

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY



AUGUST 2014

MEETINGS

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

Members are requested to be seated by 7.30pm to allow our speakers a prompt start.

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

PROGRAMME

- 3 Sept *Floods on the River Severn* by David de Haan
- 1 Oct AGM followed with a talk by Paul Luter, "John Wilkinson's work in Snedshill, Hollinswood and New Hadley"
- 5 Nov Joint meeting with the Friends at Coalbrookdale
- 3 Dec Christmas Dinner
- 7 Jan Members photographs of Broseley from the past

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new member:

Kathryn Warren, Weston-Super-Mare and Broseley

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society will be holding its AGM on Wednesday, 1 October; this will be followed by a talk by Paul Luter. The agenda will include both the chairman's and the treasurer's report as well as the election of the committee. Anyone interested in putting their name forward for this is asked to contact the secretary Dot Cox on 01952 883568 or email:

ericanddot@yahoo.co.uk

The Red Church now demolished- see Mailbox



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PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Romans in Shropshire



Aerial view of Wroxeter

In April Shelagh Hampton gave a talk on the Romans in Shropshire. During the pre-Roman Iron Age Britain was a tribal society. Present-day Shropshire was occupied by a group known to the Romans as The Cornovii (people of the horn). Their territory stretched from, roughly, the present border with Wales to the west, the River Mersey to the north, eastwards perhaps nearly to Lichfield and south to the Ludlow area. It is possible that their tribal capital was located at the fine hill fort which tops The Wrekin.

After the initial conquest, in AD 43, part of the invading force (the legion known as the *XIVth Gemina* or Combined Legion) moved diagonally across the country. They constructed a fortress at Wroxeter big enough to house 6000 troops. This was completed by the late AD 50s but was abandoned by AD 90 when the troops were relocated to the newer fortress at *Deva* (Chester). However, the site was not abandoned but redeveloped as a city and local capital with the name *Viroconium Cornoviorum* and, by the mid-second century, was a large and flourishing town with fine public buildings and an extensive baths complex. It has been suggested that it grew to be the fourth largest city in Roman Britain. Towards the end of Roman rule a gradual decline set in with many buildings being abandoned during the late 4th and early 5th centuries. There may have been some revival in the early post-Roman period but the site had certainly gone out of use by the early 7th century.

Wroxeter was the centre of a network of roads linking a range of smaller Shropshire sites both military and civilian in nature. There were forts including ones at Rhyn Park near Oswestry and at Walltown just outside Cleobury Mortimer. Another at Brompton (near Welshpool) has been excavated recently and several others near Church Stretton and at Westbury are



Silver mirror from Wroxeter

known or suspected. There was a town at Whitchurch in the north of the county (*Mediolanum*) and several other civilian settlements e.g. a 'roadside market settlement' at Meole Brace just outside Shrewsbury. A particularly interesting site at Upton Cressett is currently being examined by Dr. Roger White of Birmingham University. Possibly the site of an early fort it may have developed into a civilian settlement at a later date.

Conventional villa sites are a bit thin on the ground in Shropshire although examples have been examined at Acton Scott, Whitley Grange (south of Shrewsbury) and Yarchester (near Much Wenlock). Several more villa sites are suspected but it is likely that still more await discovery. Certainly some of the 'native-style' settlements that we know from the period enjoyed a degree of "Romanisation".

The county's mineral resources were, of course, exploited by the Romans – probably using experienced military personnel with expertise developed in the mines of Spain and Eastern Europe. The lead and copper deposits in the west of the county were certainly worked but, although coal was used to fire the baths at Wroxeter, there is no direct evidence that the deposits in Ironbridge Gorge were utilised although it seems highly likely.

The conventional date for the end of Roman rule in Britain is AD 410.



Walltown Roman fort just outside Cleobury Mortimer

The focus of settlement in the county moved away from Wroxeter – for a time much of the area may have come under the control of Powys. However, we know that several small “kingdoms” (e.g. that of the “*Wrocensaete*”) sprang up in the aftermath of Roman rule but eventually became absorbed by the powerful Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia who established Shrewsbury as the main county settlement.

Summer Walk

This year’s summer walk took place on Wednesday 4th June. The walk began at the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust Centre and was led by Cadi Price, the Community Development Officer there. Torrential rain throughout the late afternoon and early evening meant that only a few stalwarts ventured out. The walk went from the Centre through the woods above the Coalbrookdale Arboretum and down towards the Coalbrookdale Museum before returning to the Centre for light refreshments. This was followed by Cadi giving a presentation about the work of the Trust and its various projects.

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust is a registered charity that was set up in 1991 and it is the main land manager of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. In total there are about 700 acres of land that they look after for local people, visitors and wildlife to enjoy. All of it is open to the public to use and enjoy.

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust works to balance the conservation and enhancement of landscape, wildlife and public access, and also to reinforce the cultural importance of the special areas under its management. All of their landholdings are open to the public to explore and enjoy, and a network of waymarked paths and trails has been established through the woods and meadows of Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale, Jackfield, Coalport, Madeley, Barrow and Broseley.

The staff are supported by an army of volunteers and local contractors to keep this incredible and ever changing landscape looking amazing and safe to use.



Damson blossom in Coalbrookdale Arboretum

Sites managed by the trust are-

- Benthall Edge Wood
- Captains Coppice
- The Crostan
- Dale Coppice
- Haywood
- Lloyds Coppice
- Lloyds Coppice Engine House
- Madeley Wood Hall
- Ladywood
- Lincoln Hill
- Loamhole and Lydebrook Dingle
- Oilhouse Coppice and Pastures
- Pattens Rock Quarry
- Prenshead
- Ropewalk Meadow and Sunnyside Deer Park
- Sutton Wood
- Wynnes Coppice, Vane Coppice & Jiggers Bank Workhouse Coppice

For more details about the trust and their work contact-

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
 Darby Road
 Coalbrookdale
 Telford
 TF8 7EP
 Telephone: 01952 433880

Web: <http://www.severngorge.org.uk/>

Email: staff@severngorge.org.uk

Summer Outing to Salford Quays Manchester

On Saturday 5th July forty five members and friends of the Society visited Salford Quays in Manchester. We left the Square in Broseley on a beautiful summer morning with our usual driver Bill.



Members outside the SGCT Centre ready for the summer walk



Imperial War Museum

On arriving at the Quays, before going our separate ways, we were able to watch the many free swimmers in the docks, a Saturday morning activity there. None were tempted to join them.

The Quays are a development in the old docklands of the Manchester Ship Canal. The buildings are very modernistic and attractive and now house both the BBC and ITV television studios as well as the set for Coronation Street.

Some members went off on the tram towards the city centre and visited the Museum of Science and Industry, which they found very interesting with many old engines on display.

Others chose to visit the Lowry Art Centre with the Lowry Exhibition. A member of staff gave a fascinating talk at midday about Lowry and showed the group what to look for in his paintings, always a factory chimney, a church, a rotunda, a line of some description at the bottom and the inevitable dog.

Across the canal was the Imperial War Museum, a striking building with a major new exhibition commemorating the First World War.

Some even ventured into the Lowry Outlet Centre.

Lowry Art Centre at Salford Quays



First World War Exhibition

The Society held an Exhibition in the Cemetery Chapel from July 11th - 14th July to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the commencement of the First World War and our country's declaration of war on Germany on August 4th.

Our request for information, pictures and artifacts resulted in a good response. One of our members, Rosemary Clegg, over many months, had undertaken a great deal of research into the lives of those whose war graves are in Broseley Cemetery.

A number of visitors were astounded to find out information about their relatives, which had previously been unknown to them.

One of our new members Kathryn Warren, who now lives in Somerset but was born in Broseley, also provided us with a great deal of information about the Williams and Haynes families.

During the weekend over 200 people signed the visitors' book with lots of interesting comments.

The Exhibition closed with a short commemorative service led by The Rector Sue Beverly and The Rev'd Michael Pope. In attendance were members of the Broseley branch of The Royal British Legion.

Following numerous requests a pictorial representation of the Exhibition will be staged in the Broseley Library throughout the month of August.

The Cemetery Chapel housing the WWI exhibition



Pictures and artifacts loaned by members



The Rev'd W.A. Warner.MC

Mr. Bill Seabury of the Broseley branch of The Royal British Legion has written an interesting booklet about a former Rector of Broseley who served in the First World War. He was Rector from 1922 – 1927. During the war he served as an army chaplain with the Second Wiltshire Regiment and was invalided home in December 1916.

Later in his ministry he was forced to resign as rector due to the injuries he received during the war. As a chaplain he served throughout the Battle of the Somme and one of his duties was to write to the next of kin of those who were killed during the fighting. One such letter written to a Doctor Clay has been preserved. He writes as follows –

My Dear Doctor Clay, you will have heard by now of the death of your gallant son Vivian. I know what a sad blow it will be to you and it is indeed a very sad blow to all of us. However, you have this consolation that he died fighting and encouraging his men to fight. Someone described the fighting of the men who were by his side as magnificent.

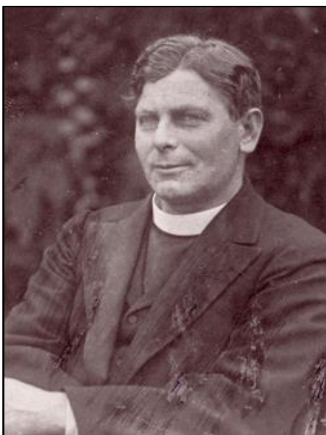
The one regret of all of us out here is that he never received any decoration for the Trownes Wood fight, when he stood head and shoulders above the others. I hope that, though he is gone his great services will be suitably acknowledged by the authorities.

His example will never be forgotten; a steady, good Christian and one of the most modest men one has ever known, respected and admired by all the officers and men of his Regiment. That is how one can sum him up.

Forgive a very hurried line, but we are only just out of the line and I am very cold and tired.

*I am with very great sympathy, yours sincerely,
W.A. Warner, Chaplain to the Forces.*

The booklets are available from All Saints Church priced £1



Reverend
Wynyard
Alexander
Warner, Rector
of Broseley 1922
- 1926

Another Broseley Plaque



A further plaque has now been affixed to the entrance to Broseley Hall. It commemorates Edward Blakeway, 1718 – 1811. He was involved in the coal, iron and ceramic industries. He was an active supporter of the Ironbridge project in the late 1770s and became a partner in the Tontine Hotel.

See article in Journal number 35 for full details about his life.

Memories of a Broseley Family

Society member Clive Edwards has written a small piece about his family and also raised a very interesting question.

Clive writes-

I have various Broseley ancestors and relatives: Meredith, Davies/Davis, Brown and Roe.

Samuel Meredith was one of my great great grandfathers, as was George Davis, of the George and Francis Davis, Dunge Brick and Tile Works, in Broseley. George's wife was Rebecca Lloyd.

Samuel Meredith had a coal business and was also a land agent for Lord Forester and supported him at elections in Broseley.

His wife, Mary Anne Brown was remembered as wearing a little white lace cap, by my mother Winifred Edwards nee Davis, her granddaughter. She often stayed with her daughter Tilly in New Ferry, Wirral. She also often stayed at Stratford with her son Samuel Edwin, who was station master of Stratford on Avon railway station for 29 years and wore a top hat in that role. Samuel Edwin's second wife, Georgina, told Winifred, that she heard Mary Anne say "Dear God send me back to Jackfield" Hilda Turnbull nee Roe, a great granddaughter, remembered that Mary Anne

often quoted the bible. She died age 90, in 1909, in Bridge View, Jackfield, her son John's house.

Their daughter was Emily "Tilly" Matilda Meredith. Tilly had been a ladies maid to a titled lady at Malvern. She was a dress maker and made all her own clothes. She married James Edward Davis, the eldest child of George Davis on 20th March 1870 and two months later their first child was born. A family bible shows they then lived at The Rock, Broseley.

One of the Davis boys, probably James, walked to school with Matthew Webb and carried his clothes, while the young Webb swam in the River Severn. Capt. Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel, was born in Dawley in 1848. Perhaps one of the Society's members could cast some light on this and which school it might have been?

James' grandson, Harry Davis, remembered that his grandfather had worked for some time at The Dunge brick and tile works as a time keeper but it is not clear why he as the eldest son should have left the family business and moved away.

James was supposed to have disappeared at one time (probably around 1877) and Tilly found him in Stourbridge, working as a policeman. I have his truncheon and did have his polished police walking stick until it was lost. They did set up house in Stourbridge as their 4th child was born there.

After Stourbridge the family moved to the Wirral in around 1879/80 where James worked as a time keeper at Cooper's or Dooley's brickwork, on the Mersey shore at New Ferry. For the 1881 census he called himself a Brick and Tile Maker. He then lived in Lower Bebington, Wirral with his family and three lodgers who were brick maker's labourers. He also, for a time, worked as a clerk of works in Rhyl, when electricity was being put in. There may have been a family connection to his working in Rhyl, as Francis Davis (George's brother) and wife Ellen owned a hotel there. Francis died there in 1902.

James was then a time keeper at Lever Brothers, Port Sunlight for a short time. He lost jobs due to drink. He would come home and look for something to read and sleep it off. Harry remembered his grandfather as a great reader and a "gentleman".

When James and Tilly moved to the Wirral their son Sam was left behind in Broseley and was brought up by his maternal grandparents, Samuel and Mary Anne Meredith. He worked as a blacksmith in the Meredith smithy in Jackfield and is on a photograph outside the



Sam Davis shoeing a horse at the Meredith Smithy in Jackfield

smithy, shoeing a horse. The smithy came into the family from the Browns.

He later joined his parents in the Wirral and had a very brief career as a sailor. He went on a ship one day and was shown his bunk. There was a stowaway in the bunk, who stabbed Sam, who was put ashore. The stowaway was kept in the crew! Sam's mother had been very worried, until he returned home, as there had been a bad storm that night.

He became head blacksmith at Prices Candles and later moved to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. He told his family, "I'm going to marry Mary with her two cows". She had a dairy shop in New Ferry with a cow shed behind but later died in child birth. Despite his good job at the Harbour Board he was restless and left it, perhaps due to the death of Mary. In a later position he had a job demolishing an acid tank in Widnes when the timber collapsed and he fell and cut his head and died.

Below is a photograph of James's son Charles Harry Davis and wife Hannah (my grandparents) with little son Harry on a visit to Broseley in about 1920. Can anyone identify the two other men, who look like real characters?





The photograph above is of a visit to Broseley in about 1937. It shows my parents George and Winifred Edwards, Ruth and Len Roe, my grandmother Hannah Davis, Dennis, George, Alice and Nellie Roe and infants Alan Roe and me Clive Edwards.

Clive Edwards

If you have any ideas of where Captain Webb went to school or can identify either of the two, "characters" from Clive's photographs then please contact Newsletter.

What's On?

19 Jul 2014 – 31 Aug 2014

Made in China

Enginuity, Coalbrookdale

You'll be able to discover more about the fantastic inventions, science and technologies that have come from the East at drop-in workshops this summer school holidays from Saturday 19 July until Sunday 31 August, between 10.30am and 3.45pm.

Thur 4 September 9.30am – 4.00pm

How limestone shaped the Ironbridge gorge

A practical workshop exploring a lesser known aspect of industry often overlooked against the world renowned iron industry that gave birth to the Industrial Revolution.

There is a cost of £25 for this course

For more information contact -
Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, Darby Road,
Coalbrookdale, 01952 433880

Sat 6 September

Photographic Display, Madeley Parish Then and Now

Madeley History Group, 2.30pm, Jubilee House, High Street

Sat 20 September

Roman Shropshire Day School

Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society, 10.20 am Shirehall, Shrewsbury 01743 236914

Wed 1 October

Who Were Famous & Infamous of Ketley?

Ketley History Group, 7.00pm, Ketley Community Centre, 01952 412937

Tue 7 October

New Discoveries at the Iron Bridge

David de Haan, 6.00pm, Museum of the Gorge, 01952 435946

Sat 18 October

Much Wenlock History Day

Friends of Shropshire Archives, 10.00am-4.00pm, Priory Hall, Much Wenlock, 01743 255350

Thur 6 November

Riding the Pegasus Stone at Oswestry

George Nash, Wrekin Historical Group, 7.30pm St Georges Parish Rooms, 01952 613331

Sat 8 November

People of the Flax Mill

Penny Ward, Shropshire Archaeological & Historical Society, 2.30 pm Shirehall, Shrewsbury 01743 236914

Mon 17 November

Newport in WW1

Janet Doody, Newport History Society, 7.30pm Baptist Church, Water Lane, Newport, 01952 810656

The above "What's On?" is a taster of what's going on locally. Details of these meetings and more can be found at the Wrekin Local Studies Forum website.

<http://www.wlsf.org.uk/calendar.html>

Mailbox

My name is Tony Stacey and I live in Canada. I have recently been delving into my history and the Station Inn, Broseley, came up. Apparently my great great grandparents managed this pub in around 1855; their names were Francis and Ellen Davies (nee Storer). My own roots are in Leicestershire. I would appreciate any information that you may be able to find about them.

Tony Stacey

Editor: Dave Shinton replies-

After some further correspondence it emerged that the family Tony was trying to trace were called Davis. Whatever the surname the family was unlikely to have been at the Station in 1855 since it was probably not built until 1861, the year its first licence was granted. Francis Davis was at the Station Hotel in 1879, but has left by 1888. It was useful to know a little about his wife Ellen. The first train to run along that "Iron Bridge & Broseley" section of the Severn Valley Railway went through on 31 January 1862.

I am a local member (Much Wenlock) of the Waterloo Association involved in tracing and researching existing grave markers, memorials etc. of "Wellington's Men". Recently some information has come to light on local soldiers. Private Thomas Davis was born in Broseley in 1775, served in the 9th Foot in the Peninsula, fought at Corunna and Salamanca and was discharged in 1816. I have no record of his death but it is probably after 1848. Could you please put me in touch with any of your members who may have any information such as a record of the burials in the churchyard or locality? I look forward to hearing from you.

Peter Thompson

I wonder if you can help. I understand that Broseley Red Church was knocked down and houses built upon the site. Can you tell me what happened to the headstones from the church yard? My mother was local to the area as a child and would appreciate it if you could help.

Gayle Williams

Steve Dewhirst writes-

The church was indeed demolished some years ago. Some houses were built adjacent to the graveyard but they did not build on the graveyard or church site. The headstones are still there although the site is somewhat overgrown.

My great great grandmother, (Susannah Tennant) is shown as born in Broseley and also Ironbridge 1809-11 according to the various census and marriage details, but no matter what I try I can't find any birth

or baptism for her. She married in Wolstanton to a James Frost then Daniel Smith (my great great grandfather).

I can only surmise that she could be a foundling from some home or other place and no record exists.

Barry Smith

Steve Dewhirst writes-

It is possible that she was christened at a non-conformist chapel. I only have the records for the Birch Meadow Baptist chapel and she does not appear in their list however in 1809 there was another Baptist chapel and a Methodist chapel. It is also possible that she was christened at the Catholic Church possibly in Madeley. I am not sure if any records still exist for these places but Shropshire Archives may be able to help

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS

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

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

To see this *Newsletter* in full colour visit the website at www.broseley.org.uk.