

# Newsletter

## Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

*Incorporating the Wilkinson Society*



November 2010

### 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

- 1 Dec Christmas Dinner  
5 Jan *More Broseley Memories* with Joan Griffiths  
2 Feb *Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth by Boat* by Ron Miles  
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

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

### NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Sheila Black, Telford  
Neil Cartman, Broseley  
Melinda Evans, Broseley  
Vivien Evans, Broseley  
Wendy Tilley, Coalbrookdale  
Michael and Sandra Wallage, Broseley

**CHRISTMAS DINNER**  
**Wednesday 1 December**  
**The Lion, High Street**  
**7.30 for 7.45 pm**  
**£17.95 per person**



The Society's Christmas dinner is once again being held at The Lion in the High Street. Make sure to book your place by **not later than Friday 26 November** by completing the form on p15 and returning it with your payment to Janet Robinson, 26 Coalport Road, Broseley TF12 5AZ.

Cheques should be made payable to the Broseley Local History Society.

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## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

### Shropshire Writers

In September Gordon Dickins, of Shropshire Library Service, gave members of the Society a talk on Shropshire writers. Gordon is currently chairman of the Mary Webb Society and author of the book *An Illustrated Literary Guide to Shropshire*. A keen photographer his talk was illustrated with photographs of places connected to the writers about whom he spoke.

One of these was Mary Webb. Born in 1881, Webb moved near to Much Wenlock when she was just a year old and it was whilst living there that she developed her love of the Shropshire countryside, which was later to be reflected so evocatively in her novels. With only a short break, she spent most of her life in Shropshire, frequently using local towns and areas as semi fictitious settings for her novels. An example of this is her first novel, *The Golden Arrow*, in which the Stiperstones feature so prominently. Probably her best and most well known work is the novel *Precious Bane* for which she was awarded the prestigious Femina Vie Heureuse prize. Sadly she did not achieve public acclaim in her lifetime.

Another famous author was A E Housman. Although not native to Shropshire – he was born in Fockbury in neighbouring Worcestershire – he appears to have fallen in love with the county from a distance, his “blue remembered hills” almost certainly being the view from near his home. Although he failed to graduate from Oxford, he later became a respected academic and in 1892 was appointed Professor of Latin at University College London. The romanticism of his first collection of poems, *A Shropshire Lad*, was in complete contrast to his previous writings which had mainly been scholarly articles on the classics. What is also interesting is that some of the poems were written before Housman ever visited Shropshire, which may account for such anomalies as his steeple on Hughley church.



The Mary Webb memorial plaque can be seen in Church Walk, Much Wenlock

Just as well known is William Langland who, it is thought, was born at Cleobury Mortimer in the mid 1300s. His *Vision Concerning Piers the Plowman* is considered amongst mediaeval literature to be second only in importance to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Some members may already be familiar with the house in St Leonard's Close, Bridgnorth, in which Richard Baxter lived for a time. After a chequered career Baxter was ordained as a deacon in Worcester but moved to Bridgnorth in 1640. He later dedicated the second part of *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* to the people of that town. A supporter of Cromwell's Parliamentary army, after the Restoration he was imprisoned by the infamous Judge Jeffreys for libelling the church. He is now considered one of the founding fathers of the Nonconformist movement.

Another Bridgnorth resident was Thomas Percy who was born in what is now known as Bishop Percy's House at the bottom of the Cartway. After graduating from Oxford he took holy orders and began his literary career with translations from Chinese and Icelandic. In 1765 he published *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, an important collection of poetry which included material from an ancient manuscript rescued from a friend's house in Shropshire. His dedication of the book to the Duchess of Northumberland (herself a Percy) earned him entry into royal circles and he was later appointed chaplain to King George III.

Francis Moore of Almanack fame was yet another celebrity who came from Bridgnorth. A self taught physician and astronomer he was born in 1657,



reputedly in one of the cave dwellings near the St Mary's Steps. He served at the court of Charles II and his original Almanack was published as a means to help sell his own brand of

Bishop Percy's House, Cartway, Bridgnorth

health pills, although his later editions included such things as astrological observations as well as weather predictions. Old Moore's Almanack is still published today and should not be confused with Old Moore's Almanac (without the k) which is an Irish publication from about the same time.

John Fletcher has a place in local history as the minister at Madeley church from 1760-1785. Although a contemporary of John Wesley, with whose beliefs he empathised and with whom he often preached, he remained within the Anglican church, devoting the rest of his life to working among the people of Madeley. His theological writings date from 1770 and his *Checks to Antinomianism* was the first writing in support of Wesleyan theology published by someone other than John or Charles Wesley. After his death his wife Mary carried on his work for another thirty years. Fletcher is buried along with his wife in Madeley churchyard, where his cast iron tomb can still be seen.

While not born in Shropshire, Charles Dickens certainly visited the county and while there gained ideas for some of his novels. He undoubtedly used Tong church as the place from which Little Nell of *The Old Curiosity Shop* sought escape and indeed, although purely a fictional character, a plaque marking her supposed grave can be seen in Tong churchyard. He also visited Newport where he heard the sad story of Elizabeth Parker of Chetwynd House who had been jilted on her wedding day. The fact that she became a recluse, even keeping her wedding cake as a poignant reminder, must surely have provided Dickens with the plot for *Great Expectations*.

*This memorial to Charles Dickens' Little Nell can be seen in Tong churchyard*



*The Fletcher family tomb can be found in Madeley churchyard*



Another well known writer was Hesba Stretton, born Sarah Smith in Wellington. Her most successful book was *Jessica's First Prayer*, published in 1867, which sold more than one and a half million copies and was translated into many languages. Aware of the sometimes appalling conditions in which working class children in Victorian England lived, she worked to alleviate child abuse and poverty and was a founder of the NSPCC.

A more modern day writer was Edith Pargeter who, as Ellis Peters, wrote the highly popular Brother Cadfael mediaeval mysteries. Born in Horsehay, just up the road from Ironbridge, she went to school at the old Coalbrookdale High School. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service during WWII and received a BEM for her work whilst there. She later became fascinated by Czechoslovakia and its language and culture and published award winning translations of Czech poetry and prose. After her death in 1995 a glass window in Shrewsbury Abbey was dedicated to her memory.

Another recent local author was P G Wodehouse who when young spent his summer holidays at Stableford, near Bridgnorth. He is best known for his Jeeves and Blandings Castle novels and there has been much debate about the actual setting of Blandings Castle within Shropshire.

Among other writers mentioned by Gordon Dickins were such people as John Osborne, who moved to Clunton with his fifth wife Jill, and from

*John Osborne's last home The Hurst, Clunton, now the John Osborne Arvon Centre for creative writing*



*Photograph courtesy of Gordon Dickins*

where he delighted in playing the role of Shropshire squire; Henry James, whose *English Hours* includes a chapter on Shropshire; Reginald Heber, rector of Hodnet and Bishop of Calcutta who wrote the hymn *From Greenlands Icy Mountains*; E M Forster, whose *Onion* of *Howard's End* was Clun; Sheena Porter, a children's novelist who received the 1964 Carnegie Medal for her novel *Nordy Bank* which is set on Brown Clee; Patrick Brontë, who wrote two small volumes of poetry while a curate in Wellington; the poet Wilfred Owen who was born in Oswestry; and last but not least, one of Shropshire's most famous sons, Charles Darwin, author of *On the Origin of the Species*, who was born in Shrewsbury.

*More information on these and other Shropshire writers is to be found in Gordon Dickins' book An Illustrated Literary Guide to Shropshire. Although now out of print, there is a copy in Broseley Library, from which some of the detail above was taken.*

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's AGM was held on 5 October when chairman Gillian Pope reported on another successful year which had seen a varied and interesting programme of events. These had included not only talks on topics of local interest but also a summer walk around the Broseley Jitties and a trip to the Derwent Valley to visit the Cromford and Masson Mills of Richard Arkwright. Other Society activities had included the erection of more plaques around the town commemorating well known local figures.

The chairman also reported that membership of the Society remained over 200, quite the largest of any local history society in the area, and thanked both the members and the committee for their continued support. She also expressed her gratitude to Steve Dewhirst for the enormous amount of time he puts in keeping the Society's website updated and answering the large number of requests for information.

She then thanked the outgoing president, Cecily Taylor, for her support during her term of office, reminding members that the other president, Ray Johnston, had sadly died earlier in the year. She proposed that Harold Grice and Norah Lane be

appointed presidents for a two year period and this was endorsed by the meeting.

She then stated that she would like to step down as chairman, but since there were no offers to replace her, she agreed to stand for another year on condition that a vice chairman be appointed with a view to taking over next year. There still being no offers, the matter rested. With the exception of Sheila Keenan all committee members were willing to serve a further term. There being no nominations, the remaining members of the committee were unanimously re-elected with Gillian Pope being once again elected chairman. Janet Doody was later co-opted onto the committee.

The meeting was followed by a talk by John Challen, operations manager at Blists Hill and Coalport China Museum, on the making of wrought iron at Blists Hill. A report on this talk will appear in the *February 2011 Newsletter*.

### NEW PRESIDENTS

At the AGM two new presidents of the Society, Harold Grice and Norah Lane, were elected for a two year period.



Visitors to Blists Hill Victorian town will already know Harold as the man behind the steam engine which runs along the short length of track beyond the canal. His interest in engines, however, goes back much further than that when, having completed his schooling in Oakengates, he went to work at a small garage nearby as a motor mechanic. Some ten years later, and by now married, he moved to Birmingham where his wife was working. Three years in Birmingham, however, was as much as Harold could stand and he and his wife moved back to Oakengates where he has lived ever since. In 1960 he opened his own small garage in Wrockwardine Wood which he ran for the next 40 years until his retirement.

Harold says he has always liked joining things as it is a good opportunity to get out and meet people. Having been at one time a member of a scout group, a youth club and a caravan club, in 1985 he joined the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge



*Harold Grice, newly elected president of the Society, working the steam engine at Blists Hill*

Museums and volunteered to help at Blists Hill. There he quickly got interested in their steam engine, a replica of the prototype of the Richard Trevithick engine built by the Coalbrookdale company in 1802. This replica was built in 1990 by apprentices at GKN Sankey from the original plans now in the Science Museum. Asked why he got interested in running the steam engine he said, well it was mechanical and working it was more interesting than standing behind a counter all day. One thing led to another until he was driving not only the Blists Hill engine but steam rollers and traction engines as well.

The next logical step was to volunteer to do some guiding and for some time he was the leader of the museum guides as well as being a member of the Friends committee. He is also a trustee of the museum. As well as working the steam engine at Blists Hill and doing some guiding there, he is a guide at the Coalport China Museum.

When asked how he came to join the Broseley Local History Society, he said that initially a friend had persuaded him to go along saying he would enjoy that evening's talk. In fact, he said, he enjoyed the talk so much that he carried on going to so many subsequent meetings that he finally decided he had better join, a decision he has definitely never regretted.

Unlike Harold, Norah does not come from Shropshire but was born in Birmingham. When just a baby her family moved first to Liverpool and then, when she was seven, to Bath. She completed her schooling



there and was already working when, early in the war, she met the handsome RAF policeman who was to become her husband. This was around the time of the Bath Blitz which she clearly remembers. Fortunately neither she nor her family were injured, but a family friend was when he inadvertently rode his bicycle into a large bomb crater.

When her husband was sent all over the country during his war service, Norah was often able to join him, working at various aircraft factories making, as she says, "things like nuts and bolts". Later she worked in Cambridge at the Ministry of Further Education.

After the end of the war, she and her husband returned to live in Bath where their daughter was born. It was only once she went to high school that Norah could think of following a career of her own and so, as a mature student, she took a teacher training course at Newton Park College.

Her teaching career lasted until her retirement in 1981 when, wanting to be nearer their daughter who had left the rat race of London for Telford, she suggested she and her husband move to be closer to her. Somewhat to her surprise, her Bath born and bred husband was happy to do so, which is how they came to settle in Broseley.

Her abiding passion, however, has always been her music. She was a member of the prestigious Bath Bach Choir for many years and was privileged to be part of that choir on two special occasions; one when Kathleen Ferrier performed there and one when Ralph Vaughan Williams conducted his Hundredth Psalm. Vaughan Williams was the first president of this Choir which was formed in 1946. It staged a series of Bach Festivals which were internationally acclaimed, drawing visitors from all over the world. Norah says that the Bach Festival should not be confused with the Bath Festival which was started later.

Once settled in Broseley she and her husband joined the now defunct Broseley Society where they both sat on the committee. Keen to carry on with her music, however, she also joined the Shifnal and District Chorale and was one of the group who sang *The Sanctus* at the unveiling of the



*Norah Lane, who has also been elected a president of the Society, was one of the Shifnal and District Chorale group which sang at the unveiling of the John Wilkinson plaque at The Lawns in June 2008*

John Wilkinson plaque at The Lawns in Broseley in June 2008. She was also a member of the Broseley Singers though this group no longer exists.

Although she claims she has now given up singing, she did admit she might be tempted out of retirement if given the opportunity to sing the Messiah.

It was only after her husband's death some 10 years ago that Norah was able to get more involved in local activities. She is an active member of the Shifnal U3A and joins in their poetry, Shakespeare and garden history groups. It was also around this time that she joined the Society, saying that she very much enjoys the meetings and tries never to miss one.

### **NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER**

The Society would like to welcome Janet Doody, who is already known to members for her two talks to the Society, as a co-opted member of the committee.



Although Janet comes from Madeley, her mother was born in Broseley and Janet knows the town well, having spent many a school holiday with her grandparents in Cape Fold.

On leaving school she briefly worked for Telford Development Corporation before joining the Britannia Building Society in Wellington where she worked for many years. Her next move was to join the Ironbridge Gorge Museums where she worked as an exhibit demonstrator at Blists Hill.

Meanwhile her interest in local history had been piqued by the evening classes run by Barrie Trinder, the well known Shropshire historian, in the mid 1970s. But it was not until 1996 that she decided to do something more positive with her life and enrolled at Wolverhampton University to read history. The talk which she gave to the Society in 2002 was based on her thesis in which she researched the Irish community of Broseley in the second half of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

Since then Janet has been researching the lives behind the names on local war memorials and the results of her investigations into the Madeley and Jackfield memorials have already been published by the Madeley Living History Project.<sup>2</sup>

After that it was Broseley's turn and in 2008 she shared with members the results of her latest research.<sup>3</sup> She says that her request for further information proved very helpful and the final results of her efforts are shortly to be published – watch this space!

Not one to sit around, Janet is now getting going on the war memorials in St George's and Oakengates.

<sup>1</sup> See the *May 2002 Newsletter* for a short report on this talk.

<sup>2</sup> Available as an A4 booklet free of charge from Madeley Parish Council, tel: 01952 567280 or email: parish@madeleyparishcouncil.gov.uk.

<sup>3</sup> See the *November 2008 Newsletter*

### **BROSELEY'S SKELETONS UNEARTHED**

A piece of Broseley history was unearthed recently when several human skeletons were found during building work on the £48,000 extension to the Birchmeadow Centre in Birchmeadow Road. The remains were uncovered when a trench was being dug to link up the drains from the new extension to the main sewer.

Work was stopped while Hugh Hannaford, Shropshire Council's community archaeologist, excavated part of what was once the burial ground at this former Baptist Chapel. The remains of four skeletons, thought to be anything up to 200 years old, were found buried almost on top of one another and, according to Mr Hannaford, might

well have been from the same family – or conversely paupers who had been buried in a communal grave. He said that one was obviously a child of about six years old, one was about 10 years old and the others were adults.

The Chapel, which ceased to be a place of worship in the early part of the last century, has since had several uses, being among other things a cinema and a night club. In 1995 it was bought by the then Broseley Parish Council for use as a community centre and renamed the Birchmeadow Centre.

The Chapel was built in 1803 as a result of a split among the worshippers at the existing Baptist Chapel in Chapel Lane. With the help of John Guest of Guest's Iron Foundry, and George Crompton, a draper, they built this rival Chapel on the Birchmeadow. Both John Guest and John Onions, another Broseley ironmaster, were buried in its graveyard.

Once Shropshire Council has returned the remains to Broseley, and the necessary permission has been obtained, they will be suitably reinterred.

The graveyard has several vaults beneath it and some of Broseley's more senior residents recall playing in them as children.

*Then and now. The old Baptist Chapel in Birchmeadow was built in 1803. Renamed the Birchmeadow Centre, it is now a community centre. Inset: This handle from a coffin was among the finds during the recent excavations*



### **IN MEMORIAM**

Seen recently at a Broseley Flower Society exhibition this arrangement was in memory of Private Percy Acton Dixon, The King's (Liverpool Regiment), who was killed in action in 1918. Entered by Society chairman Gillian Pope the



arrangement was awarded Best in Show. Private Dixon, who was born in Broseley, was cousin to Gillian's father John Dixon. The display also included two books awarded to him inscribed with his name Percy Acton Dixon. His is one of the names appearing on the War Memorial in Broseley's Memorial Garden.

### **SEVERN GORGE COUNTRYSIDE TRUST**

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT) recently held an open day at their new centre in Darby Road, Coalbrookdale, when visitors were taken on a tour of the eco-friendly building. This has been constructed using local timber and sheeps' wool insulation.

The Trust was established in 1991 to manage more than 270 hectares of land and in 2006 it started a volunteering programme to involve local people in which year round activities include tree planting, hedge laying, ecological surveying and the repairing of steps.

Last year it took on the Telford Access to Nature project, funded by the Access to Nature grant programme. As a result many local people have enjoyed joining in outdoor activities and have learnt such traditional skills as hedge laying and coppicing. They have also improved footpaths and built wooden steps in Dale Coppice, while a new all ability path across Rough Park has recently been opened. Future activities will see V stiles replaced by kissing gates and the installation of boardwalks and benches, while information panels, circular routes and leaflets will help people explore the heritage and wildlife of the area.

Anyone interested in learning more about this project should contact Cadi Price on tel: 01952 433880 or visit [www.severngorge.org.uk](http://www.severngorge.org.uk).

## WHAT'S ON?

### Coalport China Museum

21 – 25 February 2011

Drop in ceramic decoration workshops themed around the Chinese New Year. For further details call 01952 884391 or visit [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk).

### Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

#### World Heritage Site 25th Anniversary

April 2011 – November 2011

Next year marks the 25th anniversary of the Ironbridge Gorge being declared a World Heritage Site. To mark the occasion an exhibition, consisting of a range of historic images of the region, will take place in the Footprint Gallery at Jackfield Tile Museum from mid-April 2011 to mid-November 2011.

### Science, Sport, Life Festival

April 2011 – July 2012

As part of the West Midlands' Cultural Olympiad, the IGMT will be hosting a series of events in the run up to the 2012 London Olympic Games. The *Science, Sport, Life Festival* will run from April 2011 – July 2012 and will include activities at Blists Hill Victorian Town, Enginuity and Coalbrookdale Gallery. Additional events will also take place during the 2011 Cultural Olympiad Open Weekend 23-24 July.

The main focus will be the *Science of Sport* exhibition at Enginuity. This will use the Museum's collections to demonstrate the science behind modern, high performance sports. Running from April 2011 to the end of February 2012, a highlight will be the Olympic gold medal winning eight rowing boat from the Henley River & Rowing Museum.

The Coalbrookdale Gallery will stage *Sporting Life*, a display of images ranging from football teams to coracle racing. It will also include such sporting heroes as Captain Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel, and football legend Billy Wright. This exhibition will be open from April 2011 until the end of July 2012.

Blists Hill Victorian Town will stage its own period version of the world famous Community Games. These were started in 1850 by the Much Wenlock surgeon, Dr William Penny Brookes, and

are said to have been the inspiration behind today's modern Olympic Games.

For further information on these and other activities, contact the IGMT on tel: 01952 884391 or visit [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk).

## MAILBOX

The Society has received this photograph from Bridgnorth Northgate Museum; it is captioned Broseley Town Crier 1979. If anyone can remember a town crier in Broseley at that time, or recognise the gentleman in question, please contact Janet Robinson on 01952 882495 or email [steve@broseley.org.uk](mailto:steve@broseley.org.uk).



The 1851 census shows there was a Francis and Eliza Hartshorne living at 141 Queen Street, Broseley; Francis was a confectioner. Could anyone tell me which would have been no 141 as I know a lot of houses were knocked down at some stage.

Melinda Evans

[melindaevans@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:melindaevans@hotmail.co.uk)

*Have a look at the tithe map and apportionment on our website <http://www.broseley.org.uk/tithe.htm> as there were a number of Hartshornes on Queen Street at plots 270 and 299. These are probably relatives. There was also a Francis Hartshorne at plot 846 which was a small house near the Deep Pit off Cockshutt Lane. A report in the Wellington Journal states that on 13 February 1897 a Francis Hartshorne was buried in the graveyard at the Old Baptist Chapel. He was 73 years of age at the time of his death and had carried on the business of a confectioner for a number of years.*

Steve Dewhurst

Someone else interested in Francis Hartshorne is his great great great granddaughter Kim Turner. Kim writes:

I have just found an extract from the *Wellington Journal* dated 1897 reporting my great great great grandfather's funeral. I should like to say how fantastic I have found the Broseley Local History Society website; I feel I am really getting to know Broseley and its history even before I visit. Please



pass on my heartfelt thanks to those responsible for putting together such a wealth of information and making it so accessible.

Kim Turner

kimturneremail@yahoo.co.uk

**I have just found the Broseley Local History** website and all those wonderful transcriptions of the parish registers up to 1750. Are there any transcribed records of the early 1800s at Broseley? I am looking for my great great grandfather John Harris, who was born about 1800, and who gave Broseley as his birthplace.

Diana Southern

[dianamsouthern@aol.com](mailto:dianamsouthern@aol.com)

*The best places to contact are Shropshire Family History Society and Shropshire Archives. There are links on the website.*

Steve Dewhirst

**I recently found this photograph which belongs** to my father John Roberts. Can anyone tell me what was the occasion for the parade and when it might have been taken? My family are Broseley born and bred and for years ran Roberts Brothers Garage in the High Street. My father and his cousin Tom were partners in the business.

Judith Roberts

judithroberts99@hotmail.com

*This photograph was taken from the window of 81 High Street, Broseley, probably during the 1950s, by John Dixon, a local businessman. It is captioned the Mayor's Parade (or Mayor's Sunday); Mr and Mrs Wedge were Mayor and Mayoress of the Wenlock Borough (which included Broseley) at the*



*time. I think it was formerly called Hospital Sunday as a report from the Wellington Journal in 1938 indicates that this was an annual event at which money was collected for various hospitals in the county.*

Steve Dewhirst

**I am interested in finding out more about** William Higginson York, born about 1852 in Madeley, Shropshire. His father was James York and his mother was Mary Higginson. William was brought up by the Yorks and, according to Joan Griffiths' *Poaching in the Gorge*, was sentenced to 6 years' penal servitude in 1898 with William Owen, for 'unlawfully and maliciously' wounding Alfred Bowen, the constable who caught them poaching. He was entered on the 1861 and 1871 censuses as Higginson but his grandson called himself Freddie York.

Christopher Higginson

steviejkeates@hotmail.co.uk

*You might try having a look at the cuttings from the Wellington Journal where you will find references to the York(e) family, <http://www.broseley.org.uk/cuttings.html>.*

Steve Dewhirst

**My ancestor Edward Colley, who is described** as an iron moulder, was working in Broseley in 1790-1800. His son and two daughters, however, were born in Paris from 1821. I wonder what he was doing in France, since I assume he would have gone as a result of work ordered from one of the Broseley foundries. I am fascinated to learn how an iron worker might have ended up in France at that time.

Val Whiteman

val@gevaru.demon.co.uk

*It is difficult to explain why they ended up in Paris. The only link I know of with Paris is that John Wilkinson supplied iron water pipes from his foundry at Willey for the Paris Water Works around 1780. Wilkinson's brother William moved to France in 1777 and returned just before the French Revolution, probably in 1789. I do not know of any direct link but it is possible that the Coalbrookdale Company or one of John Onions' works were supplying cast iron goods to France.*  
Steve Dewhirst

**I am tracing my family tree and have got back** to 1800. I am now stuck trying to find my latest set of parents, for whom I have names but as yet no dates for their births or marriage. According to the census my family came from Salthouses, Jackfield.

Is there anywhere in Broseley which still has birth/marriage/death records? What about church records or gravestones?

Clive Doughty  
dufty11@o2.co.uk

*Doughty is a well known name from Jackfield. They seem to have been mainly involved in trade on the river. For records before 1800 you could go to Shropshire Archives which should have the parish records. Most of the gravestones in Broseley Churchyard were cleared in the 1960s and I do not think there are any church records other than the parish records. It would also be worth contacting the Shropshire Family History Society.*  
Steve Dewhirst

**Can anyone give me any information on Barry Leake** whom I knew back in 1962? At that time he was a young sailor who lived at 49 Church Street, Broseley. After I emigrated to the US we corresponded for some time but I have long since lost touch with him, although I should now like to make contact again.

Toni Byrnes  
323 375 9835  
[ttonbyrnes@aol.com](mailto:ttonbyrnes@aol.com)

**Further research has thrown up more Broseley connections** than I previously thought I had, one of whom lived at a property listed as Town's End. The 1841 census lists the properties in the area as Dunge Cottage, Forester's Arms, Town's End and Onion's Brick Works. Does anyone know where exactly this is?

Glyn Bowend  
Bowendgb@aol.com

*I had not heard of Town's End before but I can guess where it was. If you have a look at the tithe map <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/Broseley%20Tithe%20Map%2017.jpg> I think plot 900 could be one; the other two would be 903 on <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/Broseley%20Tithe%20Map%2018.jpg>. The Forester's Arms still exists, although it is now a Thai restaurant, and is situated on the Ironbridge to Bridgnorth Road.*  
Steve Dewhirst

**My Watkiss ancestors lived in Broseley in the late 1600s.** A Thomas Watkis (sic) is shown as being a churchwarden on the first page of the Broseley Parish register. He was a ground collier and had seven children all baptised in St Leonard's Church, Broseley between 1638 and 1652. He himself was buried there in 1683. I do have a copy of his will and inventory but I cannot find any mention of the area where he lived.

I do enjoy the Newsletters and wish your Society good luck with all its projects.

Sheila Jelley  
sheila@sheilajelley.co.uk

*Thomas would have been the churchwarden at St Leonard's, Broseley. The parish church was known as St Leonard's until 1845 when it was rebuilt. For some reason the new church was named All Saints' Church. You could look at the Victoria County History for St Leonard's, Broseley <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22876#s17>.*  
Steve Dewhirst

**I knew that several of my ancestors were born in Broseley** but was overwhelmed on a recent visit there when I saw the name of John Onions on a commemorative plaque on White Hall in Church Street. John Onions (1745-1819) was first cousin to my great great great great grandfather Peter Onions (1724-1798). Peter was married to Elizabeth Guest, sister of John Guest, all born in Broseley but later moved to Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan, where Peter Onions patented his process for puddling iron and his brother in law founded what we now know as GKN Sankey.

Another plaque in Church Street showed the name of Hartshorne. This family was also linked to the Onions family by marriage. I see from your *May 2010 Newsletter* that a further plaque is planned for what was once the Baptist Chapel (now the Birchmeadow Centre) which was partially funded by John Onions.

Do you have a list of all the Commemorative plaques in Broseley (especially any that refer to the Onions or Guest families)? I have found quite a lot of information about John Guest, John and Peter

Onions but would be interested in anything further about these families. I also found a memorial plaque in the church to William Onions (1755-1825) (son of Peter) but have been unable to find any information about his role in Broseley.

Adrian Green

[kengreen9@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:kengreen9@tiscali.co.uk)

*We do not have any further plaques regarding the Onions or Guest families. In addition to those you have seen we have erected these others: John Wilkinson, the ironmaster; George Pritchard, solicitor, banker and philanthropist; John Randall, historian, geologist and china painter; Victoria Hall community centre.*

*Editor*

**Thank you for the photograph of the possible house of William Guest.** I am very interested in the history of the Guests and wonder if you know of the location of houses of earlier Guests. I think they may have been farmers.

Robyn

Australia

[gordon\\_jackson@hotmail.com](mailto:gordon_jackson@hotmail.com)

*I have also heard that the Guests were farmers but exactly where I do not know. We do have one document from 1857 when Josiah John Guest bought a house and garden previously belonging to John Guest, the ironmaster and his father. This was on King Street, Broseley Wood, one of the plots labelled 288 and 289 on the tithe map <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/Broseley%20Tithe%20Map%2003.jpg>. Unfortunately the house has been demolished, but I believe it was the one shown on the photograph below, on the left hand side behind the gentleman with the cap.*

*Steve Dewhirst*



**I am researching the Stephan and Cullis families of Broseley.** I know that my ancestor George Stephan ran the General Gordon Inn with his grandfather Thomas Beard. However, the census records of 1881 and 1891 have them travelling on the barge *William* and I believe that Thomas was the last of the Severn bargemen to die. Any further information would be appreciated.

Penny Stephan

[penbex86@hotmail.com](mailto:penbex86@hotmail.com)

*I suggest you obtain a copy of Barges and Bargemen by Barrie Trinder as this has various references to the Beard family.*

*Steve Dewhirst*

**I am trying to find out more information about my grandfather's brother John Havelin.** He is listed in the 1881 census as being 18 years old, born in Belfast, but lodging at Barratt's Hill, Broseley. He is described as an ordnance surveyor, which possibly means that there was map making going on in the area at the time. He later emigrated to America and spent the rest of his life there. I am interested to know more about this area and if Barratt's Hill itself is still there.

Harry Havelin

[harhav@eircom.net](mailto:harhav@eircom.net)

*This picture of Barratt's Hill was probably taken in the early 20th century. It has not changed much since then. Have a look at these two websites <http://www.broseley.org.uk/Tour/Barratts%20Hill.htm>, <http://www.broseley.org.uk/pope/Barratts%20Hill%20F21.jpg>. Barratt's Hill is on the outskirts of Broseley on the road to Much Wenlock.*

*Steve Dewhirst*



*Barratt's Hill in the early 20th century and the same view today. The large building on the right in the early photograph has now been replaced with new build, but otherwise the houses are substantially the same*



**I am looking for information on my Broseley** ancestors dating back to the early 1800s. Sarah Batho (formerly Richards) married John Batho and they lived in Maypole House in Broseley. Sarah had three children from her previous marriage, Emma Richards born 1835, Will Richards born 1836 and John Richards born 1840. John married Ann and their son was my great great grandfather. I know that John worked as a horse driver and Will as a coal miner, but are there any records to back this up? Also are there any photographs or map references for Maypole House? Apparently Sarah Batho remarried, but would there be any record of the name of the first husband and father to the three children?

Ian Morgan

ianjmorgan@hotmail.co.uk

*I assume your information comes from the 1851 census. Maypole House is probably the house in the photograph, grid ref SJ67224 02681. The Richards children were all born in Willey, but I can see no trace of them on the 1841 census of Willey. Have you managed to trace them on the 1841 census, if so do you know where they were living? Presumably by this time the father had died. If so it should be in the Births, Marriages & Deaths (BMD) from 1840-1841 in the Madeley district of Shropshire. You could also try the Shropshire Family History Society.*

*John Batho seems to have come to a sad end. A report in the Wellington Journal of 14 February 1880 tells of a man lying with his head on the*

*Maypole House, on the corner of Woodlands Road and Crew's Park Jitty, Broseley Wood, was at one time a pub but is now a private residence*



*railway line between Ironbridge and Coalport stations. The train driver was unable to stop the train in time and the man was killed. At the subsequent inquest the jury returned the verdict that the deceased had "committed suicide while in a state of temporary insanity".*

*Steve Dewhirst*

**I am looking for information on various of my** ancestors in the Broseley, Madeley, Ironbridge and Bridgnorth areas. One of them was Thomas Parker Poole who was the town crier in Ironbridge in the 1851 census. He married Isabella Glazebrook in Wellington in 1806. Her brother James Glazebrook married Frances Golding in 1799 in Madeley. Their daughter Harriet Glazebrook was born in 1800 and she married Joseph Davies in 1825.

Thomas Parker Poole's father John died about 1790 and his widow Mary married John Bathurst. This line married into the Lloyds who owned Benthall Potteries.

Other names I am interested in are Palmer, Parker, Hartshorne, Stormont, Tomlins, Williams and Sandlands.

Information on any of these families would be much appreciated.

Richard Poole

New Zealand

[rjpoole@ihug.co.nz](mailto:rjpoole@ihug.co.nz)

**My cousin and I from Western Canada recently** visited Shropshire looking for records of our ancestors from Broseley/Coalbrookdale. Jeremiah Jones (blacksmith) and Sarah Gough were both born in Broseley in the 1820s. Their eldest child, also Jeremiah, was born in Broseley in 1854 and moved to Birmingham about 1872 to find work as an iron founder. He married Geneva Maria Parkes and they had seven children of which the eldest William Arthur, born 1876, was our grandfather. He emigrated to Alberta in 1904 where the family still live.

Jeremiah and Sarah's parents were, respectively, Richard Jones, born 1780, and Hannah Reynolds, who were married in 1809, and Benjamin Gough, born 1781, and Mary Roper. The census records

show Richard Jones as a cooper and Benjamin Gough as a miner.

We found records in Holy Trinity Church in Coalbrookdale showing Jeremiah and Sarah's burials as being in 1888 and 1896 respectively, but should appreciate any help from anyone knowing where their parents were buried.

Richard died in 1855 and Hannah in 1865, their address being registered as King Street. Both Benjamin and Mary died in 1865 in Broseley, their address was listed as Hockley.

Shirley Runte

[Shirley.Runte@csconsult.com](mailto:Shirley.Runte@csconsult.com)

**Mrs White is researching her family history.**

She believes that her great grandfather, William Samuels, married a Jane Cadman in Broseley Church but would like to find out more. She thinks that they lived at The Lodge in Dark Lane, Broseley. Anyone who can help may contact her through the Society's email address [steve@broseley.org.uk](mailto:steve@broseley.org.uk).

**Some years ago my father in law obtained a**

number of paintings which he was told were painted by the daughter of the vicar of Willey Church in Shropshire. I think his name was Wayne and he may have been vicar around 1900. I believe

that this daughter was the first woman to go to London to study art in one of the big colleges.

I should appreciate any further information, in particular the name of the daughter.

Dean While

[dean\\_while@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dean_while@yahoo.co.uk)

*The rector of Willey in 1900 would have been the Rev'd William Henry Wayne, B A (Cantab). From the 1891 census he appears to have had two daughters Mary G born around 1859 and Lillian G born around 1864. They were both shown as spinsters in 1901. They seem to have been ladies of leisure and no occupation is shown on any census.*  
Steve Dewhurst

**I am currently researching a mug which has a**

painting on it of what seems to be a watermill. The mug is dated 1787 and bears the name Samuel Bateman. I am assuming that the mill is in Shropshire as it appears to be a Caughley mug, although this is not certain. I should appreciate hearing from anyone who may be able to identify this watermill.

Kate Cadman

[kate.cadman@btconnect.com](mailto:kate.cadman@btconnect.com)

*This mug, which is almost 4 inches high, bears a painting of a watermill and appears to be Caughley china*

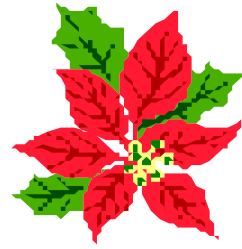


*Newsletter* is sympathetic to the concerns of certain of its correspondents who are reluctant to see their email address appear in the public domain. If there is anyone who does not wish their contact details to be published, they are welcome to make use of the Society's email address [steve@broseley.org.uk](mailto:steve@broseley.org.uk).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

**To see this Newsletter in full colour visit this website at [www.broseley.org.uk](http://www.broseley.org.uk).**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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# Newsletter

would like to thank  
all those people who  
have contributed to  
this publication  
during 2010 and  
wishes both them  
and all its readers a

**Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year**

## CHRISTMAS DINNER, THE LION, HIGH STREET, 1 DECEMBER 2010

Please reserve me \_\_\_\_\_ place/s for the Society's Christmas Dinner at a cost of £17.95 a head

Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose cheque/postal order for

Add: \_\_\_\_\_

£ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to

\_\_\_\_\_

Broseley Local History Society

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Janet Robinson,

26 Coalport Road

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Broseley, TF12 5AZ

by **Friday 26 November**

Please indicate your choice of starter and main course from the menu below, giving one tick for each person

### STARTER

### MAIN COURSE

Cream of country vegetable soup

Roast turkey with sausage and bacon rolls, stuffing and cranberry sauce

Garlic mushrooms

Roast topside of beef with yorkshire pudding

Chicken liver and herb pâté with cognac and cream

Fillet of salmon with a cranberry, port and orange glaze

Seasonal melon with fresh fruit

Pan fried duckling fillet with a gooseberry and cider sauce

King prawn cocktail

Chicken breast wrapped in bacon in a blue cheese and brandy sauce

Goat's cheese bruschetta

Winter vegetable risotto

Mushroom stroganoff

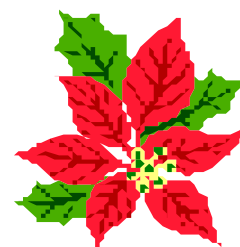
Nut roast



All served with seasonal vegetables and potatoes



Choice of desserts  
or  
Christmas pudding



Tea/coffee and mince pies