

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



August 2006

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- 7 Feb *Perceptions of the Industrial Revolution* by Diana Clarke
- 7 Mar *Bridgnorth and the River Trade 1660-1760* by Malcolm Wanklin
- 4 Apr Annual Wilkinson Lecture – *Thomas Farnoll Pritchard* by Julia Ionides
- 2 May *An Oral History of Broseley*, Ken Jones shares recordings of people's memories of the town

Further details may be obtained from Neil Clarke (01952) 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- J Brazier, Bracknell, Berkshire
Walter Dawson, Cape Town, South Africa
Brenda Gaffney, Co Leitrim, Ireland
James and Hilary Hurdley, Broseley
Robert Turner, Ironbridge
Lindsay Ward, Ironbridge

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm at the Broseley Social Club, High Street, unless otherwise announced. Car parking is available at the back of the Club. Members are requested to be seated by 7.30 pm to allow speakers a prompt start.

Visitors are welcome but are asked to give a donation towards Society funds.

PROGRAMME

- 6 Sept Memories Evening – *Health Care in Broseley*, led by Martin Brooks
- 4 Oct Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk by Mary McKenzie entitled *Shropshire Archives, the Centre and its Collections*
- 1 Nov *Memorabilia of a Broseley Family* by Michael and Gillian Pope
- 6 Dec Christmas dinner
- 3 Jan Members Evening at which members will be invited to take part in a slide presentation on Historic Shropshire

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society will be holding its Annual General Meeting on 4 October when the agenda will include the election of the committee. While the majority of committee members are willing to stand for re-election, Steve Dewhirst will be resigning due to pressure of work. The Society, therefore, will need to replace him as treasurer and offers for this post will be welcome. Anyone interested in this, or other positions on the committee, should contact secretary Dot Cox on (01952) 883568 for a nomination form.

Steve has also been responsible for the printing and mailing of the *Newsletter*. If there are any members willing to take over this task please contact the editor, Jan Lancaster, on (01952) 884766.

The meeting will be followed by a talk by Mary McKenzie on *Shropshire Archives, the Centre and its Collections*.

VISIT TO THE LAWNS



Members enjoying a summer evening at the Lawns

Society members enjoyed an evening out in June when Mel Mars, the present owner of John Wilkinson's Broseley home the Lawns, gave a guided tour of the house and grounds.

Mel has spent the last two years restoring the house to its former grandeur and is now busy turning the stable block into four two-bedroomed houses.

He is particularly keen to learn more about the house and the people who have been associated with it and asks anyone who can help to contact him on (01952) 884142.

VISIT TO BRISTOL

This year marks the bicentenary of the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. To celebrate his achievements the Society, in conjunction with the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge, organised a coach trip to Bristol to visit some of the sites and engineering feats associated with this great man.

The first stop was Temple Meads railway station, the oldest railway terminus in the world and built by Brunel for the Great Western Railway. It was opened in 1840, running services to Bath and a year later to London Paddington.

Closed in 1965, this part of the station is now the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum.

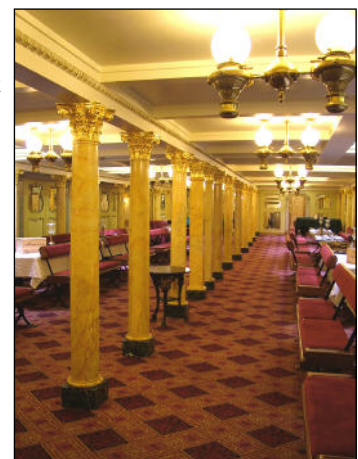
From there the party boarded the *Tower Belle* pleasure cruiser for a trip around the harbour before docking alongside the Maritime Museum and the renovated *ss Great Britain*, originally launched in 1843 and now berthed in the same dry dock in which she was built.

The talk given to the Society recently on the construction, career and conservation of this ship certainly added to the appreciation of just how much work had gone into its restoration, while the opportunity to look round the Maritime Museum added another dimension to a fascinating day.

The final stop was at the Clifton suspension bridge. The building of this bridge was the result of a competition held in 1829 which was judged by Thomas Telford. He, however, rejected all the designs and submitted his own but the decision to declare him the winner was not popular and a second competition was held. Brunel was eventually declared the winner and was also appointed project engineer.

Although the foundation stone was laid in 1831, difficulties arose and by 1843 only the towers had been completed and the project was abandoned.

The dining room restored to its former glory



The ss Great Britain back in the dry dock in which she was built



A glass ceiling at water level allows for a controlled environment to minimise corrosion



The kitchen where food for the first class passengers was prepared





Building of the Clifton Suspension Bridge stalled for some years, but was finally completed in 1864 as a memorial to Brunel

However, after Brunel's death in 1859 the bridge was completed as a memorial to him and was finally opened in 1864. Designed to take only light horse drawn traffic, today it can still handle some 12,000 motor vehicles crossing it daily.

A report on the talk by marine archaeologist Shane Casey, curator of the ss Great Britain, and Richard Baister, project manager for the renovation of this historic ship, appeared in the May 2006 Newsletter.

A PIECE OF THE TREE

Earlier this year the Society was presented with a piece of the Tree, the lovely beech tree spanning the Broseley to Much Wenlock Road, which had to be felled last year because of a fast acting fungus.

This has now been turned by Peter Gillard, a friend of Michael and Gillian Pope, to make the base for a lectern. Peter, now retired, was a lecturer at Rodbaston Agricultural College and wood turning has been one of his hobbies for many years.



A resident of Broseley, Chris Bonsall, has offered to fit a top and once this has been done the lectern will be available for use by speakers at Society meetings.

Peter Gillard with the piece of the Tree which he has turned to make the base for a lectern

THE FLY GUY

A profile

A while ago Society members were given a talk by Ray Johnston on some of his memories of the Wolfson's of Jew's Jitty, a report of which appeared in the November 2004 Newsletter.



However, local history is not Ray's only hobby. From a very early age he has had a passionate interest in flies in general and the two winged diptera in particular.

Although Ray was not born in Broseley, he went there when he was only two weeks old. Sadly his mother had died in childbirth and he and his father moved to Broseley where he was brought up by his aunt and grandmother, who kept the old post office in Simpson's Lane from 1919-42.

Ray's early days were spent at Legge's Hill infants' school before he moved on to Bridgnorth Road primary school when he was seven. There he met both Dennis Mason, whose *Memories of a Shropshire Lad* have appeared in the last two issues of the Society's *Journal*, and Jack Owen, a long standing member of the Society who died in 2004. Jack's uncle had a microscope which Ray was allowed to use and it was from that time that he developed his interest in entymology and began studying flies in general and the two winged diptera, such as blow flies and mosquitoes, in particular. Although, Ray says, his first interest was actually in pond life – but that's another world!

Ray's ambition on leaving school was to become a surgeon. In those days, however, that was little more than a pipe dream especially since, despite his father's willingness to pay the fees and his grandmother's two year campaign, he was unable to obtain a place at the old grammar school in Coalbrookdale. His next choice was that of cabinet maker. However, with no opportunities in the area at the time and his father insisting he got a trade, he eventually became a bricklayer.

In 1942 he was called up to the Shropshire Light Infantry, joined their 11th Armoured Division and was stationed at various places around the country. During this time he became interested in training as an army cook and took the requisite catering

course. Before he could be transferred to the Royal Army Catering Corps, however, events overtook him and on 6 June 1944 he formed part of the Juno Beach D-Day landings. As he says, what a way to spend one's birthday!

Demobbed early because of his trade skills he was initially sent to work in Wolverhampton before being moved to Madeley to build 17 blocks of houses. By 1949, however, he had set up his own building contractors' business. In 1952 he married and settled in Madeley, where he has lived ever since.



During all this time Ray never lost his interest in diptera and now has a considerable collection of slides. There are, he says, some 5,000 species in Britain, although the effects of global warming have led to several previously strange species being seen in recent years.

Ray says there is still much research to be done and would love to meet anyone else interested in flies. Or simply bring along his microscope to identify different species. If you want a fascinating morning contact him on (01952) 586279.

The specimens flying around these pages are part of Ray's slide collection of blowflies.

COALBROOKDALE WATERCOURSES

Previous issues of the *Newsletter* (February, May and August 2005 and February 2006) have reported on the work being done to restore the Coalbrookdale watercourses, which comprise a series of pools and streams in the Coalbrookdale valley. They are of particular significance to the industrial heritage of the area, being used

historically to generate power to drive bellows and work iron.

Now this restoration work is almost complete, with works at Boring Mill Pool and Upper Forge Sluices due to finish at the end of August. Work at this latter site has involved the construction of a bypass channel to alleviate pressure on the sluices, which will be restored and stabilised. In addition, fencing and footpaths will provide safe access for visitors.

This site is certainly one of the earliest on the watercourse system. As with Lower Furnace Pool, the Upper Forge Pool had gradually become infilled and today the sluices are the most prominent remaining feature. They are believed to be a mixture of 18th and 19th century building.

At Boring Mill Pool the remains of England's first steel furnaces, unearthed during recent archaeological excavations undertaken by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, have been marked out on the surface of the ground. The site is now being used as a picnic area.

In the final phase interpretation material will draw together the various elements of the watercourses and explain their historical and environmental importance to visitors to the Gorge. They will include cast iron waymarkers, which have been designed to resemble the winding mechanism used to raise and lower sluice gates, a storyteller's chair carved into the trunk of a tree and an interpretative leaflet.

The project is being financed by the European Regional Development Fund, English Partnerships Regeneration Agency, Advantage West Midlands and the Environment Agency.

The Upper Forge Sluices are being restored and stabilised



The Boring Mill Pool site has been infilled and the position of the first steel furnaces marked out.



This storyteller's chair beside the Lower Furnace Pool has been carved out of a tree trunk



JACKFIELD SCHOOL

In response to a letter about Jackfield School in the May 2006 Newsletter Ron Miles sent this extract from an article he had written for the Jackfield News, and in which he recalls his schooldays at Jackfield during World War II.

Jackfield School was built in 1844 and was most certainly the second one on or near the same spot, the previous one being known as the Penny School. The school had five classrooms and a school house and at its peak had some 200 pupils and seven teachers. A Miss Hughes, of Coalbrookdale, was headmistress until about 1912 when Mr Freddy Brookes, a very strict disciplinarian, took over. He spent his entire career at Jackfield, only retiring in the 1950s. The two later heads were Miss Irene (Mollie) Dixon and Mr Peter Lloyd.

Around the time of the First World War the school was accepting children as young as 3½, and the infants' classroom had a bed especially for those who could not make it through the day without a nap.

Being a Church of England School, tests in religious instruction were taken by the Rector of St Mary's Church, Jackfield, and usually resulted in pupils having the rest of the day off, while religious days such as Good Friday and Ascension Day meant a walk down the road and through the railway gates at Baynham's Crossing to the church.

School sports were held on the Coronation field which was and still is almost in the shadow of Woodhouse Farm. Lines of pupils would make their way to this field by way of the very busy tileries of Thomas Doughty, a round trip of about a mile.

One of Ron's most vivid memories was a visit from the Air Raid Precaution people who showed the pupils how to cover the classroom windows with diagonal bandages in case of flying glass from bomb damage. They also had to take part in air raid practice, forming up in lines and marching out of the school all the way to Doughty's Tileries. There they sat on bricks inside a rather crumbling kiln until the all clear was sounded.

These air raid shelter visits were abruptly abandoned, however, when the route was suddenly

Jackfield School closed in the 1970s and is to be converted into a private house



and dramatically blocked by the arrival of several large concrete drum-shaped blocks. These were placed by the War Ministry at each end of an abandoned tramway track in front of Calcutts House and were intended to hamper and delay the enemy when they overran the entire country. The enemy, fortunately, never arrived but the concrete vehicle stoppers are still there to this day.

A less happy and more poignant memory was that of a former pupil, Flight Sergeant Eddie Evans DFM, coming to talk to them about his exploits as a pilot and showing them his flying helmet and goggles. Sadly he was killed in action shortly after this visit.

By 1940 the boys, including Ron, were "digging for victory" in the school allotments which were situated where the Calcutts Road council houses now stand.

Canings were frequent at the school and Ron remembers being on the receiving end just the once, when getting stuck up a hawthorn tree at lunchtime made him four minutes late for afternoon lessons and earned him a caning in the cloakroom.

The school was closed in the 1970s and it is a source of regret to Ron that it was never offered to the village as a village hall or community centre. It is soon to be converted into a private house.

BETJEMAN ON BROSELEY

by Neil Clarke

The month of August sees the centenary of the birth of John Betjeman, writer, poet and broadcaster. Noted for his love of the English countryside and England's Victorian heritage, Betjeman was knighted in 1969 and became Poet Laureate in 1972.

He had some knowledge of the county of Shropshire. His poem *A Shropshire Lad* recreates the atmospheric local background of Captain Matthew Webb who was born in Dawley and who,

in 1875, was the first man to swim the English Channel. Betjeman co-authored with John Piper the *Shell Guide to Shropshire*, published by Faber & Faber in 1951, from which this rather poetic description of Broseley is taken.

Decayed manufacturing town of great beauty, textural and forlorn. The large Perpendicular-style church was built in 1845 by H. Eginton, and restored in the nineties. Large brick managers' houses in the town; outside, grass-grown tips, making the irregular landscape still more lumpy and picturesque. In the 18th century Broseley was in the heart of the coal and iron 'black country'. One of Watt's first steam engines was erected here. Town Hall 1777. There are still manufacturers in Broseley: of clay tobacco pipes and roofing tiles. It has a peculiar and celebrated clay from which the pipes are made. The Legg family first made pipes here. The family was in business, however, before tobacco was introduced to England at all. The Rodens succeeded them. Noah Roden (1770 to 1820) brought 'churchwardens' and 'straws' to perfection, and supplied most of the London coffee houses and clubs of the day. George Forester of Willey Park (near Broseley) bought a box of Roden's pipes in London, and sent them to Roden as the perfect article to imitate. Rev. Charles Hartshorne, antiquary, author of topographical works on Shropshire, Northumberland and Northants. was born at Broseley 1803.

John Betjeman died in 1984.

SEVERN GORGE COUNTRYSIDE TRUST

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's new Volunteering project has got off to a good start this summer with a series of activities which included a glow-worm walk, butterfly monitoring, step building, gate installation, heathland management and meadow seed gathering.

The project will continue into the autumn when it will focus on Workhouse Coppice and Benthall Edge, where people can learn traditional skills such as hedge laying and coppicing, as well as build footbridges, steps and boardwalks.

These Volunteering activities are open to everyone, although under 16s must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, and all training and equipment is provided.

There will also be a free guided walk round Workhouse Coppice on Saturday 16 September. This will serve as an introduction to the woodland management work and access improvements which are planned and Chris Wenlock, the Trust's Countryside Projects Manager, is arranging a series of meetings with local people and other interested parties to discuss this. Anyone interested in going on the walk should meet at the entrance to Workhouse Coppice in Spout Lane, Broseley, at 10.00am.

Later in the autumn, the Trust will be launching an oral history project to which the public in general, and anyone who has recollections and reminiscences regarding Workhouse Coppice in particular, will be encouraged to attend.

Both the Volunteering activities and the Workhouse Coppice project are being funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

For a full programme of events and activities, visit the SGCT website www.severngorge.org.uk or call 01952 433880.

WHAT'S ON?

Workhouse Coppice Walk

Saturday 16 September

10.00 am Meet at entrance in Spout Lane

Chris Wenlock of the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust will be giving an introduction to the woodland management work and access improvements planned for this area. Further details above.

Coalport China Museum

Ceramics Weekend

Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September

Coalport China Museum is holding a *Ceramics for Budding Collectors* weekend, aimed at people looking to build their own collection of ceramics or learn about pieces they already have. During the weekend workshops will be held on subjects ranging from a practical introduction to the manufacture and decoration of ceramics, to identification and handling.

Experts will offer advice on what to look out for when collecting and participants will be able to bring in ceramics for identification.

A full day of workshop sessions may be booked in advance at a cost of £25.00 per person, including admission to the museum; individual sessions may be paid for on the day itself at a cost of £7.00 per session plus admission, subject to availability.

To book your place or for additional information, call Coalport China Museum on (01952) 580650 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

‘Gorgeous’ Exhibition

Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 October

The Engine Room, Enginuity

10.00 am – 5.00 pm

£2.00 per person

The Shropshire Guild of Contemporary Craft’s second annual ‘Gorgeous’ fair where visitors will be able to see and purchase unusual works of art, including ceramics, furniture, glass, jewellery and textiles, made by master craftsmen from across the West Midlands. In addition, throughout the course of the weekend, there will be a range of lectures and demonstrations by participating designers, artists and craftspeople.

For further information contact the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre (01952) 884391 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

MAILBOX

My wife Wendy, whose maiden name was Wall, has traced her records back to 1650 when her family lived in Broseley and surrounding districts. I should like to bring her to see where it all began, and wondered if there is a cemetery where maybe her family are buried. Would it be worth while?

Garry Johnson
garryjohnson919@btinternet.com

I recently came across an article in your Journal no 21 1999 written by a Jim Cooper, titled *Ramsell, What’s in a Name?* I believe Mr Cooper was a descendant of a Ramsell and I was very interested as I am also descended from Ramsells or, as he rightly says, sometimes Ramsall, Ramshill or Ramsay.

I believe that my great great great grandfather was born in the east Staffordshire district, and have found many ancestors in the areas around Lichfield, Shenstone, Stonnal and the borders with

Leicestershire and Derbyshire. I should be grateful if you could pass this on to Mr Cooper as he may be able to enlighten me about the Ramsells.

Rose Mackenzie
taichimarie@blueyonder.co.uk

I should like to say how much I enjoyed browsing your website on the history of Broseley.

I am looking for information on the film star Hermione Baddeley, who was born in Broseley in 1906 and starred in numerous films; she died in 1986. She was the youngest of four sisters, and as I am presently researching this film star I should be grateful for any information regarding her links with Broseley.

Hermione’s parents were W H Clinton Baddeley and Louise Bourdin. Hermione was the sister of Angela Baddeley who played the housekeeper Kate Bridges in the television series *Upstairs Downstairs*. It would be interesting to find out exactly where in Broseley Hermione was born and the connection the town had with this family. Although she died in Los Angeles she is buried in Amesbury, Wiltshire. Her first husband was the Hon David Tennant who was a descendant of William the Conqueror.

Gordon Grubb
gwgrubb@btconnect.com

I am descended from the Hill family who were associated with various pubs in Broseley and am interested in tracing my grandfather’s family. He was born Arthur Henry Davies on 19 August 1887 at Barratt’s Hill, Broseley. His mother was

The Lord Hill is now a guest house



Elizabeth Sarah Davies, formerly Hill, and his father was Charles Davies, a butcher born in Welshpool. They were married at Birch Meadow on 6 April 1885.

Elizabeth's father was Noah Hill, a publican in Broseley. On their marriage certificate the witnesses were Thomas Sanout or Tanout and Henrietter or Harrietter Hall.

I am also looking for a William Bevan about 1851 from Stanford, Shropshire. He appears on the 1881 census in North Dyer Street, Salford. It was his daughter Mary Bevan who married Elizabeth Hill's son Arthur Henry.

Brenda Gaffney
brengef@utvinternet.com

In response to this enquiry Steve Dewhirst provides the following extracts. The first is from the *Wellington Journal* of 12 May 1894, the second from *Inns and Alehouses of Broseley* by David Shinton.

MILK ADULTERATION.—Noah Hill, landlord of the Lord Hill's Public-house, Broseley, was charged with adulterating a pint of milk on the 15th ult. Defendant pleaded not guilty. — Stephen Hill, defendant's son, said he worked for his father, and on the above date, when he was carrying milk for sale for his father in Broseley, Sergeant Darbyshire purchased a pint of milk from him and paid him 1½d.— Cross examined by defendant: I see to the cows and milk them. There is only one cow, and she has been milked seven months, and on the day in question I milked eight quarts. I did nothing but sieve it before I took it out, and I had plenty of chances to avoid the police taking the milk. We don't make butter. In reply to Major Anstice, the witness said the cow ate cut straw, hay, and meal.—Sergeant Darbyshire said after he purchased the milk he told defendant's son what he did it for, and afterwards he divided it into parts. On the following morning he sent a sample to the county analyst, Mr. T. P. Blunt, whose certificate of analysis was, "This is not whole milk, but at least 33 per cent. of the fat, or cream has been removed from it. Fat 2.08 water 88.40."— The defendant strongly denied interfering with the milk, and the only account he could give for the

milk being so poor was the poor quality of the hay and the quantity of milk. He did not water it. He did not sell cream or butter, and why on earth should he extract the cream? He had received no complaints about the milk.—The Bench retired, and on returning, the Chairman said they had carefully considered the matter, and they were of opinion that such quality ought not to be sold for new milk, and taking everything into consideration they would only make an order for defendant to pay the costs- £1 9s. 6d.

LORD HILL

This pub occupied a building, now a guest house, at the junction of Duke Street and Cockshutt Lane.

The Inn was first licensed in 1821. It closed in 1987.

Benjamin Cooke, who seems to have moved from the Crown, appears as licensee in 1829, John Burgess was next in 1835. The Weeks' family gave honourable service here. Richard's name appears in 1838, Eliza's in 1859 and John's in 1879. Steven Hill was licensee in 1862 and Elizabeth (his widow?) in 1900. A Mrs Elizabeth Marlow appears in 1909 and it is tempting to see a second marriage having been cemented. This lady held the licence in 1937.

The house was owned by Lord Forester in 1838 and in 1901. Allied Breweries were the last owners.

In 1838 this was a public house, buildings and garden. In 1882 Stephen Hill of the Lord Hill Inn donated an annual subscription of 1/- to the upkeep of Broseley School. The 1901 Survey shows the house to consist of four rooms up and five down. The next pub was 350 yards away.

The house had an inn sign affixed over the front door showing Lord Hill in his military uniform. He was a much admired Salopian and was described as "the man Wellington could trust". He distinguished himself in the Peninsula Wars.

I am descended from Thomas Lloyd, my great great great grandfather, who was born on 21 December 1778 in Shrewsbury. He married Ann Edwards who was born on 29 January 1783 in Broseley to John Edwards and his wife Ann. Thomas and Ann's son James Lloyd, who was

born on 5 March 1810, was my great great grandfather. Thomas and Ann had nine children born in Broseley and two more in Madeley. I am trying to research both the Lloyd family and Ann Edwards' family.

The Edwards family were resident in Broseley at the time of Ann's birth in 1783. I wonder if the area known as the Lloyds along the river just below Madeley could be associated with my Lloyd family. Is there some sort of history associated with the Lloyds area? I should appreciate any information on this area particularly as it may be connected to any of my ancestors.

Jack Davis
jdavis@zeroz.biz
Utah, USA

Thank you for the mention in the May 2006 Newsletter regarding the progress I am making on researching my family. The really good news is that Joan Griffiths has contacted me and we are going to share information on our family history.

John Beddows
johnbeddows@hotmail.com

A letter from John Hutchinson in the May 2006 Newsletter regarding a clay pipe found on the beach in Conwy has elicited the following responses. Rex Key, who is an authority on Broseley pipes and demonstrates the making of them at the Pipe Museum in Broseley, has this to say.

Broseley should be extremely grateful to Rowland Smitheman – he was a builder who converted a range of buildings in King Street, Broseley, into a factory for making clay tobacco pipes. He first advertised in trade directories in 1881 and apparently ran a flourishing business until his death in 1903. His (second) wife continued the business with their son, also called Rowland, until about the 1920s.

It is possible the factory closed for a period until it was taken over by the Southorn family who eventually bought the premises in the 1940s and continued production until the late 1950s. The works were then closed and padlocked and effectively remained unused for more than 30

years until in 1989 Ironbridge Gorge Museum gained control of the, by then, largely derelict works.

There then began a long and painstaking process of rescuing the factory which, today, is the only complete, original Victorian pipeworks in existence in the country. Certainly the village, and the industrial heritage of Great Britain, owe a debt of gratitude to Rowland Smitheman I. Because of him, and the subsequent benign neglect, Broseley today attracts visitors to a clay pipeworks of national and international significance where visitors can see clay pipes being made in the traditional manner using some of Rowland's original equipment.

Joe Dix, a descendant of the Smitheman family, has this to add.

I was interested to read the May 2006 *Newsletter*, and in particular the piece from John Hutchinson about Rowland Smitheman who was my great grandfather's brother.

Rowland was quite a guy and before becoming the owner of a pipe making company was a successful builder and stone mason, employing a number of men and boys from his premises in King Street.

The Southorn brothers were the key pipemakers in Broseley for many years, but they apparently had differences and Rowland, who did not appear to have had any previous pipemaking experience, saw an opportunity to move the industry forward and seems to have been very successful at it. He set up the premises in King Street and brought in the expertise to make pipes.

Rowland lived in Broseley all his life and died in the early 1900s. He had four brothers and one sister and three of the brothers were also involved in the building trade. My great grandfather, Edwin, was the one exception, he became headmaster of a school in Silverdale. The sister, Harriett married George Partridge.

Edwin had a son called Rowland Percy Smitheman. He was a successful photographer, working from Tontine Hill. John Hutchinson may have confused Uncle Percy with Rowland when he mentioned the enquiry into an infant death. That was R P Smitheman.

After Rowland died, and as the clay pipe industry declined, his widow and son, also named Rowland, formed an engineering company called Capacity Engineering. This company was involved in the manufacture of armaments during the first world war.

Joe Dix
joed43@blueyonder.co.uk

I have been looking at your excellent website and Newsletters and wonder if any of your members are researching the name of Tench. My family name has been traced back through parish registers to Neenton, Chelmarsh, Claverley and Bridgnorth from the late 1450s up to the present day. They seem to have been all around your area and my branch went from Bridgnorth to Dudley and back to Shrewsbury. I have seen records of births of Tench's in Broseley over the years but I do not know where they fit into the family.

Do you have any member who may be linked to this name in any way and are there any Tench's in the area today?

Michael Tench
m.tench@btinternet.com

Does anyone know where the staff records of Lady Forester Hospital, Broseley, are now located? I am trying to trace the career of a midwife named Elizabeth A Tyler or Tyer, who I believe then changed her surname to Epsley or Tyler-Epsley. She worked as a district midwife in the Myddle area in the 1930s and then appears to have worked at or from the Broseley hospital until about 1941.

Sian Williams
sian.anderson@ntlworld.com

Walter Dawson, a new member who now lives in South Africa, would like to find out more about his family. His great great grandfather, William Dawson, was born in Broseley in 1805. He worked as a well sinker but at some time moved to Wolverhampton where he was married in St George's Church in 1832.

So far Walter has traced a Samuel Dawson who, according to the 1861 census, lived in Calcotts

Road, Jackfield. He has also found a James Dawson of Broseley, born in 1820, who married Elisa from Madeley. If anyone can throw any more light on these people Walter would be most grateful.

Walter Dawson
wdawson@netactive.co.za.

I recently met Dr Cynthia Gamble of London, who was visiting Broseley as part of her research for a biography of Ruskin. One avenue that she is following is the friendship that Ruskin formed with Broseley people, and with members of the Pritchard and Onions families in particular. That Ruskin would have known local people was of itself some surprise to me.

We had some success in confirming that George Pritchard (not he of Memorial fame, but his son who was an MP for, I believe, Bridgnorth) is buried at Broseley church. Sadly the grave is now lost. We had less success with any member of the Onions family.

Dr Gamble is anxious to trace any photographs of members of either family to be included in her forthcoming book. If anyone knows of such items, I should appreciate them contacting me.

The Revd Dave Shinton
(01952) 882765
d.shinton@btinternet.com

My name is Donna Edwards Babiarz and my two adult children and I will be visiting Broseley in September. My mother, Mabel Glover Edwards, was born in Broseley in 1907. My grandfather, Frederick Glover, was a member of the Coalbrookdale band and sounded the last post for Queen Victoria as well as the royal proclamation call for King Edward VII and King George V.

Does anyone have any information on these events? If so I would appreciate hearing from them. We plan to visit the History Society while in Broseley.

Donna Babiarz
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