

Newsletter

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



May 2012

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm at the Broseley Social Club, High Street, unless otherwise announced. Car parking is available at the back of the Club.

Members are requested to be seated by 7.30 pm to allow speakers a prompt start.

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

PROGRAMME

- 6 June Summer Evening, visit to Stanley Hall, Astley Abbots.
- 7 July July Outing, coach trip to Liverpool Waterfront.
- 5 Sept *The Railway Navvies*, by Colin Bargery
- 3 Oct AGM and *Our First 40 Years*, by Neil Clarke
- 7 Nov *Calcutts China Works*, by Roger Edmundson (joint meeting with FIGM, Coalbrookdale)
- 5 Dec Annual Dinner.

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- Joan Banks, Broseley
- David Bowgett, Broseley
- Pat Hakanson, Australia
- Joy Sims, Much Wenlock
- Peter Smith, Broseley

FORTY YEARS OLD

Broseley Local History Society is 40 years old this year. To celebrate this achievement, at the AGM in October Neil Clarke, by far the longest serving member of the committee, will be presenting a history of the Society; there will also be contributions from other members of the Society's activities over these years. These presentations will be followed by drinks and nibbles. The Society would also like to hear from anyone else who has memories of Society events they would like to share. If you have, please contact a member of the committee or email: steve@broseley.org.uk.



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FORTHCOMING EVENTS
Queen's Diamond Jubilee
Exhibition

Cemetery Chapel

Saturday 2 June - Tuesday 5 June

10.00 am - 4.00 pm

To celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Society is holding an exhibition of Royal and other memorabilia in the Cemetery Chapel in Ironbridge Road from Saturday 2 June until Tuesday 5 June.

To make this event a success the Society would like as wide a range of artefacts as possible. While a number of people have already lent such things as pictures, commemorative items, coins and medals, if there is anyone else who would like to share some of their memorabilia, **please contact the chairman Gillian Pope tel: 01952 883960 by 30 May.**

Just one of the items lent for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee exhibition at the Cemetery Chapel

This picture of a group of Sunday School children at the Baptist Chapel, now the Birchmeadow Centre, was taken in 1905 and was the property of the late Jack Sankey



Summer Evening

Stanley Hall, Astley Abbots

Wednesday 6 June

7.00 pm

This year's Summer outing will be a visit to Stanley Hall, Astley Abbots, at the kind invitation of Michael and Clare Thompson.

Numbers are limited but for those of you lucky enough to have made the list, please be at the Hall by 7.00 pm. A map of the route there is printed on the back of your entry ticket.

According to Michael Thompson Stanley Hall was first built in 1642 but has been much added to and changed over the years. Originally U shaped, it is



said that half of it was destroyed during the Civil War. The grounds were laid out in the early 19th century by Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt Jones, brother-in-law of the notorious Jack Mytton. Of special interest in the grounds is the newly restored cup and dome Ice House - the only one in the country with a glass bridge giving a view into its depths.

In 1924 much of the Hall was pulled down so that now only about one third of the original building remains.

July Outing

Liverpool Waterfront

Saturday 7 July

Depart: 8.15 am Broseley Square

Return: Approx 7.00 pm

Cost: £12.50 per head

Liverpool Waterfront,

now a World Heritage

site, contains some of

Liverpool's most famous

landmarks. Attractions

include the Albert Dock,

Tate Liverpool, the Maritime Museum, the

Beatles' Museum and the new Museum of

Liverpool - all of which are within walking

distance of one another.

The Museum of Liverpool is the largest museum built for over a century and tells the story of how the city transformed itself from a small tidal inlet into one of the world's great ports, pioneering the world's first commercial wet dock in 1715.

The Maritime Museum focuses on some of the key moments in Liverpool's maritime history, including the importance of the docks in World War II and the Titanic and its disastrous sinking. It also holds one of the finest collections of ship models in the world as well as housing the International Slavery Museum.

A little farther afield is the Walker Art Gallery which displays some of the best European paintings, sculpture and other works from the 13th century to the present day.

Whatever your interests, there is something for everyone - and there is no charge for any of these museums.



PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Joseph Priestley and the Wilkinsons

The Annual Wilkinson Lecture at the March meeting was this year given by Diana Clarke, whose illustrated talk was entitled *Joseph Priestley and the Wilkinsons*. The talk considered the nature of the relationships of kinship, patronage, mutual interest and friendship that grew between the Priestley family and the Wilkinsons, and shared some of the glimpses Diana's research so far has given her into the colourful personalities of the people involved.

The talk investigated the many interactions between members of the Wilkinson family, in particular Isaac, John, William and Mary, and the Priestley family of Joseph, Mary, Sally, Joseph junior and William which were explored in the context of the dramatic social and political changes of the 18th century. A fascinating and not to be missed insight into these two important families, the full text of the lecture will appear in the 2012 issue of the Society's *Journal*.

Portrait of Much Wenlock

When Ina Taylor moved into the town of Much Wenlock some five years ago, she realised that nowhere was there a collection of old photographs of the town. Thinking that there should be such a thing, and with the idea of publishing a book, she and writer Joy Sims got together and began to spread the word. Very soon they had over 500 photographs and within another few months they were topping 1,000.

At the April meeting these photographs formed the basis of a Memory Lane experience when Ina and Joy gave the background to a selection of them.

The first of these pictures showed the Market Hall, the old Guildhall and Much Wenlock Church complete with wooden spire. Since many people had not known that it once had a spire, this was of particular interest. Apparently it had been built in the 18th century from wood and lead. The weight of this, however, had proved too much for the original structure and in 1930 it was demolished before it could do any more damage. The Guildhall, of course, is still there while the Market Hall, built in the 1890s, became a Memorial Hall

after World War I. It has also been a cinema and is now a museum.

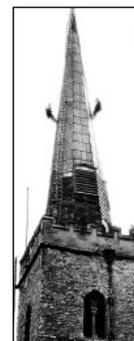
1915 saw a stall outside the Market Hall encouraging people to bring their spare eggs for National Egg Collection. These eggs were then sent down to London and packed in sawdust for shipment to soldiers on the Western Front.

Another interesting picture was that of the Gaskell Arms with a large gathering of cars outside. Judging by the design of the cars and the length of the ladies' skirts this was probably taken around 1910 and was possibly the stopping off point in a rally of some kind.

Top, Much Wenlock's Market Hall and old Guildhall with the church in the background. The spire to this was demolished in 1930 as it had become unsafe.

Middle, a stall outside the Market Hall for National Egg Collection in 1915. The eggs collected were shipped to soldiers on the Western Front.

Bottom, cars gathering at the Gaskell Arms at the top of the High Street, probably in around 1910.



A 1910 picture of Farley sidings showed women peeling and stacking oak bark for tanning which would presumably be shipped around the country to various smokeries, while the sight of floods in the High Street in 1931 must have brought back more recent memories of the 2009 floods in the town – a problem which has, apparently, yet to be solved.

Many older members will remember VE Day in May 1945. Much Wenlock residents celebrated by displaying a Victory Banner in the High Street, meanwhile lighting a bonfire on the Windmill Hill and burning an effigy of Hitler, just to make sure!

Top, women peeling and stacking oak bark for tanning at Farley sidings

Middle, floods in the High Street

Bottom, celebrating VE Day



The town also achieved fame in 1949 when posters went up encouraging people to take part in the filming of Mary Webb's *Gone to Earth*. This film, which starred Jennifer Jones, was later released nationwide but was not, it seems, a huge success.

In 1861 the railway from Wellington was extended through Much Wenlock to Marsh Farm Junction. Wenlock Station was sited on what is now the Travis Perkins yard and the coal wharf and engine shed formed the background to a photograph showing one of the carnival floats preparing to take part in the Olympian Games parade. Later, when this line was extended to Craven Arms, the station was moved to a different site, possibly under the influence of William Penny Brooke's wish to have it a little closer to the Games. The line was eventually closed to passengers in 1962 although it remained open for the transporting of cattle to the slaughterhouse until 1964.

Some members may well have recognised some of the people on one photograph taken in 1955. This included a picture of Norman Wood, a PE teacher who was well known in the town and who was instrumental in reviving the Olympian Games in 1976.

Top, a carnival float in the old railway station yard

Bottom, Norman Wood, right, was the PE teacher who helped revive the Olympian Games in 1976

