

Earlier this year, reports in the press have included the rare sighting of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in the County and also the many effects of our severe weather, such as uprooted trees. The weather has also been adding more damage to Lord Hill's statue in Shrewsbury. Otherwise, we are constantly reminded that the First World War started 100 years ago and the Normandy landings took place 70 years ago. Regular columns in both the Shropshire Star and Shrewsbury Chronicle also feature some minor local events '100 years ago', '50 years ago' etc. and perhaps we could join in by dipping into past records in a similar way:-

450 years ago: Chronicles of Shrewsbury, 1564. (Taylor MSS, Shrewsbury School).

*"This year was there a greate tempest with lyghtening and thoonder contjnewing the space of xj dayes the lycke was nev' seene in England before the forse of which dyd mutche harme in manye places & the forse therof was sutche that ..... by a village callyd Barwycke were ij ocks shacke' and forcyd upp by the rootes and so dryve' upright slydinge ..... downe a slope fyll into the myds of the ..... Sevarn and so standing as it were growing in the mydds of the same ...."*

(They became a hazard to navigation and had to be cleared)

*"This yeare ..... in the moonthe of October was seen in the Elyment many fiere impressyons .....and all the northe parts seemed to be coveryd with flames of fyer staing the most parte of an hour ..."*

All this sounds familiar except for the spelling!

200 years ago. 1814. Extracts from St Chads Parish Register.

*Burials at Bicton*

<i>Feb. 4</i>	<i>Mary Jones</i>	<i>10 days</i>
<i>Feb. 21</i>	<i>Richard Mansel, Isle Gate,</i>	<i>4 years</i>
<i>March 13</i>	<i>Sarah Pursell, Rossall Heath,</i>	<i>17 months</i>
<i>Nov. 15</i>	<i>Mary Pursell,</i>	<i>28 years</i>
<i>Dec. 10</i>	<i>Richard Pursell,</i>	<i>26 years</i>

Child deaths were not uncommon at this time, through poverty, diseases and lack of hygiene. The dates significantly fall in the cold part of the year, which gave added stress. A contagious disease could also hit more than one member of the same family at whatever age. The Shrewsbury Chronicle for this same year also provides some clues:

*Jan 28. "The cold which has been for some days experienced in different parts of country appears to have been greater than has been known for many years".*

The paper went on to report that special collections were being made for the poor during such difficult times. During the course of the year, meetings also took place to consider a suitable monument to Sir Rowland Hill, which led to the design of a column.

100 years ago. 1914. Extract from Bicton Parish Register.

### *Burials*

<i>February 7</i>	<i>William Joseph Evans</i>	<i>12 hours</i>
<i>October 14</i>	<i>Anne Lewis    Montford Bridge</i>	<i>Age 91</i>

Contrasting life spans illustrate the way in which those who survived the hazards of early childhood, especially cold winters, could eventually reach an old age. Anne, born in June, 1823, never married, remaining an independent 'dress maker' most of her life and thus avoided those repeated pregnancies which were also full of risks to so many women at this time. Electricity, central heating and double glazing make a big difference today!

75 years ago. March 1939. Extract from the magazine of the Shrewsbury Technical College:

A poem by Marjorie Jones, showing British humour on the eve of war, when prime minister Neville Chamberlain was still talking with Hitler:

#### *Dictator Queries*

*Why does Mussolini*

*Wear no hair upon his head ?*

*And, when he had some, was it black,*

*Or was it fiery red ?*

*Did he lose it all through worry ?*

*Did he tear it out in rage ?*

*Has he got a bust of Caesar,*

*With the hair worn smooth with age ?*

*Oh, tell me, Mussolini,*

*If, in order to dictate,*

*It's absolutely necessary*

*To have a hairless pate ?*

*Why does Adolf Hitler*

*Wear such a comic whisker ?*

*Does it give him "savoir faire,"*

*Or just make him look brisker ?*

*Does he talk too long and often*

*For it to increase its length ?*

*Is it, like the hair of Samson,*

*the secret of his strength ?*

*Great Scott ! That is the best idea*

*I've had for countless years,*

*For heaven's sake, go, Chamberlain,*

*And find a pair of Shears !*

*MARJORIE JONES.*

50 years ago. Shropshire Magazine August 1964

*Hall Wateridge and Owen property for sale:*

*Bicton Hall ..... is a late regency style country house set in very pleasant gardens. The farmer is well equipped with modern buildings and there is approximately 40 acres of sould pasture land.*

The auction, in two lots, took place in September. The sale followed the death of John Knight Overy (Jack), who ran an outfitters in Pride Hill. He now lies under red granite in our churchyard. He was one of several Shrewsbury businessmen who, over the years, have enjoyed country living at a convenient distance from their workplace. He so enjoyed life here that he was well known for coming home for lunch, but not always returning afterwards!

At this time many changes were taking place in the shopping streets of Shrewsbury, leaving us now with architecture of doubtful quality!

Further away in the County, changes were also taking place around Dawley and Madeley with the creation of a 'New Town'. As housing replaced farmland the Development Corporation was able to relocate at least one of the farming families to Bicton, when the Everall family put Woodlands Farm up for sale in April this same year (Alfred Mansell & Co),

Watch this space: next year we may find yet more anniversaries. If you know of any, please let us know