

# NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY



NOVEMBER 2013

## 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

- 6 Nov *Fords and Ferries*, Part 3 by Neil Clarke.  
Joint Meeting with the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust at Coalbrookdale.
- 4 Dec Annual Dinner.
- 8 Jan *More Broseley Memories* with Joan Griffiths (please note that this is the second Wednesday in January)
- 5 Feb *Family History* by Geoff Harrison.
- 5 Mar *Annual Wilkinson Lecture: John Rose of Coalport* by Kate Cadman.

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

## NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- Eldwyth George from Shrewsbury  
David & Rose Lloyd from Broseley

## CHRISTMAS DINNER

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

**The Lion, High Street, 7.30pm for 7.45pm**  
**£18.95 per person**



The Society's Christmas dinner is always an event to which members look forward. As in the past, it's to be held at The Lion Hotel in the High Street since it makes it easily accessible to most people.

Please book your place by Friday 29 November at the latest by completing the form on page 7 and returning it with your payment to:

Janet Robinson  
26 Coalport Road  
Broseley  
TF12 5AZ.

Cheques should be made payable to the Broseley Local History Society.

## CONTENTS

Programme	page1
New Members	page1
Christmas Dinner	page1
Previous Meetings	page2
Heritage Centre	page4
What's On?	page4
Mailbox	page5
Christmas Dinner booking form	page7

## Narrow Gauge Railways in Shropshire

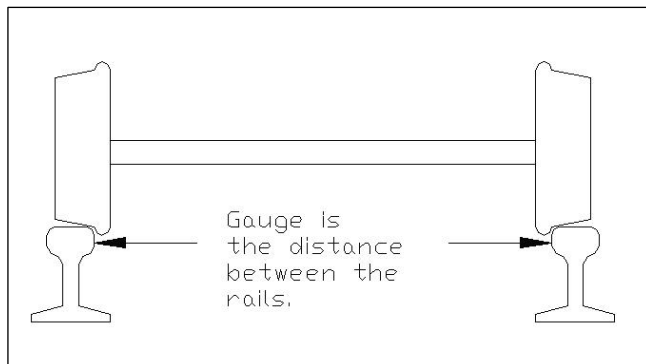
The first meeting after the summer break attracted a large numbers of members who were keen to hear Nick Coppin talk about the narrow gauge railways of Shropshire.

One of Nick's hobbies is building models, one of which he brought along with him. This requires him to do a great deal of research to make them to scale and to be realistic.

Nick explained that the gauge is the distance between the rails and generally there are three sizes. GWR Broad Gauge, GWR Standard Gauge and Narrow Gauge. There was a big problem of intergauging the rails so the broad gauge was abolished. Standard gauge can differ in size from 5 feet to 5 feet 3 inches. Less than 4 feet 8½ inches is termed narrow gauge. Narrow gauge was often chosen because it was more economic and following the First World War there were many trucks and engines available. The War Department had used narrow gauge railways to move supplies to the Front Line and after the war surplus trucks were bought by different companies. These were 2 foot gauge.

There were many narrow gauge railways in Shropshire but none were ever used to carry passengers, all were used for carrying commodities. Many were used for carrying minerals; perhaps the best known narrow gauge railway with a gauge of 2 feet 4 inches was the Snailbeach District Railway 1877 – 1959. Nick also mentioned the railways at Callow Hill Quarry, the Huglith Mine near Pontesbury and the Cothercott Mining company which named its engines after racehorses, such as Minstrel Park.

*What is railway gauge?*



Photograph courtesy Shropshire Mines Trust

*Original hopper wagon from Snailbeach*

The Presthope Quarry on Wenlock Edge was used for carrying limestone. Other railways Nick mentioned which were used for mineral transportation were Knowle Quarry, Doseley roadstone quarry which closed in 1960, Lawrence Hill, Randlay Brickworks and Lightmoor. Nearer home was the railway in Spout Lane bringing limestone from Benthall Edge and Jackfield Clay pit for the Maws Tile Works and White Brickle off the Ironbridge Road.

A railway was built at Whixall Moss for transporting peat and several were built at the Hanwood, Highley and Granville Collieries.

There were several others mentioned. Nick told the meeting that one problem was that many of the narrow gauge railways in the county were of different gauges and were not compatible with other railways nearby. The width could vary by even one or two inches and therefore stock had to be purchased to suit the rails or the rails laid to suit the gauge of the rolling stock.

Nick had many interesting photographs of all these railways to illustrate his talk.

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Society took place at the beginning of the October meeting. The chairman Gillian Pope included in her report the activities of the Society during the past year, highlighting the fact that most of the speakers were

Society members. She thanked all of the committee for their work and contributions towards the success of the Society.

In particular Gillian thanked Jan Lancaster for all her work during the twelve years she had been editor of the quarterly Newsletter. She had developed the newsletter from being a single page into a very interesting and informative publication which recorded the activities of the Society. Her contribution was recognized by members presenting her with two gifts.

The treasurer, Jim Cooper, presented the accounts which were satisfactory. However he recommended that the annual subscriptions should be increased to £7 for single membership and £12 for double membership. This was to cover the increased cost of posting and printing. The members agreed to the increase.

Janet Robinson, the membership secretary, reported that the Society now had well over 200 members and appealed to them to renew their membership as soon as possible.

All the members of the Committee were happy to continue in office and were re-elected by the members present.

Since the Annual Meeting, the Committee are delighted to announce that Andy Wellings has offered to take over the role of editor of the Newsletter and this edition is his first. We are very grateful to him and look forward to his editorship.

## **Talk by Ron Miles on 2<sup>nd</sup> October**

*Report by Janet Robinson*

After the AGM Ron Miles entertained an appreciative and, sometimes, vociferous audience with a selection of slides recording a journey he made down the River Severn fifty years ago in an inflatable boat.



Picture courtesy of visitshrewsbury.com

*The River Severn at Shrewsbury*

The voyage began inauspiciously with a puncture at the English Bridge in Shrewsbury but, after repairs, it continued all the way to Bridgnorth. I have a suspicion that Ron left his boat from time to time as we had aerial views of Shrewsbury, including one from the top of Lord Hill's Column, before the Shirehall was built. We also saw carnival floats and the Flower Show with a one-man-band balancing on a high wire. What his musical performance was like I cannot imagine! Further down river we saw the races at Eyton-on-Severn, the church at Acton Burnell and the frozen River Severn at Cressage during the bitter winter of 1963. We were taken up to the top of the Wrekin stopping half way for swing boats and donkey rides.

Ron's amazing head for heights was shown again when, for the price of a pint of beer, he was allowed to go to the top of the chimney at Ironbridge B Power Station. There were spectacular scenes of the river from that precarious viewpoint as well as the power station under construction. Some of the most nostalgic scenes were of the steam trains that passed through the gorge so regularly until Dr Beeching's axe fell in August 1963.

Naturally, photos of Ron's beloved Jackfield featured. We saw the church of St Mary's with its reredos made of local Craven Dunhill tiles, children in the playground of the old primary school, now converted into a house, and the old Free Bridge built in 1909, the first ferro-concrete bridge to be built in Britain, now replaced.

The photographs are a wonderful archive and reminded us how much has changed in fifty years and Ron's commentary was as idiosyncratic and humorous as always.

*Church Road in Ron's beloved Jackfield*



## Heritage Centre

On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September members of the Society and other groups in Broseley were invited to All Saints' Church to hear about an idea to develop a Heritage Centre there.

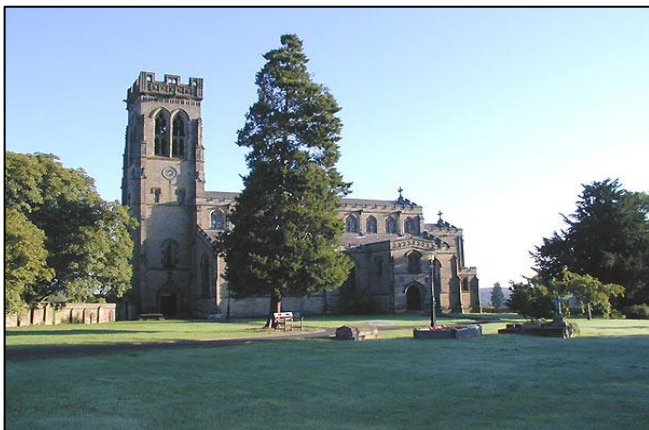
Revd. Sue Beverly explained that the idea of the Centre would be to display and promote the richness of the town's past and also provide links to other heritage attractions in the area. It would be a large project and would need to attract grant funding to be achieved as well as needing the support and interest of local people and organisations with an interest in promoting the heritage of the area to visitors. If developed the centre would hope to ensure that Broseley has its rightful place as a tourist destination in an area close to a World Heritage Site.

Revd. Sue Beverly handed over to Wendy Coombey, Community and Partnership Officer for the Diocese of Hereford. Wendy has experience of projects elsewhere in the diocese that have been successful and she was very positive that the proposed aims could be achieved. Wendy gave a presentation giving details of similar projects and also talked about attracting grant funding, and her experiences of helping secure funding in the past.

She concluded with a question and answer session before the meeting closed. The meeting was very well attended with a great presence from Society members.

If anyone would like to know more about the proposals they can contact Gillian Pope on 01952 883960.

*All Saints' Broseley*



## What's On?

### Sat 9 November

Canon William Price, Cranage's Shropshire Churches, Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society, 2:30pm Shirehall, Shrewsbury 01743 236914

### Wed 13 November

Matt Williams (Channel 4 Time Team), Time Team Traveller – Friends of Shropshire Archives Annual Lecture, 7:30pm, Shropshire Archives, £5, 01743 255350

### Wed 27 November

Ron Miles, The Coalport China Story - Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum, 7:30pm Boardroom Coalbrookdale, 433522

### Thur 28 November

Chris Cannon, The birth of the Olympian Movement - the role of the Wenlock Olympian Society - Shifnal Society, 8:00pm Trinity Methodist Church, Victoria Rd, Shifnal, 463348

### Wed 11 December

Harriet Devlin, Children in the Mines - Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum, 7:30pm Boardroom Coalbrookdale, 433522

### Mon 6 January

Anthony Poulton-Smith, Shropshire Place Names – Albrighton Historical Society, 7:30pm Red House, High Street, Albrighton, 01902 372744

### Mon 20 January

Neil Clarke, Railways of East Shropshire – Newport History Society, 7:30pm Baptist Church, Water Lane, Newport, 820456

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 Ali Simmons and I am doing a bit of research for my father John Simmons.**

He has told me today that his maternal family came from Broseley (the family name was Burnett) and once ran the shop (or shops) that used to be at 91 & 92 High Street. I believe he said they were shoe shops.

I am trying to find any photographs that might show the shops as they used to be as he tells me they have been demolished. I have checked Google street view and yes, there is a gap there now.

Would you be able to assist or advise me where I might find any old photographs?

Thank you very much.

Alistair Simmons

[ajsimmo@hotmail.com](mailto:ajsimmo@hotmail.com)

*I will ask for your request to be inserted into the next newsletter. Hopefully one of our members may be able to help*

*Steve Dewhirst*

*Editor:*

*Joan Griffiths' book, "Broseley – The People and the Past" has an image of Astons Shoe Repairs in the 1950s, now Broseley Memorials.*

*There are also records of Isaac Burnett and James Burnett being shoemakers in the town in the 1830s – 1840s. Copies of the book are still available by contacting Mrs. Griffiths via Newsletter.*

*88 High Street and 89 High Street, Broseley Memorials and Miss Molly's café respectively. Were 91 and 92 High Street adjacent to the café?*



**I am trying to trace my family history and have got back to the marriage of George Armstrong and Frances Hartshorne at St Leonards Church in Broseley in 1793. I know that his son John was also born in Broseley but I have no idea where George came from. Do you have any ideas on how I go about finding this information?**

Ben Armstrong

*I am not sure how you would go about finding more information on George as I assume he is not on the Census. You could try Shropshire Archives who have the parish registers from 1750 onwards and also Shropshire Family History Society. I have found references to an Eliza Armstrong and Francis Armstrong. They each had a house and garden in Benthall in 1800. Also there is a reference to a Thomas Armstrong who rented property on the Broseley Estate. It is quoted as being "A good Tenement with a small Garden in Broseley at the Yearly rent of  $\frac{3}{4}$  the same being now in the occupation of William Hale"*

*Steve Dewhirst*

**I am collecting information for a book entitled "Eighteenth Century English Glass and its antecedents" and working my way round the country investigating as many glasshouses as I possibly can.**

One of these was in Broseley in 1732 under the ownership of Benjamin Batchelor.

I found some information from a "Wilkinson Society Journal" of 1975-6 written by T.C. Hancox which was most helpful. I have followed up most of the references (including entries in the Broseley Register from your website which is excellent), but am completely stuck on a lease between Batchelor and George Weld. The reference he quotes does not appear to exist and searches on Batchelor (various spellings) and George Weld has not yielded anything.

I wondered if you or any of your members had any further details on the glasshouse, particularly if it relates back to primary documents Many thanks for any potential help you may be able to give me.

Mike Noble

[mikenoble1@btinternet.com](mailto:mikenoble1@btinternet.com)

*Paul Luter wrote an article on glass production which may be of interest.*

*The lease between Weld and Batchelor should be in the Forester collection at Shropshire Archives. The collection is only accessible by permission of Lady Forester but I suggest you contact the Archives first to see if the lease is in the index.*

*Steve Dewhirst*

**I am undertaking research for the Society** regarding WW1 soldiers who are buried in Broseley Cemetery, or who are commemorated on family graves. Do you know if there were any local Broseley publications published during 1914-1922. For example; Parish magazines, Church times etc, that might have named individual soldiers, and have survived in an archive somewhere?

Thanks for any advice and help you may be able to give.

Rosemary Clegg.

*Editor: Janet Doody replies-*

*As far as I am aware there are no publications regarding the graves in the cemetery, I think I just had a walk round and made notes and took photos!*

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

<i>Chairman</i>	Gillian Pope
<i>Secretary</i>	Dot Cox
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jim Cooper
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Janet Robinson 26 Coalport Road Broseley TF12 5AZ 01952 882495
<i>Programme Secretary and Journal Editor</i>	Neil Clarke
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Andy Wellings
<i>Publicity</i>	Michael Pope Jan Lancaster Janet Doody Richard Sells
<i>Website</i>	www.broseley.org.uk
<i>Email</i>	steve@broseley.org.uk

*There may be odd parish magazines surviving that folk have held onto or they might be at the church itself in their files! Long shot I know but it might be worth asking.*

*With the actual burials within the cemetery the parish burial registers (not just Broseley because often the church service was held in other parishes before the burial took place in Broseley) held by Shropshire Archives might yield some extra information. In fact I half remember discovering that George Abbey was living at Ladywood House when he died but other than that I could discover no more about him - very frustrating!*

**Broseley Local History Society will be holding** an exhibition in 2014 to commemorate the start of WW1. With this in mind does anyone have any photographs or family information on these soldiers who are either buried in Broseley Cemetery or commemorated on a memorial stone on a family grave there: Arthur Reynolds, Harry Burton, Levi Evans, Joseph Edwards, James Harrison, G Abbey, Frederick Arthur Jones, William Rose Barnett, Edward Colley, Louis Alexander Nicklin, Ernest George Boden, Wilfred John Boden, Joseph Henry Barnett Onions.

Rosemary Clegg, 12 Brookes Road, Broseley, TF12 5SB. 01952 883052

[rosemary\\_clegg@hotmail.com](mailto:rosemary_clegg@hotmail.com)

#### **DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS**

Thank you to those members who have indicated that they would be happy to have an electronic copy of the *Newsletter*. If there are any other members who would prefer it this way, please contact the membership secretary, Janet Robinson, email:

[pandjrobinson@hotmail.com](mailto:pandjrobinson@hotmail.com). Those of you who would still prefer to have it in its printed version can continue to look forward to receiving it through the post.

**To see this Newsletter in full colour visit the website at [www.broselev.org.uk](http://www.broselev.org.uk).**

## CHRISTMAS DINNER, THE LION, HIGH STREET, 4 DECEMBER 2013

Please reserve me \_\_\_\_\_ place/s for the Society's Christmas Dinner at a cost of £18.95 a head

Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Add: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose cheque/payment for

£ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to

Broseley Local History Society.

Please return to Janet Robinson,

26 Coalport Road,

Broseley, TF12 5AZ

By Friday 29 November

Please indicate your choice of starter and main course from the menu below. Give one tick for each person

### STARTER

Spiced parsnip & honey soup with crusty bread.

Platter of smoked salmon & king prawns with thousand island dressing.

Seasonal melon with fruit coulis.

Duck & port pate with toast and salad garnish.

Brie & beetroot chutney tart.

### MAIN COURSE

Roast turkey with stuffing & cranberry sauce.

Roast topside of beef with Yorkshire pudding & horseradish sauce.

Roast loin of pork with apple sauce & stuffing.

Fillet of salmon in a cranberry, orange & port glaze.

Goats cheese, chestnut & redcurrant roulade

Mushroom stroganoff.

All served with seasonal vegetables and potatoes

Christmas pudding & brandy sauce

or

Dessert selection

Coffee with mince pies