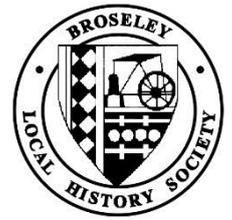


# NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

*INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY*



AUGUST 2018

## MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm at the Broseley Social Club, High Street, unless otherwise announced. Car parking is available at the back of the Club.

Members are requested to be seated by 7.30pm to allow our speakers a prompt start.

Visitors are welcome but are asked to give a donation towards Society funds.

## PROGRAMME

- 5 Sep *A Tale of Two Churches*, by Graham Hollox  
3 Oct *AGM followed by – 1918 The end of WW1* by Janet Doody  
7 Nov *The Foresters of Dothill and Wellington*, by Neil Clarke. Joint meeting with the IGMT, Glass Classroom and Coalbrookdale  
5 Dec Annual Dinner  
2 Jan Members Evening, photos and slides  
6 Feb *(Almost) the Complete Archaeology of the Iron Bridge*, Spencer Gavin Smith  
6 Mar *John Wilkinson Revisited*, Richard Sells

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

## NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new member:

Michael Ward, Telford

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## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

### WW1, Faces and Tales (1/4 KSLI) part 2, Wendy Palin

Wendy writes -

*Having told the first half of my grandfather's WW1 story of his journey and time in Singapore a few years ago I was now left to deliver the more challenging details of the time the 1/4 Battalion spent in France.*

*Since my first talk at Broseley I had become involved in the Heritage Lottery funded work of the Wellington Remembers 1914-1918 Group which has researched the lives of the 183 men and 1 woman named on the Lychgate in town. Specifically, I have been responsible for the biographies of most of the 1/4 men and their experiences seemed to cover the ground I needed to tread. So I wrote my presentation around them.*

*Having landed in France at the end of July 1917 in their tropical uniforms, their first action at the end of October was part of the third battle of Passchendaele. This was also the date of the first death for Wellington. The action in the snow at Welsh Ridge at the close of the year saw a further three men added to our list. I moved very slightly outside my initial plan and included a Snedshill man (Alfred Nock) who was buried alive when a trench collapsed and Wilfred J. Boden from Broseley who died as a POW. I also chose to include 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Gordon Duncan McAlister whose father worked at Copthorne Barracks and had written so kindly to Alfred's parents explaining the circumstances of his death. Gordon's initial burial place was known, but by the end of the war his body was not recovered so he is included on the Tyne Cot Memorial.*

*In the early days of 1918 one man was killed on a quiet day, just the luck of the draw, while in April another, who had been part of the now disbanded 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, died in the confusion of the German spring offensive, his exact date of death unknown. This hell on earth when, "Every man for himself, get back if you can," had been the order, had resulted in one of the men suffering from shell shock. When he re-joined the fighting he was sent to a different battalion where he met his end later in the year.*

*I had expected to be able to tell of the 1/4 Battalion's award of the Croix de Geurre avec Palmes on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1918 repeatedly, but it was not so. All but one of the names on the memorial in Wellington died well before that date. The men involved in the attack on Bligny Hill are more likely to hail from other counties than ours. Despite best efforts I have only a handful of names for men who were definitely on that hill with my*



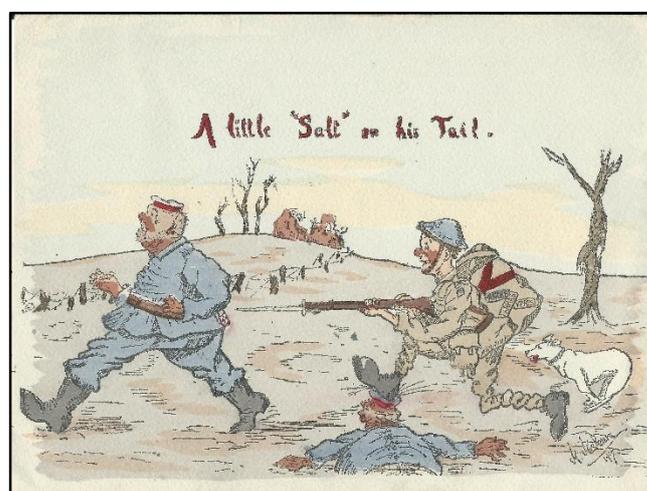
*grandfather. I have met just four sets of descendants of the survivors.*

*The last man from the 1/4 to be recorded on the Lychgate died of pneumonia just a couple of weeks after the Armistice. Starting out in 1914 as a Territorial he had served the entire war with the battalion and I feel he was hard done to not to have been awarded the Territorial Force medal. The only explanation I can come up with is that there were 3 soldiers associated with the battalion of the same name.*

*To read the stories in more detail please visit Wellington Churches or the Library who will be given copies of the groups' work or look up Wellington Remembers via Shropshire Archives who will link to the work online from November 2018.*

*A small exhibition will be held from 6-11 November in the Gratitude Café, Duke St, Wellington and we would love to see you there.*

*In memory of William Joseph Green, George Davies, George Henry Scarratt, Joseph Henry Healey, Henry Emery, Charles Thomas Emery, Reuben Cotton, Percy Wilkinson and William Stokes who helped me to tell this story.*



A WWI Postcard sent from the trenches

## The Village Built On Soap.

The Society's Summer Outing to Port Sunlight went like clockwork - everyone was good at time-keeping; it was a glorious summer's day, and the visit to this beautiful Wirral village which is now home to more than 2,000 residents proved both fascinating and interesting.



*Port Sunlight, the village founded by "Soap King"  
William Hesketh Lever in 1888*

The first production of Sunlight Soap took place on 27th October 1885 in Bolton where the father of William Hesketh Lever ran a wholesale grocery business. Young William worked for his father for a time and came to realise that there was a big demand for a quality laundry soap which was quick to dissolve, easy to lather and guaranteed to take the drudgery out of women's wash days. He realised that the soap could be improved and so in 1888 he purchased a large tract of boggy land by the River Mersey. It was here that he began to build the world's largest soap works which is now home for the development of both hair, laundry and household care products. It also houses Unilever's first purpose built research laboratory. Such was the success of William's new enterprise that in 1892 Sunlight soap carried the Royal Warrant and by the mid 1890's 40,000 tons of the soap were selling in Britain per year. William Lever was well on the way to becoming one of the richest men in the country. In 1999 The Port Sunlight Village Trust was set up by Unilever to be responsible for maintaining the majority of the principal buildings, conserving and managing approximately 250 houses, the landscape and the monuments in the village.

Nowadays the Trust administers the Museum which explores the founding and development of Port Sunlight through the decades and brings the village to life through informative interpretation panels and memorabilia displays. You can watch a unique 20-minute film - the Sunlight Spirit - which features

characters that lived and worked in the village. Next door is the recently opened Edwardian Worker's cottage which portrays the way it may have looked when first built in 1913. The workers who lived in them must have thought that they had arrived in heaven after moving out of the slums of nearby Liverpool.

One of the highlights of the day was the guided coach tour of the village led by our very knowledgeable guide Peter. He told us all about the various buildings and their former residents - the hall where the Beatles played their music before they became famous; the separate entrances for men and women to the main works and the building where the men could purchase alcohol; an activity not approved by the teetotaler William. It was decided to hold a Referendum (a dangerous precedent) for the residents and it was assumed that the womenfolk would vote against the sale of alcohol. In fact, they voted for it in order "to get the men out of the house." Port Sunlight was to get its own Public House! We also stopped to have a look at the magnificent First World War Memorial which is one of the largest in the country. It is unusual that it portrays figures of the soldiers who died but also of the women and children who lost husbands and fathers in the conflict.

Across the road from the Museum is the Art Gallery which was founded in 1922 by Lord Leverhulme (as he was by then) and which he dedicated to his late wife Elizabeth and which is now administered by the Liverpool Museums. He became a great collector of paintings, furniture and pottery which are now displayed on two floors. One could have spent all day in the Gallery!

The visit proved an excellent day out and a number of people said that they would certainly be making another visit to Port Sunlight in the future.

Michael and Gillian Pope.



## Summer Walk.

Our annual Summer Walk was held on June 6<sup>th</sup> and led by Neil Clarke. Neil Writes -

*This year's Summer Walk - "Between Coalport and Madeley" - was our contribution to the "History on Foot" programme organised by the Wrekin Local Studies Forum. A group of 25 met at Coalport China Works Museum and walked along the Silkin Way to Madeley. This follows the course of the old Coalport branch railway, and we passed under the Hay inclined plane, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Madeley Market railway station building (now a residence) on our way to the old windmill near Madeley Court. Coming off the Silkin Way, we admired the restored late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century Madeley Court, now a hotel, before making our way through the centre of Madeley to St Michael's church. Of particular interest in the churchyard were the graves of John Fletcher, the "Nine Men of Madeley" and the Turner Mosaic. Continuing down Coalport Road (still "Dabley Lane" to locals!), half the group stopped off at the All Nations public House to sample their home-brewed beer. Ours was the second of the "History on Foot" walks, the twelve of which have proved very popular.*



*Madeley Market railway station, now a private residence*



*The All Nations (in Dabley Lane) is one of Madeley's most interesting pubs and, with only one short break, has brewed its own beer since it was first licensed in 1832. It has appeared in every single edition of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide and in 2010 and 2011 was the Telford & East Shropshire CAMRA pub of the year.*

## Obituaries

### John Powell - a tribute

It was with great sadness that Broseley Local History Society learnt of the death in April of one of our members, John Powell. John was a great asset to the Society and the wider community and our meetings were enriched by his wide knowledge of industrial history and in particular local history. Many of our speakers often referred to John during their talks for his opinion on various subjects. John will be greatly missed by all of us.

John's funeral was a private family occasion and on the 6th August the family held a celebration of his life at Ingenuity in Coalbrookdale. It was an opportunity to share stories and memories of John. Broseley Local History Society was represented by Neil Clarke.

Two of our members have written the following piece about their friendship with John –

### Jan Doody and Jim Cooper remember John Powell

**Jan** I first met John during a visit to St. Fagan's, now the Museum of Welsh Life, located just outside Cardiff. My friend Jan Stephenson and I had just started working for the Ironbridge Gorge Museum and took the opportunity to go on their arranged trip to South Wales. When we entered one of the cottages we found Phil Smith (Jo Smith's brother) "guarding" a man lying full length along the floor with his head (and camera) up the chimney. He was saying something like "Yes Phil it could be a Coalbrookdale range"!

**Jim** My first meeting was in 1984 when Ken Jones took me down to the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Library and Archives one Thursday evening to introduce me into the social history research group.

**Jan** It was some years after I joined the Friends Social History Group that I came to know John well, he offered me a place in the library, which was the best job I have ever had. I like to hope that John considered me as good a friend as I did him, and I also include Rita, Gareth and Jess.

**Jim** I was in awe of John's knowledge of industrial history in the Gorge. I was sure he had been in his role for many years. In fact, he was only four years into a thirty-three-year career with the museum. I savoured those Thursday evenings and longed to be able to join in with some useful contribution of my own. After a time, the Thursday evening group dissolved and in its place a small Wednesday group convened during library opening time. This arrangement had added benefits. Tea breaks and a chance to chinwag with John and Jo Smith, his assistant.

**Jan** Employment with a railway and tea enthusiast like John did not include just the average library duties; the rail line to the power station was active, and in John's absence I was expected to race to the window at the sound of a diesel unit. My duty was to note, not just the type, name (unit and company) and number of wagons, but also the time both to and from the station in order to gauge the "turn round" time. This became second nature! Although my husband and I were reasonably keen on steam locomotives, working with John I learnt how the engine specification reflected the wheel system: 2.4.2 or 4.6.2 or whatever.

**Jim** I used to ask him why they were never odd numbers. He wasn't just a railway geek though. There were buses, and the Wolves Football Club. And cycling; he had, I think, three or four bikes! Then there was his photography; he was always on hand to record special events at the Museum.

**Jan** John was a real critic of period dramas on TV involving "trains" and "buses"; discussion over a cup of tea often concerned the use of incorrect models or livery colours in a programme seen the previous evening!

John's wit and humour were I think legendary, being very often both unprintable and unrepeatable.

**Jim** Ribald would be my description. I think he liked to shock or embarrass us at times but not in a cruel way. Mary, my wife, remembers a

Broseley Local History Society trip to Soho House, Birmingham in 2015. The coach driver told John, of how he (the coach driver) had just been propositioned by a "lady of the night". John (tongue in cheek) expressed his disappointment at being in the right place at the wrong time.

**Jan** I received a cushion for a birthday from John and Rita but I suspect it was chosen by John. It had an image of a rather aged type of parrot with the words "Not Bad for an Old Bird", this greets me every morning and always makes me smile!

**Both** Let's all raise a mug of Yorkshire Blend to our dear friend John Powell.

### **Paul Luter (1958-2018)**

We're sorry to report the recent death of Paul Luter. Paul was well known to members of our Society for a number of talks he gave at the Social Club and the articles he wrote for the Journal. He was born in Wrockwardine Wood and moved as a youngster to Ketley Bank. In later years he lived in the Dudley area but, with his health deteriorating, he came back to his roots a few years ago.

Paul was a keen researcher of the industrial and transport history of East Shropshire and built up an impressive archive of material, which is now housed at the library of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust at Coalbrookdale. In spite of failing health, he remained in good spirits and was always willing to share his extensive knowledge with fellow researchers. He died on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, a month before his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Neil Clarke

### **Where's Welly?**



*Did you guess where the old shop, pictured left, is and what the nature of its business used to be?*



*Broseley Fires in 1986*

*The picture above shows the shop as it was in 1986 and I am sure you all guessed that it was Broseley Fires in Queen Street. The business moved premises in the late 1980s. You can still buy Broseley stoves and fires today but I am not sure if the business is still owned by the same people or if the name was sold off?*

*Maybe some of our readers could shed more light on this?*

#### **Editor of the Newsletter**

Andy Wellings

It is with regret that Andy has had to resign as Editor of our Newsletter, due to new commitments, following this August edition. For the past four and a half years he has edited the publication with great enthusiasm and expertise. Andy took over the role from Jan Lancaster and continued to produce an excellent informative newsletter. We are very grateful for all the work he has done over the years. The newsletter is important to our Society because it keeps our members, who are worldwide, informed of meetings and past and future activities and it is essential that it continues.

If you or anyone you know considers they can take over his role we would be very grateful. The next edition is due to be published in November. I know that Andy and other committee members would be willing to give advice and support in the production of the Newsletter and there is a blue print for it if anyone wishes to use it. If you can help please contact the chairman. We thank you Andy for eighteen interesting copies.

#### **BROSELEY'S OWN ANNIE OAKELY!**

Jan Doody recently came across this article in the Wellington Journal and Shrewsbury News, dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 1941.

### **WELLINGTON JOURNAL AND SHREWSBURY NEWS**

For the first time in the long history of Bridgnorth and District Rifle Club a woman has won the Lord Berner's Challenge Cup.

This is Miss I Oakley, who hails from Broseley, and is employed by Mr. J Maiklem, Hermitage Farm, Bridgnorth. Last year she acted as whipper-in for the Wheatland Hounds. She is a left-handed marksman.

The event she won was the annual prize shoot of the Club, decided on St. James's Rifle Range. Conditions were 15 shots at 200 yards, eight-inch bull. All the members competing were in the Forces or Civil Defence duties, and keen shooting was witnessed. H. W. dipple scored a possible but with her handicap Miss Oakley proved a worthy winner of the Lord Berner's Cup. The Welch Memorial Plate was won by K. Mason and the Silver Spoon by E. C. Hill.

Best Scores were: Miss Oakley 65 (10)75; K. Mason 68 (6) 74; E. C. Hill 66 (8) 74; H. w. Dipple 75 (-2) 73; F. W. Head 69 (3) 72; H. c. Dipple 67 (4) 71; H. Tonks 64 (6) 70; E Jones 58 (10) 68; D. Taylor 54 (12) 66; W. Hayward 54 (12) 66.

#### **What's On?**

#### **Wed 19 Sept**

#### **Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust,**

*The Introduction of Iron Smelting*, a talk by Peter King, currently working on producing a Gazetteer of the Iron Industry 1500-1815, and who has published widely on the choice of fuel in the 18th century iron industry.

7.30pm Glass Classroom, Museum Offices,  
Coalbrookdale, 01952 435900

**Sun 23 Sept**

**Ironbridge Gorge Museums**

*The finale of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival 2018 is World Heritage Day in Coalbrookdale.*

A free family festival celebrating Ironbridge's status as a World Heritage Site at Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron and Ingenuity, from 10am to 4pm.

**Thurs 18 Oct**

**Wellington History Group**

*Postcards from Wellington*, Ray Farlow,  
7.30pm Wellington Library Wellington, Shropshire,  
TF1 1LX

**Sat 24 Nov**

**Shropshire Archives**

*Healthy and Expedient: Childcare and Charity at the Shrewsbury Foundling Hospital 1759-1772*, Dr Katharine Croft.

10.30am Shropshire Archives

The above "What's On?" is a taster of what's going on locally. Details of these meetings and more can be found at the Wrekin Local Studies Forum website.

<http://www.wlsf.org.uk/category/calendar/>

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

**DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS**

Thank you to those members who have indicated that they would be happy to have an electronic copy of the *Newsletter*. If there are any other members who would prefer it this way, please contact the membership secretary, Janet Robinson, email:

[janetc46.jr@gmail.com](mailto:janetc46.jr@gmail.com)

Those of you who would still prefer to have it in its printed version can continue to look forward to receiving it through the post

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