

THE REDLAKE

NUMBER 8

AUTUMN 2009

From the Editors

Visitors to Chapel Lawn often comment on the level of activity that goes on in our community, a fact that you can check for yourself by reference to Recent Events and Diary Dates. Visitors also comment favourably on our village hall with its traditional look and recently refurbished floor. Volunteers stripped the hall of all its contents (quite a task) and replaced them when the floor was finished. Bob's Tractor Poem was originally read at the Harvest Festival and by popular demand we have reproduced it here.

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THE SMELLPOST - A CHAPEL LAWN INVENTION?

To overcome the problem faced by hill farmers in bringing hilltop crops down to the valley, the late Jack Adams of the Smithy, Chapel Lawn developed the wheelcar, also known as the smellpost. He was seen in the mid 60s using his own modification of his old design which he had developed for use with a tractor.

The use of the wheelcar appears to have been confined to a triangle between Clun, the Anchor and Pey-y-Bont.

How does it work?

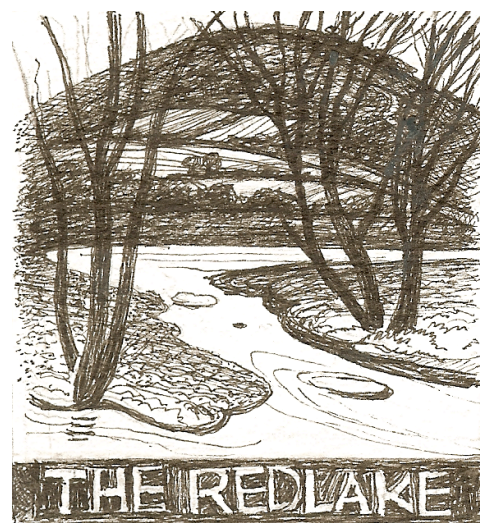
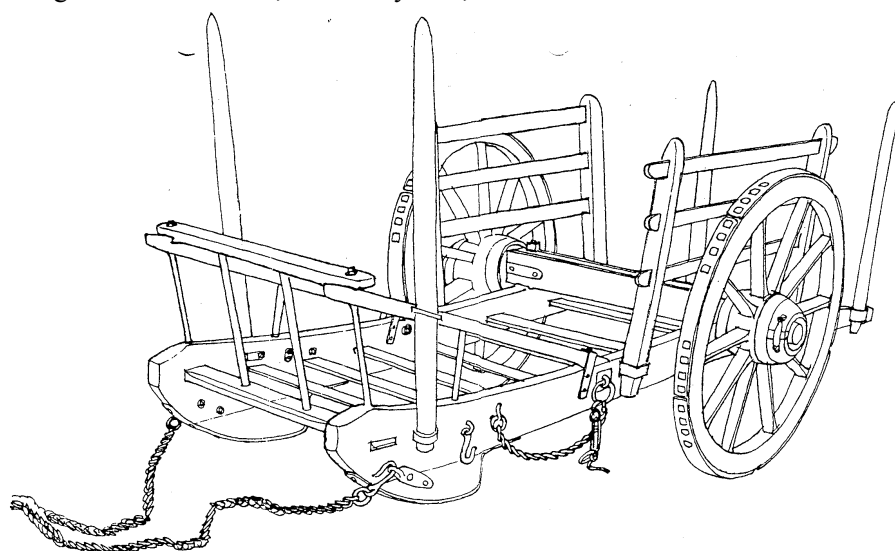
An ordinary four-wheeled cart would push the horses over and would tip on its side on corners. To overcome this, the wheelcar was evolved: about 15ft long with two wheels, built very low,

with chains to attach to the horse's harness. As the horse pulled uphill the front rose easily, as it will if it is leaned on at the back; but coming downhill it dragged like a sledge, often with the wheels locked by chains, sliding on the metal shoes over the end of the main timbers.

Why is it called a smellpost?

When the horse turned in at a gateway the cart would nose up to one side and then the other in a way which earned it its nickname.

Ralph Oldham has written about the smellpost in The February 1980 issue of the Shropshire Magazine. A renovated Smellpost can be seen at the Acton Scott Museum

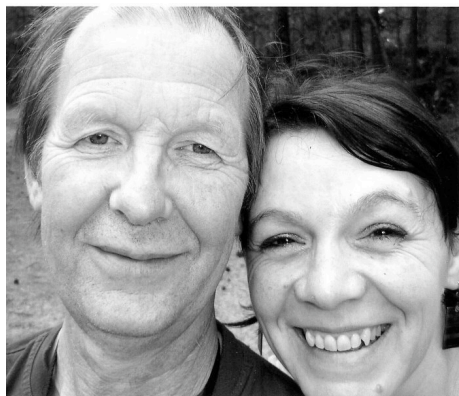


Chapel Lawn History Group

The aim of this group is to gather and document local historical information that will complement the work previously done for the Chapel Lawn School book. The plan is then to build a website that will contain pictures, factual material, recordings of residents' memories, and also annexes of reference material that family historians might appreciate. There is much work to do analysing, summarising, electronically scanning and cataloguing the material before assembling it into a manageable structure, so willing helpers with an eye for detail will not be turned away. If you wish to get involved or if you have material or recollections (for example, who was the man who lived in a tent on the road to Bucknell and caught and skinned snakes?), contact Patrick Cosgrove 01547 530347 or Michael Macturk 01547 530302 or Jim Rogers 01547 530258

Making progress

We have already started to collect more historic photographs and have arranged a visit to Shrewsbury Records Office. We have also been invited to a meeting of the South West Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society Research Group to discuss possible collaboration.

Profile**Dave & Marietta Alker**

As you drive up the valley towards Chapel Lawn from Bucknell you will see some buildings set in an idyllic spot; the river below, Caradoc beyond and old pasture all around. The couple fortunate enough to live there, at the Quern, are Dave and Marietta Alker.

Many of you will already know Dave as your friendly local plumber. He was born, brought up and trained as a central heating engineer in Surrey. As a young man he came camping to Symonds Yat and liked the area so much that he came to live in Herefordshire. He even lived, briefly, in Elgar's house in Hereford. After a couple of years he returned to the home counties to earn enough money to realise an ambition to buy a smallholding. He also met and married Liz, with whom he eventually came back to the Marches, near Pembridge, but still, sadly, without a smallholding. When Bert Lewis died, the Quern came up for auction, Dave came to view it, fell in love with it, and determined that he would be the victor at auction - and in 1987 he, Liz and the family moved in. Harry, Dave's third son, was born in Chapel Lawn. At last the dream became a reality. The Quern has 10 acres and Dave kept stock which included a Jersey cow who provided, with a bit of work, milk, butter, cream and yoghurt, pigs from which they produced pork and bacon, and sheep. Initially there was no electricity or drainage and only an unreliable water supply. Dave set to, to restore the house a sixteenth century timber

framed cottage with an eighteenth century addition and has been working on it ever since. Dave also had a lively social life. There is rumour that occasionally he held all night raves which provoked complaints from the campers in James' field who had come a long way for peace and quiet only to find... In between times Dave ran his plumbing and central heating business. Now his youngest son Harry has joined him and apart from the more conventional installations they also install solar panels and ground source heat pumps.

Marietta also originates from the south east, from Harpenden, Hertfordshire. When she finished school she went to secretarial college and is proud to say she had 100 wpm shorthand. She eventually worked in various banks, building societies and insurance brokers. If you know Marietta and find her staid employment difficult to reconcile with her lively personality you will be relieved to know that she spent most of her free time in pubs, at parties, following bands and going to rock festivals - Led Zeppelin at Knebworth in 1979 is a highlight! She was also avidly learning to sew and knit from her mother who had been a milliner, and absorbing aspects of design from her grandfather, a gold and silver smith and her father, a keen amateur artist. Sadly Marietta's father died when she was just 21 and her mother decided to move to Shropshire with Marietta and her younger sister Fiona. They found a house in Leintwardine from where Marietta met and married Harvey and moved first to Heartsease and then to Bucknell. She had a son, Ryan, now a graphic designer who lives in Chichester.

Although Marietta and Dave's paths had crossed at social events and concerts, they did not really get together until the mid nineties, when they had separated from their previous partners. They met each other properly on the dance floor at Clungunford Social Club and after a "six week whirlwind romance" Marietta moved in with Dave and six

years later, in 2002, having decided they really did get on, they married.

During most of her time in Shropshire Marietta was working for SSDC in the council tax office. After sixteen years, in the year 2000, she decided she had had enough; if ever she was going to do anything creative in her career now was the time. She undertook a City and Guilds embroidery course, and studied felt making at Westhope College. She joined Ludlow Designer Makers and Shropshire Guild of Contemporary Craft and started selling her work at craft fairs. People began asking if she would teach them her skills and she started running workshops. She also worked for two years for her Certificate of Education in Adult and Community Teaching and qualified in 2007. During all this time she was also keeping her secretarial skills honed by doing part time work locally, which she continues to do. Now she teaches in a huge variety of settings, including schools, colleges and to adults with learning difficulties. She gives talks and demonstrations, and runs workshops all over the country including here in Chapel Lawn Village Hall. Recently she has been invited to both Portugal and Arabia, but as she points out Chapel Lawn is a long way from an airport!

You will be pleased to hear that both Marietta and Dave love where they live and regard themselves as fixtures in the community for many years to come. So happily, they will both be there should either your boiler or your creative urges explode!

Jane Kent

Church Christmas Social

All welcome for Curry & Entertainment on Saturday 21st November, 7pm at the Village Hall. A competition for the men of the parish; cook and bring a curry or casserole for tasting. Tickets £5 (children free) covers food, your first drink at the bar and live entertainment. Come and join the fun!

Our new priest-in-charge, Diana Hoare is being licensed at Bucknell on Monday 7th November at 7.30pm. All parishioners welcome.

The Tractor

The wonderful Tractor, a farmer's life blood.
We choke up the roads, we cake them in mud.

At this time of year, don't be a tailgater
If you get close behind you'll be hit by a "tata"

We all have our own and each has the best
She's bigger and faster, she'll outpull the rest.

Now Adrian, Hobarris, he's just bought a new one
It came from Teme Valley, a big shiny blue one.

Jim from the Pentre, his Massey is old,
It's older than Jim, or so I've been told

He's out really early, with Massey and trimmer,
Cuts for six hours, then pops home for dinner.

The boys from the Weir, have got a Deutz Fahr,
Fred says it's faster, than Llynaven's car.

The yellow Daihatsu from up by the Rest
Went into the ditch, up to its chest.

The dog was to blame, it was "Rovers" mistake,
He trod on the clutch instead of the brake.



David had changed to go off to buy sheep,
He had to stay home to "tush" out the jeep.

Next is Purlogue with Steven and George,
28 Tractors and all of them Fords

John from Greenshutters heard a great thud
Found out his car had been hit by a spud.

Turned round to chase the tractor and trailer
Found the road blocked by a massive great "tata"

The Garn's little Dexter, was washed for the wedding,
The bride was quite late, Bob had gone tedding.

The Llynaven Mule, was parked on the side,
Along came the bull and went for a ride.

Came to the road, and tried to jump over,
The road was too wide, the Mule got turned over.

Ivor 'Dukes' Williams, he chased the Land Rover,
Just about caught up, then tripped and fell over.

Neil and Sue Marsh, they have the x-factor.
Just bought themselves a new Chelsea Tractor

At Smiling Tree Farm, they have a matched pair.
One got a scratch on, we don't know from where.

The ones at the Bryn, are old and quite dirty,
But if you should comment, the owner gets shirty.

At Chapel Lawn Farm, if you should ask,
Jim's got a new one, its top of the Claas.

The hay at the Vron, was ready for tedding.
They turned in the cows and went off to the wedding.

One of the Querns, I'm not quite sure which,
Was tedding the hay and got stuck in the ditch.

Richard, Bryncalled, his Fergie is red.
He doesn't buy diesel, he begs it instead.

Douglas Stead's Roadless, it shines really white
It's covered in lime dust and glows in the night.

I have run out of tractors and things that are witty
So this is the end of my little ditty.

Bob James

RECENT EVENTS

After our appeal to you all to 'Get Stuck In' in the last issue of the Redlake, you did just that!

August

Hodre Pond clearance. People turned out in force for the annual clearance of Hodre Pond. It wasn't the warmest weather we have had, but it didn't rain until after we had had lunch, which I think was amazing! Patrick got his trousers off and Richard put extra trousers on! Liz, Ian, Christine and Jim and others supplied everyone with pie, sandwiches, quiche, cake, beer and wine. Also - we managed to clear the pond of nearly all the weed and reduce the size of the island. All in all a very good day and thanks to everyone, especially Liz and Ian who organised it.

September

Chapel Lawn WI - Pimms and Canapés Evening The ladies of the Chapel Lawn Women's Institute hosted a social evening one Wednesday in September for all us female non-WI members. As promised on the invitation we were greeted at the door with a glass of Pimms (or Sangrier) and handed delicious canapés (things to eat). Some of the members had laid out beautiful exhibits and examples of their crafts, hobbies or professions, which have been encouraged and enjoyed through being members of

the WI. Although it was strictly denied that the evening was a recruitment drive, I am sure there is a hope that some of the guests will feel encouraged to join such an enjoyable and sociable society. After a group photograph or two, we continued drinking and gossiping with friends and neighbours and meeting people we have never met before. Half-way through the evening, two new and strange ladies arrived and although no-one knew the women, they were quickly befriended and offered drinks and nibbles. They were also quickly recognised as not being women at all, but James Middleton and Richard Barthram in wigs and dresses, who felt a need to find out what the 'ladies' got up to!

I am not sure, however, that the Chapel Lawn WI will have gained these two peculiar, I mean particular, ladies as new members!

Village Ramble and Lunch

This event always promises to be a success and the sunshine made such a difference. We served over 128 lunches and had enough salads and puddings for even the last walkers who turned up at two o'clock. Thanks to everyone who generously donated food and time to this event. We raised £953.00 of which £95 will be donated to the village hall and the rest to St Mary's Church.

Harvest Supper

Fifty friends and neighbours joined the service and sang favourite harvest hymns. Wayne played the organ and the Rev Richard Shaw gave us an address. Our cider and ploughman's supper encouraged everyone to stay and talk and enjoy a good social evening in the village hall. Thanks to everyone who decorated the Church with flowers and vegetables and helped with the service and supper.

Flicks in the Sticks

We have had three films since the season started. The Reader, I am ashamed to say had me in tears all the way through and Gran Torino was not the typical 'Clint Eastwood' violence and car chases, but a moving and amusing film. Paul Shalcross, who

came with a selection of black and white comedies and his piano was a great hit as were the puddings. The afternoon made just under £160.00. Our excellent movie equipment and the new Entertainments Committee have worked well and I hope Kim and Sheila will feel confident about handing over the reins when they leave.

Becky Whitton

Farming Column

The much promised barbeque summer turned up for a few days in June and went away again leaving us with a rather stop/start grass harvest, with more of the 'stop' than 'start'. The development of round bale silage in the late seventies by a Scotsman, has saved many hay crops from rotting in the field. The first bales made here in 1981 were placed in large black bags rather like dustbin liners and tied by hand; they are now wrapped mechanically with a type of heavy duty cling film – much easier.

The weather improved for a reasonably good corn harvest; cereal prices remain low, but not reflected in any drop in the price of bread, beer or breakfast cereal. The beef and sheep trades still remain very firm with the weak pound helping exports.

Several farm sales in the area have taken place recently as farmers have retired. The oldest to call it a day was 90, so the Government could raise the retirement age a bit.

My fellow agricultural reporter and I were asked to judge the 'Farming' section at the Knighton show at the end of August. So, as requested, we wore suits and bowler hats to look the part (could have been the 'Blues' Brothers all over again – ed.). It was a very difficult job to choose the first prize with the lack of any substantial bribes being offered. However, the first prize scarecrow now welcomes people to Chapel Lawn, had a shave and clean-up and donned his smart jacket for the Harvest Festival and even made it, along with some sheep, into the Parish Plan booklet – the only pictured residents of Chapel Lawn!

James Middleton

SEASONAL GARDENING NOTES

Berries give some zing to the fading autumn garden. Red is the most usual colour, but not the only one: think of spindle fruits in shocking pink and orange, or ivy berries in subtle green and black. *Viburnum davidii* has turquoise berries in large clusters; on the small shrub *Callicarpa bodinieri* they are lavender, with leaves tinted to match.

Shrub roses have hips of assorted shapes as well as colours, with scarlet ketchup bottles on *Rosa moyesii*, black buttons on *R. pimpinellifolia* and huge, shiny fruits as big as cherry tomatoes on *R. rugosa*.

The guelder rose, *Viburnum opulus*, has translucent red berries, but there is also a 'yellow' form whose berries look like amber beads – or ear-wax, as a friend commented less romantically, upon the shrub in my garden.

Hannah Willetts

Broadband in the Sticks

Frustrated with your broadband speed? Current delivery is via a technology that deteriorates with distance; 3½ miles or more from your exchange and performance will likely be poor.

One in four rural households in the UK are below the broadband "poverty line". The Government has proposed a 50p tax levy on all phone lines with the proceeds going towards infrastructure investment to bridge this digital gap. However, this may not come to fruition.

Future hopes: signal amplifiers are being trialled by BT that could deliver a faster and more stable speed to homes up to 7m from the exchange. Shropshire Council has tendered for a new broadband network for its schools, libraries, etc and has asked tenders to include how they might work with rural communities to provide services to these areas. Investment in satellite broadband continues and may not be too far off.

Your household wiring may also be interfering with your broadband. Check on BT's website to see if you could benefit from an iPlate www.bt.com/accelerator or buy one at www.dabs.com

DIARY DATES

Further details can be found on the Chapel Lawn website: www.chapel-lawn.co.uk (remember the hyphen)

Last Thursday every month
CL Astronomicals.

Saturday 7th November
Flicks in the Sticks: Red Cliff
7.30pm Village Hall

Sunday 8th November
Remembrance Day Service
3pm St Mary's Church

Wednesday 11th November
The WI hosts a Peter Francis talk on Wild Edric, all welcome (incl men!) 8pm Village Hall

Friday 13th November
Arts Alive Animation: Hags & Heroines 7pm Village Hall

Saturday 21st November
Curry Night & Entertainment
7pm Village Hall

Wednesday 2nd December
WI Christmas Party All welcome 7.30pm Village Hall

Saturday 5th December
Flicks in the Sticks: Looking for Eric 7.30pm Village Hall

Sunday 20th December
Carol Service 3pm St Mary's Church

Parish Plan

The Clun and Chapel Lawn Parish Plan has now been presented to the Parish Council and is being distributed to each house within the Parish. If you have not received a copy, please let me know. The plan reflects the aspirations of those who completed the survey and were involved with the consultation process; the Parish Council will now produce an action plan to take forward the points raised. Thanks to all who helped produce the plan.

Kim Smith



Next issue in January.