

Newsletter

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



February 2011

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

- 2 Mar Annual Wilkinson Lecture
Our Wilkinson Heritage
by Vin Callcut
- 6 Apr *Shropshire's Iron Age*
by Shelagh Lewis
- 4 May *Who do I think I am?*
Glyn Bowen traces his family roots back to Broseley
- 1 Jun *Rocks and History of Loamhole Dingle*,
a guided walk with Mike and Chris Rayner
- 2 Jul Trip to Blaenavon, Monmouthshire
- 7 Sept *The Wenlock Olympian Society*
by Helen Cromarty
- 5 Oct Annual General Meeting
The Coalbrookdale Institute
by John Powell
- 2 Nov *Fords and Ferries on the Shropshire Severn Part 2*
by Neil Clarke (joint meeting with Friends of the IGM at Coalbrookdale)
- 7 Dec Annual dinner
- Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

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NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- Marjorie Andrews, Broseley
Kate Cadman, Telford
Mike and Margaret Ridley, Broseley
Lynne Whitehead, Madeley

Existing members are reminded that subscriptions for the year October 2010 to September 2011 are now due. The cost is £6.00 for single membership and £10.00 for a couple. If you have not already paid, please make your cheque payable to Broseley Local History Society and send it to Janet Robinson, 26 Coalport Road, Broseley, TF12 5AZ, tel: 01952 882495.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Summer Walk

Wednesday 1 June

7.15 pm for 7.30 start

Meet at Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's new premises in Darby Road, Coalbrookdale

This year the Society's Summer Walk will be down Loamhole Dingle, where Chris and Mike Rayner will be leading this guided tour. This will be followed by a tour of the SGCT's offices, a state of the art eco-friendly building using indigenous materials. Non walkers are welcome to stay in their meeting room, where light refreshments will be served. The SGCT manages over half the land within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, all of which is open to the public, with a network of waymarked paths through the woods and meadows.

July Outing

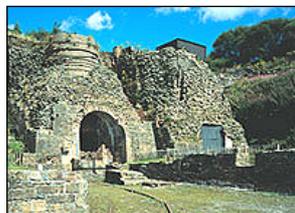
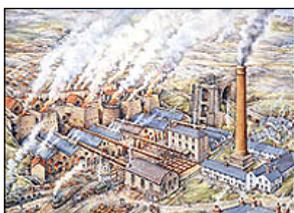
Blaenavon World Heritage Site

Saturday 2 July

This year's outing will be a visit to the Blaenavon World Heritage Site in southeast Wales. While details are still to be finalised, places to be visited will include the Blaenavon Ironworks, now an industrial museum. These ironworks, which opened in 1789, had three blast furnaces and employed about 300 men, and were of crucial importance in the development of the ability to use cheap, low quality, high sulphur iron ores worldwide. The ironworks finally ceased full scale production in 1904, although the forges at the site were used for the production of steel shell during both world wars. Blaenavon Ironworks are the best preserved 18th century ironworks in the world and contain much to interest visitors of all ages.

There will also be the opportunity to visit the Big Pit, an award winning national museum based around the former Big Pit colliery. This pit was

Blaenavon Ironworks, in their heyday and the furnaces today



sunk in about 1860 and closed in 1980, being reopened as a museum in 1983. Visitors can see the colliery buildings such as the winding engine house, the blacksmith's workshop and the pithead baths, while the possibility of taking a guided underground tour is being explored.

Further details will shortly be available, but please book this date so as not to miss what is always a very enjoyable day.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Ironwork at Blists Hill

In October last year John Challen, Operations Manager at Blists Hill and Coalport China Museum, gave a talk on the history and development of the manufacture of wrought iron. He also outlined the move by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum to equip a working wrought ironworks exhibit at Blists Hill saying that, when in operation, this is one of the most dramatic demonstrations in any museum in Britain. Too extensive to reproduce here, his full report on this talk will appear in the next issue of the Society's Journal.

MEMORIES OF THE COALPORT BRANCH

In November last year Neil Clarke gave a talk to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Coalport Branch railway. In his presentation to a joint meeting with the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum he first looked briefly at the origins of the line and then – using official and newspaper reports, personal recollections and photographs – gave some flavour of the impact that this railway had on the area and the people it served.

The eight mile branch line to Coalport left the Wellington-Stafford line (operating since June 1849) at Hadley Junction and was opened for goods traffic in September 1860 and for passenger trains the following June. It had been conceived by the London & North Western Railway Co as a replacement for the ailing Shropshire Canal and, like the canal, it served the coal, iron and clay based industries along its route. Over the years many local works – including Blockley's brickworks at New Hadley, the Lilleshall Company's furnaces at Priorslee, Randlay

brickworks, the Old Park Company's mines and ironworks at Malinslee and Stirchley, the Madeley Wood Company's brickworks at Blists Hill and Coalport China Works – were served by sidings off the Coalport branch.

But for the people who lived in the towns and villages along the line it was the passenger service, the Dodger, that was more important to their daily lives. When the line opened, there were three trains in each direction between Wellington and Coalport, Mondays to Saturdays. This gradually increased, peaking at six after the Second World War; but for the last year of operation there were only four trains in each direction, with one extra on Thursdays and two extra on Saturdays.

Although it is now almost 60 years since it last ran, there are many people who still have vivid memories of travelling on the Dodger. Amongst them are those who took the afternoon train to Coalport and walked down to Swinney to picnic and bathe in the river; those who caught the early morning train to Oakengates to get to the Walker Technical College on Hartshill; and a newly enlisted soldier who travelled to Wellington and changed to a Paddington train on his way to his London Barracks. For others, living alongside the line, the usually punctual Dodger provided a reminder of the time of day.

Neil then quoted from a most illuminating and humorous account of travelling on the Coalport Dodger in its last years of operation, written by Ivor Brown, the well-known mining historian who was brought up in Madeley.

During school terms I was a daily traveller on the Dodger between Madeley and Oakengates from September 1950 to its withdrawal at the end of May 1952. For pupils going to the Walker Technical College at Oakengates this was the



The Dodger letting off steam at Coalport station. Its last run was in May 1952

approved, although in many cases not the most convenient, route since it meant a walk of up to two miles to catch the train, followed by a short rail journey and then a mile walk at the other end.

On arrival at Madeley Market station at about 8.15 am passengers were greeted by a much-faded wartime notice 'Is your journey really necessary?'. As schoolboys, we all agreed it wasn't. If we were early, or the down train to Coalport was late, there might be a special treat for us – we could jump on the down train, wait in the carriage at Coalport while the engine ran round, and then travel up again, climbing the notorious 1 in 30 bank and passing through the Blists Hill tunnel. Otherwise, it was quite an experience to stand on the platform at Madeley Market and listen to the tank engine coaxing its load up the steep bank with its plumes of black smoke appearing over the trees long before the engine came into view.

Madeley Market station was manned by a staff of three: stationmaster Mott, porter Redding and a booking officer. Porter Redding was not too popular, because in the morning he stayed close to the station's four-wheel trolley, thus preventing us joyriding, and in the afternoon he kept an eye on the stationmaster's apple trees near the station exit. Since stationmaster Mott was said locally to be a communist, we could never understand his reluctance to share those small juicy red apples.

It was a rare occurrence if there were any passengers other than the six boys and a girl for the Tech. However, one memorable occasion was when farmer Chatham's eldest son emigrated to Canada. Never had we seen so many people on the platform as they saw him off, and for once the station trolley was actually in use carrying luggage.

Each day we caught the train the sole girl pupil would join two other girls from Coalport already aboard, while we lads would enter an empty compartment of the non-corridor carriage and, with a decently placed foot, jam the lock for the rest of the journey to Oakengates, except for the brief moment while a colleague, usually the only person waiting, was picked up at Stirchley station.

The train never seemed to stick to any rigid timetable. To begin with, it was nearly always late

arriving at Madeley and, if a quick count showed any of our number to be missing, the train would wait a few minutes before giving a blast on the whistle. Usually the straggler would be seen across the field, rushing past the cottage on whose black wall was painted the sign 'Pilkington's Pills are good for you'.

The journey to Oakengates, with stops at Stirchley and Malinslee, was normally uneventful – getting started always provided the greatest interest. On several occasions the train journey never did get started and we found a Midland Red bus awaiting us at Station Approach. The reasons for the abandonment of the train were quite varied. On one occasion the engine could not get up Coalport Bank because of lack of steam, reportedly because the fireman had let the fire go out during his tea break. On another the Blists Hill tunnel was found to be blocked and Bert Tyrer, who walked the line long before the first train each morning on his way to Kemberton Pit, received £5.00 for saving the train and, at the same time, was admonished for trespassing. On yet another occasion the train ran into a barrier of bedsteads placed between the sleepers near the Aqueduct. It was rumoured that we were to blame, but we knew that this was no way of getting a morning off school as the stand-in bus would undoubtedly have got us there quicker than the Dodger.

The last Dodger ran on Saturday 31 May 1952, to be replaced by a bus service which followed a tortuous course to link the settlements along the route of the railway. A daily goods service (which was very sparsely used) and a few excursion trains continued to travel over the branch, but the line was eventually closed to all traffic – between Coalport and Stirchley in 1960 and between Stirchley and Hadley Junction in 1964.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Once again the Society held its Christmas dinner at the Lion Hotel. Despite its being an unexpectedly snowy evening there was a good turnout, with members enjoying some light hearted entertainment by Dot Cox and Janet Robinson who had apparently just met King Wenceslas' page in the local pub.



Dot Cox, left, and Janet Robinson report on their meeting in the pub with King Wenceslas' page

Chairman Gillian Pope enjoys a joke with some of the other guests



Over a pint or two the page had appeared to throw doubt on the veracity of the well known story, claiming that 'yonder peasant' might not have been all he had seemed. "For one thing," he said, "he had no need to be so far from home to gather fuel, living as he did 'right against the forest fence' where there should have been plenty of firewood. And if there hadn't been, why trek all that way when he could just have chopped down the fence had he been short of a stick or two?" According to the page, it was highly possible that the peasant had been a terrorist from the Bohemian Liberation Front sent to lure the King into an ambush; or maybe just a scrounger, knowing that the King was a soft touch.

"Anyway," the page had continued, "things were never the same after the King brought him back to the palace and appointed him his steward. I often used to think to myself – if only Wenceslas hadn't looked out that night . . ."

Janet, who knew her Bohemian history, then asked if it had ever been established who had murdered Wenceslas. At this the page had looked distinctly uneasy, quickly finished his ale and slunk off.

Dot followed this with a variation on the Twelve Days of Christmas whereby a certain young man sends his sweetheart a series of increasingly grand gifts, starting with the traditional partridge in a pear tree. However, as the gifts continue to pile up the recipient becomes progressively overwhelmed by his munificence and begs him to "stop sending all those birds", complaining that the turtle doves make too much noise and the geese lay their eggs all over the porch.

The change from birds to people, however, only finds her increasingly irritated, particularly when

the dancing ladies prove to be anything but, and the leaping lords start causing considerable havoc with the milkmaids on the village green. Matters finally reach a head with the arrival of the entire percussion section of the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Whereupon the young man was mortified to receive a solicitor's letter demanding he take everything back.

So the moral of this story is – if you insist on wooing a reluctant lover with an over abundance of gifts, make sure they are clearly labelled “Not for exchange or return”!

MORE MEMORIES WITH JOAN GRIFFITHS

In January members had a thoroughly interactive evening when Joan Griffiths showed some more of her collection of old photographs of Broseley people and places. One of the first of these was that of the War Memorial* erected in the town in memory of those who lost their lives in the First World War. Unveiled in March 1921, the cost of £350 was raised by public subscription. It now includes the names of other members of the armed forces who have been killed in the line of duty since that time. One of those whose name appears is that of Joan's great uncle Charles Beddow. Born in 1886 in Carvers Road, Broseley, Charles was

*Right from top to bottom.
This photograph of the War Memorial was taken prior to WWII as the iron railings enclosing the gardens are still in place. These were removed during that war 'to help the war effort'*

Charles Beddow was killed in action in 1915, aged only 19 years

A casualty clearing station at Trones Wood under fire during the battle of the Somme. The term 'wood' was a euphemism to describe a location, as any trees would have been destroyed by shell fire

A very early photograph of nos 83, 84 and 85 High Street, possibly dating from the 1860s. The shop on the left, now E Davis Ironmongers, was run by John Humphries who, according to a directory of 1863, was a grocer, provision dealer, tallow chandler and melter. The shop on the right was the original post office, run at one time by chairman Gillian Pope's father

A very old picture of the Iron Bridge and the Severn Gorge, presumably taken before the construction of the Free Bridge in 1909, as what appears to be the old ferry can be seen in the distance

This picture of a frozen River Severn dates from 1917. Chairman Gillian Pope says that her mother, who died in 2009, could remember being pushed across the ice in her pram that year. 2010 was also a year when the river froze, though not so completely



Photograph courtesy Bill Seabury



killed in action at Ypres in 1915. He is remembered with honour on the Menin Gate Memorial in Belgium which is under the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

These pictures were followed by a random selection showing life in Broseley over the years, from an 1860s picture of the High Street, to a frozen River Severn and the Broseley Carnival Queen.

Once again thanks to Joan for another enjoyable trip down Memory Lane.

Except where stated all photographs are courtesy of Joan Griffiths.

**A booklet To the Memory of the Fallen of Broseley in Two World Wars, by Janet Doody, giving some background to the names on the Memorial, has just been published. See the review on page 9.*

From top

Broseley Scouts on camp, probably during the 1930s. The old phonograph which accompanied them is a nice touch of sophistication

Children from the new houses in Bridgnorth Road were treated to a party on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953. Joan Griffiths says she wasn't the right age to attend the party



From top

The Darby and Joan Club on an outing to Trentham Gardens in 1953; some of the faces were still familiar to members of the audience

A nostalgic photograph of Broseley Carnival, remembered with affection by many of the older residents of the town.

Around 1950 the Carnival Queen was Mary Oakley, attended by Jane Nutt, Maureen Harrison, Margaret Hood and Lynne Oakley; the small girls are Ann Griffiths and Sarah Whitehouse

KEN JONES, MBE

Ken Jones, a past president of the Society, recently had a memorable day when, in December last year, he was invited to Buckingham Palace where the Queen herself presented him with an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for his contribution to the Ironbridge Gorge Heritage Site and for the oral history of the people in the



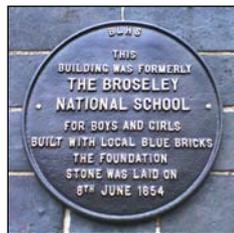
Ken Jones proudly displays his MBE medal after being presented with it by the Queen at Buckingham Palace. He was awarded this in recognition of his contribution to the Ironbridge Gorge Heritage Site

Gorge which he built up over some 30 years. His collection of audio tapes is now being digitised and can be accessed in the IGM Library. A founder member of the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums, he also does some volunteering work there.

But his lifelong love has always been trains. At 16 he joined the GWR, graduating from cleaner through fireman, until he became a driver at Wellington. In 1960 he decided to retrain and left the GWR to join the treasury department of Staffordshire County Council. But this, he says, was just a job and when he retired he began researching the history of the Wellington to Craven Arms railway line. His subsequent book on this, *The Wenlock Branch, Wellington to Craven Arms*, was published in 1998 and tells the story of a line which, until its closure in 1962, serviced both the ironworks in the Coalbrookdale Valley and the transport needs of the community.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

The latest of the Society's commemorative plaques has been installed on the Medical Centre in Bridgnorth Road. This Centre was originally built as a National School in 1854 with rooms for three departments, boys, girls and infants. A new wing was added later to accommodate 100 children. The school closed only in 1967 when a new one was built in Dark Lane.



A further plaque is awaiting installation on the Birchmeadow Centre, once a Baptist Chapel, while another is planned for the Broseley Cemetery Chapel.

ETRURIA INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

Etruria Industrial Museum in Stoke-on-Trent is being threatened with closure as the council faces instigating cutbacks. This museum was opened some 30 years ago and forms part of a vital link in the history of the Potteries. The only steam powered potters mill in working order



anywhere in the world, it shows the history of the preparation of raw materials for the pottery industry and has been granted Historic Monument Status by English Heritage.

In an effort to save this museum from potential closure an e-petition has been started; visit <http://www.eim.epetitions.net/> if you wish to register your protest. Further details on this petition can also be seen on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-11921383>.

RESTORATION HOME

The BBC are planning a prime time series of history programmes called *Restoration Home*. The series will follow homeowners restoring period properties into impressive residential homes and will reveal not only the history of the building itself, but the stories and lives of the people once connected with it.

If anyone is renovating a property, and is interested in being part of this series, contact the production team Endemol UK on tel: 03335 777740 or email: homes@endemoluk.com, giving your name and details of your property.

TOUR GUIDES WANTED

David Moody, of See Your Past, is looking for people willing to act as tour guides for family history enthusiasts from overseas who wish to visit the places and sights which their ancestors would have known. No research is required, guides simply plan a one or two day tour from information provided and then accompany the visitors around their local area providing background knowledge and local colour. For further information visit <http://www.seeyourpast.co.uk/> or contact David Moody, seeyourpast@googlemail.com.

OUR SPORTING LIFE

The Ironbridge Gorge Museums are putting together an exhibition entitled *Our Sporting Life: Sporting Heroes* and are asking individuals and sports clubs from across Shropshire to lend any sporting memorabilia they may have. The exhibition already has artefacts relating to such local heroes as the footballer Billy Wright, who

captained both Wolverhampton Wanderers and England, as well as the swimming trunks worn by Captain Matthew Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel unaided.

“We want to collect personal objects that figure in people’s memories of sport,” said Gillian Whitham, curator of the exhibition. “Whether it be a trophy or just a picture of themselves with a famous sportsman, we should like to hear from you.” People can also get involved and submit their stories and objects online via the Our Sporting Life website, www.oursportinglife.co.uk, while Gillian may be contacted on 01952 435900 or by email: gillian.whitham@ironbridge.org.uk.

WHAT’S ON?

Jackfield Tile Museum

Tile decorating workshops

Every Tuesday from 1 February – 5 April
10.00 am – 2.00 pm

Learn the techniques of tube lining and slip trailing and design your own tile.

Workshop (one tile) £7.50 plus admission.

Our Sporting Life: Sporting Heroes

Coalbrookdale

21 March 2011 – 29 February 2012

This exhibition will celebrate local heroes and their achievement and will include photographs and prints relating to local football, cricket and quoits teams, as well as rowing clubs and coracle racing. Featured will be Billy Wright, Richie Woodall and Captain Matthew Webb.

Our Sporting Life: The Science of Sport

Enginuity

4 April 2011 – 9 September 2012

This exhibition will focus on the relationship between science and sport, including how technological advancements have shaped achievements and performance in the elite sporting world. The star exhibit will be the Olympic Eight rowing boat which won gold for Great Britain in the Sydney Olympics.

Museum of Iron

Coalbrookdale

6 April

7.00 – 9.00 pm

Cooking demonstration by Dawn Roads who will

be showing participants a variety of unusual dishes. Tickets cost £15.00 and include a glass of wine and food tastings, as well as entry to the Museum of Iron from 6.30 – 9.30 pm. The evening is being held to support the Museum and its charitable aims. For more information tel: 01952 435992 or email: ruth.brown@ironbridge.org.uk.

Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival

30 April – 8 May

Features 28 free guided walks covering a range of interests and abilities, including full day outings in and around the Gorge as well as historic trails and wildlife walks. The walks are graded into four levels of difficulty. Booking is recommended, either contact 01952 435857, email events@greenwoodcentre.org.uk or visit www.cherryeventcatering.co.uk/events for a full programme.

Meccanuity

Enginuity

1–2 May

Meccano show created by Telford and Ironbridge Meccano Society, Shropshire. The exhibition will feature an array of large and small working Meccano models in Enginuity’s event space.

Blists Hill Victorian Town

Horsing About

11 June

A special event demonstrating the one time important role played by horses in daily life. There will also be an exhibition of miniature horse drawn vehicles and implements in the Goods Shed by the Guild of Model Wheelwrights.

For further information on these and other activities at the Museums contact the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre on tel: 01952 433424 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

Rally in the Valley

Severn Park, Bridgnorth

16–17 July

This year the Rally will be visited by Ruth Goodman, one of the presenters from the BBC2 series *Victorian Farm*, where she will be holding a workshop on the theme of *Living with Machines*. There

Ruth Goodman



will also be a dedicated area for local history displays. Further details may be obtained from Brian Davies, tel: 07929 290465 or from their website www.therallyinthevalley.co.uk.

BOOKSHOP

To the Memory of the Fallen of Broseley in Two World Wars by Janet Doody. A4 booklet, 18 pages, illustrated.

Broseley War Memorial was erected in 1921 and was initially inscribed with the names of Broseley people killed in the First World War; the names of those who fell in World War II were added later. Janet Doody's extensive research has revealed personal details of many of these service men. Listed in alphabetical order the information contained has given the Memorial an added dimension and would certainly be of interest to those with relatives who died in either war.

Available from E Davis Ironmongers, High Street, Broseley or Janet Doody, tel: 01952 610000, email: janet.doody27@googlemail.com. Price £1.50 plus £1.25 p&p.

This booklet is the third of its kind to be published. Booklets on the Madeley War Memorial and the Jackfield/Coalport Memorial Bridge, which were researched by Janet Doody on behalf of the Madeley Living History Project, are available free from Madeley Parish Council Office, Jubilee House, High Street, Madeley.

Other Memorials currently under research are St George's, Oakengates and Ketley and similar publications on these will be available in due course.

MAILBOX

According to the 1881 census Edward and Sarah Lloyd were living in Cape Street, Broseley. The house in this street which interests me is Burnt House. Was it an inn at this time and if so, was it possible they employed a coachman such as Edward Lloyd? Also are there any baptism records for Broseley c1879? I should like to check if an Edith Maud Lloyd, born 1879 and died 1880, was a daughter of Edward and Sarah.

David Jenner

davidliz.jenner@gmail.com

Tradition has it that Burnt House was a pub but there is no documentary evidence to prove this. It is unlikely that it would have employed a coachman as I am not aware there was ever a stable or carriages there. The nearest possible house that might have done so was Angel House on the High Street.

Baptism records would probably be held at Shropshire Archives; however there were various non-conformist chapels in Broseley where Edith could have been baptised, although I am not sure if these records still exist.

Steve Dewhirst

We have moved into 17 Barber's Row and are keen to find out as much history about the property as possible, as well as some old photographs. I believe it was once the Fox Inn and should appreciate any more information on it.

Lisa Randles

lisa@madeleys.co.uk

You may find this extract from a book on Broseley pubs by B D Shinton interesting.

The First traceable landlord was Thomas Booth in 1802 but there is a reference in 1789 to ". . . the house of Mr. John Cleobury at The Fox Inn in Broseley".

Records show no other licensee until Richard Poole in 1829. John Davies has the licence by 1835 to be followed by Elizabeth Hayman, 1844, and John Hayman, who in 1851 is described as a

17 Barber's Row was once the Fox Inn and was notorious for its cock fighting



glass dealer and victualler and in 1863 as glass dealer and beer retailer of Barber's Row. By 1868 he appears to have given over glass dealing since he is now a retailer of beer in Duke Street. There are no traceable entries after 1871 although Randall, writing eight years later, says that Mr Roberts kept the pub on closure. This gentleman was presumably a member of the Roberts family who have a long association with Barber Street. One, Harry Roberts, was the first in Broseley to own a car.

The building was until recently faced in cement into which the date 1756 was let. In 1802 the pub, including the stable, was valued at £4.4s. On 26th March 1829 Charles Davies, who may possibly have been the father of John since he was described as a maltster, was found, according to Alderman Jones, ". . . dead on the parlour Floor of the Fox Inn, Broseley, Drunk."

In 1838 Lord Forester was the owner; it then consisted of a public house, buildings and yard.

The Fox is reputedly the last inn where cock fighting took place . . . The authorities, in wanting to stamp out cock fighting, threatened to withdraw the licence. From this grew a rhyme "Stop the Cocks/or we'll have the Fox." Apparently they did, for it is said that cock fighting was the cause of the closure.

Steve Dewhirst

I have digital copies of all the wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury for people from Montgomeryshire, Denbighshire and Shropshire. Using this information I am thinking of building a closed online facility which people can log into, view the wills and transcribe the names, which will then be stored in a database. Once complete I would publish the index online as a free search facility. I wonder if your members, as well as those of other societies, would be sufficiently interested in this service to make it worthwhile.

David Hopkins
david@arakiel.co.uk

Further to my email regarding the William barge, which appeared in the *November 2010 Newsletter*, do you know where the General



Photograph courtesy Shropshire Star

A photograph of the Werps before it was cleared. The General Gordon is probably the white building with dormer windows above the left hand China Works kiln

Gordon pub actually was before it was lost to the River Severn? I should at least like to see where it used to be.

Penny Stephan
penbex86@hotmail.com

The Tithe map shows plot 762 as public house, stables, yard and garden owned by Thomas Beard; I assume this is the General Gordon. See the map <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/Broseley%20Tithe%20Map%202022.jpg>. This is an area called the Werps. The houses were demolished in the 20th century as part of a slum clearance programme. However, the site still exists, although much overgrown, and you can still see some of the back walls of the gardens.

Steve Dewhirst

I am looking for information on the old Cumberland Hotel, in particular what buildings and workshops were in the grounds before they were converted into the mews houses. I wonder if there were any old tile workshops there at one time.

Rachel Mowling
rachelmowling@yahoo.co.uk

A garden party at Field House, probably in the 1920s or '30s. It later became the Cumberland Hotel, but has now been developed as private apartments



Before the Cumberland became a hotel it was called Field House and was the home of the Howells family. Prior to that it was the Red Lion public house, see <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/Broseley%20Tithe%20Map%2004.jpg> plot 300 and the apportionment <http://www.broseley.org.uk/images/tithe.PDF>. I do not think the outbuildings were workshops but rather stables and carriage sheds. The mews houses, which are the ones on the left of the development, are new build.

Steve Dewhirst

My mother's maiden name is Elizabeth Jean Wilkinson and she reputedly had connections with Lyme Hall in Cheshire. In an article in the 1995 issue of the Wilkinson Society Journal entitled *John Wilkinson and his Family*, by Michael Berthoud, it states:

In 1821 Mary Ann, the eldest daughter (of John Wilkinson), married at Cartmel Church William Legh, gentleman, of Hordley, Hampshire, second illegitimate son of Thomas Peter Legh Esq, of Lyme Hall, Cheshire. William Legh was for many years a Member of Parliament, first for South Lancashire and later for East Cheshire. The couple continued to live for some years at Brymbo Hall, the first two of their eight children being baptized at Wrexham Church in 1832 and 1834. Their fourth child succeeded his uncle Thomas

Legh in 1857 and became the first Lord Newton of Lyme.

My grandfather was Norman Alfred Wilkinson who married Nellie Holt. Does anyone know if there is a connection between this branch of the Wilkinson family and the ironmaster John Wilkinson?

Caroline Bradshaw

carolinebythesea@gmail.com

In a letter in the November 2010 Newsletter

Val Whiteman states that her ancestor, Edward Colley, an iron moulder, was working in Broseley from 1790-1800. His son and two daughters, however, were born in Paris from 1821 and she was interested to find out why he would have been working there. Now another correspondent, Jean Jenkins, has found that some of her ancestors had been born in France (one in Paris) as British subjects. She suggests doing a search on findmypast.co.uk giving only the parameters of having been born in France and resident in Staffordshire in 1841, 1851 and 1852 where it can be seen that the names are English and the occupations are to do with the iron trade. Often there is a child or children born in Staffordshire prior to the French births and one or more on the return to England. Most of the births appear to have been between 1820 and 1840. Many of the people listed lived, on their return from France, in Sedgley, Tipton, Wolverhampton or West Bromwich, again centres of the iron industry.

Other interested readers may contact Val Whiteman at val@gevaru.demon.co.uk or Jean Jenkins at jeanxray@blueyonder.co.uk.

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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.

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