

Codsall Wood History Trail



CODSALL AND BILBROOK HISTORY SOCIETY



Photo of Codsall Wood in 1946 before so many small developments, note the old Crown Inn (now the Pendrell Arms) on the corner of Church Lane and Wood Road and the cottages within the woodland setting.

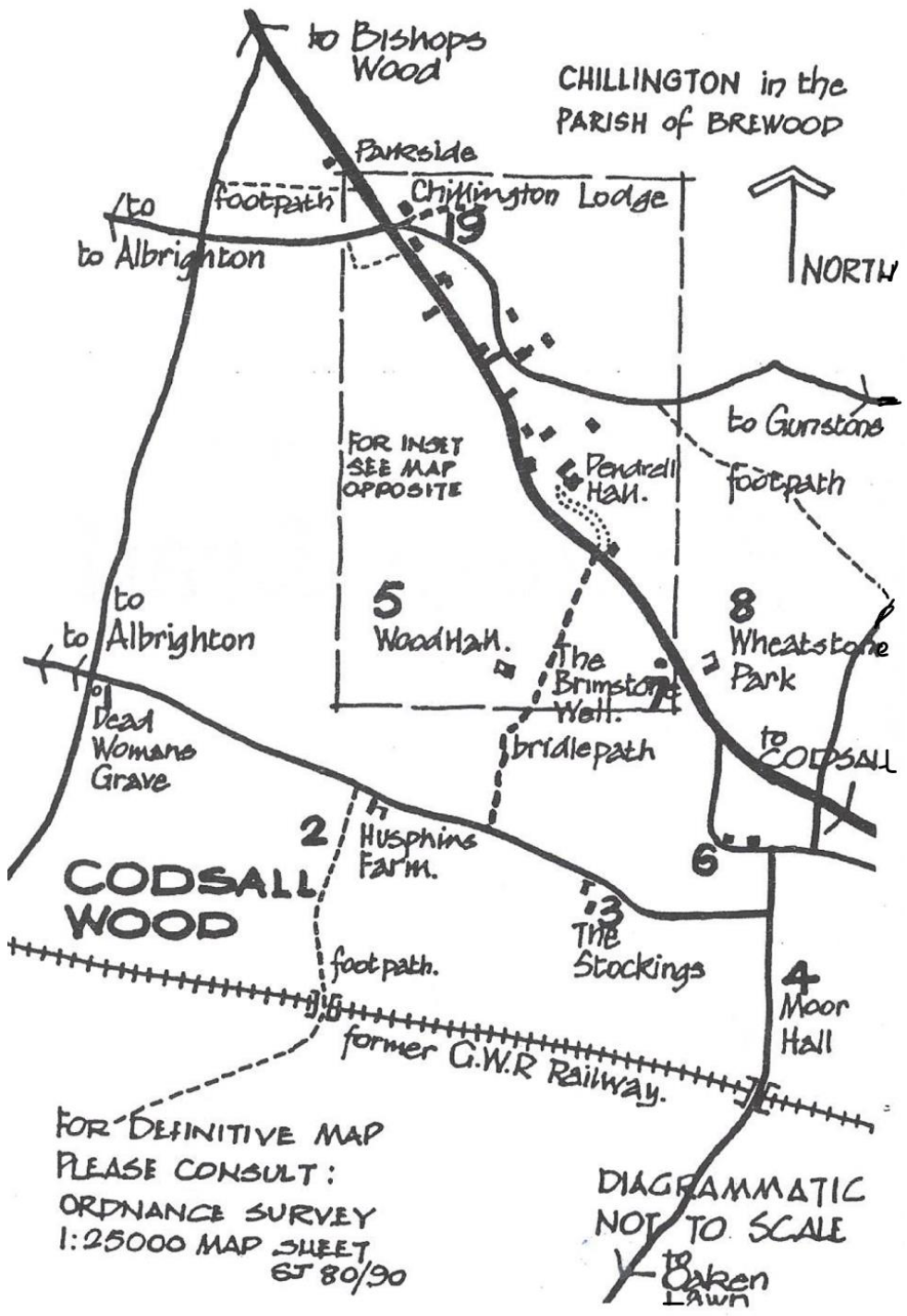
Front page illustration : St Peters Church,
Whitehouse Lane, Codsall Wood.

Codsall Wood

History Trail

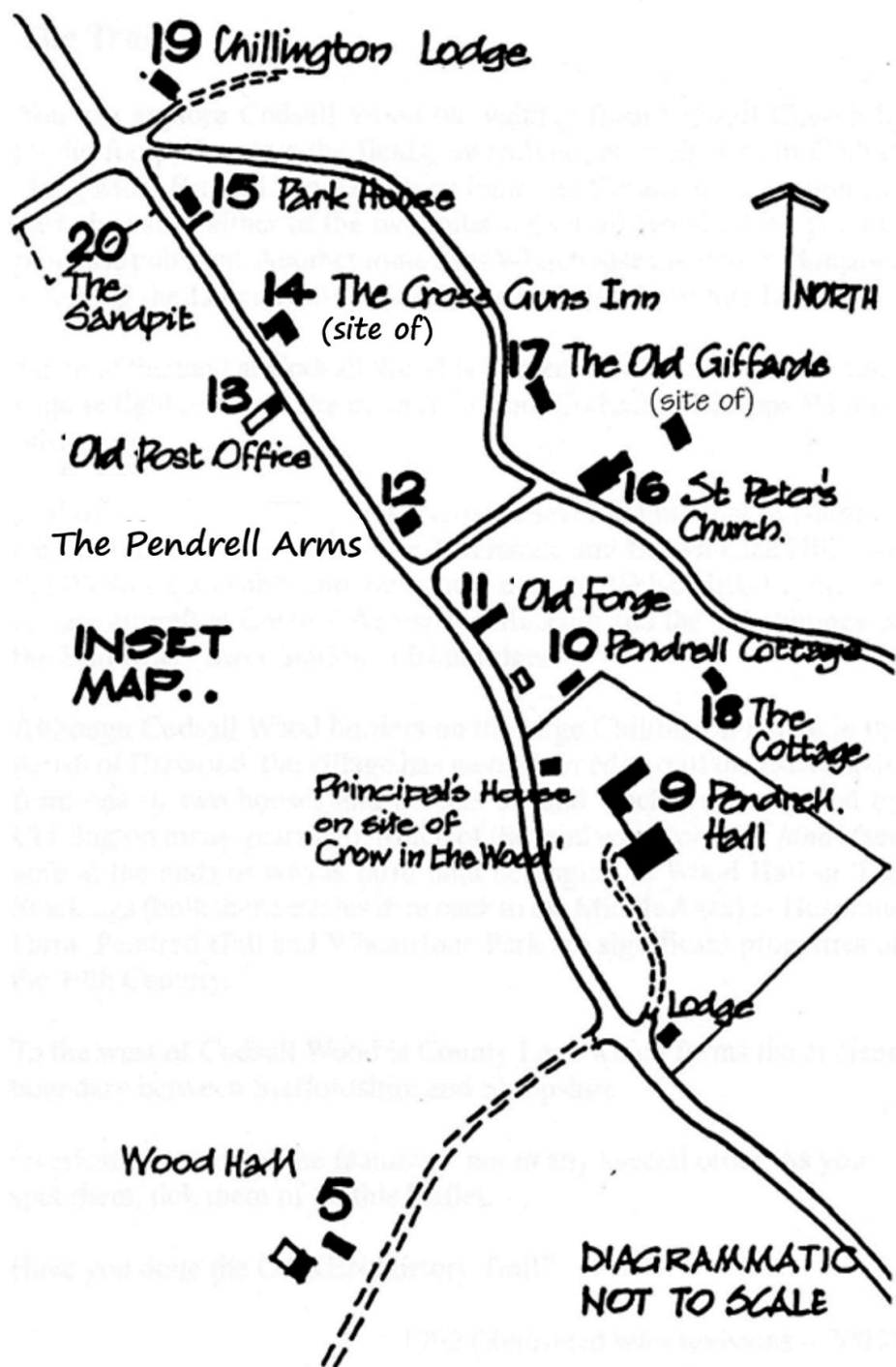
First published 1992
Revised and reprinted 2003
Revised 2020

CHILLINGTON in the PARISH OF BREWOOD



FOR DEFINITIVE MAP
PLEASE CONSULT:
ORDNANCE SURVEY
1:25000 MAP SHEET
6T 80/90

DIAGRAMMATIC
NOT TO SCALE
to Oaken
Lawn





The Cross Guns Pub, demolished in 2012, and now the site of the Limes small housing estate. Date the photo from the car in front!

The Trail

You can explore Codsall Wood by walking from Codsall Church by the public footpath that across the fields or by walking or cycling from Codsall along Moat Brook Lane, Husphin's Lane and County Lane; or park your car in either the Pendrell Arms (where you can get refreshment) or St Peters Church Hall car parks. Another route to Codsall Wood is along Whitehouse Lane from Gunstone, which passes the Leper's Well – a sulphur spring that was used by lepers and now a Grade II listed monument - also the White House, a farm, whose folly front faces the opposite way to Whitehouse Lane and appears as a temple to those walking in the Chillington Hall grounds.

Much of the land at Codsall Wood is farmed and the traffic in the lanes is quite light, though Wood Road – from Codsall to Bishops Wood is busy and walking along it should be avoided.

Codsall Wood is over 450 feet above sea level (higher than St Nicholas Church in Codsall). Looking westwards, the Titterstone and Brown Clee Hills and the Wrekin are very visible; and on a clear day the Welsh Hills beyond; so to are the hangers of RAF Cosford Museum.

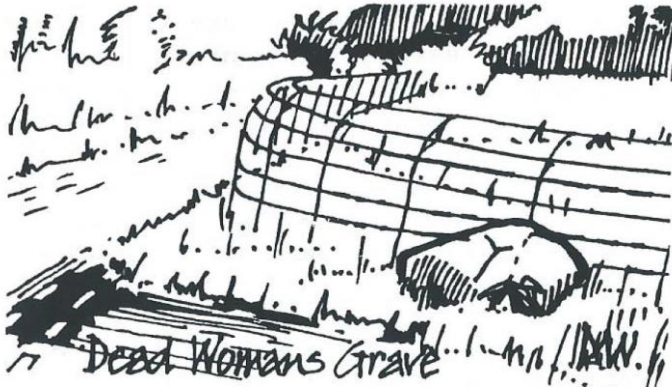
Although Codsall Wood borders on the large Chillington Estate (in the Parish of Brewood), Codsall Wood has never formed part of the Chillington Estate (apart from one or two houses and parcels of land acquired by the estate many years ago). Much of the land was 'common land' (see note about that at the end), or was / is farmland belonging to Wood Hall or the Stockings – both these estates date back to the Middle Ages. Pendrell Hall and Wheatstone Park are significant properties of the 19th Century.

Many of the old cottages, built after the Enclosure in the still remain (most date from circa 1840) are clustered around St Peters church. Many have been extended – but look out for Tinkerbell Cottage, Yew Tree Cottage, Giffards Cottage and Provident Cottage. Other similar cottages have been demolished over recent years including those now on the site of Danny Park Cottage and Lamour Cottage.

To the west of Codsall Wood is County Lane which the ancient (and current) boundary between Staffordshire and Shropshire.

From 1946 until some 15 years ago, the Village held an annual flower show, which was one of the largest in the county and raised large sums for local charities.

This booklet highlights some of the historic buildings and places in and around Codsall Wood. They are not in any special order. As you spot them tick them off!



1. Dead Woman's Grave

You might think this just a legend, but in 1676 there was a cottage called 'Dead Woman's Grave' not far from the crossroads with Husphins Lane and County Lane where the large stone marks the spot. There are two theories for the name: the hanging of a woman for stealing apples, or more likely, the grave of a suicide at the crossroads. The site is right on the Staffordshire / Shropshire boundary and also on the Oaken/Codsall boundary at the furthest point from Codsall Village. The site now has a plaque marking the spot provided by the Codsall and Bilbrook History Society.

2. Husphins Farm

Old records say 'Ursfins'. A public footpath by the side of the farm leads across the railway to the ancient common land 'Oaken Lawn' – a nice walk for another day.

During the great 'foot and mouth' outbreak on 1967/8 all the cattle on the farm were slaughtered. Opposite, during the Second World War there was an anti-aircraft searchlight site. The farm outbuildings have been converted into houses.

3. The Stockings

The house incorporates building features of centuries ago. It is mentioned in the parish registers in 1607. The Grosvenor family lived there and in the 18th Century the Bedford family. John Bedford married Hannah Rita Stubbs of The Birches in 1772. So in due time the Bedford's owned the Birches as well.

4. Moor Hall

This Medieval moated site, on the Codsall/Moat Brook side of the railway bridge can be dated back to 1538. Pottery found on the site is of the 14th century. The parish registers list people living there between 1619 and 1690. Moor Hall was incorporated in The Stockings estate in 1691.

5. Wood Hall

The attractive farmhouse dates from about 1835 and stands in a commanding position overlooking Codsall. The original house was surrounded by a moat, part of which is still there.

The Victoria County History traces land ownership to 1317.

A wealthy family, the Persehouses, owned Wood Hall for 150 years. A Walsall ironmaster, William Fleeming Fryer, also owned Wood Hall as well as the Wergs Hall estate (which then included the Birches). In those days, Wood Hall was occupied by tenant farmers and it was not until the 1930's that Mr & Mrs Ernest Gaskill went there as owner / occupiers.

6. Pig Sty Lane

This is the northern end of Moat Brook Lane and joins the main road opposite the lower entrance to Wheatstone Park. It is the original road to Codsall before the straight length from Moat Brook to Wheatstone was constructed.

7. The Brimstone Well

Halfway up the road between Wheatstone Park and Pendrell Hall is a sulphur spring – the medical properties being noted in Plot's 'Natural History of Staffordshire' (1698. It is believed to be on the same strata as the Leper Well in Whitehouse Lane. Sometimes, despite repeated efforts of the road maintenance teams, the orange water escapes and runs down the road.

8. Wheatstone Park

The house, described as a 'Villa', dates from the 1850's and was probably built for Thomas White, a chemist and druggist from Bilston. He was one of those who came to reside in Codsall when the railway came in 1849. Subsequently, Wheatstone Park and Park Farm came into ownership of the Gaskell family.

9. Pendrell Hall

This elegant house was built about 1870 by a Mr Viles, also of Bilston. who was editor of the Gentlewoman's Journal. The Hall was bought in 1879 by Richard Holt Briscoe as a wedding present for his daughter Constance, who married Walter Giffard of Chillington. Frank Gaskill bought the Hall in 1909.

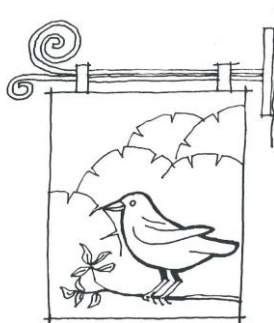


The Gaskell family lived there until 1954.

There are fine trees in the grounds and the rhododendrons are glorious. At one time, Frank Gaskell had his own generator for supplying electricity to the Hall and all the cottages on the estate.



Note the lodge at the main entrance, built in about 1909 to house a servant. Compare it to the 1970's building by the other gates, built as the Principal's House when the Hall was an Adult training centre. The Hall has been fully restored and is now an exclusive wedding venue. The Principal's House was built on the site of an inn, which was in existence in 1820 and was called 'The Crow in the Wood'



10. Pendrell Cottage

A charming black and white cottage standing back from the road. Pendrell Hall's former electricity generator and battery room are in the building with the external steps and lantern. The adjacent house closer to the road, called Hunters Moon was formerly both the garages for Pendrell Hall and later the village garage before conversion into a house.

11. The Old Forge

The building next to the road was the village forge where in the past ironworks was made and repaired and horseshoes were made and fitted. After the horses disappeared from agricultural use the force became a car workshop. Now an outbuilding for a private residence.

12. The Pendrell Arms (formerly the Crown)

The original inn on this site was built in 1843 by Joseph Dudley and was sold in 1899 by his widow, aged 84, to Messrs H & J Banks, brewers. The original inn was demolished in the 1950's and replaced by the current building. The pub faced sale and closure in 2013 and the Villagers had the pub protected as an asset of community value, formed The Codsall Wood Pub Company and raised the funds to eventually purchase it.

13. The Old Post Office

Closed some years ago, this Post Office used to deliver to Chillington Hall by hand, a round trip of nearly four miles. Now a private residence.

14. Site of the Cross Guns

The pub was demolished in 2012 and was replaced by the Limes housing development. The original inn was probably built as

a cottage for John Fox, who was the licensee in 1851. At St Nicholas Church is the grave of Sarah Fox 'the beloved wife of John Fox of Codsall Wood'. She died in 1831, aged 42.

15. Park House

A pleasant redbrick house with stables and outbuildings that belonged to the Chillington Estate. Now a private residence but historically was the New Giffard Arms Inn. Being at the entrance to the Chillington parklands, it was well placed to provide refreshment for the Black Country folk who came in their waggons on Sundays to visit the Park. The waggons stayed in Whitehouse Lane, and local lads would earn a copper or two minding the horses. Sobriety was not relevant as the horses knew their way home!

16. St Peters Church

Built in 1885 as a mission church on land given by Mr T W Giffard and extended in 1926 by the addition of the chancel, through which runs the boundary between the parishes of Codsall and Brewood. Services are held every fortnight. St Peters Church Hall is immediately behind the church was put up in the 1950's and is used by the church and as a village hall. It used by a number of groups including the WI, a model railway club, a dance school, and also for private bookings.

17. Site of The Old Giffards

This is the site of what was an attractive building, standing well back from the road, which was an Inn in 1834. In those days an alehouse licence was granted by the excise office upon application with a small fee. So the five inns in Codsall Wood would serve



the passing trade going to and from the A5, and also the considerable trade of those visiting the Chillington Hall grounds on a Sunday (then known as Chillington Park), as well as supplying beer to the locals. The pub was de-licensed in the 1920's and demolished in the 1990's. A modern house now stands on the site, also called Old Giffards.

18. The Cottage

A house of character on Whitehouse Lane once called Laurel Cottage, which was in existence in 1849. It was later included in the Pendrell Hall estate. During the colourful ownership of Howard Worthington in the 1990's a swimming pool, duck pond, tennis courts and golf course were added to the grounds.

19. Chillington Lodge

The Lodge guarding the tall iron gates at the south entrance of Chillington Hall. The Hall and grounds are open on set days through the summer. The grounds were designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and well worth a visit. The Lodge is of a distinctive design using light brickwork.



20. The Sandpit

When the common land was enclosed in 1824, the Enclosure Commissioners allotted this sandpit to the 'Surveyor of the Highways for the maintenance of the roads. The Surveyor was a parish official appointed by the Vestry meeting. There was a proposal in 1882 – fortunately abandoned – to place a church room in the sandpit. The sandpit is now disused, but is many feet below the field level from the sand extraction.

Common Land at Codsall Wood

Codsall Wood and Codsall are within the medieval manor of the Dean of the Collegiate Church of Wolverhampton. The Church Commissioners having succeeded to the lordship of the manor. Most manors had common or waste land over which there were 'rights of common'. All the land from Whitehouse Lane and Wood Road and also the land on both sides of Harriot Hayes Lane leading from Chillington Lodge to County Lane was common land for centuries.

Along the edge of the common, were a number of dwellings described as 'hovels'. In 1824 the common was 'enclosed' by a special Act of Parliament. The land was divided into plots which were then sold by the Enclosure Commissioners. Most of the houses which you see in Codsall Wood were built on these plots.

The plan attached to the Enclosure Award can be seen in the County Record Office at Stafford. The Tithe Award and Map of 1849, the Parish Registers and the map showing the proposed line of the railway (about 1848) can also be seen there.

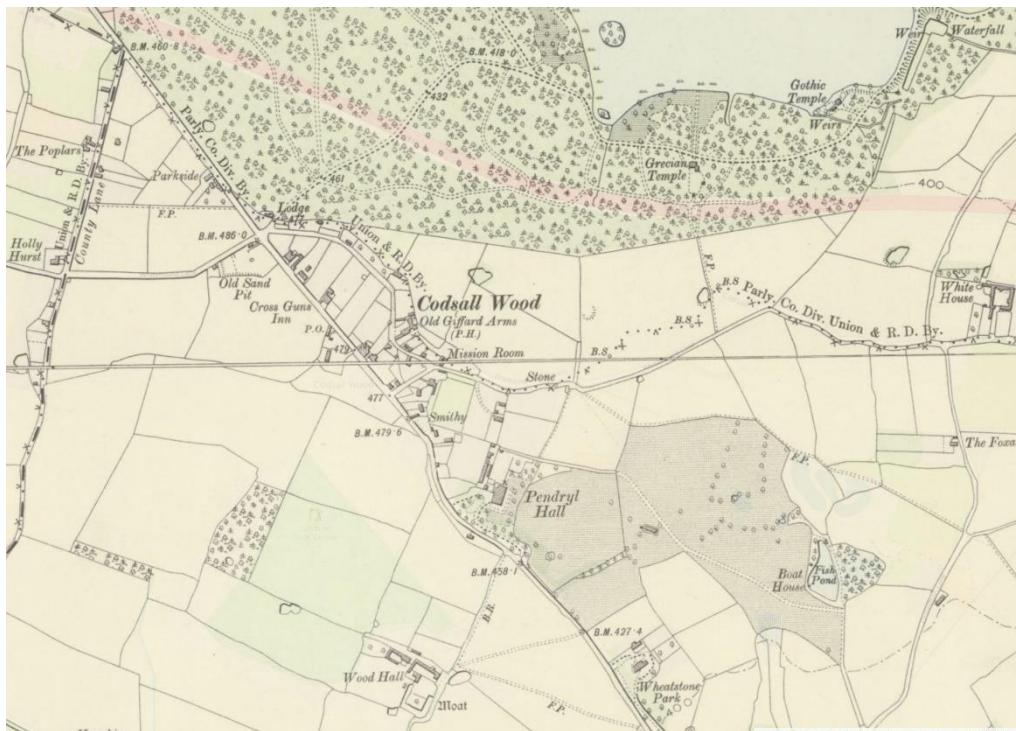




Photo of Codsall Wood, looking along Wood Road towards Bishops Wood, the dress of the lady in the photo would date this circa 1890's

History Society Publications

- The Memories of Mrs Edith Cockerill
- The Birches, Pendrell Hall, Wood Hall, Wheatstone Park and the Gaskell Family - (out of print)
- The Oaken History Trail
- Oaken - History and Memories
- The Memorials and Ornaments in the Church of St. Nicholas, Codsall
- Church Briefs
- Recollections of Childhood in Codsall Wood and Codsall
- The Wrottesley Charity and other ancient Charities
- Codsall Wood - History Trail
- The Story of Codsall and Bilbrook Schools
- Clubs and Societies of Codsall
- Codsall in Wartime
- Codsall Wood
- Codsall Village History Trail
- The Churches of Codsall, Codsall Wood and Bilbrook
- Bakers of Codsall and Bilbrook
- Memories from around Codsall
- Bilbrook in a Bygone Age

Copies may be purchased at Codsall Public Library or contact the website - www.codsallhistory.com

Who we are

Welcome to the Codsall & Bilbrook History Society

We are a thriving group with a membership of over 100.

Our programme starts in September and carries through to May with a series of indoor talks held in Codsall Village Hall on the third Tuesday of each month starting at 7.45pm.

In July we put on a coach trip, which is always extremely popular. Members receive three Newsletters each year to update them of additional events of interest.

The Society has produced a significant number of publications over the years. The full price list is available on the website.

The Site provides information about Codsall & Bilbrook History Society, its activities and meetings. The Society has also published some archive material on the site. There are 100 A4-sized pages of text and pictures which include residents' memories from the early part of the 20th Century, the struggle to get Codsall a village hall of its own, an archive postcard collection, and extracts from our History Trails to help walkers explore the area on foot.

Contact Us

www.codsallhistory.com

Please email Judy Davies at judy.davies7@gmail.com with requests.