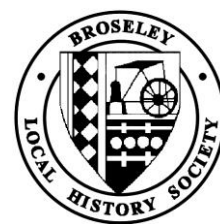


NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY



AUGUST 2015

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm 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 7.30pm to allow our speakers a prompt start.

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

PROGRAMME

- 2 Sept *The Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Trust* by Bernie Jones
- 7 Oct *AGM followed by Race Courses in East Shropshire* by Jim Cooper
- 4 Nov *John Doughty and Son, the story of a brick and tile manufacturer* by Graham Hollox, Joint meeting with the Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum at Coalbrookdale
- 2 Dec Annual Dinner
- 6 Jan *An Evening with Ron Miles*
- 3 Feb *The KSLI in the First World War* by Wendy Palin
- 2 Mar *Annual Wilkinson Lecture; Thomas Turner's Transport Requirements at Caughley* by Neil Clarke

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Philip & Judith Toyer, Broseley

Lord & Lady Forester, Willey Park

Society members in front of Soho House during the Annual Summer Outing.



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PREVIOUS MEETINGS

In May Neil Rushton spoke to us about the stabilisation work being carried out at Jackfield. Following the announcement in late 2013 by the government that funding had been granted to carry out a stabilisation scheme in Jackfield, Telford & Wrekin Council proceeded to carry out the works necessary to undertake the project. The funding was provided due to the history of ground movement that has been taking place in Jackfield. As well as preserving and maintaining the area the stabilisation works main aim is to minimise the chance of a landslide which could potentially dam the river causing flooding upstream as far as Emstrey, on the outskirts of Shrewsbury.

The contract for the enabling works phase of the scheme which comprised tree felling and site clearance was awarded to McPhillips Ltd (Wellington) and was completed in March 2014.

The contract for the main phase of the project was also awarded to the same contractor and work commenced on 31st March 2014 and is due to be completed at the end of 2015. It comprises the following elements:

- Drilling and grouting to treat shallow mine workings. This work involves filling the historic mining voids with a weak concrete mix to prevent future collapse which could undermine the piles.
- Piling to prevent slope movement. Steel and concrete piles of 600mm diameter and up to 14m length have been sunk into the ground and rock, in nine rows across the hillside
- The installation of concrete columns in the Maws Meadow to reduce river bank erosion.
- River bank revetment works including placing large boulders along the river bank to reduce river bank erosion.
- Earthworks to smooth out levels and regrade slopes ready for replanting.
- Land drainage to reduce high groundwater levels.
- Major works to create temporary roads through the site to maintain public access to homes and businesses, and the eventual construction of a permanent road.
- New highway construction and creation of river side footpaths



*River bank revetment works near to the Half Moon pub
Picture courtesy of Telford and Wrekin Council*

At the time of Neal's talk a significant proportion of the works had been completed. Concrete columns have been installed between the Maws Craft Centre and the river bank to act as erosion protection from the River Severn. A new riverside footpath had been created and another footpath has been created alongside the Maws Craft Centre access ramp. The footpath linking the Maws Craft Centre and Ferry Road had been resurfaced. Landscaping works and tree planting commenced in this area in the spring and will continue over the coming months.

On the main site, the main large diameter piling was completed on 1st April 2015 following the installation of 2081 600mm diameter steel reinforced concrete piles. Mini piling along the river bank is due to commence in late spring/early summer subject to river conditions. Preparatory works for this element has commenced behind the Church Road properties.

Earthworks have commenced to re-landscape the upper slopes above Salthouse Road and to create the permanent replacement Salthouse Road, Salthouse Lane and new Church Road through route. This work will continue throughout the summer. This will be followed by highway reconstruction and resurfacing works are underway on Salthouse Lane in front of the Half Moon Pub.

Remaining work includes the construction and diversion of the existing utilities including the Severn Trent Water foul rising main and clean water main, BT and electricity, capping of the treated mineshafts uncovered on site, land drainage, and resurfacing, the creation of the Church Road car park and landscaping and replanting works.



*Aerial photograph of the main site
Picture courtesy of Telford and Wrekin Council*

Broseley Pipe Works

Earlier in the year members were treated to a talk on Broseley clay pipes by Rex Key who, having researched and made them for many years is something of an authority on them. Since he could not actually demonstrate their manufacture at a monthly meeting, he invited members to visit him at the Pipe Museum in Duke Street at a later date when he would be happy to demonstrate the tricky technique of actually making these.

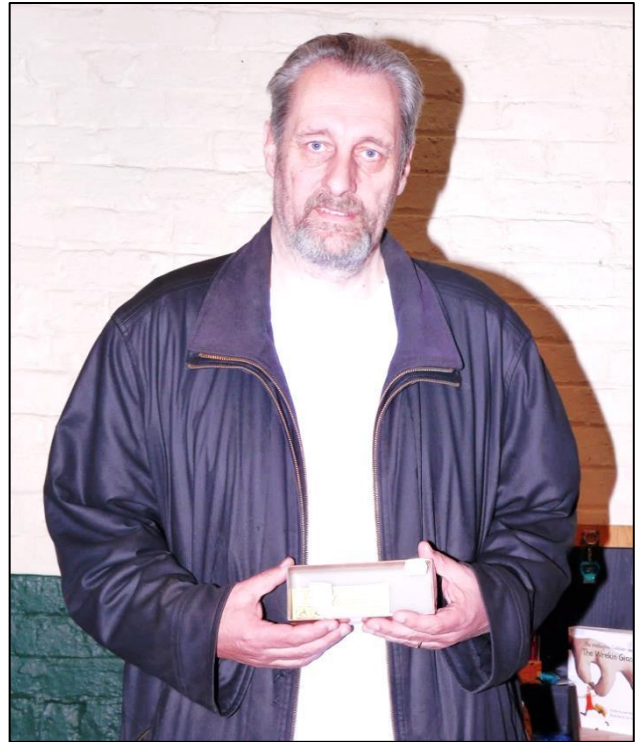
So it was that in June, thanks to Rex and the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, members met at the Museum for a real live demonstration and a talk on the history of the Works.

It seems that the original “factory” had not initially been built as a pipeworks and had previously had a variety of uses one, intriguingly, being a “cotton manufactory”. While it is not known how old the original building is, in 1881 Rowland Smitheman turned it into a pipeworks, building a brick bottle kiln for firing the pipes. Originally built as an updraft kiln, it was later converted to a downdraft kiln which is apparently more efficient.

Pipe production continued under the Southorn family until Harry Southorn (the last “proper” pipe maker there) died in 1957 after which the works continued for only a short time before closing down. And there it sat, untouched since its closure, for many years, becoming more and more derelict until the buildings were on the point of collapse.

It was not until 1989 that someone from the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust visited the buildings and found an almost complete pipe production works with its original equipment still on site and the kiln half full of saggars with unfired pipes still waiting for their final heating.

As well as the original equipment, documents were found dating back to 1872, with one letter from the



Peter Taylor, who came up from Bristol, has an article in this year's Journal on the Early River Severn Trade in Broseley Pipes.

Egyptian Embassy, written in 1949, enquiring after their order for King Farouk's spiral pipes, proof enough that these famous pipes were being exported to exotic places.

On display are nearly 1,000 clay pipes, nearly all of them dug up by Rex at various locations in Broseley. They range from tiny bubble pipes for children to the long “straws”, many of them glued back together when matching parts were found.

Rex then proceeded to demonstrate the making of a variety of pipe designs, all of which would have had the maker's stamp on them, meanwhile commenting that the workers, many of whom were women, were expected to produce between 600 and 700 pipes a day. He also showed how to make one of the famous Churchwarden pipes and stressed the skill involved in making the hole through the stem to the bowl.



Rex Key carefully making the hole through a churchwarden pipe

Once the pipes had been moulded they would have been placed in saggars and stacked in the kiln which held about 75,000 pipes for each firing. The firing itself took two or three days, depending on the quality of the coal, and a further two days to cool down. Firings took place every two weeks during peak production, meaning the works could be producing up to almost 2 million pipes a year. Quite a feat.

Rex also said that he makes pipes commercially, usually for films or television productions, and has made them for, among others, Larkrise to Candleford and Tarzan the Untamed.

The Society was very pleased to welcome Peter Taylor to this event. Peter, who comes from the Bristol area, was the first recipient of funds from the Society's Research Fund. The results of this research, entitled *The Early River Severn Trade in "Broseley" Tobacco Pipes*, appears in the current edition of the Society's Journal.

At the end of the demonstrations, members were invited to the home of Michael and Gillian Pope to help Vin Callcut celebrate a certain important birthday. There, courtesy of Vin and Hilary, was a wonderful spread of cheese, wine and other goodies – and of course a birthday balloon and cake.

So thanks to Rex for a fascinating evening and to Vin and Hilary for rounding it off so enjoyably.



Vin Callcut cuts his birthday cake at the "after party"

Summer Outing to Birmingham

This year our Summer Outing was to Soho House and Birmingham. Both Janet Doody and Michael Pope have written accounts of their day out to give different views of the trip.

Janet writes-

A Day Out In Brum!

I must confess to visiting Birmingham reasonably regularly, especially since qualifying for a senior rail card! Claiming to be England's second city (Manchester would dispute this), it is not first as a tourist destination, but give Brum a chance and take a look.

Like many locations, including Broseley, the city was embracing "Britain in Bloom"; on the day the Society visited the flower arrangements and garden designs transferred from the various garden shows were beautiful. Despite the many changes suffered by the city, re-development and slum clearance (and not forgetting Hitler!), look up, many buildings have survived. The Town Hall and Civic Buildings, together with many of the Victorian commercial properties, check out the old Midland Bank (previous workplace of our treasurer) adjacent to the New Street Station now Waterstone's Book Shop, have retained their former splendour.

The Art Gallery and Museum have a wonderful collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings as well as the Anglo-Saxon Hoard and an excellent tea-room all well worth a visit, alongside the Jewellery Quarter and various industrial museums, like the Newman Brothers Coffin Works or the pen museum.

But Birmingham is far from buried in its past, there is the new library and Rep theatre, together with the Symphony Hall, all set around Centenary Square, which on the day of our visit was hosting the Music For Youth National Festival. Beyond the Convention Centre is the world of Venice; reputedly having more canals than this city, these waterways have been rejuvenated. Meander along the pleasant towpaths or take a canal boat cruise and see a very different side of Brum; nearby is the Sea Life Centre with a chance to walk under water and see the fantastic ray fish "flying" through the water.

Finally the Brummies themselves, I've always found them friendly, and the staffs at Soho House were no exception. Although, as I understand, staying overtime for our group they were very enthusiastic about their "little gem" of a museum, multitasking, from dispensing information to tea and cakes to insure we all had an enjoyable experience.

All this and I never mentioned the shopping, John Lewis is to make a comeback! This might all sound a bit like a travel log, but I urge you to treat our visit as a “taster” and return to spend a little longer exploring this City of Birmingham.

Michael writes-

Soho House is tucked away in Soho Avenue off the main Road in Handsworth. It is a gem of a museum now run by Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. It was the home of Matthew Boulton from 1766 until his death in 1809. It was originally a small farmhouse set in 100 acres of gardens and farmland. Boulton turned it into an elegant and fashionable country house and built an industrial complex around it. It is said to be the first house in England to have had a central heating system installed since Roman times together with indoor flushing toilets. The name “Soho” is said to represent the call of a hunting horn on a local inn sign.

Matthew Boulton is one of the most important historical figures associated with Birmingham – in fact he is often known as “the Father of Birmingham”. He was born in the city in September 1728, the son of a buckle, button, and toy maker (toy was the term used to describe any small decorative object). After attending a local school he joined his father’s business in the early 1740s and then after his father died he took over the family business. In 1761 he acquired land at Handsworth and began building his great Soho Manufactory – one of the first factories in the world. He introduced modern production methods to produce a whole range of metal goods including jewellery, ‘toys’, Sheffield plate, and sterling silver ware, Ormolu (gilded bronze ware), coins and medals which were exported all over Europe. The house displayed some marvellous examples of these various items. The Soho Manufactory became a must-see stop on the itinerary of well-heeled early industrial tourists. In 1788 Boulton offered the Scottish engineer James Watt a partnership to develop and manufacture his ‘improved’ steam engine. They were joined shortly afterwards by William Murdock who was also to play a major role in the success of the enterprise. There is a fine sculpture of the three men – Boulton, Watt and Murdock in Centenary Square which was restored to its original gilded splendour in 2006. In 1788 Boulton established his Soho Mint producing high quality coins – rather like John Wilkinson did in Broseley. He was eventually

awarded the contract to produce the British copper coinage in 1797.

Boulton was also, of course, a founder member of the Lunar Society. It was founded around 1765 and consisted of an informal group of friends whose lively meetings and conversations, letters and experiments were to have a global impact on scientific understanding during the late 18th century. The members included such intellectual giants as Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Priestley, James Watt and Josiah Wedgwood. On our visit we were able to enter and see the dining room where the group met around the dining room table. The group was so called because it met on evenings when the moon was full in order to give its members enough light to find their way safely home. In 1813 the group was formally dissolved. However in 1990 the Society was re-established by a group of Birmingham citizens, a group which nowadays welcomes members from all walks of life who are concerned with development and progress in the modern world.

On arrival at the house we were given an introductory talk by Samina Kosar and after a walk around the garden, where we saw a reconstruction of the Hermitage to which Boulton would retreat for quiet contemplation, we were able to explore the house which contains much of the original furniture and fittings and which reflects the fashions and tastes of the late Georgian period.

Matthew Boulton died on 17th August 1809 at Soho House. He was buried in St. Mary’s Church in Handsworth. At the church there is a fine memorial to him sculpted by John Flaxman, one of the most gifted sculptors of the age. During his lifetime Matthew Boulton was world-famous but today he is less well-known. However in October 2014 a memorial to him was dedicated in Westminster Abbey in order to give him the recognition he deserves. Soho House is a must-see for anyone who wishes to understand this remarkable man.



The room at Soho House where the Lunar Society used to meet

Country Quest Magazine.

Society member Les Roberts recently came across an old copy of Country Quest magazine from November 1967. Country Quest was a magazine for Wales and the Borders, established in 1960. It was published monthly until December 2008 and included many articles on topics relating to the countryside of Wales and the Marches, such as history, the arts, places to visit and places of interest. Whilst perusing his copy of Country Quest Les came across the following article, by Dilys Owen, entitled, "Man of Iron".

On a July day in 1815, large crowds gathered at Monmore Green, Bilston, Staffordshire, expecting to see a ghost. It was the seventh anniversary of the death of the ironmaster John Wilkinson, and rumour had it that the great man would appear on that day mounted, as in life, on a grey horse, to visit his iron works nearby and see what had taken place since his death. No ghost appeared.

One would imagine that a person who could cause such extraordinary beliefs to prevail after his death, must have been an extraordinary man. This, in fact, is what Wilkinson was; an impressive and colourful personality who ranks among the great names of the 18th century.

He was born in 1728 in Clifton, Cumberland, the son of an obscure labourer, Isaac Wilkinson, and his birth, so it is said, took place in a market cart. The old wives of the district considered this to be a "sign," however, and remarked that, "t'lad wod sum day be a gurt man"

When Wilkinson died at the age of 80, he had risen to be an important industrial magnate, a country gentleman with several estates and mansions, and he left property worth an immense fortune.

Wilkinson was fanatically interested in the possibilities of iron, and believed that it could take the place of stone, brick, wood, and even, as he proved on one occasion by producing iron substitutes, pens and paper. His interest was so great that as well as devoting his life to metal, he also prepared, before his death, a number of iron coffins, in one of which he wished to be buried.

He began by helping his father, who had set up business in a small way at Backbarrow, Lancashire, making flat iron heaters. During this period, they built a small iron boat, which has been called, "the parent of all the iron ships that have ever been built"; and also patented a new type of smoothing

iron, which simplified the laundering of frilled shirts worn by the dandies of the day.

They carried out many experiments too, with the object of improving the smelting of iron, but none of these were successful.

Soon, Wilkinson left for Bilston, where after ten years he succeeded in raising enough capital to build the first blast furnace ever constructed in the town. Here, after many failures, he succeeded in using mineral coal instead of charcoal for the smelting of iron, a process that had been mostly in the experimental stage.

Once his works was established, Wilkinson never looked back. About 1761, when he was 33, he took over the furnace at Bersham, near Wrexham, which his father had unsuccessfully attempted to run. Under its new management it quickly prospered. Wilkinson later bought up concerns, estates and property in all parts of the country, and ran them successfully.

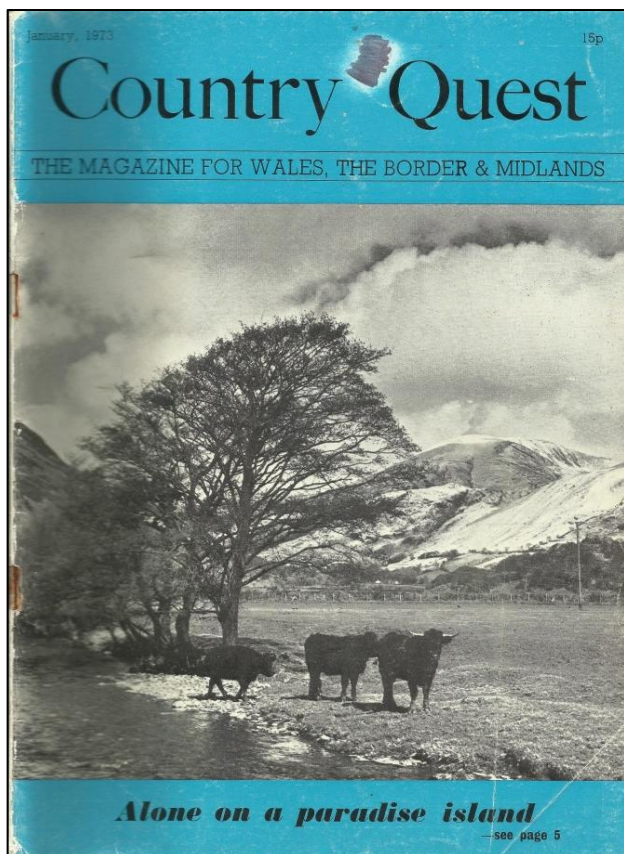
One of these estates was Brymbo Hall, near Wrexham. Here, he introduced new methods which raised the value of the farming land, and also built two blast furnaces, thus laying the foundations for what has now become Brymbo Steel Works.

Joseph Priestley, the chemist that discovered oxygen, was his brother in law, and on many occasions Wilkinson assisted him in different ways, once, for instance, providing him with money when his house was wrecked by rioters.

Wilkinson also did business with James Watt, inventor of the steam engine, who was a friend. Watt's engine was unable to function properly until he could obtain cylinders that were smooth and true. Wilkinson used a new boring mill he had invented, was able to supply the cylinders. Indeed, cylinders for most of Watt's engines were made at Wilkinson's works.

The boring machine ensured the production of excellent pipes and cannon, and Wilkinson seems to have made a fortune with the latter, for it appears that the guns made at his Bersham works were used by almost every country during wars at the turn of the century. He was even suspected of smuggling guns to the French, disguised as "iron piping" and it is reported that a case was brought against him at Chester Assizes, but apparently was dismissed.

Wilkinson may be assumed, however, to have had some sympathy with the revolutionary party. His brother William had lived in France for some time, and John himself had secured a contract to supply Paris with forty miles of piping for its new water supply.



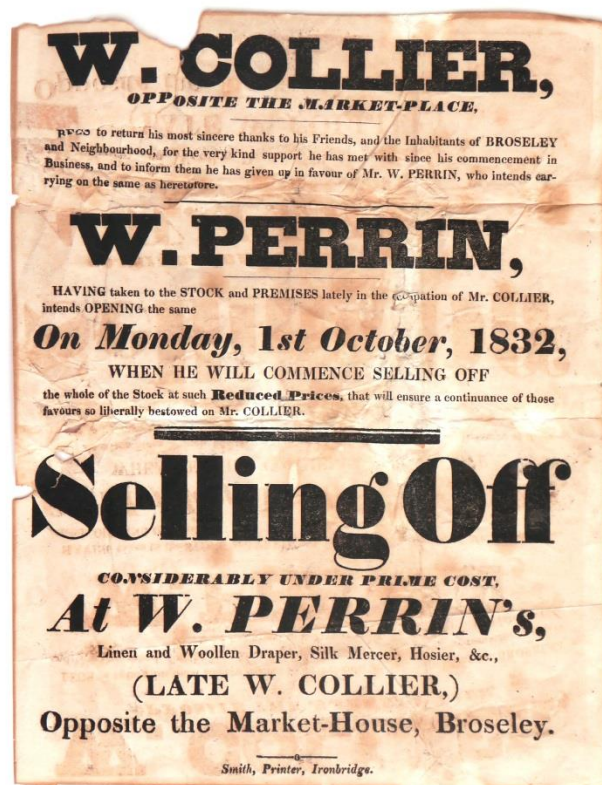
What sort of man was Wilkinson actually? Some state that he was unscrupulous and hard both in business and family dealings. His morals were not of the highest (he fathered illegitimate children), and he was popularly reputed to be an atheist. He also seems to have been quick-tempered, obstinate and arrogant about his achievements. On the other hand, he treated kindly the men who served him and seems to have been extremely generous.

A BARGAIN PRICE

A little while ago residents of Jackfield noticed that a crack in the beam over their inglenook fireplace was widening and they decided that they would have to do something about it. Further exploration revealed a folded piece of paper tucked into the crack which on recovery revealed a printed notice dated 1832.

The notice was from a Mr. Perrin to the inhabitants of Broseley and Neighbourhood informing them that he was taking over the business of a Mr. Collier which was run from premises – “opposite the Market place” in Broseley.

It states that he is taking over the Business on Monday 1st October 1832 when he will commence selling off the whole of the old stock at reduced prices – “considerably under prime cost.” The stock consisted of linen and woollen goods, silk, hosiery etc, so presumably it was a Drapers shop. The notice



also informs the reader that Mr. Perrin – “intends carrying on the same as heretofore.”

The notice raises the question – Where was the Market Place in Broseley in 1832?

The residents of Jackfield have now had the notice framed and have very kindly presented it to Broseley Local History Society.

WHERE'S WELLY?

Editor: On which Broseley building can this plaque be found? The answer will be printed in November's copy of Newsletter.



In the last edition of Newsletter we were looking for the identity of the building overleaf, built in 1709. How many people guessed correctly that it was Hurstlea, in Queen Street? It is said that the first meeting to discuss the building of a bridge over the river Severn, to connect the Broseley and Madeley banks of the river, was held at Hurstlea.



What's On?

Aug-Sept

Coalbrookdale Gallery, *To Check the Tide of Prejudice*, is a stunning new free exhibition of lithographs, original sketches and wash drawings by John Cooke Bourne, which were widely used to address criticism of the construction of the London & Birmingham Railway in the 1830s. These will be on display at the Coalbrookdale Gallery until Thursday 10 September 2015.

Tue 8 Sept

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, *Forage the woodlands in search of autumn fruits*, Identifying and gathering wild fruits and nuts and looking at traditional hedgerow recipes for food and medicinal uses.

SGCT, Darby Road, Coalbrookdale, TF8 7EP

Fee: £10

To book email: bookings@severngorge.org.uk or phone 01952 433880

Sat 19 Sept

Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival. *With the world famous Iron Bridge forming the backdrop, the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival will be a great celebration of the area's designation as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986*

Wed 28 Oct

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, *Exploring Preenshead in search of our fungal friends and foes!*

A family walk from Coalport over the river to Severn Valley Way and into Preenshead woodland taking in the sights and sounds of autumn as we go.

Shakespeare Inn car park, Coalport, TF7 8NT

Fee: £3 per child

To book email: bookings@severngorge.org.uk or phone 01952 433880

"What's On?" is a taster of what's going on locally. Details of these meetings and more can be found at the Wrekin Local Studies Forum website.

<http://www.wlsf.org.uk/calendar.html>

Mailbox

I was wondering if you knew of any connection to Eustace Rogers the coracle maker and Eustace Beard who was of the well-known Beard family of Broseley and Jackfield who were Trowmen?

I am researching my family tree and I'm descended from the Beards via my Dad's grandmother. The Beards had barges and were owners of the Werps inn, General Gordon pub, and they had the Holly Grove brick works too. Do you know if any photos exist anywhere? The Beards family home for 237 years was a place called The Old Hall at Coalford, Jackfield. It was demolished when it was bought after Lacon Beard lost his money

I also have a John Guest on the family tree. Could you tell me if there is any link to the iron master? I doubt there is but I have no idea how to check that link out.

Melinda

Steve Dewhirst replies-

I have searched my computer but I cannot find any link between Beard and Rogers. I did however find the following from Shropshire Archives 5586/5/4/5. It is a report on Barnetts Leasow Ironworks for Lord Forester in 1821.

And all that piece or parcel of Rough land lying between the Windhouse and the River Severn heretofore in the possession of Edward Lloyd. Also all that other piece or parcel of land called or known by the name of Cromptons Meadow heretofore also in the occupation of the said Edward Lloyd. Also all that other piece or parcel of land of rough land near thereto heretofore in the possession of Humphrey Harrington and adjoining his Brickworks. Also all that other piece or parcel of rough land heretofore in the occupation of Thomas Harrington and adjoining his Brickworks. Also all that other piece or parcel of land in the possession of the said Humphrey Harrington called the meadow And also that other piece or parcel of land called or known by the name of Nashes yard heretofore in the occupation of Richard Beard. All which said parcels of land with the Furnaces and buildings erected thereon are situate lying and being in the parish of Broseley in the County of

Salop and contain together by estimation Thirty Acres two roods and thirty seven perches or thereabouts (be the same more or less) and the whole of the said Furnaces Buildings Lands and premises were late in the tenure or occupation of Thomas Jesson and Samuel Dawes or their undertenants Charles Phillips and William Parsons I think the IGMT library may have a photo of the General Gordon so it may be worth contacting them as they may have others.

I'm currently tracing the Coombes family from Broseley. If you or any of your readers have any photographs they would be greatly appreciated.
Carl.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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<i>Secretary</i>	Dot Cox
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DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS

Thank you to those members who have indicated that they would be happy to have an electronic copy of the *Newsletter*. If there are any other members who would prefer it this way, please contact the membership secretary, Janet Robinson, email: pandjrobinson@hotmail.com. Those of you who would still prefer to have it in its printed version can continue to look forward to receiving it through the post

To see this *Newsletter* in full colour visit the website at www.broselev.org.uk.