

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society



Chairman	John Freeman
Secretary	Dot Cox
Treasurer	Steve Dewhurst
Curator	David Lake
Membership Secretary	Janet Robinson 26 Coalport Rd Broseley, TF12 5AZ 01952 882495
Journal Editor	Neil Clarke
Newsletter Editor	Jan Lancaster
Co-opted Member	Michael Pope
Website:	www.broseley.org.uk
Email:	steve@broseley.org.uk

Meetings

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm. Venue is 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.

Programme

- 4 Sept Memories of Old Broseley - the Jitties. Bring the map on p 5 to the meeting.
- 2 Oct AGM, followed by *The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust*, by Jim Waterson.
- 6 Nov *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, by David de Haan, Director of the Severn Gorge Museum Trust.
- 4 Dec Annual Christmas dinner
- 8 Jan More Memories of Old Broseley.
- 5 Feb *Shropshire Quarter Sessions Records*, by John Shearman
- 5 Mar The Annual Wilkinson Lecture, *Today Broseley, Tomorrow the World!* by David Lake

For further information, contact Neil Clarke (01952 504135).

Previous meetings

In June Michael and Gillian Pope hosted a Jubilee Summer Soiree at their home in Dark Lane where Michael gave a brief history of how the site came to play a major role in the provision of a water supply, and subsequently sewerage facilities, for the residents of Broseley.

In 1875 the Council decided to build a reservoir in what is now the garden of 2 Dark Lane. Plans for it to be filled by an adjacent spring, however, proved inadequate, as were their attempts to top it up with water from the original Down Well further down Dark Lane.

Twenty years later, however, the reservoir ran completely dry - it had been built over a mine shaft and the water had leaked out through subsidence cracks. Undaunted, the Council turned it into a sewerage disposal facility. But the sewage sealed the cracks, the reservoir overflowed and the whole project was abandoned.

A more detailed account of this ill-fated project, as well as other interesting facts about the site will appear in the next issue of the *Journal*.

In July Neil Clarke led the second Summer Walk from Telford Centre to Stirchley along the Silkin Way. Time certainly flies, the first one was five years ago!

The Walk, which started from the town centre, went past the Pools which serviced the Shropshire Canal, past the Mediaeval Chapel (rebuilt after being removed from what is now Telford Centre), and down to the Randlay Pool to pick up the line of the Canal. This section subsequently became a railway, which was in

turn overtaken by “progress” and is now defunct. Some sections of the Canal, however, still exist around Stirchley Pools.

The turn round point of the walk was the aqueduct at Chapel Lane and the way home included a look at St James Church in Stirchley and a pint at the Rose and Crown. We also went past the old Stirchley stack with its impressive brickwork, the clay pit and the ruined iron furnaces.

A most interesting, informative and enjoyable evening, there is more to Telford than you might think. When is the next one, Neil, 2007?

Alexander Brodie Memorial

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Broseley Local History Society (formerly the Wilkinson Society), the Queen’s Jubilee year and the 50th anniversary of the Jackfield slip, it has been suggested that the memorial tablet to Alexander Brodie, ironmaster of Calcutts, be resited.

This tablet is currently in an inconspicuous position behind the organ in St Mary’s Church, Jackfield, and the proposal is that it be moved to a more prominent place within the Church. A wooden plaque would be placed beneath the tablet explaining what had been done and for what purpose. Dave Shinton, whose idea this is, canvasses members for their opinion.

Amongst what I call the seven wonders of the Parish Church of St Mary, Jackfield, is the



Hidden behind the organ of St Mary’s Church, Jackfield, this tablet commemorating Alexander Brodie reads

IN MEMORY OF
ALEXANDER BRODIE ESQ,
IRONMASTER OF CALCUTT
WHO DIED JUNE V, MDCCCXXX
AGED LXVI YEARS.

memorial tablet to Alexander Brodie, ironmaster of the Calcutts. This memorial was originally in the Red Church, but was moved to Jackfield about the time that Randall wrote his *History of Broseley* in 1879. By that time Brodie the ironmaster and his doings had been eclipsed by the Exleys (who, like Brodie and our present Chairman John Freeman, lived at Rock House) and others in the clay industries. Brodie’s memorial was relegated to a dark corner of the church behind the organ.

Alexander Brodie, who was born in 1763, inherited the Calcutts works from his uncle, an inventive Scot, whose name he shared. No doubt the uncle tutored him in the arts of foundry management for, looking back in 1837, the historian Charles Herbert speaks of the Calcutts where “the Mr Brodies” cast so many cannon “during the late War”. The Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815, so the younger Brodie, no less than the elder, was obviously kept busy.

Brodie ran the Calcutts from 1811 when, according to the *Victoria County History* (p 276) the works included two large blast furnaces, a steam powered cannon boring machine, a boring mill for cylinders and a water powered boring/turning machine. This was a sizeable enterprise by any standards. You will know the painting by Robertson “An iron work for casting cannon” where the Calcutts is seen, water-wheel and all, downstream from the Bedlam site. This demonstrates the point.

Trinder gives the view in his *Industrial Revolution* (p 58) that as few as nine companies dominated the iron industry at this time. Along with the Darbys and Wilkinson, in that select list appears the name “Brodie”.

To have still in our possession the memorial to a man of such stature must be a rarity. Now that we appreciate once more the importance of the history of the iron industry on this side of the river, a more fitting home in the church for the Alexander Brodie memorial is deserved.

The year 2002 is not only the 30th anniversary of the founding of the (then) Wilkinson Society,

it is also the Queen's Golden Jubilee year and the 50th year since the Jackfield slip. A year to commemorate.

I have suggested to our Chairman that the Society undertake a project to celebrate these events. What the project might be is for the Society to decide. I offer the restoration/resiting of the Alexander Brodie memorial as a candidate.

If you have an opinion on this, or an alternative candidate, give John Freeman (01952 883459) or myself (01952 882765) a call.

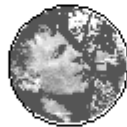
Dave Shinton

Bubbles - Yes!

Children enjoying themselves with bubble pipes is an enduring image, perhaps best encapsulated by the Millais painting which was later adapted for a Pears Soap advertisement. In years gone by Broseley children followed the custom, probably using their mother's Lux soap flakes (if rationing allowed).



Rex Key can not only make clay pipes, he can blow bubbles with them too



Now a number of Broseley youngsters can, if they wish, practise the time-honoured pastime using their own pipes. To commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee the parent-teacher association at Broseley C of E School in Dark Lane decided to buy 300 bubble pipes from pipemaker and demonstrator Rex Key and present one to each child at the school. It would be a unique and appropriate memento with local connections and be different to the customary mug.

Councillor Roy Lane, chairman of the school governors, presented the pipes, mounted in presentation boxes and endorsed with the date and occasion, at a school ceremony at the end of term.

The casting of a brass pipe mould engraved with the school's logo, an owl wearing a mortar board, was also commissioned.

When next out and about look up -- you may see a stream of tiny bubbles floating high above Broseley.

Rex Key

Apedale Drift Mine Tour

A visit to the coal face at Apedale Drift Mine, Chesterton, Staffordshire, is planned for Saturday 12 October, 2002. This will be a nostalgic day for those who remember the great days of mining, educational for those who claim not to.

Travel is by GoWhittle coach which will be picking up at the following places and times:

Highley	Old Lloyds Bank	10.15 am
Bridgnorth	The Bear	10.30 am
Broseley	Delphside	10.50 am
Telford	Bus Station	11.15 am

The cost is £8.00 for adults, £5.00 for children under 16 and for senior citizens. Please note that children under the age of 5 will not be allowed underground.

The Apedale Drift Mine was the successor to the Apedale Deep Pits complex, which included Sir Nigel Gresley's Canal, the Apedale Ironworks and Knutton Forge.

Access is by a sloping tunnel, not by a cage in a shaft, and as well as the underground experience there is the mining heritage exhibition centre. While the mine is not muddy, you should bring stout footwear and warm clothing. Refreshments are available.

To book, phone David Lake on 01746 762813 or write to Avebury, Stocking Lane, Nordley, Bridgnorth WV16 4SY. Cheques should be made out to Broseley Local History Society.

Postbag

Frank Dawson, a Society member who lives in Cumbria, has recently been in correspondence with David Lake regarding Janet Butler's research notes. In thanking David for his help, he goes on:

It is good to be reminded there are more Wilkinson enthusiasts about. I ferret away at documents and papers up here in my spare time in relative isolation and find the forum provided by the Broseley Local History Society very supportive in a curious way, though I haven't managed to get down to your meetings so far, simply because to do so involves a bit of an expedition. The David de Haan Lecture could be the catalyst I need to stir myself!

Wilkinson was certainly a multi-faceted genius, as you say. It is his confidence that again and again astonishes me, confidence to think the unthinkable (as the present day business gurus, pale shadows of Wilkinson in my view, so easily say it) but then go on to put on the ground what his contemporaries had often considered to be impossible. That carried a darker side of course - loneliness, a sense of injustice, of being misunderstood . . . undervalued, and the determination and anger this generated . . . but he is a fascinating personality to explore and his story is an epic, full of energy and drama.

I've reached the mid 1780s in the Life I'm trying to write. That is I've completed eight chapters of a projected 12 or 14 over the last four years since I retired, which included a two year period when I did no writing. The later half of his life is much better documented than the earlier which will make the next bit perhaps a slower, if a more interesting, labour.

Frank Dawson

The Society's website recently received this communication from Russell Burns, who lives in the USA and is looking for information on his family. Anyone who can help him is asked to contact him on rnb49@yahoo.com.

My name is Russell Haydn Burns and I am searching for some information about my dad. His name is Lawrence Haydn Burns, he lived in

Broseley for several years before leaving in 1946. He had a bicycle and radio shop with a gas pump outside. He supplied the town with radio for the war and drove the local minister to and from church with a loan car business.

Please e-mail me with any service you can provide. Your site is very good and I enjoyed seeing many pictures of my family's town. I was born in the USA (California), and need to know my family history. My dad died in 1983, my mom Nora, brother Anthony and sister Elizabeth were all from that area.

Thank you so much for anything you can find.

Russell Burns

Enginuity

This recently erected monument marks the site of the Caughley China Works. This was one of the projects in which Society member Stephen Perry was involved at the time of his death earlier this year. Stephen had arranged with Ibstock that the bricks for the monument would be made with clay from the

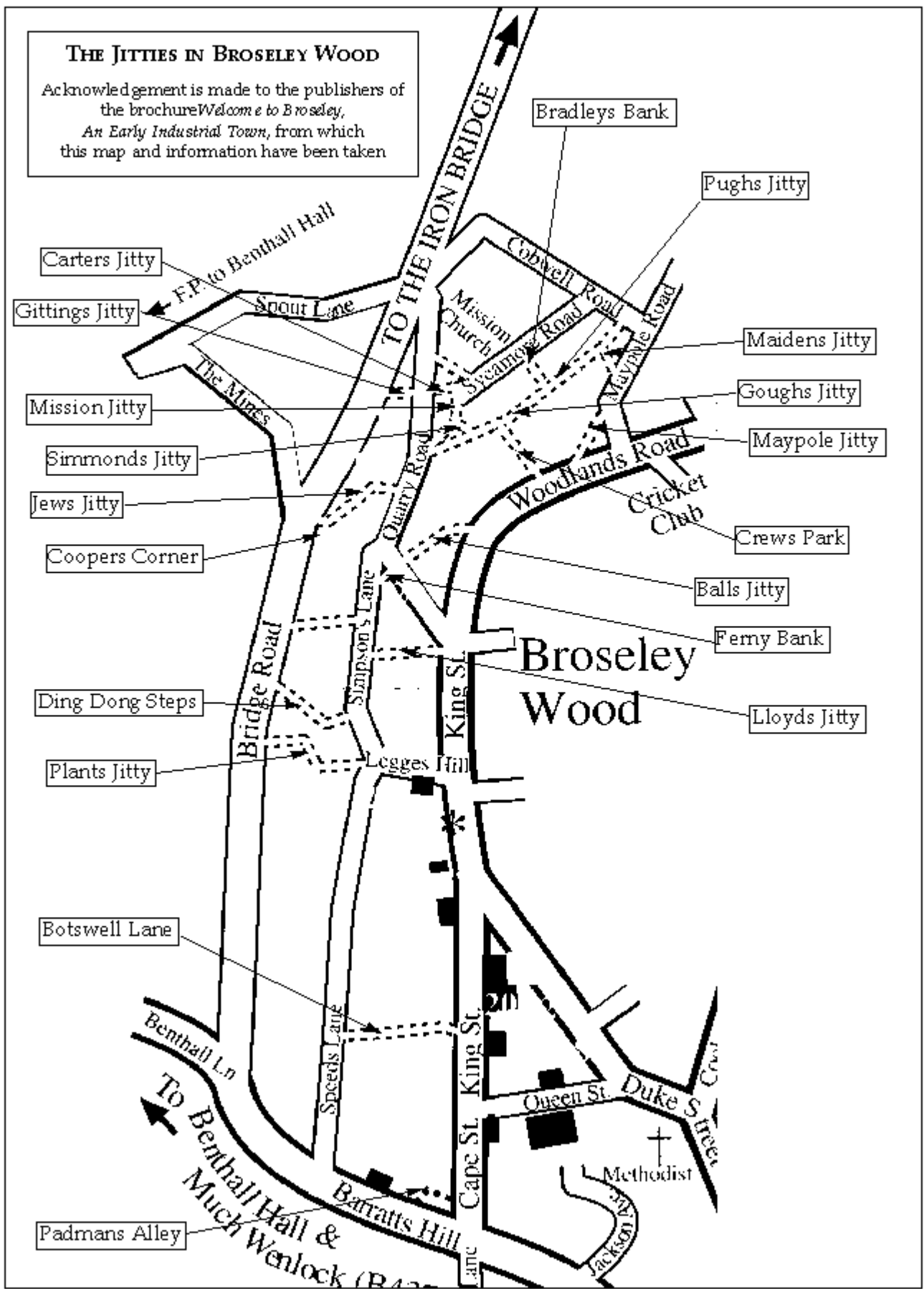


Caughley open-cast site with a recess to hold an iron plaque depicting the works (this is yet to be fitted). As a mark of respect to Stephen, a brick inscribed 'Stephen Perry 1951 - 2002' has been included.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust has recently opened a new museum. Enginuity is sited next to the Museum of Iron in Coalbrookdale and, in the words of its publicity leaflet, offers "a honeypot of exhibits which will inspire you and your family to become apprentice engineers for the day." There are lots of things to do, like pulling a real locomotive or pitching your skills against that of a robot. Call 01952 432166 for more information.

THE JITTIES IN BROSELEY WOOD

Acknowledgement is made to the publishers of the brochure *Welcome to Broseley, An Early Industrial Town*, from which this map and information have been taken



Carters Jitty

Gittings Jitty

Mission Jitty

Simmonds Jitty

Jews Jitty

Coopers Corner

Ding Dong Steps

Plants Jitty

Botswell Lane

Padmans Alley

Bradleys Bank

Pughs Jitty

Maidens Jitty

Goughs Jitty

Maypole Jitty

Crews Park

Balls Jitty

Ferny Bank

Lloyds Jitty