

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society *Incorporating the Wilkinson Society*



May 2005

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New Members

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Mr & Mrs Brown, Broseley Wood
Dr Kate Campbell, Broseley
Mr J Cockerill, Wellington
Mr Harold Grice, St Georges
Mr Barrie Hazlewood, Broseley
Mr & Mrs Johnstone, Wellington
Mrs M Jones, Wellington
Ms Pat Newman, Cumbria
Mr R Rushton, Muxton
Mr Thomas Yates, Jackfield

Forthcoming Events

Visit to Bradley

Date: Wednesday 1 June

Time: Meet in Broseley Library car park not later than 6.40 pm

John Wilkinson was not the first to recognise the wealth of coal and iron ore underlying the Bilston area only 15 miles away, but the exploitation of these riches had previously been prevented by the lack of any nearby water power. Wilkinson, however, solved this problem by building a Newcomen engine to give him the power he needed. His pioneering blast furnace on the Bradley site became known as the Mother Furnace of the Black Country.

This tour of Bradley will be guided by Ron Davies and will include John Wilkinson's furnace sites, as well as the church with its cast iron pulpit.

Parking restraints restrict the number of cars to four and those wishing to join this outing should contact John Freeman, tel: 01952 883459 to reserve their place. Maps of the route will be available; this will be via the Rabbit Run, Wombourne and Sedgeley to pick up Ron Davies at 96 Rocket Pool Drive, Bradley.

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

- 1 Jun Visit to Bradley, site of John Wilkinson's furnaces
- 2 Jul Coach trip to Castlehead and Backbarrow
- 13 Jul Visit to Benthall Hall
- 7 Sep Memories Evening – Schools
- 5 Oct AGM, followed by talk *Nelson and Trafalgar* by ex-naval man Lance Wise
- 2 Nov *Broseley's 'Tylting Rails' (1605)* – the first railway in Shropshire, by Neil Clarke
- 7 Dec Annual Christmas dinner

For further information contact Neil Clarke on 01952 504135.

Trip to Castlehead and Backbarrow

Date:	Saturday, 2 July 2005
Cost:	Coach £10.00 per person
	Admission to house £ 3.50 per person
	<i>Optional extras</i>
	Buffet lunch £ 8.50 per person
	Tea £ 3.00 per person
Leave:	Broseley 8.00 am
	Coalbrookdale 8.15 am
Return:	Approx 9.30 pm



John Wilkinson's house at Castlehead, which the Society will be visiting in July

Saturday, 2 July, is the date for the Society's visit, in association with the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, to explore the house that John Wilkinson built in the Cumbria of his boyhood. Frank Dawson, who gave our 2004 Wilkinson Lecture, will be our guide to this most complex and fascinating site.

In addition to visiting Castlehead, some of you may wish to see the remains of the nearby Backbarrow Ironworks where Isaac and the young John once worked. Although the furnace stack is in too dangerous a state for close inspection, this may be a last chance to see the site before its imminent redevelopment.

Response to earlier announcements of this event has been more than enthusiastic, and the day promises to be as big a success as the Society's trip to South Wales last year.

In order to ensure your place, please complete and return the form on p11 to David Lake, Avebury, Stocking Lane, Astley Abbots, Bridgnorth, WV16 4SY. **Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so don't delay, send your form in now!**

Visit to Benthall Hall and Gardens

Date:	Wednesday, 13 July
Time:	Meet at Benthall Hall at 7.30 pm

Benthall Hall dates from the 16th century, and has been the home of the Benthall family for much of the time since



This summer outing, which has been arranged by kind permission of the owners, Edward and Sally Benthall, promises to be a very interesting evening. Eve Madeley, custodian of Benthall Hall and a member of the Society, together with a number of volunteers, will be on hand to talk about the House itself, while Nick Swankie, head gardener, will be giving a history of the gardens. There will also be someone available to answer questions about the Church which will be open for the occasion.

Benthall Hall dates back to the 16th century and members of the Benthall family have lived there, with one or two interruptions, ever since. It is surely because of their proximity to the iron industry in the area that a branch of the family, who had settled in Essex, built for their own use one of the first iron ploughs set in a wooden frame. This caused such interest in the neighbourhood that they were persuaded to make others, eventually setting up a small manufacturing business.

This event is open to members only and you are asked to let Janet Robinson, 01952 882495, know if you will be going. There is no entry fee, but a donation on the evening towards the cost of wine and snacks would be appreciated. If you need transport, phone John Freeman on 01952 883459.

Trafalgar 200 Celebrations

This year Britain is commemorating the 60th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War and the beginning of a new era in British society. It is also the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, which took



place on 21 October, 1805, and Broseley will be one of the towns participating in the celebrations being organised countrywide.

Although Broseley has no obvious seafaring links, it would no doubt have contributed men and materials for the defence of the country. Iron cannon and cannon balls would have been obvious Broseley products in demand. Besides local ironware specialities there was a countrywide demand for timber, wool and leather, not forgetting, presumably, a good supply of Broseley pipes!

As part of these celebrations, the subject for the October meeting will be *Nelson and Trafalgar*, a talk given by ex-naval man Lance Wise. The Society will also be staging an exhibition at Broseley Library throughout Trafalgar week (16 – 22 October). Other plans include replanting the celebration trees in Dark Lane and holding a dinner open to all at the Lion Hotel on Friday 21 October.

Further details will be available shortly but in the meantime the Society would like to appeal to members for help in the following:

- Broseley people with connections to Lord Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar
- Suitable memorabilia in the district that might be available on loan for the exhibition
- The loan of a good model of HMS Victory to feature in the exhibition

Please email Vin Callcut (vin@oldcopper.org) or phone Vin on 01952 882508 or Michael Pope on 01952 883960 if you can help.

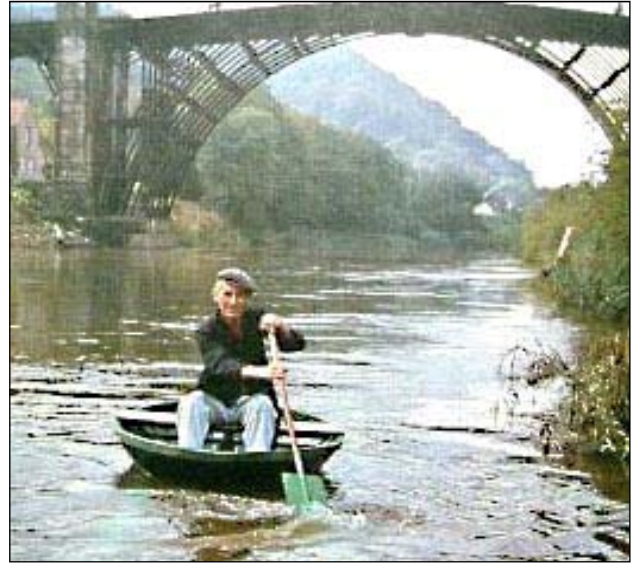
You might also like to visit the website www.seabritain.co.uk, to see how the rest of the country is celebrating this historic event.

Previous Meetings

Memories of Ironbridge and of Eustace Rogers

In February Ron Miles took members on a nostalgia trip by giving a slide show of Ironbridge as it once was, including a duck race held to raise funds for charity.

Ken Jones followed this by playing a recording made in 1982 of Eustace Rogers, the coracle maker, talking about his life and experiences along the river. These seemed mainly to be memories of his poaching friends, many of whom were recidivists



Eustace Rogers rowing his coracle below the Iron Bridge

making a livelihood out of poaching. Not that constant spells in gaol seemed to be a deterrent - one old such claimed he would much rather poach than do regular work, in spite of spending a total of 15 years inside.

Eustace and his friends employed many tricks to evade the police and gamekeepers, one of which was to keep a coracle hidden in the bushes on the far side of the river for a quick escape. Another was to go out on a Sunday night when the gamekeepers were in their best clothes after church, and unwilling to risk getting them dirty chasing poachers.

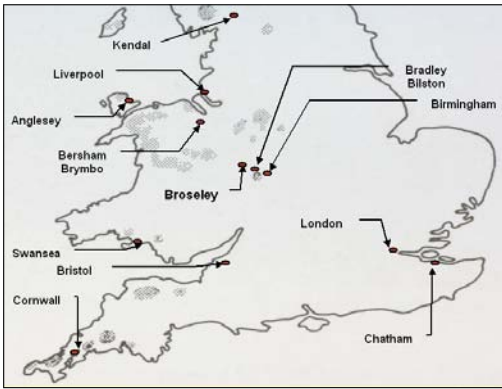
From the anecdotes Eustace told, it seems the poachers and bargemen made up a happy band of rogues, but there must also have been times in the dead of night when a spell in gaol looked awfully close.

John Wilkinson – Copper King?

John Wilkinson – Copper King? was the intriguing title of this year's Wilkinson Lecture which was given by Vin Callcut.

In his talk Vin considered the possibility that Wilkinson could well have earned the title of Copper King, in addition to that of Ironmaster.

While ironmaking was Wilkinson's first priority, he was always looking for other business opportunities. The copper industry was one such, being an area where his special technical, financial and political skills could be put to good advantage. Vin claimed that to anyone reading up on this subject, it would



John Wilkinson had interests in copper throughout the country

quickly become apparent that Wilkinson was a leading entrepreneur in the copper industry. In support of this, he said that Wilkinson also had many interests in copper at a variety of locations throughout the country.

In making his case, Vin presented brief sketches of other personalities who had laid claim to the title of Copper King, from Thomas Williams, who was born in 1730, to Sir Ronald Prain, who died as recently as 1991. He also listed those qualities which entitle someone to such a claim and said "Above all there is an essential that the individual must have qualifying achievements that are recognised to such an extent that he is nominated as 'King' by a recognised authority. Surely the Wilkinson Society has the status to nominate John Wilkinson as a 'Copper King' should it so wish? This would certainly add to his existing status as a leading Ironmaster."

The full text of this paper will be published in this year's edition of the Society's Journal.

Survey of the Gorge

As anyone who lives in this area knows, the banks of the Severn Gorge have been gradually sliding inwards over many years, a fact which was affirmed in 1952 with the dramatic land slip in Jackfield, as well as the continuing deterioration of the 'corduroy' road down to Maws Craft Centre and the Boat Inn.

Just how much movement has been taking place, however, was brought home at the April meeting when Neal Rushton, of Telford and Wrekin Council Engineers' Department, gave a talk on the survey work which was carried out in the Gorge last year.

A full report on this meeting will appear in the August issue of the *Newsletter*. In the meantime,



Lloyds Cottage on the north bank of the Severn really does look like this

you only have to look at Lloyds Cottage on the north bank of the river, to see that stabilisation work must be undertaken if this movement is to be slowed down.

Broseley in Bloom

For the first time, Broseley is entering the Heart of England in Bloom nationwide contest. *Broseley in Bloom* is the brainchild of Eric Cox, newly elected Mayor of Broseley, and former Chairman of the Society. Eric's aim in entering this competition is not only to enhance our already attractive town, but to foster that community spirit which makes Broseley so special.

Organisations in and around Broseley have been asked to contribute to the campaign and the Society will be providing a floral planter.

Britain in Bloom is not just about flowers; when the judges arrive on 25 July they will also be looking for community involvement on a wider scale as well as evidence of enhancement of the local environment.

More information on how and when you can get involved will appear around Broseley, and anyone willing to help with such things as working parties should contact Eric Cox on 01952 883568.

FortyOne Today

David Lake responds to an invitation

The Society was recently asked if it could provide an after dinner speaker to talk about the history of Broseley to the Bridgnorth FortyOne Club, so-called because its members have progressed beyond the age limit for Round Table but wish to continue

to meet informally. On this occasion they were to meet for dinner at the Forester Arms in Broseley.

Sensing a sinecure I volunteered, and it really was an easy and gratifying task. With my talk largely about John Wilkinson's career, it was interesting to find how strongly a group of manufacturers and businessmen empathised with Wilkinson in his difficulties and successes.

Coalport Bridge reopens



Coalport Bridge, which carries the Broseley to Coalport Road across the Severn near the Woodbridge Inn, was reopened in March following major strengthening work which had taken almost a year to complete.

Work included the reconstruction of two brick arches supporting the verges at the southern end of the bridge, the repainting of the entire bridge, and the introduction of new traffic control measures. Although vehicles over three tonnes are still prohibited from using the bridge, traffic is no longer restricted to one vehicle at a time; the height restriction remains.

Once known as the Preens Eddy Bridge carrying the turnpike from Broseley over the river to the north, it was one of the first traffic bridges in the Gorge, the other being at Buildwas. Opened in 1780 it had two spans and was of timber construction, giving it its locally known name of the Wood Bridge.

The bridge was badly damaged in the winter floods of 1795 and in 1799 was converted to a single span



Motorists were delighted when the Coalport Bridge, which had been closed for almost a year, was finally reopened to vehicular traffic

with timber deck and iron ribs. It was only in 1818 that it was developed into an all iron bridge by J Onions. By this time it was known as the Coalport Bridge, reflecting the growth of the new town of Coalport on the north bank of the river.

Coalbrookdale Watercourse Project

Work on the Coalbrookdale Watercourse Project, as reported in the February *Newsletter*, is well under way.

The desiltation of the Upper Furnace Pool is almost complete, with the next stage being the provision of amenities. These will include a round pool walk accessible to wheelchairs, with strategically placed benches, while the Darby Road junction will be



Amenities around the Upper Furnace Pool will include a round pool walk accessible to wheelchairs

landscaped with seating. There will also be a viewing and seating area on the bank of the pool off Darby Road up the hill towards Sunnyside. The boardwalk up Loamhole Dingle is to be reinstated to make sure it is accessible all year round.

Restoration works to the Upper Forge Sluices will include the stabilisation of the sluices themselves, provision of a viewing platform and additional and improved parking.

Improvements to the site containing Boring Mill Pool, opposite the sluices, will include desiltation and clearance of the pool, provision of a small round woodland walk, the reseeded of the former grassed and picnic area and the provision of picnic benches and additional parking.

It is also hoped that the outline of the foundations of medieval buildings discovered on the site by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust archaeological

unit will be demarcated on the surface of the ground with stone.

Interpretation of the sites will also be undertaken this summer. This aspect of the work is currently out to tender and will, when implemented, emphasise the significance of the watercourses in the industrialisation of the Gorge.

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

Birds and Footpaths of the Severn Gorge

A guided walk with Glenn Bishton and Alec Connah

Date: Sunday 29 May

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Meet at Ironbridge car park (opposite the Station Hotel)



This walk is being held in conjunction with the South Telford Rights of Way Partnership and will give participants the opportunity of seeing some of the 125 species of birds which have been recorded in and around the Gorge.

The walk will include some rough terrain, steps and climbs and will cover about three miles. You are advised

to wear all weather clothing and appropriate footwear and bring binoculars.

Further information may be obtained from the SGCT, 01952 433880 or from STROWP 01952 525103

Walk and launch of *Jackfield and Coalport: Five Historic Guided Walks* by Michael Pooley

Date: Saturday, 11 June

Time: 2.00 pm walk, 4.00 pm launch

Venue: Coalport Village Hall

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust has published the third in its series of walks books written by Michael Pooley. This book, like the two earlier ones on Benthall Edge and Coalbrookdale, encourages both local people and visitors to explore the area – in this instance Jackfield and Coalport and the Trust sites of Haywood, Sutton Wood and Prenshead.

The book includes the same level of historic detail as the others but, in addition, has stories and memories by local people about growing up, working and playing in the area, as well as the people and places they remember. The Trust would like to thank everyone for the time they gave to this project and their willingness to share their stories.

The official launch of the book will be on Saturday 11 June when the Trust will also be celebrating the completion of the access work. The event will include a walk to see some of this work in Sutton Wood. Those wishing to go on the walk should meet outside Coalport Village Hall at 2.00 pm, bringing outdoor clothing and suitable footwear. It will be varied walking including rough terrain, steps, slopes and kissing gates. People not wanting to go on the walk are welcome at the Village Hall at 4.00 pm for the launch and light refreshments.

Further information from SGCT, 01952 433880.

Ironbridge Gorge Museums

Craft courses and discovery tours

The Ironbridge Gorge Museums are to run a new series of walks, talks and craft experience courses from June to November.

Starting on 22 June, historic costume, textiles, art and design will be covered in five sessions at Blists Hill Victorian Town. On 1 June the recently refurbished Jackfield Tile Museum will be hosting a morning on how to help restore and look after Victorian Tiles.

There will also be a series of five historic guided walks around the Ironbridge Gorge discovering more about its industry, architecture and natural history.

For further information phone 01952 601010, or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

Working Horses in the Gorge

On 3 July Blists Hill will stage a working horse event when up to ten horses across a range of breeds and sizes will perform traditional tasks such as pulling historic trade vehicles and private carriages or hauling timber from the woods.

There will also be an exhibition of miniature horse drawn vehicles and implements by the Guild of Model Wheelwrights in the Goods Shed.

Other activities at the various museums are:

Blists Hill

28 & 29 May Queen Victoria's birthday celebrations

Enginuity

28 May-5 June 'Float a Boat' exhibition

Tile Museum

31 May-3 June Tile decorating workshops

Coalport China Museum

30 May-3 June Creative ceramic drop in activities

Up to 30 Oct Caughley in Colour: an exhibition of Caughley polychrome porcelain

For further information about the Ironbridge Gorge Museums call the Tourist Information Centre at Ironbridge on 01952 884391 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

School trip to Ironbridge

Lisa Cashmore, a history teacher at Shrewsbury High School for Girls, recently discovered in an old school magazine this report of a school visit to Ironbridge in 1937-38, long before the area became well known for its industrial archaeology.

We walked over the first iron bridge and then down the bank to visit the coracle maker, who told us how he made coracles, and gave us a demonstration in one on the Severn.

We left Ironbridge and noticed that the river, on leaving the gorge, again grew wide and meandered along. At Coalport we left the buses and scrambled up the hill side to see the old canal at the top. Coal was brought from Madeley in barges along the canal. The barges were then pushed on to trolleys with two small wheels and two large ones. The trolley slid down rails pulling empty ones up the hill as it went, until it reached the river, where the barges of coal were shot into the water. This is the origin of the name Coalport.

We scrambled down the hill and visited the old disused china works. Parts of the building are now used to convert tyres into rubber mats, but the remainder is a pathetic remnant of a once flourishing industry. The sheds are rusty, the panes of glass in their windows are smashed, and from the top of the kilns now grow grass and shrubs. A few years ago the director told the workers that if they did not cease striking he would close the works. He did this, and the Coalport China Factory has never been re-opened.

We returned to Ironbridge, where the thirsty ones drank tea or lemonade, and then back to Shrewsbury.

Castle Head Field Centre

John Wilkinson's old home, Castlehead, as mentioned earlier in the Newsletter, is now a Field and Study Centre. The following information was taken from a Field Studies Council leaflet.

Drawing and Painting Buildings and Trees in the Lakeland Landscape is the title of a course being held at this Centre from 3 – 7 October 2005. The course is designed for all levels of ability working in pencil and watercolour. The tutor, Patrick Corbett, likes to combine watercolour with innovative pencil techniques and has developed an individual approach to the subject using 'chisel points' to depict trees and foliage.

The Centre has accommodation for up to 120 visitors, and facilities include work rooms, common rooms, library, drying rooms and bar. So if you feel like something different for an autumn break, email them at enquiries.ch@field-studies-council.org or visit their website www.field-studies-council.org and click on Castle Head.

Once upon a time

The following items have been extracted from reports which appeared in the Wellington Journal and Shrewsbury News during 1898. These and other items now appear on our website www.broseley.org.uk.

Council tax was an issue even in those days

A ratepayer wrote to the editor thus:

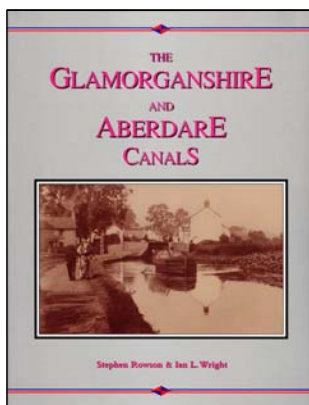
At this time of the year the roads in our neighbourhood are none too good, and to make them worse why do the authorities tolerate the drawing of timber along them, unless properly loaded on a wagon? During the last week a quantity was dragged along the road with two horses attached to a chain, cutting up the metalling and literally ploughing up the road for some distance. Our rates are as heavy as we can bear without wilfully being made heavier, and I trust some of our Jackfield members of the Urban Sanitary Authority will bring this matter before the Board, and prevent a repetition of the same.

And this is how it was allocated!

At a meeting of the Broseley District Council Councillor Exley said his attention had been called to the bad state of the street pavements. Captain Prestage thought they should draw lots to decide which part of the town should be attended to first.

Bookshop

The Glamorganshire and Aberdare Canals, Volume 2, by Stephen Rowson & Ian L Wright, published by Black Dwarf Publications, 352 pp.



Co-authored by Steve Rowson, who has both lectured to the Society and led the fascinating tour of the Taff Valley last year, this is the second volume in the story of the Glamorganshire and Aberdare Canals. The first volume covered the

whole of the Aberdare Canal and the Glamorganshire Canal from Merthyr down to Pontypridd. This volume continues the journey down to the Sea Lock at Cardiff.

While there are now little physical remains of these canals, this second volume completes the record of their existence. Containing a wealth of historical data, it is considerably enriched by the inclusion of over 400 photographs taken from the late 1890s, as well as various maps and drawings. There is also a comprehensive index and detailed reference notes to each chapter.

The book is available from bookshops or direct from the author Steve Rowson, 56 Colchester Avenue, Cardiff, CF23 9BP, tel: 02920 633184.

Cost £30.00 plus £4.00 post and packing.

Angerstein's Travel Diary of 1753-1755: Industry in England from a Swedish Perspective, translated by Torsten and Peter Berg, 400 pp, 392 illustrations. *David Lake reports:*

Together with one of our members, Peter Platt, I recently went to Shrewsbury to hear Gaye Blake Roberts give a talk in the Darwin series on Josiah Wedgwood.

At the talk Gaye referred to a book newly available from the Science Museum, an English translation of *Angerstein's Travel Diary of 1753-1755: Industry in England from a Swedish Perspective*.

Reinhold Rucker Angerstein was an eighteenth century industrial spy, well informed, observant and critical. This is a remarkably observed and illustrated diary of his journeys in Britain, covering coal, ironstone, tin and copper mining, smelting, iron foundries, smithies, rolling and slitting mills, chemical plants and porcelain manufacture.

Angerstein covered Coalbrookdale well but sadly did not come to this side of the river; of course the Iron Bridge had yet to be built. But in Cumbria he was impressed by and sketched Clifton Furnace, where Isaac Wilkinson worked and John was born. Clifton was smelting with coke and casting wagon wheels for the Newcastle coal owners who controlled Clifton.

This very fascinating book is available from the Science Museum, 2001 ISBN:1900747243 at £34.95.

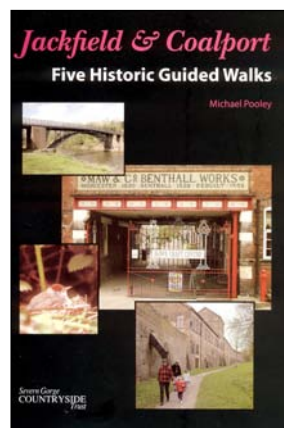
Jackfield and Coalport: Five Historic Guided Walks by Michael Pooley, published by the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, 72 pp, illustrated.

The third in the SGCT's series of walks books, it describes five walks in and around Jackfield and Coalport. As with the earlier ones the book gives a brief history of the area before taking you on the walks. These are well directed and have extensive notes on places of social or historical

interest along the way. The book is illustrated in colour and has basic maps of the five walks.

The book is considerably enhanced by the inclusion of stories and reminiscences by local people, offering an unusual and fascinating insight into the ways in which they lived and worked.

It is available from the Trust at a cost of R3.99. Phone 01952 433880 to order.



Publications from L'Académie François Bourdon.

The Society shares mutual membership with L'Académie François Bourdon in Le Creusot, Burgundy and their Director, M Ivan Kharaba, gives generously of their publications. David Lake has a list of those available should anyone wish to borrow them. He may be contacted on 01746 762813.

Members able to get to Le Creusot would find a visit to L'Académie François Bourdon, which is in Le Château de la Verrerie, very interesting. They should ask reception to let M Kharaba know of their visit. The Academy's number is 03 85 80 81 51.

Mailbox

My great grandfather was **Rueben Allworth**; he had a travelling theatre and settled in the area, owning a theatre called The Alexander. Do you have any information regarding this? I also believe that Rueben's brother was the architect for a bridge across the Severn, but unfortunately Rueben changed his surname for the theatre and I am unsure what his birth name was. Rueben apparently gave a performance to raise money for the Free Bridge – could this be a connection to his brother?

Nicky Henshaw

nicky.henshaw@btopenworld.com

Mark Farnell is looking for information on his ancestors, the **Barnett** family, who lived in Jackfield and who appeared on the census returns from the 1840s to the 1870s as blacksmiths. He asks whether they would have shod horses or worked in one of the foundries which, he believes, used blacksmiths in some capacity.

Steve Dewhirst sent him this reply:

I had a look at the tithe apportionment of 1838 and this shows one Edward Barnett. He lived in an area which is now called Barnetts Leasow by the river at Jackfield so it may be that the family had lived there for some time. The apportionment does not mention a blacksmiths but it does not list all such places. At some time after the tithe map was made a blacksmiths was constructed a few hundred yards from where he lived in 1838. In answer to your question it is likely that they would have been the 'shoe horses' type blacksmith. There were a number of these in the Broseley area.

Following this, Mark wrote:

It was actually the Hinsley family who were in Jackfield from about 1790 and Edward appears as a blacksmith whilst his children are recorded as either engineers or, in the case of Edward junior, a blacksmith aged 15. The Hinsleys married into the Barnett family. I read the article you sent and I have a John Barnett but have not come across a Samuel, allegedly the brother, so don't know if they are mine.

Mark Farnell

moonloon@tiscali.co.uk

Victoria Gittings from New Zealand is looking for information on the **Gittings** family, who came from Broseley but now live in New Zealand.

The person I am interested in is William Henry Gittings. He was born in Broseley, Shropshire, on 21 July 1894, coming to New Zealand in his mid teens. He must then have served in the New Zealand army as he celebrated his 21st birthday at Gallipoli during the First World War. The family apparently used to live at 3 Quarry Road in Broseley. I have heard there is a Gittings Lane somewhere in Broseley. Is this true?

Victoria Gittings

victoriagittings@yahoo.co.nz

In response to Brian Legg's letter in the February Newsletter, Dorothy Rolfe writes:

My first *Newsletter* from the Society, February 2005, was full of interesting articles, especially the one referring to pipes, and the Legg's Hill letter.

My interest in the area is that I believe I am descended from **William Legg**, born 1727 in Broseley, the son of Benjamin and Sarah Powis. William later moved to Dawley and was married there to Abigail Ward née Morgan in 1758. His occupation on the Hardwick marriage form says he was a horse follower. What this entailed I have been unable to find out and wonder if it is a local term something to do with coal or carting.

Benjamin was the son of Benjamin and Mary Legg born 1702/3 and it seems both father and son were pipemakers. Here the trail ends but I think that the first Benjamin was the son of a William. There are no parish records to substantiate this and I was pleased to learn there may have been a William Legg pipemaker who was born circa 1664.

I would love to obtain a Benjamin Legg made pipe but where would I look for one? Antique fairs have been of no use to me so far.

Dorothy Rolfe
D.Rolfe@btinternet.com

I am looking into the **Cleobury** family history and there seem to be a few based round Broseley. Can you help at all? I am a Clibbery descended from a John Cleobury, born circa 1810, but any information on the family in Shropshire would be useful.

Lesley Steadman
arestie@tiscali.co.uk

I am trying to find the relationship between myself and **Thomas Turner** (Caughley Porcelain). My father and grandmother had told me we are related and that Thomas had introduced Willow pattern to England. Does anyone have any personal information on Thomas? I was born in Wellington, Shropshire, and we emigrated to Australia in the 1950s. My maiden name was Ward.

Andrea Francis
bridgnorth@iprimus.com.au

Sheila Chadwick is looking for **old school photographs**.

I was born in Broseley and lived in Dark Lane and Jacksons Avenue. I left when I was 25. I will be 68 this year, and would like to know where I can find any photographs of the school as it was? I remember having my photo taken in the playground, but as money was tight in those days we did not get one, but there could be some out there somewhere.

Also is there an address in Broseley, someone I could chat to on line?

Sheila Chadwick
Swchadwick@aol.com

Roz Kane is looking for help in tracing her father-in-law's ancestors who apparently came from Broseley.

We recently visited **Burnt House** which is where we believe my father-in-law's father was born. His name was Percy Parker and his father was George. His father was, I believe, John Wild Parker and we understand that at some time he owned the house.

I am trying to find answers to the following questions about the house:

- What was it called prior to the fire on 8 June, 1883?
- What was it called when it was a pub?
- What local records could we investigate (internet or otherwise) for further information?
- Is it true that it is now converted into flats?

We were so fascinated with Broseley and my father-in-law's roots that any information on the family would be most appreciated.

Roz Kane and Rob Parker (Percy's grandson) may be contacted at roz27@btinternet.com.

Deborah Wadsworth writes from the USA regarding the **Ramsell** family.

I came across an article on the internet published by the Broseley Local History Society Journal No 21, 1999, entitled *Ramsell: What's in a Name?* authored by Jim Cooper. Jim was tracing the line of Tamar Ramsell. On p 4 of the article he says that the tree comprises 161 individuals in seven generations. It appears from the article that the Ramsell surname originated in Broseley.

I am from the United States of America and would like to know if it is possible to obtain a copy of the entire Ramsell tree containing the 161 individuals.*

I have been doing research on the Ramsell name. I am trying to make connections of my information, as well as other information I have on other Ramsells. At the present time my tree goes back to Charles Ramsell, born about 1832 in Wilnecote, Warwickshire. He married Sarah Starkey on May 28, 1855 in Amington of Stonidelf, Tamworth, Warwickshire.

**Jim Cooper has already been in touch with Deborah but if anyone else can be of help her address is:*

Deborah Wadsworth
124 Leslie Street, Johnstown, Pa 15906, USA

The *Newsletter* is always delighted to receive enquiries on any subject, and encourages readers to do all they can to help correspondents.

If you are able to help please do copy the *Newsletter*, steve@broseley.org.uk, so that we have some follow up on these queries.

Editor