

BROMLEY REGIS.

The word Bromley is said to be derived from Bromley (Broom Fields) as at one time the wild broom was very prolific on this poor sandy soil.

There is written evidence of a charter in 941 between King Edmund and Wulfsga Maur. Earl Leofric and his wife Lady Godiva are said to have had a summer residence in the village, and the former died in 1057 and was buried in Coventry. His grand-daughter Almatha married Harold (1066) when the parish ownership passed to him.

The parish stayed under the control of the crown until 1227 when it was granted to the Corbet family, who were given permission to clear part of the forest and heath to build a manor house. There are records of a corn mill at this time adjacent to the ford across the Trent connecting to the old road north.

In 1454 the estate passed to the Praers family and again by marriage to the Patriche family in 1500.

In 1580 the Manor estate was bought by the Agard family for £1240 and contained 2,000 acres. After the death of Charles Agard (c.1670) the family had considerable financial problems and the estate was taken over by John Newton. During this period a new manor house was built, west of the village (early 18th century); the Trent and Mersey Canal (1769); the Lichfield to Ashbourne Turmpike; and the foundation of the Crosse Charities (1700) including the school.

By 1794 there being no further male heirs in the Newton family the estates passed to cousins John and Thomas Lane, of the famous family at Bentley where Jane had been concerned in the escape of Charles II after the battle of Worcester. The estates around the manor house were converted to a parkland, with the removal of fields and buildings and the moving of the school (1815). The estate then contained 3,000 acres valued at £7,000.

Difficult times during the 1914-18 war together with the tragic death of John Henry Lane in 1917 hastened the end of the estates and the demolition of the family home by 1927. The leading roles in the village were then taken over by such people as the local headmaster and vicar who helped steer the village towards its present active position.

KINGS BROMLEY HISTORIANS VILLAGE TRAIL

No. 2.



The village is situated on the junction of the A 515 and A 513, six miles north of Lichfield. The river Trent defines the northern boundary of the parish. Both the main railway line to Euston and the Trent and Mersey Canal traverse the parish.

The centre of the village is a conservation area which retains many of the architectural features of the past 300 years. The population of about 1000 is involved locally in Agriculture and Light Industry and in employment in the adjacent towns. Many take part in the local community activities, including the 'Historians', and there are more local organisations per head of population than in most of the other villages in the county.

petition was sent to the Lord Chancellor for permission to extend education to girls. This was refused. In 1850 land was given to the Church Wardens by John Newton Lane and Henry Bagot Lane for the building of an infants' school on Town Field Croft. This is now the 'Old School House'. In June 1882 the Governors decided to have the school conducted as a mixed school under a master.

A modern extension including additional class room, toilets and office were added to the south side in 1972, also a kitchen block to the north side of the school was added in 1968/9. The outside covered stairway leads to the upper room where during the early 1900's the boys were taught woodwork. An old photograph of the west end of the school building shows the housing for the school bell on the apex of the roof. This housing was blown off as the result of a gale in 1976. The bell has been found and renovated and is now inside the building.

4. AIR RAID SHELTER.

This was built on the show field in 1940-41 during World War II. It was to be used by the school children and was divided in two, to shelter boys and girls. It is now used by the Horticultural Society. (There was a shelter for the rest of the village outside the village hall).

5. SHOW FIELD.

This field has been the site of the village show since 1932. Before this it was held in the Manor grounds. A grand pavilion to house exhibits was being erected on the field, but completion was stopped with the onset of World War II, when it was let to a tenant from Birmingham who converted it into a bungalow. In 1962 the part of the building owned by the Horticultural Society was sold to the tenant. (No 5A)

6. BACK LANE.

In medieval times Kings Bromley had a main street with side lanes (see No 6A) leading off to join the back lanes, which ran parallel with the main street. The back lanes were used for access to the fields from the crofts and tofts, (small homesteads and attached plots of land) which ran in narrow strips from the main street to the back lane. The

building of Lanes Close in 1986 has removed evidence of these holdings apart from one toft, which can be seen at No 6B on the map.

7. FIELDS.

The fields at No7 were once one large field and there is still evidence of medieval farming in the field at No 7A. Here can be seen undulating land, which was once part of the ridge and furrow system of ploughing.

The present village cricket club was formed in 1951, and from 1953 played in a field adjacent to the show field, on the east side. This ground was reputed to be very undulating, (further) evidence of ridge and furrow) and the foundations of the original pavilion are still visible (7B). In 1959 the club moved to its present ground in Crawley Lane.

The Manor had their own pitch in the park, matches having been recorded there in late Victorian and early Edwardian times, full details of the 'cricket festivals' were published in the Lichfield Mercury. Yet another cricket pitch is known to have been used before World War I in the area known as Crawley Park. (See No12).

8. BRIDGE.

In the 1770's the Trent and Mersey Canal was cut and this stream was used as an overflow. The brick built bridge is similar to others built along the stream and dates back to the time of the canal construction. The name of the stream is Crawley Brook, which on some old maps is called Rushmoor Drain.

9. OLD VICARAGE.

The old Vicarage can be seen from here. This was built in 1870 as shown by a date stone on one of the label stop stones. The building is three storeys high. It was built beyond the bounds of the village as it existed at the time.

10. WOODGATE.

This part is called 'Woodgate'. During the medieval period a large area of the southern half of the parish was woodland, which extended into adjacent parishes. To halt

deforestation of these areas controlled woodlands called 'Hays' were created, where hunting over long distances could take place. In the reign of Edward III one such 'hay' extended from Alrewas through Fradley, Curborough and Kings Bromley to Handsacre. Woodgate was probably the entrance from the village into this woodland, with Woodend on the Curborough - Kings Bromley boundary being the southern edge.

11. WOODROFFES

Six fields in this area have this name in their title. In 1800 they were owned by the widow of Skynner Woodroffe, an unusual surname, could there be any connection with the wild woodland plant of the same name?

12. CRAWLEY.

This area is called Crawley. According to J.P. Oakden's Staffordshire Place Names it means 'The glade where crows nested'. A cottage once stood on the roadside in front of the house on the left? It was demolished in the 1960's. Old maps show that there was once a small community at Crawley and a large building once existed on this site (No 12A). The 1851 census lists six families in Crawley (Tomlinson, Walthow, Buckley, Gee and Fernihough) with a total of 15 inhabitants. A road came out at 12B and continued up what is known locally as Thimble Hall Lane. Further research has to be done in this area.

13. THIMBLE HALL LANE.

This lane was once the main highway into the village and went direct to Lichfield in the south and to Uttoxeter and Ashbourne in the north. At least three houses stood along this lane, one being known locally as 'Thimble Hall', because of its diminutive size, 'one up and one down'. This house was occupied as recently as the 1930's, when it was demolished and some of the bricks used to build the Blythe Garage in the village. An old document states that one of the properties belonged to Robert Batkin, William Sutton and John Reynoldson who were trustees of the Kings Bromley club, what the functions were of this club are still to be discovered. The 1800 Enclosure Map shows two houses along this lane, and

1. WAR MEMORIAL.

A fund was started in October 1920 to build a memorial to the dead of World War I. It was unveiled on April 22nd 1922 by General Sir Roland Lane, and cost £142 16s. There was some money left in the fund which is used towards maintenance. Previously on this site there had been a house with a covered yard used as a makeshift garage. The occupier, besides being a motor mechanic, provided a taxi service for the army during World War I. Early photographs of this building show a large post leaning against the roadside corner, acting as a bollard to prevent cart wheels from hitting the brickwork. This post is also said to have been used as a scratching post by some of the less wholesome 'gentlemen of the road'.

2. PINFOLD & JUBILEE SEAT.

The Pinfold was an enclosed area where straying animals were kept until claimed by their owners. In 1927 Kings Bromley pinfold had a wooden rail around it, and covered an area of 55 sq yds. The bench on the pinfold site was bought with money left from the village celebrations of George V's silver jubilee in 1935. It is a typical 1930's concrete construction.

3. SCHOOL.

Richard Crose of Bagginton died in 1699. In his will he left farms and land at Marchington Woodlands, and Tuppenhurst in Abbots Bromley to a charity. The rents and profits of these were to be used to build a 'free school' for poor boys of the parish and to pay a schoolmaster. This was on condition that John Newton Esq., lord of the Manor of Kings Bromley, gave the land. This he did, and the school was built in what is now called Manor Park.

With the coming of the 1799 Enclosure Act, the Lord of the Manor, then John Lane, saw the opportunity to move the school from his parkland to a site nearer the centre of the village at the meeting of the turnpike road from Lichfield with the road from Kings Bromley Common. He agreed to build a new commodious school and school-house within eight months, using materials from the old school. The school was still to admit only boys. In 1841 a