

Popular misconceptions about Meriden

There have been many popular articles about Meriden over the last 30 or so years in newspapers and magazines. Rarely are they 100% accurate in what they write. Here are some of the most inaccurate items:

The name 'Meriden' has something to do with 'Mire' or mud

This mistake made by the famous 17th century local historian Sir William Dugdale has stuck! Like the mud he assumed it meant. I doubt you could blame him. He often travelled through the village on his way from Coleshill to London and back, was a friend of the Holbeches, owners of Meriden Hall stopping off to deliver letters and money from relatives in the Capital. Other later writers like the Welsh traveller Tennant copied what Dugdale had written in his books noting the foulness of the road where a you needed 6 or 8 horses to pull your coach 'through the sloughs of Meriden'. In fact the name means just the opposite. It comes from the Old English words Mirig or pleasant and denu a U-shaped valley showing us it was a settlement long before any written records of it exist.

'Meridien'

You can understand this misconception because that sounds something like middle and our well known claim to be at the Centre of England might make some think the name Meriden derived from this word. This is chance and nothing more.

There was a coalmine in the village giving rise to the name Shafts Wood

The earliest reference is in 1523 when there exists a lease for the Shafts Springe. Shafts were natural springs coming out of the wood on the edge of the East Warwickshire plateau. In the north of Berkswell parish on near the Meriden border was a similar wood with several names including Slibbers Slade. There were mineral springs in Gt Packington parish in 1830s and in recent times Meriden spring water has been tested and deemed some of the purest there is and compared very favourably with Derbyshire's bottled.