



NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY

Nov ember– 2024

Issue: 63

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm at the Broseley Social Club, High Street unless otherwise announced.

New members:

Mike & Diane Kaiser; Terry & Pat Arch
Terry & Carol Goodwin; Jenny Edwards

New appointment:

Congratulations to Sue Davies, our new president!

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MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thanks to your memberships subscriptions we can offer you monthly talks, a quarterly newsletter, and a yearly journal. Subscriptions to the History Society run from October to September of each year, and can be paid either in cash or by cheque (£10 for a single entry and £15 for a joint subscription) contact details for the membership secretary can be found on page 8.

[We would like to encourage you to opt for the digital version if you can, this would help us to keep our postage fees low ; please let the membership secretary](#)

What's On Elsewhere?

Broseley Local History Society is affiliated to the British Association for Local History and receives every quarter their newsletter and Journal, both of which are available at our meetings (the Local History News is also available online at the [BALH website](#))

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

News from the British Association for Local History (BALH) by **Janet Doody**:

Local History News (no.152)

There is an obituary of Dr. Kate Tiller (1949-2024) a 'most influential and eminent local and regional historian'; her books, of which I have 'English Local History an introduction' are accessible, readable and very useful. Amongst the book reviews is 'The Archaeology of Ironbridge Gorge in 20 Digs' by Michael Nevell; Church Stretton Local History Society has published a book following research into their local Union Workhouse.

For family historians the G.R.O. [General Registration Office] has increased its charges for certificates: digital images - £3; PDF - £8; printed certificates £12.50, provided index references are included.

BLHS PROGRAMME 2024 (TALKS & EVENTS)

by Neil Clarke

Please note: check our website or our Facebook page to confirm, that the event you wish to attend is still going ahead.

2024

Nov.6 - *Debunking the Iron Bridge*, David de Haan (joint with Friends of IGMT, in The Glass Classroom at Coalbrookdale)

Dec.4 - Annual Dinner (**booking form at the end of the newsletter**)

2025

Jan.8 - 'T. P. Overall and the King Street Maltings', Steve Dewhirst (1st Jan is New Year's day!)

Feb.5 - *Bow hauling on the Upper Severn*, Neil Clarke

Mar.5 - 'King of the Ironmasters', part 3 (Annual Wilkinson Lecture), Richard Sells.

April.2 - *Broseley Pipeworks*, Kate Cadman

May.7 - *Early Steam Engines in Broseley*, Steve Dewhirst

June.4 - Summer Walk

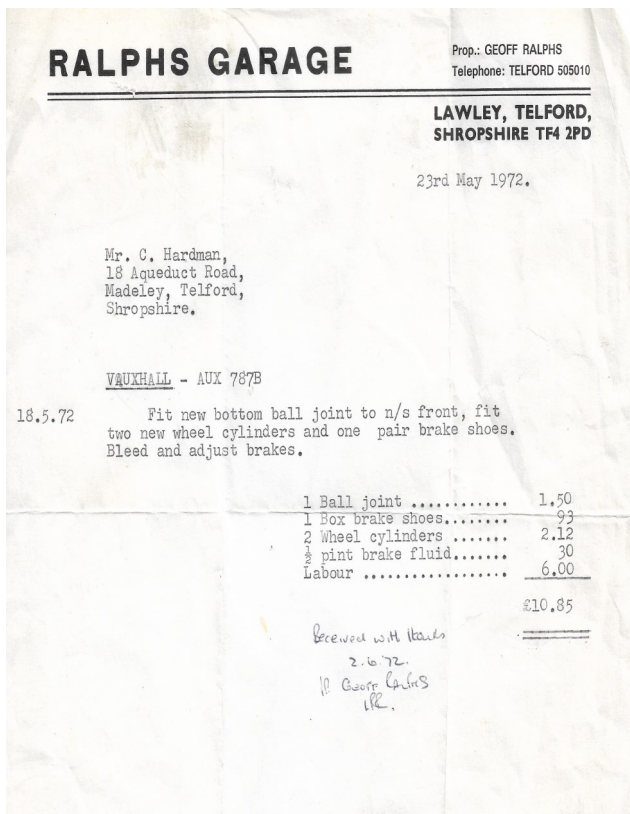
July.5 - Summer Outing

The National Library of Scotland has added more maps to their on-line archive.

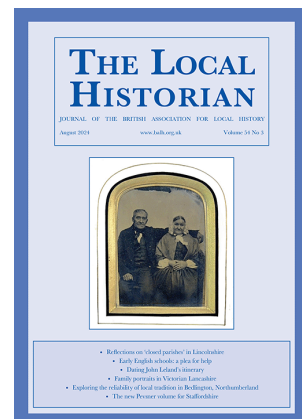
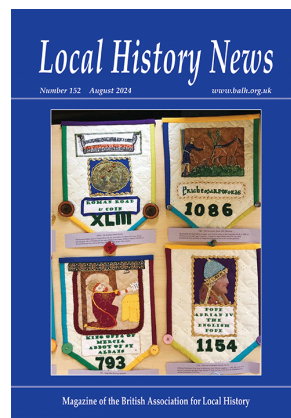
GOOD IDEAS TO BORROW: Hatfield LHS has a collection of receipts & invoices for local goods purchased; from a motorcycle in 1902 to furniture items. Broseley does have some receipts/invoices in its collection – do you have any tucked away at home? Please have a search and let us have a copy.



(picture courtesy of Janet Doody)



(picture courtesy of Janet Doody)



(pictures of publications covers courtesy of BALH)

The Historian (Vol.54/3)

There is an interesting article on exploring the reliability of traditional local stories concerning people, places or buildings; of how they can become accepted as fact without ever being proof of their accuracy! Over time misinformation can perpetuate into popular assumption orally and then reproduced in print. The author suggests that although these stories are a useful starting point, it is often rewarding and worth the effort in further research.

In 'Family Portraits in Victorian Lancashire' the author, using his own family studio photographs of the late 19th century looks shifts in taste and styles through these images. I don't have many such photographs but I shall certainly "re-visit" the ones Chris and I have.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND EVENTS

In September, we resumed the talks with **Posenhall Reservoir** by the owners themselves Peter Cross and Sarah Cook. A fascinating insight into a unique property's restoration, the project took 2 years to be completed and the final result was just stunning!

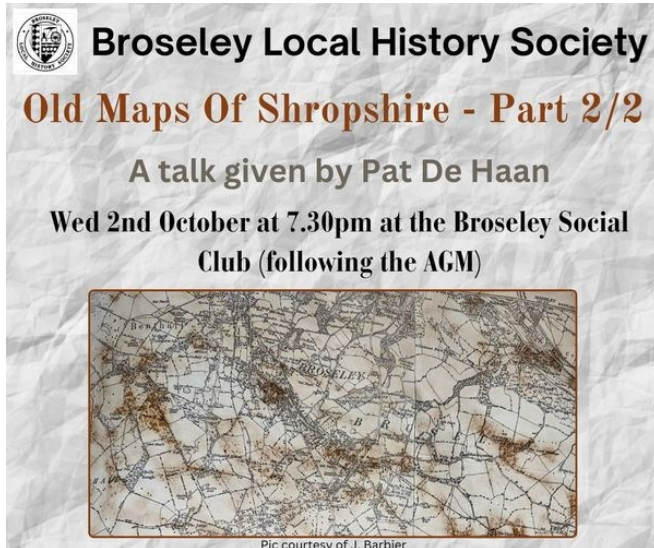
The audience was able to enjoy the craftsmanship of the brick work and Victorian architects.



Picture courtesy of Peter Cross

Then, in October, Pat De Haan delivered the second part of “Early Maps Of Shropshire” and how the changes into the maps shaped Shropshire with the addition of elements helping folks to travel by road, canal & rail.

The AGM reinstated folks in their respective role (s) & Sue Davies was elected President of BLHS .



ARTICLES

THE SKY AT NIGHT: JOHN PETER GEORGE SMITH (1818-1909) – LOCAL ASTRONOMER

By Janet Doody

John Peter George Smith was born on 9 January 1818 to Lord Henry [baptismal name NOT a title] and Jane Mary Smith in Greenwich. He began life as a clerk at the Bank of England, and in 1841 he joined C. & J. Rawdon, merchants of Liverpool; later that year on 4 November he married Emma Juliana Gray at Hove Parish Church. The couple continued to live in Liverpool where, for a short time John was appointed a director of the Liverpool Borough Bank.

During the 1870's he became a director of Craven Dunnill and the couple moved to Sweeny Cliff in Coalport, where they stayed for over 40 years; Emma died in July 1889 and was buried at Sutton Maddock. John Peter George Smith died on 31 May 1909 at Abbey Gate, Weston-Super-Mare and his remains were brought 'in a special coach per rail' to Iron-Bridge station, then to Eastfield the home of his son before the burial service at Sutton Maddock.

A keen student of the natural world and astronomy he had a large collection of birds, butterflies, moths and insects which he collected, whilst working in Brazil between 1843 -1845. In later life it was astronomy that became his passion, he had worked at the Liverpool Observatory, and in 1888 he built an observatory at Sweeny Cliff, where he mounted a Grubb refractor [telescope] and became a diligent observer which continued almost up to his death. On 9 January 1891 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and in 1898, in his late 70's he travelled to India to observe a total eclipse at Talni.

His obituary states 'he was a person who was willing to labour ... for those aims to promote the welfare of the district in which he had lived so many years. He was also an active politician, a strong Liberal-Unionist, an excellent speaker, and a capital organiser. Although a staunch Churchman, he was always free to assist other religious denominations. In many ways he will be a much missed man.

Their only surviving child, Francis Rawdon Smith, a graduate of Merton College Oxford and also a director of Craven Dunnill, remained in the area following the death of his father, he died on 6 April 1930 and was also buried at Sutton Maddock. Following Francis death, his father's natural history collection was left to the Public Museum of Liverpool , and, more interesting, his mother's collection of 6 cases of minerals etc. including corals, shells and a tortoise shell to Rugby School.

From Stars to Cells: The Life of Iron, an exhibition at the Coalbrookdale Gallery is on until 1st December; so be quick!

Source

Many thanks to Lauren Collier, Head of Interpretation at Ironbridge Gorge Museums

- Ancestry.co.uk
- Findmypast
- www.britishnewspaperarchives.co.uk

HOLLY WELL, BROSELEY by Steve Dewhirst

The well is located in Ironbridge road , between the Haycop and Dark Lane on the left hand side going down-hill. Brick lined well/spring which appears to originally have had a conical brick dome. The water sits a few centimetres from the top but there is no obvious overflow. It may be associated with another spring which still flows at SJ6810 0212.

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17.0&lat=52.61621&lon=-2.47300&layers=168&b=1&o=100>

The spelling is variously given as Holy and Holly-well but the latter is probably correct as this was the name given to the adjacent Tileworks (1). It would have been used as a local source of water before piped mains was provided in the early 20c. There is no religious reference to this well and it is not shown on early maps. In the 1880s it was investigated as one of the possible sources as part of a water scheme for the town (2), however, in 1885 it was not one of the main wells used for drinking water, perhaps because of its distance from the town. George Maw measured the flow as 1530 gallons per day (3). It is first shown on the 1902 25" OS map suggesting that the present brick structure was part of the 1880s water scheme. The scheme came to nothing and piped water was not provided until 1902.

In 1898 the rector of Jackfield was granted permission to use the water at the nearby rectory and it may be that this is the feeder which supplied the lower spring (4).

1. Holly Well Tileries company stamp of 1898. Shropshire Archives 1681/189/38
2. There is no mention in the Local Government Board Inquiry at Broseley. Eddowes Journal 29th April 1885
3. Wenlock Advertiser. 28th April 1881
4. 'Permission was granted the applicant, and the clerk was instructed to write him to this effect, adding that the work must be carried out to the satisfaction of the committee, and that the public rights must not be interfered with.' Wellington Journal, 9th April 1898



Picture courtesy of Steve Dewhirst taken in 2017



Picture courtesy of Steve Dewhirst taken with remains of a possible domed top in 2017



Picture courtesy of Jocelyne Barbier taken in 2019, the contours have lost their definition with the overgrown foliage

WILLIAM MORRIS by Steve Dewhirst

William Morris (1834-96) was from a wealthy middle-class family and is well known for his association with the Arts and Crafts movement. During his lifetime he wrote various books mainly of poetry however the book *Architecture, Industry and Wealth* (1902) was a collection of various papers and lectures including one on *The Influence of Building Materials on Architecture*. He did not have a high opinion of Broseley roofing tiles:

"I spoke just now about Broseley tiles. Just call to your memory the ordinary villages in the Midland counties of England, which I suppose were once pretty places. They are no longer pretty places at all. There are two reasons why they are ugly now; because the buildings, whatever they once were, have almost entirely given place to buildings built of the Midland county bricks, which are great big, stumpy, lumpy blocks of clay, a very bad colour as a rule; "excellent material" I believe builders would call them; and they are all roofed with these Staffordshire tiles, the worst peculiarity of which is that they never weather to a decent colour; a few months after they are put up they get a vile dirty sort of black colour, even in the country; it is not merely the smoke; and at that black colour they stick to the end of the chapter.

To sum up about this roofing material; it seems to me, you have really first of all lead for a good roof covering; then you have stone slates; you have thatch, and you may have, with some trouble, a good country made tile. This is an extremely difficult thing to get, mind you, because unfortunately the Broseley tiles are so largely used as an "excellent building material," that the country potters have got worse and worse, and the tiles they provide you with will hardly keep out the wet. That again is another thing that wants a sort of combination of people who have to do with building to insist, as far as they can, on having this material turned out as good as it possibly can be turned out, and to be always worrying and thinking about these things. Well, the tile of course is again a very serious affair, because over a large part of the country tiles, if you could get them good, are the most convenient roof-covering you can have. When they are good they are very pretty in their own countryside, but I must say I have seen them on what I should call a grey stone countryside, and there I think the tiles even when good are a kind of blight on the landscape.

The good materials are then, first lead, if you must or may use it, then stone slates, then tiles, then thatch, and lastly, when you can use it, shingles. The bad materials, which nobody ought to use on pain of not being considered an architect at all, are thin slates and Broseley tiles. I can hardly consider that on an architect's building the use of these materials is a mere blemish; I look upon it rather as a destruction of the whole building as a work of art.

We ask all who have to do with repairing old buildings to consider it not so much undesirable as impossible to supplant a good roof-covering by a bad one; to consider it impossible that Broseley tiles can be used in place of good well-weathering old tiles; that neither slates, green or blue, nor tiles, can possibly take the place of stone slabs or stone slates on any buildings with which they have anything to do.

In 1908 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings updated their leaflet on roofing tiles. It appears that as a result of criticism from people like Morris, they had previously disapproved of Broseley Tiles. The manufacturers seem to have responded by making handmade tiles again and were back in the societies good books.

Broseley tiles - Some years since the Society issued a leaflet on roof coverings giving a list of good and bad materials. It stated that "Broseley mechanically-made tiles" were considered unsuitable, as they were thin, brittle and always weathered badly.

The Committee has lately learnt that, as a result of this leaflet, some manufacturers at Broseley are now making hand-made tiles. A sample of these has been received from Messrs. Prestage & Co., of Broseley, and it is noted that the price is the same as that of machine-made tiles. The tile is thoroughly good; and though it has been kept thin, like the machine-made tiles, to lessen the cost of carriage, it is not so thin as they are.

The Committee, however, considers that a first class tile should be nearer $\frac{3}{4}$ inch than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in thickness, as it is then less likely to break; moreover the stoutness assists the roof structure.

MOBILE ANTI-TANKS CYLINDERS, JACKFIELD

By Steve Dewhirst

These are remains of the WW2 defences along the River Severn Stop Line. The seven cylinders are located on the eastern side of Calcutts Road, opposite the Calcutts House and next to the bus stop. The cylinders were either used as a permanent barrier or were movable, the movable type normally have holes in the top (1). There are no holes visible on the blocks but they could be on the underside of the blocks. The blocks may not be in their original location but appear to have been used to block a small track, probably during the 1950s or 60s

1. *20th Century Defences in Britain, An Introductory Guide. Council for British Archaeology 1996. This lists 9 cylinders but old photographic evidence suggest there were only ever 7*



Picture private collection of Steve Dewhirst, note the number of cylinders, taken in the 60s

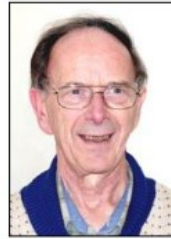


Picture courtesy of Steve Dewhirst taken in 2016

OBITUARY by Neil Clarke

Vin Callcut: a personal tribute

(picture from BLHS archives / newsletter 2012/ president of BLHS with Joan Griffiths)



We were all saddened to hear of the recent death of Vin Callcut. A Londoner by birth, with a distinguished career in metallurgy and a considerable output of technical publications to his name, Vin on retirement moved with his wife Hilary to Broseley some 25 years ago.

Vin became an active member of our Society and for several years was a member of the committee. He transcribed some of the Memory Evenings proceedings, produced a comprehensive index of Journal articles (2004), and gave several talks (including one on Broseley's water supply). One of his most memorable was the authoritative paper on 'John Wilkinson – Copper King?' for the Annual Wilkinson Lecture in 2005; an edited version of this appeared in the Journal. Vin also contributed to David Lake's editorial work in connection with the publication of Frank Dawson's posthumous book on Wilkinson (2012). He was invited to become President of the Society in 2012; and a report on his early life and working career, with a mention of his extensive collection of domestic brass and copper products, appeared in the Society Newsletter in November of that year.

In addition to acknowledging Vin's valuable contribution to the Society, many of us will fondly remember the 'Railway Evenings' which he and Hilary hosted at their Church Street home over many years in the Autumn. Railways were one of Vin's many interests and, on these occasions, members of the Society were invited to give presentations on railway (and other transport) themes. There were two sessions on either side of a refreshment break, when we were generously regaled with a superb buffet accompanied by wine. It's not surprising that these evenings were extremely popular, and not only with the railway buffs among our membership. Vin himself usually presented an illustrated talk on one of the rail journeys he and Hilary had made in Europe and North America – one included the mechanical intricacies of German 'Pacific' steam locomotives, and he patiently explained the wheel arrangement of such locomotives to the non-initiated!

Ill health prevented Vin from regularly attending our monthly meetings in recent years, but he occasionally kept in touch with me with emails about the frequent rail trips that were taking place and which he sadly could no longer join. I last saw Vin earlier this year at the Friends' talk that opened the exhibition at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum on 'From Stars to Cells: The Life of Iron'. Though unwell, his interest in metals was as keen as ever!

Vin will be sadly missed and we extend our condolences to Hilary and family.

MISCELLANEOUS

Extract from 24 April 1824, Roscommon & Leitrim Gazette, Boyle, Roscommon, Republic of Ireland

“ENGLISH CIVILIZATION .—A woman of the name Lydia Jones, of Colebrookdale, (known by the name of Lyd Williams) was offered by her husband for sale in Wenlock market on Monday. The Crier of the town proclaimed her to be sold, and she was produced with a halter round her waist, and was instantly purchased by one Aston, of Colebrookdale, for the sum of ten shillings, a quart of ale and paying the toll. The parties then retired to the Plough Inn, where the money was paid, and the evening spent with great glee by the three parties, Each appeared satisfied.”

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For more information and a general overview on the subject, please refer to

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wife_selling_\(English_custom\)#Mid-19th_century](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wife_selling_(English_custom)#Mid-19th_century)

Have you got any ancestor (s) who witnessed such a sale, or even sold their wife, if so, please contact us with your story!

GET ACQUAINTED WITH A COMMITTEE MEMBER, THIS MONTH MEET...

Margaret Hazeldine

1) *What or who made you interested into improving your knowledge of History?*

History was one of my favourite subjects at school. Having lived in the Broseley area since 1973 and in a Willey Estate house since 1975, it seemed the right thing to do to understand local history. I have also enjoyed learning about my own family history

2) *Who is your favourite historical character and why? (doesn't have to be British)*

My favourite historical characters are strong women: firstly Bess of Hardwick, and then Katherine of Aragon & Cecily Neville.

3) *For you, what is the most important legacy that the Industrial Revolution left behind?*

For me the most important legacy left from the industrial revolution are works by Thomas Telford.

He had such humble beginnings as an apprentice mason in Langholm, building bridges and harbours (my favourite Port Logan in Galloway) . He worked with William Hazeldine (is there a family connection?) to build the wonderful Menai Suspension Bridge and the spectacular Pontcysyllte Aqueduct among his many achievements.

He even sponsored library's in Langholm and Westerkirk.

EVENTS

IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM EVENTS

UNTIL 1 DECEMBER 2024 EXHIBITION "From Stars to Cells: the Life of Iron" in the Gallery at Coalbrookdale 7th -17th NOVEMBER 2024; EXHIBITION "Weave only a Trace" at the FOOTPRINT GALLERY in FUSION at THE JACKFIELD TILE MUSEUM

19TH NOVEMBER – 1ST DECEMBER 2024 EXHIBITION "24 Severn by 3" by artists from Shrewsbury, at the FOOTPRINT GALLERY in FUSION

4TH – 22ND DECEMBER ART MARKET: "Festive Footprint" at the FOOTPRINT GALLERY in FUSION

Also there are a number of Christmas Events at all the Museum Sites throughout December – check their website for details

FRIENDS OF IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TALKS

These talks will be held in the GLASS CLASSROOM at Coalbrookdale; members free, non-members £1

20 NOVEMBER 2024: "Tea Ladies" with Kate Cadman on the customs of tea drinking

22nd JANUARY 2025: "Ironbridge Gorge to Silicon Valley: How disruptive tech entrepreneurs reimagine the world" with Paul Green

26th FEBRUARY: "A Field somewhere in Broseley – cropmarks and geophysics" with Alan Smith

DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you to those members who have indicated they would be happy to have electronic copies of the Newsletter. If there are any other members who would prefer it this way please contact the membership secretary, **Janet Robinson**, see her contact details on the Committee's list (right column).

Those of you would prefer to have it in its printed form can continue to look forward to receiving it through the post. Many thanks.

Broseley Local History Society Committee

Committee Members

Chair	Neil Clarke
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To see this *Newsletter* in full colour, go to
<https://www.broseley.org.uk/news.htm>

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Christmas Dinner



At

The Lion Hotel, Broseley

Wednesday 4th December 2024

7.00pm for 7.30pm

Please reserve me _____ place/places at a cost of £27.95 per head

Name/s _____ I enclose cheque/payment for £ _____

Address _____ payable to Broseley Local History Society

_____ Please return to Janet Robinson

_____ 26, Coalport Road, Broseley, TF12 5AZ

Tel _____

Please reply by Saturday 23rd November 2024

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

STARTER

MAIN COURSE

Homemade Highland Vegetable soup
with crusty bread _____

Roast Turkey, stuffing & pigs in blankets GF

King Prawn & smoked salmon platter ,GF _____

Pork tenderloin, pan fried with blue cheese
and Brandy sauce _____

Garlic mushrooms and salad _____

Deep fried Brie and cranberry _____

Fillet of salmon with cranberry and port glaze
GF _____

Breaded white bait and tartare sauce _____

Three cheese and broccoli bake _____

Melon and fruits GF _____

Please indicate if you require a Gluten Free meal and Gluten Free gravy or stuffing

A selection of desserts

Coffee with mints