



NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society
INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY

August– 2025

Issue: 66

MEETINGS

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

New members:

Helen Hurman / Neil Lumsden /Sheila Black

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT ALL PAYMENTS TO BROSELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY p8

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MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS (Page 8)

Thanks to your memberships subscriptions we can offer you monthly talks, a quarterly newsletter, and a yearly journal. Subscriptions to the History Society run from **October to September** of each year, and can be paid either in cash or by cheque or bank transfer (£10 for a single entry and £15 for a joint subscription) contact details for the membership secretary can be found on page 8.

We would like to encourage you to opt for the digital version if you can, this would help us to keep our postage fees low ; please let the membership secretary know about your choice. Many thanks in advance.

What's On Elsewhere?

Broseley Local History Society is affiliated to the British Association for Local History and receives every quarter their newsletter and Journal, both of which are available at our meetings (the Local History News is also available online at the [BALH website](#))

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

News from the British Association for Local History (BALH) by **Janet Doody**

Local History News (no. 155):

Shropshire Archives has yet again reduced its public opening times, now just ONE day per week – THURSDAY until 5.00pm; but always check details before setting out www.shropshirearchives.org.uk

The Museum of Cannock Chase has now closed after 36 years, following district council cuts. The JANET ROSING COLLECTION of photographs has been acquired by Historic England. Check their website for details.

BLHS PROGRAMME 2025/26 (TALKS & EVENTS)

by Neil Clarke

Please note: check our website or our Facebook page to confirm, that the event you wish to attend is still going ahead.

2025

Sept.3 – Transport in Shropshire in postcards, Ray Farlow

Oct. 1 - AGM, followed by A field somewhere near Broseley, Allan Smith

Nov. 5 – Joint meeting with IGM Friends, Coalbrookdale – details to follow

Dec. 3 – Christmas Dinner

2026

Jan. 7 - Members' evening

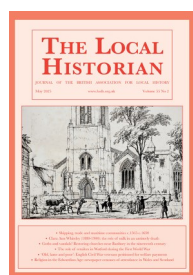
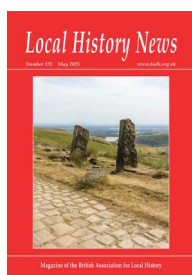
Feb. 4 –Turnpike roads in the Broseley area, Steve Dewhirst

Mar.4 – Annual Wilkinson Lecture: The Iron Men of Shropshire, Norman Pagett

The Local Historian Vol.55 No.2

An interesting article "Clara Ann Whiteley (1880-1900): the role of milk in an untimely death" by Phil Wild was motivated by the discovery that his great grandmother, Clara died, aged just 19. He suggests that the consumption of raw (unpasteurised) milk could be added to the underlying conditions of the time. *[note: I remember some years ago I told my Mom that I'd had raw milk, almost straight from the cow in a cup of tea! She was not happy and warned me not to do it again.]*

"He is old, lame and poor"; When English Civil War Veterans petitioned for welfare payments' by Richard Hobson, investigates the *Civil War Petitions* project by academics from the Universities of Oxford, Nottingham Cardiff & Southampton. There is an on-line database which I quickly searched to find just one from Broseley, a WILLIAM WIDDOWES who was granted a gratuity of 40 shillings, but no pension at the Shropshire Epiphany Quarter Sessions in 1662.

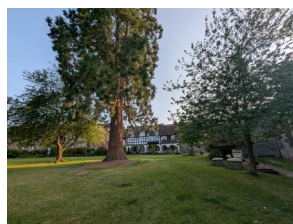


(covers courtesy of BALH)

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

June Walk with Steve Dewhirst

A pleasant stroll around Much Wenlock and the weather was on our side! (Pics courtesy of Ian Lowis)



July's visit at the Stourbridge Glass Museum, Janet Doody commented (pics courtesy of Margaret Hazeldine and Janet Robinson):

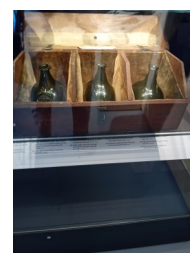
<https://www.stourbridgeglassmuseum.org.uk/>

You can find the museum on the A491 Stourbridge to Wolverhampton road, just north of Stourbridge Town Centre

We met at the very easy to find Glass Museum, (right on the A491) and were greeted with a welcome tea/coffee and biscuits for an introductory talk. The volunteer gave an excellent description of the how and why glass developed in the area and its eventual decline, very reminiscent of the Broseley Brick industry, I thought, from many works to being unable even to identify many of these sites today!

This was followed by a guided tour of the museum itself with an ex-glass works employee who highlighted special or significant items in the collection; which itself had been 'rescued' from its previous home at the Broad House Glass Museum. Following the museum we were lucky to see some glass blowing of studio glass ware; judging by the intense heat needed in the kiln you can see how the industry is concerned for its continued existence with the increasing cost of fuel.

Directly opposite the museum is the Red House Cone glass works with its huge cone like kiln, similar to the kilns at Coalport only much bigger! There is much to explore, including the walks alongside the Stourbridge Canal. Well done Margaret, a really great day out, many thanks!



ARTICLES

Guy Tonkiss & his band by Jocelyne Barbier

When we posted a mystery picture on our Facebook page last March, we didn't realise that its content would generate so much interest and would lead us to one of the most famous bands of the West Midlands (and beyond...)



From left to right: Jack Shorter/ Albert Gittens/ Frank Pardoe/Alec Southern/ Walter Hudson/ Guy Tonkiss.

We were after the names of the various musicians on the photo above, however more names were thrown in than the number of folks on the photography, it just transpired that Guy Tonkiss and his band had so many people playing for them over the years that it would be too long to mention them all.

We must thank profusely **Debbie Glaze** (Guy's younger daughter) for supplying us with most of the information and photos, as well as **Dave Lewis** (trumpet player) and **all the people** on social media who kindly shared their memories with us.

Guy and his band - A Broseley boy, he was playing the string bass, the piano accordion, and sometimes the drums. His career started early as he was already broadcasting on the radio at only 8 years old. With some school friends they had their first official engagements in 1938 at Coalport and West Bromwich Carnivals. Over the years they became famous and were regularly playing at the Victoria Hall and Social Club in Broseley, The Anstice in Madeley, at Llandrindod, at The Connaught hotel in Wolverhampton, at The Lord Hill in Shrewsbury, at The Overton Grange hotel in Ludlow, at Bridgnorth Castle Hall and during dinner dances organised at Alveley Workingmen's Club. The band was even a supporting act for The Beatles in the late 50s/early 60s. Guy and his band were regulars at every police ball in the Midlands. He had a stroke around 1988 which impaired his abilities as a musician and played his last gig (s) at the Victoria Hall in Broseley in 1990-91, the rest of the band then retired with him or moved to play for other bands, Debbie mentioned that '**... one of his sax players, Charles Booth, used to play with Syd Lawrence band...**' (The Syd Lawrence Orchestra).

Dave Lewis commented: '**...We were paid £4-£5 per 4hr gig (8pm to 12am), sometimes longer. Gigs were 2-3 per month in the summer, 1-2 a week during the winter and every night during the Christmas period [...] Music was ballroom in the Glen Miller style. I played 2nd trumpet mid-50s early 60s then went to do my national service...**'

Family life - Born on the 5th of November 1926 from a Broseley family (established in town for 300 years at least), he first lived in Queen Street, then Barratts Hill before moving to Bridgnorth Road in 1979. His first daughter Anne was born in 1957 and Debbie in 1963. Guy was an electrician by trade: he worked for MEB for 24 years, then started his own business with two other chaps in the 70s. He met his wife Dorothy Plain, born in 1932, from Ackleton, at a dance in Beccbury, and Dot was singing with the band until she had her children. According to Debbie '**...Mum put her foot down and Sunday was family day...**'. They had one grandson called Daniel Guy born in 1989 and he was in his grandad's arms for Guy's last concert. Daniel inherited his grandad double bass and piano accordion.

Guy died on the 9th of February 2015 and Dorothy passed away in 2016.



LINLEY RAILWAY STATION *by Janet Doody*

(Pictures from BLHS archives)

The station on the Great Western Railway's Severn Valley Line was opened in February 1862; but its construction was not without controversy. Mr Thomas Carlton Whitmore (1807-1865) of the Apley Park estate, despite the fact his property was on the opposite side of the river, objected to the railway line's 1852 plans as it would be "*utterly annihilating the privacy & seclusion of the said mansion, house, park & grounds*". The railway company agreed to run the line through tunnels and the process of attempting to raise extra capital for their construction ensured the postponement for a time of the whole railway. Eventually further negotiations with Mr Whitmore during 1855 led to the tunnel plans being abandoned, but at a high price. Mr Whitmore claimed £14,000 as compensation, together with a charge of £150.00 per acre for any land the railway company had to purchase from him. In addition he had the company agree to build a station where at least two ordinary passenger trains in each direction could be stopped on request although there was no public access to the station and the north side of the estate could only reach the station by ferry.

In 1905 a chain suspension bridge was built across the river Severn giving private road access from Apley Park to Linley Station. On 1st January 1917 Linley Station was first closed; opening a few months later on 2nd April having now been 'demoted' to Linley HALT. It closed to freight traffic in 1951 and finally closed on 9 September 1963, a planned pre-Beeching Report closure; the buildings now survive as a private residence and the railway route as the Severn Valley Way

One of the last Station Masters was Arthur Richard Emson (1865-1933); he was there from 1917 until 1921 when he retired.

Sources: www.disused-stations.org.uk; www.en.wikipedia.org



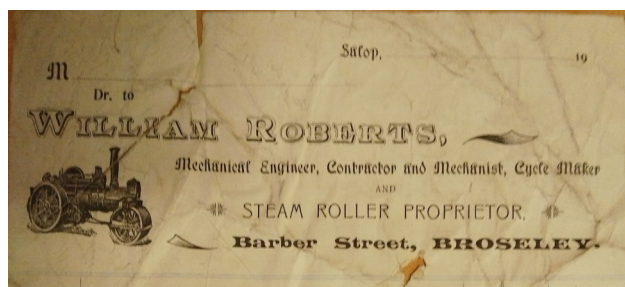
WILLIAM ROBERTS *by Janet Doody*

William Roberts (1857-1939) of 9 Barber Street, Broseley; a Mechanical Engineer, Contractor & Mechanist, Cycle Maker and Steam Roller Proprietor.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust received a rather large collection of invoices, bills, and accounts from the estate of the Roberts family. These have recently been collated and listed and are beginning to reveal a view of trading in Broseley during the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

The 1922 Kelly's Trade Directory shows a W. Roberts of Barber Street as watch repairer; another of his and the family interests. The wonderfully illustrated letterheads show the diversity of the Roberts business. It will take some time to research this extremely interesting collection

There is also an invoice from saddler Edwin Reynolds, for a leather machine belt for some machine – perhaps the steam roller. Mr Reynolds main shop was in High Street, Much Wenlock but it seems he had a branch in High Street, Broseley where saddler Arthur Davis of 21 King Street, operated.



(Pictures courtesy of IGMT)

Broseley and surrounding towns and the Hair Tax *by Steve Dewhirst*

The Shrewsbury Chronicle for 25th March 1796 contained the following advertisement:

Hair Powder tax. Stamp-office, Shrewsbury, March 17th 1796.

Notice is hereby given that this office will be open on Thursday the 24th instant and every succeeding day for granting Hair Powder Certificates, commencing the 16th of April 1796, and ending the 5th April 1797. And that the following persons are Authorized to issue the same, in the different towns within the county of Salop

John Bishop, Head distributor

Mr Edward Houlston, Wellington

Mr William Scarrott, Shifnal.

Mr George Gitton, Bridgnorth

Mr And(rew) Macalaster, Broseley

Mr Theophilus Morral, Wenlock

Wikipedia tells us that:

The Duty on Hair Powder Act 1795 (35 Geo. 3. c. 49) was an Act of the Parliament of Great Britain which levied a tax on hair powder. The tax was used to finance government programmes, especially to fund the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars with France.

The Act stated that everyone wishing to use hair powder must visit a stamp office to enter their name and pay for an annual certificate costing 1 guinea. Certain exemptions were included: the Royal Family and their servants; clergymen with an income of under £100 a year; and members of the armed forces who were privates in the army, artillery soldiers, mariners, engineers, non-commissioned officers, subalterns, officers in the navy below commander, yeomanry, militia, fencibles, and volunteers. A father with more than two unmarried daughters could buy two certificates that would be valid for any number he stated at the stamp office. The master of a household could buy a certificate for a number of his servants, and that certificate would also be valid for their successors within that year. In its first year it raised £200,000 but when it was repealed in 1861 only £1,000.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duty_on_Hair_Powder_Act_1795

Macalaster was a draper who may have been born around 1729 and probably come from Scotland. He married Rosamond Tristram at Broseley in 1763 and they do not appear to have had any children. She was buried in Broseley in 1798 and he probably died in Shrewsbury in 1817.

18th Century Markets *by Steve Dewhirst*

There are adverts in the newspapers for Wednesday markets from 1744 promoting the market at Broseley:

This is to give notice that there will be held and continued upon every Wednesday at Broseley, in the county of Salop. A free and public meeting, for the selling and buying of all sorts of cattle, grain, fowls, cheese, butter, eggs, &c. or any other commodity any one shall think proper to send by ten of the clock on the same day. N.B. The above Broseley is a large and populous place; any farmer, or other person, who shall think proper to send any cattle or grain there, may expect to meet with good encouragement.

It seems clear that Broseley was attempting to establish itself as a market town, likely in competition with the more established markets at Much Wenlock, Madeley, and Bridgnorth. However, according to the Victoria County History, this market was set up without a warrant and was ultimately short-lived.

Then, a curious notice appeared in Aris's Birmingham Gazette on the 18th of March 1745:

'This is to give notice that there is a meeting of Scotchmen to be kept at Broseley in Shropshire, upon the Account of regulating some Affairs belonging to their Company, upon Monday the 29th of April next, 1745 where they are humbly desired to repair to the Talbot in the High Town; and we likewise desire all our honest Neighbours and Acquaintance to favour us with their company at the Town-Hall, by eleven o'clock the same day, and if they will not come they may stay away: We likewise insist upon all our worth Inhabitants, to make good the Causeways and mend the Roads against that time.

God save the King, and the Lords of the Manor.'

The Talbot, locally known as the Dog, was located on Church Street, opposite Raddle Hall. The obvious question is: why was this meeting called?

A subsequent notice, published on 15 April, provides a little more context:

'Notice is hereby given to the Inhabitants of Broseley and those of adjacent Parts, That according to the former advertisement in this paper, a good Number of Scotch-men in the Linen-Draperies Way, and the 29th of this Instant, to meet at the High Town of Broseley; where their former customers and others may expect to be well used by them, that their real design is only the Promotion of Trade, and their being serviceable to the Country.'

This was the year of the Jacobite Rising, launched by Bonnie Prince Charlie on 19 August 1745, and the initial vagueness of the first notice likely raised suspicions. The second advertisement was clearly intended to calm nerves and clarify that this was merely a group of Scottish drapers promoting their wares. Still, we are left to wonder: did the meeting actually take place? No further references to the event appear that year, and we are left only to speculate.

The story does not quite end there. On 10 April 1749, a similar advertisement appeared:

'This is to give notice that at Broseley, in the County of Salop on Wednesday the 26th of this instant April, there will be a Meeting of North British Chapmen, that will expose to sale all sorts of linen-drapery goods; and as there will be a great choice of curious and nice goods all persons may depend upon being well served, and upon very low terms.'

This time, they described themselves as "North British Chapmen", a more polite, perhaps less politically charged way of saying Scottish.

What makes these notices all the more intriguing is that similar advertisements are not found elsewhere in contemporary newspapers, even though such travelling salesmen surely visited other towns. Why Broseley? What made it necessary to formally promote their arrival there?

Unfortunately, we may never know the full story. But the combination of unlicensed markets, unusual trade gatherings, and the political tensions of 1745 makes this episode a particularly fascinating footnote in the town's history.

BOOK REVIEW by Neil Clarke

The Iron Men of Shropshire

The sub-title of Norman Pagett's recent book (published by Amberley) is 'How they put the world to work', and the author in his introduction makes the claim that 'it was their technology that set the groundwork for modern mass production, which built our cities and all the complexity that sustains them, and us'.

The iron men of the title are the first three Darbys of Coalbrookdale, Richard Ford and Richard and William Reynolds – all Shropshire based, who form the first and larger part of the book; and in the second part Thomas Telford and William Hazledine, and John Wilkinson and James Watt – outsiders (apart from Hazledine), who had interests both in and beyond Shropshire.

Of particular interest to our members will be chapter 7, which combines the work of Wilkinson and Watt. The author shows how the improved cylinder-boring techniques developed by Wilkinson not only led to the manufacture of reliable cannon for the government's Board of Ordnance, but also to the success of Watt's steam engine. It seems that the boring-mill at Willey was used principally for cannon, while most of Wilkinson's steam engine cylinders were cast at Bersham.

Norman Pagett's book is well illustrated, with many of the fine photographs taken by the author. He himself will be giving next year's Annual Wilkinson Lecture on the subject of his book, and copies will be available for sale at the meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

FROM OUR ARCHIVES by Janet Doody

This invitation (see pictures below) is from the our own Society's Archives; a report in the Wellington Journal on the 3 September 1955 states that the new organ was installed in St. Bartholomew's Church (Benthall) in memory of the Rev. C. S. Jackson (late vicar), and also Mr Richard Taylor, Mr Thomas Minton, Mrs Florence Bickley, Mrs Mary Heywood and Mr Gerald Heywood, past members of the congregation. The organ had been provided by a public appeal, which had only been launched in June about £250 had been raised which had covered its purchase. It was single manual pipe organ, electrically blown and used for the first time on 28th August.

Over 150 people attended and the small church was so full that the some of the congregation were obliged to sit in the porch. The choir was under the direction of Mr B. Wase and Mr John Wase was at the organ; he gave a short recital following the Sunday service with Miss Brenda Brook as the soloist.

This particular Sunday was also the nearest to the patronal festival day of St. Bartholomew that being 24th August.

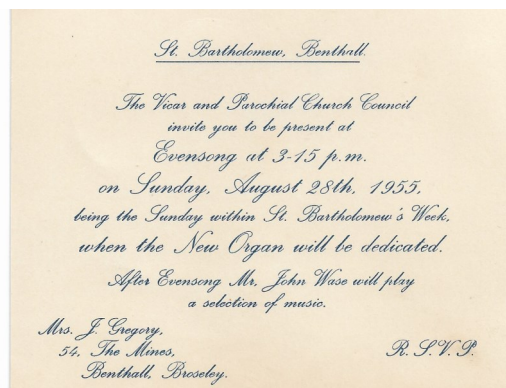
Mr Richard Taylor (1869-) of 48 The Mines and an employee of Broseley Tileries

Mr Thomas Minton (1870-1952), of 11 Quarry Road, an encaustic tile employee

Mrs Florence Bickley (1892-1952), of 28 High Street, Broseley

Mrs Mary Heywood (1860-1948) and her husband

Mr Gerald Graham Percival Heywood, Lt.-Col. 1867-1954), formerly of Tickwood Hall, later of The Grange, Much Wenlock



(Pictures courtesy of BLHS)

CAN YOU HELP?

1) Colin Low query '... There is an area of woodland behind the houses in Brandywell Road and those in Belvedere Gardens. It doesn't appear to be registered and may be retained by the developer of the houses. The extension of it towards the Red Church is owned by Shropshire Council having been dedicated by Second City Homes in 1995.

As with anything some care and maintenance is needed as it is open to the public and there is some fly tipping and overgrown trees. It isn't a great issue but it is worth researching ownership. As I understand it the land for development was sold by a Mr Farmer who sadly died a few years ago. He may have local relatives and I wonder whether local knowledge would solve the mystery. Any help or advice you can give would be very welcome...'

2) Roslyn and Evelyn Davies of Jackfield

'...My husband and I have begun walking a circular route which begins at Coalport and takes in Jackfield before we cross the War Memorial Bridge back to Coalport. It's a route we used to walk pre-Covid and have recently resumed. In Jackfield we always used to pause at a memorial on the riverbank alongside Ferry Road. The memorial, a small cast iron plaque, commemorated Roslyn and Evelyn Davies, two little sisters who died by drowning in April 1939. It was always well-tended and often there were flowers placed beside it. However, the plaque seems to have disappeared.

I am writing to ask if Broseley Local History Society has completed any research on these children - their families and what actually happened to them. We have asked local residents (when we meet them out dog walking usually :)) but they have given us conflicting reports.

Also, do any of your members know what may have happened to the cast iron plaque - a poignant snippet of local history? ...'

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM IAN WEST

'...We hope to open the Pipeworks for two days as part of Heritage Open Days, on 13 and 14 September...'

We will keep you inform via our FB page

RESEARCH

Some of you might be entitled to a small grant from the History Society for research, however it doesn't include transport, food etc. This is more to access archives and artefacts, for a small project.

For more information and how to apply please contact Steve Dewhirst on steve@broseley.org.uk

OBITUARY

This is with sadness that we have to report the death of Phil Fairclough, who kindly attended our Open Day in Sep 2022 to promote his book "When Europe came to Shropshire" (his pen-name was Philip Swainson).

Here is the link to the article on the newspaper: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/features/2025/06/26/a-historian-who-unlocked-untold-human-stories-from-a-turbulent-period-of-shropshires-history-has-died-aged-84/>



DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Distribution

Thank you to those members who have indicated they would be happy to have electronic copies of the Newsletter. If there are any other members who would prefer it this way please contact the membership secretary, **Janet Robinson**, see her contact details on the Committee's list (right column).

Those of you would prefer to have it in its printed form can continue to look forward to receiving it through the post.

Subscriptions payments (£10 for a single entry and £15 for a joint subscription)

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT ALL PAYMENTS TO BROSELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Broseley Local History Society has changed its accounts to a new building society, so you will now need to make cheques to or transfer money to:

Dudley Building Society

Payee Name: Broseley Local History Society

Society Account Number: 10001008

Sort Code: 60-83-18

Roll Number: 550434577

Broseley Local History Society Committee

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