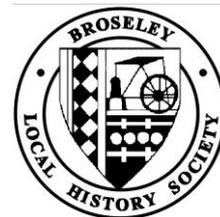


# NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

*INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY*



FEBRUARY 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

- 4 Feb *Ironbridge Institute Library* by John Powell  
4 Mar *The Darby's* by Michael Darby  
1 Apr *A Family at War – Letters From the Front* by Janet Doody  
6 May *Jackfield Stabilisation* by Neil Rushton  
3 June *Visit to Broseley Pipe Works*  
4 July *Annual summer trip to Soho House Birmingham*

**N.B. Meetings in June and July are yet to be confirmed.**

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

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## Reminder

### Your Society Needs Your Subscription

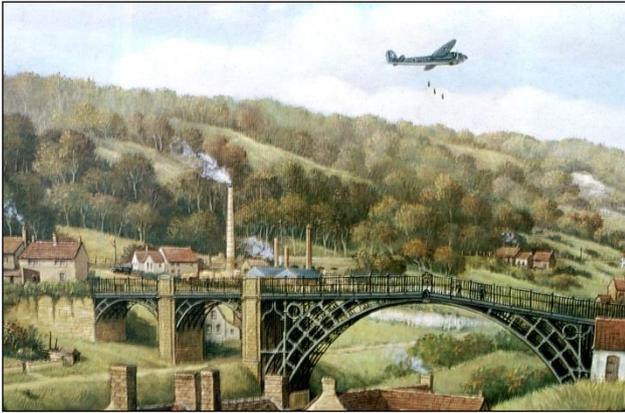
**(£7 for singles & £12 for couples)**



Membership Subscriptions were due on 1st October last year and ideally we should see 95% of subscriptions paid by this time of the financial year (i.e. within the first 4 months of the financial year). However the best we have achieved in the previous eight years was 77% back in 2008-09. Since then it has been as low as 35%. Happily this year it is back up to 60% of the anticipated total. Thank you to our many members for making us a financially strong society.

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

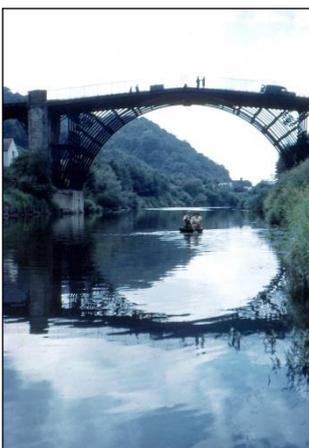
At the annual joint meeting with the Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum, held at Coalbrookdale in November, Ron Miles entertained a packed room with a selection of slides from his vast archive. Some unique images along with Ron's humorous commentary had the audience captivated. The following images are a few of the slides from the meeting and are all courtesy of Ron Miles.



*A drawing showing a Dornier aeroplane dropping bombs over the Ironbridge area on 7 November 1940. The bombs landed at the foot of Pattens Rock incline, blew out a window in Ironbridge Church and left debris on the Wharfage.*



*Shop on the Iron Bridge opposite the Tontine, taken some time in the 1930s*



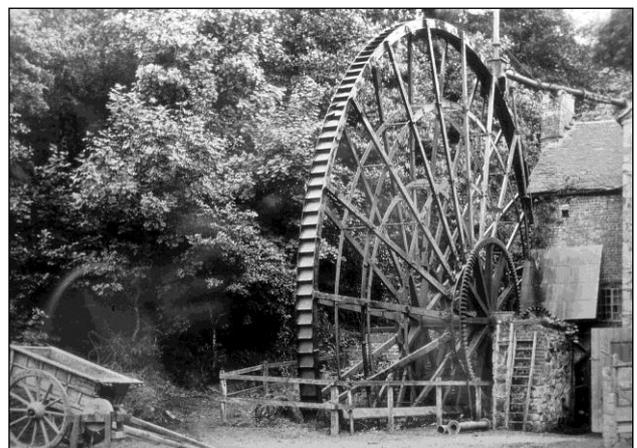
*In the coracle under the bridge are Margaret Dean and Harry Rogers. The vehicle on the bridge was a council van filled with grit. Taken in 1962, long after the bridge had been closed to normal traffic.*



*A frozen River Sever in 1917. In the background can be seen the Albert Edward rail bridge which was built in 1864 and is still in use to service the power station.*



*After the Jackfield slip in 1952, workmen were employed full time to keep the line from Shrewsbury open and serviceable.*



*This corn mill at the bottom of Bridge Road was built c1802. In the late 1920s it was used to charge accumulators. It was dismantled in 1932-33 for scrap and landed up on the now site of Morrisons in Wellington. It was later shipped elsewhere as scrap.*

## Christmas Dinner

In December Society members celebrated another successful year with a festive dinner.

*Janet Doody writes:*

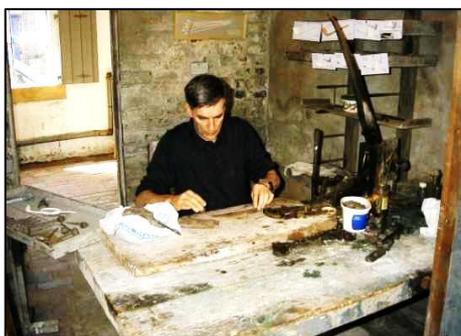
*The Lion Hotel on High Street was the venue for the event and this year did Society members well with an excellent bill of fare, party hats and crackers with very silly jokes and “presents”! The “cabaret” was a duet of Dot Cox and Derek Armstrong using snippets from the First World War letters of two Broseley brothers, Bert and Cis Oakes. They described the more comic side of life at the training camps in the UK and also some of the conditions endured on the Western Front. For example Bert said of the food at Prees Heath camp: - “I’ve just had my dinner, viz. beef, potatoes & peas, stewed rhubarb & milk, not bad, do you think and we have pineapples, margarine & bread for tea, this is to make up for bully beef & biscuits yesterday I suppose, we couldn’t eat the latter, they were too hard, just like dog biscuits”.*

*I believe all those attending had a thoroughly entertaining evening and for all of you who missed this capital treat, I know it’s a busy time but put the date in your 2015 diary NOW, you will have a great time!*

## Broseley Pipes

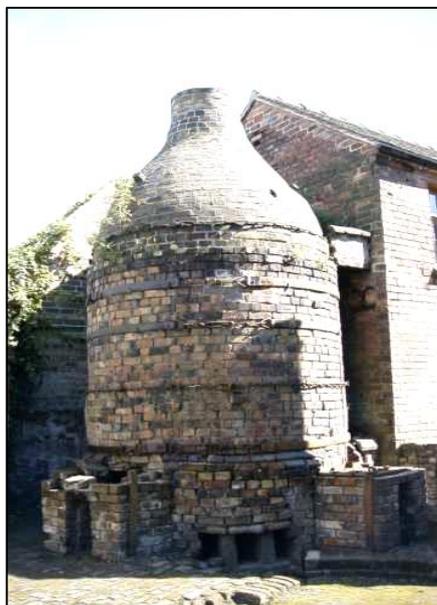
When Rex Key moved to Broseley, over 40 years ago, he set about tidying his new house and garden with gusto. Soon he was digging up parts of, what he later found out to be, old clay tobacco pipes. Fascinated by them he collected them in an old margarine tub. The tubs soon became buckets as Rex continued to dig in his own garden and at other spots around the town.

Research at the local library showed that Broseley had a long and renowned history of pipemaking. Continued digging and searching has led to Rex amassing a collection of around 14,000 pipe bowls.



*Rex demonstrates clay pipe manufacture at the Broseley Pipe Museum*

*Picture courtesy of Rex Key*



*The kiln at Broseley Pipe Works where between 75,000 and 100,000 pipes were fired at a time.*

*Each firing lasted about 4 days.*

*Picture courtesy of Rex Key*

The manufacture of clay tobacco pipes probably began in Broseley in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century using locally available clays. The industry established itself well and had expanded considerably by 1680. By 1700 there were many pipe makers active in the parish and “Broseley” became synonymous with clay pipes everywhere. Pipe making was largely a cottage industry, and from 1660 until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century both men and women makers stamped their own products. Local clays were used until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century when clay from the West Country began to be used. This clay was brought up river by boats plying their trade on the River Severn.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century several larger businesses were formed and, while few were long lived, total production was considerable. About 50 people, mostly young women, were engaged in making clay pipes in Broseley in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. William Southorn began making pipes in 1823, and William Southorn & Co. produced nationally distributed pipes from a factory at Legge’s Hill. It had 36 employees in 1851. In the 1930s the firm moved to the Crown Pipework’s (Smithemans’ 1881-1923), where it maintained production until 1957.

The Southorns’ premises in King Street are now a pipeworks museum, open from the end of May until mid-September.



*Air dried clay pipes stacked in a saggar ready for firing in the kiln.*

*Picture taken at Broseley Pipe Museum, courtesy of IGMT*

The evening concluded with Rex giving a demonstration of clay pipe making. It was made to look easy by Broseley's resident specialist but it is an art he has perfected over many years.

More can be learnt about the history and manufacture of clay pipes at the Society's meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup> where we will be paying a visit to the Pipe Museum.

Information about public opening times and events at the museum can be found at-

[www.ironbridge.org.uk/our-attractions/broseley-pipeworks/](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/our-attractions/broseley-pipeworks/)

### **Benthall Hall Research Group**

Although Benthall Hall is now closed until February, a group of National Trust volunteers is currently researching aspects of the history of the Hall, the Benthall family, the Church and the various tenants who lived there from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s.

We would be interested to hear from anyone who has personal connections with the Hall, for example family members who may have worked there in the house or garden, or visitors in the early, pre-National Trust, years of the Hall opening to the public, when Sir Paul and Lady Benthall showed visitors around.

Any information would be very gratefully received. Contact Jennie Osborn on 01952 876809 or email:

[laurabarker@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:laurabarker@nationaltrust.org.uk) or

[emily.knight@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:emily.knight@nationaltrust.org.uk)

*Benthall Hall c 1900*



### **John Pritchard (Senior) (1759-1837)**

The following picture is of an engraving of John Pritchard that was donated to the Broseley Local History Society by Jill and Kieron Parton, formerly of Broseley and now of Bridgnorth. It shows John holding Lord Forester's 1817 Act for the construction of a turnpike road from Wellington to Coalbrookdale via Jiggers Bank (completed in 1818).



*Engraving of John Pritchard 1759 - 1837*

*The Pritchard family of Broseley and later Bridgnorth formed a closely knit professional and business circle for 80 or more years and exercised considerable influence locally.*

The Pritchard dynasty reads rather like the William Pitts of Prime Minister fame so to avoid confusion they have been assigned senior, elder and junior!

John Pritchard (Senior) was baptised at St. Mary's Sutton Maddock on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1759 the son of John (The Elder 1704-1799) and Ann (née Granger). In 1799 he was placed as clerk to Mr. Brown, a Shifnal solicitor and after two years he joined Congreve & Lewis of Bridgnorth. Three years later he became articled to Mr. Lewis and after 5 years he was admitted as attorney, starting his own practice at Ironbridge. Following his marriage in 1791 to Ann Cranage (there is a record of a John Pritchard and Ann Cranage marrying on the 21st February 1791 at St. Mathew's Church in Walsall) he moved to Broseley, taking up residence at Bank House, which now houses the Broseley Social Club.

It was here that he built up a very successful law firm and in 1794 became the legal agent to George Forester of the Willey estate, a man of much local influence, whose business John later stated helped with his own success. John Pritchard Senior articled his sons George and John (Junior); subsequently making them both partners, he took on a number of clerks including his nephews, William Nock (who later practiced at Wellington), Richard Boycott and William Nicholas, together with his brother-in-law George Potts, all of whom also became partners of the bank. George Potts married Sarah Pritchard on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1802 at Sutton Maddock and eventually succeeded to the solicitor's practice.

In 1799 John Pritchard (Senior) joined with Valentine Vickers & Son (land agents and surveyors) as bankers in both Bridgnorth and Broseley. The banking side also flourished, and following the

death of the elder Vickers, George Pritchard became a partner; and in 1824 when the younger Vickers retired from banking, John (Junior) became a partner joining his father and brother.

During the Napoleonic Wars John Pritchard assisted Lord Forester to form the "Wenlock Loyal Volunteers" which they raised as a militia in 1798, and where John was appointed their Lieutenant. The Volunteers were disbanded in 1802 but by 1804, with the threat of invasion once again on the horizon, they were re-formed, with half their company at Broseley under now Captain Pritchard and the other half at Much Wenlock under Lord Forester.

Sadly John's wife Ann died on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1809, at the age of 44, leaving him with six young children; he re-married on the 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1811 to a Frances (Fanny) Wilkinson of Buildwas.

By the time John (Senior) retired from active work in 1836 he had become a substantial figure in Broseley, having property in Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Montgomery as well as throughout Shropshire. When their father retired both George and John left the firm of solicitors to concentrate on the banking concern, leaving their uncle George Potts the solicitor's business. John (Junior) was to become the Member of Parliament for the Borough of Bridgnorth in March 1853.

John Pritchard (Senior) died on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1837, and a plaque was put up in Broseley Church with an inscription that illustrates the respect and affection the local community had for this man.

In Memory of John Pritchard, Solicitor and Banker, for nearly 50 years, a resident in this parish who died 14<sup>th</sup> June 1837 aged 78 years.\*

"A kind and indulgent husband and father, a ready and faithful friend and adviser, a liberal benefactor of the poor, this good man so held his course as to gain the respect and affection of all around him, showing by his example that the duties of an active profession may be zealously discharged without neglecting those essential to the character of a true Christian."

*\*John Randall in his book on Broseley wrongly cites the date as 1857.*

There is also a plaque to John Pritchard's wife, Ann and four of their children; it also includes his second wife Fanny.

In Memory of ANN, the wife of John Pritchard, Solicitor and Banker of this parish, she died on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1809, aged 44 years. Also the following children of the above John and Ann Pritchard.

William, died 13<sup>th</sup> December 1801 aged 10 months

Eliza died 18<sup>th</sup> June 1811, aged 7 years

Thomas died 12<sup>th</sup> May 1829, aged 31 years,

Emma, died 27<sup>th</sup> April 1832 aged 29 years

Also FANNY, the second wife of John Pritchard, who died 14<sup>th</sup> November 1839 aged 79 years

Fanny Pritchard left £100 in trust to be invested in government securities and directed the interest to be divided among ten poor widows on St. Thomas's Day.

Michael Pope & Janet Doody

#### **OPEN GARDENS - SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MAY**

Our Chairman, Gillian Pope, and her husband Michael, will be opening their garden at 2 Dark Lane, Broseley on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm until 6.30pm, under the auspices of the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust. Two adjacent gardens – at 10 Clenchacres and Cerdic - will also be open to visitors during the afternoon. The Trust assists churches in the County of Shropshire, of all denominations, with the repair and maintenance of their buildings.

Teas will be served during the afternoon and there will be a plant stall. There will be an entrance charge of £3 per head and proceeds will go towards the work of the Trust and the proposed Heritage Centre at All Saints Church, Broseley, which is being supported by members of our Society.

The garden at Rivendell in Dark Lane has several interesting historical features. There is the large brick reservoir which was built to replace the Down Well and to provide a clean water supply for the people of Broseley. When it was completed a Dinner was supposedly held inside as a celebration but unfortunately the reservoir never fulfilled its purpose.

The garden also contains the foundations of the slaughterhouses which provided meat for the Miss Instone's Butchers shop which is now the Old Butchers Shop Wine Bar in the High Street.

Members of the Society are cordially invited to the gardens on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

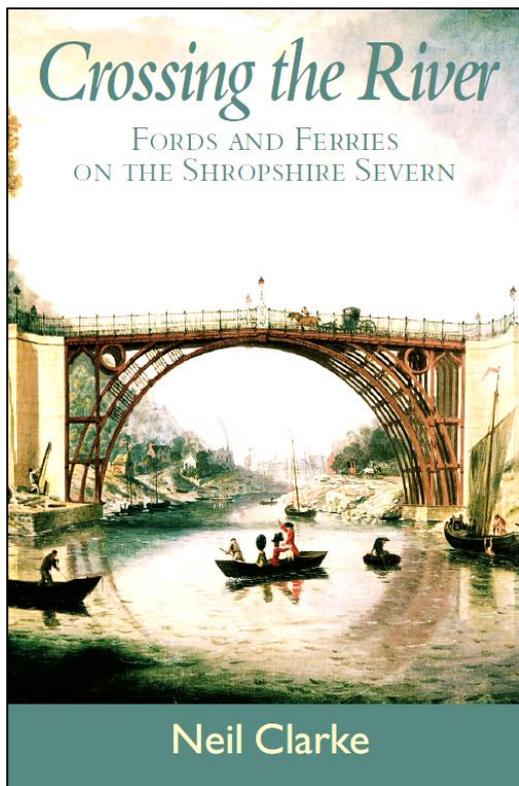
## BOOKSHOP

“**Crossing the River: Fords & Ferries on the Shropshire Severn**” is the title of a new book by Neil Clarke, published by the Railway and Canal Historical Society. The book arose from a series of three annual lectures that Neil gave in recent years to joint meetings of the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum and Broseley Local History Society. Neil's initial interest had been river crossings in the Ironbridge Gorge, but he discovered that although the bridges had been well documented, there was little to be found on the earlier crossings.

There will be a special book launch at the Museum of the Gorge on Saturday, 21 March, 11.00 am-1.00 pm.

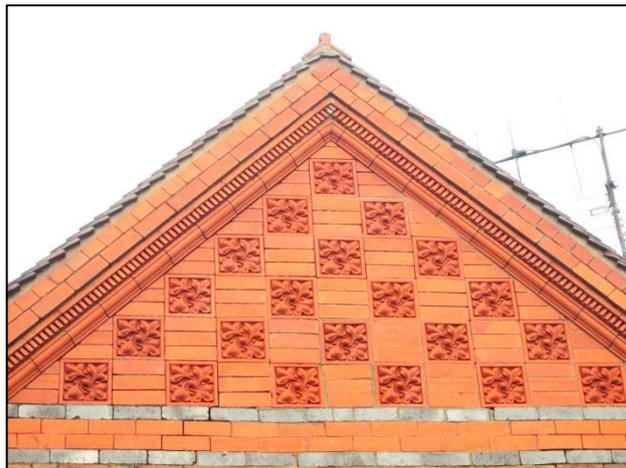
The launch will include an introductory talk, book signing and refreshments and a short guided walk from the site of Dale End ford along the Wharfage to the site of Benthall ferry.

The book is priced at £10, but as a special offer will be available at the launch at £8. There is no charge for the event, but prior booking will be required by emailing the author [neilclarke19@btinternet.com](mailto:neilclarke19@btinternet.com)



## WHERE'S WELLY?

*Editor: Where in Broseley can these beautiful decorative bricks be found? The answer will be printed in May's copy of Newsletter.*



*In the last edition of Newsletter we were on the lookout for the little sandstone bearded fellow. Well he can be found above Catherine's Bakery in the High Street. I don't know any more about him but feel free to let me know if anyone knows his origin.*



## HERITAGE CENTRE

### **Kempe stained glass window rediscovered.**

*David Wallace of the Heritage Group writes:*

*On 21<sup>st</sup> August 1880 Mr. William Exley was laid to rest in the churchyard of All Saints' Church, Broseley, after a large and very well attended funeral service. Mr. Exley was a well-respected local employer who, in 1845, had been given the contract to rebuild the large church in which he was buried. The church, built to the design of the architect Harvey Eginton, is described in "Churches of Shropshire and their Treasures" by John Leonard (published 2004) as "The finest early Victorian church in the county, a stately building constructed in an authentic Perpendicular style". The church's organ was built by J W Walker and Son of London*

in 1845 and was installed in the first gallery of the tower. In 1890 the instrument was removed from this location and rebuilt at ground level in the North aisle at the East end of the church. Sixteen years later, on 10th November 1906, a short service was held in All Saints' to witness the dedication of a new west window, given to the church by Mr. E G Exley and family "To the glory of God, and to the memory of the late Mr. William Exley". The window covers 89 square feet and has four lights (long, individual windows) depicting the prophets David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Malachi. The window was the work of Charles Eamer Kempe (1837-1907), one of the greatest of Victorian Stained Glass Artists. Examples of Kempe's stained glass adorn the great Cathedrals of Chester, Gloucester, Hereford, Lichfield, Wells, Winchester, York Minster, Wakefield, Bristol and the Anglican Cathedral of Newfoundland and Labrador. From high in the tower this important window dominated the main aisle of the church and could be seen from the altar for the next seventy three years.

In 1979 the wood Galleries from the side aisles of the church were removed following fears of Death Watch beetle. As part of this renovation the organ was re-sited to its original location in the tower where it was to be rebuilt. At this time the Kempe window was covered over with wooden shuttering and, for thirty six years, none of us have had sight of Charles Kempe's masterpiece. Mr. Leonard records in his book "The stained glass in the West window by Kempe is unfortunately hidden by the organ".

Two years ago, following a well-attended public meeting, a Heritage Group was formed to set up a Heritage and Information site within All Saints' church. Broseley does not have a natural home for visitors, tourists or historians who visit the Town and there is no natural site for the many artefacts that could bear witness to its importance. The church, the town's most impressive building, was a natural choice for this project which would in no way effect its place as our foremost place of worship.

As the project progressed it was clear that there were no images of the Kempe window available. Standing on a narrow walkway cramped behind the organ, looking up above a wall of dirty wooden shuttering, there were tantalising glimpses of bright colour where light found its way through the glass. Finally, standing balanced on a stepladder far back against the organ, using a telephoto lens, a beautiful image of an angel was revealed.



A tantalising glimpse of the Kempe window at Broseley All Saints' Church

To everyone in the Heritage group it was clear that, if this angel was typical of the 89 square feet behind the shuttering, then Broseley had a real treasure that deserved revelation.

Contact was made with Adrian Barlow, the President of the English Association and the author of a forthcoming book on the stained glass of Charles Eamer Kempe. He confirmed the form of Broseley's window adding that, in Kempe's work, representations of Jeremiah and (especially) Malachi are rare and "it would be very important to see them". He adds "Also of interest, and - if the record in the Corpus is accurate here - extremely unusual, is the fact that the window is listed as carrying two Kempe monograms. The first is a single golden sheaf, and this would usually be found somewhere at or towards the bottom left hand corner. The second is also a sheaf, but this one will have a small black tower superimposed upon it. The first is the monogram found on many, but not all, windows produced by the Kempe studios. When Kempe died it was his heir, Walter Tower who succeeded, hence the visual pun on his name. If both logos do exist, as the record shows, on the Broseley window, all other such "double monograms" date

from 1907 onwards. All Saints' window has great importance and may have unique value”.

Mr. Barlow concluded his email “The sooner you can get rid of the obstructive organ the better!”

## SOCIETY ARTEFACTS

Recently members have been “assessing” the artefacts and archives held by the Society in order to catalogue and record the items. Amongst the collection is this delightful if somewhat “distressed”, illustrated tile of Joseph Chamberlain produced by Craven Dunnill of Jackfield.

Janet Doody writes-

*Joseph Chamberlain made his career in Birmingham, but had been born in London and was initially apprenticed in the family business making quality leather shoes, but at 18 he joined his uncle's business of Nettlefold's (later Guest Keen and Nettlefold) in Birmingham. He was so successful that he was able to retire in his early 30's and by 1867 he was elected to what was then Birmingham Town Council. In 1873 he first became **Mayor of Birmingham** and during his three successive years of office initiated ambitious plans for public services and town improvement schemes which totally transformed the nature of Birmingham, by the 1890s Birmingham had become known as “the best governed City in the World.” He was also one of the main founders of Birmingham University and largely responsible for the development of the Edgbaston Campus. The Joseph Memorial Clock tower, situated on the campus and known as “Old Joe”; stands at 325 ft., it is said to be the largest free standing clock in the world.*

*At the age of 40 Joseph Chamberlain entered Parliament and from 1880 to 1885 was President of the Board of Trade. In 1895 as a Liberal Unionist in coalition with the Conservatives he accepted the post of Secretary of State for the Colonies. A renowned orator he is said to have split both main parties (Liberal and Conservative). Winston Churchill, called him “a splendid piebald: first black, then white, or, in political terms, first fiery red, then true blue.” This is the conventional view of Chamberlain's politics; beginning to the left of the Liberal party and ending to the right of the Conservatives. An alternative view is that he was always a radical in home affairs and an imperialist in foreign affairs, and that these stances were not in great conflict with each other.*



*Tile depicting Joseph Chamberlain*

*Joseph Chamberlain married three times and had six children, four daughters and two sons, Sir Austin Chamberlain MP and Neville Chamberlain MP, who was Prime Minister at the outbreak of World War II. In 1906 Joseph Chamberlain suffered a stroke and did not fully recover; during the last years of his life he lived at a splendid Gothic house, Highbury, situated between Moseley and King's Heath and now owned by the city of Birmingham. On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1914 Joseph Chamberlain suffered a heart attack and died the following day; he refused to be buried at Westminster and was laid to rest in the Key Hill Cemetery, Birmingham.*

The recording and cataloguing has been a big task and our Treasurer, Jim Cooper, and many other volunteers have worked painstakingly to complete this task. Photographic images of our collection will be posted on the website soon.

## WHAT'S ON?

### Sat 14 February

Robert Swanson, Aspects of the Medieval church in Shropshire, Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society, 2:30pm Shirehall, Shrewsbury 01743 236914

### Thur 26 February

Jill Burton, Charles Darwin's “La Belle Fanny” Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum, 2:30pm Glass Classroom Coalbrookdale, 01952 433522

### **Sat 14 March**

Neil Clarke, Fords & Ferries on the River Severn, Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society, 2:30pm Shirehall, Shrewsbury 01743 236914

### **Thur 19 March**

Robert Turner, Protecting Cultural Heritage, Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum, 2:30pm Glass Classroom Coalbrookdale, 01952 433522

### **Fri 17 April**

Lisa Sherwood, Geology of Lydebrook, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, £10 per person. To book email: [bookings@severngorge.org.uk](mailto:bookings@severngorge.org.uk) or phone 01952 433880

The above "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**

**My name is Samantha Hogate and I live in the US.** I have always heard from my grandmother that her father's Wilkinson family were the inventors of the Wilkinson Razor Blade. Since I love doing family history research I had to find out if this was true or not, and what I found was very interesting.

I did the research, and found that my 4<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather was a man named John Wilkinson. He was born in England in 1806, emigrated to Illinois in 1837, married a woman named Sarah Goble, and had ten children. He had a son named Charles, who had a daughter named Neva, she had a son named Donald, and his daughter is my grandmother.

I did not think much of this John Wilkinson until I found a book written in 1905 in Illinois. It had a long biography about his family and talked about his father being John Wilkinson the famous ironmaster. I did not know who he was then, but after learning more I was pretty excited to be related to such an interesting man (and sad at the same time since it seems that history has neglected him).

The only problem is that I do not have much evidence that they are really related besides that book. If it is true then I would love to visit the UK, and see the places where he lived and worked. But that would be a waste if I found out the connection was not there.

I would be delighted if you could help me in any way. I can't do much research from here in the US, and I have not had much luck on the internet finding

information about John Wilkinson's children. Even the book "John Wilkinson: King of the Ironmasters" does not say a lot about his son.

If it is true, I don't know if there are people who would be interested in finding out more about John Wilkinson Junior. But it seems that he got a fresh new start in America and had a good impact on his little community. He was a man that obviously cared about taking care of other people. I would love to share more of what I have found about him and his family if the connection is real, and of course if there is anyone who cares to know. I am sure there is even more information about him in Illinois, but I just have not been able to visit there yet to do more research.

### *Neil Clarke Replies*

*I have come across some notes made by the late D.W.H.Chaloner of Manchester University (Chaloner Papers in Ironbridge Gorge Museum Archives) relating to John Wilkinson, junior (1806-71), illegitimate son of the ironmaster John Wilkinson, which states that he emigrated to the USA in 1837, but goes no further. I'm about to edit these notes in preparation for an article in next year's Journal of the Broseley Local History Society, and will let you have a copy if you are interested.*

*If you're convinced this is your ancestor, I'd be interested to have further information on his activities in the USA.*

### **Samantha Hogate replies**

I would be very interested in having a copy. In fact, any information at all would be greatly appreciated.

Unfortunately I have not been able to find any concrete evidence that John Wilkinson's illegitimate son was indeed my ancestor. What little information I have been able to find is stories from books published in the 1800s and 1900s. I will attach some of them to this email. They provide a good story and look at his and his family's lives, but one that I don't know to be factual.

One comes from *Past and Present of Menard County* written in 1905 by Rev. R. D. Miller. This one obviously has incorrect information, but it is the most comprehensive story of his life I have been able to find.

The other comes from *Illustrated Atlas Map of Menard County 1874* published by W.R. Brinks & Co. of Illinois.

One thing that makes me wonder if the stories are true is a website I came across while researching the family. It is an index of the holdings of the Wolverhampton Archives, and it is very clearly talking about my family. Here is the link: <http://blackcountryhistory.org/collections/getrecord/GB149 DX-841 1-14/>

I'm wondering if you might know anything about these documents or how I could get a hold of them. They make me very curious. And do you know if these might possibly provide more evidence of him being John Wilkinson's son? In addition, my ancestor's son Fredrick applied for a passport in 1874, four years after his father's death, but it is unknown what for. I am wondering if he went to England to deal with the remainder of his father's estate.

At this point I fear that all I rely on is speculation, but I am searching for as many facts as I can gather. I have more information about his life in America I would be more than happy to share. Please let me know if you would be interested. However, I doubt that this information would be of much use if he turned out not to be related to John Wilkinson the ironmaster.

*Neil Clarke replies*

*John junior does not appear to have had the business acumen of his father, and finally sought his fortune in the New World. Certain facts from the two sources you quote (and particularly the Wolverhampton Archives documents, which I will try to get to see) would seem to suggest John junior was indeed your ancestor.*

**I came across an article in the November 2006** issue of your newsletter from a Kim Sale on the Langford's living at the Folly or Rock in Broseley.

I am in the process of writing up some of the history on my late grandfather and grandmother named Langford. Edwin Langford lived at the Folly with his wife Sarah and their children. Edwin would have not been shown on the tithe apportionment of 1838 as Edwin was not born until 1841, and Sarah (maiden name Simmons) was not born until 1844. I am not sure when Edwin and Sarah married but according to the 1881 census they were all living at the Folly with their six children.

Their children's names are as follows: - Mary Ann born 1868, John R born 1871, Sarah E born 1873, Thomas G born 1874, Esther born 1878 and Fredrick born 1880.

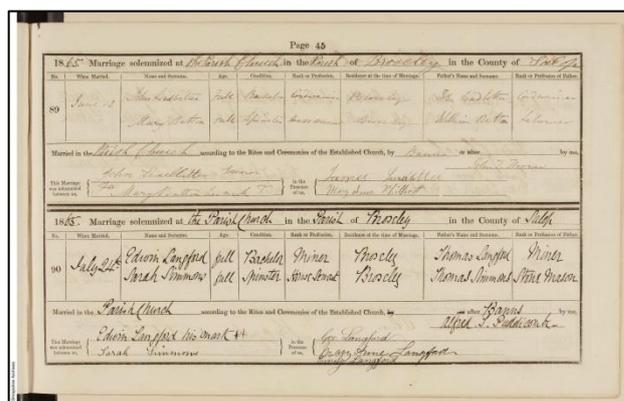
My grandfather was Thomas George Langford born 1874, he married my grandmother Grace Mary Price from Tidenham Gloucestershire, the only known history is that while working Thomas and Grace met each other employed as servants in 1900 at Cotton Hall, Alveley Shropshire. They both moved to Battersea London and were married at St Stephens Church Battersea on 21st April 1904. They had five children in all; Thomas disappeared in 1913 leaving my grandmother pregnant with their last born child, this child only died in August 2014 just one month shy of her 102 birthday.

I would love to hear from anybody who is related to the Langford family.

Bob Embling.

*Steve Dewhirst Replies –*

*You might be interested in the attached which I think relates to Edwin's marriage –*



*Edwin and Sarah's Marriage Certificate*

Bob Replies- Thank you so much for your e-mail and the attachment of Edwin and Sarah Langford's marriage certificate, much appreciated.

Following on from my first e-mail, and as already mentioned, my grandfather Thomas George Langford disappeared in 1913 leaving my grandmother Grace Mary Langford pregnant and with four other children to bring up, on the birth of her last child a decision was made to foster the baby out. For your interest I list below the names of the five Langford children and birth dates:-

Evelyn Elizabeth, born 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1905.

Thomas Eric, born 13<sup>th</sup> January 1907.

Gladys Hilda Grace, born 19<sup>th</sup> November 1908.

Gwendoline May, born 8<sup>th</sup> August 1911. (My mother).

Marie Helena, born 14<sup>th</sup> September 1913.

(Marie was fostered out thirteen days after she was born and lived to nearly 101 and died on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014).

When Thomas disappeared in 1913 it was so hard for Grace to bring up her other four children she split them up in different locations, and therefore I am particularly interested in Thomas Eric Langford.

Just to confuse the issue Thomas Eric Langford did not like being called Thomas, so he switched his name around at an early age and thereafter was always known by his relatives and friends as Eric Thomas Langford.

His mother Grace returned to Broseley with the four children hoping to find his father Thomas, but sadly he never turned up. It is believed that Grace left Eric somewhere in Broseley, but I am not sure where, there's a possibility she may have left Eric with Grace's brother-in-law, his uncle Fredrick Langford.

I do know that Eric spent the rest of his childhood in Broseley he was a very ambitious and adventurous young person who had many hobbies and one of his favourite pastimes was football. It is believed that he used to play as goalkeeper for the Broseley Boy's Football team. In 1919 he applied for a position as a cabin boy on the late Earl of Dunraven's 500 ton yacht, "The Valkiries". He left England to see the world and became a steward on several ocean liners. In 1931 he decided to settle in America and lived there the rest of his life and died at the age of 71, on 11th September 1978. Eric did return to England on 12th August 1972 and arranged a family reunion at The Valley Hotel, Coalbrookdale, Iron-Bridge, Shropshire, and then returned to America.

My question is, Steve, would anybody have any records or memories of Eric or any of the above names of this Langford generation living in Broseley. Any help would be much appreciated.

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