

THE JOURNAL

of the

WILKINSON SOCIETY

No. 5 1977

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THE JOURNAL OF THE WILKINSON SOCIETY

No. 5 : 1977

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
The Wilkinson Society	1
Notes and News	1
Markers in Benthall History by Tony Herbert	4
The Severn in South Shropshire - Part 1 by Ralph Pee	6
Gilbert Gilpin, 1766-1827: Agent, Trade Correspondent and Chain-maker by N.J. Clarke	9
Correspondence	12
Index of main articles, 1972 - 1977	14

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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 at "The Lawns", Church Street, Broseley. This collection is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays between Easter and September, from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m., or at other times by appointment.

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.

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NOTES AND NEWS

The Year's Activities

The Fourth Annual General Meeting was held at "The Lawns" on Friday 22nd. October 1976. Your officers and the serving committee were re-elected "en bloc" by a unanimous vote.

The Chairman, in his report, thanked specially all those who had helped with the Museum reorganisation and redecoration. The Treasurer, in his report, pointed out that there were outstanding loans for £49-50 arising from this work, which it was expected would be cleared within 12 months.

Anthony Mugridge, a student member, was elected Assistant Museum Curator.

After the formal part of the meeting, Messrs. Pointon, Griffiths and Hawes gave an illustrated account of their weekend trip to Wilkinson Sites in Cumbria in June 1976.

On Friday 12th. November 1976 we held our customary joint meeting with The Friends of The Ironbridge Gorge Museum, again at "The Lawns". Dr. Ivor Brown, the well-known local expert on mining matters, spoke on "Old Mines, Miners and Mining Machinery on the Banks of the Severn Gorge". The evening was held to be most interesting, and the slides were greatly appreciated.

There was an involuntary gap in the Society's activities during January and February 1977, due to the illness of our regular hostess, Mrs. Dora Pee.

Eventually a Social Evening was arranged for Friday 18th. March 1977, at Broseley Hall, by the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. M. Silvester. The theme this year was "Broseley Pipes", and special thanks were due to Mr. Ivor Southorn for sending a number of most interesting exhibits relating to Southorns' Pipe Works, and to Miss Fox-Edwards for bringing her drawings and a real "Churchwarden", which the Secretary was pleased to demonstrate in action. The raffle prizes, of Jackfield decorative tiles, were won by Mrs. Diana Clarke, Mr. Chris Whall and Mr. Tony Herbert.

The month of May 1977 proved to be the most hectic in the life of the Society to date; for, in addition to visits to the Coalport Museum (May 20th) and the Dyson Perrins Museum at Worcester (May 28th), this was the month that saw your officials involved in discussions at local, county and national level over the proposed sale by the Willey Estates Company of the two remaining buildings on the New Willey Furnace Site, together with the land immediately adjacent to them.

The visits were both very successful, being well-attended and financially self-supporting; and the Worcester outing was also blessed by wonderful summer weather.

The New Willey properties were offered for auction at the "Forester Arms", Broseley, on Wednesday June 1st. Your Society was represented at the sale, but we were not able to purchase either of the properties for the prices your Committee had in mind. However, we were pleased that, in the sale room, the historic importance of the Site was made clear to potential purchasers by reference to a letter from the Department of the Environment to Lord Forester, dated 27th. May 1977.

The final event of the 1976/7 Season was our third annual Celebrity Lecture, held in association with the Broseley and District Arts Union, on Friday 26th. August. Mr. Roy Beard, the well-known Shrewsbury architect, spoke wittily and entertainingly on "The English Village", illustrating his theme with slides of nationwide coverage.

In addition to the activities outlined above, Committee Meetings were held on 5th. April, 14th. May and 29th. May 1977. The latter two meetings were special meetings in connection with the then proposed sale of the New Willey Furnace properties.

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Programme of Events for 1977-8.

- 14th October Illustrated talk - "The Ceramic Industry in the Severn Gorge, 1750-1820" - by Mr. D.B. Roberts.
- 11th November Fifth A.G.M., followed by a short illustrated talk - "The Severn Navigation" - by Mr. N.J. Clarke.
- 9th December Joint meeting with the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum - a tape-slide presentation with spoken commentary- "Exports from Ironbridge" - arranged by Peter Green, Hilary Green, Tony Herbert, Peter Martin and Barry Trinder. At the Severn Warehouse, Ironbridge.
- 24th February Members Evening at "The Lawns".
- 31st March Illustrated talk - "George Maw, Botanist, Gardener and Plant Hunter" - by Sir Paul Benthall, F.L.S.

The Museum

For the 1978 season the Museum will normally be open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons (2.00 - 6.00 p.m.) between Easter and September; or by special arrangement with the Curator. The reorganisation of the Museum was described in the last issue of this Journal.

The Journal

To celebrate this, the fifth issue of the Journal we have listed the main articles published since 1972. They make an impressive list; and the Journal is beginning to command the attention of both local and national institutions (see Correspondence).

We are grateful to our Secretary for the typing of this issue. Further copies, and some back numbers may be obtained from the Secretary at 18, Salop Street, Bridgnorth, Salop, price 25p each including postage.

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

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Summer Activities 1978

- 20th May Summer Outing to the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings (near Bromsgrove), and Evesham.
- 1st September Fourth Annual Celebrity Lecture, in association with the Broseley and District Arts Union; Mr. Henry Sandon, Curator of the Dyson Perrins Museum at the Worcester Porcelain Works, will speak on Caughley and Worcester porcelain.

MARKERS IN BENTHALL HISTORY

The name of George Maw is usually associated with the manufacture of decorative tiles. His lesser claims to fame are in the fields of botany and geology and it is interesting to speculate on just how these widely differing enthusiasms may have affected each other.

The link between the geological study of clays from all over Britain and the use of clays to make decorative tiles is easy to appreciate. Indeed, geology grew up as a practical field subject whose theories were worked out in new railway cuttings, well borings or mine workings, rather than the hushed atmosphere of an academic library.

It is also perhaps not too fanciful to suggest that George Maw's knowledge of flowers (especially crocuses) may have influenced his approach to tile design. Certainly there are plenty of examples of Maw's tiles bearing floral designs of remarkable botanical accuracy. But it is George Maw's patent plant labels that provide the best example of a new idea emerging from the eclectic mind of a Victorian polymath.

Necessity is often said to be the mother of invention and it is not difficult to picture the young George Maw arriving back at his home at Benthall Hall in the 1860's laden with new plants for his fine garden perhaps collected on a recent trip abroad. His strict taxonomic approach to botany would make it imperative that each species should be accurately and permanently labelled. Imagine his frustration with the existing labels at that time of wood or metal which would rot or corrode. It is therefore perfectly natural that his inventive talent should have combined a knowledge of clays, opportunity for ceramic manufacture and an appreciation of the needs of botanists and gardeners to result in Maw's patent plant labels.

The provisional specification for his invention was left by George Maw at the Office of the Commissioners of Patents on 6th June 1868. It reads as follows:

'I, George Maw, of Benthall, Broseley, in the county of Salop, Manufacturer, do hereby declare the nature of the said invention for 'Improvements in the Manufacture of Garden Tallies, or Plant Labels or Markers' to be as follows, that is to say:-

My improvements in the manufacture of the articles above named, and which are usually formed of wood or metal, consist in making them of burnt earthenware, either composed of pulverised clay by Prosser's process or of plastic clay. The blank forms so produced may be either glazed or left plain, and when glazed they may be lettered or inscribed by the ordinary processes of porcelain and earthenware printing, painting, or writing either upon or beneath the glaze. When unglazed tallies or markers are used, they may be written upon with paint or black lead, composition or metallic pencil, either with or without the surface being previously or subsequently oiled, painted, or varnished, or coated with other suitable composition.'

The patent was sealed on 24th November 1868 and dated 6th June 1868, bearing the number 1861.

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The new plant labels met with immediate success and in the summer of 1868 were commended by such worthy people as The Editor of the 'Gardener's Chronicle', Sir Joseph Hooker, The Director of the Royal (Botanic) Gardens, Kew and the Floral Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society. Maw and Co.'s catalogues were soon extolling the virtues of these new 'Imperishable terra cotta plant markers and garden tallies' as 'a cheap and permanent substitute for wooden and zinc tallies, for the labelling of plants in pots and in the open border, and for suspending to Roses, Orchids, Ferns, Fruit Trees, etc. These labels, unlike Wood and Zinc, combine perfect durability with a lasting legible inscription, and form an elegant adjunct to the Garden and Conservatory for the naming of Horticultural and Botanical collections. They are also invaluable for the labelling of wine cellars, and for employment in any position where other materials would be perishable by damp.'

Nearly twenty different types were available in cream or buff colour, some provided with holes for suspending, others upright with spikes for inserting in ground. Other larger sizes were available mounted on iron shanks (cast at Coalbrookdale?) for use in Arboretums and Botanical Gardens.

The works at Benthall offered a special service of black enamel writing on the labels ('in various styles of writing') which had the appearance of jet black ink, but perfectly permanent. In addition, 'consecutive sets of Numerals printed on the Labels, with Enamel, and Labels for Wine Bins' were kept in stock, and could be obtained 'at the Manufactory', or through any Nurseryman, Seedsman, or Ironmonger.'

Several of George Maw's own plant labels have been found from time to time in the gardens of Benthall Hall and all are still perfectly legible.

Time has proved that the claims made by George Maw for his new plant labels were indeed justified and have earned their mark in Benthall History.

Tony Herbert

THE SEVERN IN SOUTH SHROPSHIRE

Part 1 Geology and the Course of the River

Confined to the west and most mountainous part of the country, where one would expect to find short rivers, the Severn is the longest river in England. Once navigable for 155 miles (1) and the second busiest river in Europe (2), now for the greater part of its length, from its source to Stourport, few boats can be seen. Its great length is due to a geologically recent combination of two drainage systems. Its fall from grace as a great navigable highway is in part due to this geological immaturity; but economic factors, the activities of those living on its banks and more recently those of various water authorities have all played their part.

There are many topographical and historical features to be seen today which illustrate these peculiarities. These notes are a record of admittedly casual observations made over a long period. They are in no way intended as an authoritative monograph, but it is hoped they may be of some interest.

It is generally accepted that, prior to the breakthrough at the Severn Gorge, the area north of Wenlock Edge was a great marsh which drained towards the Dee estuary, while the land to the south of the Edge drained towards the Bristol Channel (3). It is likely that below Linley the original 'short' Severn followed the course of the present river which flows over the western edge of a huge deposit of Permian and Triassic rocks, mostly soft sandstones. These were capped, at least in this area, with a layer of hard conglomerate i.e. mixed pebbles cemented together. Traces of this capping can be seen at such places as High Rock and Queens Parlour, Bridgnorth, The Rock at Quatford, and the Red Hill on the Bridgnorth-Wolverhampton road. These Permian rocks overlie the coalmeasures, and coal is or has been mined almost all round the edge of the deposit, from the Coalbrookdale coalfield in the north to the Wyre Forest coalfield in the south.

Of the ages between the forming of the Permian-Triassic rocks and the Glacial Epoch there is no trace in this part of Shropshire, and the deposit shows little trace of violent upheaval. The conglomerate does however slope down from the river while many roads leading from the river rise steeply from the valley and then descend gently to the valley of a tributary. It appears that there was an upthrust which would crack the hard capping. Such a crack would form a drainage channel and eventually become the river valley.

Above Linley the main stream of the 'short' Severn may have followed the valley of the Linley Brook which has three clearly marked terraces. The road from Linley Green down to the brook is rather like a giant staircase. The 'treads' and 'risers' indicate periods of violent erosion followed by periods of tranquility resulting from various ice ages. The breakthrough at the Severn Gorge could have been, and, one might think from the nature of the gorge, probably was, the dramatic result of some earth movement in the area. But even before the breakthrough, each time the retreating ice blocked the drainage to the north, and until it had retreated sufficiently to allow such drainage to be resumed, all drainage would be southwards. It may be that the

deepening of the channel through Wenlock Edge towards the end of each ice age finally made the direction of drainage irreversible. Whatever the case, the evidence of Linley brook, where the terraces are on too grand a scale to have been made by a small brook two miles long, indicates that the breakthrough came at the end of the Glacial Epoch, if not later.

Towards the end of each ice age and in the ages immediately following the breakthrough, great torrents filled the whole valley bringing vast quantities of gravel to be deposited where the valley widened and the current slackened. Remains of these deposits are found at Bridgnorth and Erdington. These gravel deposits are quite distinct from the angular boulders which used to adorn the street corners in Bridgnorth - these granite boulders were glacier-borne from much farther north.

As warmer and drier conditions succeeded the ice ages this now composite river with a severe drop in its middle reaches (something over three feet per mile between Ironbridge and Bridgnorth, which is considerable for so large a stream) carved out the river valley we know today. Being swift, its course through south Shropshire is fairly straight, but its meanderings have been sufficient to carve out a flood plain averaging something like half a mile wide.

These meanderings swept away much of the gravel deposits except where they were protected by some prominence. The High Rock protected the gravel terrace of the Grove, while the deposits at Erdington were protected by the rise at Knowle. Here the protection was such that the river takes a permanent turn to the left and the large area protected still provides a valuable source of gravel for building. The smaller area protected by High Rock has been long since abandoned for building. An interesting relic of this earlier gravel-getting can be seen on the side of Hermitage Hill. Here the sandstone floor on which these gravels were laid has been cut into to provide a shoot and waggon bay to load the gravel into the once ubiquitous one-horse tipping cart.

The meadows of the flood plain, being separated from the main farm lands, were almost always used as permanent pasture. These meadows, now used for example as caravan sites, fenced in or utterly neglected, are remembered as delightful hay fields with a wide variety of flora and bird life but few wild animals, which may have been the result of periodic flooding.

Where not obstructed by natural or man-made obstacles the river continues to meander and push its curves downstream. A picture in one of Arthur Mee's encyclopaedias shows children watching from a spot which is now in the middle of the river!

I think it fortunate for navigation that the sandstone over which the river flows is not uniformly hard. Had it been so, at summer levels the river would have been swift and shallow all the way. Had it been uniformly soft, the river would have eroded its bed downwards and back upstream to the harder rocks above Linley. This would have meant an impassable cataract between the lower and the upper reaches. As it is, hard streaks appear at intervals running roughly NE to SW. These hard streaks, often connecting prominences like Queens Parlour and High Town at Bridgnorth, provide fords which at low water act as natural weirs so that the river descends in a series of shallow steps. The water

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between these fords is often very deep and slow-moving, while all the fords have a comparatively narrow deep channel somewhere across their width. The barge operators would have been aware of these. At the Gadstone forge near Apley, which is very long and shallow, the deep channel is so clearly defined in the rock that it appears to be, and probably is, artificial.

At Bridgnorth the original river valley was very wide and the hard streak very marked. This caused the river to break up into a number of channels. One such channel ran somewhere east of Mill Street along the route of the new by-pass. A ridge marking this channel can still be seen in the fields below the town. This ridge is not the edge of the flood plain, which extends beyond it. In years gone by the road near the Fox public house was always subject to flooding when the river was high.

In historic times another channel ran between Mill Street and the present river, joining the Eylet channel via what is now the first arch of the Bridge. The end of the island formed by this channel is marked by a gully at the bottom of Doctors Lane. This gully has merely been left unfilled, not excavated for barges as is sometimes asserted. The channel can be traced in the gardens behind Mill Street, but traces of its northern end may have been obliterated by rubbish from Hazledine's Foundry (4).

This very wide and much divided ford may account for the otherwise most unlikely location of the bridge at Bridgnorth.

References:

1. W. Watkins-Pitchford, 'Bygone Traffic on the Severn', p.1.
2. J.U. Nef; quoted in B. Trinder, 'The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire', p. 104.
3. W.W. Watts, 'Shropshire: the Geography of the County', p.58.
4. Traces of the furnace of this foundry (of which the importance was noted by Maurice Hawes in Journal No.3) have now been found (February 1978) near Darley's landing stage.

Ralph Pee

Part 2 of this account of the Severn in south Shropshire will appear in the next issue of this Journal.

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GILBERT GILPIN, 1766 - 1827:

AGENT, TRADE CORRESPONDENT AND CHAIN - MAKER

John Randall thought that Gilbert Gilpin, one time agent for John Wilkinson and later for the Botfields, was "about the best trade correspondent and letter writer of that day" (1). This praise is all the more remarkable when we consider that the late 18th and early 19th centuries were noted for the quantity and quality of their industrial commentators. Gilpin's letters are of particular value for the light they throw on the ironmasters John and William Wilkinson, on developments at Boulton and Watt's Soho Works, and on the state of the iron trade in Shropshire and Staffordshire during and after the Napoleonic Wars (2). In addition to his letter writing concerning the activities of others, Gilpin was also an inventor and an industrialist in his own right. He was one of the pioneers of the manufacture of wrought-iron chains, which replaced rope for winding in collieries and for other purposes, and operated two chain-works in East Shropshire.

Born near Wrexham in 1766, Gilpin's first important job was that of John Wilkinson's chief clerk and agent at Bersham Ironworks from 1786 to 1796 (3). His letters preserved from that period include references to the increasingly strained relations between the two Wilkinson brothers and also the everyday matters of business between the Bersham Company and Boulton and Watt. In June 1796 Gilpin left John Wilkinson's service and for a short time was employed by Boulton and Watt at Soho. He then moved to South Wales where he was engaged in opening up a marble quarry and prospecting for lead ore near Neath. Returning to the Midlands in June 1799, Gilpin entered the service of Messrs Botfield and Sons at Old Park Ironworks in East Shropshire and modernised the forges there. He remained as agent with the Botfields for several years but eventually "left them in consequence of their objecting to his attention being divided between his duties to them and his chain-making" (4).

Gilpin continued to correspond with William Wilkinson from the time of his own departure from Bersham in 1796 until the latter's death in 1808. Such letters as are preserved from this period include details of his South Wales exploits; mention of an interesting technical development in Shropshire - the building of small 'Snapper' furnaces with an output of 10 to 15 tons a week which could be used to work surplus ore and coal at times of heavy demand; and references to his impending break with the Botfields (5).

Unfortunately, the collections of preserved letters appear to include few for this next and perhaps most important period of Gilpin's life - his pioneering work on wrought-iron chains in the early years of the 19th century. John Wilkinson had made some attempt in the late 1770's to introduce iron chains and wire rope for use in winding and engineering work (6); but it was not until the first decade of the 19th century, when the price of hempen rope increased because of the restrictions on the import of hemp from the Baltic during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, that more successful efforts were made in this field. Shropshire seems to have pioneered the successful substitution of wrought-iron chains for winding ropes in collieries and for other industrial purposes, with the work of William Horton and Benjamin Edge at

Coalport, and that of Gilbert Gilpin (7). According to a contemporary account, Gilpin's "method of working chains in grooves....was first put in practice at the ironworks of T.W. and B. Botfield, near Shifnal (i.e.: in 1803-4); and employed in the working of cranes, capable of purchasing from 10 to 15 tons, in the working of the governor-balls of the steam-engines constructed by Boulton and Watt, and in the raising of coal and ore from the mines, for which purposes ropes have before been solely used...." (8).

Gilpin's work was recognised by the Society of Arts, who in 1805 presented him with a silver-mounted purse containing 30 guineas and a silver medal; and, as we have seen, it also appears to have led to his leaving the Botfields and setting up in business himself at Coalport. He possibly took over the earlier chain-works of William Horton. We do not know the exact date of this move (9), but certainly by 1814 he was advertising his wares in the following way: "Gilbert Gilpin, Coalport, near Shifnal, Shropshire, sells chains of the best Shropshire iron, which will raise upwards of a ton weight in general use, at 5d per pound, or 3 sh per yard. Upwards of 8000 yards of pit-chain by him are now in use in the mines of the Lilleshall Co., Shropshire, and the adoption of such an immense quantity at one concern is a proof of the efficiency of the article. They are also in use in the principal manufactories of England and America." (10)

Although the letters we have for the last ten years of his life say little or nothing about his own chain-making activities, Gilpin provides valuable information about the state of the Shropshire and Staffordshire iron trade in the years of depression and uncertainty following the end of the Napoleonic Wars. For example, letters to Josiah John Guest of the Dowlais Company deal with such matters as the number of working furnaces and rolling mills, the prices of iron, and wages and prices of food in Shropshire (in 1817); and with the fall in the prices of Shropshire iron, which Gilpin attributed to the low prices of inferior Staffordshire iron (in 1819). (11)

The letters of these later years were sent from Coalport (1817) and "Aqueduct" (1819). They really provide us with the only clue as to when Gilpin established his second chain-works. This was a "capital brick building, with yards, air furnace, etc. connected with it..... and now in full work as a chain manufactory" (12), situated alongside the Coalbrookdale branch of the Shropshire Canal, immediately to the west of the stone aqueduct over the Wellington-Bridgnorth turnpike road, on the very northern edge of the parish of Madeley (SJ 693059). So having established a chain-works at the Aqueduct by 1819, Gilpin ran a business that was "profitable and extensive" until his death sometime before November 1827, and during these later years of his life he probably lived at Dawley (13).

Following Gilpin's death, a sale of the property at the Aqueduct took place on the 13th and 14th November, which included the following equipment: "eight pairs of smiths bellows, four anvils, several tons of new iron bars and rods, many thousand yards of iron chains from 2lbs to 20 lbs per yard, iron wheelbarrows, baskets, gawns, etc..." ; and there was also a sale of Gilpin's "library, collection of fossils, fine engravings and other effects...at the Elephant Inn, Dawley Green." (14)

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Such was the life of Gilbert Gilpin - "the best known..... of the able men whom Wilkinson gathered around him" (15); "about the best trade correspondent and letter-writer of that day" ; and "a pioneer of the manufacture of wrought-iron chains".(16).

References

1. John Randall, 'The Wilkinsons', (n.d.), Appendix p.3.
2. I know of three collections of documents which include letters from and to Gilpin: The Boulton and Watt collection in Birmingham Reference Library; The Lloyd Jones collection in the Shropshire Record Office (SRO 1781) ; and the Dowlais Iron Company letters in the Glamorgan County Record Office. I would be interested to learn of the existence of any other Gilpin letters.
3. For the earlier part of Gilpin's life see W.H. Chaloner, 'The life of Gilbert Gilpin, chief clerk at Bersham Ironworks, near Wrexham, 1786 - 1796, and his relations with the Wilkinson brothers', in the National Library of Wales Journal (1960), pp 383-4, quoting letters from the Boulton and Watt collection.
4. J. Randall, op.cit., p.11.
5. SRO 1781/6/26, 28 and 31.
6. W.H. Chaloner, op.cit., p. 384.
7. Victoria County History of Shropshire, vol.1 (1908), pp.479-81; and Barrie Trinder, 'The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire' (1973), p. 222.
8. 'The Mechanic', 1805 and 1807, quoted in V.C.H., op.cit.
9. The reverse of a Gilpin trade token of 1811 proclaimed that he "sells chains for pits, cranes, etc., of the best horse-nail iron at 5d for 1lb", but does not state where they were made.
10. 'The Cambrian', 1814, quoted in V.C.H., op.cit.; and I.J. Brown, 'Some industries in the vicinity of the Blists Hill Museum site', in Shropshire News Letter, No.37 (Dec.1969), p. 41:"Gilpin's Chain Factory, Coalport (SJ695029)....situated at the bottom of Coalport Hill on the left hand side when turning towards Coalport village".
11. Letters quoted in M. Elsas, Ed., 'Iron in the Making' (1960), pp. 3 - 7, 199 - 200.
12. Eddowes Salopian Journal, 7th November 1827. For a fuller description of the industries that grew up at the Aqueduct, see my two articles in S.N.L. No. 39 (Dec 1970) and No. 40 (June 1971): 'The Aqueduct, an East Shropshire Industrial Settlement.'
13. Around the rim of the Gilpin trade token of 1811 runs the legend "Gilbert Gilpin, Dawley, Shropshire, pays the bearer a halfpenny"; and an anecdote quoted by J. Randall, op.cit., p.13, suggests that Gilpin resided in Dawley. According to A.N. Falmer, "John Wilkinson and the Old Bersham Ironworks" in Transactions of the Cymmrodorion Society for 1897-8 (1899), Gilpin was "buried in Wrexham churchyard".

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References (continued)

14. Eddowes, op.cit.
 15. H.W. Dickinson, 'John Wilkinson, Ironmaster' (1914), p. 40; though his suggestion that Gilpin was Wilkinson's clerk at Broseley until 1786 hardly fits the facts.
- E. Trinder, op.cit., p. 222.

N. J. Clarke

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CORRESPONDENCE

Josiah John Guest

After reading the article in Journal No. 4, and being a resident of King Street, I contacted our oldest and most knowledgeable resident - Mr. Bob Thomas. I thought, if anyone could throw any light on the matter (of Guest Meadow) he could and sure enough, he did.

Mr. Thomas tells me that the meadow near the bottom of our garden belonged to the Guest family until about 1906 when it was sold to Mr. George Keay who lived in the King's Head Public House, now occupied by Mr. Ivor Southorn.

Mr. Keay bequeathed the meadow to Mr. Len Walmsley who lives in Bridgnorth Road, from whom it was purchased by Mr. Thomas and his brother Will (who lives next door to him) in 1927. It is still in their possession, and these details are, of course, recorded in their deeds.

Mrs. F.V. Francis,
Holly House,
Broseley.

April 1977

(Another letter on this subject, from Mr. Frank Selkirk of Church Street, Broseley, adds that the sitting-room of Mr. Billy Thomas' house - 29, King St., - "hardly changed for some 150 years.....is also of interest"; and that the Jubilee book of the Birchmeadow Chapel contains further information on the Guest family. - Ed.)

CORRESPONDENCE continues overleaf

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued)

Boatbuilding in the Ironbridge Gorge

With reference to the article in Journal No. 4, Griffiths of Coalport operated two such yards: (i) a canal boat and repair yard beside the Shropshire Canal near Blists Hill ironworks, where the canal separates the brick and tile works; and (ii) a yard where river boats were constructed or repaired, situated somewhere in the angle between the Coalport road from Madeley and the riverside road from Coalport village.

T.C. Hancox,
Woollam Road,
Wellington.

May 1977

(Soon after receiving this letter, we heard of the death of "T.C.H.". In our early days the Society received a lot of encouragement from Mr. Hancox, and his original research on glassmaking in Broseley appeared in two parts in issues 3 and 4 of this Journal. A full appreciation of his contribution to local history in Shropshire appeared in the Newsletter of the Friends of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, No.29, Nov.1977 - Ed.)

Pottery Workers

We are writing to you to seek permission to use information contained in your Journal No. 2, 1974. We are preparing a publication on slipware and would like to include references to the item on 'The Migration of Pottery Workers between Stoke-on-Trent and the Broseley area in the 18th Century' by Maurice Hawes.

We would also be interested to learn if Mr. Hawes has any further published information or whether his extra-mural group published a report of their work.

A.R. Mountford,
Director,
City Museum and Art Gallery,
Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent.

December 1977

(Permission was of course given, and Mr. Mountford's query passed to Mr. Hawes. It is gratifying to see the work of contributors to the Journal recognised in this way. We can also claim the Science Museum of London as a recent subscriber to the Journal - Ed.)

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INDEX OF MAIN ARTICLES, 1972-77

- Boat-building in the Ironbridge Gorge, by N.J. Clarke; No.4, pp.7-8
- The Broseley home of John Wilkinson, by Ralph Pee; No.1, pp.5-6
- Churches of the Broseley area, by Dennis Mason; No.2, pp.3-5
- Gilbert Gilpin, 1766-1827: agent, trade correspondent and chain-maker, by N.J. Clarke; No. 5, pp.9-12
- Glassmaking in Broseley, by T.C. Hancox; No.3, pp.3-4, No.4, pp 4-6
- The Hawarden Bridge Iron and Steel Works, Shotton, near Chester: a study in entrepreneurial history, by P.S. Richards; No.3, pp.9-11
- King of the Ironmasters, by Wayne Turner; No.1, pp. 3-4
- John Wilkinson's Trade Tokens, by Wayne Turner; No.2, pp.10-12
- Josiah John Guest, 1785-1852, ed. by N.J. Clarke; No.4, pp.11-12
- Markers in Benthall history, by Tony Herbert; No.5, pp.4-5
- The Migration of pottery workers between Stoke-on-Trent and the Broseley area in the 18th century, by Maurice Hawes; No.2, pp.7-9
- Richard Trevithick and the Hazledine Foundry at Bridgnorth, by Maurice Hawes; No. 3, pp. 7-8
- The Severn in South Shropshire, part 1, by Ralph Pee; No.5, pp.6-8
- Working at the Blists Hill mine forty years ago, by Frank Turner; No.3, pp. 5-6