

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



August 2008

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm 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 7.30 pm to allow speakers a prompt start.

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

PROGRAMME

- 3 Sep *The Realities of War*. Further wartime memories with Ray Johnston and Janet Doody
- 1 Oct Annual General Meeting, followed by talk on *Milestones* by Tony Keegan
- 5 Nov A talk on John Wilkinson, given by Michael Berthoud
- 3 Dec Annual Christmas dinner

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Mrs Amos, Shrewsbury
Mrs C Beels, Shrewsbury
Mr Chris Brown, Elland, Yorkshire
Mrs Brenda Glasby, Suffolk
Mr Brian Gresty, Wrexham
Mrs Margaret Jacobs, Bristol
Mr & Mrs M Kaiser, Broseley
Mr & Mrs A Longmore, Swindon, Wiltshire
Mr & Mrs Lovegrove, Berkshire
Mrs Ann Robinson, Broseley

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Newsletter was delighted to learn recently that Gillian Pope, Chairman of the Society for the past three years, has been named Broseley Citizen of the Year. She was awarded this honour for her 'unstinting work on behalf of Broseley and the



Society Chairman Gillian Pope, Broseley Citizen of the Year, with Mayor of Broseley Lynda Garbett, left, and Deputy Mayor Roy Childs, right

CONTENTS

Programme	page 1
New Members	page 1
Citizen of the Year	page 1
Annual General Meeting	page 2
Wilkinson Weekend	
Bicentenary Day School	page 2
Trip to Brymbo	page 2
A Cast-Iron Case	page 3
Local History Exhibition	page 4
Commemorative Collectables	page 5
Celebrations at Castlehead	page 5
Trip to Gloucester	page 6
Previous Meetings	
You try and stop me! Part II	page 7
The Plaque at the Lawns	page 8
Broseley in Bloom	page 8
Fourth International Early	
Railways Conference	page 9
Trevithick 200 Steam Rally	page 9
Obituary - Joan Davies	page 9
Broseley on the Map	page 9
Blists Hill Development	page 10
What's on?	page 10
Bookshop	page 10
Mailbox	page 10
Paying the Toll	page 12

many ways in which she has supported the town and its community, among them her role as Chairman of Broseley Local History Society, her involvement in the Open Gardens scheme, her contribution to the Broseley Flower Club and her terrific commitment to and success with Broseley in Bloom.'

Those who know Gill will also know how much other work she puts in behind the scenes. They will also know just how much her husband Michael does, not only in giving Gill support, but also the many community activities in which he quietly becomes involved. Broseley can be proud of them both.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society will be holding its AGM on Wednesday, 1 October, when the agenda will include the election of the committee. Anyone interested in putting their name forward should contact secretary Dot Cox on (01952) 883568 for a nomination form.

WILKINSON WEEKEND

Bicentenary Day School

The Society has been marking the bicentenary of the death of John Wilkinson all year, but celebrations came to a climax in July with a series of Wilkinson related activities. Perhaps the most important was the Day School, arranged by Neil Clarke, which took place on Saturday 12 July in Coalbrookdale, and in which various speakers presented recent research into the life and achievements of this great ironmaster. Morning lectures were followed by the option of a guided walk to the Iron Bridge or a field trip to local Wilkinson sites, with the final lecture being given by Frank Dawson on *The Importance of the Women in John Wilkinson's Life*.

The full text of all the lectures will appear in the 2008 edition of the Society's Journal.

Trip to Brymbo

The following day Society members visited Brymbo, the site near Bersham where John Wilkinson founded his ironworks in 1794. The blast furnaces and foundry which he built there



Members were given a fascinating tour of John Wilkinson's Brymbo site by the Brymbo Heritage Group

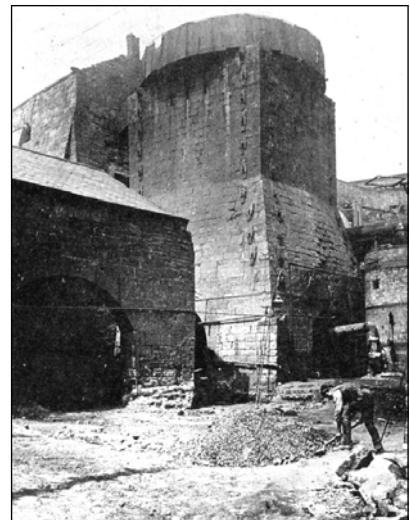
eventually became Brymbo Steelworks, an enterprise which closed only in 1990 with the loss of 1,110 jobs. While the major part of the site has now been cleared for building development, the Brymbo Heritage Group is anxious to retain what industrial heritage still remains.

In tidying up the site, two unexpected finds were a colony of great crested newts and a petrified forest; the newts have now been fenced in while the forest is being excavated with the help of Aberystwyth University.

Members were made extremely welcome and given an intensive guided tour of the site by enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable members

'Old Number One' blast furnace was recorded as producing 884 tons of pig iron in 1796

*Below
The three blast furnaces with Old Number One on the extreme left. The blacksmith's shop is behind the crane, while the foundry yard, with its stock of cast iron pipes, is in the foreground.
Photograph c1885*





Old Number One blast furnace today, alongside the original foundry building which was in use until 1985

of the Group, some of whom had been employed at the steelworks before its closure. Although many of the buildings have now been demolished, John Wilkinson's Number One Blast furnace still remains. This furnace was operated continually for nearly 100 years, being blown out only in 1894. Alongside this is the original foundry building which was in use until the final tap took place in 1985.

The final stop of the tour was the old machine shop. This more modern building was erected in the 1920s and housed the engineering workshops where fitting, pattern making, fabrication and blacksmith's work were undertaken. Today it houses a number of wooden patterns as well as some of the fossils removed from the petrified forest site.

Members were then shown an exhibition of maps and photographs taken from an archive of thousands accumulated over the last 100 years. Cataloguing these is just one of the Brymbo Heritage Group's projects.

This very successful trip was organised by David Lake.

Return to Brymbo

Neil Clarke recalls an earlier trip.

The recent coach trip to Brymbo was the fifth visit by the Society over the years to Wilkinson-related sites in the Wrexham area, but only the second to include this particular site.

The original visit was made during the very first year of the Society's existence. On 26 May 1973 we had a guided coach tour of the area that took us to the Bersham ironworks site and Minera lead mine as well as Brymbo Steelworks, which at the time was part of the GKN group. Our guide,

Wayne Turner of Chester who knew the area well, had been researching Wilkinson for some years and has contributed articles to early numbers of the Society's Journal.

The steelworks were still in full swing at the time and I remember the vastness of the hill-top site, the skill of those working in the rolling mill and the pride in the history of a works going back to Old Number One furnace – memories rekindled by our recent visit.

A Cast-Iron Case

As part of the weekend's celebrations, the Broseley Amateur Dramatic Society (BROADS) staged a colourful *son et lumière* pageant based on the life of John Wilkinson. Janet Robinson shares her enjoyment of the event.

In July 1808 John Wilkinson, the great ironmaster, died at the age of 80. Two hundred years later, in the gardens of The Lawns in Broseley where he once lived, a pageant A Cast-Iron Case took place, recalling his life, inventions and influence on industry and the history of Britain.

The play was written and directed by Mike Kaiser of BROADS, with David Baxter as John Wilkinson. Other famous 18th century inventors, engineers and key figures in industry, such as James Watt, made their appearance and we learnt the importance of their links with Wilkinson in the development of steam power. We also saw how Wilkinson's accurate boring of cannon affected

Wilkinson's iron boat The Trial, 'floats' into view in front of a sceptical crowd



Children from Broseley primary schools singing the Children's Cantata, Iron Mad Wilkinson



warfare and watched as his iron boat The Trial 'floated' into view.

We saw how John's character aroused strong feelings in those who knew him and how his self belief and hard manner had been shaped by the poverty of his early life in Cumbria. A game show allowed the audience to judge how well he had put his case and whether he was deemed to be a saint or a sinner.

Songs from the folk group Cuckoo Oak interposed the proceedings, dancers represented the flames of a blast furnace, there was a scrapyard percussion item, Morris dancing and, perhaps most memorable of all, a performance of the Children's Cantata Iron Mad Wilkinson by Robin Grant, sung by Broseley primary school children and accompanied by an orchestra from William Brookes School.

The whole event, with its finale of fireworks, was an unforgettable experience and an example of what can be achieved when different groups from a community come together to make something happen. Congratulations to everyone involved.

One of life's little coincidences was revealed after the show when Brenda Glasby, who believes she is a descendant of John Wilkinson, got chatting to Janet. It turned out that Brenda, who lives in Suffolk, was holidaying in this area when she saw the pageant being advertised. She later wrote to Janet saying "We really enjoyed the pageant, I felt quite moved. Although John Wilkinson did not come back after seven years (as legend claims), a descendant arrived by chance after 200 years!" Brenda has now joined the Society.

Following this very successful weekend, Gordon Watkinson, a member of the Brymbo Heritage Group wrote:

A small group from Brymbo Heritage Group came to share in the bicentenary celebration organised by the Broseley Local History Society. We were treated to a day very well arranged and professionally executed with excellent talks, in most cases on different aspects of the great man's life. Additionally we had a delightful and informative trip into the glorious Shropshire countryside to view scenes of the Wilkinson

history. Old age and decrepitude caused some of us to miss the evening celebrations at The Lawns, but reports are that we certainly missed a treat.

The following day saw a large party from Broseley coming to us at Brymbo Iron Works, which is the most complete Wilkinson site in existence. It was a real pleasure to have such a well informed and knowledgeable people visiting, and the depth of the questions and level of understanding was invigorating for us guides. It was obvious that everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, visitors and residents alike.

Many thanks to all of you from Broseley for instigating the weekend, it was good that something was organised to celebrate this bicentenary.

LOCAL HISTORY EXHIBITION

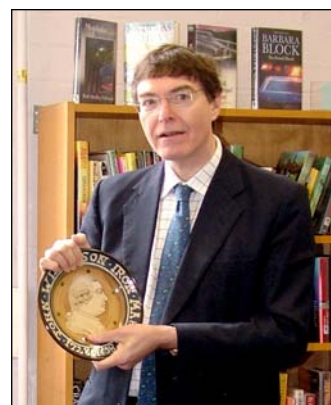
As part of the year long bicentenary celebrations, the Society staged an exhibition at Broseley library. As well as a series of graphics illustrating the lives of John Wilkinson and other famous Broseley people, various local products and artefacts were on display. These included metalware, china and pottery, as well as a specially commissioned commemorative bicentenary plate, made by local potter Elspeth Soper, and traditional clay pipes made by Rex Key.

The exhibition was opened by local MP Philip Dunne, who said that although he had been aware that Broseley had played a prominent part in the industrial revolution he had not realised just how dynamic the town and its inhabitants had been. He

9 year old Tom Edwards with the John Wilkinson bicentenary token he won in the quiz set by library staff



Philip Dunne MP with one of the commemorative bicentenary plates made by Elspeth Soper



then thanked Society Chairman Gillian Pope for her gift of a commemorative plate, saying that it would complement the Broseley Biscuit presented to him at the Trafalgar Day celebrations in 2005.

The exhibition was subsequently visited by pupils of the various Broseley primary schools. A quiz set by library staff was won by nine year old Tom Edwards who correctly answered all the questions. Tom, who is in Year 4 at Dark Lane Primary School, said that he had already known quite a lot about iron and John Wilkinson as his class had studied it at school the previous year.

COMMEMORATIVE COLLECTABLES

To celebrate the bicentenary of John Wilkinson's death the Society has commissioned various artefacts; a percentage of the profits from these will go toward the Commemorative Plaques Fund.



Tokens bearing John Wilkinson's effigy on the obverse with an enhanced forgemaster, updated to the bicentenary year 2008, on the reverse are available for £8.00 each, plus £1.99 UK 1st class

recorded postage, from Vin Callcut email: vin@oldcopper.org.uk or phone 01952 882508. Supplies of these are limited so don't miss this once in a life time opportunity.



Commemorative plates made by Elspeth Soper of Willey Furnace Pottery are available to order for £43.00 each, plus £4.99 UK postage, email:



Boxed traditional clay pipes made by Rex Key are available for £5.00 each, plus £1.00

UK postage,

A large number of the bicentenary tokens have already been snapped up. Here are some comments from satisfied customers.

Thank you for the tokens, they will go into my collection of Wilkinson pennies along with the

medal struck for the Wilkinson weekend at Ironbridge many years ago.

My father once had a Wilkinson penny which he said had been handed down through the generations, but I lost it and he never forgave me. He was a John Wilkinson, as was his father and his father before him, as indeed am I. Had my grandfather not taken to the bottle and lost the last of the John Wilkinson rolling mills I am sure I would have carried on the tradition.

The strangest thing of all is that I was born on 14 July, but in 1942!

Michael John Wilkinson

While it is well documented that John 'Iron Mad' Wilkinson died on 14 July 1808, some people believe that he was also born on that date in 1728.

Editor

I bought the token because I already have examples of all the genuine tokens Wilkinson issued as well as some forgeries. As a former history teacher I often spoke about his exploits to my classes who found the information about his obsession with iron, even down to the iron coffin almost lost in the sands of the Solway Firth, fascinating. I wish your Society every success in its money raising efforts for your venture.

Henry Tompkin

CELEBRATIONS AT CASTLEHEAD

Society members will remember with pleasure their visit in 2005 to Castlehead, the house built by John Wilkinson overlooking Morecambe Bay. It was here that Wilkinson was buried before his body was removed and reputedly re-interred in the church in the nearby village of Lindale. Lindale's Parish Council, therefore, thought it fitting that they should also mark the bicentenary of the death of this famous ironmaster and consequently organised a weekend of celebrations at Castlehead in July. David Lake went north to join them and sent back this report.

John Wilkinson's bicentenary was commemorated at Castlehead over the weekend of 19-20 July when the house was opened to the public, with Frank Dawson providing guidance to the house and grounds.

A new interpretation panel for the Wilkinson monument that stands in Lindale was unveiled and funds are being raised for its maintenance, while Lindale church was also open for the occasion.

At Wilson House, one time home of John Wilkinson's father Isaac, barn conversions have been attractively carried out, with some of the pipes and columns from the original small furnace there remaining in place. At Backbarrow, however, matters are less satisfactory. Houses have been built near the old furnace but the developers have not fulfilled the conservation conditions of their planning permission and are now running short of money.

Barrie Trinder gave a talk on John Wilkinson – a key figure in the Industrial Revolution in which he said that it was not easy to understand Wilkinson's thinking as it was complex and little had survived of his correspondence.

While it was acknowledged that he was influential in the construction of the Iron Bridge, in a broader context it was his Bradley works which pioneered the industrialisation of what was to become the Black Country with its network of canals.

TRIP TO GLOUCESTER

Another highlight of the summer was the Society's trip to Gloucester Historic Dockyard. Gloucester has been a port since before Roman times and was once used by John Wilkinson. The warehouses still standing today, however, were mainly built between 1826 and 1873.

No longer used for their original purpose, one of these buildings now houses the National Waterways Museum. This gives a fascinating insight into the history of canal building as well as the opportunity to investigate the different types of cargo which would have been transported along



Gloucester Dockyard is now home to craft of a very different kind



Gloucester Cathedral, the only cathedral other than Westminster to see the coronation of an English king

the waterways. Yet another area shows examples of 'Roses and Castles', the distinctive and highly colourful canal boat art practised by the boatmen and women.

The Gloucestershire Regimental Museum, covering the history of the two local regiments, was also well worth a visit, as was the Mariners' Church which was established in 1849.

Just a short walk away was the magnificent Gloucester Cathedral, the only Cathedral in England other than Westminster to have seen the coronation of an English king. When King John of Magna Carta fame died in 1216, supporters of his nine year old son Henry were concerned that Prince Louis of France might accede to the throne. Henry was, therefore, rushed from Winchester to the nearby cathedral of Gloucester to be crowned Henry III of England. There being no crown handy, a plain gold band was used instead.

From there it was on to Toddington to board the train for a smoky but nostalgic 30 minute trip on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway to Cheltenham Racecourse. Originally part of the former Great Western Railway's main line from Birmingham to Cheltenham, the line was abruptly closed in 1976 when a coal train derailed at Winchcombe.

In 1981 reconstruction work was started by a group of enthusiasts and by 1984 the first public train was able to operate along a quarter mile of track. Since then ten miles of track have been restored and the station at Winchcombe reconstructed.

A great way to round off the day and thanks to Vin Callcut and Michael Pope for making it such a successful and enjoyable trip.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

You try and stop me! Part II

Society members will recall Ron Miles' tour of Jackfield in 2003 when darkness called a halt to a fascinating walk. In May this year, Ron set out to fulfil his promise to complete this tour.

The walk began above the old railway crossing, past what had once been William and Peter Jones' Excelsior Tileries with its wall built of old tiles, and under the Brymbo Bridge. Then it was back down the road past The Tumbling Sailor, once a thriving pub but now a private house, and over the old level crossing which had the widest gates on the Great Western Railway.

Ron then pointed out Calcutts House, which had been used as a cholera hospital during the 1820s, and the site of the Broseley wooden rails, arguably the earliest railtrack in the country. Here also was the site of Earl Dundonald's tar works and the Alexander Brodie cannon factory – one of his cannons is reported to still be on Nelson's flagship HMS Victory.

From there it was past Jackfield primary school, built in 1844 to replace the Penny School across the road, and the old Craven Dunnill tile factory, now the Jackfield Tile Museum.

Further down the road was Jackfield Church, built in 1862 and designed to show the range of tiles and



Jackfield Church was designed to show the range of bricks and tiles manufactured in the area



The beautiful reredos inside the church is the only one in the world made of tiles from the Craven Dunnill factory



The last group of children to attend Jackfield Primary School before its closure in the 1980s

bricks manufactured in the area. Despite choir practice being in full swing, members were invited inside by the Rev'd Dave Shinton to see the pulpit which had come from the old Red Church, now demolished, and the unique reredos, the only one in the world made of tiles from the Craven Dunnill factory.

Beyond this was the site of the landslip of 1952 when a house, Pear Tree Cottage, had suddenly cracked in two and collapsed. One of the party, Ray Johnston, recalled that he had been in that cottage two days before the catastrophe, looking at the possibility of repairing some cracks, and had seen the wall split right down. He had wisely beaten a hasty retreat.

Past the Half Moon, once the centre of the village before the landslip of 1952, the final stop was the Boat Inn, famous for its high water marks painted on the door. The highest of these is dated 1st November 2000 when the water level reached 19ft 6in.

By this time the onset of dusk once again brought to an end what had been another memorable evening. No doubt Ron will manage to complete the whole trip one of these days!

The waters were still rising when this picture of the Boat Inn was taken in the autumn of 2000, eventually reaching a height of 19ft 6in



The Plaque at The Lawns

The June meeting saw the first of the Wilkinson bicentenary celebrations when a plaque to the great ironmaster was unveiled at The Lawns in Church Street by pupils from John Wilkinson Primary School. At the ceremony Society Chairman Gillian Pope said that, since Broseley and The Lawns had been of such importance in the life of John Wilkinson, the Society wished to mark the house in which he had lived. The plaque had been made at Blists Hill by Roger Fewtrell and similar plaques were planned for other significant sites in the area. A Commemorative Plaque Fund has already been set up.

Guests were given an unexpected treat when the Shifnal and District Chorale, under their conductor Paul Kelly, performed various pieces of music, in particular two pieces applicable to Broseley. These were the *The Sanctus* and the *Kyrie Eleeson* which had been dedicated to The Hon and Rev'd Orlando Watkin Weld Forester, Rector of Broseley, and had been sung in the cathedrals of Lichfield and Peterborough. The profits from these early performances had gone towards funding the building of the new Church of All Saints' here in Broseley in 1845.

The Society would like to thank Mel Mars, the current owner of The Lawns, for his continued support and for allowing not only the plaque to be erected but for hosting such an enjoyable evening.

Left to right, Society Chairman Gillian Pope, John Wilkinson Primary School pupils Holly Ardern, Daniel Fielding, Jonathan Hussey and Eden Rendell and headteacher Jacqui Carter, at the unveiling of the commemorative plaque to John Wilkinson at his former home The Lawns



The Shifnal and District Chorale singing The Sanctus at the unveiling of the John Wilkinson plaque at The Lawns.

Inset: Dot Cox 'doing' the sound effects during a performance of Verdi's Anvil Chorus on an anvil aptly inscribed with the initials J W. Since it also bears the date 1827, however, it could hardly have belonged to John Wilkinson.

It was lent by Eric Cox, who said he 'picked it up somewhere about 30 years ago'

BROSELEY IN BLOOM

Broseley was holding thumbs for a hat trick this year when Britain in Bloom Heart of England judges visited the town in July. Last year the town won a Gold Award for the second year running, as well as being voted Best Overall in the Small Town Category.

This year's theme of Local Roots aptly tied in with the Society's celebration of the bicentenary of John Wilkinson's death and the bright flame coloured flowers seen throughout the town were specially chosen to represent the colour of fiery furnaces. This theme was enhanced by the Ironbridge Gorge Museums lending the town two pieces of equipment; a kibbling mill which came from the old Milburgh Tileries was placed in the Memorial Gardens, while a kibble pot was 'planted' on the Pritchard Memorial.

An old Milburgh Tileries kibbling mill, on loan from the Ironbridge Gorge Museums, was installed in the Memorial Gardens



The results of the competition will be announced in early September. Meanwhile the town looks glorious and a real credit to all those people who have worked so hard throughout the year.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL EARLY RAILWAYS CONFERENCE

Neil Clarke recently presented a paper on *John Wilkinson's Railway at Willey* at the International Early Railways Conference held at University College London in June. The venue was chosen as it was the site of the demonstration of Richard Trevithick's Catch Me Who Can locomotive, built at Bridgnorth in the summer of 1808.

In his paper, Neil examined the evidence for the two railways that served Willey ironworks – the one running down Tarbatch Dingle to the Severn and the Benthall Rails. What had begun as wooden wagonways, Wilkinson converted to iron. He seems at first to have followed the Coalbrookdale practice of laying iron bars on top of the wooden rails to prevent excessive wear, but then took it further, making the entire rail out of iron – reportedly one of the first to do so.

Another paper of local interest was Peter King's *The First Shropshire Railways* in which he argued that the wooden wagonway recorded at Broseley in 1605 was not only the first railway in Shropshire but probably in the country.

The proceedings of the conference are to be published in book form later in the year.



TREVITHICK 200 STEAM RALLY

John Challon, curator of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums, left, and Harold Grice with Trevithick's Coalbrookdale locomotive. Also at the Rally was a replica of the famous Catch Me Who Can, the world's first fare paying passenger locomotive, built at the Hazledine foundry in Bridgnorth in 1808

OBITUARY

The Society regrets to announce the death of Joan Davies, wife of Society member and author Ron Davies. David Lake remembers her with fondness and admiration.

Joan Davies was a Bradley lass, born and bred. After a delay due to the war, she married Ron and was a major factor in his writing career. Joan was a fervent supporter of Hope House and similar good causes, to which profits from the books were given. In the case of *John Wilkinson, Ironmaster Extraordinary*, Ron's dedication was "To my wife Joan, for her quiet patience and encouragement." When the Society reprinted the book Ron and Joan gave all the profits to the Society.

I have enjoyed many visits to them in Bradley. In Jack Owen's time I used to take him with me and they were kindred spirits. I always loved to see Joan; a more genuine lady never existed and she is quite irreplaceable.

BROSELEY ON THE MAP

The Society recently hosted a visit by the Barr & Aston Local History Society which was celebrating the 25th anniversary of its inception with a tour of the area.

Having spent the morning at Blists Hill, they were given a guided tour of Broseley by members of the Society in the afternoon.

In a letter from their secretary Jenny Carr she says: *On behalf of the Barr & Aston Local History Society I should like to thank you so much for organising such an interesting afternoon for us.*

The Pipe Museum was really interesting and it was fascinating to see how the pipes were actually made. There are so many interesting old buildings in Broseley. We were quite envious as almost all the old buildings in our area have now gone.

Thank you to all the guides who showed us round and for those who gave us tea. It was a lovely day and one we shall remember for a long time.

Another group to visit Broseley in June were members of the Friends of Shropshire Archives who were given a guided tour of the town by Steve Dewhirst.

BLISTS HILL DEVELOPMENT

Blists Hill Victorian Town is undergoing major developments which will revitalise this popular visitor attraction. While the existing main street will remain virtually untouched, Canal Street will be transformed with the building of an artisan's quarter and Victorian shops based on authentic designs.

A narrow gauge railway through the woods towards the Hay inclined plane will improve access to more remote parts of the site, while a 'mine' experience at the end of this track will underline the importance of mining to the area. Inspired by the inclined plane, a smaller version will transport visitors between the Village Green and the canal.

The work is expected to be completed by the spring of 2009.

WHAT'S ON?

Ironbridge Gorge Museums

Wednesday 16 September, 7.30 pm

Forties Night at Blists Hill

Join the Museum's resident performers for a night of music and monologues straight from the Roaring Forties. Ticket price of £11.00 includes a steak and ale supper. Further information from 01952 583003.

BOOKSHOP

John Wilkinson – King of the Ironmasters

By Frank Dawson

The draft text of this book, which has been made available on a website page for comment prior to publication by the Broseley Local History Society, contains the results of significant new research concerning Wilkinson and his family relationships. The printed version will include relevant maps and illustrations. The text runs to about 120 A4 pages. There are 304 references.

Before embarking on publication, the Society would like to gauge the likely demand for copies of this book and would value readers' opinions. Please visit the website below for the text, and email your comments to [vin\(at\)oldcopper.org](mailto:vin(at)oldcopper.org), replacing the (at) with the usual symbol. (Note this

address is given in this format to avoid being scanned by spammers.)

MAILBOX

My wife and I have promised to give our grandchildren short accounts of our four parents' lives. The 1851 census seems to show that my paternal great great great grandfather came from Broseley, being born in 'Salop Broseley'. There is an IGI reference to a man of the same name being baptised at Barrow in 1780 which ties up with his age from other documents.

We should like to know of places other than the Records Centre in Shrewsbury, such as churches or record centres, where we might gain information to help us trace his family.

Arthur Longmore

In response to a previous letter about Broseley Blue Dragon china, I inherited several pieces of this from my Bennett great aunts who came from Broseley. Their father Thomas lived in Padman's Alley, as did his father Thomas before him. The pattern is like the pieces in your picture, except they have Coalport marks. My great great great grandfather was Stephen Lawrance who worked as a china painter for Coalport, as did his daughter Naomi and other family members. One of the previously mentioned great aunts is on the 1891 census aged 12 as a burnisher.

Incidentally, I should be interested to learn if any readers recognise anyone in this photograph which was probably taken after WW1.

Hilary Wood



My maiden name was Garbett and I am tracing my family history. So far I have gone back to 1560-1690 and 1804-1900. I have secured a copy of the parish registers 1560-1700, but wonder if others exist. I am also looking for photographs of my ancestors, in particular William A Garbett who was a singer and a tile designer at Jackfield.

I should appreciate any help from your readers as I have every reason to believe that my ancestors make up 500 years of Broseley history.

Alison Mudway

I am looking for information relating to Shirlett Sanatorium in the period 1930-1947. Dr Frederick Turner MC, who was a relation of mine, was medical superintendent at the Sanatorium from 1921 to the time of his death in 1946. I should be interested to know if anyone has any information or pictures of his time at the Sanatorium or of the Lagonda tourer which belonged to him.

John Ewing



The Lagonda tourer which belonged to Dr Frederick Turner, medical superintendent at Shirlett Sanatorium from 1921-1946

In response to earlier correspondence regarding the Locke family, Society member Rex Key remembers them from his early childhood when he lived in a village called Hookagate, just outside Shrewsbury. "I was born in 1945," he says, "in a public house called the Royal Oak and I remember the family travelling around the area in their horse drawn caravans – pulled by both piebald and skewbald ponies. When I was three or four I recall seeing 'Granny Locke' sitting on the steps of her caravan smoking a short, stubby clay pipe that had

turned black from long use. I was very nervous about this old lady but in fact she was a very friendly sort of person. I believe the Locke family spent most of their time in the Bayston Hill area, making and selling clothes pegs with the men generally 'tattooing' around the area. I do not know any of their names but seem to remember one old lady was known as Dolly."

Past President of the Society Vera Francis says that the family were always well regarded and worked for local farmers. The mother Mary was 'friendly and thin and smoked'. She was a good mother but strict; she died some years ago. The 'old granny' Sarah also kept things in order and smoked a pipe, often carrying around a basket of lace and pegs for sale. The school house in Astley Abbots was turned into a home for the Locke family, but their descendants moved into council housing and followed a more conventional way of life.

As secretary of the Brymbo Heritage Society I should like to compliment the members of the Broseley Local History Society following the recent exchange visits between our respective Societies. I understand that both these visits were very successful and those of our members who attended the Wilkinson celebrations were full of praise for the hospitality and warm welcome extended.

The return visit to our Heritage Centre was also an enjoyable and worthwhile experience, not only for the visit itself, but also for the very generous donations made to our Group.

It is to be hoped that the links between our respective groups can be maintained. I think that in the near future we shall be able to donate to your Society some of the 'patterns' that have been rescued.

Peter Chadwick

My mother was a teacher at Barrow School from approximately 1938-1946. Her name was Marie Chidlow, née Yorke, and she lived in Madeley. The first photograph (overleaf) was taken during this time, the second in 1949. I should like to hear from anyone who may recognise themselves.



These pupils were at Barrow School in the 1940s

I understand that Barrow School is still in existence and has recently celebrated its history; I should appreciate knowing whom I could contact for further historical details.

Sue Jones

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<i>Chairman</i>	Gillian Pope
<i>Secretary</i>	Dot Cox
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jim Cooper
<i>Curator</i>	David Lake
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Janet Robinson
	26 Coalport Road
	Broseley
	TF12 5AZ
	01952 882495
<i>Programme Secretary and Journal Editor</i>	Neil Clarke
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Jan Lancaster
<i>Publicity</i>	Michael Pope
<i>CD archiving</i>	Vin Callcut
<i>Website</i>	www.broseley.org.uk
<i>Email</i>	steve@broseley.org.uk

Amberley Publishing is starting a new series of books called 'Through Time' and is looking for people interested in compiling a book of local photographs. Each author would cover a town of their choice with around 90 old photographs and 90 new ones. The photographs would be put into context with captions pointing out local characters or the changes over time. Each book would be 96 pages long and would be priced at £12.99. The books would be marketed locally through such avenues as targeted media and competition copies.

I should appreciate hearing from any of your readers who may be interested.

sarahflight@btinternet.com

Amberley Publishing

PAYING THE TOLL



Chris Pryce, right, and Sue Maddox (now Smith) paying the toll to cross the Iron Bridge. This photograph was taken on 31 May 1950 shortly before the bridge was closed to traffic. Chris used to live over what is now Eleys Pie Shop across the bridge where her father W R (Bill) Pryce ran a butcher's shop. When her father died her mother continued to run the shop until the 1960s when it was taken over by Eleys

With acknowledgement and thanks to Jess Freeman who helped with the editing of this Newsletter

Newsletter is sympathetic to the concerns of certain of its correspondents who are reluctant to see their email address appear in the public domain. If there is anyone who does not wish their contact details to be published, they are welcome to make use of the Society's email address steve@broseley.org.uk. Any respondent without access to email may pass on information to any member of the committee.

**To see the Newsletter in full colour
visit the Society's website
broseley.org.uk.**