

Kempsey Long Ago

Over three thousand years ago most of Britain was deeply forested. Wolves, wild boar, other animals and a few humans roamed the land.

If you were looking for a place to set up home, you couldn't find a better place than the raised ground where our church is today. Everything a settlement needed could be found here. Water near to hand to drink and for transport, fish and game for food and an easily defensible position, which was made even stronger by the building of an earth wall, called an 'agger', around the whole site.

We know that the early settlers, of the bronze and Iron Age, were here on this site. For in Worcester Museum are artifacts from both these times. A piece of iron, probably a cloak clasp dated 1500 to 800 BC were dug up. In January 1956 fragments of a hand made pottery vessel, of the early Iron Age were found at Court Meadow, while some years ago a bronze spear-head of this period was dredged up from the River Severn.

A Celtic chieftain, called Kemys, obviously knew he was on to a good thing, for he built a settlement here, that had the river on one side, the brook on the other and marshy land around half of the 'agger'. Perfect for defence and for keeping wild animals out and tame animals in. The settlement was called Kemys Eye (an eye being a marshy place or a place of sluggish moving water.) From which, with a few changes in spelling over the years, we get our present name, Kempsey.



Romans

A minor Roman camp was built on the old settlement to guard the road from the north, the Saltway, and also an important ford which led towards British Camp. The camp could be seen from Malvern, as it was built on the raised ground above the flood plain, and provided a deterrent to the local tribes living across the Severn.

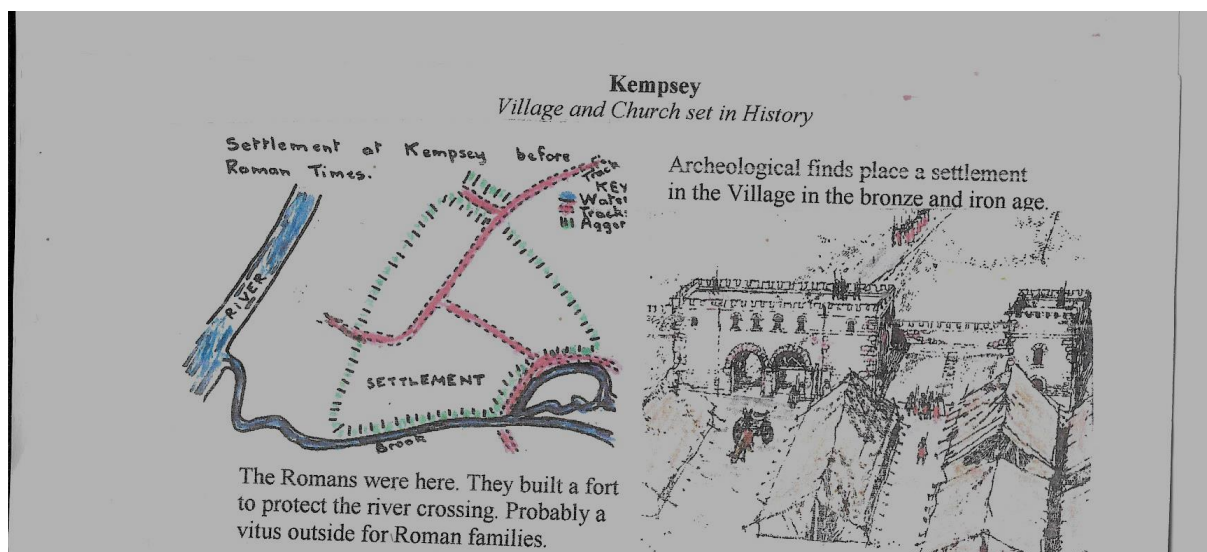
The fort held about sixteen hundred men and we know that they used the ford, because several light wooden piles, such as they put down to reinforce their footholds, were found during river dredging. It was very possible that a 'vicus', a village, grew up around the fort to provide accommodation for the soldiers' women and also shops or an inn. Perhaps the very beginning of our village.

Many traces of Roman occupation have been found, coins from the time of the Emperors Caligula and Domitian, and pottery of several kinds both local and imported have been dug up in the gravel pits.

We know that part of the second legion was based in Kempsey as a Roman brick was discovered inscribed 'LEG II CONSTANTINO'. A Roman mile-stone, dedicated to the emperor Augustus, probably set up in his reign (308-337AD), was found on site and is now in Worcester Museum.

There was a Roman burial ground near the camp and one of the most interesting graves was that of a Romanised Britain, perhaps a chieftain. It contained fragments of the bones of a horse and a shoulder brooch, burial urns and many fragments of pottery. There was evidence of a villa on the site too.

The Romans appear to have been more enterprising than the County Council, for they crossed the river at Kempsey by means of a bridge like structure. In 1844, dredging of the Severn revealed the remains of oaken piles and planking stretching halfway across the river: and here a Roman spearhead was found.



Saxons

The Romans were in this country until about 410 AD, and then with trouble at home they were recalled. For a time, there was comparative peace, but for hundreds of years the peoples of England were the subject of raids from the northern isles, from the Norsemen, Saxons and Vikings.

In 538 two Saxon brothers sacked Worcester and it is probable that the Roman fort at Kempsey fell at this time. There were also further raids up the River Severn in 680 and 868. There is a field at Brookend called Danes Close which may be connected to these raids.

The records for this time are very meagre. But we know some of the Saxons settled in Kempsey and the surrounding area, for although they have not left many traces of their occupation, the evidence is there in the local place names.

A man might build an enclosure, which was called a "ton". So we have Napleton or Nappleton where he grew apples and nearby was Pirton where pears were cultivated. If a man built a house he would name it a hall – Broomhall, Stonehall, Woodhall and Baynhall. If he was less important his dwelling would be smaller, and he would call it a "cot", as we find in Draycot. Trees were important landmarks, so if someone lived near a big ash tree, he would be described as living "atten ash", so the place name would be known as the Nash.

So, Saxons changed from Raiders into peaceful settlers and became part of the general population.

The Church

Kempsey was part of the kingdom of Mercia and when this was converted to Christianity in 661AD, the village became involved in the changes this conversion brought about.

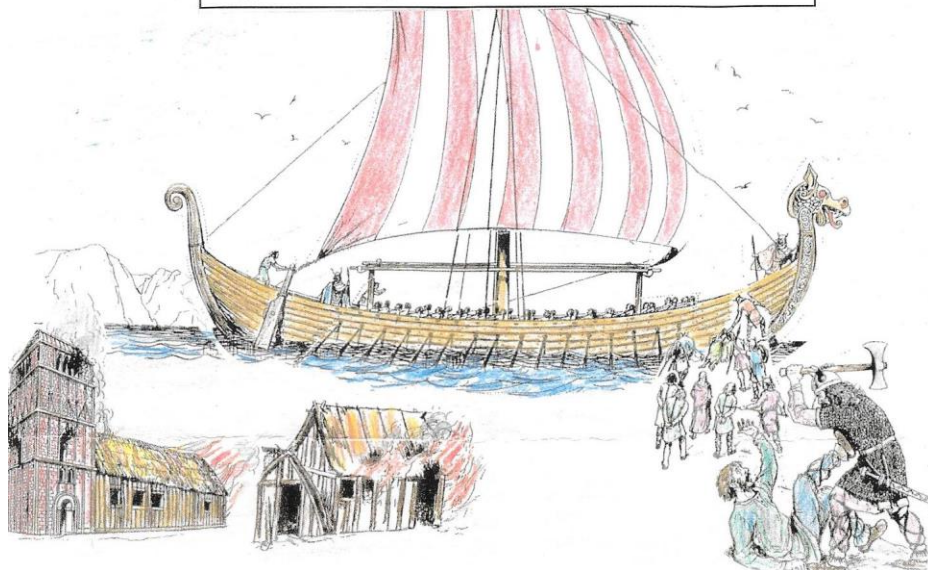
In 655 several missionary priests arrived in Worcester and formed an early monastic community. Twenty five years later in 680, a monk from St Hilda's Abby at Whitby, named Bosul, was sent to be the first Bishop of Worcester. The same year a small religious community was settled in Kempsey, with probably a small wooden church. This was later burned by Danish ships travelling up the river Severn to sack Worcester.

In 799 there was a monastery in Kempsey under the guidance of Abbot Balthun and in 868 a chantry chapel was built as a thank offering for the departure of the Danes. Unfortunately, this proved to be a mistake and the raiders came back up the Severn and sacked, burned and practically destroyed Worcester. No doubt the community at Kempsey was exterminated at this time.

When the monastery was destroyed the bishops turned the monastic lands into a memorial park and the bishop's palace was here in Saxon times. The river must have been very busy at this time as monks and bishop were rowed from Worcester to Kempsey.

There was a chapel attached to the palace for Bishop Leofsy died here in 1033. A definite mention of a church here can be found on documents of the day, during the time of Bishop John, who was Bishop of Worcester from 1151 to 1158. So we can say that Christian worship has been carried out on or near this spot for over a thousand years.

This picture shows a Danish warship pillaging a village. The village would be burned and anything of value taken. The women and the young people would be sold into slavery and the men slaughtered.



Domesday Book 1067

The monasteries of Worcester and Kempsey were joined, and together with adjoining parishes formed the great Manor of Kempsey, in the hundred of Oswaldstow. The Bishops of Worcester were the Lords of the Manor and retained that position for over a hundred years.

William, Duke of Normandy, claimed he was the rightful king of England. In 1066 he defeated King Harold at Hastings and was crowned king in Westminster Abbey on Christmas day. He proceeded to grant most of the lands belonging to the Saxon nobility to his followers, with permission to build castles to control the local population. Saxon bishops were deprived of their sees and replaced by the King's Norman chaplains. In effect Anglo-Saxon England seemed to have ceased to exist.

The exception was the Saxon Bishop of Worcester, the Holy Wulstan, which was good news for Kempsey. Others were not so lucky.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles says of William that in 1067, he:-*"let his men harry all that they went over – he promised good and did."*

The Chronicles also recorded that in 1085 – *"at Gloucester in midwinter – the king had deep speech with his counsellors – and sent men all over England to each shire...to find out...what or how much each landowner held in land and livestock and what it was worth."*

William sent his commissioners throughout the land, and he was so thorough or perhaps untrusting, that he even sent other commissioners to shires they did not know, to check their predecessors' survey. Because it was the authoritative register of rightful possession of people, land and property, the "natives" called it

The Domesday Book.

A priest is recorded in the survey for Kempsey, so it is a fair assumption that a village church was in use at the time. It is also interesting that the value of the village had halved from £16 to £8 as a result of the conquest.

The Domesday Book

In this Hundred the Bishop of this church holds KEMPSEY.

24 hides which pay tax. Of these hides, 5 hides are waste.

In lordship 2 ploughs; 1

5 villagers and 27 smallholders with 16 ploughs.

A priest;

4 male slaves and 2 female slaves.

Meadow, 40 acres; woodland 1 league long and ½ league wide.

In lordship 13 hides

Value before 1066 £16; now £8.

Royal Visitors

“As we look out over our undulating meadows it is hard to realise that three kings of England were entertained with the hospitality worthy of their state,” and that here in Kempsey, “mitred lords of the manor kept their court in a splendour scarcely less regal.” (R.C. Purton – historical notes.)

Henry II 1154-1189 – the first Plantagenet

Henry II, the man whose hasty words led to the death of Thomas Becket, had inherited a kingdom shattered by two decades of civil war, and a discredited and despised crown. The barons, he knew, were the source of order and injustice. Therefore, it was his consuming aim to re-establish royal power and prestige. To establish a sense of justice was a personal challenge and Henry knew so much law that he frequently sat in judgement in person.

He did not invent juries, royal writs or itinerant judges, but he drew these ideas together, as part of his peace-making strategy into a system of royal justice. Thus, establishing the code of written laws that was to form the basis of the English legal system and was to provide access to the law for ordinary people of the land.

In 1158, Henry observed the Christmas festival in Worcester and was crowned in the cathedral. Putting his crown on the alter he solemnly vowed never to wear it again. History is silent on whether he later removed it. In 1159, King Henry was staying in Kempsey, with his Royal Council (The first time a Royal Council was ever mentioned) to see personally that justice was being observed; and in 1186, he again held court here in Kempsey, staying in the Bishop's palace and worshipping in the church here.

Henry III 1216 – 1272

Henry III was a man of mediocre abilities. The tragedy of his reign was that he possessed a burning ambition and an exalted ideal of his own grandeur.

Henry longed to be a dominant figure on the European stage but lacked even the basic aptitude for battle strategy. His barons resented the heavy taxes they paid to finance his wars and by 1258 his kingdom was bankrupt. Henry's power was wrested from his hands by the barons led by Simon de Montfort. The nobles set up a committee of twenty-four to govern and in 1264 a historic assembly in Westminster Hall set up the first parliament, to control the power of the king.

Henry's attempt at a counter stroke against the barons, failed miserably. His army was routed at Lewes in 1264. The King was captured by de Montfort who retraced his steps to Hereford, with the king, counting on the advance of his son to enable him to surround the king's son, Prince Edward, at Worcester.

Travelling across the Malvern Hills and through the Chase, to avoid the direct road to Worcester, which Bishop Walter de Cantelupe had warned him as guarded, he arrived opposite Kempsey and crossing the river, he lodged at the Bishop's Palace, while his men were brought across in boats. The Bishop said mass for Simon and

King Henry, in Kempsey church, the following morning. Unfortunately for giving the Eucharist to a traitor, de Cantelupe was later excommunicated by the Pope and died out of favour in 1266.

Meanwhile, de Montfort halted at Evesham, for the king was tired and the soldiers were hungry. There on 4th August 1265 Prince Edward attacked and most of de Montfort's army were slain. De Montfort himself did not escape. This battle destroyed the power of the barons for the next forty years, but the parliament set up by de Montfort lived on.

Edward I – 1272-1307

Edward I can be called the first English king of England. Certainly, he spoke French, like all the nobility, and he ruled Gascony, a province of France. But he was born and bred in England and his friends and interests were all English. Handsome, with a kingly bearing, Edward was a masterly general who subdued Wales and added it to his kingdom and had almost completed the conquest of Scotland when he died, gaining the nickname 'Hammer of the Scots'.

However his real greatness was as ruler of his people. Known as the "Law Giver", he suppressed many of the barons' private courts, in which it was hard for a man to get true justice. He checked the churches acquisition of vast amounts of land and he rooted out dishonest sheriffs and judges who were lining their pockets at the expense of those they were meant to serve.

Edward paid many visits to Worcester but we only have three documented times when he stayed in Kempsey. 1276 he stayed here and must have enjoyed it for he went back in 1281, when it is reported that after leaving Worcester he spent three days at Kempsey, where Bishop Gifford had a manor house. The King and Queen were said to have been at Worcester in 1291 and to have been rowed by barge to the episcopal manor house here. Edward was a king respected, obeyed and feared. He was the most formidable king to rule medieval England. He transformed the law and made his crown the richest and most powerful in Europe and we entertained him in Kempsey.

The Civil War

The clash between King and Parliament had been building for many years. Parliament's grievances had multiplied. King Charles raised taxes without the consent of Parliament, imprisoned men without trial, and kept a standing army. There was no platform for public debate and the king was seen as an obstacle to change. By 1640 there were controversial issues concerning religion, politics and trade. Neither side would yield, and the outcome was rapidly leading to war. The civil war, between Royalist forces (Cavaliers) and the Parliamentary troops (Roundheads), started in 1642, and Kempsey was quickly involved. On 22nd September Colonel Nathaniel Fiennes and Colonel Sandys led a detachment of Lord Essex's Parliamentary army across the Severn at Pixham Ferry. One account says that the forces of Prince Rupert beat them on Powick Ham, another that victory went to the Roundheads. Given the known skill of the Prince it seems more likely he was the winner. What we do know is that the fugitives from the battle recrossed the River Severn at Kempsey.

The village was called upon to provision the Royalist garrison in Worcester several times and also helped fortify the city. On 1st February 1644 the junior constable of Kempsey was fined £5 for not sending the full number of labourers to the city's fortification.

In June there was an order to send to the Pied Bull in Sidbury; 2 quarts of oats or pease, 1 fat veal, 1 fat lamb, 1 fat mutton, 1 dozen poultry and 3 or 4 dozen loaves of bread. Further, on April 5th 1645 the constables provided the Commissary General with 36 strikes of wheat, 2 flitches of bacon and had to pay £4 for not supplying cheese.

In 1646 Worcester, under the Royalist Governor, Henry Washington, was besieged by the Parliamentary forces led by Colonel Whaley. The two armies could only support themselves by sending out raiding parties to plunder the neighbourhood for fresh supplies, so that loyalty to each cause soon wore thin for the local population. When the Bishop had to forfeit his property after the execution of Charles I, Kempsey was sold to some friends of Shakespeare for £75.12.6 and in 1649 the rent of Kempsey amounted to £81.12.6 which was raised as follows:

From leaseholders and freeholders	£56.7.7
Rent in wheat (50 bushels at 34)	£ 9. 0. 0
8 bushels of Rye (26 per bushel)	£ 1. 0. 0
292 eggs	£ 5. 0
Fines	£14.9.11

Kempsey was sold again in 1659 for £1812. 5.10 to a certain Christopher Meredith, citizen and stationer of London. After the death of Charles I, England was ruled by the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell for the period of the Commonwealth. The Puritans objected to any kind of pleasure or frivolity and so in 1659, John Redding of Kempsey was fined for "growing, setting and planting tobacco at Kempsey". It has been discovered that Kenelm Winslow, grandfather of the Edward Winslow who sailed in the "Mayflower" to found the puritan Colony in America, was a yeoman farmer and churchwarden at Kempsey. There are now many descendants of the man scattered all over the United States of America.

When James II was deposed and William and Mary came to the throne, a Revolution Elm was planted in Church Street

When Dick Turpin Rode in Kempsey

Tom King a drinking companion of Lord Coventry details to his companion a plan he had laid for robbing that nobleman but which was hardly feasible with a bold and skilful confederate.

When he had explained his views. Turpin readily closed with them

“I like it much” replied he, “here is my hand on it; and for my part of the business, fortune favouring, consider it done.

Leave it all to me – only detain our bird a few minutes at the star, and if I don’t pluck him to the pin feathers, call me a bungler, that’s all”

Matters were soon arranged and King rode forward to the Inn at which the young nobleman was expected. He soon after arrived.

Wine was liberally ordered and a merry hour and a half was passed while Turpin spent the interval in making necessary arrangements for the success of their exploit as follows:

He called on the Blacksmith at the corner of Draycott Lane, Kempsey, throwing him a guinea and demanded an axe. He then proceeded to fell a tree from the avenue of the Temple’s Nash, Kempsey, some three miles from Croome, and put it across the road.

The attendants of the nobleman consisted of his valet and a postilion. They were now entering a narrow lane where long rows of lofty over-arching elms three dense shadows on the roadway. They had advanced some fifty yards, when the horse on which the boy rode suddenly shied and reared at some obstacle on the ground.

The boy rolled from the saddle, the valet leaped from the rumble, and opening the carriage door inquired if his lordship was hurt. His lordship was just enjoying a doze to which the sultriness of the evening and the fumes of the wine had disposed him, when he was awoke by the sudden stoppage.

“what the devil’s the matter now, Stevens? “S’blood a horse down eh Help the lad to get him up, then and be d-d to you. Shut the door fellow; I’m drowsy.”

A minute after Stevens again opened the door.

“My lord” said he almost in a whisper, “we can’t get on; there’s one of the horses disabled by his fall. One would think that t’was done by design, for there’s a small tree across the road, and the bark so peeled off it that the best eyes couldn’t see it, even in the moonlight. Shall I go back to the Star, my lord, ot-“

“Sblood, but the road surveyors hereabouts shall hear of this – the d-d scoundrels! That extortionate numskull, too, the host of the Star, to send a nobleman forward with such floundered catsmeat.”

His lordship, having by this time sworn himself awake, looked out the front window of the vehicle with a languid yawn.

Stevens and the boy mounted the uninjured horse and rode back to the Star. He had scarcely cleared the lane, when a man stepped from behind a tree at the roadside.

“Down on your knees, or I fire!” said he, in a gruff undertone to the valet, at the same time presenting a pistol to his ear.

“And now if you please, we’ll discuss business matters. I must trouble you for your loose cash, my lord – (a purse was handed to him) and now if you please, I’ll take your watch; it’s a handsome one I know – (his lordship drew it slowly from his fob): that diamond ring on your finger too; and I’ll also thank you for the miniature you carry about you of a lovely lady, of whom, my lord, we’ll say nothing – but that I know you have it.”

“Padzooks, Mr Highwayman,” said he. “The picture I’ll not part with, demme – (his lordship grew warm) – and if you’re the blood I take you to be you’ll not insist on it. Name the terms and I’ll redeem my pledged word like a man of honour and a gentleman – demme!”

“Why really,” replied Dick, I’ve wasted too much time already. I forgive you the attempt you made to provide for me in the order world; and as I’ve reason to believe your lordship really has an affection for this picture, and I’ve not wish to disfigure it by breaking its frame. Say thirty guineas. You assent Then an order for thirty guineas on your agent Moreland will do: and I’ll ensure its presentation before your lordship can trouble him with any advice on the subject.”

Lord Coventry drew forth his pocket book, and extracting a leaf, wrote the required order.

Turpin meantime presented the order with all speed at Mr Moreland’s Church House, Severn Stoke (Lord Coventry’s agent) and it was duly honoured. The next night he met his friend Tom King off the London Coach at the lovely village of Broadway, to square up the plunder. Incidentally the miniature was of Mary Thornton.

Facts about Dick Turpin

Richard “Dick” Turpin

Born: 1705 at The Old Post Cottage, Hempstead

Baptised: 21 Sept 1795 Hempstead

Married Mary Millington.

Died: Saturday 7Apr 1739, Blue Boar, Castle Gate, York.

Buried: St. George’s Churchyard, York

Occupation: Highwayman & Horse Thief

Comments: hanged at York

By the age of 30 Turpin had committed crimes of murder and highway robbery. As there was a reward of £200 for his capture, Turpin lay low in Holland. When he returned to England, he went north, where he was unknown, and posed as a horse dealer under the name of Palmer, his mother’s maiden name. On 2 October 1738, he was arrested for shooting a cockerel in the town of Brough. A local labourer challenged him over the incident and Turpin threatened to kill him. As a result, he was arrested and taken to court. He was sent to jail as he could not afford to pay bail. During investigations, evidence of his horse-stealing was uncovered and he was sent to the Debtor’s Prison which now forms part of York Castle Museum. His true identity was finally discovered and, on Saturday 7 April 1739, Turpin was hanged on the York Tyburn which is now part of York Racecourse.

Kempsey Windmill

This is a newspaper article from the Memory Lane column written by Michael Grundy in the Evening News of 10th March 2001, page 12.

Kempsey's star turn takes the wind out of V & A expert

Why is Windmill Lane in Kempsey so called

On the face of it, because it was once the site of a wind-driven structure for milling flour, though you'd be forgiven for finding it difficult to readily confirm this fact.

The truth is that a windmill did, indeed, exist in this location for no fewer than 800 years, though the sturdy structure was pulled down 126 years ago and is obviously a landmark well out of anyone's living memory.

Fortunately, however, a superb photograph of the Kempsey windmill still survives, and such is the atmospheric beauty and rarity of the historic scene that it's one of the prized images in the photography collection of London's renowned Victoria & Albert Museum.

The photograph, as artistic as any Victorian landscape painting, was taken almost 150 years ago by one of the nation's earliest pioneer photographers, Benjamin Brecknell Turner.

It is believed he captured the Kempsey Windmill on camera sometime between 1852 and 1854, making the rare image almost a century-and-a-half old.

Martin Barnes, the Victoria & Albert Museum's assistant curator of photographs, says it must certainly be the "earliest photograph" taken at Kempsey.

I learned of its existence from a chance meeting in Worcester recently with Ron Sears, whose comparatively modern bungalow home stands on the site of the Kempsey Windmill.

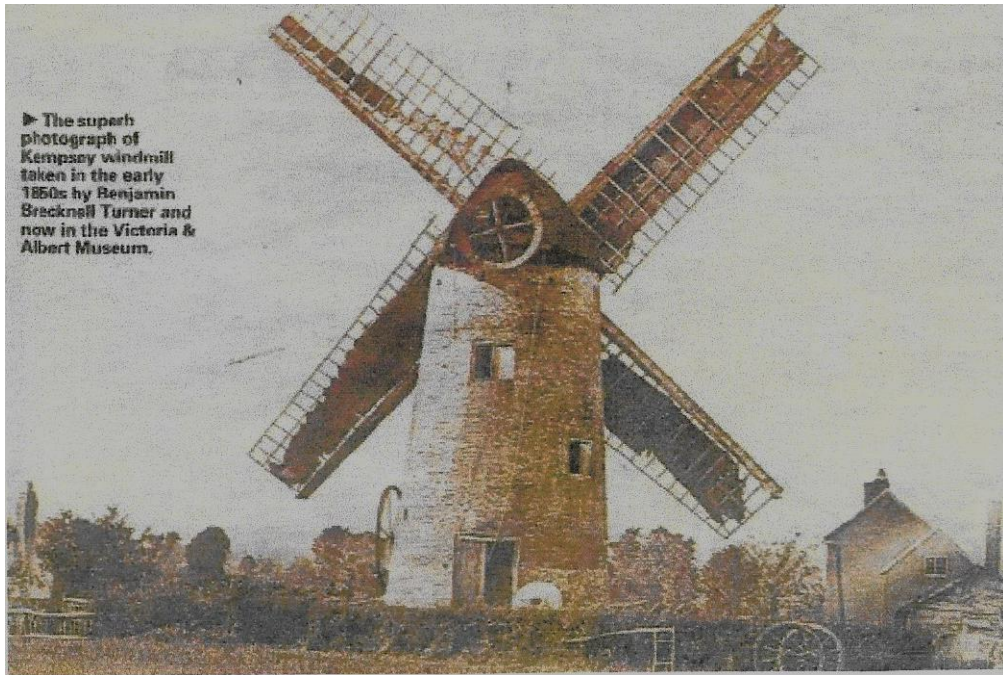
He and wife Jess have lived in Windmill Lane, for 46 years and had a surprise visitor a few months ago when Martin Barnes knocked on their door.

He had come up from London, in search of the site of the Kempsey windmill, featured in a valued collection of Benjamin Brecknell Turner photographs which he cares for at the V&A.

Martin clearly identified the Sears' home and garden as having been the site for which he was searching. Looking at the 1850s photograph, we can see, on the right, a substantial Victorian cottage which still exists though it has since been extended and converted into two homes – those of Sears' neighbours, Brian and Cheryl Ballard, and Bill and Doreen Wood-Honey.

Kempsey History

Martin Barnes was carrying out research for a book he was compiling. Entitled Rural England Through Victorian Lens – Benjamin Brecknell Turner, it is to be published next month by V&A Publications, price £30. Other Worcestershire villages featured in the Benjamin Brecknell Turner collection are Earls Croome, Clerkenleap and Bredicot.



Eighteenth Century

In the eighteenth century, Kempsey was greatly changed, most of the houses were occupied by gentlemen-farmers and the main road was improved. Over twenty coaches passed through every day and they changed horses at Baynall where Mr Blandy had his stables. The common field was enclosed and a group of houses occupied by retired officers of the Army and Navy stood in Kempsey House gardens. Squire Nuttall bought up and demolished these houses to make a fine new garden and Kempsey House was enlarged.

The coming of the railways ruined the prosperity of Kempsey for the line did not pass through the village. The coaches ceased to run, but now that motor vehicles are so widely used, Kempsey is the scene of incessant traffic. The village is growing rapidly and when this was written thirty new council houses were being built, electricity, bathrooms and water supplies were common and life in Kempsey was a continual hum of traffic and people.

The Horse Chestnut in the Church

A famous site in Kempsey was the chestnut tree which grew for seventy years behind the tomb of Sir Edmund Wyld. An extract from "The Rambler in Worcestershire" by John Noake, dated 1848 gives an eye witness report. *"from the top (of the tomb) issues a fine branch of a horse chestnut tree, which has been growing for some years and now seems in flourishing condition. The appearance of a tree growing out of a solid mass of masonry in the interior of a church was so singular that I was led to inquire the cause and found that some years ago the then sexton of the church, observing a choir boy playing with a horse-chestnut, when he ought to have been digesting the sermon, gave him a fillip on the ear with one hand and threw the chestnut away with the other. The chestnut alighted on top of the monument, where in the course of time it formed a mould and gradually shot out, until it now hangs most gracefully over the recumbent figure of the worthy knight."*

The tree germinated in 1830 and finally died in the summer of 1895. During repairs to the chancel, the tree was covered with a box so that it would not be damaged, because it brought many sightseers into the church, proving a source of revenue!

The Ghost of the Naked Cavalier

Village pubs are a good place if you want to hear local gossip. The colour of the tales usually improves in direct ratio to the amount of beer drunk! With this in mind, it may temper your belief in the following tale.

Now cast your mind back to the stories of the battle of Worcester, when supporters came from near and far to take part in this historic event. This is the story of one young Royalist soldier who came to fight and die for his cause and who died, but not in battle, for his cause.

While the saying today is that a sailor has a girl in every port, in those days a cavalier was generally thought to have a girl in every town, and more than likely in every village and hamlet on the way to every town. On the eve of the hostilities, as the armies prepared to fight, Cavalier Fitzwilliam was preparing to pay a visit to Kempsey. As his companions cleaned their swords and wiped down their muskets, Fitzwilliam slipped away and rode out by moonlight to the home of a young lady.

When he arrived in the village he went to the girl's home and found it empty, but he had no difficulty in discovering that she had moved to another house in the next lane near the church.

Leaving his horse outside, he climbed the clinging ivy and peered in through the bedroom window. There lay the girl, just as he'd remembered, her long flaxen hair covering the pillow as she slept. He slipped in through the open window and gently woke her.

What followed is probably best left to the imagination, but suffice to say that the Cavalier Fitzwilliam had been in the room for just under an hour when the back door of the cottage slammed and a powerful voice bellowed up the stairs. It was then and only then that the girl confessed her secret.

Since the handsome soldier's last visit, she had married the village blacksmith, Tom Smithers, a man with hands like prize marrows and twenty stone of solid muscle. His was the voice at the bottom of the stairs and shortly his would be the massive shape appearing at the bedroom door.

Cavalier Fitzwilliam managed to pull on his long leather boots and his hat, but the heavy feet of the blacksmith were already coming up the stairs. The young man was poised by the window, wearing only his boots and hat. There was nothing for it but to jump.

In Western films cowboys often jump from a height onto the backs of horses and come to little harm. Fitzwilliam was not so lucky! But cowboys wear thick leather 'chaps' and he had no such protection. He might have been alright but a loud bellow from Smithers caused the horse to move backwards. The result was that the poor cavalier landed not astride the comfortable saddle but on the sharp bit on the front, the pommel.

Fortunately, perhaps for him, instant death followed. Fortunately, because had he lived, he would not have been the same cavalier, for a cavalier without certain assets would not have been a cavalier at all.

His screams were indeed so terrible that the terrified horse went full gallop through the village with the naked cavalier clutching the reins in his death grip. Thus, was born the legend of the ghost of the naked cavalier.

My tale teller nudged his empty mug. "on a moonlight night I've seen 'ee," he whispered. "it's hawful. The screams and the blud and that 'oss covered in sweat, I'll have another pint!"

