

STEDMAN COUSINS



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No. 22

Dear Cousins,

I think we all agreed that it was a good weekend of fun, discovery, not to mention, good food.

On Saturday, our first “port of call” was Yarkhill Church. After checking back, we realised it was 11 years since we were last there for the service of dedication following the installation of the new bell in memory of Fabian Stedman. On a previous occasion, some of us had climbed the tower to see the bell being put into place.



The organ at Yarkhill



Interior view



Yarkhill court where Henry James Stedman lived

For our lunch stop, we went to Kenchester Water Gardens. It is so lovely there, some of us felt we could have stayed the whole afternoon, enjoying the fountains, fish and water lilies in abundance.





However, we really wanted to try to find the remains of Edward Stedman's farmhouse in Cwmygerwyn valley, if it was possible. Only Dave and Roger were brave enough to go through a hedge and drop down a steep slope into the valley below. They were delighted to find two pieces of wall which they hoped were those of the farmhouse.



Dave's photo of the wall.

However, Dave now thinks they are the remains of another house called Rock Cottage that was close by the farmhouse. 😊 We hope to have further news on this in the near future.

There were a few hiccups in the menu arrangements for our meal together at The Horse and Jockey. However, these were soon resolved and we all had a good evening together, punctuated by Bob's jokes, which he said he would repeat next year as we are most likely to have forgotten them by then.



Sunday began with a visit to Hill House Farm in Corfton, where Caleb I and family farmed in the early 1700s. Mr Pugh, the farmer and his sister, were very welcoming and shared stories about the farm's history that they knew of. Dave gave them copies of some documents relating to the farm in the early 1700s. We asked about the chapel. It seems that the chapel/church was originally built in the 13C but was rebuilt in the 17C by a man who didn't want to go to the local church (Mr Pugh said the story is that this person had probably 'fallen

out' with the vicar so had built his own church on his farm land.) This could well have been our Caleb! The building is now used as a grain barn, but it is still possible to see where two windows had been. Mr Pugh had a picture of the chapel as it had been.(See below)



The older part of the farmhouse



stables



Corfton Chapel as it is now..



Corfton chapel

We were going to see the mound (also on the farm) where the 12C castle had stood, but time ran out, so we hope to visit that next time.

Our lunch at The Swan in Aston Munslow was arranged for 12 noon, and certainly lived up to The Swan's reputation for good food.



Having been well fed, we went on to Wilderhope Manor (with our 'Smallman' hats on). There are many original features remaining from this Elizabethan manor house including a beautiful circular staircase, each step of which is made from a solid block of wood, leading from the ground floor to the attics and capped with a conical roof.



From this old photo of the rear of the house, you can see the conical roof of the spiral staircase.



Some of the plasterwork showing the initials FS and ES being the initials of Francis Smalman and his wife Ellen, (the builders of the house in the late 1500s), can be seen on the ceilings.



Long-bow rack



Garderobe or toilet

Fortunately, there are modern conveniences for those staying at the youth hostel now, you will be pleased to know!



I hope you have enjoyed a glimpse of the lovely weekend we had, and hope those who were unable to join us this year, will be able to next time.

Best wishes
Sandra