

INDEX TO POINTS OF INTEREST

- A. Peas Green and Village Centre
- B. Church and footbridge
- C. Bannut Tree House
- D. Rusland Cottage
- E. The Vault
- F. Little Berrington
- G. Bodenham Bridge
- H. Saffron's Cross
- I. Henhouse
- J. Bunhill Villa
- K. Bodenham Lake
- L. Bodenham Manor
- M. Broadfield Court
- N. Bowley Court
- O. Railway Inn and Dinmore
- P. Bodenham Mill
- Q. Hampton Court
- R. Calderwell
- S. England's Gate Inn
- T. The Vern
- U. Devereux Court
- V. Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum
- W. Maund Bryan
- X. Rosemaund Research Centre

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are greatly indebted to Dr. Anthea Brian, who has supplied much of the historical information contained in these notes, particularly that of the Arkwright family and their associated properties and influence in the village.

We also acknowledge with thanks the research into parish and county records made by Kenneth Payton, a founder member of Bodenham Ramblers.

Acknowledgment is also made to Herefordshire, The County Magazine for much of the information concerning the development of Queenswood Arboretum and Country Park, and to the Shell Book of Britain.

POINTS OF INTEREST

(A). Peas Green and the Village Centre. (Seen on all the walks starting from the village car park).

The area round the car park and up to the Church is known as Peas Green. Most of the cottages were once occupied by craftsmen. The Arkwright family, (descendants of Sir Richard Arkwright, 1732-1792, owner of textile factories and inventor of the cotton-spinning water frame), purchased nearby Hampton Court in 1809 and owned 18,500 acres and all but 2 of the houses in the village. The family were great benefactors to the village and were responsible for restoring St Michael's Church in 1889.

The Church is Early English style and mainly built in the 14th century although some of the stonework is older. The tower is of unusual construction. Shortage of money prevented its completion when the Church was built. When the Church was restored in 1889 it was intended to complete it but, once again, the money ran out. The Church is well worth a visit and more detailed information is available inside.

Opposite the car park is St Michael's School. To the left of the school is the earliest of the four vicarages still standing and was for years used as a barn. It has recently been restored to a private residence.

In 1379 the Devereux family were granted a licence for a Tuesday market and the remains of the Market Cross can be seen near the War Memorial. The base is original but the post is nineteenth century and was quarried near Dudales Hope (walk 17). Nearby are the Coronation Seat; the capped well, once the main source of water for the village; the large oak tree in the adjacent field planted in 1898 to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee; and the small oak tree planted in 1995 to commemorate VE Day.

A large scale map of the area showing rights of way can be inspected in the car park.

Note the ancient pitched stones footpath leading to the Church and the mounting block near the lych gate.

(B). The Church Footbridge over the River Lugg. (Seen on walks 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,13 and 14).

This is an ancient crossing place and stones of a former ford can be seen when the water is low. The turnstile dates back to at least 1925, but the bridge is more recent. The signpost was "planted" in 1991 to mark the restoration of the parish rights of way by a group organised by Bodenham Ramblers. The black and white house that you can see across the river to your right is Devereux Court (see note U).

(C). Bannut Tree House. (Seen on walks 2 & 3).

A bannut is a walnut. This house was once the Bannut Tree Inn.

(D). Rusland Cottage. (Seen on walks 2,3,4,7 & 13).

The remains of Rusland cottage can be seen at the top of the steps. It is believed to have been occupied until the 1940's.

(E). The Vault (old name Faulde - a fold or enclosure). (Seen on walks 3, 7 & 13).

The Vault is a quiet hamlet just inside the parish of Marden, locally known as "sleepy hollow". The Manor of Marden was given by Henry VIII to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. There are several points of interest.

The Vault House Farm, a 17th century substantial stone house standing in attractive grounds, is a working, family run, stock farm. The maltings, cider house and Victorian hop kiln have been sympathetically converted into holiday accommodation.

Opposite is the half timbered Vault Farm in its peaceful setting. Built in 1510 it was the bakery for the area. The external granary steps can be seen where local legend has it that a man was shot for £5. The barns, which have been restored, are of a later period. Roy Harper, a musician, lived here for a time in the 1970's.

Both houses offer inviting family run country house accommodation.

Nearby stone clad Hope Lodge is thought to have been two cottages, possibly of the same Tudor period as its neighbour. The building, which has been much altered over the years, has many exposed beams inside and one room was until 1954 used as a Methodist Chapel and, before that, used by the Salvation Army. The Vault Farm and neighbouring Hope Lodge were both used by the BBC in the filming of their series, "The Survivors".

A little further along the road is the Little Vault. The main building is a sensitively restored former barn with the original cottage to the rear.

(F). Little Berrington Lake. (Seen on walks 2,3,4,7 & 13).

This is a recent innovation built to attract wildlife, particularly wildfowl. It is fed by an ancient spring. The new building nearby is the bottling plant for the Berrington Pure Water Company.

(G). Bodenham Bridge. (Seen on walks 5,6,8,10,11,14,15 & 16).

The bridge was built over the River Lugg in 1816 by John Gethin. There is no weir here but nearby once stood a warehouse where goods were stored for loading into barges when the Lugg was commercially navigable up to Leominster. It is probable that the name of The Weir House nearby is a corruption of Warehouse. Oak bark was one of the cargoes shipped to the tanneries at Chepstow. Leominster Priory bells passed through when they were sent to Chepstow for recasting. They returned to Leominster in 1756. Also nearby was the village pound, the smithy, (where some of the local metal kissing gates were forged) and which is now a wormery. The octagonal building at Pigeon House is a dovecote.

(H). Saffron's Cross. (Seen on walks 6 & 10).

The origin of the name is obscure. The Old Toll House was built in the 1830's and may have replaced a toll gate at Cornett (south-east of Maund Bryan on the A417) which was sold by auction at England's Gate on the 24th September 1835. The Ketch Gate House opposite is an old cider house.

(I). The Henhouse Farm. (Seen on walks 8,9,11,12 & 16).

"Hen" is Welsh for old and the history of the house has been traced back to the 17th century, when it may have been the centre of a small hamlet. It burned down, but was restored. See also Hampton Court (note Q) visible from a little further down the track.

(J). Bunhill Villa. (Seen on walks 8,9, & 11).

This house was built in 1837 and it then stood beside the main road out of Bodenham to the west. It was for 30 years the home of the coachman to Hampton Court until he was killed in 1881 when his coach overturned as it rounded the bend in the village.

(K). Bodenham Lake. (Seen on walks 1,2,8,9,11,12, & 16).

The 20 hectare site of the lake, purchased by Leominster District Council in 1994, was formed by the extraction of sand and gravel. It is the largest single expanse of water in Herefordshire. The eastern end is open to the public. A seat on the far side, between the lake and the river, provides a restful place to relax and observe the wildlife. The western end is devoted to nature conservation and the area of access is indicated by a map at the gate. A very comfortable hide has been constructed at the extreme north-west end of the area of public access. It contains a

log book, provided by the Herefordshire Ornithological Club, and lists the large variety of birds which have been observed. On the way to the hide you pass an old orchard with mistletoe and then two fields on the right which normally contain several varieties of deer. The hide is amongst newly planted trees. On the opposite side of the lake to the hide a gravel shelf has been constructed to encourage wading birds. 71 species of bird have made the area their breeding ground, and a further 28 species of wintering or birds of passage have also been spotted. The County Youth Service has a sailing centre located on the north bank, and there is a seat nearby.

The 4 houses opposite the entrance to the lake were once almshouses built, at a cost of £1700, by the two Arkwright sisters in memory of their father, Henry Arkwright, vicar of Bodenham for 46 years. They have recently been restored and are now privately owned.

(L). Bodenham Manor. (Seen on walks 8, 9, 11, 12 & 16).

Bodenham Manor was built in 1844 as Bodenham Vicarage by John Arkwright for his nephew Henry when he became Vicar. He was eventually blessed with 12 children during his stay there and employed 12 servants. The house has since been used as a special school but is now a restaurant.

(M). Broadfield Court. (Seen on walks 10 and possibly 19).

Broadfield is mentioned in the Domesday book in 1085. It must have been a house of some importance as in 1346 a licence to celebrate mass in the private chapel was held by Margaret, widow of John de Broadfield. There is now no sign of the chapel but the land on which it stood is still called Chapel Orchard. In the 14th century the lands became the property of Dinmore Preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers of the Order of St John of Jerusalem but again changed hands at the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII.

Broadfield Court is the oldest house in the parish, parts of it dating from the 14th century. It is noted for the variety of its windows and the seven gables facing south; one 12th, two 15th, three 19th and one 20th century. The Edwardian gable was demolished in 1968.

Winegrowing was introduced to Herefordshire by the Romans and vines planted at Broadfield Court in 1971 now extend to 17 acres. Bodenham wine is available from the shop, as is a leaflet and booklet giving a fuller history of the house and vineyard. The gardens are open and you are invited to wander freely during the summer months.

(N). Bowley Court. (Seen on walks 10 & 19).

Bowley Court is an ancient site which in 1500 belonged to the Knights of St John at Dinmore Manor. The house is now much altered.

(O). Railway Inn and Dinmore. (See walks 9, 11, & 12).

“Dinmore” either from the Welsh or Old British “Din or Dun Mawr”, “a great hill or great fortress”, or from the Old English “Dynna mor” meaning “marsh of a man called Dynna”. There are still traces of an old fort, in the form of a ditch and bank, built some 2,000 years ago. The Railway Inn was built when the railway first opened and is described as “an ornamental double cottage”. From the Inn you get a good view of the Lugg Valley. Friars Mill, another local building once owned by the Knights of St John, was located on the river but there is no sign of it now. The two railway bridges are built at different heights. The first bridge was built from bricks made on the site from clay near the river. A camp was set up here for families of workers and parish records show that 3 children were born at “The Huts Dinmore” in 1881/2 and were christened at St Michael’s Church. Their fathers’ occupations were described as “labourers at brickfields” or “contractors to the tunnel”.

From the road bridge can be seen two tunnels at slightly different levels. The first one, completed

in 1852 at a length of 1006 yards, took two and a half years to build. The second tunnel was completed in 1891. Both are perfectly straight and the siting tower above the tunnel, which was used by the surveyor for setting out the tunnel, can be seen from the bridleway to the right when returning from Queenswood Country Park.

(P). Site of Bodenham Mill. (Seen from walks 6 & 10).

There was a mill here by 1264 near the junction of Riffins Brook and the River Lugg. It was demolished in 1697. The large depression was probably the mill pool and there are the remains of a weir upstream.

(Q). Hampton Court. (Seen on walks 8,9, & 11).

From the track just below the Henhouse look north, where Hampton Court can just be seen. It was built by Rowland Leinthal in about 1475, (and therefore is some 40 years older than Hampton Court on the River Thames in Middlesex). In 1809 it came into the ownership of Richard Arkwright, son of Sir Richard Arkwright inventor of the water frame, and remained in the family until 1912. After a series of owners it is now American owned.

(R). Calderwell. (Seen on walks 15 to 20).

Calderwell, seen as you cross the stile 100 metres west of the Parish Hall is described, in a directory of Herefordshire dated 1867, as a never failing spring of beautiful water, containing some remarkable properties, and formerly much used by invalids.

(S). England's Gate Inn. (Seen on walks 15 to 20).

England's Gate is probably a corruption of "Inland Gate", or "the Gate into the Inland Field". The house was built around 1600 and extended around 1700 as a private house. There is evidence that shoe making and brewing took place here in 1776. In 1827 it was purchased by Richard Arkwright of Hampton Court. Around 1856 it was tenanted by the sub-postmaster who combined these duties with those of landlord until the post office moved, first to a site in Peas Green, and then to its present site. The Inn, which was thatched until 1855, was sold by the Hampton Court estate in 1921. It recently came under new ownership and has been sympathetically restored. A detailed history of England's Gate can be seen there on request.

(T). The Vern. (Seen on walks 1 & 2).

The Vern is the site of an ancient settlement and former river crossing. In recent times it was the home of The Vern herd, a famous breed of Hereford cattle.

(U). Devereux Court. (Seen from walks over the Church footbridge and 8 & 16).

Devereux Court is the black and white timber framed house seen across the river to the right from beyond the footbridge or from the left as you enter the approach to the lake. It is the 15th century original manor house of Bodenham and was the home of the Devereux family. Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, was for many years a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, but his conduct later displeased her and he was beheaded in 1601.

(V). Queenswood Arboretum and Country Park. (Seen on walks 9, 11 & 12).

The Country Park is part of a broad leafed forest that once stretched to the Welsh Border. The area was acquired from the Crown in the 1500's by the Conningsby family of Hampton Court and passed to the Arkwright family in 1810. During the 1914-18 war much of the timber was felled for use as trench supports but, in 1935, 170 acres at the top of Dinmore Hill were purchased by the County Council to mark the Silver Jubilee of King George V and to form the present Country

Park. During the Second World War caches of weapons were hidden in the woods for use by secret units of the Home Guard for sabotage in the event of a German invasion. In 1955 the arboretum was opened to celebrate the accession of Queen Elizabeth II. Since 1987 the woodland has been designated as a Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The Visitor Centre was once a tannery by the River Kenwater in Leominster and was lying dismantled when, with financial aid from Sun Valley Poultry Ltd., it was purchased by the County Council for re-erection at Queenswood.

The cafe was formerly the Essex Arms in Widemarsh Street, Hereford. Built some 300 years before, at the turnpike gate, it closed in 1960 and was then owned by Hereford Timber who sold it to the council for the token sum of £1. The company also paid for it to be dismantled and transferred to Queenswood.

The building nearer to the road was built in the 1930's as a holiday bungalow and then became the Jubilee Cafe until the present cafe was completed, since when it has been used as an office.

Queenswood Arboretum and Country Park is open from dawn till dusk throughout the year.

(W). Maund Bryan. (Seen on walks 17 & 18).

As you approach Maund Bryan from Watery Lane the house across the A49 is Maund Court and over to the left, standing back in the field, is Maund Farm a stone and timber building dating back to the 15th Century. A later wing was added in the 17th Century and it has recently been restored. To your right the Old Mission House was built in 1860 by the Arkwright family as a school. In 1880 it was handed over to the Bishop of Hereford when it became a Mission Hall. In 1973 it was sold and converted to a private residence.

(X). Rosemaund Research Centre. (Seen on walk 20).

To the south of the green lane lies the 176 hectares (450 acres) of Rosemaund Research Centre run by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service for the benefit of consumers, farmers and growers. The farm carries out research work on all aspects of many crops including hops, cider apples, cereals, potatoes and oil seed rape; also on beef cattle, sheep and deer enterprises.

NOTES