

Meetings.

Meeting 5th January 2000.

BROSELEY CENTRE.

Frank Selkirk's house in Church Street.

FS. Deeds go back only to c. 1932. Older deeds lost, probably when Potts Solicitors closed. Originally smallish brick house, 2 up, 2 down, late 18th C., added to c. 1814. Owner previous to Frank was Maurice Chidley, who said he had found backing paper on wall relating to Battle of Waterloo. Ownership in 19th C. not known.

MS. Mrs Charlton lived there in the twenties and thirties. Her maiden name was Potts, one of the three Potts sisters who had lived at the Deanery in Church St. May and Hettie never married.

EP. Miss Dingwall lived there. When she passed away she was not found for four days. Maurice Chidley bought the house and moved in c.1970.

BP. Miss Dingwall and her mother were Victorian ladies, always together, in black and very gracious, but after the death of her mother Miss Dingwall must have been lonely.

FS. The house had a cellar and outbuildings, but Maurice demolished some of the outbuildings and filled in the cellar with the bricks, having had trouble with the cellar flooding. Frank had discovered and dug out the cellar, installing a pump for drainage. Only problem the rat that had moved in. Derek Pountney had said the house used to be known as Prospect House.

MS. As a child I visited the house because my aunt used to work there, but I can't recall its being called 'Prospect House'.

LO. It is said that the Prestage's had lived there. Opposite used to be a row of very modest cottages, where the Uppercroft flats are now. Merediths the funeral directors lived near the bottom end of Foundry Lane.

MS. Their business was in Poole's Yard. I was born in Foundry Lane, and the ruins of a furnace were still there, on the right as you went down. The cottages in Foundry Lane had no water laid on and used a hydrant that stood by the furnace. A wide part of Foundry Lane was called the Bull Ring.

TI. Mr Clark had a shop in Church Street where he sold second-hand furniture and fireworks. He had a horse and dray.

50 Church Street.

NC. Gerald Instone's house, why the very high wall so close to frontage ? Defensive ?

MS. But the back of Gerald Instone's house is like the front of Willey Hall, with columns. Mr Lee the dentist had his surgery there. He had another practice in Wellington.

Cottages behind High St shops and pubs.

JO. A lane ran parallel to the High St. Along it were small cottages with poor occupants. The lane was below the level of the High St by one floor's height. Where Catherine's Bakery is the actual bakehouse is one floor down from the shop, at the level of the back lane.

The present Post Office used to be Stephen Jones, grocers. Again, there is a drop of one floor to the back room. JO used to play there with the Jones children, Moms and Beryl. The family had a smallholding at The Mines, where they lived, and where we used to play.

At "The Albion" a horse and dray brought the beer to the back door, at cellar level.

TI. There was a butchery at what is now The Butcher's Bar.

MS. You could say the occupants of the cottages were poor but generally respectable. Poaching was an occasional occupation.

The Pritchard Memorial.

JO. Demolition was a tragedy, for it was the most remarkable thing in Broseley. The railings had been taken for the war effort. The water in the well had been very irony, rather poisonous. A lad called Nock had drowned in it in JO's Father's Day.

Men used to collect their pensions from the Old Post Office, then jump over the low wall by the Memorial and into the betting shop. The Post Office then was in what is now Broseley News.

MS. My parents said that the well was there before the memorial. Although the water was not good the alternative for many of the people of Broseley was the horse-drawn water-cart that used to come round, and its water was charged for by each bucketfull.

When I was a child what is now The Guest House was the Post Office, kept by Mr Walter Davies. Mrs Davies' maiden name was Estelle Martin; she was the kindest lady in Broseley. Walter Davies was the Evacuee Officer during the war. Three nuns who were evacuated with their school from Liverpool lived with the Davies's and ran their school in the Town Hall.

VF. The Revd Jackson wanted the Pritchard Memorial pulled down; he was a socialist and against wealthy bankers like Pritchard.

LO. The rubble was used to pave Lodge Lane.

MS. Mr Jackson was nevertheless a very generous man, so that he died poor in The Beeches. He brought ordinary people onto the church council as well as the Potts, the Prestage's and Captain Collins. Capt. Collins lived in Church St, next to Dr Boon at Whitehall.

The Town Hall.

JO. Demolished c. 1965. Jack spoke to Percy Parr, Bill's father, about it in 1964. Percy was then living in what had been Ruston's, and subsequently Bert Jones's butchers shop. Percy had converted it into a house, with the coalyard at the rear.

The site of the Town Hall was redeveloped as the Spar Shop, built by Galliers and run by the Picken family. Mike Picken's parents had come to Broseley in the 20's, and had a grocery shop in Barbers Row. They used a BSA motorcycle combination for deliveries. After some years away they returned and took over Pat Thompson's men's outfitters, once again as a grocer's. Then they took on the Spar Shop, which is now run by Vicky and David Picken.

MS. The Town Hall was used for everything. The Police Court was there. There were dances, and social evenings which were run one week by the Girls' Friendly Society and the next week by the Sunday School or the Mothers' Union. The Church ran a super dance on New Year's Eve. The Tennis Club dance was high society. Major Prestage was dancing with Miss Hamilton when he, very sadly, dropped dead. The Church actually owned the Town Hall, not the Council.

JO. They also held song contests. I well remember when the song 'Peggy O'Neil' was popular, a lad called George Potts sang Peggy Cow Heel to the tune and we were all in stitches. Wrestling bouts were also held there. A German called Hacker Schmidt came and challenged all comers. Billie Osborne threw him out of the ring after a fight full of dirty tricks.

Barber's Row.

MT. Relatives used to live there. Mary has tape recording made c. 1950 of her grandmother talking about the building of the Lady Forester Hospital in 1896 and will copy it for us.

LO. The Picken family used to live on the left, next to Mrs Sankey and Jack. The shop next to Simon Gibbons was Patrick Thompson's gent's outfitters. There was a horsebreaker here in 1909.

MS. Mr Thompson's wife was found drowned in his well. My parents told me that the finger of suspicion pointed at him, but it was not proved.

Instone Building.

RK. Roland Smitheman married the Instones daughter. The building is now an estate agency run by Roland's great-great-grandson. The activities there were very visible from the school windows. Used to watch the rope hoist lifting sacks up to the first floor store.

JO. The hoist was worked by a horse, driven by Stan Gallier. It had to walk forward down Bridgnorth Road to raise the sack, then back up to lower it. Although you could see all this from the school windows you got the cane if you were caught watching. Often the sacks brought by a steam wagon. As it pulled away up the High Street all the schoolboys would hang on the back.. Jack used to spend time at Instone's playing with John, Roland's son, in the domestic part of the building which was to the right of the shop, looking at the frontage from the square.

VF. Windows decorative with coloured glass "frieze".

EP. Has an almanac from Instone's, mentioning Bibby's animal feed.

LO. Moore's Stores, used to be Gas Showroom, now a house.

The Pheasant.

FS. Landlords used to be Hurdley family.

MS. Before that it was kept by the Hargreaves who came from Birkenhead, and by the Kennedys. Mr Kennedy always had a shotgun on his shoulder; he used to go shooting in the Fiery Fields.

TI. My Dad, Thomas Henry Instone, used to shoot across the Fiery Fields, for rabbits and pheasants. He was a crack shot - at fairs he could shoot looking in a mirror.

EP. Ancient Order of Foresters used to meet there, in a meeting room to which the access was by very rickety brick steps. Also the Broseley Poultry Club used to meet there.

JO. And the room was also used for the Willey Estate rent collection.

MS. I remember when the Estate rents were collected at the Forester's Arms, where also there was an annual Dinner for the tenants. It comes to my mind particularly because I used to help with the washing up there, for half a crown and a bowl of trifle!

New Road House (Bridgnorth Rd).

FS. Hermione Baddeley lived there. The New Road was built by POWs. Which war?

SD. Road antedates First World War. Perhaps Napoleonic War.

JO. The Baddeley sisters were Hermione and Angela. They lived there with their mother but didn't come to Broseley School.

Afterwards John William Price, Managing Director of Maws Tiles, lived there from the mid 20's to when Maws' financial problems began in the late 20's. Then the family moved to Duke Street, opposite the bottom end of Queen Street - the parents, Rhoda, Jack, Sid and Mary. Jack worked at Maws in the fitting shop, which should have been called the toolroom but if it had been the wages would have had to go up. JO started on 3d an hour, with an increase after 2 years.

MS. Later in life Angela Baddeley took the part of the cook in "Upstairs, Downstairs" on TV. Rhoda Price had a private infant's school at New Road House.

The National School.

VF." Pattern boys" and "model girls" with 100% attendance records. Boys had the "library" end of the school, girls the "surgery" end. Legges Hill was an infants' school, and there were infants' classes at the Big School also.

LO. This was where physiotherapy now takes place. In 1901 Miss Alice Wilkinson taught there.

JO. Jack as a boy lived at The Mines, and so he attended Legges Hill School until he was 7 in 1921. Then he went to National School for 7 years, leaving in 1928 at 14. The headmaster was Charlie Ashby. The wall dividing the boys' and the girls' playgrounds was 7 feet high and you got the cane if you tried to climb it. The boys played football and if your ball went over the wall you never got it back. The ball was usually rolled up socks or rags bound with string, and the playground was earth, not tarmac. When wet, it was a quagmire, and you didn't want to get hit by the ball. Boys wore shorts, winter and summer. Some wore clogs, some hob-nailed boots. There was no school uniform as such. The school inspected shoes and hands for cleanliness.

Billy Bright was in JO's class. He had to walk from The Wyke to school and used to bring horse beans from the beannck. He and JO would sit side-by-side chewing beans. Anything that could be eaten got eaten!

JO's parents bought 46 The Mines from the Willey Estate in 1924. JO has the receipt for the deposit. The Estate kept the mineral rights of course.

EP. You could get a scholarship to move to Walker Technical College or Coalbrookdale High School.

JO. Nelly Bill taught standard 1, Mrs Ashby 2 and 3, Mr Jordan 4 and 5, and the Headmaster 6, 7 and X7..

Arthur Bagley was a good lad who passed to go to Coalbrookdale High, and subsequently passed to go to Oxford. But his mother was too poor to afford this and Arthur started work at Capacity Engineering, and then worked in the lab at Craven-Dunhill's. Wilfred Howells who owned Craven Dunhill used to preach at the Wesleyan Chapel in Duke Street, now the Methodist Chapel, but he gave Arthur his notice and gave the job to Walter Bachelor.

? Adrian Miles' dad took over as Deputy Headmaster.

LO. Bill Miles. Another teacher, Miss Jaques, married Mr Brooks, Headmaster at Jackfield School. Blanche Kenyon used to teach standard 3; she was the daughter of a baker in King Street.

YW. Bill Miles' daughter Yvonne was my friend at Coalbrookdale High School. She had a great crush on a boy called Neil Clarke. After a sixth form outing to Rhyl, where a ride on the waltzer gave her an excuse for clinging on to Neil, she told us that it had been the happiest day of her life. We thought this rather pathetic, but we were not so fond of Neil. I was rather flat-chested, and did not appreciate his nick-naming me Sabrina after the busty model of those days, and a rather plain friend was not happy to be nick-named Marilyn.

MS. Miss Kenyon later became Mrs Wase. Her husband worked at the Forester's Arms Garage, which is now the Wheatland Garage.

JO. James Davis had the garage built.

JR. The men taught the boys and the women taught the girls, generally.

EP. The infants' classes were mixed, at Legges Hill and at the Big School.

TI. Enoch Brown came after Mr Jordan. He lived in the Broseley Wood area, and had lost a leg in the War. With this he had to change from his motor-bike to a 3-wheeler, but he could catch you

very quickly and efficiently with his crutches when necessary. He was well-liked, but eventually moved on to Stottesdon.

Usually a teacher used one room. Mrs Ashby who taught standard 2 and 3 had the flat-roofed section.

The room for standards 4 and 5 had two coke-burning stoves, and a chimneybreast at the far end. Sixty years ago the "babies' class" (just starting school) was taught by Miss Smitheman. The next class of infants was taught by Miss Smallwood, and the third class by Miss White who became Mrs Garbett upon her marriage. Miss Smitheman used what is now the physio's room, and the other two teachers shared one room divided by screens.

Hockley Hall.

VF. 3 story, tall, lived in by some actors - we didn't see much of them. Maurice Chidley owned the land. The garden wall had arched gateways, with "Dieu et Mon Droit" carved over the arch.

JO. There had been a dispute over the ownership of the land and the man who won had the inscriptions carved.

MS. The house had a very big chimney with steps going up inside which were used in the days of boy chimney sweeps.

LO. At one time a Mrs Ford from Liverpool lived there. She taught the Catechism.

VF. The inscriptions were in a cement rendering, not in the actual stone. Mrs Crawford lived in the Hall and later in the adjacent bungalow. She said "Keep your clothes for 20 years and they'll be back in fashion".

MS. I used to go to keep Mrs Crawford company. The hall should never have been demolished as happened in the sixties.

LO. Mrs Crawford was the daughter of an Attaché in Turkey.

Mill House in Mill Lane.

EP. Ivor Correll with a long white beard lived there. It was demolished in the 1940's.

JO. The base of the windmill survives as a garden shed with a corrugated iron roof; you can see it from Mill Lane. There had been another windmill on Ferny Bank before my time.

JO. Mrs Thomas - Cis Thomas's wife - lived next to Mill House.

The Workhouse in Workhouse Road, (now Woodhouse Road.)

JR. Were there two workhouses?

SD. No, each parish had to have one.

JO. There was another one at The Mines in Benthall. It is now a private house, The Croft.

TI. The Hand and Tankard pub was in Workhouse Road, owned by Frank Benbow who used to breed spaniels - not cockers, a heavier type.

Bank House (now Broseley Social Club).

VF. The Pritchard family lived there, and then the Potts the solicitors.

Broseley Church.

NM. Why is the church so big in a small town?

SD. It was built to replace a church that had not been big enough for its congregation.

Oakley's Stables, Swan Street.

JR. Used to be where Dave's Garage is now.

JO. It became William Oakley's garage in the 20's. William was Lol Oakley's uncle.

Parr's Coal and Scrap Yard.

JO. Percy Parr had come from Wenlock living first in Foundry Lane and then at Benthall House. Later he had an office down the Ironbridge Road, on the old C. R. Jones tilery site past The Summerhouse, Ladywood Tileries.

MS. When Bill Parr was a child, and his brother John, I used to take them out.

The Lion.

FS. Once a coaching inn. The landlady was Mrs Oswell.

LO. Mrs Oswell's daughter was Mrs Dixon, later the widow of the postmaster. She also taught at Broseley School.

TI. I was born at The Lion in 1916.

Bon Marche.

Run by Miss Meadow in the 1930's

EP. Used to be where Nick Downes has his greengrocery now.

JO. The proprietor was James Davis.

VF. The man next door made a way through the party wall and stole stuff from Bon Marche.

The Victoria Hall.

LO. Was once a Gospel Hall for the Plymouth Brethren.

JO. Percy Parr thought it ought to be demolished and replaced by flats.

VF. There used to be the Victoria Players, in the 60's and up to the mid 70's

King Street.

LO. Legges Hill School - nursery and infants. A Miss Wiggins was governess there and lived in one of the big houses in King St.

Davis's butchers' shop - owned by Matthew Davis, who had grazing land on opposite side of the road. The slaughterhouse was at the back of the premises. Many Maws tiles were, and still are, in the shop. A drover used to walk the cows from Bridgnorth market to Davis's.

A pub called "The Corner House" and one called "The Prince of Wales" were in King Street.

A French family called de Sortois, mispronounced by the locals as de Sort Eyes, lived in a big house in King Street, possibly Orchard House.

JO. Miss Wiggins lived at The Laurels. Joe Nicklin lived at Orchard House, then later at Holly House.

Cape Street.

LO. "The Cape of Good Hope" pub was owned by Mrs Brazier. It was divided into two houses, later demolished.

Benthall Hill.

LO. Leo Farm. The Leopard Farm, owned in the 20's and 30's by farmers called Gwyn.

JO. It had been occupied by John Rose, the veterinary surgeon. Bobbie Gwyn lived at the Vineyards Farm at Wyke, but later had a wooden bungalow built just above the Leopard.

Ironbridge Road.

LO. Rock House owned by Exleys, the brick- and tile-makers. Ernest Exley lived there. "Three Stile Piece" - fields near the Red Church, owned by Mr Oakley.

Meeting held 7th September 2000

Foundry Lane.

NM. I lived in Foundry Lane, one of two children living with our aunt. There was no running water in the house though we had gas. We used a pump in the yard, and five families shared two toilets. This was in 1950 before we got a council house.

MS. I was born in Foundry Lane and lived there until I was twelve in 1928, when we moved into one of the first council houses in Bridgnorth Road.

NM. We lived in the wide part of Foundry Lane, the Bull Ring, until we moved in 1954.

JR. When was the foundry actually working ?

MS. It was in ruins when we lived there; I don't remember it working. There was a big well in the middle of the Bull Ring with an iron plate over it.

NM. We carried water from the pump in a bucket.

MS. There was a hydrant, and many houses had wells. About 20 families used the hydrant, so there was often a queue.

Pooles Yard

JR. Where was Pooles Yard?

MS. You came out of the bottom end of Foundry Lane, then up Church Street to Dogs Yard, up which was the public house called "The Talbot" or "The Dog".

NM. Lucy Hudson lived there. Her parents kept the pub. Mr Shaw lived in the big house and owned the cottages. We paid our rent to him.

MS. We paid Miss Mason, a maiden lady who lived in Broseley Wood.

NM. The toilets were flush toilets, not earth closets.

The Iron Topped House.

JR. What about the Iron Topped House, with its iron framed roof, where Liz Mars lives?

MS. Its opposite where Liz used to live, which had been a grocer's shop. John Wilkinson had it built for one of his workmen. It's the only house in Broseley with cast iron rafters.

NM. An elderly teacher lived there at one time.

EC. Built c 1800.

PT. Was it built as an office, or for estate purposes? Somewhat small for accommodation. Are there many iron framed structures in Broseley?

EC. The barn by The Pheasant car park has iron rafters.

DL. Whitehall has a sort of extension room at the rear, with iron rafters and built over a well.

EP. There are two houses behind the Iron Topped House. Eileen Molyneux lived there.

Raddle Hall.

JR. Then there is Raddles Hall, said to be the oldest house in Broseley.

FS. It's built with old bricks, much longer than standard bricks.

EP. I remember three families sharing it. It was divided into three separate houses. There used to be a railing round the front, and a narrow footpath. Little steps went to the door on the side. The garden and railings were removed for road widening.

JR. I have seen a photo of Raddles Hall with railings, and a noteworthy round window at the side.

EC. The timber framed cottage in Coalport Road could be the oldest house in Broseley. There used to be an avenue of trees from Raddles Hall to Whitehall.

Whitehall.

MS. Behind the trees was the Sunday School football field. It belonged to Dr Boon at Whitehall. We used to have our Sports there.

JR. Dr Boon at Whitehall used to open his gardens for various activities.

MS. Dr Boon used to do his rounds on horse, he would tie it to our house gate. Then he had the first car in Broseley. It had a dickie seat, a little seat at the back. It was quite important to us children because we had never seen a car before.

EP. We didn't have Dr Boon, we had Dr Hoy.

JR. Who else lived at Whitehall?

FS. Warren Hawkesley, who was MP for The Wrekin.

DL. Did Dr Boon add the non-matching front bays to Whitehall?

EP. They've been there while I remember; obviously there have been many alterations. Dr Boon had two sons; one was killed in an air crash. There was a shop, Instone's Grocery, where Whitehall Court is now.

JR. I had a phone call from a lady in Fulham, a descendant of the Thursfield family who had been pottery manufacturers in Jackfield, and had lived at Whitehall and at Benthall Hall. There is a Thursfield memorial window in the church.

EP. The name occurs in my book about Broseley written in the 1930's by Mr Jones of Benthall.

MS. I've heard say there was a Dr Thursfield in Broseley, before Dr Edwards.

FS. By Whitehall there is a semi-annexe at right angles to the main house; I've heard that was where John Guest was born.

EC. John Guest of GKN.

EP. Captain Collins lived there.

DC. Whitehall has almost no garden now - when were houses built in the garden?

EP. I remember them being built, but not when. Also, there are the Rectory gardens, and you could go from these into Whitehall gardens.

MS. There were great nights on Saturdays at Whitehall, with the Jackfield Band playing.

EP. When I was little my dad would give me 6d for the silver collection when Jackfield band played on a Sunday evening at Whitehall. We did a lot of embroidery at school, cushion covers and things, and then the head teacher would have a stall at the Church Fete to sell them.

JR. All the life skills at Broseley School. What about The Lawns?

FS. Before that, what about Bob Gough's house?

The Prestage's.

EP. The Prestage's, of the Prestage Tileries in Coalport Road, lived there.

JR. As in Prestage Close.

MS. We used to go blackberrying at The Tileries, and there was a big pool where we went skating, and old mineshafts. What happened to it all.

JR. There have been a few shafts found since the houses were built there.

MS. They had three maids at Prestage's. All the big houses kept maids.

EP. Mrs Prestage came to live at Angel House, a very old lady who had been a hospital matron. Next to Prestage House was Captain Collies' garden.

DC. So this garden was across the road from his house. Why has Bob Gough's house no proper frontage? From the road it looks like an outbuilding.

MS. The house faces the other way.

EC. Why is there a section of railway line by Bob Goughs drive? I once asked Bob and he told me not to be nosy.

JR. It perhaps goes back to the Prestage's living there.

DL. It was major Prestage who died when dancing with Miss Hamilton at the Town Hall. ? The War put paid to the Broseley nobility, the doctors and the tennis club people.

MS. They all used to keep maids along Church Street, this was the only occupation going then NM. There were no vacuum cleaners so there was plenty of work for the maids.

JR. What did the women of the house do with their time all day?

EP. Church work, charity work, all good works.

DC. Did the maids live in?

MS. They had to, working from 6 in the morning to 12 at night.

EP. From fourteen when they left school.

JR. They left when they married?

EP. Yes.

MS. Broseley hospital had a full staff - matron maids, ward maids and so on.

The Lawns

JR. Now, The Lawns. I only know that John Wilkinson lived there.

EC. John Rose the potter, of Coalport China, lived there first when it was called New House. Probably John Wilkinson gave it the name "The Lawns".

EP. Mr Shorting lived there when I was a girl.

MS. Ernest Shorting; he always smiled and said hello. He never married.

EP. When he died there was a sale. My mother bought some oil paintings, one of them is quite valuable. He died in the early forties. The grave is in the churchyard, near the path.

NM. Did Broseley have many children from Liverpool and so on during the war?

EP. Yes, evacuees. The nuns brought them, and they had their school classes at the rectory. Broseley School gave up half days now and again so they could have classrooms. If it was fine, we used to play rounders with them on Broseley cricket pitch.

MS. The nuns lodged with the Davies's at the Old Post Office where I worked. I found the nun's very pleasant people.

EP. Many evacuees stayed on here and are now third generation. They were Catholics, and the boys went on to Coalbrookdale Institute. Some of them stayed with my uncle, who had three bedrooms. They came for their meals to our house. Dad caught one of them stabbing our settee with a knife and knocked him out. I remember the Catholic priest appeared. One boy told us that when the Heinz factory in Liverpool had been bombed his mother had cried and cried, so we took it that they all lived on baked beans.

FS. When Ernest Shorting died, who bought "The Lawns"?

EP. There was Mr and Mrs Goss, then Miss Sharp, then Mr and Mrs Ralph Pee. MS. It's supposed to be haunted.

FS. When auctioned in 1946 it's said to have sold for £500.

JR. That must have been very cheap even for then - it's a big house. Ralph Pee was there in the seventies when we came. I remember the house being freezing cold when we once went there. Then Michael Berthoud was there with his wonderful collection of teapots.

EC. In what was called the new kitchen there was a range with a spit that was turned automatically by the heat from the range. The Broseley Society used to use the stable block.

FS. The Dramatic Society performed once upstairs in the stable block, but the following year there were new owners who didn't want us.

EC. We once polished the floor, becoming very intoxicated by the polish.

FS. Any polish left?

PT. What about the beer signs on the wall?

EC. A previous owner had dealt in beers and lagers.

FS. Obviously "The Lawns" had bigger gardens in its earlier days. Was Wilkinson Avenue part of the gardens?

MS. No, that land belonged to the Prestage's. A swimming pool there was proposed in the sixties.

NM. The tradespeople didn't want it. All the children cried when houses were built instead.

DC. There was a swimming pool fund, which still exists.

The Mint.

JR. Next door then, The Mint, where John Wilkinson minted his tokens.

EC. It had a strongroom, from which we have the door, reinforced with sheet iron.

FS. There is now an art gallery in the basement.

EP. The next house is built end-on, and Mrs Taylor lived there. There was a blacksmith's shop in Mr Boulton's courtyard, with the back wall on Church Street. When we were girls in the forties, we used to watch Bert Meredith shoeing horses.

JR. In the wall at the back of the courtyard was an archway; what was through there ?

EC. Roger Smith had a nursery there. The registrars was at 6 Church Street.

EP. Yes, William Edge. He registered me.

The Rectory.

JR. The Rectory next. It's obviously changed - was some of the front removed?

EP. Yes, there was much more to The Rectory. Mrs Jones, who lived in the iron topped house and was housekeeper to Rev Jackson, cooked the school dinners there. The front door was to the right of the present door, round the side, facing the church.

MS. There was the parish room, where we used to play table tennis in what was really Rev Jackson's dining room. Rev Jackson never locked the door, you just walked in.

EC. Are there any photos of the rectory as it was?

EP. Perhaps in my old copy of the parish magazine for when I was married.

JR. It must have been a big kitchen to cook all the school meals.

EP. Yes, with a scullery and big boilers for cooking the vegetables. They used to do wedding receptions as well. You ate your school dinner in the room facing the church, with French windows opening to the garden.

Broseley Hall.

JR. Then there's Broseley Hall, the big house set back.

NM. There was the lady who died.

EP. Her father was a solicitor in Ironbridge.

? Veronica West fell off the roof of the Hall.

EP. The Dixon family had lived there. They owned Dixon Engineering in Cockshot Lane. After Mr Dixon died his daughter Mrs Sylvester kept the factory on.

MT. My sister was secretary there.

JR. Was the Hall originally an ironmaster's house?

EC. I used to guide tours of the hall when the Wests lived there. Pritchard, the designer of the Iron Bridge, had added ornate features, fireplaces and a Garden Temple at the top of the garden. The garden also had a three-seater loo. Alec West had taken the old roof off the hall and replaced it with a chipboard roof. Ken Sheffield spent a lot of money putting a proper roof back on.

JR. What about the buildings at the back, down the track by the church, associated with the hall?

EP. They were cowsheds, now converted to a house, called The Malthouse.

Broseley Church.

JR. The church itself is not so old, being built in 1845, but it stands on the site of two previous churches.

FS. The chancel was intended to be longer, but its length was limited by the discovery of old mineshafts. The building was half paid for by Lord Forester for his brother the Hon Rev Orlando. When I came here there was still the gallery.

PT. What was the population of Broseley in those days?

EC. Surprisingly high, around five thousand, but there was considerable emigration afterwards. NM. There would be eleven or twelve children in a family then.

JR. Lots of cottages have been demolished since then.

EC. Church Alley still runs by the side of The Lawns but is now gated. In the church there is supposed to be a stained-glass window hidden behind the organ.

FS. About 25 years ago the organ was moved from its position at the side of the church to what was believed to be its original position. The tower also used to have pinnacles.

EP. There have been big changes since my childhood. We had a vicar who made changes. The choir stalls were moved, the choir vestry was on the right where there is now the lady chapel, and the lady chapel was the little chapel on the left.

JR. And the gallery has gone. They say it used to be warmer in church when the gallery was there.

The Lady Forester Hospital.

JR. What about the hospital? Lady Forester donated the hospital. When was it built?

MT. I'll find it on the tape my mother made about the hospital. I think Much Wenlock was built first, then Llandudno, then Broseley. Lady Forester could see what was needed, she saw babies dying, she had her way, and the town had a maternity ward.

FS. It was a comprehensive hospital, with an isolation hospital for diphtheria and scarlet fever.

MS. The isolation hospital was never used as such; no-one knew why. It was up Caughley Lane. Did the Gittens live there?

EC. Yes. It caught fire and there was nothing left.

DC. It was a quarter of a mile past the Forester' Arms, just beyond the Tileries in the corner of a field. There is nothing to be seen now.

JR. What was there beside maternity at the Lady Forester hospital?

MT. My mother when a child was badly burned. She spent 6 months there, probably saved her life.

JR. Were not soldier casualties nursed there in the First War?

EC. They carried out radium treatment, which resulted in some contaminated ground. DC. Where was the nurses home?

EP. Down the little lane by the side of the churchyard. JR. How many patients did they have?

NM. There were two maternity wards each with four mothers, and two big wards, male and female.

EC. The hospital actually grew all its own produce.

EP. There were tennis courts for the nurses' recreation. There were more staff in those days.

The Deanery.

JR. And opposite the hospital is The Deanery. Dr Bhageerutty lives there, and so did Maurice Hawes and family, but it had been built in 1910 for the two Misses Potts.

EP. Mrs Newell lived there and then had the bungalow built.

FS. It's an Edwardian house, with lovely floor tiles.

DC. It has a second, servants' staircase. I think The Lawns only has one. There are two at Broseley Hall.

Meeting held 1st November 2000

Floods

JM. In the great flood of 1946 no trains were running, and the buses could only get to Dale End; the Wharfage was terrible. I was trying to get back to Broseley. The Free Bridge was OK. The floods this year have been worse than in '46.

FS This month has seen one of the highest floods for a long time; we should be recording it.

JR The Free Bridge itself has been open, but Waterloo Street and The Lloyds were flooded.

MH When I lived in Ironbridge people were regularly flooded between November and February, especially in 1946. We used to have collections for them.

NM The low-built cottage in Jackfield is always getting flooded.

FS This year The Boat has been flooded again, and there was a half-submerged car on the car park. At the old Half Moon, the water was halfway up the ground floor. The house recently built across from the Black Swan has been flooded.

EP In 1946 my dad worked at the Power Station, and the only way they could get to work was by walking along the railway line from Ironbridge to the Power Station.

DL What has been the state of the Coalport Bridge?

? The river has been up to the arches, but OK for traffic.

JO In the '46 flood only Harry Rogers was able to get around in his coracle, taking bread to the neighbours. I stood with Ken Morris at the bottom of Tontine Hill, looking over the wall at all the water coming down. Jones the Post Office took our picture. Next morning the wall had been washed away into the river. Winters are not as hard as they used to be; my mother used to tell me how, when she was young, the ferrymen had to stay up all night to fend off the icefloes from smashing their boat. That was the ferry that was there before the Free Bridge.

JR And the river is warmer now because of the Power Station.

EC By about 5 degrees

The Forester Arms

EP The Wheatland Hunt often used to meet there.

DL When was the function room at the back erected? It's a period piece like the Forest Glen.

JR Lord Forester has applied to demolish and replace it - you'd better object.

DC Our president Mary Smith had both her wedding reception and her diamond wedding there, so its got to be 60 years old.

JR Does anyone know how old the actual Forester Arms is?

The Scout Hut. (Now demolished)

DC When was the Scout Hut erected? The scouts and guides had met in the Town Hall.

EP The hut was built not so long ago, probably when the Town Hall was demolished.

JO There is a very old house that stands back from Avenue Road, where the Butler family lived. There was Lewis Butler.

Dark Lane

JR Backtracking somewhat to Dark Lane, where Rev and Mrs Pope live -

GP For our house to be built an old cottage had to be demolished. Its garden ran down to what was called the mixen, underneath which was a vast underground cavity, big enough to take two double-deckers.

FS It was built as a water reservoir, but the ground was undermined and so it leaked. It's opened up occasionally to test for gas.

JO The mixen or midden was the town rubbish dump. The council used to have it emptied by Caggie Lane, with his horse and cart.

The Tileries, Coalport Road.

SH I used to work there. As I was the youngest there, I used to go to the Forester Arms for a jug of tea. This was when tea and sugar were rationed.

I went to The Tileries in 1951 for an office job, but when I got there the manager had already taken on an office girl, so I ended up in the laboratory. This was the time of Direction of Labour; the boss of the lab had moved from a reserved occupation at the Court Works, but he had done so without permission, so he got called up for his National Service. This left me in charge, I was the chemist, analysing the clay that was being dug from the Caughley Drift Mine.

Before this the manufacture of tiles had finished, and they had tried making insulating bricks, which were used to back up the actual refractory bricks which were in contact with the molten metal in a furnace. When Coalmoor Refractories took over they opened up the Caughley Drift Mine to get clay suitable for refractories.

In the office we used to get letters from all over the world. Our tiles were highly regarded. There is a house in Dark Lane by the path going to the Down Well, and the red tiles look perfect after eighty years.

GP My grandfather built that house, completing it in 1911. My father was born there in 1912. The bricks and tiles are actually Exley's.

DL Where was the Caughley Drift Mine?

SH I used to have to cycle to it, down a little lane with cottages on the left

DC This would be Rough Lane. Did The Tileries occupy all the land that became the new estate?

SH The Tileries were quite big, but not that big. They appended perhaps to what is now Forester Road. There was a pool, and a field beyond it.

EP There was a little cottage at the end of the tileries. The Dodds lived there. There were two rail lines that ran across the Coalport Road, down to the Deep Pit, where now, a bungalow has been built on the pit mound.

JR There were still rails crossing the Coalport Road in 1972

SH They said that. a boy had been killed by black damp when playing by the Deep Pit.

JR What is Black Damp?

SH Carbon monoxide, which is odourless and very poisonous.

DC Are there any signs of the tileries still left?

JR Yes, the clay and pieces of tile in our back gardens there.

DC Was the pool the result of quarrying for the tileries?

SH There was nice red clay all round it but as far as I know it was just the farmer's field.

JR So where the pool was there are now houses.

SH And by the Forester Arms there was a garden with low curving walls round it, the sort of garden that is never dug.

DL Was the analysis of the clay to look for things that would be bad for tiles?

SH Not for tiles. By my time they were making the refractory bricks, I was analysing the clay for silica and alumina - high alumina is good in refractories. The insulating bricks made before I came were of a sort of spongy structure. Our fireclay from the Caughley Drift Mine was better than the Coalmoor clay for refractories.

JR Were you there till they closed? When was that?

SH No, they moved the lab to Coalmoor.

FS The closure was probably 1970, with the estate building starting in 1972.

EC Are there any photographs of the tileries?

EP No-one would have thought it worth a photograph except perhaps Ron Miles. It was so ramshackle and higgledy, piggledy - the office was the best bit. Who owned Coalmoor Refractories when you were there ?

SH His name was Mr Allen, from the Lightmoor area. We were called Coalmoor Refractories because the first place that he bought was Coalmoor, at the top of Jigger's Bank, by Stony Hill to the right as you go along towards Horsehay. After that he bought Lightmoor, and then Broseley. He didn't do so much in Broseley except for the manufacture of refractories.

Coalport Road

JO, CT The Coalport Road was a toll road; there were toll cottages just past Forester Road, another at the bottom of Sutton Bank, and one just past the cemetery.

JR So you had to pay to go down Coalport Road, and again to go over the bridge?

JO Broseley folk called the tollgate the catchgate; it caught you to pay the toll.

NM Who got all these tolls?

SD The Turnpike Commission trustees, representing the parishes who were responsible for the upkeep of the roads.

EP There is the very old cottage in Coalport Road, just after the John Wilkinson School. When I was a girl Mr and Mrs Salter lived there. There was nothing on that side after the cottage until you came to Folly Farm and the cottages by the farm.

DC And then there was The Amies, a sizeable, rectangular, black-and-white place, Tudor perhaps. It was demolished in the 1890's; now there are only some depressions in the field.

DL How did it compare with The Tuckies ?

DC Not as large; we have a photograph of it.

JR And then Preen's Eddy; how did it get its name ?

CT The Woodbridge used to be called Preen's Eddy Bridge. The name applies to the area, and there is Preen's Head on the OS map. Ward's Tynning also comes in Preen's Eddy. My house is 261/262 Preen's Eddy, and where my garage is now once was 263/264; I think they were numbered from Jackfield. Ron Miles could tell us a lot about the area; he said that there used to be a stone riverside

toll-house for boats entering the Gorge, on the riverside field next to the Severn Valley Way, somewhere below my cottage.

Meeting held 3rd January 2000

Barber Street

JR. Barber Street, from High St junction to Fox Lane, and Barber Row.

EP Pickens had their shop there, but not as a butchers. It was a butchers, then a bakers, in years gone by, where Simon Gibbons the butcher is now. It was Mr Cleobury's when I was a girl, and I believe it was also a bakers. I think you can see something still painted high on the wall now, as you come down from Broseley Wood. Rowe it says, and I think they were bakers.

JR So that was a bakers shop?

EP Yes, and a butchers. Then Mr Molyneux had it, he was a plumber or something, then it reverted back to a butchers again in later years. But there was a shop further up, that the Credit Union have now. Before that it was called Thompson's. And then just beyond that, beyond Pickens' house, there was a wall with a sort of Gothic arch in it, where I remember my Mum telling me there was a Catholic church in days gone by, whether brick-built or tin or galvanised I don't know, but where the Catholic church is now.

JR So that was the Catholics' site.

EP Behind the wall Mr Cis Roberts kept his threshing box, and he had a steam roller as well. He was related to your family, Ron.

NM Mr Picken's shop, you could go in, before they had Spar.

EP Yes, they had another little shop, before they had the one there.

JR Was that the one that has been various things, like a fashion shop?

EP No, where the Credit Union is was Pickens'. During the Second World War Pickens had a shop just up the road from there. Do you remember, Mr Miles, a little shop on the left-hand side, where you stepped right out into the road? They had a little shop and they lived in the house at the back.

DC That's all gone now, there's a modernised house there.

RM Opposite the hairdresser's, there's a gents' hairdresser's there as well.

EP Yes. Opposite there when I was a girl was Mr Embry, who worked on the Forester estate. Then there was a cottage, and then this other little cottage where Pickens lived at the back and had the shop at the front, during the Second World War. Then they moved to the one further down.

JR So these are all on the right-hand side?

EP No. The first one that I can remember was on the left-hand side.

DC This would be opposite the Catholic church?

EP Yes, but a little further up.

NM And there was Instone's in The Square, where my husband's aunt worked when I came to Broseley in 1950.

EP Yes, I remember her there, but we're going up Barber Street. There were other grocers as well. I was born in 1932, and I lived in Broseley until I was 23. Then I only moved four miles to Astley Abbots, so I never really left Broseley!

DL Cis Roberts was a fascinating character.

EP Yes, he had the threshing box and the steamroller.

MT. He mended clocks and watches. He was always stood at the top of the alley.

JR Was his house opposite Fox Lane?

EP No, further down, they've been modernised. There was the Catholic church, then two little houses with an alley between them, before you get to Dot Roberts.

MT. I think it might recently have been sold - Cobweb Cottage.

DC. We remember Cis Roberts, and we came in 1982.; he must have died in 1984 or something like that. He always stood at the top of the drive, in black clothes. The house was incredibly dirty. He would pass the time of day with anybody.

JR Didn't he have an enormous collection of newspapers? What happened to that?

EP Probably went in the house clearance.

RM There were a lot of treasures there - I have some photographs. I'll bring them in. He told me he had the first commercial driver's licence in Broseley; I think he meant the first lorry driver's licence ever issued in Broseley; either the first car or lorry driver's licence. He also had some connection with John Onions, who built the Coalport Bridge. John Onions is buried in what is now the car park of the club, what was the Bladen Club and before that the Baptist church.

JR The Birchmeadow Chapel.

RM John Onions is buried there, either on the car park side or on the Birchmeadow side.

DL So was Cis a descendant of John Onions?

RM I don't know, but he knew a lot about him. He was a wonderful chap.

MT There were Roberts at The Fox that were related as well, and Roberts at the garage.

JR What, Tom Roberts?

MT Yes, there were two Roberts brothers living next to each other.

EP There was Tom Roberts, and Tom Roberts' dad's brother, and the other one that worked at the power station with my dad. Tom Roberts' dad lived where Tom lives and the other brother in the other end, and there was a sister; they divided it into three.

JR So which was The Fox?

EP The building right at the bottom of Fox Lane.

DC Laurie Hill lives there now.

FS The history of the Pickens - their first shop, second shop and the Spar - I recorded Mike Picken talking about the development of the first supermarket. The original plan for the site was for six shops, but he approached the developers and asked to have it as one unit. He had nothing to do with the pulling down of the place.

DC Was that Mike or his father?

FS Mike, but he and his brother and his father were all connected with the business. NM There used to be a butchers in the main street as well.

EP Yes, where the flats are, by the Victoria Hall.

FS Gerald Instone had where the Butchers' Bar is, but Instones were not the butchers then. But there was another butchers shop. Gerald Instone had a picture.

EP Alan Jones's dad kept the butchers shop where the flats are now.

RM Wasn't it where the garage was?

EP No, where the flats are was shops - Mr Jones the butchers, and then Bill Parr's dad had it later on. Mrs Pee from The Lawns had it as a florist, and then Mr Parr lived there.

RM Wasn't there a Mr Lloyd?

EP A Mr Lloyd had the Town Hall garage.

DL So Mr Parr took over where the butchers had been and changed it into a coal merchants?

EP No, Percy Parr lived there. I think Mrs Pee had the shop as a florist and Mr Parr lived in the house.

RM Then Percy Parr moved over next to The Elephant?

EP No, he went and lived at The Elephant where he died.

NM Was it still a public house?

EP No, it hadn't been a public house for a number of years.

DC What was in the shop that has been a wool shop and things like that? Between The Elephant and Simon Gibbons butchers.

EP It was a grocers when I was a girl - Mr Millward's. The house Margaret lives in next to Jack Millward's dad's was the fish-and-chip shop, Mr Millward's also.

DC There must have been lots of grocers!

EP Yes because, where Broseley Post Office is now, that was Miss Horbon's, and where Broseley News is was a branch of R. A. Instones. Then there was Instones in The Square, Instones down Church Street, three little grocery shops in King Street - Ivor Snow's, Mr Bower's and Mrs Harvey's - loads of places that are houses now.

JR What was in Fox Lane?

EP There was a little grocer's shop years ago - Mr Darlington, who used to work at the Coop. Then it was a hairdressers, now it's all incorporated into the house I think.

JR It's a wonder all these grocery shops could make a living, all competing against each other.

MT It was in the days of rationing, when you had to say which shop you were going to. The shops were not as big as today.

EP They were little shops, front room shops.

JR Did they weigh out all loose stuff, the butter and so on?

EP I don't think so. R.As did in The Square. They had to weigh your butter out, because you only had a tiny bit of it.

RM Then there was a ladies' milliners round the corner, Bon Marche. EP Where Downes's is

JR That was Bon Marche, a milliners?

RM Where the travel agency was, and the opticians, and the Chinese restaurant.; that was Bon Marche.

EP Mr Roberts had Bon Marche and lived in the house on the corner. Where the opticians and the insurance agency is now was Roberts' house. They had a ladies' department and a men's department.

DC Is that related to Cis Roberts?

EP I don't think so.

NM There were two old ladies who sold thread and wool and stuff, the Miss Taylors.

EP Where the Cantonese is now, next to the stonemason's, it had a projecting window where the restaurant door is now. She had hats on stands there, and baby clothes in the other part.

JM Talking about Percy Parr, the Mayor of Wenlock. I came out of the Army in 1946, I was married to Sue Meadows, and lived in Queen Street. A knock came on the door. It was Percy. We invited him in. He had four buses then, and he asked me if I'd like to be a bus driver. I said well, I'd driven a tractor in the Army but I hadn't got a PSV licence. He said don't worry at all about that, can you start on Monday? Next day he came with a PSV licence, I hadn't passed a test or nothing! I had an old Bedford bus, and I used to take the workers down to the power station, then the children to school, then I had to wash the bus. I had this for three months, then there was a trip to Southport, but halfway up Jiggers Bank the bus broke down.

EP It was a boneshaker, I remember. Have you still got your PSV licence?

JM No, Percy had it back when I packed it in and started at the power station. I talk to his son John; we often have a laugh about it. I never had an accident.

EP It's a good job.

DL It would be the little Bedford with a bonnet, like the one we had from Boultons when Eric Cox took us to Bersham.

DC It overheated by Shrewsbury, and we had to stop at Bayley's while it cooled down.

DL It gave us a chance for a chat, which was impossible on the coach because of the noise from the back axle.

RM A story about Barber Street - the Borough of Wenlock finished in 1965. Thirty years before that, in 1935, Barbers Row was behind the butcher's shop we've talked about, where there was the public convenience, now gone. It became a terrible slum, with a problem family nicknamed the Stickies, who had to be rehoused because they were causing mayhem in the centre of Broseley. So in 1935 the Borough of Wenlock built them a council house midway between Broseley and Jackfield. Its called Holly Grove, across the New Road from the Summer House pub at the bottom of Ball's Lane.

DL So the Stickies were some of the last inhabitants of Barbers Row, which Jack described as poor houses behind the High Street.

EP Mr Picken built a bungalow on the site. For Barbers Row you turned left at the public toilet. There were some very decent, respectable people who lived there. Then council houses were built, and they were moved out.

DL Who owned the Barbers Row cottages before they were demolished? EP Mike or David Picken might know.

NM Who owned the house in Church Street, a very tall house with a big garden, opposite the church? Sometimes they have art exhibitions there.

EP Yes, there are two houses, Mr Boulton lives there. Mr Edge the registrar lived in one. It was a nursery.

DC There is a connection with John Wilkinson at The Lawns. He had a strongroom, from which we have the door, in the house nearest The Lawns, called The Mint.

NM When I came to Broseley in 1952 I joined a choir, and we gave a concert in the garden at The Lawns.

EP Was it Merrie England? Mr Yorke who was organist at the Church ran the Choral Society in Broseley.

RM What does it mean that the house was called The Mint?

DC I think that John Wilkinson struck his own coinage, his tokens there. Its strongroom shows that it was a place people could want to break into.

RM In the early days of the Wilkinson Society we were asked to bring in items connected with Wilkinson. I brought half a dozen Wilkinson tokens, some with the Ironbridge on, some with the incline at Ketley, some with a forge hammer. I'd heard on Blue Peter that if you soaked old coins in Daddy's Sauce overnight, they became like new again. So, I did and took them along. Maurice Hawes was horrified.

NM When did Broseley first have TV?

RM The first TV in the district was 1932 in Madeley. Eddie Lloyd had an electrical shop in Ironbridge. He had the first TV, on top of the hill at Madeley, in a place called Mawkin's Lane, also known as Fisher's Stinks, since Mr Fisher had a chemical works, opposite Abraham Darby school.

MT We always reckon my granny had electricity before the doctor.

EP It's possible, because your Uncle Bill wired our house for electricity when I was about sixteen.

RM The first TV in Broseley would be about 1947, in Jackfield about 1948. You were a bit before us.

NM We were invited to go and see the Coronation on TV, which we didn't have. RM On second thoughts, say 1950 for TV in Broseley.

EP The Cape of Good Hope had a TV; it would be between 1948 and 1950 - a tiny screen, but we thought it was marvellous. It wasn't a pub then - it hadn't been in my lifetime.

JR When did electricity come to Broseley?

DC The old power station was built in 1932.

NM In Foundry Lane in 1952 we had gas, no electricity.

EP We had gas in King Street, when I was sixteen or seventeen.

DL The power station was not built with the intention of supplying Broseley. It was for Wolverhampton and Walsall, the big consumers. There had to be a lot of arm-twisting before the smaller places got a supply.

NM When was electric street-lighting introduced in Broseley?

EP It would be after the second World War; till the War the gaslighter came round, and then there was the blackout, so no street lights.

? Where was the gas supplied from?

EP We had our gasworks, this side of the river.

DC Go down to the hairpin bend in Ironbridge Road, under the railway bridge and the gasworks was on the left. The base of the gasholder is still there.

RM There were actually three gasworks; one in Queen Street, Madeley; one behind the Bedlam Furnaces; and the third one in Barnetts Leasow, by the river.

Can I just deviate a bit? It was Christmas night a few days ago, and I walked through the village of Jackfield and I found eight cottages abandoned, owing to the floods of nine weeks ago. I've lived in Jackfield for seventy years, and never has there been eight cottages abandoned.

EP I came by on the bus yesterday and I noticed that new house abandoned.

RM Seven abandoned in one street, and one behind the Half Moon.

If we return to the site of the Ironbridge gasworks, which is above the Bedlam Furnace, on the subject of floods - look for the Lakeset Tavern, which is a sunken residence four feet below road level, a

black-and-white building just a little up the road from the Bedlam Furnace, two Rover cars outside. Look across to the other side of the river there, to Barnetts Leasow and Ladywood - giant trees have been swept down, and I've never seen that before.

There's a connection with Caughley, because if you look right outside the Lakeshead Tavern you can sometimes see a drop-off of three or four inches in the road surface. That's the geological fault that starts at Caughley, runs in front of Jackfield Rectory, or a bit this side of Jackfield Rectory, and then it runs straight across the road there.

Meeting held 6th February 2002

King Street

JR Let's start from Cape Street then, where the old Cape of Good Hope was

NM The fish and chip shop was in Elizabeth Crescent.

JR Let's start from the Barratt's Hill end

JO Just in Cape Fold there was Teague's fish and chip shop - the shed's still there

EP My friend lived at what had been The Cape, we used to go down in the cellar. There were neighbouring houses, on Cape Fold. Mrs Burns had a fish and chip shop, another one. Opposite was Hill's paint shop, they were plumbers too. Then there was Padman's Alley on the other side of the road. Where the green is now was a little cottage where Mr Evans the chimney sweep lived, then the Braziers, the Molyneux and the Miss Burnetts. The Burnt House was said to have been a pub. They used to give us sweets, but we were not allowed to eat them. Annie Lloyd lived on the left, with her cats.

JO Cecil Harrison was a plumber, followed by the Hills. Cis Hill did major painting work, for churches for example, and also used to make stained glass windows, extruding the lead glazing bars himself.

VF Annie Lloyd had a lovely soprano voice. She got annoyed with her cat when it wouldn't come when she called it. She said "Oh bollocks" and the cat came! Ever after that she called "Come here bollocks" and it used to come.

BDS Padman House is next to Padman's Alley, where Alan Jones lives now. Broadhursts lived there. Annie Lloyd's was claimed to be the oldest house in Broseley.

JO John Broadhurst was Lord Forester's agent. Towper Aston's family lived in cottages at the bottom of Padmads Alley, where it joins Barratts Hill. He was just an odd job man, but a very loyal supporter of our school football team, which I was in and which Charlie Ashby trained. When we played Bridgnorth Boys Jim Oakley took us to their Love Lane ground in his Chevrolet lorry, but Towper and his wife, with the kids in a Dunkley, an old type of pram, walked there from Broseley to cheer us on. We beat Bridgnorth, and when we arrived home Broseley turned out to greet us !

EP Next door to Annie Lloyd's house were the old stables, attached to the house. Annie, her sister Maud and their parents lived there with relatives. Annie told me that when she and Maud were children they would lie in bed at night and listen to the horses stamping in the stables. She was quite a character, very talented, played the piano, was a marvellous dressmaker and keen on amateur dramatics. She was my godmother. They used to own properties by you, Vera.

VF Yes, they owned our house and two more in Hockley Road.

BDS Annie's was a truck house.

NM A glazier used to be there.

DC The Burnt House was derelict for years, then it was bought and done up by Frankie or Lennie Lowe.

JO Frank Lowe or his son Len. They were property dealers and restorers - they had the corner shop on the right at the bottom of Hockley Road. In the part of the Burnt House just in Queen Street the Goodhalls lived for quite a while - Les Goodhall, known as Barney, and his sister Mary, known as Polly. The part in Cape Street was a shop run by Darren Bullock. Len Morris of New Road is the expert here.

JR When was it burnt?

EP That was before our time

JR Can anyone explain the numbering in King Street?

DDS No - not even Einstein?!

VF The houses were numbered in the sequence in which they were built.

JO King Street started from Ferny Bank and was numbered from that end to Cape Street. Then they extended it from Ferny Bank round into Elizabeth Crescent and added more numbers there.

EP On Jack Owen's car park there was a row of 4 houses called Benthall View - known by the locals as 'back of The Prince', and also a house facing King Street occupied by Mr and Mrs W. Wood.

JR Where was The Prince of Wales?

DC It was 45 King Street - there was Capacity Engineering, then the car park, then the Prince of Wales. Mr and Mrs Scott and their daughter Dorothy were there before the war, and until they died. Mr Scott was a bookkeeper at Maw's.

EP Mrs Farlow lived in the Kenyon's house, next to the bakery.

Pauline? There was always a cat in the window with the cakes.

JR Where was the bakery?

DC At Jack's end of our house, right on the road

JR When did Capacity start?

JO I took it over in 1964. It was started by John Smithemans, my friend's father. My friend used to wait for me after school and we'd go to his house. It might have been partly clay pipe making at one time. There were the three Smitheman sons, and Teddy Instone, who married Effie Garbett. He invented a spring frame for motorbikes, using a leaf spring. Teddy cut out the leaf spring and fastened it to a motorbike frame, extending it to carry the axle. I used to see him on this Norton, testing it out. He left a notebook in the works with a sketch of it, and with many references to Effie. I know that Capacity Engineering were doing war work in World War I.

NM How many Broseley men went to war? My husband was a tail gunner until the doctor certified that he got airsick.

JO Eddie Garbett was Effie's brother and was a Poor Law official. I asked him if he wanted the notebook for Teddy, who had gone to work for Bristol Engines

EP Mr Snow's grocery was opposite Annie Lloyd's, and Mr Eric Lloyd had the Capacity Engineering Works in 1932. Mr and Mrs Lloyd were friends of my parents.

? Where were you born, Elsie?

EP At number 48, nearest to the new house, I lived there for many years. There were two cottages where the new house is now, then a yard, then two cottages sideways on to Orchard House, facing

Capacity. When they were demolished a well was found inside. Perhaps they had been stables originally.

FS Was there a forge there, a little low building?

EP Bill Thomas's shed?

VF The place opposite Kiln Cottage was another shed belonging to the Thomas brothers.

JR Who was at Orchard House?

EP Mrs James Davies, then Mr and Mrs Horne. She had been Miss Burton from Burton's in Bridgnorth, and she ran the tennis club. Then there was Miss Wiggin, another character. She stopped me in the street one day and said, 'I'm selling some of my Coalport and would like you to have some.'

MS Her brother was a bit odd.

EP Her mother was headmistress at Legges Hill School. My granny's brother used to garden for her, where Jean Jones now lives, between Orchard House and the pipe works. Then there was the barber Mr Langford, then the old Cumberland.

JR Now, the Cox's house

EP When it was two cottages the left-hand one was empty for a time.

DC After that Stan Pountney lived there. He put in a new fireplace in 1960, from Maw's, where he worked. In the right-hand cottage were Mr and Mrs Bob Thomas, decorators, then there was their wallpaper store, then Mr Bill Thomas's house

VF Mrs Bobby Thomas, Irish Thomas as she was always known, came from Lurgan.

NM Why was the Town Hall demolished? They had wonderful dances there.

VF It never should have gone. It's these parsons!

DC Another family who had lived in our cottage before it was empty was the Jones family, with nine children.

EC Norman Jones went to fetch Mrs Thomas from Birmingham Airport but couldn't find her at first. Eventually he found her walking along the north runway!

VF Elsie Bradburn's sister used to live in the building at the back of your house, Dot.

? One sister was Enid.

BDS And there was Rhona.

JR So the old Duke of Cumberland was on the corner by the Pipeworks, where a new house is now.

VF I had some quartered oak flooring from the Duke of Cumberland and used it for my woodwork. They were throwing the street nameplates in the skip - we rescued "King Street" and it's now on the wall outside my house.

JR Between Mr Bill Thomas and Holly House there are three houses.

VF They were all shops. There was a grocer's next door to us. Next to that Tommy Broadhurst had a shop where they had dolls' cups and saucers, Coalport, under the counter. There was the shop in The Square in Broseley kept by two unmarried sisters, the Misses Taylor. They sold baby clothes and so they kept a check on the calendar from when people were married! My uncle Tom Green kept the grocer's shop when we came to Holly House. Then it was some folk called Clews and then Ted Hancox until he died, when it became a private house, as it still is.

EP In my childhood days the shop nearest Mr Thomas sold Coalport, the middle shop sold paraffin, and the third shop was a grocers.

JR Three shops then. How long have you lived in Holly House, Vera?

VF Getting on for fifty years - we were married in '55, wasn't it - I can remember my first time was 1942.

JR Who had Holly House before you, Vera?

VF A Mr Irvine, an engineer with Guest Keen and Nettlefold's in Wolverhampton, and his wife. He said "In the spring this patch in the garden will be covered with beautiful yellow flowers" And do you know what they were?

All Dandelions

VF No - celandines! His wife was quite a beauty, out in the sticks here, and she wanted to be where there was more going on, theatre and things like that. So, they went to live in Wolverhampton, where his firm was anyway. And it was funny because John Guest once lived in our house. One of the Maws once rented it, and another owner was Joseph Nicklin, manager of Lloyds in Broseley.

JM John Guest rented it.

NM You had two cinemas, one in Ironbridge and one on the way down to Ironbridge.

JR So next to Holly House there's the old butcher's shop, the one that's absolutely covered in tiles.

VF They used to put the throw-out tiles in big piles at Jackfield and anyone could go and help themselves to them. They weren't brought in any order, just fetched and put on the walls, like at Matthew Davies's butchers shop next door.

JR Mrs Lil Oakley has told me she used to see cattle being brought along to the field opposite.

EP Where the bungalow is now used to be the slaughterhouse.

VF There was a field opposite our house when we went there. They wanted £200 for it, but we'd just raised the money for the house.

DC Was the button factory actually making buttons when you were first there?

VF No, no - first it was a garage and paint shop. Cars used to come from Austins in Birmingham to be painted by hand with nine coats of paint. Then they'd be driven back by way of Coalport Bank to test the brakes out. After that it was a factory for all sorts of things. It was a button factory years and years ago, and then a factory that made badges and little nameplates. Some were thrown out in the yard and we used to go and pick them up. Now its divided into factory units.

JM Joe Harvatt used to store wood there, tree trunks.

EP The Button Factory was next to the garage owned by Mr Davies. The Button Factory itself had been the garage showroom and had a tiled floor and glass doors. During World War II it was the storage depot for St Johns Ambulance Brigade who were evacuated from London because of the Blitz. Their headquarters were at Willey Hall.

VF That would be before I came to live down there.

NM How much did Lord Forester have to do with Broseley in those days?

EP In days gone by he owned a lot of the town but then he sold quite a lot

MS He owned nearly every house, and a lot of the Wrekin; he still has land at the Wrekin

VF Death duties took a lot when the present Lord Forester's grandfather died.

EP The Maypole and the cricket field belonged to them.

NM Were you allowed into Willey Park once a year?

JR Let's get back to King Street. When were the council houses built on the right in King Street?

NM 1954 ? Not the Wimpeys. They did some bungalows before they did the Wimpeys.

DC There was a field where they had a fair occasionally, and there were the Dead Walls

VF - opposite Owen Terrace in Duke Street, which goes off to the right, past the Button Factory.

JR There are more properties after Holly House and the butchers.

EP There was the butchers house, then the malt house, then a bungalow, then Walter Williams the insurance collector's house, with the old Globe public house next door at the top of Legges Hill.

BDS Does anyone know about the malthouse, still with the arm for lifting the bags?

VF It used to be used as a depot by the pigeon fanciers - there were a lot of them in Broseley.

JR So then it's Legges Hill school.

NM My two went there until seven. A teacher came from Much Wenlock - Mrs Grainger

JR Did you start there at five?

EP At four actually

JR What sort of education did you have there? Was it formal?

EP A proper education - there were two classes in the big room where you went until you graduated to the top class. I had a lovely photograph of class 1 and class 2, and also a separate one of the Infant's class.

JR Did you have Miss Pardoe?

EP I was before Miss Pardoe's time. It was Miss Maggie Scott the headmistress and Mrs Roberts, (nee Miss Lamont), a nice Infants teacher.

VF She married Jim Roberts, and they lived in what was known then as "back of the Delph", now Delphside. The Delph was the boggy, stinking old coalpit long ago, where the Town Garden is now.

EC What was the lower part of the school used for? As it goes downhill there's a sort of lower basement part.

EP Well, I don't remember anything about that. There used to be a cloakroom at the back, and the toilets were earth toilets, and they were outside in the school yard. There was the top yard over King Street. We used to go there in a crocodile, two by two.

DES I remember where we used to play. There were mature trees.

VF I never went there to school, but there were trees round where Ian Beddow now has his bungalow, and it was used for the afternoon playtime.

EP And there used to be little gullies across Legges Hill in those days - it wasn't straight down as it is today, little brick gullies across. It was small red shale; if you fell down you had awful knees.

Pauline ? My mum when she was in labour had to walk up Legges Hill; she lived at the bottom. She was in labour having me, it was January '47, and they came to fetch her. The taxi said, "I can't go down there, I'll never get back up", so she had to walk up Legges Hill to get to Broseley Hospital for me to be born on a Sunday afternoon, 26 January.

VF Were there pieces of timber running across the hill?

EP No, they were bricks Vera, brick gullies.

DES I always remember Miss Pardoe, probably because she so terrified me!

EP She was headmistress afterwards.

MS A maiden lady with earphones I seem to remember.

Pauline? Was there a lady just down Legges Hill who had no hair?

EP Yes, Mrs Denstone perhaps - she used to pull her hat right down, you could tell she hadn't any hair, it was quite sad really. She lived on the bank, on the right hand side.

BDS Can I just say a word about The Globe? I was delighted someone mentioned The Globe, because in the Ironbridge Gorge Museum study of Buildings in Broseley Wood it is claimed that The Globe has been demolished.

EP It hasn't, it's still there - I came past it last night.

JR Which one was The Globe?

EP The cottage right on top of the bank, on the left-hand side as you turn down for the school - that was The Globe in days gone by. I remember Mrs Archer lived there. She fell out with Edith Smith because there was a play on at the Town Hall, Annie Lloyd was in it, and there had to be a schoolgirl. Edith Smith wanted to be the schoolgirl and she could get into gymslips, but Mrs Archer wanted the part and she was furious. I was only a little girl; I remember tittering about all this.

VF Mrs Archer became very fat as a lady - she had dropsy and couldn't move.

DC Could people have dinner at Legges Hill School?

EP No, not in those days, not in wartime. I went home.

DES There was a canteen, I never went through the door, but some people stayed for dinner, this was in the fifties.

EP Not in my day

DC So did people all go home at lunchtime?

EP I think they'd take sandwiches in those days

BDS And did you have milkbottles with cardboard tops?

EP Yes, oh dear! It froze in winter and was put by the stove to thaw.

JR I had hoped we'd get as far as The King's Head

DC Anything on the way to The King's Head?

VF On the right-hand side of Legges Hill there was a cottage, and then there was a row of cottages. One was a shop; Mr Bowen kept it

DC That's entirely gone now with the new houses?

EP Bowen's shop's still there - Barbara Johnson's

DC So that was Bowen's shop?

EP Yes, but then the other houses - the one at the top of Legges Hill is still there, isn't it? In between there were four houses

DC So the King's Head, in the deeds, was owned by Lord Forester until 1890

EP The cottages after The King's Head, they haven't altered - well, they may have done inside.

JR Can we throw any light on The Kings Head?

EP It was always Southorns' in my time.

EC It was sold in about 1900 to a woman named Cerutti, an Italian name. She managed to sell it a year later to what became the Wrekin Brewery. She made a profit of about £1000, which in those days was colossal.

DC The landlord who lived there, his name was George Keay, pronounced Key.

EC His only claim to fame was that as a councillor he tried to get some handrails put up Legges Hill, which wouldn't have been a bad idea.

DC He kept The Napoleon pub, and The King's Head. Tina was born there, Jean Jones's mother.

EC About 1930; they were there 15 years.

DC We've taken Tina round there.

EP Ive heard my parents talk about them, but I think it was before I was born. It was Southorns in my time.

VF I remember the Keays.

EP Yes I remember them - they went to Workhouse Cottage, over by The Mines

VF Just down The Quarry there was a house across a yard; did that used to be a pub? After the terraced houses at the top

DC The white one that was The Bells, or The Five Bells, where Coppins live now.

EP I don't remember that.

EC Where the fish-and-chip shop was used to be The Seven Stars

BDS Do you know anything about the bowling green?

EP Vaguely I can remember - where the bungalows are - opposite the old chip shop.

DC Did it belong to the pub?

EP The King's Head

DC How far along did that go - to the shed that's Ivor Southorn's ? All Southorn territory, wasn't it, and the dairy.

EP Ivor used to deliver milk out to Astley Abbotts

EC Mention the chip shop.

EP Harold Williams lived there and kept the chip shop at one time.

BDS Did Harold start the chip shop?

EP No, it went back before that.

? I have a list of the owners.

DC Was yours the chip shop?

No, next door.

DC Some of the family kept a sweet shop along there, before the top of Quarry Road

DDS There was a pub called The Star in Lower King Street. Looking down there is an L-shaped house. Pubs would try to get one up on each other, so The Star came first. King Street turns to the right before the Quarry, past Southorn's bungalows and down past the council houses to the road where the prefabs are. It joins Edinburgh Road by Pat Hurdley's shop.

Meeting held 4th September 2002

Jitties

DC Starting at Padman's Alley - who was Padman ? Boswell Lane then ?

VF It's Boss Well according to Jack - the biggest well.

JO Yes, the Boss Well, two words, is in my garden.

DC Has it still got water in it?

JO Yes, like a reservoir. It used to run down the hill by the Boss Well path. There was a tap so people could fill their buckets.

DC Did you own the land, Jack?

JO It was common land. The tap was where the gulley went down.

RM It was a big tap the children called The Spitting Lion, it was the shape of a lion's head. It was on the left by Capacity. It served the pub called The Prince of Wales and the houses called Benthall View at the back of the Prince. They have all gone now. Woods lived at the Prince, the big house.

DC The house that's still there?

RM No, its gone.

? Mr. Wallbank lived second from the last house. Mrs Wild lived there.

DC Was there a water supply to the houses?

? Only this tap

DC And sanitation was a shed at the bottom of the garden?

? Yes, an earth closet.

DC And Ding-Dong steps are said to be named from the sound made by studs in boots. But Plant's Jitty was named after residents there, like some other jitties.

RJ The Plants came after the Cartwrights. They used to live by the church mission in Broseley Wood They were inveterate gamblers. And Cooper's Corner - Mrs Cooper came and lived in a cottage there, after Tommy Speke who cut his throat.

DC And Jews' Jitty?

JO It was also called Quinns' Bank. The Quinns lived in a house halfway down until they moved to Jackfield. Then the Jewish family lived there. They bought a pottery at Benthall from John Rowe and his son Walter. The wheels were driven by a rope from a hit-and-miss gas engine.

DC Then there's Simmond's Jitty and Mission Jitty. Do people remember the Mission functioning?

RJ I remember it

DC Was there a Sunday School there as well?

MT Yes, they gave us picture shows there, and we had Christmas parties and so on

VF It went out of commission for a long time, didn't it?

MP The old Legges Hill school was used as a church then. I used to take services in the mission school. I presume that after the mission was closed and the school had closed as a school it was taken over and used as a church for a considerable time.

DC Was there much of a congregation?

MP Yes, about twelve. Gwen Jones was a strong member. The people from Broseley wood went there because it was quite a way to walk to the other church. I don't remember back to when the mission hall was the church.

IL What sort of church was it - Congregationalist?

All No, C of E

DC Was it common for churches to have offshoots like the mission church?

MP Yes, to cater for people a long way from the main church, All Saints.

DC So it was run by the clergy from the main church.

JO The Plants lived in the corner by the mission. Their horse dropped dead there. They poured a pint of beer down its throat to try to revive it.

DC Gittins and Carters Jitties were named after folk living there.

RJ Jack Carter had a fish and chip shop there.

DC So there were shops down some jitties, like a sweet shop at the top of Quarry Road.

RJ There was a Post Office in Simpson's Lane in 1942, previously Mrs Schofields the grocers.

DC Were there any more shops or pubs in Quarry Road?

VF In the yard down Quarry Lane there was a pub.

? We used to call it the Red Jitty, because down to the Iron Plate it was red sand. It was also called Sandy Bank.

NM There was a mission there in the 50's, and a Sunday School.

DC When did you come here Michael?

MP 1965

DC Jack, was the New Inn a coaching inn, for stage coaches. Didn't someone in your family see a stage coach there?

JO Yes, my brother Albert, 10 years older than me, had seen the last coach drive away from the stables there. It had been kept there for some years.

VF We always used to call Bridge Road the coach road. It must have worn the horses out so they had to be changed at the New Inn.

DC Jack, you were born at The Mines?

JO Yes at number 46. I've got my feet on both sides of the brook! My parents lived in Broseley Wood and I was started off there. Then they moved to The Mines where I was born.

DC And the stream runs all in a culvert now.

RJ I remember when it was open, very smelly with sewage.

DC Now there are steel ventilation pipes to the culvert, one in Speeds Lane.

JO Its complicated geology there. There was a mill pond and a mill to grind blacking for ironwork.

DC Do you remember the mill working, Vera?

VF Yes, down at the bottom.

RJ Jack is talking about the mill by the iron plate.

AM There were a series of mills down the valley. The top mill was in my garden, opposite the New Inn, the foundations are still there. Below that there were 3 or 4 mills going back into the 18th century, including a boring mill. A Nuffield survey was done of the area and maps them out.

DC There is no evidence of a stream in your garden on the surface?

AM Not now, but it still runs all year and you can hear it underground. It was the parish boundary.

DC So the car park opposite the New Inn is what remains of a mill pond. Regarding the big waterwheel, what happened to it ?

VF It was a Broseley joke that it went to The States to make a Yo-yo for Primo Camera, the American heavyweight

RJ It was sold for scrap.

JO We used to say we were extra clever because we had an extra big overshot wheel.

RM The buckets were sold for scrap. In its last few years the mill drove a dynamo used for charging accumulators. Before that it was a corn mill.

DC So it never had any particular link to ironmaking.

JO My brother's first job was on a farm by Benthall Church. He had to take a horse and cart to collect coarse meal for cattle feed from the mill, which was still grinding corn. Later it belonged to the Bennets who did away with grinding corn and put in a generator which was used for charging accumulators. My brother had a radio and had rigged up a light in our bedroom, so I had to take our accumulator to be charged and go later to pay 60p and collect it. My Uncle Walter did a

painting, that I now have, of the big wheel being dismantled. He was a great artist; he did a pencil drawing in 1905 of his granny, the lady with ironworks connections. She was a member of the Hill family, the last ironmasters to actually produce iron at Benthall.

RM It was a 60 foot diameter overshot wheel, a similar size to Daniel's mill. The brook is the boundary between Jackfield and Benthall, so Ironbridge Station was half in Jackfield, half in Benthall.

DC So Broseley Parish started further up the hill. Now Maypole Jitty, by our historic Maypole erected in 1985 by Eric Cox and others. Anyone remember maypole dancing before that? Was the maypole green an old pit mound?

RJ I remember the clay there but I don't know where it was mined.

DC The cricket Club has been there for a long time.

NW I once bowled out the Reverend Jackson - I took 7 wickets for 22.

DC Where does the name Stocking come from? Why the Stocking pit and mound?

NW A little girl got drowned there years ago, and they closed it.

JO They got ironstone there and stocked it there.

RM We had a Maypole in Jackfield school yard. Did you have one in Broseley?

DC There was a Maypole pub, which suggests we did.

MT The carnival always started at The Maypole.

DC Did that go back a long way - before the second World War?

MT Definitely. We had a little one during the war, with Dig for Victory floats.

NM There were floats and dressed prams, about Robin Hood and fairy tales, with dresses of silver paper and tissue paper.

EP So if it rained - oh dear!

DC And a torchlight procession in the evening?

? Do you remember the stand outside the Town Hall for finding Miss Broseley?

DC Who chose? By a vote or by a committee of worthies? Mr Wedge perhaps. Coming back down the map, to where the Wimpies are -

? There are the Dead Walls, by the Quaker graveyard and the tennis courts.

DC Any memories of the King's Head?

RM The Napoleon, with stained glass above the door. 1907 was a very cold year when they started the construction of the Free Bridge. A worker from Cumberland froze to death.

DC Ferry Bank?

JO Geoff Garbett was a character; he worked for me at one time. He asked me 'Dust tha know Johnny the name of that up there T' "Yes, Ferny Bank" 'Bloody hell, I didna think tha'd know that. How did tha ?' I told him "When I was a boy I had to deliver bread to Mrs Shaw there. Billy Darling always wrote on the parcel - Ferny Bank".

RJ Gough's Jitty had a different name in the postal address.

JL We walked the jitties and put them on the map as marked on the signs.

DC The signs were put up by way of job creation, might be right or wrong. Any station memories ?

RM It was Ironbridge and Broseley, and busy until axed by Beeching.

DC The haulage up Bridge Road was work for Mr Oakley

RM And Ron Hall - lots of work for people. To get to Wellington you changed at Buildwas Junction. You queued at the cubby hole for tickets from the date stamp machine. If you wanted to go to Weston-super-Mare they had to write out your ticket. The station was always manned. With the piles of tickets and cash it was like Las Vegas. There was a big homing pigeon traffic to Nantes, and other continental destinations.

JO The special clock for timing the returning pigeons was kept at The New Inns. As I could run fast in those days I was often given the job of running with the ring taken from a pigeon that had got back to its loft, so it could be checked into the clock at The New Inns. My cousin Percy Beddoes was a pigeon-fancier, but when short of money he'd ring one of the pigeons necks and sell it to Mrs Goodall.

RJ Saturday evening it was 1/- return to Shrewsbury.

RM There were lots of excursions, and lots of RAF traffic for Stanmore Camp.

DC Anyone remember commuting?

? We had shopping trips via Buildwas and Cound and went to Bridgnorth through the tunnel.

VF What's the origin of "jitty" ?

DC It's not unique to Broseley; there are the "shuts" in Shrewsbury.

RJ I spoke to a lady in Madeley who asked me 'What is a jitty?' In Yorkshire they are "snickets".

Meeting held 6th September 2006

Dentistry in Broseley, led by Martin Brooks

Facilitators – Dot Cox and Janet Robinson

Martin Brooks gave us an excellent evening of reminiscences on many subjects, some of them hilarious, backed up by a few contributions from members.

Martin started with a quick autobiography. He was born in Wednesbury and is proud of being from The Black Country. In the 1960's he was a choirboy at St. Bartholomew's, Wednesbury and remembers vividly the view down the aisle to the 'volcano' shape of The Wrekin in the distance. He was sent to elocution lessons but is still happy to revert to his local dialect.

After qualifying as a dentist at Manchester he joined a practice in Harlow new town. His ambition was to earn more as a practice partner so he looked for a suitable post. The idea of working in a new town appealed to his social democratic principles so he enquired at Dawley, only to be told that there were enough dentists situated centrally. He was recommended to try Madeley or Broseley where dentists were an extinct species. If dentistry were needed, there might be an 'expert' available in one of the pubs who could whip teeth out for 7/6d (75p) a time.

He took an old grocer's shop in Madeley but patients were initially not quick to volunteer for treatment. Shropshire County Council appointed him School Dentist in Broseley and supplied a caravan for use in the playground for the first six months. His salary was a useful £24 per week for four sessions, at a time when his mortgage payments were £24 per month. Once he had gained the confidence of the children, their parents were soon asking for treatment. His nurse, Mary Tudor, was a great help. Since there had been no resident dentist in Broseley for 150 years, there was quite a backlog of problem teeth and sepsis. Frequently these problems had advanced towards huge abscesses or **Vincent's angina, otherwise acute necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis, but best remembered locally as 'trench mouth' since the 1914-1918 war.**

The vast majority of his work was far from today's preventative and cosmetic procedures. 'Relief of Pain' was the paramount concern of most patients. Today an extraction is usually avoided except in extreme circumstances. Then, extraction was seen as the best way to end a problem permanently and teeth had to be extracted singly, in multiples or as a complete clearance.

The subject of anaesthesia kept the audience members well awake. Nitrous oxide, laughing gas, had been discovered by Joseph Priestly in 1793 but the technique used in Broseley was still 'Rag and Bottle'. With ether dropped on a mask held on the mouth and nose, the patient was asleep very quickly. Since the cloth had to be removed for access, administration stopped and the time available for extraction was around a minute or less before the patient awoke. The mask was often secured by straps round the head and Martin described how one patient's activities while nominally sedated led to a struggle to get the head set off that resulted in a magnificent mop of 1960's style hair coming away in his hands. Naturally, it was replaced wrong way round with effects that had the audience in fits of laughter.

During his studies at Manchester, Martin had become familiar with the use of gas supplemented by fluorethane (Halothane) additive made by ICI at Aderley Park, that made anaesthesia far more controllable. He had the apparatus installed and soon most patients were asking for 'Extractions with the gas'. Living in Broseley was Freda Bannister, co-author of the standard work on anaesthesia by MacIntosh and Bannister. She was a consultant at Wolverhampton and the wife of Dr Rupert Whitney. Martin was very pleased

that she was able to help in his surgery on occasions although not so happy with the time that it took for patients to come round again after their thorough somnolence.

Not a straight face was to be seen while the topic of 'Dentures' was being aired with much clattering of virtual sets. There was much to be valued in the early versions made with a Vulcanite base in use until the 1940s. The vulcanised rubber conformed to slight variations in the mouth and could still be in satisfactory service for over 20 years. The later acrylics had no such latitude despite other advantages.

After a slow start the practice grew and grew. Extra help was needed after the first three years and the practice now employed ten dentists and four hygienists. A recent anecdote concerned students visiting Shropshire from the Birmingham College of Dentistry. Unlike Shropshire, the water supply in Birmingham has been fluoridated for years and teeth remain in good condition.

'Is that decay?' they ask when they see a cavity!

The discussion occasionally strayed from dentistry to cover the education systems and social politics of the 1960s.

'Does anybody feel that those times were better and want to go back to 'The good old days?', queried Martin.

'Yes', replied Ian firmly, 'I was younger then!'

Contributors

NC. Nick Coppin.

DC. Dot Cox

EC. Eric Cox

SD. Steve Dewhirst.

VF. Vera Francis

Sh. Sue Harvey.

TI. Tom Instone.

RK. Rex Key.

DL. David Lake.

JM. John Mephram

RM Ron Miles

NM. Neda Meyrick.

LO. Lilian Oakley

JO. Jack Owen.

BP. Bill Parr.

EP. Elsie Philpott.

GP. Gillian Pope

JR. Janet Robinson.

FS. Frank Selkirk.

BDS. Dave Shinton

DES. Diane Shinton

MS. Mary Smith.

CT. Cecily Taylor.

MT. Mary Tipton.

NW. Noel Ward

YW. Yvonne Williams.