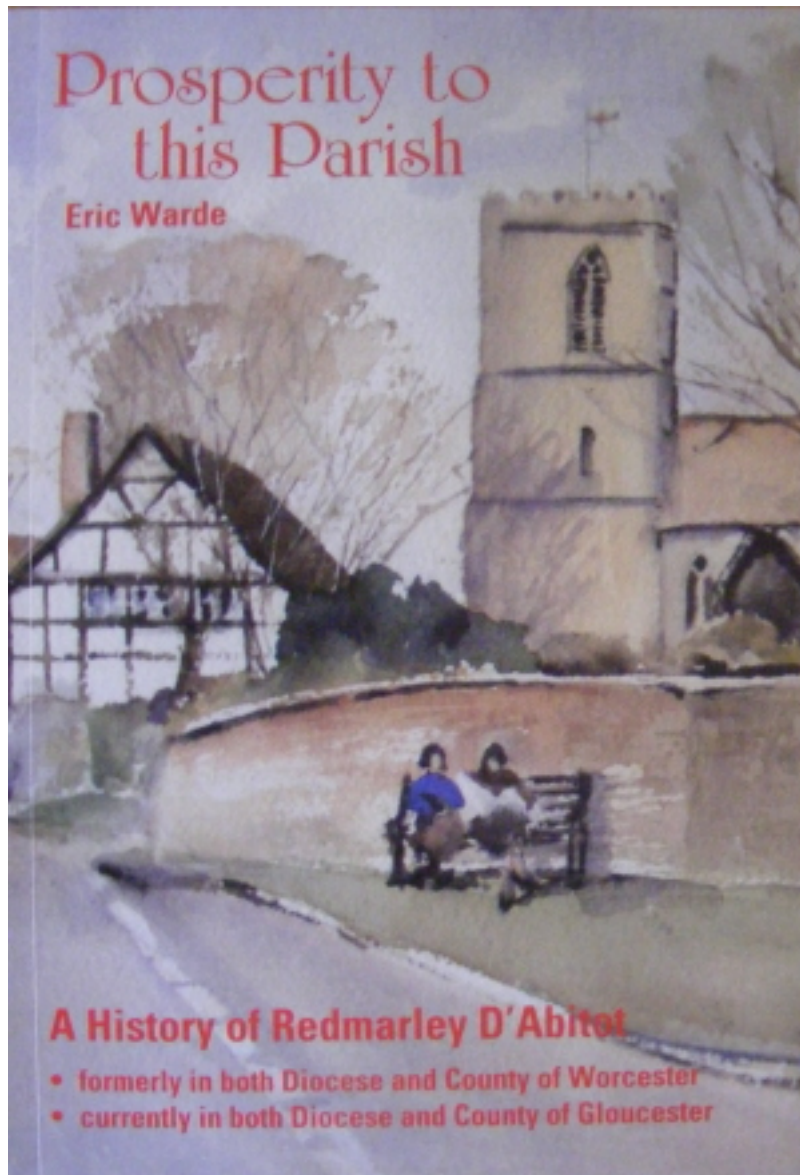


Book Review: Prosperity To This Parish

Written by Brenda Bainbridge

Sunday, 20 January 2008 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 01 October 2008 12:24

The enthusiasm of Eric Warde and eight members of Redmarley Local History Group has produced this wide ranging book on which they are to be congratulated. It begins in Neolithic times and touches the 21st Century with notes on local residents. People, events, vernacular and unique buildings are investigated and recorded.



The attractive cover is illustrated, by Carol Henning, with a scene from the centre of Redmarley. An explanation of the derivation of the intriguing title of the book is provided at the beginning. In 1743 when a bell from the parish church of Redmarley was re-cast, Abraham and John Rudhall inscribed it with this message of goodwill. Unfortunately, prosperity did not touch all villagers as over a century later some children walked to school 'in all weathers, all too frequently poorly clothed and shod and inadequately fed'.

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The book includes many illustrations, mainly black and white photos of the centre of the village, sports teams, the larger houses and their associated families. The reproduction of the recent colour photographs is superb. The inclusion of a map of the whole parish, to locate the places mentioned, would have been of benefit to readers not familiar with Redmarley.

Many chapters were written by the late Eric Smith including chapter 19 *The Down House - The Early Years* . The Down

House is situated on a superb site which has probably been occupied for more than a millenium. Eric Smith's writing demonstrates his local history knowledge and thorough research. He begins chapter 19 with the earliest recorded history of the estate. This is followed by Eric Warde's *The*

Down House - Post 1800

, which deals with the house as 'a magnificent country residence' investigating its more recent owners and their families. The names mentioned include the Dowdeswells, Scobells and Bulloughs and this will be of interest to many family historians. Extensive use is made of primary sources in this excellent chapter.

The Chartist Community at Lowbands is by Martin Hobby. This is the writing of a man who knows his subject. He imparts facts and information whilst maintaining pace and interest, always linking how national events affected the residents of Lowbands, Redmarley and, eventually, the demise of the Chartist Movement.

The chapter recording the listed buildings in the parish is an inspired inclusion and would have benefited from grid reference numbers. This chapter could have been slightly extended with a list and a few lines of description of the mills in the parish. Mills, as one of the earliest forms of mechanization, played an important part in the social and economic prosperity of Redmarley parish.

Prosperity to the Parish has continued the line of histories of Redmarley stretching back over a century. It covers the development of this scattered community, which leads to an understanding of Redmarley today giving a sense of belonging. This successful reappraisal reflects the hard work and commitment of the committee.

Editor:

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Prosperity to this Parish is available from Ledbury Books and Maps and Ledbury TIC at £13.50. The book is also available from Ledbury Library.