

EDITORIAL

Broseley Local History Society

The Society was originally formed as the Wilkinson Society in 1972 and was renamed in 1997 to reflect its main purpose:

'the research, preservation and promotion of Broseley's unique heritage'.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month beginning at 7.30 pm, at Broseley Social Club; and annual events include a summer outing, an autumn walk and a winter dinner. Members receive a quarterly newsletter and an annual journal. The Society's collection of artefacts is at present stored at the IGMT Tile Museum at Jackfield.

The Society has a web site which contains information about Broseley, copies of the newsletter and articles from previous journals. This can be found at *www.broseley.org.uk*

The Journal

The six articles in this issue of the Journal range in time from the 18th to the 20th centuries, and in place from the Broseley area to Bradley near Bilston, Worsley near Manchester and Le Creusot in Burgundy. They represent the ongoing researches and reminiscences of members of our Society and we are grateful to the individual contributors. Our thanks to Steve Dewhirst for designing and typesetting this issue.

Contributions for the next issue of the Journal would be welcome and should be sent by 31 August 2002 to the Editor, Neil Clarke, Cranleigh, Wellington Road, Little Wenlock, TF6 5BH.

[We learned of Stephen Perry's tragic death as the Journal went to print. We send our condolences to his wife and family. A tribute to him will appear in the Society's next Newsletter]

Broseley Miners at Worsley

by Jeff Tudge

[This short article is from material supplied in a recent letter by Society member Jeff Tudge of Wigan. -Ed.]

Whilst researching the Tudge family tree, I was directed to *Thomas Bury's Book 1778*, author C.E. Mullineux by Mrs. Ann Monaghan of Salford Lifetimes, info@lifetimes.org.uk. The book (ref 622B) is located in Walkden Library, Greater Manchester.

The introduction of the book states:

Thomas Bury was the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater's colliery manager, working under John Gilbert until Gilbert's death in 1795. After the death of the Duke in 1803, Thomas was responsible to Robert Haldane Bradshaw, the Superintendent Trustee of the Bridgewater Trust who lived at the Brick Hall in Worsley. Thomas by this time was living at the Packet House, which was then a plain brick building.

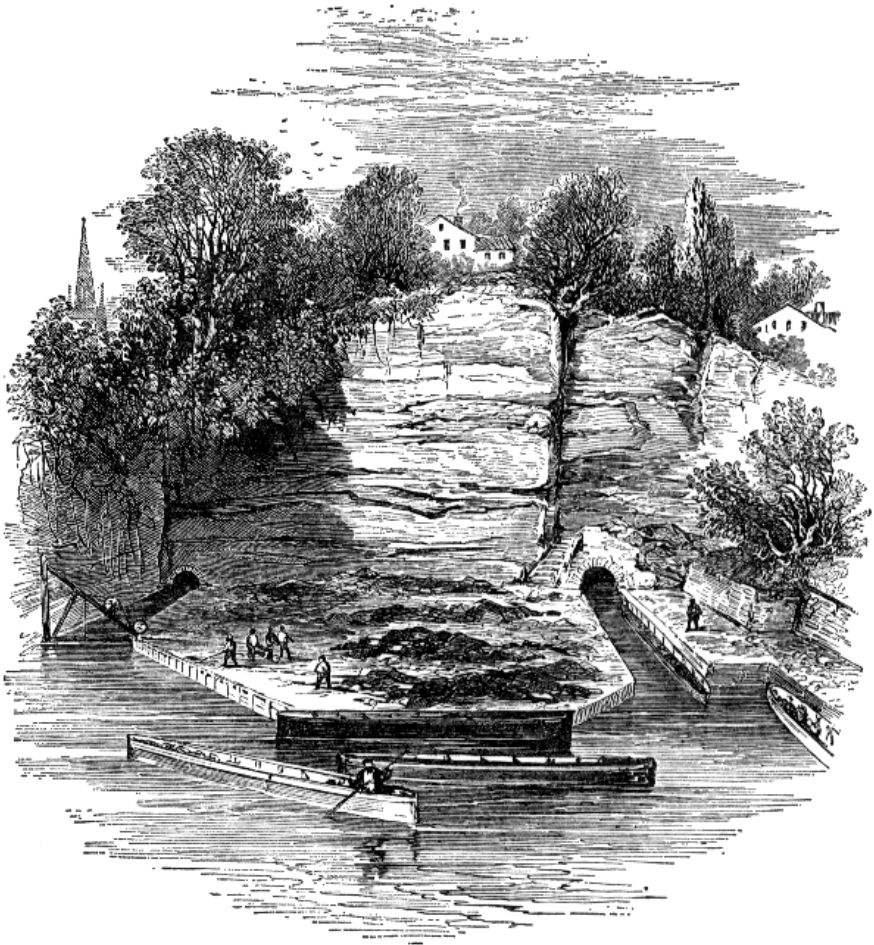
Bury's book shows the coal mining records and gives details of the mines, amount of coal extracted and people employed to mine the coal. The miners came from all over the United Kingdom but I've listed those who came from Broseley in the table opposite.

John Tudge (record no. 232 in the Table) was hired at Worsley in 1781. He was married to Sarah and their children were baptised in Peel Chapel, Little Hulton, Lancashire from 1785-1795. I have not found any marriage record for John and Sarah in Little Hulton, Bolton and so am particularly interested in looking for evidence that John Tudge resided and possibly married in the Broseley area in the period after 1781 (i.e. Church and coal mining records).

Hopefully I have correctly transcribed the spellings as listed in the book, but it is interesting to note that Broseley was spelt with one 'e' and sometimes with an 'a'.

No	When Hired	Surname	Name	Township each belongs to	Witnfses to each person's Signing	Comments
280	8 April 1785	Adams	Francis	Brosley	T. Bury W m. Valey Ri. Evans	
293	9 Aug 1785	Armstrong	Thomas	Brosley	T. Bury R. Evans	
306	13 Feb 1786	Auston	William	Brosley	W. Vatry R. Evans	
132	2 Mar 1779	Bryan	George	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	
243	14 June 1784	Ball	Francis	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	
245	14 June 1784	Bradley	Lawrence	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	
39	9 July 1777	Crompton	Richard	Brosley? in Salop	Thomas Bury Thomas Kent	
68	24 July 1777	Crompton	Thomas	Brosley? in Salop	Thomas Bury Thomas Kent	
262	3 Aug 1784	Crompton	Timothy Snr.	Brosley	T. Berry W m. Bowker	
263	3 Aug 1784	Crompton	John.	Brosley	T. Berry W m. Bowker	
98	19 Dec 1777	Evans	Richard	Brosley? in Salop	Thomas Kent W m. Bowker	
238	14 June 1784	Evans	Thomas	Brosley	Thomas Bury W m. Vatry	
253	18 June 1784	Evans	John	Brosley	Thomas Bury W m. Vatry	
322	12 April 1787	Evans	George	Brosley	Thomas Bury W m. Vatry	
240	14 June 1784	Goodhall	Edward Jun. ^r	_s_ey? in Salop	Thomas Bury W m. Vatry	
258	18 June 1784	Guest	William	Brosley	T. Bury W m. Vatry	Gave Notice Nov 9. 1784
259	18 June 1784	Guest	John	Brosley	T. Bury W m. Vatry	Hired him again March 7 1787
241	14 June 1784	Hulmes	Peter	Brosley	T. Bury W m. Vatry	
245	14 June 1784	Jones	W illm. Jun. ^r	Brosley	T. Bury W m. Vatry	
281	8 April 1785	Jones	W illm. Sen ^r	Brosley	T. Bury W m. Vatry Rich. Evans	
305	13 Feb 1786	Jones	Thomas Jun. ^r	Brosley	W m. Vatry Ri: Evans	

No	When Hired	Surname	Name	Township each belongs to	Witnefses to each person's Signing	Comments
242	14 June 1784	Lewis	William Jun ^r	Brosley	T. Bury Wm. Vatry	
264	8 Oct. 1784	Lloyd	Edward	Brosley	T. Bury Wm. Vatry	
268	8 Oct. 1784	Lloyd	Samuel	Brosley	T. Bury Wm. Vatry	
266	8 Oct. 1784	Lloyd	William	Brosley	T. Bury Wm. Vatry	
326	14 Nov. 1787	Lloyd	Cornelius	Brosley	T. Bury R. Evans	
250	18 June 1784	Morris	Samuel	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	
252	18 June 1784	Morris	John	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	
247	18 June 1784	Rowlance	John	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	Gave him notice 20 June 1791
267	8 Oct 1784	Richards	John	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	
334	12 Mar 1791	Smith	Richard Jun ^r	Brosley	T. Bury Josiah Howcroft	
335	12 Mar 1791	Smith	Richard (son of Richard)	Brosley	T. Bury Josiah Howcroft	
232	20 April 1781	Tudge	John	Brosley	T. Bury T. Kent	
246	14 June 1784	Tildsley	Edw ^d	Brosley	T. Bury W. Vatry	
320	15 Mar 1787	Tildsley	Richard	Brosley	T. Bury J. Foulkes?	
325	14 Nov 1787	Tenant	Wiliam	Brosley	T. Bury R. Evans	
237	14 June 1784	Wild	Wiliam Snr.	Brosley	T. Bury Wm. Vatry	
244	14 June 1784	Willis	Wiliam	Brosley	T. Bury Wm. Vatry	
265	11 Oct 1784	Ward	Thomas	Brosley	T. Bury Wm. Vatry	
327	14 Nov 1787	Ward	Wm.	Brosley	T. Bury R. Evans	



The Basin at Worsley
(Duke of Bridgewater's Canal)
showing the canal entrances to the Coal Mine

WILLIAM WILKINSON'S PLANS FOR LOUIS XVI's NEW CANNON FACTORY, 1781

translated by David Lake

[The original document, handwritten in French, is in the archives of L'Academie François Bourdon in Le Creusot. William, John Wilkinson's younger brother, had gone to France as consultant engineer responsible for the design of the equipment at the Royal Foundry, "following the English method" — see Journals No. 21, p. 27 and No. 22, p. 3.]

Note that monetary values are expressed in 'livres'. At this time a livre was the equivalent of 10 English old pence (10d.), i.e. 24 to the pound (£). All the places mentioned in the text are near Le Creusot in Burgundy except Indret, which is in western France near Nantes. — Ed.]

List of requirements for the establishment to be created at Le Creusot near to Montcenis, requirements which must be fulfilled starting this day, in accordance with what is detailed for each item.

Studies of the Iron Ores at Challengy, St Maurice, Dracy, Antully and Drevain near to Couches.

The establishment being destined for Montcenis, the working of the ores in places already known and the investigation of areas where there are signs of it must be the first concern of the management; and without losing any time it would be proper to schedule the work to be done this winter in respect of Challengy and for the other places indicated if I can, and for La Charbonniere; with regard to the first it will be necessary to establish 10 gangs of 3 men each, under the supervision of a miner knowing the ways of these mines, so that he will attend to the proper extraction of the ore, without mixing up the stones, and he will give out to the workers the timber necessary for the work; because it seems essential to use timber so that the workers do not leave so much of the ore in their workings as they do presently. One part of these gangs will be at the workface, the other part employed in examining the ores and in digging out the pit each day. These daily tasks will need in the first instance the provision of the necessary tools and ropes at the King's expense.

The pits thus opened during the winter will serve for the extraction of the ore in the veins already known and will be useful next year for

sinking 100 or 150 feet lower than they have dug up to now, in order to examine the nature of the lower beds and to see if there are not other veins of ore, as seems very probable from the number of signs indicating it.

This method is not much used in France, but in Flanders, in the Liege area and in England it is preferred to that of sinking pits at random because it is infinitely less costly and it reveals at the same time how the land and the veins lie after which the working can go on with safety. This precaution is more essential here than elsewhere, since the large-scale exploitation that we must have will be expensive. Since in France they make little use of roof timber it follows that to benefit from it it will be necessary to have men come from one of the places indicated above where they habitually make use of it.

As the location of the Challengy mines is a long way from the town and from any inn, and since there will have to be frequent journeys, it will be necessary to have there (to rent or otherwise) a temporary lodging where they could stable 2 horses for protection from the harshness of the weather and for feeding; where they could also put in store the timber and tools needed for the working; and eventually install a forge for making and repairing equipment.

The necessary cost of this work can be estimated at 1200 livres per month as the list below. The sum of 1200 livres per month seems to me enough from the 1st of November up to the end of March; in this time we could establish more certainly the sum necessary for the summer working.

List.

30 workers at 30 livres per month average rate	900..
1 miner per month	60..
Repair of tools per month	60..
Timber for arches and transport	60..
Acquisition of ropes, sheets, baskets	60..
Iron and steel for tools	60..
	1200..

Study of the Iron Ores at La Charbonniere.

It would be appropriate to excavate the old pits which have been filled in, in order to find in the beds of earth if the signs of iron ore which are

to be found in surrounding areas correspond with the interior; to achieve this it would be necessary to establish a gang of 9 men including the miner to lead them; to have them open up 3 or 4 old pits ready for my return. I could see in what way it would be best to go about the working of those ores which up to now have not been touched; this labour is the only way to determine the course to take in respect of them and it cannot well be dispensed with.

Beginning the first of November up to the end of March, one can estimate the cost per month as below.

9 workers, including the miner at 30 livres per month	270..
Rope, windlasses, buckets, baskets, purchase and maintenance of tools, wood and transport, candles and fire to dry the workers coming out of the pits	130.. 400..

Bricks to be Manufactured.

As experience has shown that bricks are more satisfactory than any other materials for the construction of blast furnaces; for that of steam engine boilers as well as forge hearths; and as the quantity required by these various constructions will be considerable and would be very expensive to have them come from places with a reputation for good quality bricks; it is necessary to think how to get them as near as possible to the works.

Quite close to the coalmine at the place called La Charbonniere there is found earth which to me seems suitable for this use, and by using this same coal in the firing one could get the bricks very cheaply. I estimate that the blast furnaces, the boilers, and chimneys of the steam engines, the hearths of the forges and the chaufferies will use at least a million of them, without counting those used in other constructions. These bricks must be nine inches long by four and a half inches wide and three inches thick.

To have this quantity of bricks ready in time we cannot start work on it too soon, and to be able to start producing them next spring weather permitting it is necessary to bring in an experienced brickmaker, to negotiate with him the price payable per thousand bricks received, and to take him on to get the clay up above ground in great quantity so that frost and rain will condition it for making brick, which without this precaution is subject to cracking and failure.

Since this work will need advance payments that the brickmaker will perhaps not be in a position to make, we could advance some money to him on account for the bricks and by reason of the earth that he will have used. To achieve this (reckoning on 4 workers at 25 livres per month) could entail a cost of 100 livres for each month from 1st November up to the end of March

Timber required for the Steam Engines and the Water Wheels or the Forges.

Being of the greatest consequence in the construction of steam engines, machinery and the setting up of forges that the timber to be employed in it should be of good quality and well seasoned, we cannot start too soon to cut and transport as near as possible to the works the timbers of which the list is below so that they dry and become more as required for the applications for which they are intended.

Item 1.

Eight pieces intended to take the force of the engine beams, each one 26 to 27 feet long by 18 inches square, failing which 16 inches by 20 inches.

Item 2.

Four pieces intended for the shaft of the hammer, each one 22 feet long and from 17 to 13 inches square.

Item 3.

Four pieces intended to carry the beam or other part of the steam engine, each 24 feet long by 13 inches square.

Item 4.

Four pieces intended for the frame of the forge each one 50 feet long with the greatest section possible, as 18 inches at one end and 14 inches at the other.

Item 5.

Two pieces each 24 feet long by 18 inches square intended for the water wheels of the chaufferie and the tilt-hammer and first serving also for the crusher.

Item 6.

As it is impossible to forecast the quantity of timber needed for the different parts of all the machines nor the quantity of planks of various thicknesses, I will limit myself to asking for the present for four

thousand cubic feet of timber of various lengths having their sections in proportion to their lengths.

All this timber and especially that comprising the five first items must be of the best possible quality, straight, sound, with no sapwood, cut from the trunk and without flaws; as large at one end as at the other; the usage of planks for the coal trucks will be considerable and these planks also must be of the best wood possible to avoid frequent repairs.

All this provision needing to be made before the month of March, and possibly containing about five thousand cubic feet costing 40d, [sic] charged to the works, it is necessary to provide a sum of ten thousand livres to cover the cost.

This amount seems to me sufficient for this year, we will increase or reduce it next year according to requirements.

Setting up the Blast Furnaces and Forges.

The strength of the furnaces and forges requires the greatest attention in their construction, and the bonding together of all parts being that which most ensures strength, one must neglect nothing to establish this as well as possible; which I believe can only take place by using cast iron lintels of a sufficiently great strength to resist the irregular movements of a mass such as a blast furnace; it is therefore necessary to make provision for these pieces in good time, without this it is useless to think of building furnaces.

They commonly use in the construction of blast furnaces in this country lintels cast in the forges nearest to the site, although these furnaces never achieve a heat as great as that which will be achieved by those it is proposed to construct, so it often happens that these lintels break and cause the ruin of the furnaces. I do not think it right to be exposed to such disasters, and to avoid them I recommend the construction of a temporary reverberatory furnace, as given in the list below, with which furnace we would cast the various pieces needed in the construction of all the works.

Old cannon being normally better for remelting than pig iron cast in furnaces near to the works I would want us to allocate 250 thousand-weight; these old cannon could be transported from Toulon up the Rhone and the Saone as far as Chalons and delivered to La Charbonniere at better value than those of the locality; it would be good if these

cannon were not of a calibre greater than 18, bigger than that they would become difficult to handle until one is set up in a manner for moving heavy loads. If the iron of these cannon is not completely of a good enough quality as would be wished, it could be mixed with 30 or 35% of iron from Franche Comte which would come by the Saone to Chalons and from there to La Charbonniere at an average cost six or seven pounds the thousand-weight, adding to this quantity of old cannon one hundred and fifty thousand-weight of iron that I will pick out in the nearby forges, that will give a stock that I think enough for the work that I can presently envisage; as to surplus I limit myself to that for the first year and if after that we need a greater quantity I will be careful to order in such time that they can be replenished without having the works held up.

To construct the furnace as above I want to have ordered and brought from Langeais in Touraine twenty thousand white bricks like those I have used at Indret, these bricks of eight inches square and one inch thick this quantity will be enough to make the furnace as above, with which not only will we cast all the pieces needed for the works but also we can carry out the tests needed to ensure the quality of the local bricks. These bricks from Langeais could cost about two thousand livres delivered to La Charbonniere; to that has to be added three thousand livres for the construction and preparation for use.

Temporary Buildings.

It will be appropriate to have built, as near as possible to the proposed works, a heated room which will serve as a general office for matters related to the daily running of the works. In this room we must have four tables or writing desks, with four cupboards in which would be put the things that are needed, the whole well lit; by the side of this room must be a carpenters shop and a joinery shop; after that a forge with two hearths with tools and utensils alongside a section serving for moulding at the end of which will be built the furnace of which I have spoken in the previous article. Monsieur Toufaire will decide the way in which the above buildings can be constructed.

Transporting Materials to the Furnace.

One of the main advantages of this method of working consists in keeping intact and large the coal that is to be used. I believe that we should adopt the methods already recognised as the best which lie particularly in the transport from the pits to the yard below the furnaces.

In the trucks made expressly for this, running on tracks made expressly to take them; this method which keeps the coal intact facilitates its transport and keeps the cost down. These trucks being put together like those we have used at Indret, it will be necessary to have twenty of them and consequently a stock of one hundred wheels, eighty axles and as many carriages. In the case of wheels made at Indret these should we think serve as the patterns; the axles should be of a very fibrous iron of a small section and welded together to form the required size. Without this precaution they will be prone to break on the railway which brings everything to a standstill at once. The wheels must also be in cast iron of the best quality, it is to replace those that may fail that I am ordering twenty of them above the number needed to make twenty trucks.

Tests of the Coal

It will be desirable that before winter and before my journey to England we carry out some tests on the coal from La Charbonniere; consequently I wish to have a hundred thousand-weight of the biggest coal to coke it and to see in what way it will be best to use it to get the biggest coke possible and to know what to expect as the increase in volume that the coal acquires in coking.

Slag from Forges

For some years it has been recognised in England that the slag from fineries or bloomeries mixed with the ore for blending in the blast furnace produces great advantages as much in the yield as in the quality of the iron, especially when one is aiming to make wrought iron. I believe it essential to establish this method of working in the furnaces here and for that I request that we acquire slag from the forges of Mesvrin and La Mothe and that it should be brought to the works before the furnaces are lit.

It will be necessary to negotiate with the Masters of these forges in order to secure these slags for the future, for in all likelihood when they see the use that will be made of them, they will be tempted to put up the price or to keep them for themselves.

At Montcenis the 16th October 1781

Wilkinson

Read and approved

P.Toufaire

John Wilkinson and Thomas Turner : Employer and Employee?

by Stephen Perry

The Caughley China works were founded around 1772-1775 by Thomas Turner, originally from Worcester, and Ambrose Gallimore of Staffordshire. Caughley made a fine translucent soapstone porcelain, similar to that made at Worcester, and mainly decorated in underglaze blue patterns in the Chinese style. Almost all of Caughley's products were useful tablewares, the majority of which were teawares. After Gallimore's death in 1790, Turner continued as sole proprietor until October 1799 when he sold his entire interest in the business to one of his former apprentices, John Rose of Coalport, who operated both factories until about 1814 when most of the Caughley factory was dismantled to enlarge the Coalport works.

The reason advanced at the time for Turner's sale of the business is given in *the Eddowes Salopian Journal* of October 30th 1799, which carries an advertisement for a Sale by Auction of the Caughley China-ware stock, being "*the property of Thomas Turner, Esq. (who from his indifferent state of health declines continuing the said manufactory).*"

Most modern writers dismiss this assertion about Turner's health as merely a face-saving excuse. Instead, they point to a number of factors which led to increasingly difficult trading conditions for Turner in the late 1790s. Chinese-style designs, the mainstay of Caughley productions, were becoming unfashionable. From 1792 Turner lost his contract for the supply of soapstone, and was forced to adopt a different porcelain body which changed again about 1796, neither of which was altogether successful, either in the kiln or in appearance. From 1788, the Chamberlains, at Worcester, had bought Caughley porcelain "in the white" for decoration, but in 1793 they began to make their own porcelain and the trade with Turner ceased. Finally, from 1793 John Rose, initially at Calcotts but from 1795-6 at Coalport, was successfully producing his own porcelain in direct competition with his former employer.

Both Gaye Blake Roberts¹ and David Holgate² reflect on Turner's life after his supposed 'retirement' in 1799, aged just 52, following the

My Dear Mrs. Turner!

Mr. Wilkinson is no more, I was myself too Ill to go to Bradley yesterday, confined to my Room and as you may suppose the shock has been severe to me. It would ease my Mind if you would come here even if it were for a Day or Two. Mr. & Mrs. Aston [?] called here some little Time ago in a Gig which was a very good one and it appeared they had it for some Days and will be bound upon reasonable Terms, & by applying to Mr. and Mrs. Aston, the Gardener may immediately engage it for you and you may come without Loss of Time. Permit me to say so, by your coming here immediately you will be near Bradley - I have only to add in addition that we both made a promise to our Dear Little Boy that it should be his Turn to see Dudley Port and why not let him have that Gratification? - pray bring him with You! The steady Temper & the personal advantages of our Dear Katherine George entitle her to every Attention to her Learning and advancement in Life & tho I have been deprived the gratification of seeing her from Time to Time yet I learn with pleasing Solicitude those endearing advancements.

and believe me My Dear Mrs .Turner

Your one truly affectionate Husband

Tho Turner

Tividale Cottage 25th Jany. 1808

The juxtaposition of the names Wilkinson and Bradley in the first sentence led me initially to believe that Turner was informing his wife of the death of John Wilkinson, who died in 1808 at Bradley, near Bilston, where he had set up an ironworks around 1768. Ron Davies wrote a fascinating account of these works in the Society's Journal No 21, of 1999.

Thomas Turner and John Wilkinson both excelled in their respective, though very different, fields of activity and although I have never seen their names linked together in any document, it is inconceivable to me that they did not know each other. Although Wilkinson was twenty years the senior and already established in Broseley by the time of Turner's arrival, both were well-known and well-connected businessmen in Broseley at the same time. Wilkinson was a Burgess

M^{rs} Turner Caughley Place
 near Shiffnal
 Shropshire
 forward it from Broseley

My Dear M^{rs} Turner!

M^{rs} Wilkinson is no more, I was myself too ill to go to Bradley yesterday, I confided to my Room and so you may suppose the shock has been severe to me. It would have been my friend if you would come here & even if it were for a Day or Two. M^{rs} & M^{rs} Liffon called here some little Time ago in a Pig which was a very good one and it appeared they had it for some Days and will be bound upon reasonable Terms, & by applying to M^{rs} & M^{rs} Liffon, the Landlady may immediately engage it for you and you may come without loss of Time. Permit me to say to, by your coming here immediately you will be near Bradley - I have only to add in addition that we both made a promise to our dear little Boy that it should be your turn to see Dudley Post and why not let him have that gratification? - pray bring him with you! The steady Temper & the personal advantages of our dear Mother and George attract her to every Attention to her learning ^{and improvement} in life. I who I have been deprived the gratification of seeing her from Time to Time yet I learn with pleasing Satisfaction those endearing Advancements. And believe me My Dear M^{rs} Turner

Your ever truly affectionate Husband

The Father.

Swadale Cottage 25th Jan^y 1808.

of the Borough of Wenlock, Turner five times the Bailiff; Wilkinson's first wife was the sister of Edward Blakeway, whose backing enabled John Rose to start his chinaworks at Calcutts on his leaving Caughley in 1793, a severe blow to Turner, and one from which he never really recovered; and both Wilkinson and Turner were occasional visitors to George Forester at Willey Hall. Even Wilkinson's Tarbatch Dingle tramroad, connecting the New Willey Furnace the three miles to the River Severn at Willey Wharf, bordered Caughley.

However, John Wilkinson apparently died on 14th July 1808, though other references give 4th or 11th July. As many members of the Society will know, he was ultimately buried, after several attempts, in a cast-iron coffin surmounted by a cast-iron obelisk in the front garden of his home at Castlehead in the Lake District.

John's younger brother William, who helped set up the French Royal Foundry at Le Creusot (as described in David Lake's article, also in Journal No 21) also died in 1808 - but in *March* and at Wrexham.⁴ However, dates must be treated with caution - even Turner's own death a year later in 1809 is variously described as taking place in February⁵ or May!¹

This is confusion of dates might suggest that the letter is dated 25th July rather than 25th January. However, Gaye Blake Roberts dates it as January as did staff at the V & A Museum.

Readers can form their own opinion from the reproduction of the letter shown opposite.

It is noticeable, too, that Turner does not say that Wilkinson has died, but that he is 'no more', whatever that might mean. Perhaps Wilkinson has suffered a stroke and is incapacitated, or has lapsed into a coma, to linger on for a further six months? Whatever the actual circumstances, Turner's reaction to Wilkinson's demise does seem rather extreme. John Wilkinson was 80 when he died, William about ten years younger, so their deaths, even if sudden, could hardly be described as unexpected. None of John's nephews had management ability, neither is there any evidence that either had a son, legitimate or illegitimate, who was involved in the Bradley works. And if Turner is so severely shocked and in need of support from his wife, why doesn't he return home rather than request the company of his wife

and son, therefore leaving Katherine behind, presumably with a nanny or nurse?

Turner appears to be suggesting that he feels he should have gone to Bradley the previous day, only his illness preventing him from doing so. Why? Was it to offer condolences or for another reason? And why would he be concerned that his wife should be "... *near Bradley*" too? The strong implication in this letter is that he can't return home because he is working - if not at Bradley (which seems most likely) then perhaps somewhere else nearby. As Turner had "*been deprived the gratification of seeing [Katherine] from time to time*" this would suggest that he was not making a fleeting visit to Tividale, but that this was a regular arrangement.

If Tividale Cottage is indeed in Tividale, (which I have yet to confirm) this is less than half a mile from Dudley Port, both being about three miles from Bradley. For those who know the area, the present John Wilkinson Primary School at Bradley is built on the exact site of the blast furnace of the main works. A credible alternative is that Turner was working at Matthew Boulton's Soho foundry some five miles from Tividale and at which William Wilkinson had also worked on his return from France. In 1808, the Soho works was managed by Matthew's son, Matthew Robert Boulton, who later married one of William's daughters, Mary Anne. It is also feasible that Turner was working at Dudley Port, the adjacent township to Tividale. The Birmingham Canal was originally built through Tividale and Dudley Port in the 1770s, a second, straightened cutting constructed in the 1820s by Thomas Telford. By 1794 there was an ironworks at Dudley Port known as Plant & Fisher's⁶ run by a Mr. Parkes⁷, so there appears to be no connection with Wilkinson.

Could Turner have been involved in any of these enterprises, presumably making use of his management and organisational skills? Is it more likely that he was used for his experience as a potter, though this would be considered very much a downwards move for a porcelain manufacturer, and a proprietor at that?

John Wilkinson certainly had a pottery at Bradley some time before 1798. John Randall⁸ quotes from a letter of John Wilkinson, writing

from Bradley on 16th October 1798, in which he appoints a Mr Thomas Pearce as Manager of the Bradley works. Wilkinson's "Rules for Mr Pearce" include one that "*He is also to examine the Pottery accounts every reckoning - this does not appear to have been done.*"

The Bradley estate was auctioned in 1836. The Sale Catalogue includes particulars of two sales, in April and June.⁹ The restructuring of the lots in the second sale suggests that either the first sale did not go ahead for some reason, or that most of the lots remained unsold. Lot 18 in the second sale catalogue cites "*Two extensive Potteries with various Buildings, Dwelling-Houses, and other Erections attached thereto ...*", with a footnote: "*These Potteries are supplied at a cheap rate, from the adjoining Land, with the different sorts of Clay used in the Manufacture of Black, Yellow and Stone ware, which are here produced of excellent quality.*" The attached map shows a third pottery, not included in the sale.¹⁰ However, it is unclear which, if any, of these was the 1798 pottery. A trade directory of 1834¹¹ shows that the pottery adjacent to the Birmingham canal at Pot-house Bridge was making 'blue and white'. The other two potteries were adjacent to each other and situated between present-day Bradley Lane and Lees Terrace. One, leased to Benjamin Myatt, was making 'yellow', the other, leased to John Wilde, making 'coarse black'. Could this Benjamin Myatt be related to the John Myatt who built a new pottery in Jackfield in 1826¹² or 1836?¹³ The Bradley Potteries continued until the early 20th century making decorative green or brown-glazed ware, a collection of which was in the Bilston Museum in the 1970s,¹⁴ though its present whereabouts is unknown.¹⁵

So what **was** Turner doing at Tividale? Was he managing the Bradley works for John Wilkinson or was he involved in these potteries in 1808?

Perhaps Turner continued his business activities as well, during his 'retirement'. He also had a farm, Church Farm, at Stottesdon, seven miles south of Bridgnorth, though the only Church Farm I can find on current maps is one at the nearby hamlet of Billingsley.¹⁶

There must be some doubt whether these activities were profitable, however. In spite of Turner's apparent wealth, as suggested by his building Caughley Place, his French-style 'chateau' overlooking the china-works around 1789, he does not seem to have been particularly

good with money. He borrowed £500 (approximately £125,000 in today's terms) from his father in 1790, only paying it back in 1793, two years after his father's death, and then only at the specific request of his mother who wished to redistribute the money according to the terms of her husband's will.¹⁷ In addition, he went into arrears on a property (possibly near Shirlett Farm) which he rented from the Apley Estate, and paid no more rent on it until 1799/1800.¹⁸

It is therefore little surprise that when Turner died intestate in 1809, he left "*a considerable real Estate but a very small personal estate whereby his only son George Thomas Turner will be amply provided for and his only dau. Georgiana Catharina Cecelia Turner having little or no provision*" according to the Will of Mary Turner, Thomas's widow, a copy of which is also included in the file at the V & A.¹⁹ Mary, "*having taken the circumstances of my said two children into consideration*" subsequently left everything to her daughter. Mary's death emphasises the cautionary note above about dates; her will was proved on 19th May 1816 yet Hubert Smith (Katherine Turner's son, and therefore Mary's grandson) in his Pedigree⁵ claims she died at Bridgnorth on 20th November 1816!

Turner may not have put his feet up on his so-called retirement, but does this letter provide a clue as to his subsequent activities and a possible, previously unknown business connection with Wilkinson?

Finally, one potential line of inquiry has been suggested to me just two days before this article was to be submitted, so remains unexplored.⁶ Tividale is overlooked by the Rowley Hills, which were mined for coal in the early nineteenth century. The highest of these hills, which lie just a mile and a quarter from Tividale, is called ... Turner's Hill!

I am grateful to the staff of the Glass and Ceramics Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, particularly Judith Crouch, Assistant Curator (Care and Access) for her practical help accessing papers and Robin Hildyard, Assistant Curator (Information), for permission to reproduce Thomas Turner's letter and to quote from other documents.

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Hulbert's 'History and Description of The County of Salop'

by Steve Dewhirst

Charles Hulbert was a Shrewsbury cotton master, draper, auctioneer and bookseller, who published many books on Shropshire and the history of the county. This particular book was published in 1837. The following extracts provide a glimpse of Broseley at a time of change when ironmaking had given way to the clay industries. Mining was still important, as was trade on the river. Hulbert's work is particularly useful for its personal observations. His suggestion that Broseley become a retail centre was a little ahead of its time - perhaps Broseley could have become a 19th century Merry Hill where a retail park has been built on the site of the Round Oak steelworks!

Madeley Annual value £10,927 Population 5822

Coalport, equal in importance to many towns, is celebrated for its rich and extensive China Works, which have for 40 years, been established here by Messrs John Rose and Co. The articles produced at this Manufactory are not surpassed, in taste, elegance, and durability, by any in our nation, or foreign countries, giving employment to 800 hands, and enriching the vicinity.

There are no places of Public Worship here, except a Methodist Chapel. A very handsome Iron Bridge, erected in 1817, crosses the Severn, -from the centre of which, in May 1836, I counted no fewer than seventy two vessels loading and unloading their various cargoes, chiefly Coal, of which 50,000 tons are carried down the river annually. A commodious Warehouse, five stories in height, has been erected by the Lord of the Manor, from whence proceed and return vessels for Worcester, Gloucester, Bristol &c.

A little above Coalport is the Inclined Plane, which, by the facility it affords, in loading and unloading vessels, may be said to connect the Shropshire Canal to the river Severn. To the late W. Reynolds, Esq. the whole neighbourhood, and indeed all the vast district of Coal Works, Iron Works, and Canals is deeply indebted for its great prosperity

From Coalport to the Iron-Bridge, two miles, the river passes through the most extraordinary district in the world: the banks on each side are elevated to the height of from 3 to 400 feet, studded with Iron Works,

Brick Works, Boat Building Establishments, Retail Stores, Inns, and Houses, perhaps 150 vessels on the river, actively employed or waiting for cargoes; while hundreds and hundreds of busy mortals are assiduously engaged; melting with the heat of the roaring furnace; and though enveloped in thickest smoke and incessant dust, are cheerful and happy. Madeley Wood is also a very populous portion of the parish, in which is a spacious Methodist Chapel, and extensive Iron Works of the Madeley Wood Company.

Ironbridge, here we may say is the mercantile part of the town of Madeley, and here is the focus of professional and commercial pursuits. The Weekly Market, the Post Office, the Printing Office, principal Inns, Drapery, Grocery, and Ironmongery, Watch Making, Cabinet Making; Timber and Boat Building Establishments; the Subscription Library, Subscription Dispensary, Branch Bank, Subscription Baths, gentlemen of the Legal and Medical Professions, Ladies' Boarding School, &c. Navigation also, as previously intimated, carried on to a very considerable extent, gives to Ironbridge the character and appearance of an inland port

Broseley Annual value £7285 Population 4,299

Broseley a market town of considerable antiquity and in ancient records called Burwardsley. It is seated on an eminence above the banks of the Severn, from which and the Iron Bridge, the only road was formerly steep and difficult. A new carriage road, commencing at the Bridge, and opening directly onto the Worcester road a few yards east of the town, has removed the difficulty. From Wenlock, the descent into the town, and its ascent, are still obstructions and call LOUDLY for improvement. Broseley is very irregularly built, but capable of being rendered, at no great expense, a pleasing if not genteel, or handsome town. It consists chiefly of one long street, from which branch several minor streets leading to the different works etc. in the vicinity. The houses are chiefly of brick, some of them respectable character, interspersed with others of a more humble description. The town hall is a handsome brick building, appropriately situated in the centre of the town: in a spacious room over the Hall, the Public Courts and Meetings are held. There is a small Prison or lock-up house attached.

Some years ago during the late war when its Iron Foundries were in full work, Broseley was a thriving town. In the absence of the

advantage enjoyed from prosperous Manufactories I would recommend the lighting and paving of the Town etc. as soon as possible, and that every encouragement be given to the retail trade, and a more easy communication for carriages with the populous neighbourhood by which it is surrounded.

Jackfield is a populous and important portion of the parish of Broseley. The church or chapel of ease is a plain but handsome built edifice, with a square tower, and is most delightfully situated on a commanding eminence, overlooking the Ironbridge, the busy Severn, and a great portion of Coalbrookdale. This edifice was erected in the year 1759, by Francis Turner Blythe, Esq. and is a perpetual curacy, in the patronage of W. G. Davenport Esq.



Jackfield Church 1821

(Courtesy of Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society)

In this section of the parish is the ruined mansion of the Tuckies, within little more than half a century the residence of that admirable Chemist and enterprising Nobleman Lord Dundonald, who died so recently as 1831. At the Calcutts, on the banks of the Severn, his lordship constructed ovens, stoves, etc. for the extraction of tar from

coals, in which he succeeded as an experimentation, but was unsuccessful, in the result as to profitable remuneration - sinking many thousands of pounds in the endeavour. On the site of the Earl's property was erected the great Iron Foundry, where so many cannon were cast by Mr Brodie during the late war, two of which, now on the premises (August 1836), are to be devoted to the furnace, as old metal. Mr Hazledine occupied the Foundry here, for 14 years; but such was the unpropitiousness of the period, even his master talents could not insure success - he consequently lost some thousands on the adventure. At the period of my visit, the proprietor, Mr Foster, the "great Iron-master," had men engaged in removing all the erections, formerly in occupation as a *Foundry*. Near Calcutts are the extensive works of Mr William Davies where at least 900,000 flooring bricks and tiles besides malting tiles, fire brick, etc are annually manufactured. The article here produced, at the adjacent works, and in the parish of Madeley, are not surpassed by any in the kingdom; heavy as the bricks etc. are, they find ready markets along the whole course of the Severn, up the Avon, and even in foreign countries - the clay of which they are made is nearly as hard as rock, and requires blasting with gunpowder in rising from the bed. To the gentlemen above mentioned, Mr Davies and to Mr Pearce, agent to Mr Foster, I am indebted for polite attendance during my inspection of this flourishing vicinity. A short way down the river, and near its verge is a New Pottery of brown and yellow stone ware, belonging to Mr John Myatt; he kindly took me round his works, and explained the whole process of manufacture; the various produce of his skill and art appeared excellent quality. In this vicinity are also various Manufactories of Rope, Oil etc. The Tar Spring is not now considered of much value; I saw a few casks which had been filled with its produce.

Benthall Annual value £2077 Population 525

Benthall, three miles from Wenlock, the church is dedicated to St Bartholomew, this being a perpetual curacy, in the patronage of the vicar of Much Wenlock. The church, rebuilt of brick in 1667, is most delightfully situate in a gentle eminence, though now nearly embosomed in trees: the interior is very neat and contains a monument to the memory of Ralphe Browne, lord of the Manor of Benthall, - he died in 1707. This manor was anciently one of Lord Burnell's, who left it, with other estates, to his cousin and heirs. Adjacent to the church is Benthall Hall, the residence of Francis Blithe Harries Esq. son of the Rev. Edward Harries, of Cruckton, rector of Hanwood, and vicar of Cleobury

Mortimer, and brother of Thomas Harries Esq. of Cruckton Hall, present proprietor of the manor and estate. Some portions of the ancient Hall, erected in 1535, remain, having escaped the fury of a disastrous fire in 1818 - the beautiful carved wood of the staircase and parlour, were fortunately preserved.

Mrs Browne, in 1767, left £200, the interest of which is distributed in bread to the poor.

There is a Pottery in this parish, of large course ware, belonging to Mr John Farnall; and nearly opposite is the Earthenware Manufactory of Messrs Jones and Bathurst, but which is in the extra parochial liberty of Posenhall.

Barrow Annual value £2046 Population 351

Barrow, a pleasant parish, three miles from Much Wenlock. The church is ancient, and has a square tower covered with tiles; it is dedicated to St. Giles - the living a rectory united with Willey, in the patronage of Lord Forester, and incumbency of the Rev W. Bates.

The church walls display many tabular monuments: one to the memory of Anne Corbett is an effecting epitaph. The Font, which is very ancient, has the most captious bason of any I have hereto noticed. Near the pulpit is the Poor Box, made of oak, curiously carved - date 1691. In the church-yard rest the remains of Tom Moody, buried Nov. 19th, 1791, a celebrated Huntsman of the pack of George Forester, Esq., then being at Willey - "he lived and died an honest fellow, but alas, he was a wet one." A handsome pedestal, surmounted by an urn, and surrounded with iron palisading, covers the remains of a dear friend, Mary Pattern Pitt, wife of Thomas Pitt, of Posenhall, who died Nov. 5th 1833, aged 37 years; near the church yard are six Alms Houses, founded in 1631 by John Slaney. At a short distance is an excellent Free School for twenty boys and girls, endowed with £10 per annum; it is conducted in the National System, by Mr and Mrs Scale, who are reputed to be very attentive to their duties.

Linley Annual value £628 Population 111

Linley, four and a half miles from Bridgnorth and two and a half from Broseley. The living is a rectory, united to Broseley in the same patronage and incumbency. The church is dedicated to St. Nicholas - curate the Rev — Jones, duty only once a month. The appearance of

Linley church bespeaks great antiquity - the tower is covered with red tiles, and lighted by very small slits, in which are inserted iron bars occasionally; the windows are square headed, and very small, giving the edifice, in that respect, the semblance of a dungeon, rather than a place of worship; it is in some degree secluded, and partly obscured by a young plantation.

Posenhall Annual value - Population 28

Posenhall, an extra – parochial liberty, little more than two and a half miles from Wenlock, and less than two miles from Broseley. It consists of a capital Farm and good House, in the tenancy of Mr Thomas Pitt; and premises with Land, in the occupation of Messrs Jones and Bathurst; the whole, with many excellent estates in this vicinity, are the property of the Right Hon. Lord Forester.

Willey Annual value £1639 Population 159

Willey, a parish, four and a half miles from Bridgnorth and two from Broseley. The living is a rectory, with Barrow, in the patronage of Lord Forester - incumbent the Rev. W. Bates, who resides at the rectory. Of Willey, my often cited Historian, Rev. W Cox., says – “it is a little village, where is the ancient Seat belonging to the family of Welds”

Willey Park is the magnificent Seat of Lord Forester, erected partly of fine white Grinshill stone, after design by Lewis Wyatt. The principal front extends about 120 feet, and to the extremity of the edifice nearly 300 feet; carriages drive under a portico of the Corinthian order, which opens upon a vestibule leading to a saloon, much admired for its fine architectural effects - it is 40 feet by 30 in dimension, and is adorned with Corinthian columns supporting a large equestrian portrait of the Duke of Wellington and the Emperor Napoleon, and statues of Apollo and Acteon, copies from the antique, upon pedestals. The rooms are splendidly furnished, and contain some fine family Portraits, including one of the late Lord Forester, and Lady Forester of distinguished beauty. The library is spacious, and stored with works of general utility and value. The Plantations, in the vicinity of the house, are tasteful and flourishing; and a beautiful Lake adds to the loveliness of the scenery. At some distance are the remains of the ancient Hall, a portion of which neatly fitted up, is the residence of his lordship’s much respected agent, Mr Oare

THE JACKFIELD MINE DISASTER 1856

by Ivor J. Brown

Jackfield's worst pit accident, at least since 1850, appears to have occurred on Wednesday, 3rd December 1856 when four youths lost their lives. The youths, named Potts, Taylor, Symons and Pope, were killed when the cotter came out of the D-link in the winding equipment by which means they intended travelling down the shaft.

They were employed at a clay and coal mine near Jackfield Church by a Mr. Davies on the estate of Lord Forester. The following account of the inquest is from the Wellington Journal of 13th December 1856. (Note: "the runner" was a platform on wheels kept over the shaft for safety).

THE LATE DREADFUL ACCIDENT AT JACKFIELD.

On Tuesday evening last, an adjourned inquest was held at Mr Parker's, Lloyd-Head Inn, relative to the late accident by which four youths in the employ of Mr Davies lost their lives.

The Government Inspector of mines attended; also G. Potts, Esq, on behalf of Lord Forester, the proprietor of the estate.

The first witness called was George Roden, who said - On Wednesday, the 3rd December, was employed in letting the four young men, killed upon that occasion, down the pit; it was about two o' clock; master said go and see if the hooks are right; I called out and said - "All the hooks are right, lads;" and they said "yes come and loose us down;" saw myself that they were right; they were fastened in the hooks when I got to the pit; they called out "short", and I pulled the runner from under; Noah Potts and master had hold of the shafts at the time; the boys were playing, "gammoking-like," climbing up one another at the time, and as soon as I pulled the runner from under they fell; one said "Oh dear;" that was all I heard. - In answer to questions by the Inspector, witness said: he was not the banksman; was called by Mr Davies to assist; did

not notice the cotter; supposed he was doing the banksman's work. Inspector: If you were banksman, would it not have been your duty to have seen all safe, and to have remained at the top of the pit.? Witness: he did not know. A juryman: would you have considered it safe if you had seen the cotter out.? Witness: no.

John Potter was called and said he was banksman for Mr Davies, at the pit mentioned at the time of the accident, and that when he landed the first draught; he hooked the chains into the rings, and did not see anything amiss. Inspector: asked if they drew coals with the same tackle as they let the men down with. Witness: yes. Witness: I went to the gin to let them down, and got into the shafts; had let two men down previously, Francis Poole and William Pugh; I lifted up the four from the runner; did not stir the gin after lifting them up; examined the tackle three or four times a day; had the link constantly before his eyes; believe the cotter was in, could not be sure; the last draught of coal was about three-and-a-half cwt.; was shewn the loop and pin; when he last saw it, he believed the pin had a split, or spring cotter in it. By the coroner: If anything is wrong, and it is reported to Mr. Davies, he puts it right; had not been, furnished with any instructions; no one had read any rules to him; never heard of any; was not a regular banksman; had banked about one or two days per week for six months; the rope is a good one, and the tackle good. - The Inspector enquired whether, if witness had understood the duties banksman, he would have gone from the pit's mouth, and whether a true banksman would not have seen that the cotter was out. Witness could not say. Inspector: did you look to see of the cotter was out when you let the two men down? Witness confessed he did not. Inspector: then you did not do your duty. The Inspector further called attention of the witness to the state of the link and pin which passed through its upper end, which was much worn, and inquired if it had not struck him as being dangerous, and if not what was his opinion now. A juryman: If you had noticed the play it had, would you have considered it safe? Witness said he did not know.

Another Juryman: Perhaps you never entered it; did you ever look at it to see if the cotter was safe? Witness could not say he had, nor did he recollect any of the men noticing it. Witness said Thomas Ball had that morning noticed it but made no remark.

Thomas Ball, time-keeper, was called and examined, but his evidence threw no light upon the sad affair.

Francis Pool, in the employ of Mr Davies, was examined at length, and in the course of his evidence, Mr Wynne inquired how he came to permit the banksman to leave the top of the pit, and another to take the runner during his descent; did not know except his master ordered it. Witness was next shown the link, which is in shape like the letter H, with a pin run through each of the two ends; and he was asked by the Inspector if he conceived the pin and link to be in proper state, and admitted it was not. In answer to the Inspector, he replied he had seen no rules.

Mr Round, agent to Mr Foster, was next called. – The link is what we call a D link in Staffordshire, and a “copsal” in Shropshire; considered it to be a safe link, one capable of bearing a good deal more weight than that of four boys. Accounting for the accident witness thought it possible that the boys may have trod upon the open cotter and have broken it, it would then be liable to fall out. The Inspector thought it more probable that it occurred from loose action of the pin.

The Coroner said this was the whole of the evidence he had to offer; that in the present instance it was evident that the banksman of Mr Davies did not know his duties. The cotter may have been drawn against the pulley and broke; it was probable it had not been out many minutes previous to the accident. The safest way was to have both a cotter and a bur at the back of it; the one being off would then call attention to the other.

The jury, after a short time, returned a verdict of “Accidental Death,” accompanied by a recommendation to Mr Davies to employ qualified persons as banksmen.

A BROSELEY CHILDHOOD

by Jack Owen

[This is the first part of Jack's autobiography, covering his early years up to the time of his first regular job in 1929. — Ed]

It was on the 15th July 1914 that I first saw the light of day and it happened in a humble cottage, which still exists and is known as 46 The Mines, Benthall, Broseley, Shropshire. I was the youngest of three sons born to my parents, Charles Henry Owen, my father and Rosannah Owen (nee Cullis) my mother. The firstborn was Albert Henry, the second William, and lastly myself, John Cullis, though I was always called Jack. [Note: - My father was the eldest son of Charles and Elizabeth Owen (nee Aston). My mother was the eldest daughter of Henry and Emma Cullis (nee Pumford). The Cullis family disagreed with the marriage, so Henry was cut off and they had to live on a relative's boat, called Adam's boat. This is where I think my mother and her sister, Mary were born.]

My father was employed as the blacksmith at Maw & Co. Ltd., Benthall Works, Jackfield, manufacturers of encaustic tiles, for which they were widely renowned. My mother, who lived at Jackfield, had also worked for the same company and, I presume, that is where they became acquainted. They subsequently married in Benthall Church on 16th December 1903.

At first, and for only a short while, they lived in Duke Street, Broseley, then moved to a cottage in Simpson's Lane, Broseley Wood. Albert Henry Owen was born here on 24th November 1904. They later moved to 50 Crewe's Park, Broseley Wood, where William was born on 21st September 1907. Mother's sister, Mary Ellen Stokes (nee Cullis), came to live at 51. These were a pair of semi-detached houses which had been built by some of mother's relations but, after a few years, the relatives wanted the houses vacated so that they could let them for a higher rent. My aunt Mary went to live at number 29 Barnett's Leasow, Jackfield for a time and, in March 1914 my parents moved to 46 The Mines. This is where I was born

My parents were a very hardworking couple and, between them, they kept several fowl and two pigs. Mother made bread and cakes etc., did the cooking, which was all done by coal fire as there was no gas or



The Mines Benthall - No 46 is at the left end of the white terrace

electricity. The first Ironbridge Power station had not then been thought of. There was also no tap water, drinking water had to be fetched from what was called The Mines spout, which was about a quarter of a mile from our home.

This water was only used where pure water was essential, for all other purposes rainwater was used. I would say that all of a thousand gallons of water could be stored and used for the preparation of vegetables, washing ourselves, having our baths in front of the fire in a galvanised bath; it was also used for the weekly washing of clothes. This meant lighting a fire to heat the cast iron wash boiler for boiling the clothes, then some were dollyed in the dolly tub, some scrubbed on the scrubbing board and eventually rinsed and put through the wooden rolls of the mangle, rinsed, wrung and put through the mangle again, before being put out on the line to dry. When sufficiently dry the ironing was done with flat irons, which were made by the local foundries. These irons had to be heated in front of the fire. The wash boiler was also used for brewing beer; hence the washroom was called the brewhouse. Obviously, brewing was just as important as washing!

Mother also did dressmaking, and made most of our clothes; she was even up early one morning and made a pair of trousers for my brother, Bill, before he could go to school. She knitted our gloves, socks and jerseys and darned them when they needed repair; she also patched our other clothes. She was a wonderful mother.

One story I must tell about my mother and her sister is this. Their father, Henry Cullis, died quite young. I think my mother was 7-8 years old and her sister, Mary, was two years younger. Henry Cullis was the son of the Cullis family of bargeowners who kept The Black Swan Inn at Lloyds Head, Jackfield. At the time they lived on Adam's boat, and their mother was left with two young daughters who were sent to a school in Bridgnorth, where they were boarded.

Apparently, they disliked the place so much that they decided to run away, and as mother was the eldest, I guess that she was the leader. I wish now that I had asked her the details of the escapade but she did tell me she knew that if they got onto the railway line they could walk home. Even at that young age my mother knew that, if they walked along the railway line, they would get to Jackfield and home to their mother; which they did. Their mother would not let them go again and she worked very hard to keep the family together, often going to work at Southorn's Pipe Works in Broseley Wood, without taking any food with her. She had to pass the house of a relative, and rather than let them think she had no food, she used to put a half brick into her basket and cover it with a cloth. Some folks think they have it hard now!

As I said earlier, my father was a blacksmith, and like most men of that trade, could turn his hand to many other things, e.g. carpentry, bricklaying, boot and shoe repairs, cutting our hair, building his own greenhouses, making his own heating installations for them, making his own ladders; also making some of their furniture. As well, he made all new windows for the house and he made a bit of pocket money by sharpening scissors and saws for the locals. But his great love was his garden, where he grew enough vegetables to feed the family for twelve months. He had over three hundred rose bushes of which he was very proud, most of them he had budded himself. Like all other cottages around we had an earth closet, which periodically needed emptying. Then father would dig a large hole in the garden, and into this went all the contents of the closet. In due course a row



Broseley Wood School 1921
Jack (fifth from the right, back row) in his last year at the school before moving to the National School.

of runner beans were planted over it. Re-cycling went on in those days too!

On top of all the work at home he walked two miles to his place of employment and two miles back home. This was on six days a week and occasional Sundays. For a forty-seven hour week he received three pounds five shillings and any overtime, including Sunday work, was paid at time and a quarter. Actually, when they first married, my father's wage was little more than a pound a week and the working week was, I think, 52 hours. In those days they started very early and had their breakfast at work,

When people are telling their life stories they often tell of their earliest memory. When I was young both baby boys and baby girls wore frocks. My earliest memory is this. I had started toddling and, having got as far as the edge of the table, could not see onto it. I grasped the edge of the table with both hands and pulled myself up onto the tips of my toes, in order to see the things on the table. I clearly remember that, on that occasion, I was wearing a frock - a very early memory indeed!

My mother told me that I was three years old when I started going to Legges Hill School, Broseley Wood, where Miss Lamont, who was a very kindly lady, assisted Miss Wiggins, the head. Miss Wiggins retired and Miss Scott became headmistress. At this time of my life I contracted various ailments and, at one stage, I was so ill that I know my parents thought I was going to die. I remember my mother sitting on the bed and hugging me and I told her that I was not afraid to die. Anyway, with my mother's wonderful nursing and Dr. Fox-Edward's treatment, I got better; but for a long time afterwards I had very little appetite.

I also remember, after I was up and about, Joe Jones the postman had delivered an envelope. I can, in my mind, see mother now. She came into the parlour, sat down and opened the envelope and took out what was inside. She sat there obviously distressed. I said, "What's the matter, Mam?" She replied, "It's the doctor's bill and I don't know how I'm going to pay it." It was for £3, which, at that time, was more than my father's wages for a week.

Because of my poor appetite following my illness my mother used to pack biscuits, every day in a little nickel-plated brass box, for me to eat during playtime. This box I still have. However, gradually my health improved, largely due, I think, to my palling up with fairly rough lads. There were four of us, Benny Cartwright, Arthur Boden, Jack

Arrowsmith and myself and we called ourselves The Black Hand Gang; we spent most of our leisure time in the local woods and fields. In the woods we would spend our days building tents of birch and bracken, both on the ground and in the trees. We also built wig-wam type tents in charcoal burners' holes. In the fields we played football. We also made bows and arrows and spears. We had contests, shooting with the first, and throwing the second along the woodland glades. Father taught us to make whistles and another thing, peewits; both made from young sycamore shoots. He also taught us to make kites. The frame was usually made from hazel sticks covered with newspaper and stuck with paste made from flour and water. We used to fly these in The Folly field when the March winds were blowing. The Folly was the main playing field; there the farmer never bothered us. Agnes Aston-Hill, a relative of my father's, also featured the Folly field in a poem.

My father made toys for me. I think the first was a wooden horse, he also made a wooden truck. As I got a bit older he made a scooter, which was great, until one day it broke, but I soon had another one. This time I bought one from Toone's shop in High Street, Broseley. The wheels were only wooden discs and soon wore oval, but father soon rectified them by putting iron rims on them, like miniature cartwheels. At that time most of the lanes and roads were either limestone cobbles or pottery refuse. The Coach Road to Ironbridge was just such a one, and what rattle the iron shod wheels made when I used to take my cousin Charlie Owen on the front of the scooter, down the Bridge Bank to Ironbridge and Broseley Railway Station, where we often played. Sometimes we carried on to Coalford, Jackfield, where my grandparents and my Aunt Mary and Uncle Jim Stokes lived.

Also, on a Saturday morning, my mother would put some religious papers in a small carpetbag, for me to take to my granny at Coalford. The way I went on the scooter from 46 The Mines to Coalford was, up the Coach Road to Broseley, straight down High Street and Church Street to the Hospital Corner, then down Ironbridge Road to the Hairpin Bend, and turn right to Coalford, about 3 miles. Granny would give me a glass of Dr Watson's Stout and a piece of cake, and then it was back home via Ladywood and up the Bridge Bank. A total distance of about four and a half miles.

My brother William (Bill) was a cyclist, and he knew Douglas Smith, as they both worked at Maws. One day, Doug told Bill he had a cycle to sell for ten shillings. I bought it; I was then ten years old. The bike was an old GPO sit up and beg type. After a few rides in the close local area, brother Bill planned a longer ride for me: Much Wenlock, Bourton, Brockton, Shipton, Bridgnorth and home; about 28 miles. Soon I acquired a second-hand Hercules sports bike for thirty shillings; this opened up a new world for me, and from then on I was hooked on cycling.

At the age of seven I went to the C of E School in Bridgnorth Road, usually called The National School. There I continued my education until I was fourteen years old, leaving school when we broke up for the August holiday.

Jobs were scarce at that time although, when I was thirteen, in 1927, another lad, Percy Jones, who was a year older than me asked if I would take over his part-time job helping Harry Baugh the breadman. Percy had been helping Harry, who delivered bread for the Co-operative Wholesale Society, three times a week. I was only too willing to take on the job and I did it for over two years. (Note: - Percy went to Maddocks's Foundry, Oakengates as the buyer and later became a director) The bread was delivered by horse drawn van; we also collected parcels of groceries which customers had ordered from the Broseley Co-op. These parcels were delivered with the bread.

When I came out of school at 4pm on Mondays and Wednesdays I had to meet Harry and the bread van. We then took the bread all around Broseley, Benthall, The Mines and Broseley Wood. On Fridays I met Harry when I came out of school at 12 noon. It was one rush to do the round, leaving Harry at what used to be the Maypole pub at Woodlands Road, Broseley Wood then having to run from there back to school. I had to cover three quarters of a mile from the pub and be back in school before half-past one, otherwise I had the cane. When I left in the August of 1928 I continued to help Harry; also I did some part-time work for Mr Gee. He managed the Co-op shoe shop in Ironbridge and what interested me most was to help Billy Williams, the cobbler at the shoe shop. He taught me not only to repair shoes, but even to hand sew new soles on. I carried on doing these part-time jobs until I was fifteen years old; then I got my first regular job at Hunter's Tea Stores in Much Wenlock. I started there on 2nd September 1929.

Book Reviews

John Wilkinson, Ironmaster Extraordinary
by Ron Davies,

Reviewed by Rex Key

Mad - or a genius? Whichever way you look at it, John Wilkinson was certainly a colossus among men of iron and it is difficult to ascribe his inventions and achievements to being the work of only one man. Certainly he suffered setbacks and failures, but these were dwarfed by his monumental successes, often in the face of almost universal scepticism.

John Wilkinson had an innate ability to make things - things which had not yet been invented, things which people said could not be made. In his book, John Wilkinson, Ironmaster Extraordinary, Ron Davies has chronicled some of the factors and influences which drove him on, building bigger, more elaborate foundries and ironworks to the pinnacle of his endeavours, the Bradley works near Wolverhampton. This earned the sobriquet "the second wonder of the age", Coalbrookdale being the first.

The book, which runs to 27 pages, with an additional 24 pages of line-drawing illustrations by the author, places Wilkinson's epoch-making achievements in an industrial context and details his links with such other pioneers as Matthew Boulton, James Watt, Abraham Darby II and James Brindley. Ron has dug out what appears to be his earliest link with Broseley when in 1752 he was buying coal from the Weld Estate, following through as one of the protagonists of the Iron Bridge.

An 18th century adventurer and pioneer worthy of international acclaim, most schoolchildren have hardly heard of John Wilkinson. This book should be compulsory reading for every youngster who, while he may have full finger-mouse-cursor co-ordination, is in danger of leaving school with no idea what happens to a lump of iron if you heat it and hammer it.

This is a compact, but authoritative, work on Wilkinson and, additionally, is an enlightening snapshot on the social, domestic and commercial world of the late 18th and 19th centuries. It is invaluable for serious scholars and local historians - and for computer-infected youngsters as well.

Copies are available from:

David Lake, Stocking Lane, Nordley WV16 4SY.

Price £6.95 - P&P:£1.50 (free within a 10 km radius of Broseley).

Cheques should be made payable to the Broseley Local History Society

'Broseley and Its Surroundings' by John Randall

John Randall was born in Broseley in 1810. For much of his life he worked as a china painter at both the Coalport and Rockingham China Works, specialising in painting birds. He lived through major changes in the district. When he was born Broseley was a major ironmaking and mining district. By the time he was 20 ironmaking had all but ceased and Broseley was a depressed town. Mining continued to decline such that, by the time his book was published, there were fewer than 200 people working in the mines of Broseley. During this period ironmaking and mining were replaced by the clay industries of Brick and Tile manufacture as well as Pottery and Clay pipes.

The book still remains the main source of information on Broseley and is particularly informative on: medieval, industrial and family history as well as the Forester family who still live at Willey Hall. It is particularly useful as Randall had access to many documents, which have either been lost or are held in private collections. As in all works of history there is some conjecture and misinterpretation; however, this does not detract from its value and even today it remains the most complete history of the district.

As well as being a painter Randall was an accomplished geologist and acted as a consultant in mining geology. He was also a prolific author of books on the district. He lived much of his life in Madeley and died in 1910. His epitaph in Madeley Church reads: *'To his geological researches was due the extension of the mining industry in the neighbourhood'*

Review by Nick Coppin

This classic Broseley history has been out of print for some time and is now available in CD ROM format. It is the original 1879 edition with additional notes. The work has been painstakingly carried out by Steve Dewhirst and copies are available from him.

I have used the CD ROM and it is a very handy way of looking for items of interest. It is in a .pdf format and if your computer does not have Adobe Reader, a copy is included on the disc. It is then a simple matter to look through page by page or search for that particular reference of personal interest - railways in my case!

For non-computer people, it should be a simple job to get a firm or a friend to print out a paper copy of the book.

Copies are available from:

Steve Dewhirst, 9 Maypole Road, BROSELEY TF12 5QH
Price £6.00 - p&p: £1.50