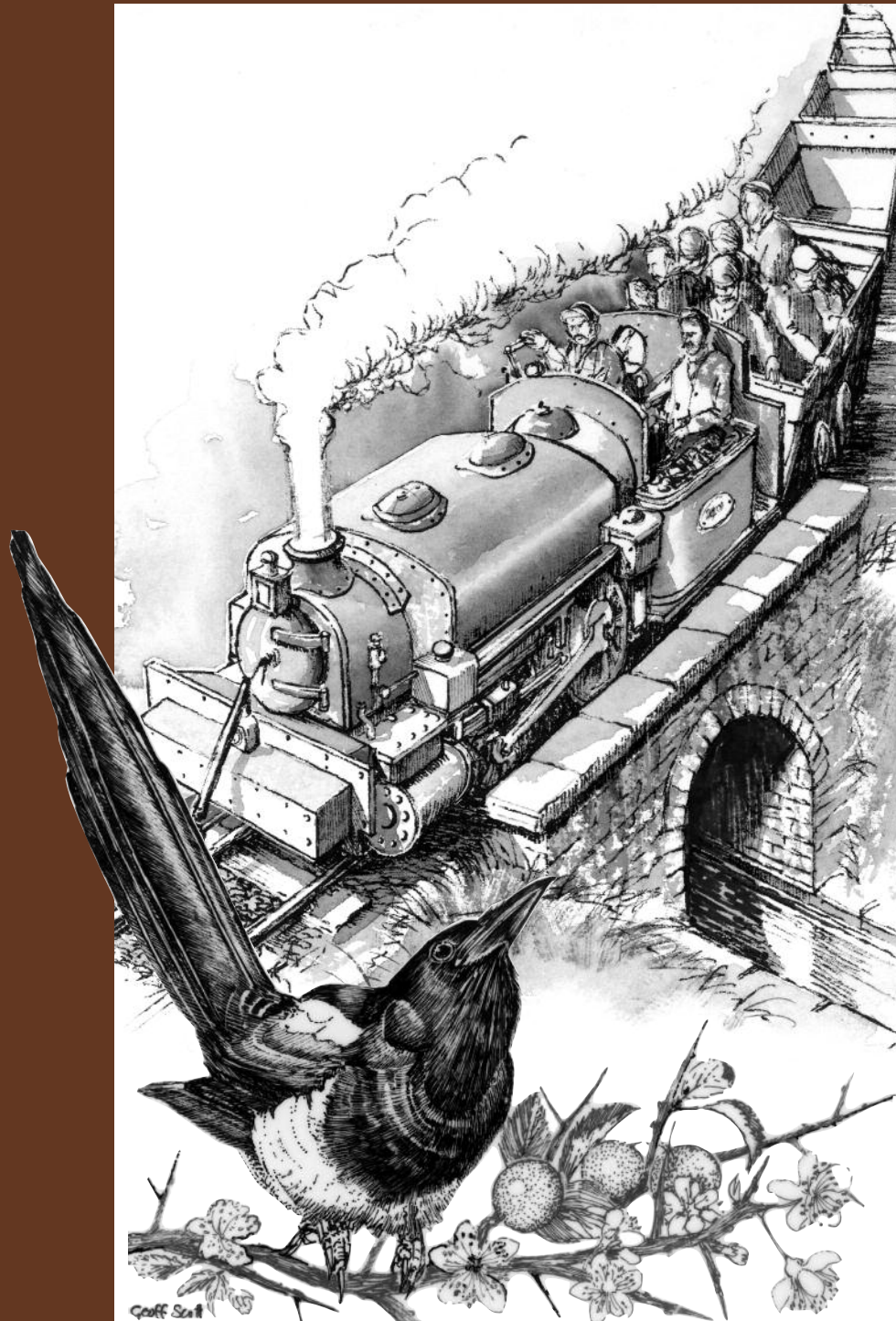


BEGELLY & KILGETTY



*Naws am Le
Sense of Place*

Community

Begelly and Kilgetty are part of the modern Community Council area of Kilgetty Begelly.

Names

Begelly is an ancient parish. The name may derive from the Welsh word for "shepherd": BUGAIL.

If so, Begelly would mean something like "the territory or estate of Bugail".

Thomas Chapel derives from St Thomas Chapel, a chapel of ease under Begelly.

The original Kilgetty (a gentry house) was in the ancient parish of St Issells. Dr B G Charles says that the name is formed from the Welsh Cil "a nook" and a personal name "Cetti".

Thomas Chapel, village green and pond



Antiquities

Stones removed in 1977 from a field known as Blackhook (formerly Chronicle Park), are thought to have been the remains of a Neolithic burial chamber.

Names such as Bignin Moor and Bickning Lane may refer to a beacon site; such sites were often a re-use of Bronze Age burial mounds.

Middle Ages

In an area now incorporated into the extended burial ground of the church, there was a motte and bailey castle. Before its removal (in 1921) the mound was about 5 to 8 feet above the surrounding levels (Commander W R Morgan). The castle would have dated from the time soon after the Normans arrived at Pembroke (1093) and probably was associated with the struggle for territory. Later, Begelly and "Carne" formed two knights fees, in the Earldom of Pembroke.

Landed Proprietors

Much of the local land belonged to the Kilgetty Estate, which was acquired by the Philipps family (Picton Castle) who also had the right to choose the Rector of Begelly (with East Williamston). They and other landowners were interested in making profit from the anthracite coal underlying their estates as entrepreneurs or lessors.

Entrance to Begelly House



Childs of Begelly

Captain James Mark Child, his widow Sarah and James Mark Child (1825 - 77) of Begelly House, the only resident gentry in the 19th century, were industrial pioneers.

Coal Mining

In 1581 there were so many workings in Begelly parish near the highway from Tenby to Haverfordwest, that no one dared to pass over it in a carriage or cart because of the danger of subsidence. A notice to this effect was served on the landowners by the burgesses of Tenby calling for improvement.

There was one enterprise - if not two - called Begelly Colliery in the late 18th century. Other important works of that time were the Old Engine Pit (Kingsmoor) 1775 and the first pits of the Thomas Chapel Colliery 1784. In 1851 the Thomas Chapel Pits were acquired by the Pembrokehire Iron and Coal Company.

Amongst spots on the outskirts of Begelly village where coal was mined, were Blackhook and Coal pits Back, and there were others within the village area. By 1834 the Tenby and Begelly Coal Company, in which J M Child "almost certainly had a sizeable share holding" (M R C Price) was in existence.

Industrial Transport

While some of the coal produced was sold locally, a wider market was sought. The product of the Philipps' mines at Kilgetty, and coal from further afield was shipped from Wiseman's Bridge, but since this was feasible only in the late spring and summer, the miners were unable to work for part of the year. Amongst attempted improvements was a canal from the Kilgetty Great Pit to Wiseman's Bridge. A tramroad from Begelly Collieries to Saundersfoot was mooted by Mrs Child. Eventually the Saundersfoot Railway and Harbour Act was passed in 1829, and this included provision for a line from Saundersfoot to Thomas Chapel (via Bonville's Court). The line (a 4' gauge) was opened officially in March 1834. Horse power was used at first but later "Bulldog" engines were introduced. The trucks were the type used in the collieries. The Tenby and Begelly Coal Company had two small vessels, the Peggy and the Mary Anne and by 1836 there was a Begelly Wharf at Saundersfoot.

Roads

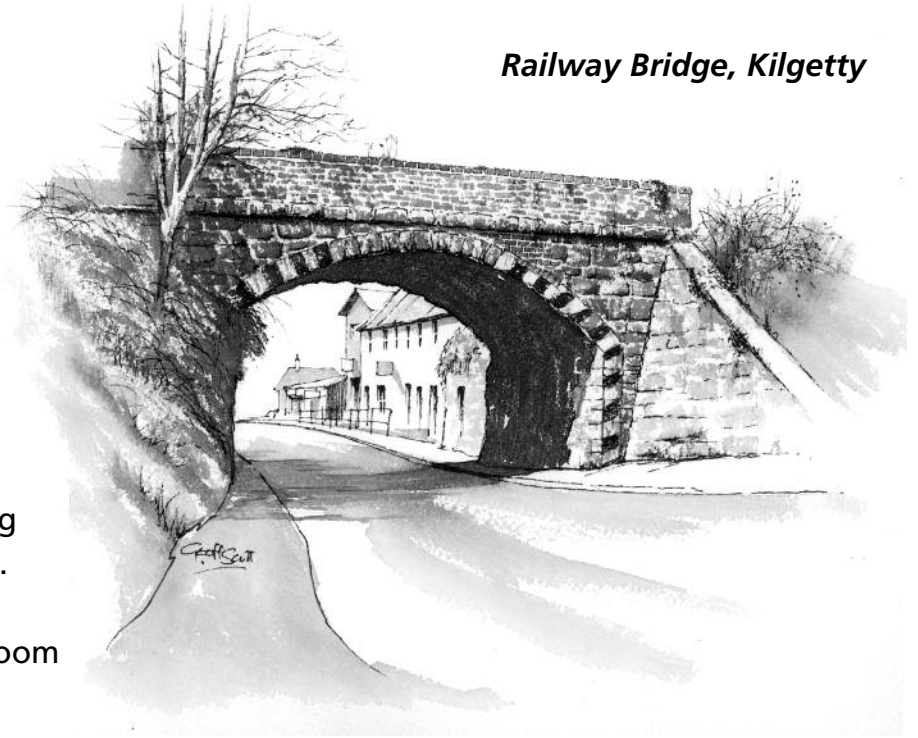
Begelly was on an important old route between Tavernspite and beyond and Tenby (turnpiked in the 18th century), but far more traffic crossed the plain below Begelly church and village with the building of a virtually new turnpike road from St Clears to Pembroke (completed by 1839). Begelly Cross Roads, so well known over the years to coach and motor travellers, came into being. The coach traffic on both roads was serviced at the Begelly Arms.

Commander W R Morgan records that there were post horse stables and a blacksmith's shop on the New Road below the inn. The cross roads was later the site of one of the earliest petrol pumps in the area.

Subsequent road improvements have altered the appearance of the original cross roads and produced a new roundabout (Kilgetty by-pass 1984).

Railway

A generation after the St Clears - Hobbs Point Turnpike Road was built, the countryside was carved up once more for the linking of the Pembroke and Tenby Railway with Whitland - (first passenger train, 4th September 1866), and Kilgetty had a station, in the long term, a nucleus for development. A new station was built on the opposite side of the track with room for a siding and cattle pens, and in due course a fortnightly mart was held nearby. Amongst commodities transported in the 20th century were sugar beet and rabbits. The CWS Co-operative was established in 1921-2 (new site 1936). and the Post Office transferred there from Begelly in 1923.



Railway Bridge, Kilgetty

The Later Years of Mining

Work at Begelly ended in the 1860s. However, mining continued an important occupation for Kilgetty and it had many of the experiences of bigger industrial villages: strikes, soup kitchens, extra police - and a dole office (at the Free Gardeners Hall). The Miners Federation had a part in setting up the Co-op, and the Miners Welfare in establishing a recreation ground. Branches of 2 Friendly Societies were formed: the Free Gardeners and the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes. Another amenity was the Reading Room (now the W.I. Hall).

Lower Level (closed 1900 or soon after) was the last working pit in the area. The last coal marketed was removed from the site of the new school at Kilgetty in 1990: 7,000 tons sold to industry.

Viewing the Industrial Past

The Miners Arms, Begelly is now a private house. In St Issell's Church, Saundersfoot, there are wall tablets to some of the Child family. Follow the walk outlined in the SPARC leaflet "The Miners Walk" to discover where the tramway and some of the pits were.

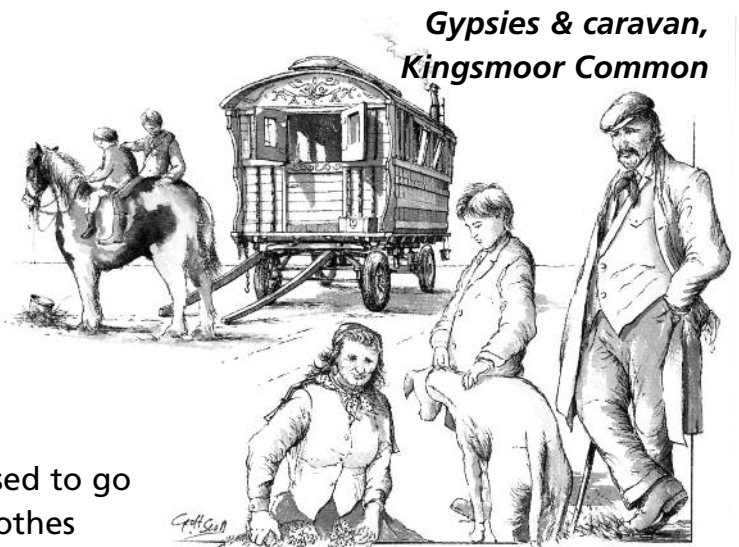
Post World War II: A Further Turnaround

Kilgetty saw about 20 years of prosperity because of work associated with the South Wales Electricity Board. But the cattle mart came to an end and the role of the railway was curtailed. It is however, still a commercial centre, while Begelly is residential.

About Kingsmoor

It consists now of about 161 acres. There was an unsuccessful attempt to initiate an Act of Enclosure in 1855-6. Its unity has been lost because of road improvements, but a large area of interesting wetland and heath survives. The scene of large assemblies: religious, disputive and athletic, traditionally it has been the home of gipsies.

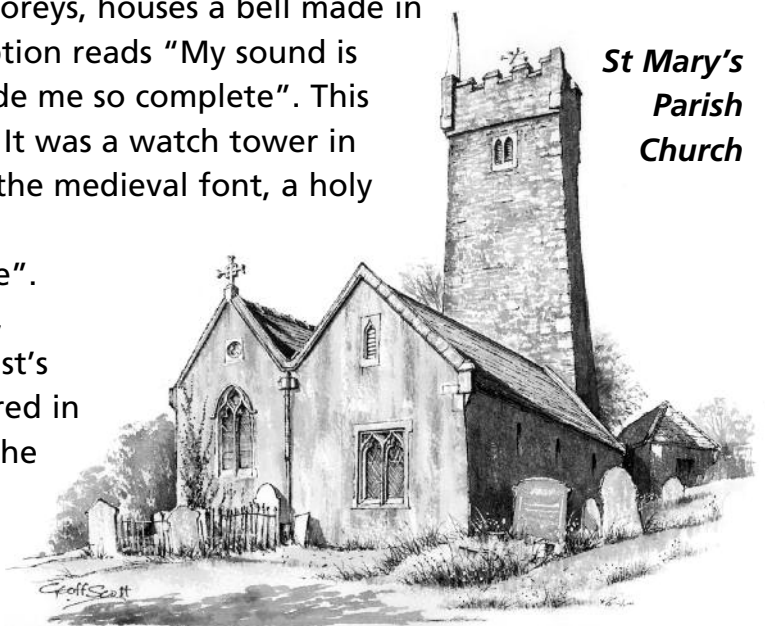
Local inhabitants recall that the gipsies used to go round selling small articles, particularly clothes pegs, tin boilers and paper flowers. Small silver coins were saved so as to cross the gipsy's palm with silver. No one sent the gipsy away empty-handed. Romany gipsies were allowed to stay for a maximum of 7 days and alternated between Kingsmoor, Redberth and Sageston Commons. There is now a permanent Gipsy Caravan Site north of the A477 and descendants of the gipsies of long connection locally, still live there.



***Gypsies & caravan,
Kingsmoor Common***

St Mary's Parish Church, Begelly

It consists of a nave, chancel, north transept, south transept and a massive embattled tower. The tower, 71 feet high, with 3 storeys, houses a bell made in 1760 by Bayley in Bridgewater. Its inscription reads "My sound is good, my shape is neat, Twas Bayley made me so complete". This tower is the oldest structure in the area. It was a watch tower in World War II. Amongst the features are the medieval font, a holy water stoup and the chancel arch "apparently Norman - built of local stone". The chancel leans markedly to the south, reputedly to show the inclination of Christ's head on the Cross. The church was restored in 1887. The stained glass window behind the altar (by Messrs Clayton and Bell) depicts the meeting between the Risen Christ and his mother. The lych gate was erected in 1886-7.

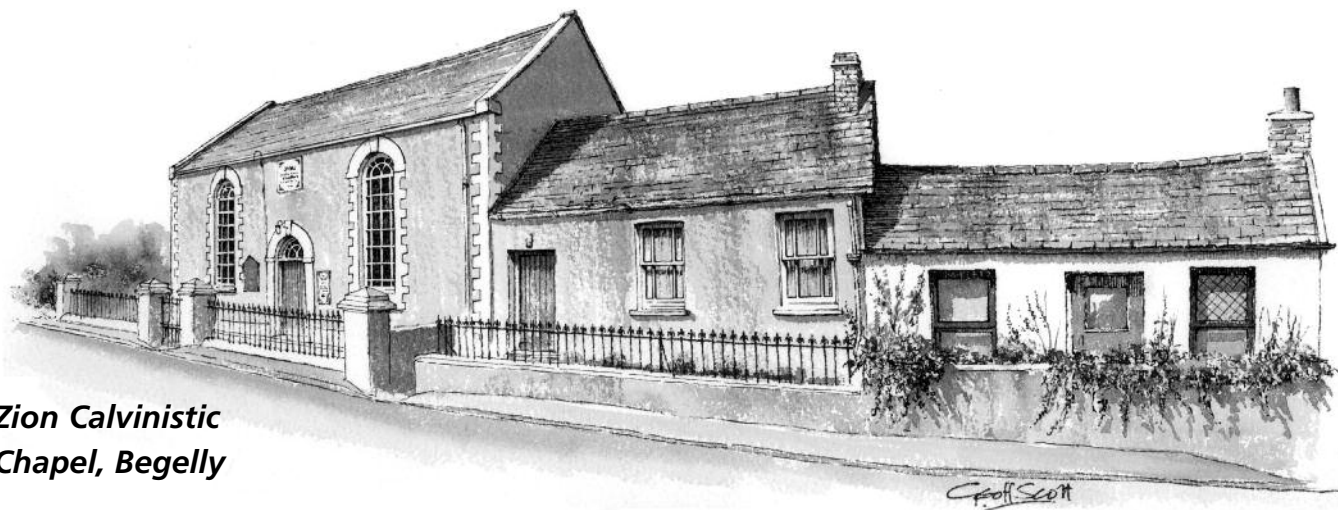


***St Mary's
Parish
Church***

There was an almshouse on a portion of land added to the churchyard in 1881. It was usual to toll the church bell on the death of a church member and also to ring out the old year and ring in the new.

Kilgetty Mission Church

Built for the benefit of parishioners of St Issell's, it was licensed for Divine Service on 24th May 1893, and served the community until 1986. Most of the contents were incorporated into St Mary's.



**Zion Calvinistic
Chapel, Begelly**

Zion Calvinistic Methodist Chapel

Built in 1828 following services in a house, a new building was opened on 29th and 30th April 1866 in the time of Rev. George Bancroft who had the joint pastorate of Bethesda and Zion.

Kingsmoor Methodist Chapel

Hill Chapel, built in 1837, was originally Primitive Methodist. It was closed in 1984.

Thomas Chapel Primitive Methodist Society

Meetings started in 1826 at Thomas Chapel Farm on alternative Thursdays, and sometimes also in a two-roomed cottage at Cowsland Stone. After a break from the early 1880s, meetings were re-established in 1906 and held in the farmhouse until the 1920's. One of the annual high days was an open air meeting held on Green Bank outside Thomas Chapel Farm. The Society is said to have ended for the lack of a suitable place to have services.

Begelly Board School

This was opened on 8th May 1876 and closed in 1961 when there were only 23 pupils on the register.

World War II

Just off the old tramway beyond Begelly towards Thomas Chapel are the remains of a brick building which housed a generator, part of a bombing decoy system. Beneath was an air raid shelter.

Walks & Wildlife

There are several possibilities for walks starting from Begelly or Kilgetty. The "Miners Walk", for which a leaflet is available, passes through both villages. From Kilgetty, a path passes through coniferous woodland and farmland to Fords Lake Valley, an unspoilt area of scrub and woodland, where nuthatches and greater spotted woodpeckers may be seen or heard, and foxgloves and red campion adorn the hedgerows. The route also makes use

of the old "dramway", the former railway line between Thomas Chapel and Begelly, which once carried coal from mines at Broom and Thomas Chapel to Saundersfoot. The hedgebanks abound with plant and bird life, and the ditches alongside the line are alive with frogspawn in the early spring.

Kingsmoor common is an important wildlife habitat, being a good example of wet, acid, heathland and scrub, with some areas of open water. Because much of the common is no longer grazed, gorse, heather and bramble have spread over large areas, while willow, ash and alder trees are spreading over other parts. Birds such as snipe (in winter), sedge warbler and corn-bunting are found here, while barn owls, kestrels and buzzards may occasionally be seen hunting over the common. Where some grazing occurs, plants such as Perforate St John's Wort, Knapweed and Fleabane occur, while in the wetter areas, the Bogbean with its beautiful fringed white flowers, and Bog Asphodel with its spike of yellow flowers, may be found.



Bog Bean

Country Code

Respect • Protect • Enjoy

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.