



Gough Walks no. 1.

Myddle, a small village in rural Shropshire is famous throughout the English speaking world for one reason only. In 1700 a yeoman farmer started to write about the Parish and the people who lived in it.



Richard Gough was that farmer. His writings live on. They were not published in his lifetime, which is probably just as well, for as you follow these walks you will read his stories of some of the people who lived in the Parish. The laws of libel could well have been called upon by his neighbours who were the subjects of Gough's lurid tales.

These walks take you through the landscape that Gough knew so well, although much changed now, from 1700.

They have been produced as a community project for the Millennium, with financial support from Shropshire County Council.

The book was first published (in part) in 1834, more than a century after Gough's death. The first full copy was printed in 1875. All of the quotations in "speech marks" on these walks are from the 1981 Penguin edition, edited by David Hey, deemed by many to be the definitive version.

The County Council bought the manuscript of Gough's work in 1965, and in 1999 it was the subject of major conservation works. It is now maintained in the County Records Office.

But let's get on. Our first walk begins at the Red Lion, in the heart of Myddle.

There was a crooked man.....





The Red Lion Inn

Richard Maddock "pulled downe the barne which was att his house over against the Lich gate, and sett it up .. att the foot of Myddle Hill, near Penbrooke's gate, and there he sold ale."

By Gough's day, the place was called Eagle Farm, and one Thomas Jukes who lived there took a wife, from Wales - a handsome woman but "he might have had one as honest nearer home."

They had three awful sons. Thomas, (the youngest), used to break into his neighbours' houses, then became apprentice to a Juggler.

The second son stole horses before becoming a soldier. Vincent, the eldest, was a seaman. He was taken prisoner by the Turks, off Tangiers, with another Englishman. After some time they changed their religion and became Turks, and got better treated. They were sent off in a small vessel, with just eight Turks and grabbing the opportunity, when the Turks were all below decks, shut down the hatches, and hoisted sail for England. They sold the boat (and possibly the Turks!) and Vincent bought a new suit of clothes, a good horse, and came home to Myddle. Ballads were sung in the area about this adventure. He went after to sea again, and was heard of no more.

Witterage and Bilmarsh

"Before this common was whoolly inclosed, there were two lytle houses or cottages upon it neare the southwest corner of the common.... a Taylor, dwelt in one of them, and one Edward Grestocke lived and sold ale in the other, and his wife made cakes, which were accounted the best in this country, soe that two or three of Grestock's cakes was a very acceptable present to a friend."

Mr. Osmay Hill, took a lease of this common and enclosed it; he pulled down the cottages, and built a fair house upon it. He was a scholar and kept a very flourishing school at his own house, where many gentlemen's sons of good quality were his scholars. He had one son, whose name was Francis, he had several daughters, who were servants to gentlemen whose sons were his scholars.

One daughter was servant to a gentleman who lived near Wellington, and as she held water for her master to wash his hands in the kitchen, he flicked a little water into her face, which his wife saw, and thinking it was much too familiar an action, she took up a cleaver, and gave Miss Hill such a blow on the head that she died.

The Setts

The first part of the way to Myddle Church from Newton on the time of popery, the people, when they went that way with a kneeling round about it did mumble over some prayers, eyther

Alderton

William Downton lived in Alderton. He had a son, Samuel, who had a crooked back, grim, swarthy complexion and long black hair. But "hee was not so deformed in body as debauched in beehaviour" William, saw that things were going to go awry, so married him off to a good woman. They had one son and four daughters, but then she died. Samuel hired a servant girl to look after the children, then married her. The young people were so angry that they all left home. Samuel got into debt, sold his place at Alderton and went to run an alehouse in Cockshutt, which became very well established - some say because of his new wife who was nicknamed 'white Legge' because she usually went without stockings!

Samuel's son, Thomas, took over his father's land in Alderton, but did little better. He married a wife with nothing - "Her name is Judith - shee proved such a drunken woman as hath scarce been heard of..." In fact, in the late 1600's her husband had to pay her bills at local alehouses - often as much as £10. No wonder Thomas eventually had to sell up, too. In his will he left £60 to his wife, but before he died he took another £10 back to pay more alehouse debts. After he died she actually had £120 "and now she sets about in earnest to spend this, and with hard shift, spent most of it in two years, and now lives poorly in a lytle house in Myddle."



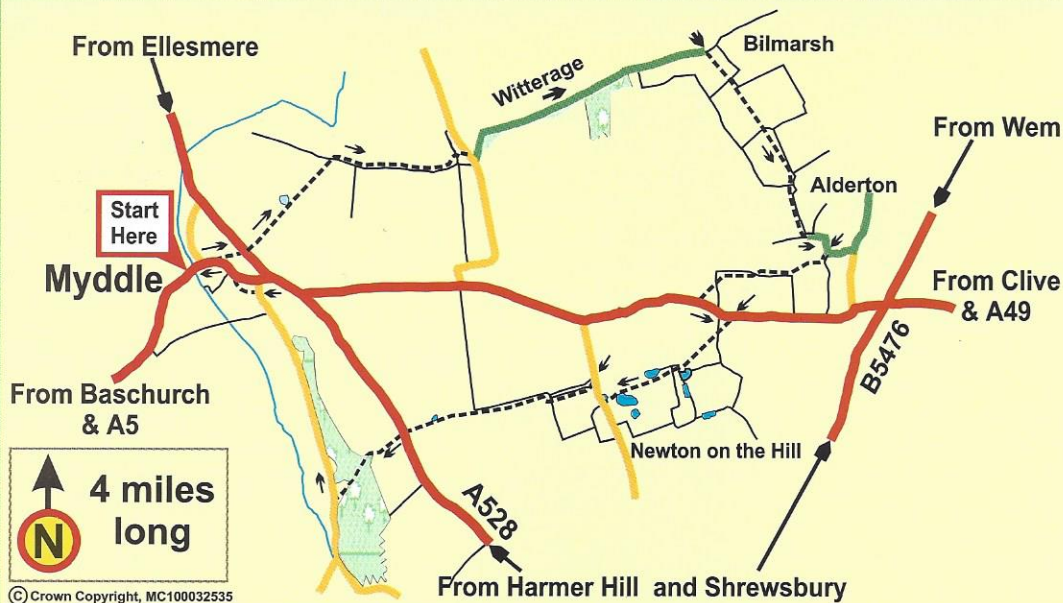
Newton on the Hill

Richard Gough's farm was in this hamlet. He had several other houses (some of which were moved around the Parish) but his main house, where he wrote his 'Antiquities and Memoires of the Parish of Myddle' still stands, though greatly changed from his day.

When writing of his neighbours Gough often showed a ready sense of humour. One of the Rectors of Myddle was a Mr. Kinaston. There was a poor weaver, named Parks, who lived in Newton on the Hill, he had eleven children, all baptized by Mr. Kinaston; at the baptizing the tenth or eleventh, Mr. Kinaston said merrily, "Now one child is due to the Parson," to which Parks agreed, and Mr. Kinaston chose a girl, that was about the middle age among the rest, and brought her

up at his own house, and she became his servant; and when she had served several years, he gave her in marriage with thirty, some say sixty pounds' dowry.

ne Hill "was, by antient people, called the Setts, because in the Corps to bee buried, they did there sett down the Corps, and for the sole of the deceased, or for themselves."



Starting at The Red Lion, turn left and go towards Myddle Hill. Straight ahead you will see a path with concrete steps. Go up this, and cross the main Shrewsbury to Ellesmere road, A528.

Pass through a kissing gate and cross the first field, passing a pond on your left. Through the next gate turn right and at the small wooded copse go through it then turn right along the road for 50 metres before going sharp left into The Witterage, a green lane.

Eventually this becomes a grassy path, ending at a field gate. Here you turn right, following the way-marked path across fields until you enter another green lane.

This twists sharply right, then left. On this second corner pass over a stile on your right, and go across the field, aiming for the corner of the next small field that juts out into yours. At the corner bear right, cross a stile into the smaller field then over a further stile, bearing left you come into the road from Myddle to Clive.

Here turn LEFT for 150 metres then RIGHT onto the footpath, again. Cut across the corner of this field, over a stile and go towards some ponds. Through a narrow field, pass a pond on your right, then aim for a larger pond, about 100 metres ahead of you. Pass this on your left (the roof you can see beyond the pond is Gough's House) and go over stiles into Newton Lane.

On entering Newton Lane turn right and just before the house and chapel (on your left) cross stiles and walk down this field keeping the woodland area, known as the Setts, on your right.

Follow this route until you get to the A528 again, cross the road and make for the nearest corner of woodland. Pass through the gate, into the path known as The Cryn, down the steps, pass the quarry and out onto the Lower Road. Turn right along here back towards Myddle. After the second house on your left go along the small footpath and then follow the road back to the Red Lion.