

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



November 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

- 7 Dec Christmas dinner.
4 Jan *More Memories of Broseley* with Joan Griffiths.
1 Feb *Historic Shropshire Churches* by Richard Bifield.
7 Mar Annual Wilkinson Lecture, *Joseph Priestley and the Wilkinsons* by Diana Clarke.

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- Roger Onions, Malvern Wells, Worcestershire
Shirley Runte, Alberta, Canada
Keith Aldin, Broseley
B Mason, Wolverhampton

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Wednesday 7 December

The Lion, High Street

7.30 for 7.45 pm

£17.95 per person

The Society's Christmas dinner is always an event to which members look forward. As in the past, it is to be held at The Lion Hotel in the High Street since this makes it easily accessible to most people.

Do make sure to book your place by **not later than Friday 2 December** by completing the form on p13 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 Wenlock Olympian Society

In September Helen Cromarty, sponsorship secretary for the Wenlock Olympian Society, gave a talk on the life of William Penny Brookes and his part in the setting up of this Society.

William Brookes was born in Much Wenlock in 1809 and lived there for much of his life. His father was a local doctor and as a young man Brookes was sent to study medicine in London. From there he travelled to Italy where he attended lectures at Padua, famous for its 16th century mediaeval herb gardens. He also studied at the Sorbonne but, on the death of his father in 1831, returned to England to take over his father's medical practice.

A man of many interests, he was a social reformer who believed that anyone of any class should have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and become mentally and physically fit. He also felt that England's young men should build up their strength and fitness in case the country became involved in another war.

He was also well known as a philanthropist, paying for the refurbishment of the Guildhall in Much Wenlock and setting up the Much Wenlock National School in 1848. He was a magistrate for almost 40 years and in 1856 became chairman of the Wenlock Gas Company which first brought lighting to the town. He was also director of both the Wenlock and Severn Junction Railway Companies, with the first train to Wenlock coinciding with the Wenlock Olympian Games of 1861.

But it was in 1841 that the Olympiad story really began. In this year Brookes established the Agricultural Reading Society to help local people read and in 1850 set up the Olympian Class of that Society to help them keep fit. The first meeting of this Society included athletics and sports such as quoits, football and cricket and was open to everyone of any class.



*William Penny Brookes,
founding father of the
modern Olympic Games*

While intended for men only, with women not even allowed to watch, it was decided in 1852 to hold one race for Old Women, in other words working women. However, since women did not at that time 'wear anything under their skirts' it was later deemed unsuitable and the experiment was not repeated! Nonetheless, these games became so popular that in 1860 they were renamed the Wenlock Olympian Games.

Keen to expand these, Brookes began to include pageantry and organised processions through the town as well as increasing the number of events. By 1870 the sports included running, cricket and 14 a side soccer, and in the following year competitions in drawing, prose and poetry for both children and adults were introduced. As the years went on the Games became increasingly popular and well known so that people came from all over the country to compete. This had a snowball effect in that they took the idea back home and started up similar societies in their own communities.

While the question could be asked why the Wenlock and not the Much Wenlock Olympian Society, there is a simple explanation for this. Brookes was keen to include not only the town of Much Wenlock but also the surrounding areas which spread over Wenlock Ward, Broseley Ward, Madeley Ward and Little Wenlock.

Brookes' real ambition, however, was to help revive the original Olympic Games and in 1859 he obtained sponsorship for such games to be held in Athens. Unfortunately, Athens used the money to hold an industrial exhibition, merely tagging on some games at the end, which in any case were only for Greek citizens.

So in 1865 Brookes helped found the National Olympian Association based in Liverpool. Their first national event was held in 1866 at the Crystal Palace in London. It attracted over 10,000 spectators and was meant only for amateurs. Brookes' idea of an 'amateur' was anyone who did not earn money for his sport and he was determined that all such people should be eligible to compete. However, this did not suit the ideals of the elite who were determined that British sport should be restricted to 'gentlemen' – in other

words, those people who did not need to work for a living. Brookes, however, won the day and his definition of amateur still stands.

1877 saw the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee and Brookes took the opportunity to ask Greece to donate a prize for the National Olympian Games being held in Shrewsbury.

The silver cup sent by King George I of Greece gave Brookes the chance to lobby the Greek nation to hold an International Olympian Festival in Athens. Sadly, his efforts were in vain.

Meanwhile, a young French aristocrat, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, was growing up with an increasing sense of the importance of physical education and sport in schooling as well as among the general population. In 1889 he organised an International Congress on Physical Education and subsequently met up with Brookes. Brookes invited him to Much Wenlock and put on a special autumn Games in his honour. De Coubertin was so impressed with Brookes' work that, on his return to France, he wrote a glowing report saying that "If the Olympic Games that Modern Greece has not yet been able to revive still survives today, it is due, not to a Greek, but to Dr W P Brookes".

Both de Coubertin and Brookes shared a common dream of an Olympic revival in the form of an international Games and in 1894 de Coubertin set up the International Olympic Committee. While Brookes' ideal was for a Games based on the Wenlock Games, which would include pageantry and would be held in Athens, de Coubertin disagreed with this maintaining that the Games should move around the world.

Their dream was finally realised when, in 1896, the first of the modern style Olympic Games was held in Athens. Ironically, however, Brookes died at the age of 86 just a few months before these games took place. He is buried in Much Wenlock churchyard where his grave is bordered with Olympic laurel wreaths.



Pierre de Coubertin who, in 1894, set up the International Olympic Committee

Annual General Meeting

The Society's AGM was held on 5 October when chairman Gillian Pope said that the past year had been very successful, with an interesting programme of talks and activities. As well as presentations on such varied topics as Shropshire Iron Age Forts and the Wenlock Olympian Society the annual Wilkinson Lecture, presented by Vin Callcut, had reviewed the life and achievements of John Wilkinson, relating them to conditions today.

Summer activities had seen a guided walk down Loamhole Dingle in Coalbrookdale and an extremely interesting trip to the Blaenavon Iron Works and the Big Pit in South Wales.

The Society had also been active in erecting commemorative plaques around the town for which they had received a grant of £1,000 from the Local Joint Committee. Numbering ten in all, the last of them has now been erected on the Burnt House in Cape Street. All ten were made by Roger Fewtrell at Blists Hill.

Another project was its involvement, together with Broseley Town Council and Broseley Partnership, in the refurbishment of the Cemetery Chapel where some of the Society's artefacts are now on display to the public.

The chairman then went on to say that many members will remember Frank Dawson and the Society's trip to his house, Castlehead, in Cumbria some years ago. Inspired by the fact that Wilkinson had built and lived in that house, Frank had written a book about him. Sadly he died before it could be published, but he left the rights to the Society. Thanks to the efforts of David Lake the History Press of Stroud has agreed to publish this book and hopes to have it on the shelves shortly.

It was also mentioned that next year would be the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Wilkinson Society, the forerunner of the present Broseley Local History Society. The committee are planning to mark this occasion and details will be announced later.

Meanwhile, the chairman extended her thanks to the committee for their support in the past year, as well as to Steve Dewhirst for his continued

dedication to maintaining the Society's website and dealing with the many requests for information, and to Yvonne Humphrey for her help in the packing and distribution of the Newsletter.

There being no other nominees, the existing committee were unanimously re-elected.

The AGM should have been followed by a talk on the Coalbrookdale Institute given by John Powell, librarian at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. Unfortunately, John had just undergone major surgery and, although back home and recovering well, was not yet out and about.

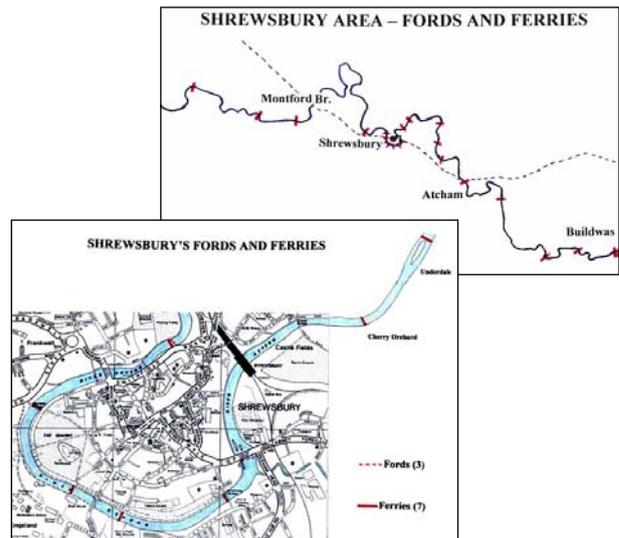
Instead, Ron Miles was asked to stand in with one of his slide presentations. This he did in his usual inimitable manner, entertaining the meeting with a display of what he called Real History. This was a series of photographs he had taken while he was following his trade of travelling chiropodist and vividly illustrated the way in which many of his customers lived in days gone by. His pictures of the interiors of some of the cottages he visited must have stirred many nostalgic memories for some of the older members, who can surely remember a time of cast iron fire ranges, old style wirelesses and stone sinks. Thanks to Ron for putting together such an interesting presentation at such short notice.

Members will surely join *Newsletter* in wishing John Powell a speedy recovery; it is anticipated that he will be giving his talk on the Coalbrookdale Institute some time next year.

Fords and Ferries on the Shropshire Severn

At the November meeting, held jointly with the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge, Neil Clarke presented another in his series of talks on *Fords and Ferries on the Shropshire Severn*, covering the area from Molverley on the county's western boundary, downstream to Buildwas. While Neil's talk treated the subject in some depth, space here allows only mention of the more important ones.

Neil opened his talk by saying that although rivers had once played an important part in transport and trade, they could also be a barrier to people and goods wanting to cross them. The earliest answer to this problem had been to ford them, the terrain

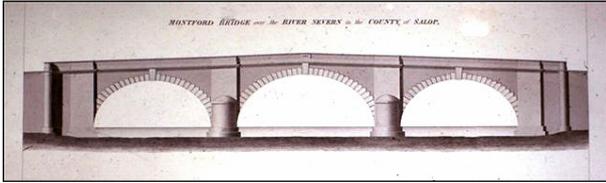


through which the river flowed very much influencing the place chosen for such a crossing.

In Shropshire, where the river goes through the north Shropshire plain, the Ironbridge Gorge and the open valley to the southeast, the earliest crossings were in the Montford Bridge area, Shrewsbury, Atcham, Buildwas and Bridgnorth, and only later in the Ironbridge Gorge. These crossings were usually first by ford, followed by ferries and then bridges, although in some cases, even after some fords were replaced by ferries, heavy traffic still used the old fords. In other cases, a ford would simply be abandoned, while a ferry or a bridge might be established where no crossing had existed before.

Upstream of Shrewsbury and downstream to Buildwas there is evidence of at least 12 fords and records of 17 ferries. The most strategic crossing places were at Shrawardine and Montford Bridge. The ford at Shrawardine was so important that the Normans built motte and bailey castles to guard it. By the early 18th century there was also a ferry just below the ford, although this latter was still occasionally used by heavy traffic until the mid 1800s. The ferry is known to have been in use at least up to 1892.

While there is some evidence that a ferry once existed at Montford this crossing was also considered sufficiently important that a wooden bridge on stone piers was built there as early as the 13th century. It was here that Daffyd, Prince of Wales, was betrayed by his own people in 1283 and handed over to the English. He was



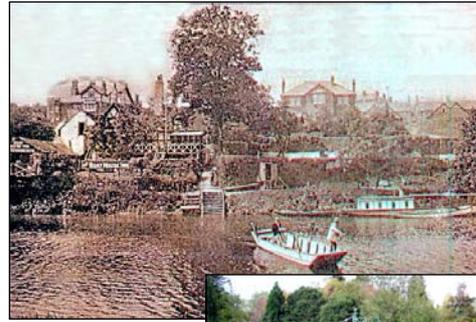
Thomas Telford's Montford Bridge, built in 1792, carried what later became the Holyhead Road

subsequently found guilty of treason, taken to Shrewsbury and hanged; a plaque at the top of Pride Hill marks the place of his execution. This mediaeval bridge only went out of use in 1792 when it was replaced just upstream by Thomas Telford's first bridge and carried what later became the Holyhead Road. A modern bridge now carries the rerouted A5 over the river.

Two crossings each side of Shrewsbury, Shelton and Uffington, are interesting in that they both figured in the 1403 Battle of Shrewsbury. The ford at Uffington was still there in 1881, as was a chain ferry just upstream. The WWI poet Wilfred Owen and his family lived close by and may have used this ferry to attend church services in Uffington.

Not unnaturally, the greatest number of crossings were in Shrewsbury itself, although the two main ones were just upstream from the later English Bridge and just below the present Welsh Bridge which in 1795 had replaced the mediaeval St George's Bridge. As the town expanded beyond the loop of the river in the 18th and 19th centuries, so did the need for ferries. There is evidence of seven of them, with the farthest upstream being from Smithfield Road to Mountfields, started in 1860 to improve access to the cricket ground; it was still operating in 1916. Today the Frankwell suspension bridge, opened in 1979, provides the means of crossing.

This chain ferry at Uffington may have been used by Wilfred Owen and his family



Then and now. The old plague house hospital at Porthill ferry later became the Boat House Inn and was a popular haunt of bargees and trowmen



Another one was at the site of the plague house hospital at Porthill. Built in the 17th century this later became the Boat House Inn, a popular haunt of bargees and trowmen. The ferry was replaced in 1922 by the present suspension bridge.

Further down still was the Quarry ferry providing access to what had begun in 1760 as a foundling hospital. This later became the Shrewsbury & Atcham Union Workhouse but was taken over by Shrewsbury School in 1882. The ferry closed only in 1941.

Another means of crossing, the Cann Office ferry, began operating from about 1750; it continued in use, with a short break, until replaced by a toll bridge in 1892. From the early 1850s it had carried wagons from Burr's Kingsland lead works.

The final ferry crossing in Shrewsbury opened in 1809 downstream of the Underdale Island to allow horses to cross from the tow path to where it

The Cann Office ferry operated from about 1750 and from the early 1850s had carried wagons from Burr's Kingsland works

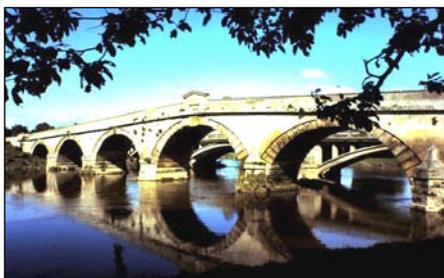


continued on the opposite side. It was subsequently used by local residents, though a new ferry just below the later weir was opened in 1882. The toll with ½d per person but the ferry was replaced in 1910 by a bridge just upstream. This was superseded in 1951 by the present day Castle Walk footbridge.

Crossings by ford or ferry were all very well but could sometimes prove hazardous as this letter of 1879 to Eddowes Journal by ‘One who crosses’ reveals. One of his concerns was the inability to see the water’s edge after dark. Not all the ferries, he wrote, carried lights and even if they did, these frequently dazzled the eyes, making it just as difficult to avoid a watery edge. A less usual hazard was that once experienced by poachers who laid out their weighted lines one night intending to pick them up in the morning. On this occasion, however, they had lain them across a ferry rope and it was the ferryman who hauled up the line, complete with a fair catch of eels!

The next most important area downstream was that from Atcham to Wroxeter. Atcham was where the Romans originally forded the river on their way to the Welsh borderlands before they built a fort and settlement at Wroxeter. Once established they diverted their route through the city, crossing the river from there. Although there has been a suggestion that a bridge existed there in Roman times, it seems more likely that there was just a ford. This appears to have been used long after the Roman period, although by the early 18th century a ferry was also in use.

The first bridge to be built at Atcham belonged to the Abbot of Lilleshall who, in 1221, was charging a penny a loaded cart to cross it. This was replaced in 1540 with an 18 arch stone bridge, which in turn was replaced in 1776. This latter survived until 1929 when the present concrete bridge was built.



The first bridge to be built at Atcham belonged to the Abbot of Lilleshall. This one dates from 1776

The next important crossing downstream was at Cressage, where a ferry was working in at least 1747. This, however, was often affected by floods and in 1799 permission was given for the building of a bridge. Unlike his earlier Severn bridges, Thomas Telford designed this one from wood with stone abutments with a toll house on the Cressage side. It was replaced in 1913 with the present one.

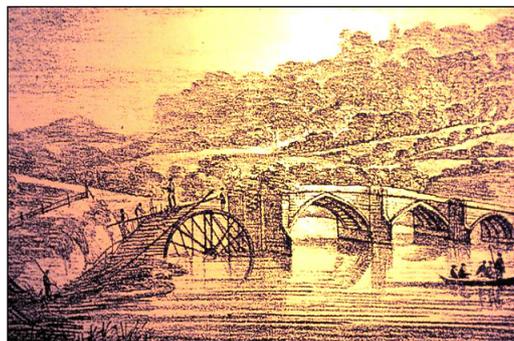
It is thought that the earliest crossing at Buildwas could go back to prehistoric times as there is some evidence that this may have linked the Wrekin area with sites further south. This would have been used by the late Saxon monastery at Much Wenlock, as well as the Norman priory at Wenlock which possibly even set up a ferry. But it was Buildwas Abbey itself, founded in 1135 which, certainly by the early 14th century, built the first bridge.

While this mediaeval bridge had replaced the earlier ford and ferry, it was often subject to flood damage and under regular repair. The 1795 floods, however, caused so much damage that it became unsafe. Telford’s design for a replacement was for an iron bridge – the first to be built since the original Iron Bridge farther down the river. He was also asked to design a temporary wooden bridge, at the same time that the Clerk of the Peace was advertising for a ferryman. This ferry operated until after the permanent bridge was opened the following year. Telford’s bridge has since been replaced twice, although the cast iron date plaque from his original bridge is preserved at the side of the road.

After such a fascinating evening members will certainly look forward to Neil’s talk on the final stretch of river, from Buildwas down to the county boundary, at some point in the future.

All photographs courtesy of Neil Clarke

Buildwas bridge was under regular repair until the floods of 1795 damaged it beyond repair. It was replaced by Telford’s first iron bridge



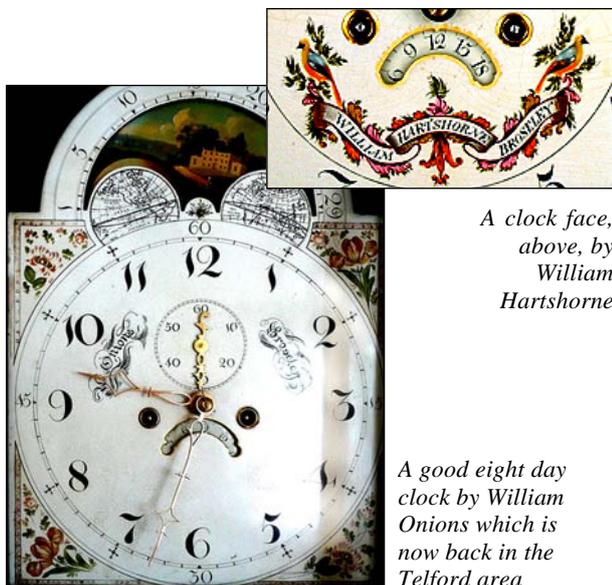
THE CLOCK AND WATCH MAKERS OF BROSELEY

Vin Callcut has been researching the clock and watch makers of Broseley, but finds that information on them is rather scarce. In an effort to find out more, he has set up a web page showing what is available and asking for comments. This page may be found on the 'oldcopper' website and may be accessed by putting 'The Clock and Watch Makers of Broseley' into any search engine. Vin is hopeful that the information collected will be sufficient for an article in the Society's Journal at some stage.

His research so far has discovered very little on the clock makers living and working in Broseley during the late 18th and 19th centuries when clocks and watches were made by hand by craftsmen. However, their marked products may still occasionally be found and can make just as important a contribution to the décor of a home as ever. While many clock history books contain useful snippets of background information on makers they often repeat the facts originally quoted elsewhere.

The family names commonly found are Blakeway, Hartshorne (with or without the last 'e') and Onions but there are others. Some of these might be from makers living in nearby towns who had made clocks for Broseley patrons and used the town name as a courtesy.

Vin would welcome anyone who has more information contacting him via the above web page.



A clock face, above, by William Hartshorne

A good eight day clock by William Onions which is now back in the Telford area

Photograph courtesy Alan Smith

BROSELEY CEMETERY CHAPEL

As many readers will already know, Broseley Cemetery Chapel has recently been undergoing refurbishment and in July this year was formally opened to the public as a place for quiet reflection as well as the display of various artefacts of local historical interest.



This old bier is on display in the refurbished Cemetery Chapel

Although access is usually available during the week, it was felt that it would be of value to the community if it could also be opened at the weekend. Consequently a pilot scheme was put in place to open it on each Sunday in October, manned by volunteers. The committee was extremely encouraged by the number of people who visited the chapel during these days and plans are afoot to open it again next spring. This, however, would require a greater number of volunteers and anyone willing to offer a couple of hours time on a Sunday would be welcomed; please phone Derek Armstrong on 01952 882582.

It is also hoped to extend the range of artefacts on display; if anyone has anything they think may enhance this, please also phone Derek Armstrong.

FRIENDS CHALLENGE QUIZ

Over the past two years teams from the Society have performed with distinction when competing in the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Challenge Quiz. Now a further quiz is to be held early next year, when it is hoped that the Society can once again field at least one team in a bid to uphold its reputation.

The event is being held on Saturday 18 February 2012 at 7.30 pm in the Glass Class Room (Museum Offices), Coalbrookdale when the question master will be Richard Bifield.

Teams are limited to a maximum of four members and the cost is £12 per team including refreshments. Anyone interested in making up at least one team for the Society should contact Neil Clarke, tel: 01952 504135 or email: neil@cranleigh19.plus.com.

OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY

There was great excitement in Broseley recently when it was announced that the Olympic Torch would be passing through the town during its tour of Shropshire next year. While it was expected that it would visit Much Wenlock where William Penny Brookes founded the Wenlock Olympian Games, it was an unexpected pleasure to learn that Benthall and Broseley were also on the route. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, 30 May although the time and actual route will only be announced later. For further information visit www.london2012.com/olympictorchrelaymap.

The Olympic torch is almost 3 ft long, with the circles running the length of the body representing the inspiring stories of the 8,000 torchbearers.



WHAT'S ON?

Blists Hill Victorian Town

Sat and Sun 10-11 and 17-18 December

10.00 am-4.00 pm

Special Christmas Events

Enjoy traditional celebrations from the 1800s, join in the carol singers and watch a Punch and Judy show. Find the Twelve Days of Christmas hidden around the town and check out Santa's reindeer as well as buying those last minute Christmas presents.

For further information, contact the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre tel: 01952 884391 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk

Ongoing until Wednesday, 29 February 2012

Coalbrookdale Gallery, Coalbrookdale

Our Sporting Life: Sporting Heroes

In celebration of Shropshire's sporting heroes, from England footballer Billy Wright and Captain Matthew Webb to modern day heroes such as boxing legend Richie Woodhall. Display of images ranges from football, cricket and quoits teams to rowing clubs and coracle racing.

For details of opening times tel: 01952 433424 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk. Admission free.

Ongoing until Sunday, 9 September 2012

Enginuity, Coalbrookdale

Our Sporting Life: The Science of Sport exhibition

An exhibition focusing on the relationship between science and sport. The main exhibit is the Olympic Eight rowing boat that won gold for Great Britain in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

For further information tel: 01952 433424 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk

Opening 23rd March 2012

Engine Shop, Enginuity, Coalbrookdale

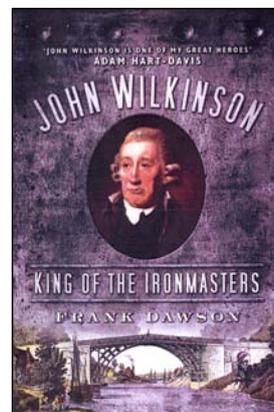
CORE, a digital art installation

As part of the London 2012 Festival the Ironbridge Gorge Museum will host CORE, a digital art installation designed by renowned international artist Kurt Hentschläger. CORE forms the next generation of the Chicago-based artist's generative 3D and audio work. Visitors will experience a digital world made up of virtual aquaria containing dynamic bodies in extreme motion whose movements are neither predictable nor repeated.

For information on this and other events visit: <http://www.ironbridge.org.uk>.

BOOKSHOP

When Frank Dawson moved into Castlehead in Cumbria some years ago he realised that he was living in the one time home of John Wilkinson. He began to research his life, in particular the more personal and family aspect of it, and soon became fascinated enough to



begin writing a book about him. The result gives a new and unique insight into the character and thinking of the man Telford called King of the Ironmasters. Sadly Frank died before it could be published, but he left the publishing rights to the Society.

Now the History Press in Stroud has undertaken to publish it and the book, which will be entitled *John Wilkinson, King of the Ironmasters*, is in the course of production with publication expected early in the New Year.

MAILBOX

I recently found a birth certificate for my grandfather, Thomas E Caughlan, who was born in Padmans Alley, Broseley, on 26 September, 1888. His father Thomas and mother Mary Ann Eliza, formerly Humphries, probably came to the States prior to 1899. Any information you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Jerry Stankus
Kennett Square, PA

From the 1881 census you will see a Humphries family was living on Padmans Alley and what I presume were her parents living a few doors away in Cape Street. The father was not local and from the name it looks as though he originated in Ireland. How he came to be in Broseley is not obvious although there were some families from County Mayo and Galway living in the vicinity of Cape Street.

Steve Dewhirst

I have been researching my Booth family history in Shropshire and have discovered that during the 1700s William Booth, a cordwainer, and his brother Henry lived and worked in the area. I also came across an article which refers to the area of Calcutts. My 6 x grandmother, then a widow of William Booth, was leasing a property in Calcutts and I wondered if anyone could help me with further information, for instance where they might have lived? From my research it seems that a number of possibly derelict cottages were demolished at some time (maybe near to Calcutts Hotel) and replaced with modern homes.

A Sir George Onesiphorus Paul signed the lease I mentioned over to Alexander Brodie and Eleanor Booth. I gather that Sir Paul was a great prison reformer.

Vivienne Hulme

I am afraid I do not know much about the Calcutts Estate. It seems to have been quite small and adjoined the larger Broseley Estate. There is a small piece about the estate in the Victoria County History and at one time there was a furnace there being run by Brodie. The area would not have been

very pleasant as there would have been a large amount of acrid smoke from the furnaces, coke ovens and ironstone calcining heaps.

Steve Dewhirst

I wonder if anyone can tell me where your local plaque to Alexander Brodie is now? I understand it was originally in St Mary's Church but was to be moved to the Pritchard Memorial Church. I am not very familiar with your area but your website has been most helpful.

Brodie was born in Traquair, a small collection of a few houses near here, (I live in Cardrona, Scotland) and was always very supportive in sending money annually to pay for educating the poor of his local parish. He also provided the first commercial woollen mill at a cost in excess of £3,000 which opened in Innerleithen in 1788. It does seem odd that one of the country's most successful hosiery industries was started by a blacksmith, which is what he was when he left his home at Traquair. The four storey mill is still standing partly operational, but the main building is derelict and might soon be demolished.

I, along with others, have been working on recording the history and present state of the Caerlee Mill and the associated Mill Lade which Brodie built at his own expense to provide work for the locals. The lade also powered several other industries and much of the old equipment is still in existence, although now derelict.

Jim Lyon

Caerlee Woollen Mill at Innerleithen was built by Alexander Brodie in 1788 at a cost of over £3,000 to provide work for the local population



Photograph courtesy Jim Lyon



This plaque in St Mary's Church, Jackfield, is actually in memory of Alexander Brodie senior's nephew, confusingly also called Alexander

The plaque you mention is now in St Mary's Church, Jackfield, having been moved there from the old Jackfield Church (known as the Red Church) further up the hill, some time ago. Both churches were called St Mary's, the old one finally being demolished in 1961.

The plaque, however, is to the nephew of Alexander Brodie, the more famous ironmaster. Confusingly they have the same name. This nephew took over the Calcutts works after Alexander's death in 1811, he himself dying in 1830.

I understand that there is a memorial to Alexander Brodie at Traquair. Was he buried here?

Steve Dewhirst

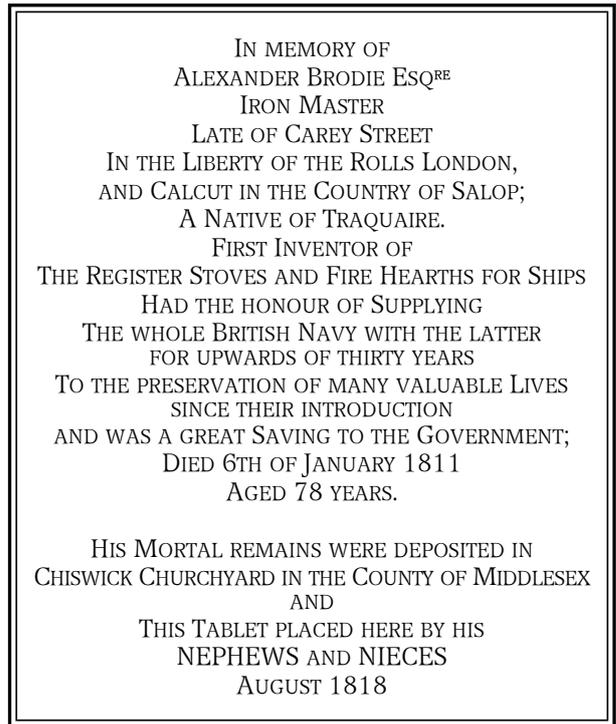
There is a memorial stone to Alexander Brodie on the outside of Traquair Church but he was buried in Chiswick in Middlesex. He was originally apprenticed as a blacksmith but at age 18 he set off for London with 17/6d in his pocket and a letter of introduction from the Lady of the Manor. The rest, as they say, is history.

Jim Lyon

Traquair Church, which bears a memorial stone to Alexander Brodie



Photograph courtesy Jim Lyon



The inscription on Alexander Brodie's memorial stone which appears on the outside of Traquair Church. The stone was placed there by his nephews and nieces to whom he bequeathed his estate, and who administered the Caerlee Mill. This was leased to others for some thirty years before being sold to a Robert Gill in 1849

As can be seen from the inscription above, Alexander Brodie was famous for being far more than an ironmaster. He was also the inventor of register stoves and fire hearths for ships and was to supply them to the British Navy for over 30 years.

In October 2005 the Society put on an exhibition in celebration of Trafalgar 200. One of the features on display was a 1:12 scale model of the

A 1:12 scale model of one of Alexander Brodie's galley stoves



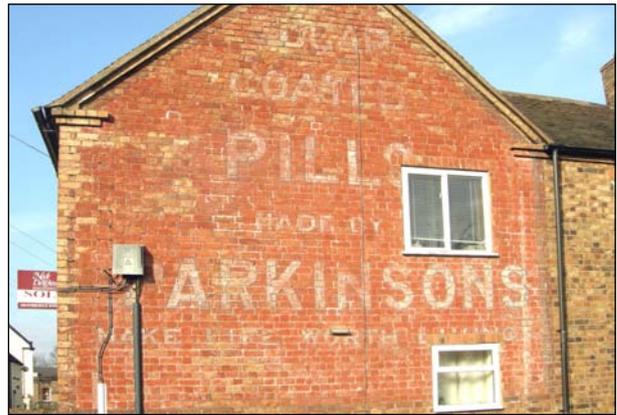
Photograph courtesy Vin Calicut

galley stove invented by Alexander Brodie. It is said that an actual stove on *HMS Victory* was capable of providing two hot meals a day to a crew of over 800 men. The stove, 6ft 6in square and 5ft 6in high, was surrounded by a rail on which individual braziers could be hung. The front had three fire sections, a chimney-driven spit and two kettle cranes, while behind this was an oven capable of baking 80 loaves at once.

In the August 2011 Newsletter

we had an enquiry about the area surrounding a house in Station Road, Madeley – the one with the Parkinsons pills advertisement on the end of the house. In answer to this Rob Breeze wrote:

The site adjacent to your house was obviously fields at one time but for many years, and up to the time the new houses were built, it was the site of an engineering works originally producing steel fabrications for the mining industry and subsequently jigs for prefabricated timber frames for the building industry. It was always known as Station Works and in 1967 was mentioned as belonging to Walton & Co – the company involved in steel fabrication. A company of the same name was recorded around the turn of the 20th century as manufacturers of colliery winding chains at a works near the old canal bridge on Queen Street.



This house in Station Road, Madeley, has a sign on it dating back to at least the 1940s

As far as I know your house dates from the second half of the 19th century – it was certainly shown on the 1881 OS map but it is difficult to be more precise. As to your sign, or at least an earlier version of it, that dates back to at least the 1940s as one former local resident has mentioned seeing it then on his way to and from Madeley Market Station.

Rob Breeze

Thank you, that is very interesting. I read in the Broseley Local History Society *Newsletter* about Ivor Brown having seen the sign between 1950 and 1952 when he used to get the train. I think Parkinsons’ name was changed from Parkinson and Sons in about 1928 so that helps to narrow it down even more. I have been given a copy of an old postcard of the station with the sign very bright and clear in the background, although I am not sure of the date.

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 this website at www.broseley.org.uk.

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Newsletter



would like to thank
all those people who
have contributed to
this publication
during 2011 and
wishes both them
and all its readers a
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year