Some of these documents are still preserved among the family documents. It is difficult to believe that they are over 300 years old so brilliant is the gold and the colouring of the illuminated parchments. They are beautifully written, painted with the arms of England, and signed with the King's signature. They are all dated 1630 and endorsed in one of these styles:-

- I. To the high and excellent monarch and great lord Shang Suffie, Emperor of Persia, Media, Parthia, Armenia and of the famous kingdoms of Lar and Ormus and of the many other large and populous provinces.
2. To the excellent prudent Lord Nabob Assuph Chan favoured of the mighty Emperor Shang Jehangreat Mogul, Director of the wise and faithful Councils of the Eastern Empire.

His brother Sir Roger Feilding wrote to him about this time about their sister-in-law, Lady Desmond:- "My Lady Desmond had a desire to go live at Newnham and none but Dillon (who went unworthily from my Lord Marquis) was thought a companion for her, which I laboured by all means to have prevented, knowing a discreeter woman who had been fitter. They played such mad tricks in the country that a little before Xmas, your wife and my Lady Buckingham brought them away to Whodden, where they remain" History unfortunately does not relate of what the mad tricks consisted.

Su's greatest anxieties came with the civil war. Her eldest and beloved son Basil had been Master of the Robes to Charles I. He was sent to Venice as Ambassador with his young wife Ann, daughter of the Duke of Portland, where she shortly died. While he was there he was commissioned by the King to buy quantities of pictures and works of art, of which great numbers were brought to England at this time.

In 1639 he married Barbara Lamb. He came home and did not return to Venice though he remained Ambassador for some time. Events in England were moving rapidly the King and Parliament being at loggerheads and Basil became in sympathy with the Parliamentary party.

This attitude was a source of great anxiety and distress to his mother, whose sympathy, affection, and gratitude all tied her to the king. We can guess at the arguments and discussions which must have passed between mother and son by the tone of the following letter:-

My dear Son,

I was very glad to receive a letter from you, but when I found how little my persuasions had wrought upon you, I was much afflicted. Methinks you spoke Mr. Pym's language, and I do long to hear my dear son Feilding speak once again to me in the duty he owes to his Master and dread Sovereign, the master of your poor afflicted mother, banished from the sight of you I do so dearly love.

Let me entreat you look back upon me and on yourself whose ruin surely I see before my eyes...If you will come hither I know the Queen will make your peace with the King, but that I leave to you, though I do not think it would be a very good way. The King is now in very good condition, and doth daily grow better, his people being every day more and more his. Do not deceive yourself, he shall not want men nor money to do him service. All good men begin to see how he hath been abused, and none are undeceived, and I hope you will be amongst them....Do not let me be made unhappy by you, my dear son. I have suffered grief and sorrow enough already, let me reap comfort from you in this action. Remember it is a loving mother that begs for the preservation of her eldest son. I hear my Lord of Holland is gone to the King. I hope the next news it will be you, and so with my blessings to you and my daughter I take leave".

War between Roundheads and the King became inevitable and in spite of his mother's entreaties Basil declared himself for the Roundheads.

The Queen went to Holland, Su accompanied her. She wrote to Basil full of solicitude for her children and grandchildren, especially Little Sue, the child of his dead sister Mary.

"Dear Son she wrote - "Have a care of my poor little Su and send for her sometimes. I shall never fail to give you the best counsel I can, and I do believe you will find that your mother hath dealt more really with you than any other, and I am sure has suffered more than any other. I hope you will never take arms against the king, for that would be too heavy a burden for me to bear".

On August 25<sup>th</sup> 1642 the King left Stoneleigh, where he had been the guest of Sir Thomas Leigh, and raised his standard at Nottingham. The Midlands thus became the scene of continued warfare and bloodshed. Levies were raised on local people, much impoverishment followed, the land became uncultivated.

At the battle of Edgehill, the Earl of Denbigh and his son Basil fought on opposing sides, but they did not meet. Herein lay the real tragedy of Su's life. One more appeal she made from Holland, which he would have received shortly before Edgehill. She begged him to change his views:- "Still yet I hope you will never have arms against my master but go to Newnham and go not with them in any of their actions".

After the battle Su came back to England with the Queen, landing at Newcastle. Prince Rupert and Denbigh, who had been with their troops on the banks of the Severn near Worcester marched north to meet the Queen. They seized Birmingham, then a place of no size, of which Clarendon wrote:- "of as great fame for hearty disloyalty to the King as any place in England."

Here at the entrance to the town Denbigh was wounded” with many hurts on the head and the body with swords and poleaxes, of which within two or three days he died”.

Basil was sent for under flag of truce, but arrived too late to find him alive. He wrote to his mother, who replied:-

“My dear son, I am much comforted with receiving of your kind letter in this time of my great sorrow for the loss of my dear husband, your dear father, whose memory I shall ever keep with sorrow and a most tender affection, as he did deserve from me and the whole world, which he did declare till this last hour, leaving so much to his memory as was possible to be merited. God make me able to overcome this my affliction. I beg you, my first born, to give me the comfort of that son I do so dearly love, that satisfaction that you owe me now which is to leave those that murdered your dear father, for what can it be called, but so? Which when he received the death wounds but with the saying he was for the king, there was no mercy to his grey hairs but wounds and shots, a horror to me to think of .... If I may be so happy to obtain this my desire of you, let me know, and I shall make your way to the best advantage. I do know you shall be welcome, I give you many thanks for the care you took in paying the last rites to your father. I have a longing desire to see you and if I had any means I would venture far to do it. The Queen hath been very kind to me in this time of my grief and hath sent to the King to stay the place (the royal wardrobe) that it be not given to any but that my Lord’s debts may be paid out of it. Besides, the Queen did send me money or I should not know what I should have done, I was in so great want. So, with my blessing, I take my leave, your loving mother, Su Denbigh”

But Basil could not or would not turn back now. His second wife Barbara had only lived for eighteen months after the marriage and in 1642 he married Elizabeth Bourchier. Of her letters there are many still extant, some written in anxious times, and others in happier moods. One written during political strife is as follows:

“My dear Heart, my dear life, my sweet joy, I wrote to you yesterday wherein I gave you many thanks for your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup>. I hope God will preserve you from your father’s or anybody’s hurting you.

I am sorry it lies not in my power to serve you otherways than in praying for you, but I am confident prayers will do more good than anything; and be confident that my prayers shall never cease for your happiness. So assuring you of that which I am competent to know, which is that none loves you so well as your most obedient and dutiful wife and humble servant. E. Feilding.

P.S. A hundred thousand, thousand kisses I give thee, and I might be so happy as this paper. I long much to see you”

The petulance and impatience of the next letter are atoned for by the postscript:-

“Dear Hart, I cannot but be still confirmed in the opinion that you do not really affect me, or else after my earnest desire you would have come home before this; and you are a little unjust in repaying my affection wit so much neglect, the which I am inforced patiently to endure till it be God’s will to rid you of this trouble who as long as she lives will, notwithstanding your little love, be your obedient affectionate wife, E. Feilding.

P.S. I am transported with grief. I know not what I write, and if I do trouble you with my importunate desires of your company you ought to think they proceed from extreme affection and so you ought to yield to my suit as much as may be”

In another letter she writes:- “Your colt is very well, it is at grass at Muswell Lees. As soon as I can hear of any one that can teach it to pull, I will have it learn, but I would have it learn well, or anything else you leave in my charge shall be carefully looked to by me”

Basil must have valued as highly these following letters, so carefully preserved. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> she wrote:- “Dear Joy, I long extremely to see you, for I love you with an intense affection. I should have been glad to have been with you on the 8<sup>th</sup> July, because it is our wedding day, but if be not my good fortune to obtain that happiness, my la. Su Hambleton (Hamilton) and I will have three cherry pies and drink your health...I have sent you a pair of boots with tops”

The next, written when he was still in the field:-

“I received your letter dated the 16<sup>th</sup> (1644) It brought me much comfort in respect it gave me hopes of enjoying your company which is much desired by me... I hope want of money shall not keep me from seeing you, for I would rather live with you with bread and water than from you with all the plenty in the world”

Nor did she forget his creature comforts for in another letter she rejoices at the hope he holds out of soon being with her, and tells him she has sent him some flowers candied “they are borage and marygolds of my own doing, I wish they were better for your sake, and I have sent you a pair of gloves, this town affords no better”

There are no more letters in this batch so it is to be hoped that soon they were together again at Newnham.

Life was not all tragedy in those days, or Elizabeth’s vanity dormant – To her husband away in London she wrote:- “Pray, sweetheart, do me the favour if musk millions be in season, as I hear they are, and send me some for I have a great mind to eat some – and pray, my lord, give Harry Hill orders to buy me some combs, box and ivory ones, for I want some extremely – and pray get somebody, if it be too much trouble to you, for I know it must needs to buy me a tafatyhood, and a curle one, and two masks for me and two for my la Susan Hamilton, and each of us a black scarf either laced or plain as you please, and either of us a dozen of gloves, my pattern and hers”. She tells him on another occasion: “I have now taken my physic-drink twelve days and intend, if God bless me with life, not to omit any of the twenty. I desire you would please to add to the other things you I know want some hoods and scarves, garters and ribbon; gloves dark coloured and white; pens and laces, some combs, a roll for my head and a thimble – I hope you will pardon this rudeness”

Basil, now Lord Denbigh, became Commander in Chief with headquarters in Coventry. Many local men must have been in his forces – Monks Kirby was amassed in a certificate dated August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1650 at 5 horses and 10 men for the Militia.

The king was finally taken prisoner, The Queen fled, accompanied by Su – They went to Exeter where the Queen gave birth to her last child, then on to Cornwall and across to France. Su must

have left with a heavy heart after saying goodbye to her beloved eldest son whom she was never to see again. She died in Paris in 1652. After the battle of Worcester Basil seems to have withdrawn from the Parliamentarians and taken little part in politics. He settled at Newnham and devoted himself to the care of his estate.

With the restoration of the Monarchy, Basil was one of the first to ask to be reconciled with the new king – On June 20<sup>th</sup> 1660 Charles signed the pardon which is still preserved. Newnham was the centre of many gatherings – At about this time a duel is supposed to have taken place there. The following letter, sent to Mr. Sergeant Newdigate of Arbrony:-

Sir, Mr. Walter Devereux hath informed me, upon my refusal of appearance at the assizes of Warwick, to give testimony in his cause, that you advised him to serve me with a sub-poena. Some such thing was found near my hall, and brought to me, that rude part acted by some mean fellow to draw me publicly upon the stage to give in personal evidence of what happened accidentally in my house: contrary to the rules of honour and hospitality; which, though others, for private interest, may attempt to break, will not become me to initiate so pernicious an example.....

Yet certainly the Peers of England enjoying the privilege in the Chancery of being cited to appear by letter, and not by an ordinary sub-poena, I may well lay claim to the same civility in other Courts of Justice: and therefore shall desire the favour that you will excuse me from waiting at this time upon the judges, upon this occasion, before I have acquainted my Lords the Peers, now sitting in Parliament, with the case to receive their judgement and order therein.....My stay here (Newnham) depends upon uncertainties and will not suffer me to engage in other men's occasions upon a business acted in my own house, in the way of a frolic and humour of divertisement, not usual with me; which must end in forgetfulness in order to a fair composure of this unhappy difference.....”

Mr. Newdigate replied that he was “So far from desiring and advising any sub-poena” that he had “never heard of it” At the same time he expressed his great regret for the “unhappy incident” which had been the cause of the whole affair. This is unfortunately all we know about it.

In 1678 Basil lost his third wife Elizabeth, who died at Mastrop in Rutland. He mourned her loss very deeply and was anxious to render her remains every possible honour. There is a lengthy correspondence among the family papers between him and Sir William Dugdale, and other authorities about her obsequies –

It opens with a reply by Sir William Dugdale to a letter brought by a messenger from the widower. Dugdale understands “that the corpse is put in cere cloth already and that the Earl purposes to remove it to Newnham”. He advises that the body should not be laid to rest in the oratory there. This building be considered to be a very improper place, though he owns that Denbigh has a right of burial there, because “Since it is a timber house, and not a chapel standing of itself, it is most liable to ruin” for “I make a doubt whether those who shall succeed your lordship will make the use of it which your lordship now doth; “from which we may gather that Dugdale did not consider the religious fervour of the Roundheads would last now the Royalists were in power. As to the funeral rites Sir William proceeds to tell Lord Denbigh that if he intends to have them according to her degree and dignity, and to be public, he must communicate with Sir Edward Walker, the Garter,

since the funerals of all members of the nobility “come within his province, He will punctually appoint how everything is to be prepared both in hanging of the house and otherwise, and to take care to have all such escutcheons and trophies as are of right due to her, made and sent down and likewise inform how many officers at arms are to be made use of for performance of the solemnity. The greatest charge will be in blacks, to such as your lordship shall think fit to give mourning unto, of kindred and friends, with their servants, for the honour and state of the proceeding – “Besides yourself and six persons of honour who are to be your assistants (as you are to be chief mourner) all in close mourning with gowns and hoods, there must be others in the like close mourning with the bearer of the great banner and of the eight banner rolls – and , for the better state of the proceeding, it will be necessary to have as many poor women in coarse black gowns and white kerchiefs as she was years of age at the time of her death. Velvet cloth and baize such and so much as shall be requisite may be hired in London by some trusty servant, whom you shall think fit to employ.

“But if your lordship resolve of a private burial, my opinion is that it be performed with all possible speed, and in the right tune, by torches, not divulging the time, in regard of concourse of people, for in so doing you will prevent many inconveniences” Dugdale ends by saying that there is a post from Coventry to Coleshill only twice a week, hence the delay. Lord Denbigh therefore wrote to Sir Edward Walker, on the 21<sup>st</sup> September ordering the funeral of his wife.

He had, by then apparently given up the idea of the oratory and had given orders for a vault to be made in Monks Kirby Church. “I may add to every banner a led horse, comparised with velvet, with all the achievements of her noble ancestors, if that ceremony might not be thought more fit for the sons of Mars than of ladies. The costume of white kerchief and black gowns is obsolete, it being the custom of my family, upon their decease, to leave twenty pounds to the poor of the parish. For six of my quality to bear me company in mourning robes, the country will not afford (i.e. will not produce them) and for blacks to other families I never had that respect paid for me” Sir Edward Walker, together with his reply, enclosed a lick of the elaborate and exact procedure which should be followed. On considering that matter further, Denbigh, not surprisingly, decided in favour of a private funeral, though “not without regard had, as the time and place will permit, to the honour of a lady whose memory is so dear to me”

But even then matters did not proceed apace for not till October 16<sup>th</sup> did Denbigh write to Dugdale’s son in law that the inscription had come safe with the velvet for the pall, out of which is also made a cushion upon which to place his coronet – His chapel and closet are ordered to be hung with cloth, so that the decency of mourning may accompany his wife’s hearse till the vault is finished. He objects to imitation ermine, having noticed “in the greatest Courts that I have been conversant in, that in public ceremonies and solemnities, such things as are used must be real and entire as the French are wont to say”. The bill for the preparation of the funeral alone came to £441.10.0. In her funeral certificate it is stated that “.....upon mature consideration how a public funeral might be solemnised for her, according to her state and dignity, finding in respect in the remote distance of her relations and other persons of honour, that the solemnity could not be done in such a noble manner and regularity as it ought was necessitated to cause the office of burial to

be performed at the Chapel within his house at Newnham, whence in a fair vault prepared in the North side of the Chancel at Monks Kirby it was translated thither upon the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December 1670” Thus ended the long funeral rites of Elizabeth Denbigh.

Basil married for the fourth time in the following year but died in 1675 and leaving no children his titles and estates devolved on his nephew William Feilding Earl of Desmond. With the coming of Charles II to the throne, England settled down to the internal peace she so badly needed.

There was a great deal to do to bring the neglected land into production again and life at Newnham must have been very full and active in the years to come. Nearly everything had to be made at home including soap medicines cordials and remedies receipts for which still exist.

The house remained a family home to succeeding generations, never again was it to know the troubles of Civil War, though many went away for it to battles in other lands.

The chief preoccupation at Newnham was always agriculture, its improvement and development and the care of the land. Shooting and hunting were the chief sports – The Arts were not forgotten – Pictures, books and furniture were constantly added and the old house often altered and enlarged, for the last time in 1880.

The large coach used for many years from the 18<sup>th</sup> century till the coming of the railway, is still in the stables, and runs as well today as when it took the family to London, a journey that lasted two long days.

In 1846 Lord Fielding, eldest son of the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl had married Louisa Pennant, granddaughter and heiress of Thomas, historian and naturalist of Downing in North Wales. Together they entered the Roman Catholic Church in 1849, but Louisa died in Italy in 1853. In 1857 he married Mary Berkley and went to Newnham for the first part of their honeymoon. Years later she wrote an account for her children of Newnham and of her homecoming:

“It was nearly dark as we drove into the village and found it all illuminated – A light in every window, a candle fastened to every spoke of the school rails. The people of the village were assembled to greet us, the tenants on horseback with torches in their hands rode in front of the carriage to the house. There was a pompous old butler Sleeman, who ushered us in at the front door – It was by special favour that we were allowed to use this entrance as Lord Denbigh usually permitted no carriage to enter the gravel square.

Next morning, very early, the children from the school serenaded us with pretty hymns outside the window. We stayed a week at Newnham and gave dinners and teas to the people to thank them for their welcome and tell them we hoped to be good friends to them....Lord Denbigh had only been living at Newnham about five years since he let it in 1840.....Queen Adelaide who was very fond of both your grandparents had made this possible by putting the house in Bushey Park at their disposal. Lord Denbigh was the Queen’s Master of the Horse and had also served at Court at the time of William IV. Newnham was taken by Napoleon’s brother Joseph the ex-King of Spain, under the name of Count Survilliers”.

Lord Denbigh had returned to Newnham in 1852 – Many improvements had taken place before he moved in – the pool or lake which extended all along the East side of the house and which



caused much damp was filled in and an Italian garden laid out. A passage was made connecting the two sides of the house, which must have been a great improvement. The wrought iron gates, made by the Roberts brothers, were brought from Berwick, on the banks of the Severn, taken to Norwich to be renovated, and placed where they are now.

In 1876 the house completely altered. It was discovered that it stood on quicksand under clay. Cofferdams of cement had to be sunk and arches built over them to support the foundations. Part of the old building was pulled down, more added and the roof raised. The old chapel was demolished and a larger church built in its place. It was all finished in 1880.

The Feilding family continued to live there until the end of the war of 1914-1918 when Lady Denbigh turned the house into a convalescent home for wounded men, herself being commandant. She it was who wrote the book "Royalist Father & Roundhead Son", from which much of this account has been written. Two of her three sons were killed in the war. - With peace Newnham became a family home once more.

One of the beauties of Newnham are the daffodils which grow in great profusion there. For many years the grounds had been opened to the public in the Spring on a Sunday which had come to be known as Daffodil Sunday. After the war teas and refreshments were provided in aid of local charities - Many helpers came from the surrounding district each year. Teas were served at long tables in the forecourt, a band played at the side, buses and cars were parked in the park, and small paper daffodils were sold, all resulting in large sums being raised. For a long time the house had been the scene of the Atherstone Hunt Ball and the Farers Ball - The large ballroom with its red walls and full length portraits all round the walls, the crystal chandeliers and beautifully decorated ceiling making a perfect setting for such occasions.

Lord & Lady Feilding, who lived at Newnham with their five sons died within a few months of each other in 1937, and in 1939, the house was closed and deserted. There in May 1940 came a sudden request from the Convent of the Holy Sepulcher of New Hall near Chelmsford to take the house for their School - Rooms had to be cleared and the house made ready in a matter of a few days. This was the time of Dunkirk and New Hall was considered to be in a danger area. The house was quickly filled to overflowing with Nuns and schoolgirls and here they remained until 1946, when they left to return to their own home. New Hall had been badly damaged by bombs but was now habitable again.

A sale of furniture took place in 1946 and the house stood empty until 1952 when it was demolished, only the lovely gates and the stables remaining of what for centuries had been an English home.





