

**THE
JOURNAL
OF THE
WILKINSON
SOCIETY**

No. 11 1983

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Editor : N.J. Clarke

THE WILKINSON SOCIETY

The Society was formed in 1972 to meet the demand for an organisation to preserve the material and documentary evidence of Broseley's industrial past. Since an important part in this industrial past was played by John Wilkinson, who lived for a time at "The Lawns", it was decided that the organisation should be known as The Wilkinson Society.

The aims of the Society are :

- (i) to act as custodian of any relevant material and information and to make such material and information available to interested individuals and organisations ;
- (ii) to promote any relevant preservation activity and to assist individuals or organisations in such activity where deemed appropriate ;
- (iii) to provide a link with the community of Broseley for individuals or organisations undertaking local historical research.

Any available material will be added to the existing collection of Broseley and Wilkinson relics, part of which is on display at Broseley Hall.

Administration of the Society is by an annually elected committee. Membership is open to anyone interested in the Society's aims and activities. These activities include illustrated lectures, social evenings, researching and exhibiting the collection, field trips and coach tours. Members are kept informed by newsletters, and this annual Journal presents articles on the history of the Broseley area, John Wilkinson, and industrial archaeology in general.

NOTES AND NEWS

The Year's Activities (1981-82)

The first meeting of the 1981-82 season took place in the All Saints Church Hall, Broseley, on Friday 9th October, 1981. Dr. Malcolm Wanklyn, Senior Lecturer in History at The Polytechnic, Wolverhampton, gave a talk based on his study of 16th and 17th century Broseley Parish Registers, entitled "The Industrialisation of Broseley 1570-1700". Dr. Wanklyn's expertise was much appreciated by the sizeable audience present.

The Ninth Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 6th November, 1981 at the same venue. In the absence of Mr. Ralph Pee due to illness, the Chair was taken temporarily by Mr. John Cragg. Mr. Pee's written report mentioned well-attended meetings and recent small finds at the New Willey Site, which had been brought to our attention by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. John Banks, and had been recorded by staff from the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, thanks to the good offices of Deputy Director, Stuart Smith. The Treasurer's report indicated that consideration would have to be given to raising subscriptions at the next AGM.

Election of officers followed. Mrs. Audrey Morton was proposed as Chairman (M.A. Hawes, sec. N.J. Clarke). The proposal was carried unanimously and Mrs. Morton then took over the Chair. The remainder of the Officers agreed to continue, in order to provide continuity of support for the Chairman, and were re-elected individually. The Committee was also re-elected, en bloc.

Under any other business, the need for an alternative site for the Society's Museum was discussed at some length. It was eventually agreed that the Committee should investigate the the possibilities of using a building on the site of the Quaker Burial Ground in Broseley, belonging to the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust.

After the AGM, Mr. Roger Edmundson gave a most interesting and carefully researched talk entitled "John Rose and Edward Blakeway". This proved a most rewarding evening for those present, and Mr. Edmundson's talk was recorded on tape by the Secretary.

The annual Joint Meeting with the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum was held at the Severn Warehouse, Ironbridge, on Wednesday 16th December, 1981. The films were greatly enjoyed and refreshments, provided by the ladies of the Friends' social committee, were appropriately seasonal and welcome.

During the months of December and January the Committee met on several occasions, including site meetings, to explore the possibilities of using the I.G.M.T building on the Quaker Burial Ground in Broseley as a museum. Eventually the plans were shelved because the building was required for other purposes.

The annual Social Evening was held at "The Lawns", by the very kind invitation of Mr. Ralph Pee and his family. The theme was "A Broseley Heritage Centre?", and some useful ideas were floated for consideration at their next meeting.

As it turned out, two Committee Meetings were held in quick succession. At the first, on Thursday 8th April, 1982, we were still thinking in terms of the existing museum at "The Lawns", and discussed security and opening times in the light of minimising the disturbance to Ralph Pee and his family. We also finalised the Society's calendar of events for 1982-3.

The second Committee meeting, on Thursday 21st April, was called in urgent response to an offer by Mrs. V. West, of Broseley Hall, to accommodate the Museum at her home, which was to be opened to the public on one afternoon each week during the summer. The Committee discussed the offer at some length and it was agreed that it should be accepted in principle, and that Mr. Hawes and Mr. Whall should liaise with Mr. and Mrs. West on the details. After some other business had been completed, the meeting adjourned to Broseley Hall where, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. West, they were able to inspect the accommodation being offered and confirm their grateful acceptance of it.

On Friday 7th May, 1982 a small but enthusiastic party of members was guided to the very end of the Tar Tunnel in Coalport, under the watchful eye of Mr. Stuart Smith. The far end of the tunnel is not normally open to the public and the visit proved most interesting and exciting. We were very grateful to Stuart for providing this opportunity of seeing the whole exhibit.

The Annual Outing was to have been a joint effort with the I.G.M.T. friends to the Black Country Museum, but this had to be cancelled due to lack of support.

However, Mr. Tony Herbert more than made up for this with his invitation to members to enjoy a private preview of the exhibition at Maw's Tileworks in Jackfield. This exhibition was scheduled for July 10th - 11th, and the preview took place on Friday, 9th July. It was greatly appreciated by those present.

During the period April-September 1982 the Committee catalogued and dismantled the exhibits at "The Lawns" and transported them to Broseley Hall for eventual

re-erection there. Special thanks are due to Chris Pointon, who provided his van for heavy items, and to Mr. Eric Cox, a recent new member, who added considerably to the muscle-power of the team.

Programme of Events for 1983-1984

- January - April : Re-erection of exhibits in new museum at Broseley Hall
(1983)
- 1st May : Official opening of new museum (3.00 p.m.)
- 23rd July : Annual summer outing : joint visit with I.G.M.T. Friends to Chatsworth
- 19th September : Visit of Mr. Leighton Wilkie and party (U.S.A.) to Museum
- 14th October : Eleventh AGM, followed by illustrated talk - "The saving of the last Severn Trow" - by Mr. Brian Waterson
- 11th November : "The 'Trial' Enigma" - illustrated talk by Mr. R. Pringle-Scott
- 14th December : Joint meeting with I.G.M.T. Friends at the Severn Warehouse
- 22nd February : Joint meeting with the Broseley Society - social
(1984) evening and slides (Mr. Ron Miles)
- 30th March : "Road Transport" - illustrated talk by Dr. Barrie Trinder
- To be announced : Annual summer outing

The Journal

The editor regrets the delay in the appearance of this issue.

Further copies of the Journal and back numbers can be obtained from the Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Freda Spickernell, 11 High Street, Broseley.

Contributions to future issues would be welcome, and should be sent to the Editor, N.J. Clarke, Cranleigh, Little Wenlock, Telford.

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JOHN WILKINSON : TALK AND WALK (MAY 1984)

Wednesday, 16th : 'John Wilkinson' - an illustrated talk by Neil Clarke, America Room, IGMT, The Wharfage, Ironbridge at 7.30 p.m.

Sunday, 20th : 'John Wilkinson of Willey' - a walk led by Neil Clarke, beginning at Broseley Church Car Park at 2.30 p.m.

(Organised by the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum - members of the Wilkinson Society welcome.)

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RALPH PEE, 1912-1983 : A TRIBUTE TO
THE FOUNDER OF THE WILKINSON SOCIETY

With the death of Ralph Pee in May 1983, the Society lost not only its founder member but also the driving force behind the first ten years of its existence.

A member of an old Bridgnorth family, Ralph attended the local Grammar School and, on leaving, joined the Royal Air Force at Cranwell. At the outbreak of the Second World War, he stayed in the RAF, reached the rank of Squadron Leader and saw service in India and Ceylon. After the war he held office in the Bridgnorth branch of the RAFA for many years.

Ralph eventually took over from his brother, Ernest Pee, in running the family's florist shop on Waterloo Terrace, Bridgnorth, before moving to Broseley in 1959. There he bought "The Lawns" in Church Street, the former home of John Wilkinson, and before long began to research the life and work of his famous predecessor-resident.

The initial result of Ralph's efforts was an exhibition staged at "The Lawns" in 1971; but perhaps of even more significance was the part he played in forming a society to take the study further. The many items collected for the exhibition formed the basis of the new society's Museum of which Ralph was curator until about a year before his death. During that time he acquired many additional items for the museum and made a number of models, answered numerous queries about John Wilkinson from all over the country, and published some of his own research in the Shropshire Magazine and this journal (and listed below).

A kindness much appreciated by all the members was Ralph's invitation to the Society to hold all its indoor meetings at "The Lawns", and these occasions were hosted by his wife Dora until her death in 1978 and then by his daughter Gill. Ralph became chairman of the Society in 1979, but ill-health forced his retirement two years later. From then on he was unable to play an active part in the Society, meetings had to be transferred to the Church Hall and eventually the museum collection moved to Broseley Hall in the autumn of 1982.

Maurice Hawes writes - 'I first met Ralph very shortly after I moved to Broseley in September 1972. The Wilkinson Society was then in its infancy, having been formed at a meeting at "The Lawns" on July 5th of that same year. Once Ralph discovered that I was an engineer by training, he began passing on his enthusiasm for the industrial history of Broseley and the special place of John Wilkinson in that history, and I soon became a member of the Society. His energy and enthusiasm led me into many expeditions around local sites, and I shall always remember these occasions with great pleasure. One walk in particular, from Gitchfield to Caughley via Tarbach Dingle, along the route of John Wilkinson's wooden railway, was typical, as Ralph showed me the path over steep places and through wild undergrowth with the spirit of a man half his age. He was never happier than when exploring in this fashion, or when employing his natural skills and talents in making the models for the Museum. The drive he displayed in making these models was matched by his respect for accuracy, so that when the Museum was visited recently by an expert visitor from the United States, the comment was "He got it right". The Wilkinson Society could not have begun without Ralph, and the rightful place of Broseley in the industrial history of this country was recognised by him at a time when many others were inclined to overlook it. The Society and its little museum stand as memorials to his inspiration.'

In his will Ralph requested that I should edit on behalf of the Society all historical notes found in his effects together with literature in the museum.

This I will be honoured to do in memory of the founder of the Wilkinson Society, and to conclude this short tribute to him is appended a list of Ralph's published papers.

'THE WORLD'S FIRST IRON BOAT', in Shropshire Magazine, July 1972, pp. 18-19

'THE BROSELEY HOME OF JOHN WILKINSON', in The Journal of the Wilkinson Society, No. 1 (1973), pp. 5-6; No. 7 (1979), pp. 4-5

'JOHN WILKINSON AND THE TWO WILLEY IRONWORKS', Wilkinson Society Monograph No. 1 (1973-74); and in Journal No. 7 (1979) pp. 8-12

'THE SOCIETY'S COLLECTION OF INDUSTRIAL RELICS', in Journal No. 2 (1974), pp. 13-15; No. 3 (1975), p. 12; No. 4 (1976) p. 14

'THE SEVERN IN SOUTH SHROPSHIRE:

part 1 - Geology and the Course of the River', in Journal No. 5 (1977), pp. 6-8;

'part 2 - Navigation', in Journal No. 6 (1978), pp. 4-8

'A GRAVEYARD OF BARGES?', in Journal No. 8 (1980) p. 11

'THE NEW WILLEY IRONWORKS: A REAPPRAISAL OF THE SITE', in Journal No. 9 (1981) pp. 3-9.

N.J.C.

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'JOHN WILKINSON, IRONMASTER : THE DYNAMIC FORCE THAT
USHERED IN THE DAWN OF OUR INDUSTRIAL AGE' -

*title of a lavishly produced 22 page booklet by Leighton A. Wilkie
and published by DoAll Company, Des Plaines, Illinois (1983).
Copies available through our secretary, Maurice Hawes.*

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THE BROSELEY ANTI-FELONS, part 2

The first part of this article, which appeared in 1981, contained the record of the Anti-Felons' proceedings for about 30 years from 1789 on. Reference was made in the Minute Book entry for October 9th, 1789 to the theft of six geese belonging to John Rose. It has been made clear by Mr. Roger Edmundson that this John Rose was the father of John Rose the manufacturer of porcelain at Caughley and Coalport. John Rose senior was a farmer, living at Swinney Farm near Caughley, in the parish of Barrow. He died in 1792 when his son John at the age of 20 was about to end his apprenticeship with Thomas Turner and join Edward Blakeway at Jackfield.

At the Anti-Felons' meeting held on April 20th, 1820, at the Fox Inn, Broseley, a new committee was formed consisting of : Mr. A. Brodie, Mr. W. Hazeldine (represented by Mr. Thomson), Mr. W. Fifield, Mr. Thos. Roberts, Mr. Jno. Lister, Mr. Abr. Wyke, Mr. Samuel Roden, Mr. Geo. Hartshorne. Any four of these men could act in conjunction with the Treasurer who had been in office since before 1789.

There are some well-known Broseley names in the above list: Hartshorne, Wyke, Roden, Lister. Brodie and Hazeldine were comparative newcomers.

Alexander Brodie lived at the Rock House, Jackfield. He was the nephew of another Alexander Brodie, a Scot who became a figure almost as important as Wilkinson. Alexander senior bought the Calcutt mines, furnaces and forges in 1786 and made a national reputation for producing high-quality iron, for steam pumps and other engines, for cannon accurately bored, and for such by-products as coke and tar. He died in 1811 and his nephew took over the Calcutt works.

William Hazeldine of Shrewsbury, where he owned a foundry, had taken over the Calcutt works from Brodie by 1817, when in the aftermath of the recent Wars trade was sluggish. Under the supervision of his friend Telford, Hazeldine constructed the Menai Suspension Bridge and was constructor also of the ironwork for the Pontcysyllte and Chirk Aqueducts.

William Fifield is described in Pigot's Directory as a Surgeon. A Mrs. Fifield was living in 1851 at Barratt's Hill, possibly in what is still called "Fifield House", which was a Doctor's residence until recently.

In May 1822 there is a Minute about expenses allowed to Messrs. John Rose & Co. "in the prosecutions of Griffiths and Nevitt". No details are given.

The Minutes of a meeting held on October 24th, 1822 were signed by 17 members who included John Onions, George Hartshorne, William Roden ("for father"), John Lister and Thomas Rose. John Onions and his father John, who died in 1819, are two of the great ironmasters and mine-owners of the age, owning furnaces in whole or in part at Lilleshall, Benthall, Broseley (Coneybury) and Brierley Hill. John junior lived at Whitehall (Church Street) in 1851. He died in 1859. Thomas Rose was the brother of John Rose. He had been a partner in the porcelain firm of Reynolds, Horton & Rose in 1803 when Robert Anstice purchased the share-holding of his late cousin William Reynolds. In 1814 John Rose bought up Anstice, Horton & Rose and brother Thomas thus found himself subordinate to John and as we see attended meetings of the Anti-Felons as a representative of the firm.

Amongst the names of subscribers to the Association in May 1824 appear the Hon. Lord Forester and the Rev. Townshend Forester who later became a Canon of Worcester Cathedral.

At the meeting of April 14th 1824 "the Society (felt) itself much obliged by the services of the late Mr. John Guest as Treasurer of the Association for a period of fifty years and upwards last past". According to this tribute John Guest became Treasurer of the Anti-Felons in or about 1774, some 15 years before the first meeting recorded in the surviving Minute Books.

John Guest was succeeded by Mr. John Onions who was "unanimously elected" and "was good enough to accept the appointment". Traces of pride, gratification and deference here. Alexander Brodie signed this Minute as Chairman.

There is a reference in Minutes of a meeting in April 1826 to prosecutions on behalf of four members of the Association: John Hartshorne, William Bennett, Samuel Roden and Abraham Aston. A Mr. Ashwood "was allowed expenses for advertising a robbery at his mill". Pigot's Directory records that in 1842 Jeremiah Ashwood was a miller and "Postmaster" in Broseley. He was also a maltster and an agent for the Globe Fire Insurance Company. In April 1827 Mr. Ashwood is said to have lost "his lead pump". Rewards for information were agreed on in cases of window-breaking and a theft of fowls. In November 1827 a "robbery of sheep" is mentioned.

At a meeting held on April 17th 1828, Mr. Onions expressed his "determination to resign" the Treasurership. Unfortunately no reason for this is given in the Minute Book. Mr. J. Lister was appointed in his place.

The meeting of October 19th 1837 decided on a new scale of rewards for information leading to successful prosecutions. (See Part 1 of this article).

In 1844 the Association had funds of over £100 in hand and the annual subscription was reduced from 5/- to 3/6, the entrance subscription dropping to half a guinea from one guinea. In 1853 the annual subscription was again cut, to 2/6.

In 1849 there occurs the first reference to meetings being held at the Pheasant Inn instead of at the Fox. In 1859 the Pheasant was closed, for no stated reason, and it was decided that meetings in future were to be held at the Lion.

The mid-19th century is a convenient time to look at national developments in the field of law and order. In country parishes maintenance of order was the duty of constables appointed usually by two justices of the peace. These constables often delegated their duties to deputies who were in many cases inefficient and corrupt. General dissatisfaction led to attempts to reform the system. In 1839 an Act of Parliament was passed empowering Justices in Quarter Sessions to establish a paid constabulary in the counties. This Act was only permissive and it was followed in 1856 by another which made it compulsory to create county police forces.

These enactments caused no immediate change in the affairs of the Broseley Association for the Prosecution of Felons, or at least in the reports contained in their Minute Books. The system of rewards for information leading to successful prosecutions continued, and the scales of payment published in 1837 were re-issued almost unchanged in 1860.

When the names of Police Constables do eventually appear (and these men were already paid by the County Police authority) they are recorded as receiving the appropriate reward listed in the Association's scale of payments. P.C. Becket in 1881 received 10/6 for giving information leading to the conviction of Edward Doughty for the theft of coal from the pits of Messrs. Ealey & Sons. P.C. Daniel Brew had the same amount for his share in the conviction of Annie Hill and William Purrier who had stolen "underwood belonging to Lord Forester". In 1883 P.C. Perry of Jackfield was rewarded for the apprehension of Mary Heighway who was found guilty of stealing potatoes and turnips belonging to Mr. James Barnet of Woodhouse Farm.

Several other cases are recorded of similar rewards given to policemen. It is never apparent if they were or were not acting during their hours of official duty. Some other convictions were obtained as the result of action by members of the public, but such cases seem to have been fewer than those involving the police. In 1884, for instance, Mr. Henry Sergeant was rewarded for reporting that Richard Griffiths had stolen "peasticks the property of Lord Forester".

During the latter half of the 19th century a change took place in the occupations and interests of the leading personalities amongst the Anti-Felons. Earlier on, the prominent men, the Guests, the Onions, Hartshornes, Hazeldines, Listers, Rodens etc., were industrialists, shopkeepers, landowners. (John Wilkinson is never mentioned in the Minute Books, nor is Lord Dundonald, nor Alexander Brodie senior, though they may have been members). About the middle of the century men of other occupations begin to appear as Chairmen and Treasurers. Lawyers and doctors for instance, occasionally a clergyman, together with some landowners, tradesmen, small manufacturers and farmers.

In 1851 the Chairman was Robert Evans, a brick and tile manufacturer and a J.P., living at the Dunge. In 1853 Evans had died and his place was occupied by Mr. G. Pritchard, a solicitor and banker. The Treasurer was Dr. Richard Thursfield. According to Pigot's Directory (1842), while George Pritchard was the leading "attorney" in Broseley, George Potts was an attorney in Ironbridge. George Pritchard was very highly regarded in Broseley, as a benefactor to the poor, to orphans and widows, and "an able and upright magistrate". The Pritchard Memorial which once stood in Broseley Square was erected by public subscription to perpetuate his memory.

Bagshaw's Directory of 1851 states that in that year George Potts was Clerk to the Borough of Wenlock and to Madeley County Court. He lived at "The Green" in Broseley.

George Pritchard died in 1861. Already, in 1860, George Potts was Chairman of the Association. He was also Solicitor to the Association. Richard Thursfield, the Treasurer, had died. At a meeting held on October 3rd 1860, George Potts was elected Treasurer in place of Thursfield. Edward Bagnall Potts was elected Solicitor of the Association in place of George Potts.

The Potts were energetic, ambitious and tenacious. The family name recurs up to the end of the century and beyond, though entries in the Minute Books become shorter and more infrequent. The Potts' influence was, however, of shorter duration than that of the faithful John Guest.

In 1887 a reward of 10/6 was given to P.C. Banks "for extra diligence which led to the conviction of a man for stealing a hat". The Chairman on this occasion was Frederick H. Potts. The hat belonged to Mr. G.B. Potts. At the

same meeting a Mr. Carter was rewarded for obtaining the conviction of James Barrett who had stolen plants belonging to Mrs. Bathurst. In 1851 Henry Martyn Bathurst, headmaster of the National School, lived on Barratt's Hill, perhaps some relation of Mrs. Bathurst who was thus robbed. In 1887 also, three men were convicted of stealing "old iron".

Most meetings during these years were held at the Lion, but there was an attempt, briefly successful, to move back to the Pheasant. On October 26th 1870, Edward Roden supported by Rev. R.H. Cobbold, proposed that the meetings in the following year be held at the Pheasant.

In 1873 the name Thursfield appears again. Thomas Greville Thursfield was elected Treasurer. Edward Potts was Chairman. On November 15th 1882, F.H. Potts was elected Treasurer in place of Dr. Thursfield who resigned for reasons of ill-health. At this meeting, held at the Lion, a reward of 10/6 was given to P.C. Tomkins of Bridgnorth for the apprehension and conviction of Thomas James who had stolen rope belonging to John Burroughs of Bridgnorth. Perhaps Thomas James was a Broseley man, otherwise this seems not to have been a Broseley matter. There are also references in 1882 and again in 1883 to the theft of artificial manure from Mr. G.W. Wheeler of Posenhall.

Rewards continued to be offered to policemen for services rendered to members of the Association until after 1900. On December 16th 1901 P.C. Davies was given one guinea "for extra diligence" in obtaining the conviction of Eliza Aston and Elizabeth Sargeant for stealing coal belonging to Mr. G. Davies senior. In the same month P.C. Bower received 10/6 "for diligence" in connection with the conviction of Frederick Sherwood "for stealing beansticks and stakes the property of Lord Forester". For supplying information in this prosecution Mr. G. Boden was given one guinea.

No further examples of policemen receiving monetary rewards occur in the Minute Books. But in 1907 the Police Constables of Broseley and Jackfield were each given a goose for Christmas from the Association's funds.

The last reference in the Minute Books to payment for information received concerning an alleged crime appears in a Minute dated January 12th 1934 when an application for such a reward was made on behalf of George Sherwood for reporting that Samuel Watson and Albert J. Thomas, in pursuit of rabbits, trespassed "on land in occupation of Mr. E.A. Powell of the Dean Farm. A reward of one guinea was allowed". Not the most heinous of crimes, even supposing that trespass was a crime in 1934.

Annual Dinners for members of the Association were not unknown in the early days; there is reference to such events in the 1790 entry in the Minute Book. But little mention of them is made until we come to 1901. On December 11th in that year a dinner was provided by Messrs. Haughton for 43 members at a total cost of £5. 7. 6., plus £5. 1. 5. for wine and tobacco and 10/0 for the waiters. In 1914 dinner at the Pheasant for an unspecified number of members cost in total £6. 9. 0., plus £4. 1. 0. for wine and cigars. This event was something of a social occasion in the town. However, after 1914 there is understandably a blank in the record of the Associations's activities, but it lasted, according to the Minute Books, until 1932.

On December 16th 1932 a dinner for 34 members and visitors was held at the Forester Arms. The Rev. C.S. Jackson was at this time Chairman, W.E. Price was Secretary and Treasurer and the Committee members were : J.T. Mear, J.H. Matthews, C.R. Jones, A.H. Dixon, T. Jones, W. Oakley, F.W. Davis, T. Marlow. J. Nicklin and W. Edge joined the Committee later on. Most if

not all of these men will be remembered by many people in Broseley to-day. I imagine that with the Rector of Broseley in the chair a more tolerant attitude would be shown towards the kind of petty offences which had, so often been reported and punished in the past.

Newcomers to the town and district were not slow to join the Association. Doctors Tom and Sherlock Hoy became members in 1933 not long after their arrival here.

The Association's accumulated funds were drawn on quite liberally over a period of years after 1934 in support of various institutions and charities. The Cricket Club benefitted, the Horticultural Society also; a gift was made in aid of the local unemployed at Christmas in 1932, and a similar donation was contributed to a fund for men and women in the Forces at Christmas in 1940. In 1946 people who suffered loss and damage in the Severn floods were helped. More substantial grants were made in 1946 to the Broseley Church Tower Fund (£150) and to the Baptist, Congregational and Methodist Churches (£50 each).

On July 30th 1959 the Association's affairs were wound up. Mr. Arthur Garbett and Mr. Will Oakley as Trustees arranged the final disbursement of money from the remaining funds. £20 in each case was given to Broseley Church, to the Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches and to Mrs. Hoy's Gymkhana Club which was raising money for the Town Hall.

I am indebted to the late Ern Harris who suggested that I should write this account and give a talk on the Broseley Association for the Prosecution of Felons; to Arthur Garbett for giving me initial guidance and for providing copies of correspondence; to Barrie Trinder's splendid "Industrial Revolution in Shropshire" with its wealth of information on many aspects of this area's history; to Pigot's and Bagshaw's Directories; and to Randall's still fascinating "Broseley and its Surroundings".

JOHN CRAGG

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THE MEADOW COLLIERY, MADELEY

The following is an edited version of material supplied by Frank Turner just before his death in 1982. I have added notes at the end. - Ed.

The Madeley Wood Company's Meadow Colliery ⁽¹⁾ closed just over 60 years ago after operating for over a century ⁽²⁾. I well remember the working of the colliery in its later years and its closure ⁽³⁾.

The working of the mine

There were two mine shafts, 12 yards apart, and one air shaft. The top pit shaft was used for winding coal and the bottom pit shaft for winding water. Chain was used for the pit cage and a flat wire rope, approximately 5 inches wide and 1 inch thick ⁽⁴⁾, was attached to the water tank. The winding engine was a large beam engine, supplied with steam by three boilers, two Lancashire and a round-ended one fired underneath. There was a pool nearby which supplied water for these boilers and condensing water for the beam engine.

My grandfather, father and uncle used to work the engine and this gave me the opportunity of going into the engine house and seeing it operate. The engine worked at 5lbs. steam pressure and had a very quiet exhaust; but what really amazed me was the speed of the pit cage arriving at the top of the shaft. This was due to the large diameter of chain on the winding spool. There was quite a large bell attached to the engine which was operated by gears, and this bell warned the engine man that the cage was approaching either the surface or the bottom of the main shaft. It could be heard all over Madeley !

In about 1918 it was decided to do away with ponies in the mine. A haulage house was built on the surface and in it was assembled a two cylinder steam engine. A wire rope worked off a drum and passed down the mine shaft to the workings, guided by a series of pulleys.

The ventilation in the mine was created by a large fire at the bottom of the shaft(5).

Delivery of coal

Coal was sent from the mine in horse-drawn waggons on cast iron plateways to Blists Hill furnaces and tileries in one direction and to the Woodlands brickworks in the other. The route to Blists Hill was across the Lee Dingle bridge. The Woodlands brickworks, situated just to the south-east of the Beeches Hospital, had originally belonged to the Madeley Wood Company but at this time it was owned by George Legge & Son (it closed in 1917). The tramway to the brickworks crossed the Madeley - Ironbridge road not far from the island near to Mawkins Lane; it then ran alongside that road to the top of Madeley Bank where, opposite what is now the Beacon Hotel, it followed the lane leading to the brickworks(6).

The stables for the horses that helped to work the mine were situated on the left of the lane leading to the colliery from the Madeley - Ironbridge road, almost opposite the Park Inn; they are now a row of cottages. I remember the behaviour of the pit bank horses at the end of their working day. The driver would release them and they would trot down the bank to the stables, stopping to drink out of a large water butt before going inside to their own particular stalls. At the one end of the stable block was a blacksmith's hearth which was used by the shoeing smith (Mr. Jim Owen) and also for colliery maintenance. The grazing place for the horses was in the adjacent cricket field, and to stop them wandering on to the actual pitch disused pit chain and wire rope was placed around it (7).

Closure and after

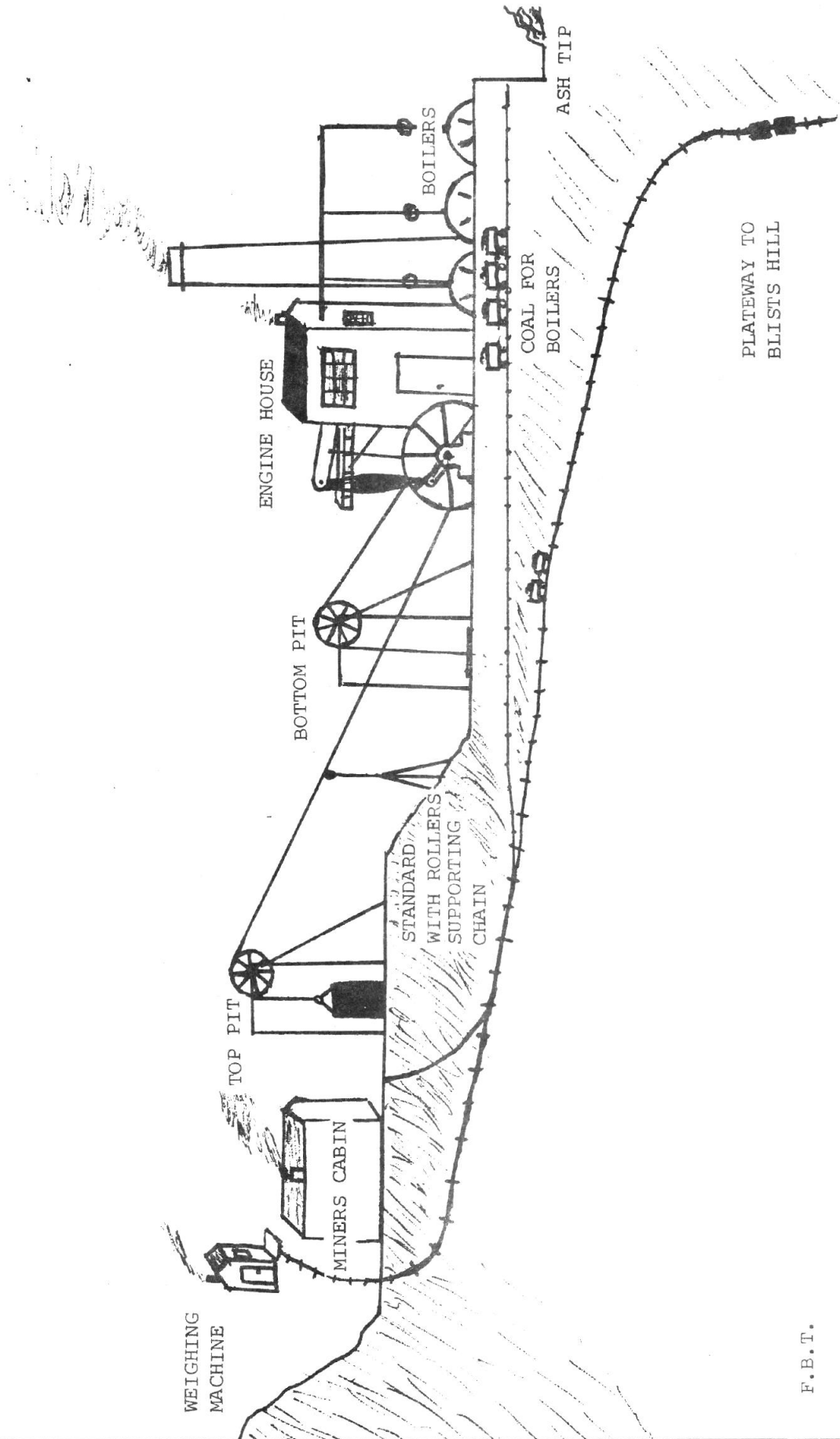
At the time of closure Mr. Richard Dodd was manager of the colliery. The last load of coal was brought up the shaft on 21st May, 1920, and water was wound up the water pit until August, 1920. All the machinery was left in the mine. The beam engine became derelict but, following a fire in the engine house, the engine was finally scrapped and taken away.

FRANK TURNER

Notes

1. Also known locally (and indicated on maps) as the Meadowpit Colliery, it was situated just to the south of the Madeley - Ironbridge road at

SKETCH SHOWING LAYOUT OF MEADOW COLLIERY



F.B.T.

map reference point 690041, and its tree covered spoil tips are still very prominent.

2. Frank suggested mining began there in 1802, but Ivor Brown ('The Coalbrookdale Coalfield : Catalogue of Mines", Shropshire County Library, 1968) gives 1808. Although ironstone had also been mined at this pit, only coal appears to have been mined during its last years.
3. Born in 1906, Frank would have been 14 when the colliery closed.
4. When the wires in the flat rope became worn they were taken out and replaced by new ones, this being called lacing. ' I knew the men who did this work', Frank added.
5. Frank had in his possession a 5 inch diameter bronze flywheel and other parts for a model horizontal steam engine, the metal for which was smelted in the fire at the bottom of the shaft at the Meadow Colliery in about 1882 !
6. The route of this tramway (marked 'Rail Road') is shown on the 1st edition O.S. map of this area (1833) and on subsequent editions. Frank said he 'well remembered seeing the railway track'.
7. How the cricket field was eventually purchased by Madeley Cricket Club from Madeley Wood Company about two years after the closure of the mine, was also related by Frank in his notes.

Frank Turner was the last of a long line of engine drivers in his family, all of whom worked in the Madeley area. His great-grandfather had driven the engine at the Leasow Colliery in the mid-19th century. The last engine his grandfather worked was the Blists Hill blowing engine, which ceased to operate with the closure of the furnaces in 1912. Frank's father maintained the Lloyds pumping engine before he became engine driver on the winding engine at Kemberton Colliery from 1895 to 1928. His uncles worked the beam engines at Halesfield and Meadow pits. Frank himself was winding engineman at Blists Hill mine from 1935 until just before its closure in 1941. The information provided by Frank in his two articles in this journal ('Working at the Blists Hill Mine forty years ago', No.3, 1975, pp. 5 - 6; and the article above) is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the work of enginemen on the Coalbrookdale Coalfield in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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ERN HARRIS : an obituary

The Society lost in December, 1982, a most likeable and valued member whose knowledge of Broseley and the area in general was unrivalled. Ern Harris was born in Broseley some years before the First World War. The house in Swan Street where he spent his early years no longer stands, but "The Lindens" in Duke Street, which he later shared with his sister Addie, is still there.

His father was a saggar-maker at Maw's Tile Works. His grandfather was in charge of the saw-mill at Willey. Ern himself left Broseley School at 14 and continued his education in the evenings at Coalbrookdale Institute. He was an apprentice in the Capacity Engineering Works, King Street, and afterwards was employed at the Court Works, Madeley. He was instructor to R.A.F. trainees at Cosford during the Second World War, and later had charge of apprentices at Buildwas Power Station up to his retirement in 1973. Some of the young men he trained still work at Buildwas.

Ern Harris enjoyed using his broad, capable hands and applying his many skills. He had metal and wood lathes at home; he was a clever clock repairer; machinery of every description fascinated him; he had an instinctive feeling for the qualities of the materials, wood and metal, with which he worked. He was, in short, a true craftsman who loved to impart his knowledge and to teach his skills.

The talk he gave to members of the Wilkinson Society a few years ago entitled "Broseley as I remember it" will remain a happy memory with those who heard it. Fortunately, it also remains recorded on tape.

His loss to the community will be felt for a very long time. He was a Samaritan, to whom many must owe a great personal debt; he was a mainstay of the Methodist Church, Sunday School, Youth Club, and Bible Study Group; he had a most lively and sympathetic interest in many social activities, including this Society, and was always glad to contribute in discussion from his extensive knowledge of the town and district. He will be greatly missed by his fellow Members.

To his sisters and other members of the Harris family we offer our most sincere sympathy.

J.A.C.

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*'Then let each jolly fellow take hold of his glass
And drink to the health of his friend and his lass.
May we always have plenty of stingo and pence,
And Wilkinson's fame blaze a thousand years hence.'*

- verse from a popular song about John Wilkinson. A survey of what contemporaries thought of the man and his achievements will appear in the next issue of the Journal.

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