

This is short History of Redmarley d'Abitot, written in 1928 by H. Morton Niblett a former Rector of Redmarley, as reprinted in 1981, which has been digitised.

Whilst some his research falls short of Eric Smith's it is nonetheless interesting particularly with regard to The Battle of Redmarley, trades and population and the dynastic manner in which the "Rectorship" was kept within families.

Original pamphlet courtesy of Dorothy Ann Smith.

A SHORT HISTORY  
OF  
REDMARLEY D'ABITOT

By H. MORTON NIBLETT  
(Sometime Rector)

## Introduction

At the request of the Redmarley Church Council and with the agreement of Mrs. Elizabeth Niblett, this short History of Redmarley d'Abitot, written in 1928, is being re-printed in time for Easter, 1981. This is being done partly to celebrate a Flower Festival and partly to reawaken an interest in the local Church and its story. A limited number of copies are being printed with up-to-date photographs of the Church (exterior view by Alan Greatwood, interior view by J. M. Mullaney). A plan and simpler edition will be more readily available to visitors.

The Parish of Redmarley was transferred from the Diocese of Worcester to the Diocese of Gloucester in 1977 to form a United Benefice with Pauntley, Upleadon, Oxenhall and latterly Bromsberrow, under the present Incumbent — the Rev. W. J. Moxon.

During the nineteen-sixties, the fine old Rectory (seen from the lower end of the Churchyard) was sold and a modern Rectory was built nearer to the Church.

The new Primary School (located south of the Church) was opened in 1968 by Sir Gerald Nabarro, M.P. for South Worcestershire. The older building further along the road has been used as a Village Hall for some years. The school building in Lowbands is now a private house.

Pfera Hall (formerly Hazeldine House) where Edward Elgar's wife lived before marriage, is now a Hotel.

The local landscape has been slightly affected by the opening of the M50 Motorway but the district remains very beautiful with fine views: northwards to the Malverns, southwards to May Hill, westwards to Marcie Hill and eastwards to the Cotswold Hills across the Vale of Severn. In the Spring the wild daffodils in this district are a delight. They grow extensively in Redmarley Churchyard.

The Church is indebted to the enthusiastic band of Bell Ringers, who in 1968, undertook the overhaul of the Church Bells. It is our pleasure to welcome parishioners and visitors alike to take an interest in our local heritage and help us to keep it in good repair for the future.

The Rector and Churchwardens.

Lent, 1981.

To  
My Old Friends and Parishioners  
at Redmarley

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*You perhaps know that I have for years been collecting the history of the parish, and it occurred to me that, now that I have more leisure, it might be of interest if I put it into a booklet. There is a good deal of history connected with our parish, and there is not room for it all, but I have set down the chief things, and what I thought would be of most interest. The rising generation will like to know what has taken place in their own parish, and also any new- comers should make themselves acquainted with it.*

*Your sincere friend and former Rector,*

*H. MORTON NIBLETT.*

*Holmwood,  
Cheltenham.  
Easter, 1928.*

There has always been much doubt as to the origin of the word “Redmarley”. It was formerly spelt as follows:—

In Saxon times, A.D. 450 to 800: Reode mare leah, or Ryde mare Leah.

In A.D. 1086: Ridmerlege.  
“ 1322: Rudmerlee, or Rudmarleye.  
“ 1658: Ridmarley.  
“ 1703: Ridmarly.  
“ 1783: Ridmarly.  
“ 1813: Ridmarley.

Thus the first syllable was spelt with an “i” instead of an “e” down to the beginning of the last century. The Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford gave it as his opinion that the old spelling in two Saxon documents suggested “some such a sense as ‘the field of the border of the clearing’.” It seems most likely that Redmarley took its name from the fact that it is a border parish at the extreme end of the County, being bounded on three sides by the County and Diocese of Gloucester.

There is another Redmarley in Worcestershire, viz., at Great Witley, and the Rector there said: “There is a Redmarley farm in my parish — indeed, the farm immediately adjoining my own grounds. The popular explanation of the name here is, I believe, that it was given because of the red sandstone, of which the soil of the farm is largely composed, but the same peculiarity would apply to other farms in the parish as well. Mine is not a boundary parish of the County but it is of the Diocese, as the next parish is in Hereford, and this particular farm is on the boundary of the parish, so the boundary explanation might be made to apply in this way”.

### THE D’ABITOTS

There is no doubt as to the origin of the last part of the name of the parish. It was called “D’Abitot” from the Norman family of that name, a branch of which settled here in the olden times, or at any rate owned property in the parish. Domesday Book says: “Urso (D’Abitot) holds seven hides of this manor at Ridmerlege”. (A “hide” is supposed to be about 120 acres). This Urso drew down upon himself the wrath of the Archbishop of York by encroaching on the

property of the Canons of Worcester with some works in connection with the castle. His curse is preserved in these words:

“Hightest thou, Urse!  
have thou God’s curse”.

The family of D’Abitot came to England with William the Conquerer from near Havre, in France. The Victoria history states: “A family named D’Abitot owned property in the parish in the sixteenth century and lived at the Down House. According to Nash (the County historian, 1781), the last member of the family died in the eighteenth century”.

If the parishioners will look at the cross raguly on the east gable of the nave of the Church they will see a relic of Urso D’Abitot, whose cognizance was a bear and ragged staff (“Urso” in Latin means a bear, and he seems to have been a bear by name and a bear by nature!).

## **DOMESDAY BOOK**

It is not generally known that Domesday Book was compiled in Gloucester Cathedral. Its date is A.D. 1086. It gave particulars of each parish, and this was the state of Redmarley at that time; “there are 4 carucates in demesne, and 23 villeins, and 9 bordars with 10 carucates. There are 6 serfs, 2 serving-women, and a mill of 5/8, Wood a mile long and half a mile wide”. As to the meaning of these words, a “carucate” was as much land as one team of eight oxen could plough in a year, and these four carucates being “in demesne” means that the lord of the manor had not let them, but was keeping them in hand. The “villeins” in those olden days were small-holders. They had to work for their lord two days a week, and had about 20 acres of land and a few cattle, but on their death it all went back to the lord. The “bordars” were small freeholders, while the “serfs” were slaves. The population then was 40 with their families, as no mention is made of wives and children.

## **BURY COURT**

Now, Redmarley is fortunate in possessing a building of the Norman period at Bury Court. The present cellar has a Norman doorway on the side next to the Ledbury road. Its dimensions are 29 ft. 10 ins, in length, 17 ft. 10 ins, in breadth, whilst the walls are 4 ft. 9 ins, in thickness. The Victoria history says: “It is vaulted in three bays, with chamfered transverse and diagonal ribs springing from moulded corbels”. The picture of the ceiling, which we give on

the opposite page, will make this clearer. [Picture not included in this Edition] There is a difference of opinion as to what this old room was used for. There is a tradition that it used to be a prison, and an old cowman, of the name of John Pitt, said in 1884 that he was once a carter's boy there and he remembered a plate on the wall outside which stated that it was a prison.

The following account of such a room, from a reliable source, seems to describe it exactly: "Below the solar (i.e., private sitting-room), if not below the hall itself, would run the cellar — a large, vaulted structure of stone, which might be storehouse, brewery and stables all in one. Plenty of storage-room was necessary, for the stores could only be laid in at great annual fairs".

Whilst speaking of Bury Court, it may be mentioned that the lords of the manor lived in these various courts. Each lord was entitled to hold a "court baron" in his manor-house, thus giving it the right to be called a "court". Here the freeholders were the jury, and all questions relating to the well-being of themselves and the lord were here debated and adjusted. At Redmarley there was a "court-leet", with a wider jurisdiction, and not a "court-baron", a privilege which only some few manors possessed.

## **THE PARK FARM**

Near to Bury Court is the Park, which was a deer park in the good old days. It is first mentioned in AD. 1457. Nash (in his history of Worcestershire) says that "the Beauchamps, the heirs of the D'Abitots, had also in this large manor a park, with every ensign of greatness". A bank may be seen on the side next to Cook's Lane, which runs a considerable distance, and was no doubt the boundary in that direction; while on the south is the "Park Gate", which we may conclude was the entrance to the property. The Park passed to the King in 1517 by attainder, who exchanged it together with Bushley Park for certain lands in Essex, at the request of Bonner, Bishop of London. Ridley (the martyr) succeeded Bonner in 1550, and on his appointment he gave Mr. George Shippside the management of "The Park", which was part of the endowment of the See of London. Shippside married Alice, the Bishop's sister, and "was confined in Bocardo at Oxford on his account, and attended him to the stake". Ridley wished him good-bye in these words: "Farewell, my brother, George Shippside, whom I have ever found faithful, trusty and loving, in all states and conditions, and now in the time of my cross over all others to me most friendly and steadfast, and that which liketh me best over all other things in God's cause ever hearty". Shippside continued to reside at the Park after Ridley's death. Our old register contains an entry of his burial in 1609, and of Alice, his wife, in 1579. There is an interesting old brass behind the organ to his memory, which runs thus:—

“Alt flesh is grasse, wormes meat and clay, and here it hath short time to live, for prooffe whereof both night and day all mortall wights ensamples give beneath this stone fast closde In clay doth sleepe the corpse of George Shippside, wch Christ shall rayse on ye last day and then with Him be glorifide, whose soule now lives assuredly in heaven with Christ our Saviour in perfect peace most joyfully with God’s elect for evermore. Oblit 31 die De bris An. D’ni 1609, Ac. An. AEtatis sue 84. Ecce quid eris”.

which means: “He died on the 31st day of December in the year of Our Lord 1609, and in the year of his age 84. See what thou wilt be”.

## **AN OLD DOCUMENT**

This seems to be a suitable place to mention an old document which was discovered at the Record Office in London, as the Park farm figures a good deal in it. It is 448 years ago since it was drawn up by one Robert Eylond, a bailiff. It gives an account of Crown property in Redmarley, and is of considerable length. Amongst other rents received, there is “20s. of the farm of the lord’s watermill there called Bury myll”. Numerous other places and fields are mentioned, which it is now hard to identify. It is rather surprising the number of houses and lands which were void even in those good old days “on account of a lack of tenants”. It is curious that amongst the rents received is “6d. of the price of a pair of gilt spurs”, and “of a penny for a pair of gloves at Easter”. There are the following references to the Park “Paid in forking scattering carrying and in stacking the hay coming from the two parks called Newmede and Brodemede for the keep of the wild beasts (i.e. the deer) within the park in winter, together with the carriage of the said hay as far as the lodge within the said park, 9s. 6d.” Also “Paid to Thomas Wodeley upon breaking up of the antehillocks and the stokekyng (i.e., stocking of thorns and briers) within the foresaid park, 14d.” “Also Paid to John Hyndbody, worki ng for 32 days for mending certain defaults in the palisade of the park, 10s. 8d.”

## **THE CHURCH**

The Victoria history says: “The first mention of the Church of Redmarley is in 1290, when the Bishop of Worcester dedicated three altars there”. Nash states that our Church “had formerly a low spire, the present tower being built in the year 1738”. We imagine that he gained this information from one of our registers, where there is a note to that effect. Nash records too that “the inside of the Church and Chancel are dry and neat”. The condition of the Church must have sadly deteriorated in the first part of the last century, for The Rambler in

Worcestershire (published in 1854) says that “the Church is anything but a neat structure, being in a most dilapidated state, the walls considerably out of the perpendicular, and the roof decayed. The pewing of the Church is most unsightly, and will not accommodate one-fifth of the population”. Another account says that it was “dangerous and disgraceful”. The Rambler continued “Scarcely a vestige remains of anything ancient except a niche near the pulpit on the south side of the nave, supposed to have been used for a lamp or hour-glass in former times: an Early English piscina on the south side of the Chancel wall, and some old bench-ends in the nave very rudely carved”. This old Church had a gallery at the West End, where the musicians used to sit. There was no Vestry, the Clergy robing in the Tower amongst the ringers, who have now been moved above. We gather from the minutes of parish meetings that there had been some talk of repairs, and in one place mention is made of insufficient accommodation, but it seems doubtful if anything was done. Soon after the appointment of the Rev. Edward Niblett as Rector a scheme for rebuilding was set on foot. The larger donations towards this very necessary work included D. J. Niblett, Esq. (the patron of the living), £200 ; Earl Beauchamp, £100 ; Rev. E. H. Niblett, £100 ; T. Gambier Parry, Esq., £50 ; Lady Palmer (of the Down House), £40 ; O. Ricardo, Esq, £20 ; J. Stallard, Esq, £20; C. Stokes, Esq., £20 ; Doctor Henry, £20 ; Colonel Scott, £20 ; Diocesan Church Building Society,; £150 ; Parent Society, £85 ; receipts from a German Tree, £40. The estimate of Mr. James Griffiths, of Eldersfield, for £1,369 was accepted, the architect being Mr. Francis Niblett. The foundation stone was laid on July 11th, 1855, by the Rector’s eldest son. The porch was given by Lord Beauchamp in addition to his subscription.

There was, of course, a great gathering on the occasion of the opening of the new Church. The report in a newspaper says “A procession of the Clergy and the Choir from Eastnor, all habited in surplices, and preceded by school-children carrying banners, moved at the appointed time from the Rectory, and on entering the Churchyard chanted the 134th Psalm”. We have the names of the Clergy who took part in the service, but they would not be known to the present generation.

The Organ was added in 1864, at a cost of £115, and another £50 was spent on it in 1914.

To supply a long-felt want, half an acre of additional land was added to the Churchyard in 1886, the ground being given by Lord Beauchamp.

The following inscriptions are on the Church bells:—

Treble:	“Peace and good neighbourhood”. 1743.
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	“Prosperity to this parish”. 1743.

3<sup>rd</sup>: “John Jeffes and Thos. Perkins, Churchwárden’s”. 1739.  
 4<sup>th</sup>: “The Revd. Mr. John Rodd, Rector”. 1743.  
 5<sup>th</sup>: “Geo. Slaughter and John Reeve, Churchwardens”. 1743.  
 Tenor: “John Jeffs and Richard Aston, Churchwardens”. 1793.

Four of the bells were cast by Abraham Rudhall, of Gloucester, the great bell-founder of the time. His works were situated in that part of the town where the Bell Hotel and Bell Lane are now. The bells were rehung in 1893, and various repairs were then done to the framework and fittings. (Both have now disappeared)

There is an old couplet to this effect

“Reap wheat, and mow barley,  
 say the bells of Redmarley”.

There is a very old register belonging to the Church dating from 1539, and also an old chalice for Holy Communion dated 1571, which has a cover used at one time as the paten.

The following “charter” may be seen in the Manuscript Room at the British Museum: “Lease for 31 years by Walter D’abitot of Ridmarley gent. to Richard Watts, of the same, husbandman, of a cottage in Ridmarley, rent 7/4 and 1 lb. of wax yearly to the rood (rood) of the Church of Ridmarley, 1530”. It will be as well to explain that the rood was the figure of Our Lord on the Cross, which was placed on a screen or beam which separated the Chancel from the nave of the Church. It was customary to burn lights on the rood-beam, and all the people had to contribute towards the expense of the wax.

The following two returns with reference to the Church are interesting:—

(1.) “Inventory of Church goods at Ridmarley D’Abitott, SS. Bartholomew and Luke R.,” in the 6th year of the reign of Edward VI. (viz. A.D. 1553).

“A chalyshe (chalice).

A pyxe of Sylver. (A pyxe was the box in which the Host was kept).

ij crosses of brasse.

iiij sensers of brasse.

ij copes the oon (one) red sylke and ye other red velvet.

iiij payre of vestments the oon thryd of turkye satten, a vesture for a deacon.

iiij bells in the steeple.

H.P. 230 (H.P. means houselling people, or Communicants). Chantry of Our Lady”.

(2.) “From the state of the Bishoprick of Worcester in the year 1782 and continued to the year 1808.

Ridmarley D’Abitot R. St. Bartholomew.

Circum (circumference) 12M. 80 families. 3 of them Papists.

Div. Ser on Sundays. Morn at 11, and Even at 3.

Holy Sac (Sacrament) 4 (4 times a year). Commun 20.

Off. Mon (Offertory-money) to the sick and infirm. Catech in Lent.

Ch. Chan. and P. (Parsonage) House in good repair.

No School or any charitable endowment”.

Reference is made in the first of these returns to a “Chantry” which used to be in the Church. A Chantry was a chapel in a Church for the celebration of masses for the soul of some person departed this life. We know that the Chantry-priest at Redmarley who said these masses was paid annually £5 7s. 11d., which seems a small sum.

### **THE CHURCHWARDENS**

One of the old Church account books contains a list of the Churchwardens of the parish from the year 1654. This is going back a long way. The first name is “Thomas D’Abitott”. This list shews that there was a change of Churchwardens every year, two fresh ones being always appointed. We gather that the occupiers of the different holdings took it in turn to serve the office. Thus we find “Richard Daniel for Glinch and John Rostal for his own” appearing as Churchwardens in 1680. “For his own” (which occurs several times) would evidently mean that the property on which he lived was his own. The smaller holdings quite as frequently supplied Churchwardens as the larger ones. Thus in 1686 we find “Thomas Stubbs for the Parke gate” ; in 1707 “James Cooper for Paford” ; in 1710 “Wm. Dobins for the Green” ; in 1715 “Samuel Hay for Playley Green House” ; and in 1755 “John Perkins for Todimus”. This proves that in some cases there were dwelling-houses where there are now only farm-buildings. In 1737 we meet with “Anthony Drew for Mrs. Dobbins”, which shews that as a woman was not eligible for the office of Churchwarden, a man took her place.

### **THE SCHOOLS**

Lowbands School was the first public attempt at education in the parish. It was built in 1846, and was intended to do duty for the parish of Pendock as well as for our own. .

The Rev. James Commeline, junior, was the prime mover, his donation towards it being £111. Lord Beauchamp gave £50, and the piece of “waste” land on which the premises are built. The Committee of Council contributed £64, and the National Society £40. There were a few other subscribers as well, the total cost being £302. The hauling was done by the farmers free of expense. The contractor was Mr. Joseph Griffiths, of Eldersfield. Two years later the attendance reached the very creditable number of 63, the scholars coming from the parishes of Redmarley, Pendock, Staunton, and Eldersfield.

Next we hear of the building not being large enough for the number of children, and in the year 1868 Lord Beauchamp agreed to enlarge it at his own expense. We believe that it was then made double its original size, the beam running across the centre marking where the original building came to.

No doubt it had long been felt that the Lowbands School was situated on one side of the parish, and in 1860 the Rev. E. H. Niblett set to work to collect funds for building the Upper School. The cost of it is put down at £200, which was raised by voluntary subscriptions, but the list of subscribers has not been met with. It was built on a piece of the glebe which was conveyed over. The stone of which it was built was raised in “Yew Hill”, near the Gravel Pits, and was hauled to the site by the farmers.

Owing to the demands of the Government Inspectors, a good deal was spent on the Schools in the early part of this century. £312 was expended at the Upper School in building new offices, coal-house, and cloak-room, putting up the partition across the room, and making a new large window at the north end. The sum of £208 was spent on the Lowbands School for similar improvements. It has already been stated that this School was built on a piece of “waste” land which was conveyed over by Lord Beauchamp for the purpose of a School, but as it was disused ‘for some time it gave him the right by Act of Parliament to take possession of it. A small rent was paid for it for a good many years afterwards, and when Lord Beauchamp sold the bulk of his property in the parish in 1919, Lowbands School and Schoolhouse were sold with the rest. The Diocesan Church Education Society bought it for £350, which sum was made up as follows:—

	£ s. d.
Subscription by the Redmarley School	
Managers from funds in hand	50 0 0
Church Board of Finance at Worcester	105 0 0
Church Education Society at Worcester	125 0 0
National Society	70 0 0
	£350 0 0

### **THE BATTLE, AUGUST, 1644**

A battle was fought at Redmarley during the Civil Wars between the King and the Parliament. The City of Gloucester at that time was held for the latter, General Massey being in command there. Two Royalist forces set out, one from Hereford and the other from Worcester, with the intention of combining and attacking Gloucester, but they missed each other. The Hereford contingent, it would seem, made a feeble attack in the direction of Gloucester, but were driven back and retreated by Brand Green and Payford to Redmarley, followed by the Parliament troops. The next day the battle took place somewhere near the Church, but the Royalist force was defeated, and the survivors fled in confusion to Ledbury. The Worcester detachment now appeared on the scenes but too late to take part in the encounter, and General Massey, not deeming it prudent to engage this fresh force, retired to Gloucester.

These few remarks will make clearer the two accounts which there are of the battle. One of these is by John Corbett, described as “a preacher of God’s Word”, who was incumbent of St. Mary de Crypt, in Gloucester. It will be seen that he was on the side of the Parliament. He states “late in the afternoon our party began to advance, and at High-leaden passage got over the brook. The enemy (i.e., the King’s party) were quartered in Hartpury field, and commanded to lie close. Our men came up to a bridge within a quarter of a mile of them in the dark night, gave them an alarm and took ten prisoners, and another party of our horse that quartered near the Lawne (Corse Lawn) took divers that were sent that way to plunder. But their main body evaded us, and with great speed marched that night to Redmarley, and we, after a tedious wandring to find them out, came to Eldersfield, where we rested two or three houres to refresh ourselves and horses.

“At break of day we prepared to advance upon the enemy, when the beating of their drums minded us of an early march and by six of the clock we came up to their rendezvous ; their horse consisted of an 160 and their foot of 850, and of them 640 muskettiers by their own confession; all drawn up into battalions, and the hedges lined with muskettiers. To beat them out of their advantages, the Governor (Massey) divided the Foot into two bodies and drew out the Horse into single troops because the frequent inclosures would not make roome for a larger forme (the enemy in the meanwhile plying us with small shot). Having disposed of his own troop, with the 100 Muskettiers from Tewkesbury newly come in, and many of the country inhabitants armed with muskets, and good resolutions, to one part of the town, he drew the Gloucester muskettiers about an 160 and the greatest part of the horse to another place of best advantage. Himself advanced with this party and led the van, which consisted of three troops these were seconded with three other

troops left to the command of Captain Backhouse. Some of the Foot were placed in each flank of the Horse, and one single troop with the rest of the Foot brought up the Reare. They were drawn out into this posture, marched up to the face of the enemy, the Governor in the van ; next unto him Collonel Harley in the head of his own troop, gallantly, and in good order, gave the charge, beat them from their ambuscadoes, put their horse to flight, and in the instant of time got into the van of their Foot, cut down and took them prisoners, that few escaped our hands. The Horse and Foot, both Officers and Souldiers, plaid their parts with resolution and gallantry. The Enemy was left to our execution, and their whole body broken and shattered, many wounded and slain, but more taken. Major-General Min was slain on the place with an 170. Among the Officers Lieftenant Collonel Passy, then mortally wounded, Major Buller, 7 Captains, 4 Lieftenants, 5 Ensignes, 12 Sergeants, and neer 300 common Souldiers were taken prisoners. Some troops advanced in the pursuit five miles from the place of the fight, but upon the view of a strong party from Worcester that came to joyn with Collonel Min, they were enforced to leave the pursuit and prepare for a second encounter. And a strange hand of providence kept asunder the Hereford and Worcester forces, whose joyning would have proved unto us an inevitable destruction. For Lieftenant-Collonel Passie, who commanded this fresh partie of 150 horse and 500 foot, just upon the beginning of the fight, was riding up to Mm's Brigade to bring news of their arrivall, but happily intercepted and wounded by our Scouts, and left for dead ; so that neither enemy had the knowledge of each other's condition, but the Worcester forces advanced within two flight shot of the place, whilst our men were scattered here and there in the chase of a vanquished enemy, nor did the Governor, when the first brunt was over expect an after-birth. The body of Collonel Min was brought to Gloucester and vouchsafed an honorable buriall". John Pitt has been referred to before in this history, and he used to tell a strange story to the effect that Oliver Cromwell was once shot at as he was crossing Drury Lane, and his would-be slayer said, "Here goes for a fat Minge". Now, it is rather curious that in another account of the battle we read "So going down the steps at the Inn at Redmarley he (Colonel Min) ordered the soldiers to draw up with speed to march towards the enemy, the Colonel leading them. At a small distance a country man concealed himself in a hollow tree with a birding-piece in his hand, when they came near, the man knowing the Colonel, fired at him, and he died immedia tely ; the soldiers did not perceive whence the bullet came". There is no doubt then that Pitt's story had to do with the death of Colonel Min, as the man who fired at him knew who he was, and must have exclaimed: "Here goes for a fat Minge".

There is an entry in the old register of the burial of some of the soldiers after the battle, which runs as follows:—

“1644.	Soldiers slaine 9.	August 3.
	And more 5.	August 4.
	And 1.	August 6.
	And 2.	August 8”.

Between 2,000 and 3,000 must have taken part in the fight, for the Hereford force numbered 1,010, and the Parliament troops, one would suppose, must have been of equal strength, while the troops from Worcester were 650.

It is said that some men were cutting wheat in a field at Hazeldine when the fight began, but when the cannon-balls came flying over their heads, they took to their heels !

The marks on the south side of the Church Tower are supposed by some to have been made by the weapons being sharpened thereon before the battle. There are exactly similar marks on Yardley Church in this county which are attributed to the same cause.

It may have been noticed that in the first of the accounts of the battle, Redmarley is described as a “town”, and it is so described in other old documents. The story runs that “Oliver Cromwell beat it down”.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

### POPULATION

In	1801	was	689.
„	1811	„	775.
„	1841	„	981.
„	1851	„	1192.
„	1861	„	1265.
„	1882	„	1000.
„	1891	„	923.
„	1901	„	857.
„	1911	„	846.
„	1921	„	722.

When studying these numbers it should be borne in mind that the Chart ist allotments at Lowbands were started in 1845, which brought a number of fresh people into the parish, and in consequence the population in 1851 increased by more than 200.

Some interesting details respecting the population in 1801 are to be found in one of the Church registers. There were then 126 inhabited houses occupied by 133 families, while there were eight houses not inhabited. 510 persons are entered as “chiefly employed in agriculture”, and 72 were employed “in trade and manufactures”.

### **MURDER OF GOODE**

The following story used to be well known in the parish:

There was once a house and property not far from the Lottery called “Alford’s”, which belonged to one Thomas Goode. At his death it was to pass to his nephews, Richard and John Lane. They could not however wait for the old man to die in the ordinary course of nature, so they determined to put him out of the way. With this intent, the Lanes waylaid Goode in a field near the Chapel and shot him. They escaped to Bristol, but were followed by Owen, the Redmarley constable, and were caught there and taken to Worcester. Whilst in prison they “willed away” the property. They were hanged at Gallowsbrook in this parish on March 10th, 1800.

### **AN OLD COACH**

A four-horse coach used to pass through this parish years ago. It started from Gloucester, reaching here at 8 or 9 in the morning. Horses were changed at “The Feathers” at Staunton, and again at Ledbury, thence it went to Hereford, and returned at night, reaching Redmarley about 9. It seems to have ceased running about 1850.

### **THE WORKHOUSE**

The present Post Office was the parish Workhouse once upon a time. There appears to be little doubt that the site was taken off the Churchyard. Its ownership used to be a bone of contention, but the matter was referred to the Local Government Board in 1890, and their verdict was “It must now be regarded as a charity for the benefit of the poor of the parish, of which the Rector and Churchwardens are by custom Trustees”, which has now been changed to two Trustees appointed by the Parish Council.

### **THE MEMORIAL CROSS**

The parishioners subscribed £266 to erect the Cross at Hyde Park Corner in memory of the men of the parish who fell in the Great War. Sir George and Lady Bullough gave £100, and Mr. and Mrs. Barratt £70. The Cross itself is of Portland stone, and the base of Cheltenham stone. It is an exact copy of an old

Cross near Wantage. It was unveiled by Sir George Bullough on July 10th, 1920, and there was an impressive service on the occasion.

### **THE VILLAGE WELL**

The people who lived in the village used to be obliged to fetch their water from what is known as “Anchor Well”, near Cob’s Hill. Miss Laura Commeline, a daughter of a former Rector, bought the village-well for their convenience. Before that it had been private property. It is cut through the solid rock to a depth of 45 yards.

### **THE WAKES**

The memory of the Wakes has nearly or quite died out. They were the most disgraceful scenes, and were held on the first Sunday before St. Bartholomew’s Day on the village green (which was enclosed in 1838). There was much drunkenness and fighting on those occasions, the spectators, they say, climbing some pear-trees to watch the fights! Persons were then hired for hop-picking. It was a good thing when the Wakes came to an end.

### **GLOVE-MAKING**

A notice of an important industry may well find a place in this history. Glove-making was once in vogue in Redmarley and the neighbouring parishes. The gloves were made for Dent and Allcroft, of Worcester. Their agent used to come to the “Rose and Crown” twice a week to serve the gloving, and as much as £80 or £90 was paid away in the week. Machines however came in, which ultimately ruined the trade in handmade gloves.

### **TRADESMEN**

It is surprising the number of tradesmen that there were in the parish years ago. About the middle of the 19th century there were 6 tailors, 13 shoemakers, 15 masons, 18 carpenters, 5 thatchers, and 7 blacksmiths. Instead of buying things in town people then had them made at home.

### **EMPTY HOUSES**

With a decrease in population there will naturally be unoccupied houses. The Rev. H. M. Niblett and Mr. Nunn counted them up in 1918, and it was found that there were 18 empty that were inhabitable, while there were no less than 65

others which had either been pulled down or were uninhabitable; 25 of these were at Lowbands. Mr. Nunn could remember all these standing and occupied.

### **STEEPLECHASES**

The Ledbury Hunt Steeplechases were held at Redmarley Park Farm from 1885 to 1920, i.e., for 35 years.

### **LOWBANDS ALLOTMENTS**

This history would not be complete without an account of the Lowbands estate, and Mr. How, who was one of the original settlers there, drew up the following statement: "In the year 1845 the well-known Chartist agitator Feargus O'Connor and a Manchester solicitor of the name of Roberts were the promoters of the Land Society, designated the Chartist Co-operative Land Society. The objects were to purchase land in large quantities, to divide each estate into 2, 3, and 4 acre allotments, on which cottages were to be built, the land cultivated for the reception of its members, and from £15 to £30 aid money given to each allottee on location, subject to a perpetual fee farm rent-charge. These promises and objects seemed to people unacquainted with farming so tempting that in the course of a few months 70,000 members had subscribed more than £100,000. Farms were purchased and cottages built in different parts of the country. One of these farms is the Lowbands Estate, which consists of about 160 acres, divided into 46 allotments. The members who had subscribed £2 12s. 0d., £3 15s. 0d., or £5 4s. 0d., were entitled to ballot for location in August, 1847. The allottees took possession of their cultivated farms, and received the aid-money promised, besides a further loan of similar amounts. In September, 1848, one year's rent-charge was due and demand made for it, but the great results promised by farming these small allotments had by this time proved a delusion, and no rent could be paid by any one of the occupants from the produce of the land".

### **ORIGINS OF PLACE NAMES**

The names of "HYDE PARK CORNER", "DRURY LANE", and "PALL MALL" were given by a Mr. Stokes, who was surveyor of turnpike roads over a large district.

### **COB'S HILL**

"Cob" or "Cop" is an old English word which signifies head or top. There are numerous instances of hilly spots which are called "Cob".

### **THE CHAPEL FARM**

There is no doubt that it was so called on account of a Chapel having been there once. Nash says: "There was formerly a chapel at Inneston or Inardeston within this parish. About the year 1480 the inhabitants belonging to it sued Thomas Denham, Rector of Ridmarley, for not finding a chaplain at his own expense to officiate therein; they were cast, and cost and charges given against them in behalf of the parson". The Victoria history says: "The Chapel at Innerstone seems to have been disused before the Dissolution (i.e. of the Monasteries), and its site may be marked by the present Chapel Farm".

### **THE SCAR**

This denotes a face of rock or cliff. Compare Scarborough.

### **PAYFORD**

It was spelt in the same way a long time ago. In a deed dated 1413 we meet with these words: "Grant to John, son of Agnes Hoke, of a cottage and garden at Payforde in Rudmarleye"; and it is also called "Payford" in a deed belonging to the Hanford family in the year 1568. Two derivations have been suggested, the first being that it took its name on account of toll being paid there in the olden times, and the other that it was so called because the approach to it was "paved" or pitched.

At the beginning of the last century there was a wooden bridge at Payford, which got into a state of bad repair. Instead of restoring it, the parish paid Mr. Stokes the sum of £30 in the year 1815 for the right of using a stone bridge there belonging to him as a bridle-road only. Mr. Stokes erected a private carriage-gate at the bridge, and also a bridlegate for the use of the public. On the last day of the nineteenth century Payford Bridge was washed away. The river was in flood, and the structure was unable to resist the rush of water. It was rebuilt at a cost of £429.

**THE LEZAR**, near John's Green. This is only a corruption of "Leasow", which is the name given to it in the Tithe map. "Leasow" is an old English word meaning pasture, and it appears again in such names as "Pig's Leaze" and "Oxleaze".

### **LOWBANDS**

It was written "Lowburn" in an Ordnance Survey map of 1830, so that it took its name from the brook or "burn" which flows by Blackford Mill.

**THE BACCUS**, near Lowbands School, has nothing to do with Bacchus, the merry god, though it was till lately known as "The Angel Inn"! It ought to be

written and pronounced “Backhouse”, i.e., the house which lies back from the road.

### **BLACKFORD MILL**

The origin of this name is obvious. Before a bridge was erected there the little stream had to be forded, and we are told that the passage through it was black and muddy, so quite naturally it was known as the “black ford”.

**BERYN**, a puzzling word indeed, but the proper spelling is “Bare End”.

### **EGG’S TUMP**

“Egg” is a word which means a hill. In Eldersfield there is an “Egg’s hay”, and in Birtsmorton an “Agg-hill”, which is more often known as “Egg-hill”. Both these fields are on hilly ground. “Tump” is a local word denoting a small, steep hill.

**CHURCHES FARM** took its name from a former owner of the property. The table of Benefactions in the Church states that “William Church did by will, bearing date in the year 1727, give and bequeath the sum of £1 a year to be paid out of an estate called ‘Churches’ in order to put out poor children to school”.

### **CARPENTER’S**

A family of this name is found in the parish in 1608 also a family of the name of GRIMER in 1275.

## LIST OF PATRONS AND INCUMBENTS

### WITH DATE OF APPOINTMENT

Patrons	Incumbents
Gaifridus D'Abetot. lord of Rydmerley.	(Adam de Hernwynton, 1305 ( Henricus de Hernwynton, ( April 26th, 1306. ( Petrus de Barton, May 14th, 1319 (Thomas de Homptone, Nov. 1st, 1320.
John Sapy, knight.	( Walterus de Rosse, 1358 (Robertus Amyas, Oct. 21, 1361.  Thomas Sibylle, Oct. 25th, 1379. Gaifridus Buune, Oct. 21st, 1381
The King, on account of the minority of the heir of the Lord Le Despencer.	( ( William Hoke, May 14th, 1411.
Ralph, Lord de Seudeley, Treasurer of England.	John Kyng, Sept. 20th, 1446.
John Beauchamp and William Mountford, knights ; John Noresse and John Nanfan, esquires of the King's body and William Monston, esquires, coffeoffes of that puissant Lady Isabella, late Countess of Warwick.	( ( ( Michael Trewynard, April 28th, 1456. ( Thomas Denham, 1466. ( ( (
The King.	Robert Saunder, Nov. 28th, 1485.
Thomas Sherle, gentleman, by transfer of Edmund, Bishop of London.	( ( John Mery, Jan. 9th, 1556. (
For this turn Thomas Sherle gent.	Richard Stone, Nov. 9th, 1579.
King James I	Thomas Baldwin, Nov. 28th, 1608.

	(William Kimberley was the Minister during the Common ealth).
Henry Jackson, of Feckingham	Decimus Jackson, Jan. 29th, 1662.
Margaret Jackson	John Bullocke, March 6th, 1674.
Margaret Bullocke, widow.	Samuel Birchett, July 12th, 1686.
Margaret Birchett, widow.	(Thomas Rodd, A.B., Feb. 24th, 1719. (John Rodd, June 19th, 1730.
Francis Morton, of Eastnor, gent.	(John Treherne, B.A., May 2 1st, 1745. (John Morton, B.A., March 5th, 1750.
Michael Bidduiph.	John Howe, M.A., May 23rd, 1789.
Fanny Monro.	James Commeline, M.A., Feb. 13th, 1800 (the father).
Kitty Niblett, widow.	James Commeline, M.A., 1836 (the son).
Daniel John Niblett, of Haresfield, gent.	Edward Henry Niblett, B.A., 1853.
John Daniel Thomas Niblett, of Haresfield.	William Lewis Mills, M.A., 1878.
Do.	Henry Morton Niblett, M.A., May 24th, 1882.
Rev. Henry Morton Niblett.	Basil Morton Niblett, M.A., June 11th, 1925.
Rev. B. M. Niblett	Paul Gordon Young, Oct. 11th, 1959
Exors. of Rev. B. H. Niblett.	John James Reginald Burley, F.Ph.S. June 14th, 1974.
Mrs E. Niblett and the Bishop of Gloucester.	William John Moxon, M.A. April 19th 1977. Rector of Redmarley and Pauntley, Upleadon and Oxenhall, and Priest in-Charge of Bromesberrow.



Old Work House — now known as Church House.  
*[reproduced from the Victoria History, by permission].*