

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



May 2008

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.

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PROGRAMME

- 7 May 'You try and stop me!' Part II. A walk around Coalport and Jackfield, led by Ron Miles. Meet at 7.00 pm at Jackfield Tile Museum
- 4 Jun Summer Evening at The Lawns, Church Street, and installation of the plaque commemorating John Wilkinson
- 28 Jun Trip to Gloucester Historic Dockyard and the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
- 12 Jul Wilkinson Bicentenary Day School at the Long Warehouse, Coalbrookdale
- 13 Jul Trip to Brymbo, the site of just one of John Wilkinson's ironworks
- 10-13 Jul *A Cast Iron Case*, a pageant at The Lawns, Church Street, set around the life of John Wilkinson
- 3 Sep *The Realities of War*. Further wartime memories with Ray Johnston and Janet Doody
- 1 Oct Annual General Meeting, followed by talk on *Milestones* by Tony Keegan
- 5 Nov A talk on John Wilkinson, given by Michael Berthoud
- 3 Dec Annual Christmas dinner

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Marcus Branson, Broseley
Mr and Mrs Poyser, Coalport
David Turner, Wyke
Lynne Wilkinson, Bishop's Stortford

GIFT CARDS

Membership of the Society makes an unusual gift, so next time you need a present, why not buy one of the gift cards now available from the Society? These incorporate a picture of Broseley Church and cost 50p plus £5.00 for a single subscription or £8.00 for a couple.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May walk – ‘You try and stop me!’ Part II

Date: Wednesday 7 May

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Meet at Jackfield Tile Museum

Join Ron Miles as he finally completes his guided tour of Jackfield.

Summer Evening and Installation of Plaque

Date: Wednesday 4 June

Time: 7.30 pm

Venue: The Lawns, Church Street, Broseley

A Summer Evening at The Lawns where a plaque commemorating John Wilkinson will be unveiled by children from John Wilkinson Primary School. Members and invited guests will be entertained by the Shifnal and District Chorale which will be singing pieces composed by Henry Knight. Drinks and nibbles will be available.

Visit to Gloucester

Date: Saturday 28 June

Cost: £20.00 per person

Dep: 8.00 am Broseley Square

8.10 am School Road, Coalbrookdale

Ret: 7.15 pm Coalbrookdale

7.25 pm Broseley

This year's summer outing will be to Gloucester Historic Dockyard and the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. The Dockyard has a variety of attractions including the chance to visit the National Waterways Museum, Museum and Art Gallery, Mariners' Church, Gloucester Cathedral and Gloucester Regimental Museum. The price includes group admission to Gloucester Historic Dockyard museums.

The return trip will include a half hour journey on the award winning standard gauge Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. From the main station at Toddington the scenic ten mile run will end at Cheltenham Racecourse.

Further information from Vin Callcut, 01952 882508, or to book complete the form on page 13 and send it with your payment, by not later than 31 May to Michael Pope, Rivendell, 2 Dark Lane, Broseley, TF12 5LH. Please enclose an sae if acknowledgement is required. Cheques to be made payable to Broseley Local History Society.

Wilkinson Bicentenary Day School

Date: Saturday 12 July

Time: 9.45 am – 4.30 pm

Venue: Long Warehouse,
Coalbrookdale

Cost: £10.00 to include copy of the day's proceedings on publication

A Day School presenting recent research into the life and achievements of John Wilkinson. The programme will include the talks *The Wilkinsons at Bersham*, by Steve Greuter; *Iron Ships in Green Fields: Wilkinson's Legacy 1777-1833* by Richard Barker; *Wilkinson's Trade Connections* by Eric Alexander; *The Importance of the Women in John Wilkinson's Life* by Frank Dawson.

There will also be a choice of activities in the early afternoon; a field trip to local Wilkinson sites, a guided walk to the Iron Bridge or a visit to the Museum of Iron (this will carry an extra charge).

Tea and coffee will be available but lunch is not included. However, there are several restaurants and pubs within easy reach.

Further details from Neil Clarke, 01952 504135. To book complete the form on page 13 and send it with your payment to Michael Pope, Rivendell, 2 Dark Lane, Broseley, TF12 5LH. Cheques to be made payable to Broseley Local History Society. *This event is sponsored by Broseley Local History Society, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and Friends, Shropshire Archives and Wrekin Local Studies Forum.*

Trip to Brymbo

Date: Sunday 13 July

Dep: 10.00 am, Broseley Square

Ret: 5.15 pm

Cost: £8.50 per person

To round off the Society's Wilkinson Weekend, there will be a visit to Brymbo, the site not far from Bersham which was purchased by John Wilkinson in 1792. The blast furnaces and foundry which he built there were the basis for Brymbo Steelworks, an enterprise which closed only in 1990. The Brymbo Heritage Group has offered to lead a tour of the site, which includes John Wilkinson's old No 1 blast furnace, his contemporary foundry, the drift mine and agent's house, and the more recent machine shop. The Heritage Group will supply tea and coffee but participants should take a packed lunch.

Further details from David Lake, 01746 762813. To book complete the form on page 13 and send it with your payment, by not later than 13 June, to David Lake, Avebury, Stocking Lane, Nordley, WV16 4SY. Cheques should be made payable to Broseley Local History Society. Bookings will be refundable until 13 June.

A Cast Iron Case - a Pageant

Dates: 10, 11, 12 and 13 July

Time: 7.30 pm Thurs – Sat, 2.30 pm Sun

Venue: The Lawns, Church Street, Broseley BROADS, Broseley's amateur dramatic society, will be staging *A Cast Iron Case*, a pageant centred around the life of John Wilkinson. Local school children will also be involved and, with a grant having already been received, this promises to be an exciting and colourful event.

JOHN WILKINSON COMMEMORATIVE TOKENS



To celebrate the bicentenary of the death of John Wilkinson a new issue of tokens is being struck. The tokens will bear his effigy and dates on the obverse with an enhanced forgemaster,

updated to the bicentenary year 2008, on the reverse. As with the originals, the names of significant towns will be inscribed on the edge, these being BROSELEY BERSHAM BRADLEY WILLEY SNEDSHILL.

When in 1775 the Royal Mint stopped striking small denomination coinage in silver, John Wilkinson was one of the first of the leading industrialists to issue their own tokens. Perhaps not surprisingly, his own image appeared on the obverse, with various designs on the reverse. He also decided against using silver, preferring instead to use copper from mines in which he had an interest. Thousands of tokens were minted from 1787-1798 with 75 different varieties of genuine ones now being catalogued, not counting the 57 designs of forgeries.

This project is being coordinated by the Society with some financial support from Broseley Town Council. The tokens, which will be supplied in presentation boxes, are to be sold at a small profit to help finance the erection of commemorative

plaques such as the one to be installed at The Lawns in June. 'Proof' Token No 1 is to be auctioned, others will be available direct from the Society from mid-May, cost £8.00 each (for UK 1st class recorded post add £1.99). To purchase contact Vin Callcut email: vin@oldcopper.org.uk or phone 01952 882508. For members purchasing tokens at a Society meeting the cost will be £6.00.

JOHN WILKINSON COMMEMORATIVE PLATES

Well known Broseley potter Elspeth Soper of Willey Furnace Pottery has made a limited number of plates commemorating John Wilkinson. The design is based on that of the new issue of the Wilkinson tokens described above and the plates are available from Willey Furnace Pottery at a cost of £43.00 each (plus £4.99 for UK



Well known potter Elspeth Soper working on one of the John Wilkinson commemorative plates

1st class postage), with a percentage going to the commemorative plaques fund. To purchase email elspeth.wfpottery@hotmail.co.uk or phone 01952 884379 or mobile 07790 347007.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Shropshire Workhouses

In February, Lance Smith gave a talk on *Shropshire Workhouses*, with particular reference to the Broseley and Madeley areas.

In this talk, Lance said that under the Old Poor Law each parish had been responsible for its own poor and aid was funded through local rates. Although the distribution of aid was usually at the discretion of an appointed unpaid overseer, it could be contracted out. An example of this was the hiring of a William Micklewright who, in 1772, was paid £100 for providing for all the poor of the parish of Madeley for one year.

Accommodation for the destitute was often of a very hit and miss nature, sometimes consisting of a couple of old cottages, although there were some workhouses in the area. In Broseley there had been one in Harris's Green from 1734-1841. In 1794



Broseley had a workhouse at Harris's Green in 1734



The old Madeley workhouse at Brockholes which was built in 1796

the existing accommodation in Madeley was declared inadequate and a new workhouse was built at Brockholes in Madeley.

It was not until the beginning of the 18th century that parishes began to establish workhouses combining housing and care of the poor with a house of correction for petty offenders. In 1797 an advertisement had appeared for a master and matron, 'with some knowledge of the manufacturing of coarse linens and woollens', to superintend a House of Industry in the Parish of Madeley. In those days, the word 'industry' had a slightly different meaning, referring to being industrious rather than to manufacturing, and this House of Industry would have been for the able-bodied who could not find work.

By 1834, along with the rest of the country, Shropshire no longer considered the Old Poor Law to be fit for purpose and it was replaced by the Poor Law Amendment Act. This Act took responsibility away from individual parishes and gave it to unions to be made up of several parishes. It also stated that no able-bodied person could receive help other than in workhouses, which were to be made so harsh as to deter any but the most desperate from going there.

The person responsible for setting up these unions throughout Shropshire was a William Day who incorporated Broseley into the Madeley Parish Union. Day had to oversee the new system of select vestries whereby ratepayers elected representatives to a Board of Guardians, as well as appointing salaried workhouse overseers. In 1836 Madeley Parish Union had its first Board of Guardians which included a large proportion of non-conformist industrialists and a chaplain, who was appointed at a salary of £30 a year.

The Board of Guardians was also responsible for the building of workhouses and in 1863 a new one, probably the last workhouse to be built in Shropshire, was erected above Ironbridge. In 1929 workhouses and the unions were officially abolished, their responsibilities being transferred to the county councils and boroughs.

In 1930 the Madeley workhouse changed its use to that of accommodating the chronic sick. It was later converted as the Beeches Hospital and latterly provided care for the elderly.

John Wilkinson and his Transport Interests

The March meeting was held at the new Thinktank in Birmingham Science Museum when Neil Clarke was invited to give a talk to the Newcomen Society on John Wilkinson and his Transport Interests. The audience of some 70 people included a fair contingent from Broseley and the talk was well received, prompting considerable debate. The full text will be published in the next Society Journal, meanwhile a synopsis of his talk appears below.

With many business interests in this country and abroad, it is not surprising that John Wilkinson needed to spend much time and effort dealing with his transport requirements. Raw materials had to be conveyed to his various works and finished goods to home and foreign customers; and he himself, as a hands on employer, needed to travel extensively between his works and his residences and on business to other parts of this country and on the continent.

Even from the limited range of extant original sources, it is apparent that Wilkinson not only used well-established means of travel and transport such as horses, river navigations and coastal shipping, but also took a leading role in promoting newer forms such as canals, turnpike roads and railways. In his paper, focusing mainly on Wilkinson's activities in the West Midlands, Neil included examples of the personal travel arrangements of the ironmaster; his support for the attempts to improve the navigation of the Upper Severn and his launching of the first commercial iron boat, the Trial; his difficulties in shipping iron pipes and steam engine parts to France; his promotion of canal projects, including the Shropshire Canal with

its three inclined planes, and the Ellesmere Canal, the main line of which was never completed; his involvement with a number of turnpike trusts and with the building of new bridges in the Severn Gorge; and his development of a railway system at Willey.

South Staffordshire Ironmasters

At the April meeting Paul Luter gave an illustrated talk entitled *South Staffordshire Ironmasters with Broseley Origins*, showing the pivotal part Broseley people and families had played in the development of the British iron industry, particularly in South Wales, Shropshire and South Staffordshire. The presentation centred around the Guest, Baldwin, Firmstone, Thorneycroft, Gibbons and Jones families who had genealogical roots in Broseley from 1755-1770.

In his talk Paul discussed the importance of John Guest's move to Dowlais in about 1758, along with Isaac Wilkinson, from his house in Church Street, Broseley.

He then focused on the achievements of Joseph Firmstone (1759-1830) who moved from Broseley to Pennydarren Ironworks near Merthyr Tydfil. There he invented a new puddling technique which, unbeknown to John Wilkinson and William Reynolds, was secretly applied by Samuel Homfray and Richard Crawshay. This new technique prompted a wave of increased iron production through South Wales from 1793 and when Firmstone moved to Bilston in around 1796 he took the new process with him, generating a similar boom in the South Staffordshire pig iron industry which resulted in the number of furnaces increasing rapidly, from the original 14 to up to 84 by 1823. Firmstone became one of the fathers of the South Staffordshire iron industry with, in conjunction with other ironmasters, furnaces at Highfields, Bilston and many collieries.

Another family of the Broseley 'six' was that of George Benjamin Thorneycroft (1791-1851), a key ironmaster in the Wolverhampton district throughout the Victorian period. Paul then traced the family's origins in Broseley back to George Benjamin's father Edward and his mother Mary who came from Benthall. George Benjamin

trained at Kirkstall Forge near Leeds before moving to Moorfields Furnaces, Bilston, in 1817. In 1848 he became the first Mayor of Wolverhampton and was running furnaces near Wolverhampton, including the Shrubbery Ironworks.

The next family Paul discussed was that of the Gibbons, by then based in Wolverhampton, whose connections with Broseley could be traced back to the reign of Henry VIII and whose bank in Wolverhampton played a major part in the development of the South Staffordshire iron industry. It was John Gibbons (1788-1851) who developed a new form of blast furnace construction known as 'Gibbonising' which increased iron production in South Staffordshire by over 60% and was said to be more important at that time than the development of the Boulton & Watt steam engine.

Paul concluded his talk by discussing the Broseley origins of William Pearce Baldwin, who opened the Priestfields furnaces at Bilston in 1809 and developed the industries in the area, and the Wolverhampton ironmastery of George Jones (1781-1868) and his important contribution to the South Staffordshire iron industry.

LOCAL HISTORY EXHIBITION

The Society is taking part in a Local History exhibition in Broseley Library which will run from 26 April through



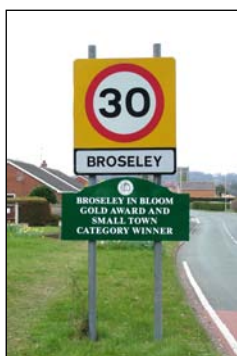
to the end of May. The Society's display will form part of the year long celebration of the bicentenary of the death of John Wilkinson, as well as illustrate the lives of other famous Broseley people. There will also be a display case of local products including metalware, china and pottery, with a specially commissioned commemorative plate made by Elspeth Soper of Willey Furnace Pottery.

Perhaps the highlight of the exhibits is the first public display of a heavy cast iron fireback, dated 1618 and initialled 'JR' for James I of England. It originally came from a stone cottage in Shirlett and was described by the antiquarian, John Randall, in his 1879 book *Broseley and its Surroundings*. It

was then acquired by Dr Hezekiah Hartshorne before being lost for many years. It was recently discovered beneath a fireplace during restoration work on a house in Church Street and is being loaned by Society members Vin and Hilary Callcut.

The exhibition, which was opened on Saturday 26 April by local MP Philip Dunne, may be seen during normal library hours.

BROSELEY IN BLOOM



In the year in which the Society is celebrating the bicentenary of the death of John Wilkinson, it will be working with Broseley in Bloom to support the Royal Horticultural Society's theme of *Local Roots*. As a symbol of the colour of furnaces against the night sky, the

floral colour scheme throughout the town will be flaming oranges, reds and yellows.

The Society has also, in support of Broseley's ambition to win a hat trick of Gold Awards, sponsored a flower bed behind the Social Club.

HAYCOP CONSERVATION PROJECT

Work is continuing on the Haycop conservation project. The original engine house pool for the old colliery has now been cleaned out and allowed to fill and an island for nesting birds and a hide have been built. Various nesting boxes have been donated by the Broseley in Bloom committee.

Children are already enjoying exploring the area, despite the mud. The area is to be planted up with grass and wild flowers to attract birds and butterflies



What is now a rather muddy area will shortly be put down to grass and wild flowers attractive to birds and butterflies. The project is being supported by all three schools in the area and it is anticipated that they will use the Haycop for nature trips and school projects.

Adrian Miles, who is coordinating the project, says that although hopes of funding had been dashed 'because work had already been started', he was still confident that the project would be completed this summer.

Working parties are held every Saturday morning and anyone who is interested in helping or would like to make a donation, should contact Adrian on 01952 882318.

THE GENUS CROCUS

Benthall Hall near Broseley in Shropshire, a National Trust property, has a new exhibit – the *Monograph of the Genus Crocus*, written and illustrated by George Maw. The book is signed by the author and dedicated to his wife Frederica. One of only 27 copies published in 1886, the book remains the chief reference on crocuses.



George Maw's illustrations were described by John Ruskin as "most exquisite ... and quite beyond criticism"

George Maw was a tile manufacturer of international repute who, together with his brother Arthur, ran a tile making business first at Benthall and then at a purpose built works at Jackfield, producing encaustic and other tiles which were exported all over the world.

It was while George was a tenant at Benthall Hall from 1855-1885 that he travelled extensively in Europe, Turkey and North America, collecting numerous exotic plants and bulbs. Many crocus bulbs from his collection still flower annually at Benthall.

In a reminder of his activities while living at Benthall, one of his clay plant markers was recently found intact in the garden, still clearly labelled 'Pernettya angustifolia'.

WHAT'S ON?

Ironbridge Gorge Museums

3-31 May, 10.00 am – 5.00 pm daily

'50 in The Footprint'

Footprint Gallery, Fusion, Jackfield Tile Museum
Art exhibition featuring 50 works of art from 14 Shropshire artists. Entry is free.

Fusion is a contemporary new centre for the creative industries; resident designers and makers include glass artists, a sculptor and letter carver, a fine art printer and framer and a bicycle hub.

Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival

Saturday 3 May – Sunday 11 May

Walks include:

Mon 5 May, Historic Railways of the Gorge

Tue 6 May, Industry of Jackfield and Coalport

Wed 7 May, Watercourses of Coalbrookdale

Thu 8 May, Tour of Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale

Fri 9 May, Mining and Instability in the Gorge

For further information phone 01952 432769 or email courses@greenwoodcentre.org.uk

Coalport China Museum

During 2008 Coalport China Museum will be highlighting the importance and symbolism of flowers for the porcelain painters of Coalport and for the people who bought and used the china. A new Botanical Trail through the galleries will be launched at May half-term where families will be able to learn more about a wide range of plants, from cottage garden varieties to exotic blooms. In the year of the Beijing Olympics the meaning of flowers in Chinese decoration and custom can also be discovered by following the Trail through the museum. Further information phone 01952 884391 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

Wednesday 21 May, 7.30 pm

Park Lane Community Centre, Woodside

Open Evening

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, which manages some 300 hectares of woodlands and countryside throughout the Gorge for the benefit of the public, will be holding an Open Evening on Wednesday 21 May at which Sarah Raper, Chief Executive of Transforming Telford, will be giving

a talk on *Transforming Telford's work in South Telford*.

At this meeting the Trust will outline its plans for the future and display work recently undertaken. Members of the public will be invited to share their opinions on work already done, as well as find out how they can get involved in the work of the Trust.

For further information phone 01952 433880.

Museum Collections Open Day

Monday 26 May, 10.00 am – 4.30 pm

The Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, 25 Dollman Street, Nechells, Birmingham, are holding an Open Day on Bank Holiday Monday 26 May. This will provide an opportunity for visitors to see behind the scenes at one of the largest museum storage facilities in the country, with over 500,000 objects, including industrial objects, vehicles, sculptures and fine art as well as social and local history.

Parking is freely available or there is a vintage courtesy bus service between Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (Edmund Street) and the MCC every 30 minutes. This also travels onward to Aston Manor Transport Museum.

BOOKSHOP

The Industrial Heritage of the Rural Parishes around the Wrekin

The Industrial Heritage research group was formed in 2005, following the launch of the Down to Earth around the Wrekin project developed by the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership.

The aim of the group was to identify and photograph the historic industrial and transport sites in the parishes of Leighton & Eaton Constantine, Little Wenlock and Wroxeter & Uppington, and to research their history.

The work of the group is to be published in two parts. The first part (available late 2008) includes an overview of the area with a gazetteer of sites and papers on coal mining, stone quarrying, iron making and industrial unrest. In the second part (now published) there are two in-depth studies, *Steeraway and the Little Wenlock Lime Industry*,

by Lance Smith and Roger Howells and *The Great Ancient Road* (Watling Street, the Holyhead Road and the A5), by Neil Clarke.

Copies of *The Industrial Heritage of the Rural Parishes around the Wrekin Part II* are available at £4.00 (£4.50 to include postage) from Neil Clarke, Cranleigh, Wellington Road, Little Wenlock, TF6 5BH, tel: 01952 504135. Cheques to be made payable to Wrekin Local Studies Forum.

John Wilkinson – a biography

Frank Dawson, whom members will remember from the Society's trip to Castlehead in 2005, and who will be giving one of the talks at the 12 July Day School, has now completed his biography of John Wilkinson. Still in manuscript form, he has offered this to the Society for publication. At around 130 pages, this is a considerable undertaking and the committee has proposed initially printing a small number of drafts, without many of the illustrations, in order to gauge the interest in such a book. This could be published in ring binder form in order to incorporate maps and illustrations at a later date, but other formats are being considered. Further details available later.

Forgotten Ironmasters of Shropshire by Paul Andrew Luter. Cost £4.50 to include postage, available from the author 01384 345414.

The Pre-Victorian Blast Furnaces and Forges south of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, and their development between the years 1780-1830 by Paul Andrew Luter. Cost £4.50 to include postage, available from the author 01384 345414.

MAILBOX

I am a descendant of William and Mary Gittings. William Gittings was born at Broseley in 1850 and died in 1924, while Mary Caroline Gittings (née Taylor) was born in 1855 and died in 1923. From possibly 1891 until about 1924 they lived at Caughley House which I believe was on Lord Forester's estate.

My grandmother Anne Caroline Gittings was the eighth child born to William and Mary in Hockley, Broseley, in 1883 and she married my grandfather Walter Henry Caves in 1907. Walter was born in 1884 and died in New Zealand in 1956.

If there are any Gittings family members still living in the Broseley area, or anyone with information regarding Caughley House or my great grandparents, I should really appreciate hearing about it. I am planning a trip to Broseley in July this year and should like to find out if Caughley House is still standing and where it is exactly.

Rosemary Caves
scotmail@bluemaxx.com.au

I see from the 1901 census that William Gittings was a pit banksman. It is likely that he worked at the nearby Turner Yard colliery which worked clay and coal for the Broseley tileries.

The census does not give an address but as you will have seen there were very few properties at Caughley. Other than the farm I think there were three buildings, of which two remain. I am not sure which of the three was Caughley House. Of the two which remain, one is called the Round House (despite it being square!) so it is likely to be one of the other two. The most likely candidate is the cottage which was part of the Caughley China works but unfortunately this has been demolished. Perhaps one of our members can be more precise.
Steve Dewhirst

I have some relatives going to Broseley in August who will visit the cemeteries to take photographs of my ancestors' graves. Is there a contact for the Broseley cemeteries/churchyards where I can find plot numbers or directions to graves? With so many Gittings and Gittins family buried in Broseley it may otherwise take them forever to find them all.

Peter Caves
pcguy@clear.net.nz

I should like to say how useful your Society has been for me while researching my family history. My Culliss ancestors came from Broseley and the surrounding area and their influence in the town only ended at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. I live in Brighton, however, so your putting the local newspapers online has been absolutely invaluable to me, enabling me to give life to the information from censuses and directories.

One of my key ancestors was William Yates Culliss, bargeowner and landlord of The Tumbling Sailor Inn when he died on 21 July 1865 – apparently from a fractured skull after a fall. I suspect that there may be a newspaper entry giving an account of what happened, so I look forward to seeing a transcript for 1865 if you get round to it.

Nick Culliss
nickculliss@hotmail.com

I am looking for information on Isaac Watts, the brother of my husband's great grandfather William Watts.

From the census I see that Isaac was a farmer as well as a draper who kept a shop in Broseley High Street – I think it was the one on the corner, on the left facing down the town.

Christine Ensor
basilandcybill@hotmail.com

Isaac Watts, a draper, was born in 1828 in Trentham, Staffordshire but in 1861 was living in the High Street, Broseley, in the shop which faces down the High Street at the junction between Barber's Row and the High Street itself. When I was a child it was still a draper's shop, the Bon Marche, owned by the Roberts family. Today it is Downes, the greengrocer's shop. Isaac had a son, William Whitehead Watts, who graduated at Cambridge University and went on to become Assistant Professor of Geology at Birmingham University.

This latter I learnt quite by accident when talking to a Broseley resident, Ken Davis now in his 80s. He said that William Watts had once taught him and had given him a book which he had written Shropshire, the Geography of the County of Salop, which was published in 1919.

Joan Griffiths



This shop, now Downes the green-grocers, was probably the one kept by Isaac Watts

Does anyone have information about a house in Broseley with a whale's jaw bone over the front door? My mother, Elizabeth May Southorn, used to tell me tales of seeing this house when visiting Broseley Pipe Works with her father.

Geoff Baldwin
geoff_jan@hotmail.com

I don't know of any house in Broseley with whale's jaw bones, but there was one in Coalbrookdale which did have a whalebone arch. This was in the papers a few years ago and I think they were going to re-erect it. Perhaps one of our readers can help you.

Steve Dewhirst

I am trying to find out the history of the former Duke of Wellington Inn in Jackfield. I have so far got information up to 1901 but am looking for photographs in existence from then up until the 1960s when it was demolished.

Sonia Bird
info@soniabird.co.uk

I have traced my family back to Broseley and Benthall c1560 and one thing has surprised me – that nobody has recorded the graves in the churchyard. I believe there is a Victorian record of inscriptions inside the church. Is the task of recording the graves so large nobody has started or is there very little there nowadays?

Peter Taylor
bristolloggerheads@blueyonder.co.uk



The gravestones in both Broseley (top right) and Benthall church-yards (bottom right) have been moved from their original positions and placed around the edge of the graveyard.

Benthall Church has now been closed



I do not think that anybody has recorded the inscriptions. Most of the old gravestones have been moved from their original positions and been placed around the edge of the graveyard. Presumably some were also lost in the move.

Steve Dewhirst

My great grandfather, who died in 1932, had a son, J M Caswell, of whom I was previously unaware. His address is given as 30 Barrow, Broseley, although my great grandfather himself lived and died at Wrottesley, near Albrighton.

I noticed that there is a Betty Caswell mentioned in one of your *Newsletters* who has also written a document called 'Childhood Memories of Life in Broseley'. Does anyone know if there are still Caswells in the Broseley area and what and where is 30 Barrow?

Christopher Kelly
cjkelly@zoom.co.uk

Although Barrow is a village it is really a number of isolated houses with a very small population and I don't know where 30 Barrow is. Betty Caswell actually lives in Stourbridge and I don't think she would be related to J M Caswell.

There is, however, a reference to a Caswell in Barrow in 1927 when Harold Caswell gained a prize in the Barrow School December Terminal Examination for mapping and writing.

Steve Dewhirst

I was recently given a cup and saucer with a blue

dragon pattern on it and was told that it was a Broseley Blue Dragon. My parents' families were from that area and although I knew about clay pipes, Caughley and Coalport china I had not come across Broseley Blue Dragons before. There are no makers' marks on the items and I wonder if anyone has any information about the manufactory and the period when these would have been made.

Glen Coleman
chrisnglen@hotmail.com



No maker's mark, but is this cup and saucer a Broseley Blue Dragon design?

I believe the Broseley blue pattern originated at Caughley but it was widely copied, particularly by the works in Stoke on Trent. Perhaps some of our members can help you identify your cup and saucer.

Steve Dewhirst

During my family research I came across many mentions of the Potts family of solicitors. I am descended from the Potts family on my maternal grandmother's side, her grandfather being Abias Potts, the younger brother of George Potts, solicitor, 1811-1873. One of George's sons, Edward Bagnall Potts, had a daughter Katherine Sarah, 1873-1907, who married a clergyman George Herbert Cobbold Shorting.

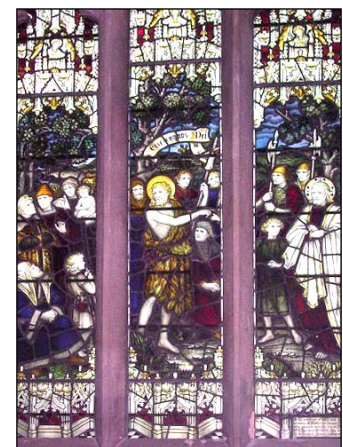
I recently came across an item in the *Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News* for 9 November 1907 regarding two windows dedicated to Katherine at Kimpton Church in Hertfordshire after her death following the birth of her son Herbert John Shorting.

My mother believes that she once saw a newspaper clipping mentioning an Enoch Potts being mayor. Unfortunately this has been lost and I have not been able to find anything in my research. I was wondering if anyone could shed any light on this?

Lynne Wilkinson
lynnewithane57@hotmail.com

Thank you for the picture. I remember the cutting about the window and it is nice to see a picture of it. I have not come across Enoch, but if he were mayor it is likely he would have been Mayor of Wenlock Borough of which Broseley was a part. Hopefully one of our members will be able to help.

Steve Dewhirst



The window in the church of St Peter and St Paul in Kimpton, Hertfordshire, was dedicated to the memory of Katherine Shorting following her death on the birth of her only son

I should like to say how wonderful your website is – very interesting and informative.

I am researching a family called Kearn who lived at Dean Farm in Broseley from 1900 until about 1946. I have found mention of them in some of the old newspaper articles posted on your site but would like to search these newspapers on particular dates for reports of such things as funerals. Can anyone tell me who holds the archived copies?

I am also confused as to areas of Broseley. I believe that Dean Farm was in Willey but one of the family, Glynder Kearn, appears to have been buried in Barrow Church. Are these neighbouring villages?

I should appreciate any help and am hoping that there might even be some people who remember them from the 1940s.

Kati Carpentier
kati370@hotmail.com

I have been looking into a Bullock family and was wondering if the parish records for 1750-1800 have been lost. I cannot see anything on the IGI or on your site.

jan bullock
jan@bullocks.org

I believe that the parish registers for Broseley have been transcribed and are in Shropshire Archives. The ones on our site come from an old transcription which was published in the early 20th century. Unfortunately they only went up to 1750.

Steve Dewhirst

I should like to congratulate you on a great website, brilliant for family historians with ancestors from Broseley.

I have found one branch of my family, Samuel and Eliza Walker, in Speed Lane/Road, Broseley, in the 1851 census but could not find them in 1841. It turns out they were living in what, from that census entry, looks like Benthall Rails. Would that be correct ?

Simon
deepdale.duck@yahoo.co.uk

Thanks for the kind words about the website, I am glad you found it interesting.

You are correct in transcribing it as Benthall Rails. The exact location is difficult to pinpoint but I think it would be Bridge Road down the hill from Hilltop House. This is almost opposite Speeds Lane which would make some sense.

Steve Dewhirst

I should like to contact Victoria Cox, the author of *Shirlett Sanatorium* which is featured on your website, as I am interested in the research into this old sanatorium.

David Francis
denaridave@aol.com

I have been ‘wandering’ around your website which is absolutely fascinating – one of the best History Society websites I have come across.

I am trying to find an area in Broseley known as Ockley. My great great grandmother Eliza Jones was born in Ockley, Broseley, Salop in 1829 but so far I cannot find any reference to an area called this. On your website I found an Ockley Bank so maybe it is just a road? If so could you pinpoint the area for me? I have an old map of Broseley but cannot find it on there. Also, where would be the best place for me to do a little more research on this family?

Sue Buckley
sue_buckley@blueyonder.co.uk

There is an area of Broseley called Hockley and Hockley Bank. On the map from the Victoria County History Hockley is on the bottom left.

Steve Dewhirst

Hockley Bank, Broseley, today



I used to live at Holborn House, in or near Legge's Hill, from 1936-1939. Our family name was Thompson, John (Jack) and Rhoda, and I remember Legge's Hill as being very steep with a road running off to the right where we lived (possibly Simpson's Lane) in a brick house with the front door on the first floor level and the back facing downhill.

I recently revisited the area and found everything just as I remembered it from 70 years ago, which is quite remarkable – Broseley is a bit of a time capsule. I recognised the front entrance of Holborn House with its sloping coalhouse roof and the high wall along the jitty below Ding Dong Steps. Legge's Hill is even steeper than I remembered and still has the double rail at the junction with Simpson's Lane – I remember doing somersaults on these, falling off and grazing my knee on the gravel!

Children in Legge's Hill school in 1938/39. Sheila is the one with the bow in her hair behind the doll's cradle



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The photograph is probably Legge's Hill school with myself with bow on the right behind the doll's cradle. It is stamped on the back with GROUP B in purple and 4634 Sp in pencil. It would be 1938/39.

Sheila Maddock
sheila@smaddock.plus.com

Thank you for the photograph, I am sure it will bring back memories for some of our members.

Steve Dewhirst

In response to Jill Hartwright's request for information on the Locke family (*February 2008 Newsletter*) there is a picture of Mrs Locke and three of her eight children, dated 1965, in the book *Shropshire, Pictures from the Past* by Toby Neal and Phil Gillam. The book is published by Breedon Books, Breedon House, 3 The Parker Centre, Derby, DE21 4SZ. There is a copy in Broseley Library.
Dot Cox

Mrs Locke with three of her eight children. The family were well known in the Church Stretton and Much Wenlock areas



Newsletter is sympathetic to the concerns of certain of its correspondents who are reluctant to see their email address appear in the public domain. If there is anyone who does not wish their contact details to be published, they are welcome to make use of the Society's email address steve@broseley.org.uk. Any respondent without access to email may pass on information to any member of the committee.

**To see the Newsletter in full colour
visit the Society's website
broseley.org.uk.**

BOOKING FORM
TRIP TO GLOUCESTER SATURDAY 28 JUNE 2008

Cost £20.00 per head, covers the coach fare, entry to the dockyard museums and the train journey on the standard gauge railway, as well as gratuities for the day. There are restaurants in the dockyard area, otherwise please take your own food.

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____ Tel: _____

No of persons @ £20.00 per head: _____

Total payment: _____

Place of pick up: Broseley Square _____ School Road, Coalbrookdale _____

Please make cheques payable to Broseley Local History Society and return this form by **not later than 31 May** to Michael Pope, Rivendell, 2 Dark Lane, Broseley, TF12 5LH. Tel: 01952 883960.



BOOKING FORM
WILKINSON BICENTENARY DAY SCHOOL 12 JULY 2008

I/We wish to book _____ places @ £10.00 per head for the above Day School and enclose cheque for £_____

- Preference for early afternoon session
1. Field trip to local Wilkinson sites _____
 2. Guided walk to the Iron Bridge _____
 3. Visit to Museum of Iron _____ (carries extra charge)

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____ Tel: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please make cheques payable to Broseley Local History Society and return this form to Michael Pope, Rivendell, 2 Dark Lane, Broseley, TF12 5LH. Tel: 01952 883960.
Enclose a sae if acknowledgement is required.



BOOKING FORM
TRIP TO BRYMBO HERITAGE SITE 13 JULY 2008

I/We wish to book _____ places @ £8.50 per head for the trip to Brymbo and enclose cheque for £_____

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____ Tel: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please make cheques payable to Broseley Local History Society and return this form **by not later than 13 June** to David Lake, Avebury, Stocking Lane, Nordley, Bridgnorth, WV16 4SY. Tel: 01746 762813.
Bookings will be refundable until 13 June.