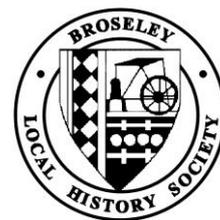


NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY



NOVEMBER 2016

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

- 2 Nov *A History of Much Wenlock* by Vivien Bellamy. Joint meeting with the Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum at Coalbrookdale
- 7 Dec *Christmas Meal*
- 4 Jan *The Battle of the Somme* by Janet Doody
- 1 Feb *Local Photographs* by Ray Farlow

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- Mandy Day, Broseley
Pete & Krys Welch, Broseley
Mark Blacker, Broseley
Mike Bradfield, Broseley
Mr. P. & Mrs. M. Nixon, Broseley
Kirsten Lloyd, Benthall
Mr. K. & Mrs. D. Robinson, Much Wenlock
Mr. T. & Mrs. M. Roden, Preston Upon the Weald Moors
Judy Moore, Jackfield

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Wednesday 7th December

**The Lion, High Street, 7.00pm for 7.30pm
£18.45 per person**

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

Please book your place by Friday 25th November at the latest by completing the form on page 9 and returning it with your payment to:

Janet Robinson,
26 Coalport Road,
Broseley, TF12 5AZ.

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



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Previous meetings

At the first meeting back after the summer break

Paul Wolfe spoke to the society about Captain Matthew Webb.

Victorian Britain was full of pioneers like Brunel and daredevils like Houdini but in 1875 it was Webb, a Shropshire lad, who attracted the attention of the British Empire for being the first man to swim the English Channel.

At 10.41am on Wednesday 25th August 1875 Captain Matthew Webb picked himself out of the chilly waters of the English Channel and made his way onto French soil. Almost 22 hours earlier he had entered the Channel near to Dover and begun swimming. As the first man to swim the channel Webb became an instant celebrity and public hero overnight. Everywhere he went crowds turned out to welcome him.

Webb was born in Dawley on 19th January 1848, one of eight children of a local doctor. From an early age he wanted to go to sea, a common ambition for many young boys of the day, but Webb was different. He was an incredibly strong swimmer having learned to swim in the strong currents of the Severn and had also acquired a reputation for being fearless having once saved his brother from drowning near to the Ironbridge. At the age of 12 Webb left home to train as a merchant seaman, learning his trade for two years before going to sea. It was not long before his swimming skills, at a time when most sailors could not swim, began to attract attention. In mid-Atlantic he once jumped overboard to save a colleague who had fallen into the water, a highly dangerous feat. He did not find the missing man, but was awarded £100, then a considerable sum, for risking his life.

In 1873 Webb read an account of a failed attempt to swim the channel by J.B. Johnson, a racing swimmer, and it changed his life. He quit his job as captain of



*Captain
Matthew
Webb of
Dawley.*

*The first man
to swim the
English
Channel*

the steamship Emerald and lodged in London, where he began to train. To start with he built up his stamina at Lambeth Baths, but as soon as he could he was practising in the cold waters of the Thames and the English Channel.

Finally, in August 1875, it was time for Webb to take the plunge, but disaster struck. Seven hours into his first attempt a violent storm blew up and he had to abandon the attempt.

Twelve days later he was ready to try again. Backed by a flotilla of three boats, he set out again, swimming breast stroke into the ebb tide which carried him out to sea. Eight hours into the swim, Webb was stung by a jellyfish, but a dose of brandy helped him to continue. The arrival of dawn saw him fighting the tide as he attempted to reach Cap Gris Nez on the French side of the channel. For five hours he swam along the coast, waiting for the tide to abate and becoming increasingly desperate. Eventually the tide eased and an exhausted Webb was able to make landfall at Calais. He had swum 39 miles.

Webb never returned to a life at sea but now made a good living as an exhibition swimmer, at the same time attempting the odd race against other daredevil swimmers, and doing some circus style stunts that usually involved him staying in water for a very long time.

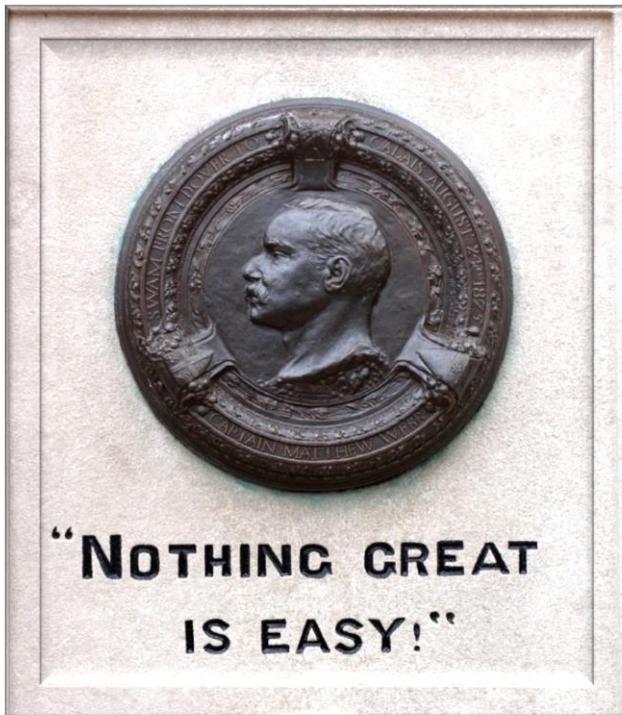
He married Madelaine Kate Chaddock in 1880, but it was not long before he was pushing the boundaries again. His next stunt was to be a truly dangerous swim across the rapids at Niagara Falls, a feat considered by many to be suicidal.

At 4.25pm on 24th July 1883 he jumped into the river from a small boat and began his swim. Within 10 minutes he had become caught in the current and was dragged under by a whirlpool. His body was found four days later and buried at Oakwood Cemetery, Niagara Falls.

In 1909, Webb's older brother Thomas unveiled a memorial in Dawley. On it reads the short inscription: "Nothing great is easy".



*A postcard
of the
Captain
Webb
Memorial in
Dawley*



The main panel on the Captain Webb Memorial in Dawley

AGM

On Wednesday 5th October the Society held its Annual General Meeting which was well supported by members.

Neil Clarke read a report on behalf of Gillian Pope outlining the activities of the Society over the past year during which members had enjoyed a varied and interesting programme. He thanked all members of the Committee for their hard work during the previous twelve months.

All members of the Committee agreed to stand again for the ensuing year and were re-elected en bloc.

After the AGM Neil Clarke gave a presentation based on the final book of his transport trilogy of east Shropshire. His latest book is called *Roads of East Shropshire* and is the perfect finale to the trio which began with *Railways of East Shropshire* and continued with *Waterways of East Shropshire*.

We found out that the first roadways in the area would have been prehistoric trackways that would still have been in use when the Romans arrived on our shores. The Roman army established a fortress at Wroxeter and their main route from the south east of the country to Chester and beyond later became known as Watling Street.

Watling Street headed in a north-westerly direction from London and on reaching the Midland plateau in Leicestershire it turned westwards for Wroxeter. There were camps and forts along the route including one at Red Hill on the modern day A5 just outside

Telford. A change of horses or a bed for the night could be found at the regularly spaced camps and forts.

In later times roads radiated from Watling Street to the area's market towns – Newport, Shifnal, Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock, with Wellington as the hub. These roads were turnpiked in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a result of increased traffic encouraged by the development of the coal and iron industries on the Coalbrookdale coalfield during the Industrial Revolution.

The growth of motor traffic in the first half of the twentieth century led to improvements for all the area's roads. The biggest changes came with the conception and development of Telford New Town and the opening of the M54 motorway.

Neil's talk was enhanced with many splendid images of the roads and their traffic from the earliest times to the present day.

Commemoration of the Battle of the Somme

Michael Pope writes:

***The Thiepval Memorial.** On July 1st Gillian and I attended the Commemorative event to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme at the Thiepval Memorial in Picardy in France, a battle which began on July 1st 1916 and continued for the next 141 days. It was a great privilege to join some 10,000 other people in order to honour all those involved in a battle that is seared onto our national consciousness. On the first day almost 20,000 British soldiers were killed; out of three million soldiers who took part almost 400,000 lost their lives and around 800,000 were injured. The Battle of the Somme marked the start of a new era, the era of "industrial warfare". Never before had people witnessed such a deluge of iron and fire. As the English poet and soldier Wilfred Owen expressed with unparalleled poignancy, men here died not as men but "as cattle." By the end of the Great War it was estimated that of the "million dead" of the British Empire only half had identified grave sites. The remainder was "missing": their bodies had not been recovered; their graves had been unrecorded, lost or destroyed in battle. The Thiepval Memorial was therefore erected to commemorate "The Missing of the Somme": more than 72,000 members of the British and South African forces who were killed in the sector between July 1915 and March 1918. The architect appointed to design the memorial was Sir Edwin Lutyens who also was responsible for the design for the Cenotaph in London. Originally it was to be built to stand over*



The Thiepval Memorial in Picardy

a road at St. Quentin in a similar manner to the Menin Gate at Ypres. This idea was dropped and an alternative site was decided upon at Thiepval. Before the outbreak of war in 1914 Thiepval was known for its patisserie. It consisted of a cluster of farms and a modest chateau. It had views over the surrounding countryside and provided the perfect place for the German soldiers to construct one of the Somme's most formidable fortresses. On 1st July 1916 Thiepval was attacked by the 15th Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers, known as the "Salford Pals". The official British historian wrote – "So intense and accurate was the German machine-gun fire that whole lines of men were swept down dead or wounded". It was said, with some truth, that only bullet-proof soldiers could have taken Thiepval on this day. It was not captured until September 26th after the loss of a great many lives. After the war the construction of the memorial began in 1928. The foundations were dug to a depth of around 30 feet, uncovering German tunnels and unexploded bombs. Around 10 million bricks and 100,000 cubic feet of stone were used in the construction - a series of arches, interlocking at right angles and rising up to a central tower. Around the base of each of its sixteen ground-level piers are panels of Portland stone inscribed with the names of those whose bodies were never recovered or identified. Each man is listed by surname and initials and grouped by regiment and rank. In her book on the Broseley War Memorial Janet Doody lists a number of men from Broseley whose names are recorded on the Memorial at Thiepval. On our visit we set out to find them and did so after some searching. We found John Brazier who lived in Rough Lane; Thomas Britton who died on the same day, 14th July 1916, both of whom served with the K.S.L.I. Then we found Fred Harris who lived in Swan Street and Francis Jones who lived on Barratts Hill. On Panel 12D we found the name of Percy Roberts who was born in Broseley and enlisted



Gill and Michael Pope attend the commemorative event to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme at the Thiepval Memorial

in Ironbridge. We also found the name of Malechia William Jones of 22 Church Street whose name Julie Owen had mentioned to us. His name is also on Panel 12 D. Both of them served with the K.S.L.I. After the Commemoration we laid a wreath on behalf of the Broseley branch of the Royal British Legion at the Cross of Sacrifice which is adjacent to the Memorial. The Cross depicts a downward facing sword and was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield. He was the nephew of Sir Arthur Blomfield, the architect who designed Jackfield Church. I always think that its decorative tower could equally be at home on a little church at Thiepval in Picardy. There is, I think, a connection!

A New Arrival

Jan Lancaster writes:

A new arrival in the form of an iron horse has recently taken up residence on the Pritchard Memorial. This unusual sculpture is one of six which was built by Gerry Foxall out of recycled steel and chains in the 1980s and donated to the Ironbridge Power Station. With the closure of the power station last year, however, these had to be found a new home and earlier this year residents learnt, in a move that would emphasise the town's mining and industrial history, that they would all be coming to Broseley.

The next step was to decide where to put them. After public consultation six sites were chosen, the Pritchard Memorial plinth, Cape Fold, Wilkinson Avenue, the library car park, All Saints' churchyard and Haycop Rise, the new Dark Lane housing development.

Before the first one could be sited, however, the kibble bucket, which has been on the Memorial plinth since 2008, had to be removed. What some people have described as nothing more than a rusty old



Preparing to lift the kibble bucket off the Memorial plinth

bucket was, in fact, originally used to transport kibbled clay at the old Milburgh Tileries, and was lent to Broseley by the Ironbridge Gorge Museums.

It was in that year that the Heart of England theme for the Britain in Bloom competition was for entrants to depict their Local Roots. This gave Broseley the perfect opportunity to not only celebrate the town's reputation as being the birthplace of the iron industry, but also to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of the famous Broseley ironmaster John Wilkinson. It is highly probable that this, together with a splendid display of fiery coloured flowers, was a factor in Broseley achieving a hat trick of Gold Awards that year.

The bucket is extremely heavy and caused not a little consternation while it was being offloaded onto the plinth back in 2008. Now, half full of bricks and topped up with soil and plants, some residents were extremely sceptical about the ability to move it at all. All credit must, however, go to Broseley's Mayor Cllr Simon Harris, who persuaded Morris Corfield to send a truck and crane and, in what seemed an effortless manoeuvre, lift the bucket gently off the plinth and onto a waiting trailer. From there it was transported to a ready prepared site on the Maypole Green in Broseley Wood.

Three days later the horse sculpture was brought up from the power station and just as effortlessly installed on the plinth where it stands amid the flowers adding a different dimension to the town's visual history.

As for the other five sculptures, one has already been installed on Cape Fold, while the others, at the time of writing, are still waiting to be brought up from the Power Station and placed in their dedicated sites around the town.



The horse now in place on the plinth



Julie Evans poses with the sculpture her father Gerry Foxall built from recycled steel and chains in the 1980s

Where's Welly?



Editor: I have had my walking boots on again and been enjoying the warm early autumn weather. This month I took an hour long walk to the south of the town and stopped to say hello to the little fellow in the picture above. Do you know who he is and where he can be found?

In the last edition of Newsletter we were looking for the identity of the building below. I'm sure you all guessed that it is Benthall Farm which is found just off the avenue which runs off the Broseley – Much Wenlock road next to Morris Corfield's Benthall Works. In past times the lane was a main route down Benthall Edge to the Severn at Buildwas.



Benthall Farm

What's On?

Fri 18 Nov

Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Pottery and pig iron; The Simpsons of Horsehay, by Ben Simpson. 2.30pm Glass classroom Coalbrookdale. 01952 433522

Sat 19 Nov

Friends Annual Lecture, William Hazledene, Ironmaster Extraordinary, by Andrew Pattison. 10.30am Shropshire Archives. 0345 678096 (£5)

Wed 14 Dec

Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Edith Pargeter, by Paul Wolfe. 2.30pm Boardroom Coalbrookdale 01952 433522

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/calendar.html>

Mailbox

I read with interest your latest Newsletter and would comment on a couple of items-

- Mailbox

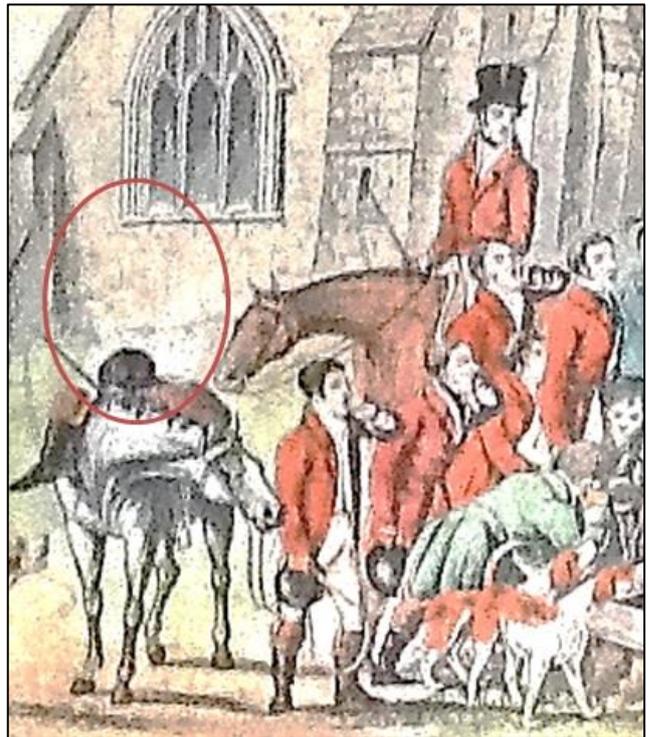
John William Griffiths/Peter Tandy -Jubilee Cottage. Jubilee Cottage still exists. It is a small cottage on the roadside at Willey Furnace, which to my knowledge has always been, and still is, in the ownership of the Willey Estate.

- Tom Moody – Whipper in.

I believe that the "three clear rattling view-halloos" which were requested by Tom Moody to be given

over his grave at his burial at Barrow Church arose from a macabre fear of his being buried alive... "Then if I don't lift my head, you may fairly conclude that Tom Moody is dead."

Tom Moody was buried in 1797 and for many years thereafter Tom Moody was seen riding with a single hound through the local countryside. So famous did his spectre become that by the mid-19th century The Death of Tom Moody and The Burial of Tom Moody became popular subjects for paintings and prints, usually as a set of two. These exhibit a great deal of artistic licence, as although the church is given as Barrow, or sometimes, incorrectly, Willey Church, they bear no relationship to the actual churches (or indeed the house which is frequently painted in the background is not Barrow House!) However, in most of the second of the two prints, not only can the mourners be seen giving the view-halloos, and Tom Moody's favourite horse, carrying, as reported in your recent article, his cap, whip, boots, spurs and sand girdle with the brush from his last fox in the bridle, but also his ghost appearing in the saddle with his arm to his mouth, presumably he/it too giving a final view-haloo!



One of the prints showing Tom Moody's horse with his boots and cap. Can you make out his Ghostly figure?

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: pandjrobinson@hotmail.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.

To see this *Newsletter* in full colour visit the website at www.broseley.org.uk.

There have been several requests not to publish people's personal e-mail addresses along with their queries in the Mailbox section of Newsletter. If you would like to respond to any of the Mailbox items then please do so via- Steve Dewhirst steve@broseley.org.uk
Or
Andy Wellings broseley@talktalk.net

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2017

Subscriptions are now due for the year 2016-2017. If you have not paid please complete the form below and return to Janet Robinson, Membership Secretary BLHS, 26, Coalport Road, Broseley, TF12 5AZ. 01952 882495

The cost of a year's subscription is £7 or £12 for couples.

Cheques should be made payable to Broseley Local History Society.

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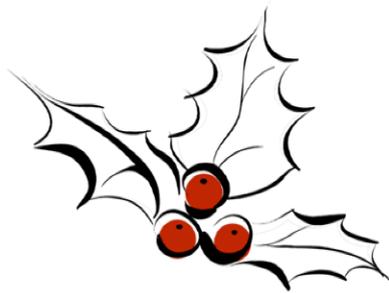
Newsletter

*Would like to thank all those
who have contributed to this
publication during 2016 and
wishes both them and
all its readers a*

Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year





CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE LION HOTEL BROSELEY



**Wednesday 7th December 2016
7.00pm for 7.30pm**

Please reserve me _____

place/places at a cost of £ 18.45 a head

Name/s _____

Add _____

TEL _____

I enclose cheque/payment for £ _____

payable to Broseley Local History Society

Please return to Janet Robinson

26, Coalport Road, Broseley. TF12 5AZ

BY FRIDAY 25th NOVEMBER 2016

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

STARTER

MAIN COURSE

Stilton and Broccoli Soup _____

Roast Turkey with stuffing and cranberry sauce _____

Battered prawns with sweet

Roast topside of beef with Yorkshire pudding

chilli garnish _____

and horseradish sauce _____

Melon with seasonal fruits _____

Salmon with hollandaise sauce _____

Duck and port pate with

toast and salad garnish _____

Courgette and brie crumble _____

Christmas pudding and brandy sauce

or

Selection of desserts

Coffee with mince pies

Please indicate any dietary requirements

