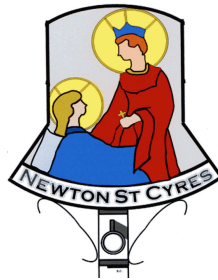


NEWTON ST CYRES HISTORY GROUP



Our meeting last month, on Thursday 21st February, was well attended with many new faces, because Nick Baker, who lives at Cowley, was giving an illustrated talk on Cowley and Pynes, and both present and former residents came along to hear him.

The opening slide of a map of 1796 immediately took us back to a time when there was no railway line along the Creedy valley, and nor was there a road to Bramford Speke from Cowley, or even along the Exe Valley. It was necessary to go up Stoke Hill and along the top, and then descend to reach Bramford through Thorverton. Because of the difficulty of travel, the owner of Cowley Place built a Chapel of Ease, now Cowley church, so that people could attend church on Sunday without a long muddy walk through the fields and over the river. Cowley Barton was a large and early estate. The house is now divided into two and the farm buildings mostly derelict – attempts to develop them failed and there is also a problem of access. However, an aerial view shows how many buildings there are at Cowley, which are not visible from the busy A377.

The Three Horseshoes Pub has changed in appearance from early photographs. It was run by a Mr Wear from 1860 – 1890, when there was a Blacksmith's Shop, which was a flourishing agricultural engineering business employing local men. Petrol pumps can also be seen in an early photo. By 1900 it was owned by Mr Ellis, who ran it with four sons and a daughter, but all the boys were killed in the 1st World War (their names can be seen on the Memorial in Upton Pyne) and Mr Ellis then gave up the business. However, a gate made by 'ELLIS UPTON PYNE' is owned by Nick Baker.

Across the road, Cowley Manor was built around 1788 for Mr Jackson of Exeter, who was the organist at the cathedral. The house then had a great deal more land than now, and also the Exe and Creedy ran differently, so that the landscape around the house has changed. In its day the house was a centre of society, with balls, shows and theatre productions. The conservatory is now a swimming pool, and the Midland Bank, who bought it in 1968 and now the NatWest Bank have altered and cleared around the house.

Turlake House was another more recent building. There was a house by the road opposite the Three Horseshoes, which is shown on early maps, but the present Turlake was built around 1830 on a new site set back from the road. However, the barns and outhouses belonging to it are of an earlier date, and must have belonged to the older house, and they have now been converted into cottages, whilst the house itself is now flats. The land in the area belonged to Turlake House and was largely orchards, for eating and cider apples. Varieties were grown to store over the winter and some of the old trees still exist in gardens. Access was directly opposite the Three Horseshoes, but now a drive has been brought in from the Langford Road. During the Second World War, the local home guard – the Exe Valley company, was based at Turlake House.

The bridge to Upton Pyne is Grade 2 listed, and was built in the early 1800s by the people who built Exeter Canal. Below it is the remains of an old bridge which can be seen in dry weather. This is the same for Newbridge, which was new in the 1690s, and the remains of an old clapper bridge can be seen upstream when the water is low.

On the road towards Pynes are Mill Cottages, named because they had a large post mill there in a circular room with a central post. The mill was for minerals not corn, and would have been used to crush the local manganese ore. Now the room is divided in half between two of the cottages.

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Pynes itself was originally built in the 12th century for the Northcotes but that house is now lost and the present building dates from around 1700. The family mausoleum is in Upton Pyne churchyard and the arch to the entrance vault and steps can just be made out at ground level.

An annual day out was held at Pynes and the Pynes Pic-Nic Gazette of 1856, price 1d, records the events that year. There is a photo from 1938, with children dancing, at a similar event at the house, and it was still being held in 1956.

The 1881 Census return records a maid, who in the 1891 census had become the housekeeper, Mrs Croft, and Nick showed a photo of her with a basket of kittens. A maid had no heating but the housekeeper had her own room with a fireplace and a balcony.

We finished the talk with another picture from the Illustrated London News showing the railway line flooded and a train stranded, which is topical after the events of this winter!

Nick has done a great deal of research and amassed a solid body of documented information both in maps and pictures. The hour's talk could easily have been extended to three or four hours, because he knows so much. We look forward to our summer outing to Pynes when we will learn more about it and the area.

Meetings are usually on Thursday evenings in the village hall club room and start at 7.30pm.

Everyone is welcome. There is a small charge of £2 which includes tea and biscuits.

For further information contact Jean 851337 Isobel 851351

Next meetings

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| April 18 th | Derek Jackson Towers and Bells of Netherexe Parishes. |
| May 16 th | Colin Hart Metal Detecting – History beneath our Feet 2. Colin will bring a different set of exhibits from last year. |
| Mid June | Our Outing to Pynes led by Nick Baker - Saturday afternoon 8 th or 15 th to be confirmed. |

Derek Jackson's expertise is with the history of bell towers and bells. Have you ever wondered where our Church bells were recast in the early 1700's and by whom? Come along on April 18th and find out.

We have no special membership arrangements. Everyone is welcome.