

THE REDLAKE

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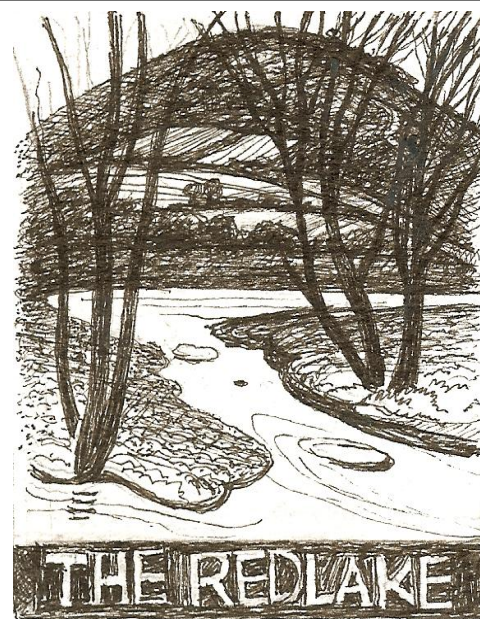
From the Editors Summer's here

I'm looking out the window this morning, and it is raining and quite cold for this time of year at 15°C. Yesterday on the other hand was warm and sunny, at 25°C. Nothing like an unpredictable English Summer; we are known for it! Rather like putting this edition together; there was nothing or so I thought and then suddenly it started to pour in. So even though things might look dark at the moment, it can always get brighter. Sunshine and showers it is, but there is always a need for both, we just have to see what comes round and make the best of what turns up tomorrow. Ah, I think the sun might be coming out....

Jeremy Jameson

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Constance Annie Adams 1924 to 2015



On hearing the sad news that 'Auntie Con' had passed away, someone said, "That's a little bit of Chapel Lawn that's died". Many people in the Redlake Valley will understand that perfectly. As life returned to normal in the post-war years of the 1950s and 60s and the 'baby-boom' generation was born, it was people like Connie Adams who made sure that where they lived were thriving communities.

Connie was born on 15th January 1924 at Pool House, Obley, to farmers George and Ann Huffer. The family moved to Lower Hodre (now

Timbercroft) soon after and later moved again to Green Farm, Purlogue.

Connie was the eldest of three children, followed a year later by John (known as Jack) and three years after that by Freda. Despite having to walk more than two miles each day to Chapel Lawn School, Connie never missed a day and the Misses Evans rewarded her each year with a small present. She was a clever pupil and excelled at sports, particularly sprinting, which stood her in good stead years later when she helped the WI rounders team to numerous victories. Her keen interest in affairs beyond her immediate surroundings may have begun when she sang with 1,000 other children at The Albert Hall in front of the King and Queen and Princess Elizabeth. As well as seeing the sights of pre-war London then, she also saw a London being rebuilt on the famous Chapel Lawn of Britain in 1951.

Transport to Bishops Castle was difficult, so on leaving school Connie went to work; first at a Doctor's surgery in Clun, then on farms during the war. Latterly, her only real regret was not joining up during the war.

Young people worked hard for long hours in those days, but there was also plenty of fun in the form of local dances, usually reached by groups of friends on bicycles. Connie recalls in a memoir that her first bike, from Woods Garage, cost £4.10s which she paid for in instalments.



December 29th 1954, St Mary's Church, Chapel Lawn
L to R Edgar James – Best Man, George and Connie Adams,
Rev. Dewi Llewellyn-Jones, Feda Huffer – younger sister.

On 29th December 1954 at St Mary's, Chapel Lawn, Rev. Dewi Llewellyn Jones married Connie to George Adams of the Smithy, who worked as an agricultural engineer for Prince and Pugh in Knighton. Married life began at No 1 The Council Houses, very close to George's parents at The Smithy. When Brook House at The

Pentre came up for sale for £950 they moved there.

Connie was mother to four children; Keith, now living in Ludlow; then Derek; third in line was Judith, now living near Much Wenlock and finally Kath who has lived in Australia for 32 years. Her niece, Ann, also moved in from the Smithy after her parents passed away and Connie was an excellent mother to her as well. The house was always busy with children, dogs, cats, rabbits and chickens and later, George's bees!

Although family life must have been hectic, Connie was also a mover and shaker in the Chapel Lawn community. She and George shared a party line with the Philips at Pentre Farm (Knighton 748 and 749). The line must have been red hot whenever there was an event in the 'new' village hall that the men had transported from Marshbrook in 1951 and rebuilt behind the school. She was the church organist for many years, often backed up by the voices of the Middleton men in the choir stalls (plus a mouse trap under the organ to protect the bellows!). She served on the village hall committee and regularly helped out at gun club events. Connie was renowned within the family and beyond for her baking and culinary skills; cakes, meat loaf and trifles were particular specialities. "Always there" is how one person remembers her from those days. Children grew up and gradually fled the nest. Grandchildren have since arrived - eleven in total, then six great grandchildren. Connie didn't rest, physically or mentally. She had been taken on as Ancillary Helper at the school, which meant turning her hand to almost anything. Jane Kent describes her as having been "fundamental to the school's success" as she helped in so many ways over and above her job description. She would rehearse the children before concerts, sew costumes for plays and organise sports days. Connie was a rock and always the voice of calm when things were hectic. She was loved by the children whom she loved in return. If a child was getting the notes wrong in a recital, Connie as

accompanist would play louder to mask the mistake until the child was back on track. The school became a big part of her life and she was very sad when it closed in 1985. For years she toured the valley every autumn collecting for Poppy Day. She was a founder member of the Chapel Lawn WI and enjoyed the annual competitions at the Knighton and Clun shows (her contemporaries will certainly remember her jams). In 2006 the Air Gun Club honoured Connie's tireless efforts over the years by appointing her as President.

When George died in 2003 it was a great blow. Connie stayed on at The Pentre for a few more years but finally left the roses and fuchsias at Brook House and moved to be next door to Derek in Craven Arms. By now she was slowing physically but her mind still very active. She followed politics; having been a strong supporter of the Conservative Party all her adult life (she particularly disliked Nicola Sturgeon - "that woman!"). Conversationally she was a match for anyone on the topic of football and supported both Liverpool and Southampton. In fact she loved most sports. Wimbledon week was a highlight of each year and Derek's and his family's passion for Auto Grass racing caught her imagination, as did Formula 1 (she was proud of having passed her driving test first time; was this a thwarted ambition?). She had always been an avid listener to the Archers and Songs of Praise and enjoyed watching Country File. After moving to Craven Arms she kept closely in touch with Chapel Lawn life and almost until her death made the effort to visit occasionally, the last time being in May this year for the concert to celebrate the restoration of the church. For many people their last memory of Connie is at her 90th birthday party in 2014 which was attended by over 100 guests.

Connie's funeral at St Mary's was on Wednesday 22nd July. The Rev John Greaves welcomed a packed church and led the service. Coffin bearers were Stephen Wilding, David Price and Derek's stepsons, Alun Adams

and Deklan Traylor. The hymns, chosen by Connie, were Give me Oil in my Lamp, The King of Love My Shepherd Is and Love Divine all Loves Excelling; Wayne Davies was organist. Warm tributes and reflections on Connie's life were read by her son-in-law Rod Dean, granddaughter Claire Della Torre and friend and former Head teacher of Chapel Lawn School, Jane Kent. Donations will be divided between Hospice at Home, Craven Arms, District Nurses Equipment Fund and the Chapel Lawn Church Fund. To cram such a full life onto one page is difficult. There are hundreds of family photographs and a longer history would do much greater justice to Connie's very full life.

Sometimes an immediate response is the best way to capture the essence of a person. When asked to sum her up in a few words, without hesitation some family members said: "lovely", "kind", "generous", "would do anything for anyone". Someone else in the valley said "In her quiet way she was a really important person in the village, but without the slightest trace of self-importance." "She was a quiet person, but with a great sense of humour", said her friend and neighbour, Vera Price "But just don't ask me about the carpet in the church!"



Following a private cremation, Connie's ashes are now alongside George's in Chapel Lawn churchyard, bounded by the hills, fields and woods that they both knew so well, within earshot of the river where she played as a child.

She will be greatly missed.

Poets Corner

Bumble-Bee buzzing against the pane,
 He's stuck in the sun-room...Once again,
 All that good country
 In which he could roam,
 And yet, he persistently
 Seeks out our home.
 We are blessed by your presence,
 You dear little Bee-
 But you're better off outside,
 So, fly and be free.

Jem

Seasonal Gardening Notes



Alchemilla mollis is a plant that divides gardeners into the 'haves', the 'have nots' and the 'wouldn't haves under any circumstances'.

I am firmly in the first division; it is a splendid plant, provided you like deadheading a little or else weeding a lot. Deadheading before the flowers turn brown will solve most of the weeding necessity and will also keep the plant tidier – my one grouse against *alchemilla* is its height. If it were only a foot tall it would not flop about so badly nor scatter seed so widely. Cutting back its first flowers will encourage it to bloom again on shorter, neater stems.

There are several other *alchemilla* species which are shorter, but quite different in effect to the frothing, acid-yellow *A. mollis*. The ground-hugging foliage of *A. alpina* is lined with silver satin and its flowers are silvery bobbles. On *A. erythrosora* the tiny blooms are coral-red. My favourite is *A. vetteri* with deep green flowers. All are determined seeders, but none has the best feature of *Alchemilla mollis* – the softly furred leaf with its central dimple holding a mercury droplet of rainwater. It is worth growing for that alone.

Hannah Willetts

Sky Notes from Offa's Dyke Astronomical Society

August is not a good month for viewing the planets. Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury are lost in the Sun's glare. Saturn is visible for a short time after sunset, but is low in the sky towards the South.

The most dramatic sights to be seen in the August night sky should be the Perseids meteor shower. This can be seen between July 23rd and August 20th. The shower peaks between August 9th until August 14th. You can expect to see swift meteors with bright trains and some fragmenting in a glow of light. Always best to look after 11 pm until dawn.

Meteors occur at heights of 80 km to 100km above the Earth. They are very small grains of comet dust. The Earth passes through the orbit of comets at certain times of the year and encounters streams of cometary dust.

Meteors must not be confused with asteroids. Meteors rarely ever reach the earth's surface. Asteroids are chunks of rock (minor planets) which can and do hit the Earth's surface from time to time.

In 2013 an asteroid exploded in the sky above the Russian town of Chelyabinsk. Large asteroids larger than 50m metres are likely to penetrate the Earth's atmosphere and hit the surface. An asteroid of this size would cause local devastation. One of half a mile in diameter would be a global catastrophe and one of 5 miles in diameter could mean possible extinction. Thankfully these are extremely rare events!

Graham Arnold

NB

ODAS are hoping to have get together late on the evening of Monday 10 August (weather permitting) to view the Perseids. The venue will have to be fairly high up to get a good view. If you are interested in joining us please let Graham Arnold or Carolyn Wilde know. We can then let you have the details nearer the time.

Redlake Recipes Pecan Biscuits

Good in the festive season, or for buffets.

5oz unsalted butter (125g)
 3oz Caster sugar (70g)
 6oz Plain flour sieved (150g)
 6oz ground pecan nuts
 ½ teaspoon vanilla essence

- Cream butter and sugar and mix in the other ingredients.
- Wrap in cling film - chill well!
- Roll into balls - large marble size.
- Place on greased sheet and bake 2nd shelf down No3 (150) 20-30 mins.

Happy Baking.

Lilian Lewis

News about the Redlake Valley Community Benefit Society's Community Woodland

After completing the building of nearly 100 steps to access the community woodland, we held a short ceremony on Saturday 30th May to officially open them. The 'Mudlarks' were invited along with shareholders and other locals to bring the wood to life with song. Their singing seemed to cause a gentle breeze to pick up and rock the trees, while Becky Sherman's mezzo-soprano's solo caused an echo in the valley!

Our AGM took place on Thursday 9th July. Afterwards the guest speaker Dr. David Parsons, from the University of Wales, talked to a packed village hall about the project he is coordinating on the origins of the place names of Clun and district in 2016. Patrick Cosgrove organised a place-names quiz and there were a lot of questions for the speaker at the end.

The RVCBS has been awarded a grant by Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund for a project: 'Brineddin Community Woodland Engagement, Learning and Conservation.' The Project involves creating promotional materials which will support our presence at three local shows. Come and see us at the Clun Show (1st August) and Bucknell Show (5th September)! We also hope to be present at Craven Arms Discovery Centre's Wood Fair on the 19th September. We will be

purchasing some new tools for further woodland management work around the quillet in the winter months. These will also be put to good use by children from Clun School and Bishop's Castle Community College when they visit the quillet in the next few months. We are also liaising with Shropshire Wildlife Trust on an interpretation board.

The RVCBS is involved with another AONB funded project this year; Children from Bucknell School, working towards their John Muir Awards, will be visiting our quillet on several occasions in the autumn to undertake various exciting woodland activities. See you at the Quillet!

Karen Limbrick

Recent Events May to July 15

As spring moves into summer, we tend to have fewer events in the Village Hall. That said, we have had some very good ones.

First, early in May was the election; I am told that we had a very good showing in Chapel Lawn with the last voter turning up at the very last minute! For better or for worse, the Conservative candidate Philip Dunne has retained his seat for our area.

The 'church' used the last weekend in May to raise money and entertain the residents; on Saturday, Christine Oakley and Patrick Cosgrove put on their aprons and cooked up a fabulous farmer's breakfast of bacon, eggs, sausages, fried potato 'wodge' and tomato – the full works – for nearly 50 people. Fortified with a good breakfast on Saturday, residents were invited to the church on Sunday afternoon for a Celebration of the Restoration of the Church, which replaced the usual Voices of the Valley concert. There was a mixture of poems and readings, including a theoretical letter from the original church architect and hymns and songs, all performed by local artists; Dave and his granddaughter Jess, Gemma, Pat Hancock, Beryl, Mark, Jemima and Eileen with their guitars, Di, the Mudlarks; on the keyboard, Margaret Davis and Wayne and

making the introductions, Andrew Gibbs. Tea and cakes were served afterwards in the village hall.

The same weekend, the Redlake Valley Community Benefit Society held the grand opening of the steps up through the Quillet. The Mudlarks and I were honoured to be asked to provide a little light entertainment in the form of a couple of songs, before cutting the beautiful natural 'ribbon' across the bottom step and drinking 'bubbly' to those who had put in all the hard work to get them finished. There seemed to be plenty of enthusiasm to continue the steps up the hill, but I think most of the interest was in the possibility of constructing some sort of device for hauling the timber and tools up into the wood without expending too much energy!

A couple of weeks ago we put on a 'gig', inviting the Sultana Brothers back after their last visit two years ago. Over 100 people came to enjoy a wonderful evening of music, dancing and drinking with a little gossip thrown in. It is inspiring to witness the dance floor totally filled for every dance by people of a generation who might have to adjust their hearing aids to accommodate the volume of the music!

Becky Sherman

Farming Column

It is hard to believe that motorway hold-ups would have any effect on farm life in Chapel Lawn, but with cross channel delays and lorries queuing on the M20 in operation "stack", the effect has been dramatic. Over a third of our lamb production is exported, but very little is able to go to the continent at present, so combined with the strong pound, prices have dropped rapidly. Beef prices are better than last year but there is no sign of light at the end of the tunnel for dairy farmers.

With several new ideas and methods being tried on the areas' farms, my cousins from Cwmwhitton, who have been growing seed potatoes here, have taken one idea back to their farm; JCB gardening. I spotted the digger

parked in the middle of the garden of a recently vacated bungalow with the contents of said garden piled neatly in the field.

New arrivals on the farm included a hedgehog with two youngsters in the straw in the cattle shed and also a barn owl who has taken up residence in the barn by the house. I have never seen one on the farm before. Maybe I should include it in my vermin control plan.

James Middleton

Diary

WI- 2nd Tuesday of the month, in the Village Hall 7pm

ODAS- Last Thursday of the month 7pm

ODAS- Monday 10th August, look at Persoids meteor shower.-Info Carolyn Wilde. Email:

cmwilde@btinternet.com or ring 01547 530085.

ODAS-Saturday 22nd August. Sun party & Talk 1pm-5pm. Village Hall car park & Village Hall. Talk & afternoon tea 2.30pm £4. **Talk** "The Rape & Pillage of Chapel Lawn!" All welcome.

Obley Pond clearing, Saturday 12th September 11 o'clock. All welcome.

Ramble & Lunch, Sunday 13th September. Walks from 10.30am, lunch from 12pm-2pm in the Village Hall. Adults £8, children under 14 £4.

Village Hall Committee meeting- 16th September. 7.30pm

Macmillan Fund Raiser-Saturday 26th Coffee morning 10.30am-12pm.

Flicks: Saturday 26th September "Imitation game" + **Talk** on the Enigma Machine, by Dr. Mark Baldwin 7pm. Adults £4.50, children £2

Harvest Festival-Thursday 8th October Service & Supper 7pm.

Flicks: Saturday 10th October "spy". 7pm Adults £4.50, Children £2