

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



August 2007

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- 2 Jan *Society Activities 2006-07*, presentation by John Freeman
- 6 Feb *Shropshire Workhouses*, by Lance Smith
- 5 Mar *John Wilkinson and his Transport Interests*, by Neil Clarke (at Birmingham Science Museum)
- 3 Apr *Broseley Ironmasters on the South Staffordshire Coalfield*, by Paul Luter
- 7 May 'You try and stop me!' Part II. Walk around the rest of Coalport and Jackfield, led by Ron Miles
- 4 Jun Installation of John Wilkinson plaque and summer evening at The Lawns
- 12 Jul Wilkinson Bicentenary Conference at the Great Warehouse, Coalbrookdale
- Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm at the Broseley Social Club, High Street, unless otherwise announced. Car parking is available at the back of the Club. Members are requested to be seated by 7.30 pm to allow speakers a prompt start.

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

PROGRAMME

- 5 Sept Noel Ward and Ray Johnston, led by David Lake, share some *Wartime Memories*. Time allowing, David will also talk about the cavity magnetron so crucial in powering wartime radar equipment, and now powering our microwave ovens.
- 3 Oct Annual General Meeting and talk by Richard Bifield on *Thomas Telford's Shropshire Works*
- 7 Nov *Alison House*, talk by Vin Callcut on the history of his house in Church Street, Broseley
- 5 Dec Annual Christmas dinner

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Barry Hodgson	Wolverhampton
Caroline Bagnall	Broseley
Dr Richard Weekes	Bradford
Lynda Watts	Waterlooville, Hants
Jenny and John Dyas	Widnes
Angela and Keith Davies	Sleaford, Lincs
Robert Fisk-Moore	Broseley Wood

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

John Wilkinson 200th anniversary

Next year sees the 200th anniversary of the death of John Wilkinson. To mark this occasion, the Society will be installing a commemorative plaque at The Lawns in Church Street, the one time home of this great ironmaster. By kind invitation of Mel Mars, whose home it now is, this ceremony will take place on Wednesday 4 June 2008.



The Society will also be holding a one day conference on 12 July which will include lectures on John Wilkinson and his work as well as a tour of local places of interest. Details of this have yet to be finalised but book the date in your 2008 diary now and watch this space!

WANTED!

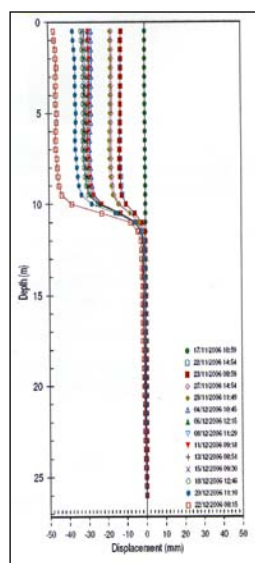
The Society occasionally needs microphone and speaker equipment for use at meetings. If there is any member willing to lend such items when needed, please contact steve@broseley.org.uk or any member of the committee.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Site visit to the Lloyds

In June over 40 members gathered at the Lloyds where work has been going on to stabilise the road that runs along this section of the river Severn. There, site engineer Neal Rushton of Telford & Wrekin Borough Council explained what had been done to assess the problem and the work presently being carried out to contain it.

As any local resident will know, water levels in the Severn vary considerably. These varying levels have a definite influence on the rate of slip and inclinometers installed on the site during November and December of 2006 showed that the lower the water level the greater the amount of slip. Alarming,ly, one inclinometer plot located downslope of the Lloyds showed an average ground movement of 1.4 mm/day (that's over 20 inches a year!), accelerating up to 6 mm/day.



It had become quite obvious, therefore, that urgent action needed taking and in September last year Phase I of the stabilisation project was begun.

The first thing the site team did was to move sufficient material from the site to

One inclinometer plot located downslope of the Lloyds during November and December 2006 showed an average ground movement of 1.4 mm/day, accelerating up to 6 mm/day

compensate for the weight of the 80 tonne crawler crane needed for the job. The next was to install temporary steel casings through the landslide material into the rockhead. Pile bores were then drilled up to a depth of 29.5 metres, each pile being reinforced with a 660 mm diameter steel tube down its full length. Some of these were fitted with inclinometers and strain gauges to allow future monitoring.

Once the steel tubes were positioned, they were filled with concrete from the bottom up using a pipe suspended from a crane. A new reinforced concrete wall, to retain the south side of the carriageway, was also constructed.

During construction work, the site team made some interesting finds. South of Lloyds Cottage was the remains of an old building, while during piling timber was found within the landslide material. Old mine strutting timbers were also unearthed and a wheel from a furnace trolley, encased in slag, was found beneath the road. Abandoned mine workings also posed a problem, with grout having to be injected into the worked coal seams up to depths of 55 metres.

The site is presently being tidied up and the road resurfaced and at the time of going to press was scheduled for reopening on 31 August.

Funding has now been obtained for Phase II of this project, which is to stabilise the area between the road adjacent to Lloyds Cottage and the river.

However, Telford & Wrekin Council do not anticipate that the road itself will be closed during this work.

The steel tubes were filled with concrete from the bottom up

A furnace trolley wheel covered in slag was found beneath the road



Lloyds Head closure

As members will already know a short length of the road in front of the Black Swan on the Jackfield side of the river has been closed to vehicles which are now diverted via Calcutts and Ironbridge Roads. Temporary traffic lights have been installed at the junction of these two roads and a barrier erected at one end of Chapel Road to avoid this being used as a short cut.

To restore a direct route from the bridge to Jackfield itself, a temporary road near to the existing road closure is to be built.

Trip to North Wales

This year being the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Telford, the Society's July outing was a trip to North Wales to see some of the achievements of both Telford and John Wilkinson in and around the Dee Valley.

The idea was to travel along as much of Telford's Holyhead Road (built from 1815-37) as was feasible, with an initial short detour to see his 62 ft span aqueduct at Longdon on Tern. From there it was straight through to Llangollen, a journey much enhanced by Neil Clarke's commentary on the various features to be seen along the road.

Telford's remit was to improve the route from Shrewsbury to Holyhead. This he did by following much of the existing turnpike roads, reducing the steeper gradients, bridging rivers and generally making the route both faster and more comfortable. He also designed the toll houses, the wrought iron toll gates and the cast iron milestones. It is a tribute to his work that today's A5 follows the same path almost without change.

On the way Neil pointed out the contrast between the cast iron triangular milestone posts east of Shrewsbury, such as the one outside the old Wrekin Hospital in Wellington, with the Telford



Off on a smoky and nostalgic journey up the Dee Valley

designed stone pillars with recessed cast iron plates west of Shrewsbury, most of which are still in place. Also to be seen were the toll houses at Montford Bridge, Wolf's Head near Nesscliffe and Chirk which were in use before the Holyhead Road improvements, while those at Burcot, Llangollen and Ty-Isaf (with weighbridge) reflected the standard Telford design.

Major civil engineering works to be seen were the Ketley embankment, new sections of road at Overley Hill and Montford Bank and the new alignment on the approach to Chirk. Two bridges along the way, Montford Bridge (built in 1792) and Chirk (built in 1793), were also designed by Telford, although prior to the Holyhead Road improvements.

Telford also provided for recesses for roadside storage of surfacing stone. No more than a quarter of a mile apart, they were much in evidence between Chirk and Llangollen.

Once at Llangollen station the party boarded the first steam train of the day, taking a very smoky and nostalgic journey up the valley as far as Glyndyfrdwy, storms having damaged the line further up. Phil Bradley from Eardington was the winner of the footplate prize, and he says that although he had been on a steam train before he had never been through a tunnel. It was, he said, quite an experience and very enjoyable, as was the whole trip.

From there it was back to Llangollen by coach to board the *Thomas Telford* narrow boat for a trip along the Llangollen Canal over Pontcysyllte Aqueduct to Froncysyllte Wharf.



Telford's milestones along the Holyhead Road were stone pillars with recessed cast iron plates





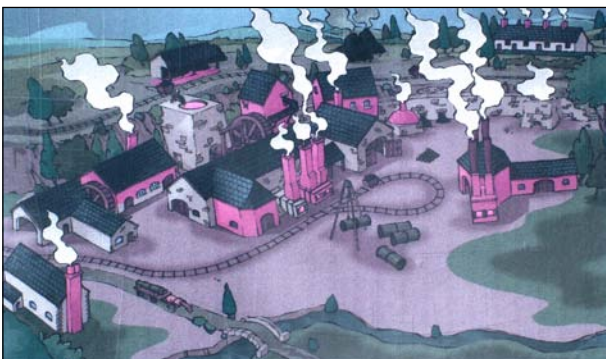
Crossing the Pontcycyllte Aqueduct was like being suspended in mid-air

Telford's aqueduct, carrying the canal over the River Dee, is 1007 ft long and 125 ft high and it certainly seemed like it – from the deck of the narrow boat one appeared to be suspended in mid-air. Definitely scary but an experience not to be missed! The design of the aqueduct is very ingenious. It is simply an iron trough on stone piers and, to solve the problem of water displacement and reduce costs, Telford hung the towpath over the canal itself. When built in 1805, the joints were sealed using welsh flannel dipped in boiling sugar and then sealed with lead.

The next stop was Bersham Ironworks. Ironworks had existed there since at least 1670 but it was John Wilkinson who in 1763, together with his brother William, took them over from his father Isaac and made them famous. It was here that he developed his machine for boring cannon from solid iron and was later to bore cylinders for James Watt's new improved steam engine.

In 1793 John bought the nearby Brymbo Hall estate with the intention of founding another ironworks. This, however, led to a quarrel between John and his brother and in 1795 John bought William out. From this time the works started to decline and were finally sold in 1812, although by then many of the works buildings had already been demolished

An artist's impression of how the Bersham site might have looked in its heyday



This octagonal building was probably the cannon foundry

Today the only part of this once great ironworks still visible is at Mill Farm where excavations have revealed not only many artefacts but a blast furnace and coking ovens previously buried beneath farm buildings.

At the site Steve Grenter of Wrexham Museum indicated the remains of the blast furnace which was there in 1763 and which may even have been the one where iron using coke was successfully made in 1723.

The octagonal building on the site was probably built in about 1775 as a cannon foundry, its shape ensuring that each furnace was the same distance from the casting pit, while built into the hillside was a limekiln, its special features indicating that it may have been built by an ironmaster.

Also visible was a ceramic pipe running towards the blast furnace. This was probably the remains of one of Isaac Wilkinson's inventions. In 1757 he had patented a method of blowing air into a furnace, involving a mechanism under a waterfall and a series of underground pipes. Unfortunately, it did not work and had to be abandoned.

And so to the end of a thoroughly enjoyable and fascinating day, and a big thank you to all those people whose hard work had made it such an interesting and varied trip.

A thoroughly enjoyable day



100 YEARS ON

E Davis & Son, the popular ironmongers' store in Broseley's High Street, last year celebrated its 100th anniversary. Originally owned and run by an Edwin Davis, it was passed on to his son Walter. Walter, however, had no children and on his death it was left to the person who had been helping him run it – James William Hurdley. It is his son, also James, who today runs the store with his family.

In trying to find out more about the Davis family, James asked Walter's nephew Ken, who still lives in Broseley, for some background information. Here is what Ken had to say.

My great great grandfather Francis Davis came from Myddle in North Shropshire to work in the Ironbridge Gorge. There he married a widow called Sarah by whom he had several children, two of whom were named George and Francis.

George and Francis bought a brick and tile works down Rough Lane. It was very successful, many bricks being shipped down the Severn to build half of Bristol. Their products were also used for buildings in this area among them the Instone Buildings (1900), Broseley School, the Blue School in Ironbridge, my (Ken's) house in Queen Street and the floor tiles in Broseley Church.

Their success was due to the fact that they discovered how to make very hard brick. To keep the formula secret, however, they made the mix themselves during the night and never passed the secret on. My father, Charlie, said that had they done so the family would have made a fortune!

Left, Ken Davis' great great grandfather Francis Davis with his wife Ellen and right, George Davis 1828-1903



Photograph courtesy of James Hurdley

George lived in the right hand house opposite the church and Francis lived in Raddle Hall. Their clay pit was in the church fields between the church and the cemetery. At that time the bottom end of Broseley was frequently flooded in the winter and George thought that if he could crack the underlying clay bed this would solve the problem. So he and Francis set to and packed the pit with dynamite. The resultant explosion nearly blew up half of Broseley. It also cracked the bed and solved the problem!

After a terrible row, the brothers split up and Francis left, first taking over the Station Hotel at Ironbridge and then a boarding house in Rhyl, where he eventually died. His body was brought home and buried in the churchyard. George carried on the business but it gradually declined and folded. He eventually retired and on his death was also buried in the churchyard.

George's children were George, William and Edwin. George emigrated to South Africa but Will went to Ruabon and took over a brick and tile works there. He was very clever and successful in making unusual yellow pots. Recent tests have shown that the yellow clay colouring was caused by traces of a uranium ore and the pots are slightly radioactive (my cousin, Matt, still has one). William had a son, Vincent, who worked at Maws before moving up to Ruabon to join his father. He too was very successful and eventually retired as a millionaire. A few years ago, as a member of the family, I was officially invited to the opening of a section of Ruabon museum which was devoted to the work of these two.

The third son, Edwin, bought a grocer's shop, now the newsagents, and an ironmongers next door but one – now run by James Hurdley. He had five children, Edith, Lily, Maggie, Walter who married Estelle Martin, and Pattie. He also took over the (Old) Post Office which Estelle managed. He eventually sold the grocery shop to Billy Instone and concentrated on the ironmongery. I have always thought how fortunate it was that when his son Walter took over the business, he took on your (James Hurdley's) father to help him out. For any excuse and Walter was off to attend a concert, play the piano or go to Ludlow Races with my father!



Then and now, Matthew Davis' shop in King Street

Francis, my great grandfather, had a son, Matthew, whom he apprenticed to a butcher called Barney Wilcox in Ironbridge. After serving out this apprenticeship, Matthew married June Hayward and emigrated to Argentina at the age of 22. There he set up a business selling meat to the ships but having lost four children he had had enough and they came back to Broseley. He bought a set of buildings in King Street and set up as a butcher. Matthew was till mad and completely tiled the shop, parts of the house and the slaughter house next door from top to bottom. The shop is unique and has featured on television. It was there that my father, Charlie, was born. He was one of sixteen children and I am the only direct male descendant to be left in Broseley.

Ken Davis

This copy of an indenture document dated 1875 is courtesy of Ken Davis and shows Matthew Davis being apprenticed to Barney Wilcox, a butcher in Ironbridge. Matthew was 13 at the time. The document reads in part, "He shall not waste the Goods of his said Master, nor lend them unlawfully to any. He shall not commit fornication nor contract Matrimony within the said Term. He shall not play at Cards or Dice Tables or any other



unlawful Games whereby his said Master may have any loss with his own goods or others during the said Term without Licence of his said Master. He shall neither buy nor sell. He shall not haunt Taverns or Playhouses nor absent himself from his said Master's service day or night unlawfully.... And the said Barnabas Wilcox in consideration of the work and services to be rendered by the said apprentice shall and will pay to him the sum of four shillings per week from the time when the said apprentice shall attain his age of eighteen years until the termination of the said apprenticeship...."

The original document, which was signed off by Barnabas Wilcox, is now in the possession of Matthew's great grandson and was last heard of hanging on the wall of his office in Singapore.

Readers may also like to refer to Gerald Davis' correspondence on page 9. Gerald, who lives in Australia, is the direct descendant of George Davis.

TELFORD WINS SILVER

Telford & Wrekin Council and its partners have won a silver medal at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The Council won the award in the show gardens category for its interpretation of a Thomas Telford Toll House Garden.



A LITTLE BIT OF MEMORABILIA

This ticket to a Grand Cricket Match between Broseley and Droitwich Cricket Clubs was lent to Newsletter by Tom Roberts. Dated 17 September, 1927, Tom is keen to emphasise that he was, of course, much too young to have actually attended the match! He is, however, impressed by the County and All England support given to the two sides. And all for 6d!

Tom also recalls going on a Broseley School Camp to Fairbourne, Merioneth, in the summer of





The campsite at Brynmeurig in Fairbourne, Merioneth, where pupils from Broseley School 'learnt to be self reliant and act on their own initiative'

1936, and his School Camp Notebook makes for interesting reading.

The five and a half hour train trip must have been quite an adventure, as well as all the other activities with which the boys were kept busy throughout the week. Although they had previously drawn up maps of the village with its shops and major buildings and done a land utilisation survey of the immediate area, such things as tide times and weather conditions had to be recorded. Tom also noted that although he didn't manage to grow any taller in that week, he did put on 1¼ lbs!

The boys were also taught how to make and use a sundial, which could have been tricky given the warning notice which greeted anyone braving the nearby beach.

Tom Roberts, whose family kept the garage in the High Street for many years, now lives in Barber's Row. Anyone else who remembers these camps, or indeed any other interesting activities, is welcome to write in to Newsletter. Ed.



Tom's caption to this photograph from his Notebook reads 'First view of the Beach – very appropriate'

BRIDGNORTH HISTORY WEEK

As part of Bridgnorth History Week the Society, along with other local history groups, recently held a display in Bridgnorth Library. The display was designed by Steve Dewhirst and gave a brief history of Broseley, as well as an illustrated synopsis of some of Broseley's past industries, in particular the clay industries of the area.

The aim of this History Week, which was organised by the Discover Shropshire Project, was to promote local and family history research in the Bridgnorth area. The local studies room at Bridgnorth Library is now equipped with a new fiche reader and a more comprehensive collection of local reference material. Volunteers based at the library will be available every Friday afternoon to help researchers get the most from the new resources. The library also asks that if any members are interested in becoming one of these volunteers they contact John Chedgzoy or Emma Spenser on 01746 763358.

SEVERN GORGE COUNTRYSIDE TRUST

Workhouse Coppice

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust has now completed its project at Workhouse Coppice finishing with a community day on Saturday 7 July. Also present at this event were ecologists Rodney Helliwell and Kate Thorne, as well as Glenn Bishton, a local ornithologist.

At the meeting it was explained that while any large scale project looked raw for the first two to three years, the benefits of more woodland flora and bird species would make it worthwhile in the longer term.

Alongside this project, the Trust has published a booklet *Workhouse Coppice, The Saving of a Woodland*, written by local historian Michael Pooley (see *Bookshop* on page 8).

It also intends to establish a Gorge wide group of interested individuals who can share their valuable local knowledge, especially about wildlife, as well as learn more about ongoing management work.

For further information on the SGCT's activities and publications, telephone 01952 433880 or visit their website www.severngorge.org.uk.

WHAT'S ON?

Coalbrookdale Gallery

Colossus of Roads Exhibition, ends 30 September
This exhibition, being held to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Telford, the engineer responsible for the design of many bridges, roads and canals throughout the country, focuses on his greatest works in the Midlands and North Wales as seen through the eyes of contemporary artists and engravers.

For further information on opening times telephone 01952 884391 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

Thomas Telford celebrations

Thomas Telford Conference Study Day
Sat 8 September, Jubilee House, Madeley
Further information from Richard Bifield 01952 384191 or visit www.thomastelford.info.

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

Wenlock Woodland Trail
Thurs 20 September, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm
Guided walk of the historic Wenlock Woodlands with Pete Lamberts, Wrekin Forest Project Officer.
For details telephone 01952 433880.

Telford Trail Challenge Walk

Sunday 16 September, 9.00 am
Meet at Spout Farm House, Telford Town Park
The event is aimed at raising awareness of some of the public Rights of Way in the Telford area. Walks will be approximately 2, 8, 11 or 14 miles and sponsorship for charity may be sought. The person raising the most money will win a pair of walking boots. Registration fee £1.00. There will also be a short walk of up to one hour starting at 10.30 am. Registration fee 50p.

For further information visit their website www.madeleyparishcouncil.gov.uk or telephone Julie Jones on 01952 278001.

BOOKSHOP

A Potted History of Barrow

In this 27 page illustrated booklet the history of Barrow church is narrated by the church itself. Written in a lighthearted and contemporary style it gives a 'potted' account of 1,200 years of ecclesiastical and social history which is both easy and delightful to read.

Published by Damson Valley Snippets of Bridgnorth, it is priced at £3.00, proceeds going to the Barrow Church Restoration Fund. Copies available from Norman Wyke, tel: 01952 882261 or email: nwyke@aol.com.

Workhouse Coppice, The Saving of a Woodland by Michael Pooley

This booklet is another in the series published by the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust and is a record of the way in which one small community in Shropshire defended its own precious piece of woodland.

When Workhouse Coppice was suddenly threatened with development in the early 1980s, the people of Benthall united to oppose the destruction of the wood, and then went on to secure its future as a place for wildlife and a recreational resource for all to enjoy. Well illustrated with photographs, diagrams and old newsclippings it makes an interesting and informative read.

Available at £3.00 from the SCGT, telephone 01952 433880.

MAILBOX

I am trying to find out about my Webb ancestors, many of whom were doctors in the Broseley, Wellington and Madeley part of Shropshire. My maternal great grandfather was first cousin to Capt Matthew Webb, the channel swimmer who was born in the area, and I am particularly interested in finding out more about his siblings, father, uncles, aunts and grandparents. Capt Webb's grandfather was a surgeon and lived in Wrockwardine for a time and his son Thomas Webb MD was in Wellington for many decades.

From the family bible I do know some details of births and deaths, but do not know much about their actual lives. Any anecdotes or references regarding these particular people would be very welcome:

Thomas Webb b 16 February 1760 – m 1.
Elizabeth Fryer, 2. Eleanor Howarth
Matthew (MD) (son of Thomas and Elizabeth)
b 30 March 1783, d 1837, m Damaris
Hartshorne at Broseley

Thomas Fryer (MD) (son of Dr Matthew and Damaris) 1812-1869, m Julia Ann Law 1849
 Charles Cattell (son of Thomas and Julia) b 22 July 1854 in Wellington, m Edith Subina Hilliard
 Matthew b 1813, m 1. Jane Wilcox, 2. Sarah Gazbeth – father of Captain Matthew Webb, 1848-1883
 Sue Fallon
 Canberra

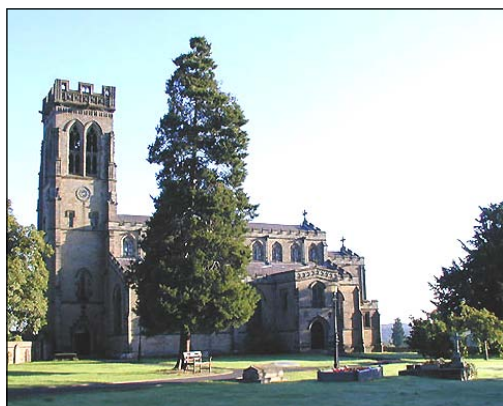
I am not aware of a Dr Webb in Broseley although I do have references to a Dr Webb of Madeley, one of which appears below:

“2nd February 1895 – As Dr Webb was driving his sleigh on Wednesday he came in contact with a hard piece of snow and was thrown out, as well as was a young lady who accompanied him. The horse bolted but was soon stopped by a youth. Fortunately no one was hurt.”
 Steve Dewhirst

My direct ancestor is George Davis who leased a brickworks with his brother Francis and I am trying to authenticate genealogical information compiled by other members of my family.

I have visited your website and found some very interesting reading. I am curious, however, that the photograph of All Saints’ Church that is shown on the website pictures a couple of vaults in the foreground. It was grassed over at the time of an earlier visit. Would anyone know whether the headstones shown in the photograph are the Davis family vaults which have since been removed?

Gerald Davis
 Sydney



All Saints' Church, Broseley



Photograph courtesy of Gerald Davis

Teacher and model pupils at Broseley Infants School, 1900. Gerald's father, Edmund Silvanus Davis, son of George Davis Junior, is the boy next to the teacher on the left. He would have been six years old at the time.

Ken Davis (whose reminiscences about his family are on pages 5 and 6) says the vault you mention is near the cherry tree on the right of the churchyard entrance, although the top stone has now been moved to under the big yew tree on the right. The headstones were cleared in the 1960s and although they were supposed to be placed around the periphery of the churchyard some went missing, among them that of George.
 Steve Dewhirst

I have been researching the Morgan family and am having difficulty finding the birth record and mother's name of my great grandfather James William Morgan who, according to the 1901 census, was born about 1868 in Jackfield. I know he lived in Pelsall/Walsall in 1901 and kept a grocer's shop until the 1940s. I have him and his family in 1891 and 1901 but am unable to trace his birth record in Shropshire.

I understand he was illegitimate and am, therefore, following the mother's line – probably looking for a female Morgan having a son some time in 1867/1868. Can anyone direct me to where I might look?

Sue Oliver (née Williams)
 Australia

My father, John James Broadhurst, originally came from Broseley and was the only son of John George and Minnie Broadhurst. They lived in Padman House in Cape Street. My father was a

Church of England clergyman and had parishes in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cornwall before retiring. He also had a very active life outside the church, being particularly interested in gardening and was an RHS judge for gladioli and daffodils.

I have quite a collection of old photos taken in Broseley as well as some of Coalbrookdale School. I also have several newspaper cuttings about James Davies who was my grandmother's brother.

I have done much research into our family tree and have already come across many familiar family names on your website. I look forward to doing more now I have come across such an excellent resource.

John Broadhurst

As you will have seen from the newspaper transcripts on our website, the name Broadhurst crops up quite often. So it was nice to hear from a descendant and to find that the information is useful.

James Davies is of particular interest as (if it is the same one) he was something of a local entrepreneur owning a shop in Broseley Wood selling almost everything. He also seems to have

A garden party at Field House, later the Cumberland Hotel which is now closed and converted into apartments



The County High School for Boys, Coalbrookdale, 1927



Photographs courtesy of John Broadhurst

been one of the first people to sell motor cars in the early 1900s.

Field House which you mention was later the Cumberland Hotel. This has now been closed and converted to apartments.

Steve Dewhurst

*The Society now has copies of the photographs and newspaper cuttings mentioned above. Anyone interested should contact steve@broseley.org.uk.
Ed*

I should like to say how much I enjoy reading your Newsletter – you have a good knack of bringing history to life.

My Taylor family lived in Broseley and Benthall for centuries and ran a pipe shop in Broseley in the 1730s. All my family were clay pipe makers back to Thomas 1693-1740 and possibly as far back as 1670. Going forward they kept the trade going until the 1920s. They set up in Birmingham and Gloucester before opening up in Shrewsbury in 1830.

They left Broseley between 1800 and 1815 and prior to this time they also used the surname Syner (other spellings were Seynor, Signer, Cynor) and I was wondering if this was the place where they originally lived and if so where is it exactly? I have Syners in Benthall from the 1560s and think there must be a connection with Syners Hill the place.

Peter Taylor

There are two references to Syner in Randall's History of Broseley 1879:

1726. The Deep pit in Madl. Crompton's land £8;

Thomas - Crayfuld's pit £2;

Synerhill pits £3.

Steve Dewhurst

My grandfather Fred Welch removed the pinnacles from Broseley Church after the war (see May 2007 Newsletter). My mother, Marion, remembers sitting alongside her father on the iron topped Dixon tomb as he ate his lunch.

Jonathan Elcock

Brenda Gaffney has been researching her Hill ancestors (see August 2006 and May 2007 Newsletters). In June, on a visit to Broseley, she joined other Society members at the Lloyds site visit. She now writes:

I had a wonderful evening at the Lloyds site visit and was surprised how well it was attended. Next day Rosemary Clegg took me round Broseley to see the places where my ancestors lived, in particular Barratt's Hill, where my grandfather was born, and the Lord Hill in Cockshutt Lane. My great grandmother was married at Birchmeadow. I thought the jitties were great, so nice that most of them still remain; Rosemary explained about the squatters' rights and said there were lots of hastily put up dwellings along the road to Ironbridge.

Joan Griffiths and Rosemary then took me to Benthall Church. So pleased to see it was open and at long last was able to see for real the famous iron grave markers of the Hills.

Brenda Gaffney

I am now a disabled octogenarian living in a rest home in Southport and getting much pleasure researching my Shropshire ancestors, the Evans family.

I find many of these were miners in the Broseley area. Could you please tell me the name and situation of the colliery in Broseley? My great grandfather left the pit to work on the railway in the 1860s. Would that be the date when the railway was first built in that area?

A previous generation was living in Broseley when the iron bridge was built in 1799. There is a family legend that before the building of the bridge, a ferry conveying people across the river capsized in a storm and a relative was drowned. Could this be correct?

The family were Methodists. I wonder if John Wesley ever preached in the area?

Thank you so much for your interesting internet site. I have found it most helpful.

Dorothy Broadhurst

Thank you for your kind words about our website.

There were many mines in Broseley, most of which were quite small. We don't know the names of the mines before the mid 19th century so it would not be possible to find out where your ancestors worked. If your grandfather left to work on the railway in the 1860s it is possible that would be the Severn Valley Railway which was constructed through Ironbridge and Jackfield in 1861.

I am not aware of a ferry capsizing by the iron bridge, but the Coalport ferry about 2 miles downstream capsized in 1799 killing 29 people.

As to John Wesley preaching in Broseley, Randall's History of Broseley 1879 indicates that he did so on two occasions, one of which was in April 1780 when he "took Broseley in my way (to Worcester), and thereby had a view of the iron bridge over the Severn: I suppose the first and the only one in Europe. It will not soon be imitated. In the evening I preached at Broseley."

Early in the history of Methodism, Broseley was in the Chester circuit and the preachers came on horseback, with saddlebags, once in three months. Later it was placed in the Shrewsbury circuit and preachers visited once in three weeks.

Steve Dewhirst

I have recently had published through the Madeley Living History Project booklets about Madeley War Memorial and the Jackfield/Coalport Memorial Bridge. Whilst researching these I have gathered quite a bit of other information and several people have asked if I was doing a similar publication on the Broseley War Memorial.

Before I do any more work is anyone in the Broseley Society doing a similar project? If so I can exchange information, if not I shall continue!

Janet Doody

These booklets, together with a series of others such as Parish Pubs – Licensed Premises of Madeley Past and Present, St Michael’s Church, Madeley (a Thomas Telford church) and The Beeches Hospital, the story of a Madeley Institution, may be obtained free of charge from Shelagh Lewis, Madeley Living History Project, email: lhp@mparish.fsnet.co.uk or tel: 01952 680278.

I am researching a documentary series on the men and women who worked on the Home Front during World War II making weapons, unloading ships, digging coal, nursing the injured and producing the food Britain needed to win the war.

I should like to hear from anyone who worked in the aircraft and munitions industries, on the railways, in the mines, in the emergency services, by the sea and docks and on the land. I am particularly interested in memories of the pride, camaraderie, danger and sacrifice made by these people. If anyone has a moving story to tell, please contact me.

Lizi Cosslett

Testimony Films

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Checking out some family history in Llandudno

I came across this article. Edward L’Anson was also the architect of the Forester Hospital at Wenlock.

Jonathan Elcock

One of Llandudno’s most familiar buildings faces an uncertain future after the announcement by Four Seasons Healthcare that it is to close the North Wales Medical Centre.

Originally opened in 1904 as the Lady Forester Convalescent Home this splendid building occupies a slightly elevated 18 acre site at the junction of Queen’s and Fferm Bach Road.

The Forester family, who owned quarrying and iron making works in Shropshire, erected the Llandudno facility to enable ill and injured workers to recuperate in healthy and attractive surroundings.

Although Lady Forester was born plain Mary Anne Ricketts her father was a viscount and her first husband was enormously wealthy and left her his entire fortune in his will.

In 1862 she married the 3rd Baron Forester, George Cecil Weld. When he died in 1886 she decided to endow charitable works in his memory and in 1893 plans were laid for two hospitals in Shropshire and a convalescent home in Llandudno.

In 1977 Aberconwy Borough Council tried to buy the redundant convalescent home but it was eventually acquired by a private medical company which subsequently sold it on to Four Seasons.

Members will remember Robbie Pickles’ very welcome expression of interest in getting the Society’s collection of artefacts more available for viewing. He has followed this up by offering to produce a photographic listing of this, liaising with Steve Dewhirst to put it on our website.

Robbie could be going to join our historians who not only study, but also make history!

David Lake

I am researching narrow gauge railways in the area and have heard of lines at Whixall Moss and Ercall Quarry which used Simplex i/c locos. I wonder if anyone has a copy of the IRS handbook of locos for Shropshire? I know the book is out of print but I should like to get a copy if possible.

Nick Coppin

Newsletter is sympathetic to the concerns of certain of its correspondents who are reluctant to see their email address appear in the public domain. If there is anyone who does not wish their contact details to be published, they are welcome to make use of the Society’s email address steve@broseley.org.uk. Any respondent without access to email may pass on information to any member of the committee.

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its launch in 1998!**