



AMBLECOTE HISTORY

Number 19

The Newsletter of Amblecote History Society

July 2007

WAR MEMORIAL CLUB LATEST

The campaign to do something about the old War Memorial Club site has begun in earnest with Society Chairman, Councillor Pat Martin, requesting that Dudley MBC attempt to persuade the site's owner, David Fabb, to clean up the area.

Consequently Mr Fabb was, on the 24th of April, served with a notice by the Council to clean away rubbish from the site. The notice required the owner to remove all

waste that has accumulated on the land and dispose of it appropriately. No such action was carried out, and in consequence the Council cleared the rubbish and are entitled to recover costs. This action should be seen as a first step in returning the land to proper use by making the owner recognise their responsibility for it.

Any further developments will be reported at History Society Meetings and in the Newsletter.

SOCIETY EVENTS

All at Amblecote Church Hall 7.30pm

September 12th

Uncovering the Mutiny

To mark the 150th Anniversary of the Indian Mutiny the monument to Ensign Lyndon John Grier in Holy Trinity Church, which is normally hidden behind the organ and a bookshelf, will be on view. A short talk about Grier, who was killed at Cawnpore, as well as another Stourbridge soldier of the same regiment, Dominic Corcoran, will accompany the viewing.

October 10th

Chain Making in the Black Country

Ron Moss will deliver a talk on this important Black Country industry which involved so many Amblecote folk.

November 14th

Nature Conservation in Dudley Borough

Alan Preece, Nature Conservation Officer for Dudley MBC will make a presentation on conservation efforts within the Borough.

December 12th

Christmas Social



War Memorial Club Latest.
Campaign to clean up the site.

From Severn Valley Saxons
to Black Country Blokes.
*A new take on the Black Country
dialect.*

Manorial Matters.
*More on the Amblecote manorial
records.*

From Villeins to Villas.
A walk around Dennis Park.

Memories of The Western
Front.
Amblecote soldiers recalled.

From Severn Valley Saxons to Black Country Bloses

A NEW LOOK AT THE BLACK COUNTRY DIALECT

Around sixty members and guests attended the May meeting of the Society to hear Ed Conduit, author of *The Black Country Dialect, A*

Modern Linguistic Analysis, talk about his studies and subsequent theories about 'BCD'.

The talk generated a huge amount of discussion with everyone holding some opinion about the construct and structure of our local language.

Ed began with the premise that the BCD is a true dialect and not an accent. That is, it is descended from a language (Severn Valley Saxon) and is not simply a local linguistic overlay, and certainly not a working class industrial artefact.

His scholarly study suggests that many 'Blackcountryisms' such as *there'd a-bin* and *er'd a-knew*, etc, are not bad grammar (as generations of schoolmasters, schoolmistresses and latterly the linguistic dictators of the BBC would have us believe) but an *alternative* grammar based on a now subsumed language. If we accept this then the emphasis, construct and actual words used in BCD take on, sometimes literally, a new meaning.

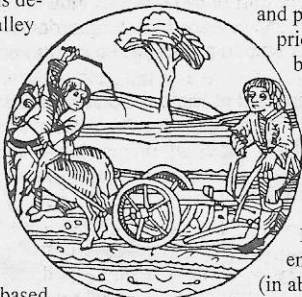
True local words could indeed have been in use for well over a thousand years, whilst the meter and morphology of BCD can be expected to betray some very ancient origins.

Ed noted that the syntax, or essential construct, of language is something that we all learn during the first year of life – well before we can actually speak – and is therefore something that only but a few focussed experts can successfully disguise. Thus our linguistic traits are 'imprinted' upon us and, where local populations remain stable over generations (which in Britain they by and large do), the underlying way we speak is a 'signature' with great historic value.

Applying some impressive analytical techniques Ed has noted that BCD vowels are often displaced slightly from that expected in Received Pronunciation (RP) or 'proper English' and that the meter (or 'rhyme') of the language is also very distinct – indeed Germanic. Add to this a small but significant usage of actual Anglo-Saxon words and his conclu-

sion is that BCD is a form of English using linguistic forms that characterise the way much of the indigenous population would have spoken before the late medieval influences of Norman French and subsequent 'Modern' English came to be perceived as the 'right' way to talk.

Of course, this is not to say that BCD is the only local dialect to retain early phonetic signatures; the UK is full of these. But the important point for BCD is that if it is descended from Severn Valley Saxon then 'Black Country' possesses a long standing (dare we tribal) heritage dating from well over a thousand years ago that should make its possession and preservation a matter of rather more pride and interest than has generally been the case.



Perhaps the most fascinating of the ancient 'markers' that make BCD distinct, is its apparent failure to go along with the English Great Vowel Shift (GVS) which occurred sometime between about 1400 and 1600, and is illustrated by the difference between the writings of Chaucer (in about 1400) and Shakespeare (in

about 1600). Chaucer would have had *pays* and *bæcon*, Shakespeare *pees* and *baycon*. Here in the Black Country we still have the former along with *boons*, *onds* and *ommers*, etc.

This consideration of the GVS brought into focus one of the greatest difficulties facing linguistic historians. That is lack and correct interpretation of written records. Most early texts were written in French or Latin and, apart from a smattering of names, give few clues as to how the people who wrote them actually spoke. Indeed, even those texts that are in English are written in what was known as Chancery, a form of written language employed by significant numbers of migrants from Norfolk to London who specialised in 'clerking' tasks. Thus these men created a standard form of spelling and punctuation that, as it spread throughout the country, subsumed dialect spellings even if those doing the writing used dialect in everyday speech. We still see this today where our own spellings differ widely from the way a word is spoken both in dialect and RP. *Laugh* for example bears no resemblance to the Black Country *loff* or the South-of-Watford *larff*;

(Continued on page 8)



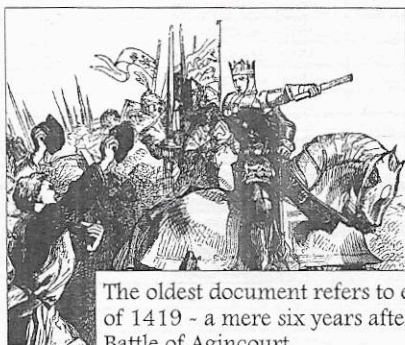
MANORIAL MATTERS

The Amblecote documents - Further developments

The project to translate the Manorial Records of Amblecote has taken two important further steps. Firstly, the approval of Enville Hall has been gained to progress the project, and in the second Mr Richard Samways of Portland in Dorset, has completed the translation (from medieval Latin) of the 'pre-amble' of all 94 documents ascribed to Amblecote (see pages 4 and 5). These reveal that the documents are primarily (though not exclusively) 'Courts Baron' and date between 1445 and 1621. In fact one 16th century document refers to a previous document of 1419, although the original has failed to survive.

The importance of these documents cannot be understated. We know from the several trial translations that they contain vital references to farms, fields and families, as well as 'proto-industry' in the shape of early coal extraction. Who knows, a full translation may reveal an early (perhaps even the earliest) reference to glass making? We do, after all, know that the Grey family owned land upon which some of the earliest glass houses, at Holloway End and on Withy-moor, were built.

These documents are unique in our part of the Black Country. The long and continuous ownership of the Manor of Amblecote by the Greys ensured that documents relating to it (including some obviously 'inherited' upon its acquisition) have been preserved within a single collection and give us a continuum of historical record which no other Stourbridge location can match.



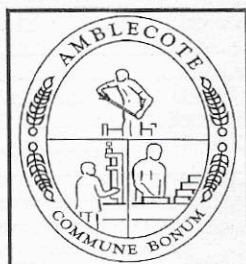
The oldest document refers to events of 1419 - a mere six years after the Battle of Agincourt.

Translating them would enable us to push back the details of Amblecote's history, who lived here and what they did, to the time of Henry V. The earliest reference of 1419 occurs only six years after the battle of Agincourt, whilst the spread of documents covers the period of the Plantagenets, Tudors and Stuarts; the Wars of the Roses, Battle of Bosworth, Spanish Armada, and the Gunpowder Plot. Whilst Amblecote may well have been something of a rural backwater during these times (although the failed Gunpowder plotters would have ridden through in 1605),

translating the documents would give us a vital insight into to our area against which to set against these great national events.

The next step is to try and raise funds to translate further documents and then publish the results. It is estimated that a full translation would cost up to about £1,500, with perhaps a little more to publish properly. The secretary will be looking at ideas to raise this money over the coming months. Approaching the lottery and 'sponsor a document' have already been suggested - but if anyone has any other ideas (or has any experience in organising a small lottery bid), please get in touch with Nick.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



AMBLECOTE HISTORY SOCIETY www.amblecote.org

Chairman: Councillor Pat Martin

Treasurer/Conservation Officer: Helen Cook

Secretary: Nick Baker

23 Brompton Drive

Amblecote

West Midlands DY5 3NZ.

Tel: 01384 894446 Email: m.baker@btinternet.com

AMBLECOTE MANORIAL DOCUMENTS (ENVILLE ESTATE) 1419—1621 LISTED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

This table lists all those documents associated with Amblecote held in the Enville Estate Archive. Most are 'Courts Baron', the basic administrative document of a manor, at which tenants would transact business—or be fined for transgressions— by the Steward, The Lord of the Manor's representative.

No	Name	Steward	Lord of the Manor	Year	Date	Type
88	Ambulcote			1419	Dec-25	16th C document quoting former
47	Almelcote & Swynford			1445	Mar-25	Court
11	Amelcote			1451	Nov-09	Court
42	Amelcote			1455	Oct-02	Court
12	Amelcote			1456	Oct-05	Court
54	Amulcote		Humphrey Stafford	1458	Apr-13	Court
53	Amelcote & Bedcote			1464	Oct-16	Court
62	Amelcote			1464	Oct-11	Court
48	Amblecote		Humphrey Stafford	1467	Dec-28	Court
96	Amblecote			1470	Nov-26	Court
96	Betcote			1471	Dec-26	Court
71	Betcote			1472	Apr-25	Court
43	Amelcote			1487	Oct-03	Court
15	Ambelcote & Betcote			1496	Oct	Court
52	Amblecote			1501	Apr-29	Court
84	Betcote			1508	Apr-01	Court
33	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1510	Oct-23	Court
34	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1510	Oct-23	Court
35	Amblecote			1512	Oct-23	Court
90	Amblecote		Giles Strangwith	1514	Oct-19	Court
87	Amblecote		Giles Strangwyth	1516	May-19	Court
41	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1517	May-23	Court
45	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1517	Apr-09	Court
57	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1517	Dec-05	Court
91	Amblecot		Giles Strangweyes	1517	Apr-19	Court
91	Betcote		Giles Strangweyes	1518	May-19	Court
70	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1519	Apr-11	Court
98	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1519	Jun-01	Court
36	Ambulcote		Giles Strangweys	1520	Jan-01	Court
79	Amblecote		Giles Strangweyes	1520		Court
61	Ambulcote			1522	Apr-26	Court
38	Amblecote		Giles Strangweys	1524	May-09	Court
23	Ambullcott		Giles Strangwysche	1529	Sep-22	Court
73	Ambulcote		Giles Strangwysche	1530	May-13	Court
17	Ambullcote		Giles Strangwysche	1534	May-02	Court
46	Ambulcote			1535	May-03	Court
59	Amblecotte		Thomas Grey	1540	Nov-04	Court
68			Thomas Rowlande & Thomas Berley	1540	Jul-01	Court
59	Ambullcot		Thomas Grey	1541	Aug-06	Court
60	Amblecot		Thomas Grey	1541	Apr-26	Recognition
85			T.G.	1545	Mar-28	Court
89	Ambulcote		Thomas Grey	1545	Mar-28	Court
89	Ambulcote		Thomas Grey	1546	Oct-27	Court
69	Ambulcote		Thomas Grey	1549	Oct-09	Court
40			Thomas Grey	1550	Dec-22	Receipt
66	Amblecote		Thomas Grey	Mar-04	Apr-19	Court
13	Ambullcott		Thomas Grey	1552	Sept	Bond
67	Ambulcote		Thomas Grey	1552	Sep-19	Court
95	Ambulcot		Thomas Grey	1552	Oct-14	Court
80	Ambulcote			1554	Sep-10	Estreat
16	Ambulcote		Thomas Grey	1555	Oct-16	Court

No	Name	Steward	Lord of the Manor	Year	Date	Type
44					1556	Oct-02 Power of Attorney
97	Ambulcote		Anne Grey	1560	Sep-05	Court
81	Ambulcote	Thomas Dolman?	Anne Grey	1562	Nov-19	Court
77	Ambulcote	Richard Broke	Anne Grey	1565	May-08	Court
83	Ambulcott		Anne Grey	1565	Dec-10	Estreat
93	Ambulcott	Richard Broke	Anne Grey	1565	Dec-10	Court
63	Ambulcote	Richard Broke	Anne Grey	1566	Apr-09	Court
75	Ambulcot		Anne Grey	1566	Feb-05	Court
64	Ambulcot	Richard Broke	John Grey	1568	Apr-28	Court
8	Ambulcott	Robert Wright	John Grey	1570	Oct-22	Court
32	Ambulcote	Robert Wright	John Grey	1570	Oct-22	Court
9	Amblecott		John Grey	1572	Oct-14	Court
10	Ambulcott		John Grey	1573	May-12	Court
65	Ambulcot	Robert Wright	John Grey	1573	May-12	Court
78	Ambircott		John Grey	1574	Dec-02	Court
2	Amblecott	Robert Wright	John Grey	1575	Oct-23	Court
3	Amblecott	Robert Wright	John Grey	1576	Sep-24	Court
51	Ambulcote		John Greye	1576	Sep-23	Court
4	Amblecott	Edward Shadwell	John Grey	1582	Apr-19	Court
5	Amblecott	Edward Shadwell	John Grey	1586	Apr-17	Court
19	Amblecott	Edward Hale	John Greye	1589	Oct-25	Court
20	Amblecott			1589	Oct-15	Court
18	Amblecott	Edward Hale	John Greye	1593	Jun-16	Court
30	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Henry Graye	1593	Oct-20	Court
25	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Henry Graye	1594	Apr-30	Court
74	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Henry Graye	1595	Apr-14	Court
24	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Henry Graye	1596	Jul-20	Court
28	Amblecott			1597	Aug-24	Court
29	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Henry Graye	1597	Aug-23	Court
21	Amblecott		Henry Graye	1598	Sep-05	Court
22	Amblecott		Henry Graye	1598	Sep-05	Court
26	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Ambrose Graye	1605	Dec-17	Court
31	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Ambrose Graye	1606	Oct-25	Court
27	Amblecott	Edward Hale	Ambrose Graye	1608	Oct-24	Court
6	Amblecott	Oliver Whorwood	Ambrose Grey	1609	Oct-07	Court
7	Amblecott	Oliver Whorwood	Ambrose Grey	1611	Oct-05	Court
55	Amblecott		Ambrose Graye	1621	Nov-16	Court
37	Amblecote		Giles Strangweys	1513 (?)	May-08	Court
76	Ambulcote		Giles Strangwysthe	1536/7		Court
92	Ambulcott		Thomas Grey	1540(s)	Mar	Court
72				1544/5		Text
91	Ambulcott	Richard Broke	John Grey	1567/8		Court
1						Deed
14						No Heading
39						No Heading
49	Amblecott					Survey
50	Amblecott					Survey
56	Amolcotte					Homages
58	Ambulcote					Text
82					Oct	Court (during Elizabeth I)
86	Amelcote					Court
94						Tennants answers

The documents are shown in chronological order with several obscure and undated ones grouped at the end. Note the changing ownership of the manor which before 1540 was owned by the Strange-way and the Stafford families who, at times, owned other manors including Swynford and Betcote which on occasion held courts alongside those of Amblecote. The spellings are original and are especially useful in illustrating how the name Amblecote may have been pronounced over the years.



From Villeins to Villas Vale Street and the Coalbournbrook



well attended Society Walk took place on Wednesday June 13th the day after a gorgeous early summer spell came to an end with thunderstorms and torrential rain. Fortunately enough umbrellas were in attendance to hold off a threatened downpour and the walk took place in relatively dry conditions. We were pleased to welcome a number of guests including one from as far away as Australia.

The walk began at the King William Street car parks and proceeded along Cameo Drive to Dennis Hall. There we were pleased to see both of the historic 'blue plaques', which the Society helped organise with the developer in 2004, still in place. There is, of course, no reason why the plaques should have been removed except to bring amusement to our local exuberant youth – although such a thing is entirely possible. However, there they are still; an outer one noting that the Hall was the residence of the Hill family and later the works of Thomas Webb, and one on the building itself noting it was built in about 1776. We also recalled that the Hall was the residence of several other notable Amblecote individuals including William Seager Wheeley and James Grier the first Vicar of the parish. It was noted that it was Wheeley who sold the Dennis estate after a business failing in the mid 19th century, following which it was divided and further sub-divided into building plots – a process that continues to this day.

From Dennis Hall the party proceeded via a pedestrian walkway into Dennis Street and then into Vale Street via Collis Street. Here we were very kindly invited by Society members Sue Smith and David Edgar to view their home, Number 12, which they have lovingly restored to its Victorian glory. Sue explained how the house was built for the Hingley family of glassmakers who owned several connected properties in the Vale Street / Villa Street area. Jabez, who lived at number 12, later became a pawnbroker, but the family remained connected to the glass trade well into the 20th century via the Albert Glassworks in Wordsley.

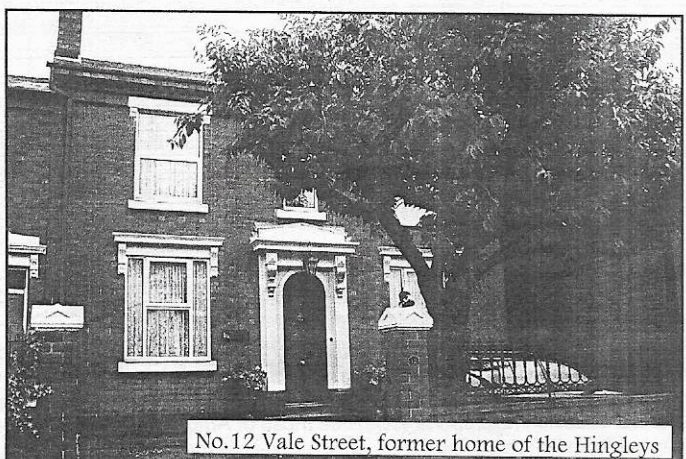
Sue and David have restored house to what can be described as a 'contemporary functionally Victorian design'. There is of course electricity, central heating and a modern kitchen (all of which the Victorians would have aspired to had they been available!), but the fittings and decoration reflect as closely as possible the mid-late Victorian period of the main house. Two staircases illustrate the fact that even lower-middle class artisans and businessmen such as the Hingleys employed servants, whilst a beautifully restored conservatory area recalls the Victorian obsession with the potted palm!

Sue and David are keenly researching the history of their house, and would be very interested to hear from anyone with recollections or knowledge of No.12.

Leaving No.12 Vale Street by the rear entrance (which leads into Villa Street) we paused to look at Chestnut House, another Hingley

property, now divided into two. Indeed, it was easy to appreciate from Sue and David's extensive back garden, which overlaps other properties but is itself enclosed by a number of eccentric garden plots, just how is was that the Dennis estate came to develop. The Dennis Land Society, a company formed by a number of local businessmen to develop the Dennis estate

(prominent amongst whom was William Blow Collis and



No.12 Vale Street, former home of the Hingleys





William King, the two main streets being named after them), sub-divided the estate into plots which were purchased singly or in blocks, either to build upon or as investments, by those who could afford it. The Hingleys clearly purchased adjoining plots which they then used to build houses and workshops, and later re-sold. These relatively large plots have themselves been sub-divided, built upon and re-sold over the intervening century or so, each time adding both density and value to the local housing stock. The process continues, with every commercial opportunity to sub-divide being taken; a microcosm of the history of British property ownership, although one which inevitably begs the question where it will end (although the Victorians probably asked the same question)?

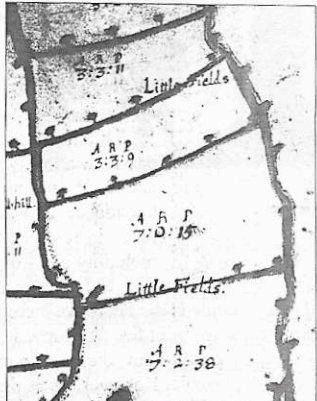
Crossing Collis Street the party paused in the public car park and many recalled the fact that this area was once a glass-works tip. Councillor Banks, who had recently taken part in a volunteer clean-up of the area attested to this fact by noting that the surrounding hedges still contained glass waste alongside rather more modern metal lager cans and plastic pharmaceutical devices. It was noted that the glass works tips were often on fire and that there was at least one recorded case of a child being burned to death whilst playing in the area.

Entering the Coalbourn valley, Society Conservation Officer Helen Cook took over the lead and pointed out the wonderful natural inclusions in the area. Although by no means an 'original' landscape, the fact is that the brook was never truly industrialised in the same manner as other local watercourses. Its position as a border between the Dennis Estate and the ancient Manor of Amblecote, which has for the most part remained relatively undeveloped until fairly recently, has resulted in the Coalbournbrook becoming haven for flora and fauna – despite the best efforts of fly tippers and vandals. Indeed Helen noted that a recent problem arose when a resident began dumping leylandii cuttings in the stream, the culprit somewhat given away by their freshly cropped hedge! Helen pointed out that the brook is the responsibility of the Environment Agency, and showed us the result of some recent pollarding of willows, an entirely appropriate (and indeed ancient) form of management of these trees. Also making an appearance were several local birds including Jays and Blackbirds as well as the ubiquitous Wood Pigeon. As Helen pointed out, Jays are a true woodland species, and their presence in the Coalbourn valley is indicative of an established woodland environment. Further evidence of the quality of habitat, both in terms of water quality and bank cover, was the spotting (although sadly not on the night) of a Kingfisher during one of Helen's previous visits.

Finally the party paused on the edge of the School Drive playing fields, once part of the ancient 'Little Field', one of the three open fields of Amblecote where the villeins of Amblecote Manor would once have toiled and is now occupied by the school, allotments (where the villeins still toil) and the football pitch. Several clumps of hawthorn and two poplars revealed the old hedge line—something no-one had spotted before.

So, with dusk and an increasing rain fall, the walk came to an end; although an enthusiastic few struggled back up Collis Street to the Robin Hood where the landlord – on spotting the number of umbrellas – enquired if there had been a meeting of the local Mary Poppins Society...?

Many thanks to Sue and Dave for inviting us into No.12, and also to Helen for guiding us around the Coalbournbrook.

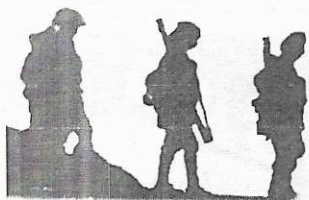


The Amblecote map of 1688 shows the 'Little Fields' where the allotments and playing field now are. The Coalbournbrook is on the right.



This map comparison between 1901 and 2006 shows how properties in Vale Street have been continually subdivided.





MEMORIES OF THE WESTERN FRONT

Frederick Frank Zinke in 1918. A year earlier he had rescued William Cox during a gas attack on the Somme.



The recent publication of the Society's two volume history of War Memorials in Amble-

cote has coaxed a fascinating Great War recollection out of obscurity. Society member Brian Mason's mother Edith (nee Zinke) who was born in 1918, was prompted to recall a family story concerning Private William James Cox of the 2/6th Staffordshire Regiment who died on 23rd of September 1917. Edith's Uncle, Frederick Frank Zinke, who was serving in the alongside Cox, carried him off the Somme battlefield after they had both been gassed. Sadly William died, and although Fred survived he spent many months in various military hospitals before being finally brought to Wordsley Hospital and at last allowed home.

The Cox family (who lived at The Mount in Brettell Lane) were forever grateful to Fred Zinke for bringing their son out of the trenches and remained firm friends with him afterwards.

Fred Zinke was, of course, a member of the family descended from Adolph Zinke, a Bohemian Glass Engraver who came to work in the Stourbridge glass trade during the 1880s. It is interesting to note that a number of their children, born in Britain to English wives, fought during the First World War as British soldiers. Indeed one, Harry Kny, was killed. Nevertheless the Bohemian families came under official and unofficial suspicion during the war, and although they escaped the worst excesses of internment and deportation, still had their freedom of movement severely curtailed.

(Continued from page 2)

yet any other spelling than laugh would definitely 'jar' the eye.

Thus the very few precious English texts that can be traced to the Severn Valley from the medieval period are of vital linguistic and historical importance. Ed has, and continues to, analyse these; searching for clues as to whether they betray the origins of the Black Country Dialect. These include the famous *Piers Ploughman* of 1380 by William Langland and the lesser known but vitally important *Laghamon's Brut*. Ed has examined these works closely for evidence of BCD and has been amply rewarded not only by words which, if spoken by a Black Country native, simply sound so much more correct, but a smattering of true Saxon and – equally important – a relative lack of Norse and French influences.

Indeed this latter fact is reflected in local place names, with Ed demonstrating that the Black Country and its western border consists almost exclusively of Saxon settlement names, indicating a strong and lasting presence by these peoples. He suggested that the hard fought Battle of Tettenhall in 909 might provide an explanation, resulting in a stop to Danish expansion southwards and holding what became South Staffordshire as a 'pure' Saxon stronghold both physically and linguistically.

Ed Conduit's research, which is in depth and ongoing, provides a revolutionary revisionist view of this fascinating subject. Not least because it breaks away from the stereotypical view that BCD is somehow a result of industrial influences and seeks to delve below the joking self-mocking superficiality which sometimes attaches itself 'Anock und Ali' like to local treatment of the way we 'spake'. If the Black Country Dialect is indeed descended from Severn Valley Saxon then it is something to be preserved and proud of; not laughed at or brushed under the 'BBC English' carpet.