



# NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society  
*INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY*

February – 2026

Issue: 68

## 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.

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## 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.

### 2026

**Feb.4** – Turnpike Roads in the Broseley area, Steve De-whirst  
**Mar.4** – The Iron Men of Shropshire, Norman Pagett (Annual Wilkinson Lecture)  
**Apr.1** - Broseley's 'Black Plaques', Janet Doody  
**May 6** – In search of the Botfields: local ironmasters and aspiring landed gentry, Diana Clarke  
**June 3** – Summer Walk (Madeley)  
**July 4** - Summer Outing (to be decided)  
**Sept.2** – John Ogilby's 'Britannia', Patricia de Haan. “

## IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR OUR MEMBERS

**Due to the lack of attendance to the Christmas dinner, we have decided to find out what you would really like. We created a survey in Page 7 which is completely anonymous**

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS (Page 8)

Thanks to your memberships subscription 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, by cheque or bank transfer (£10 for a single and £15 for a joint subscription ) contact details for the membership secretary can be found on page 6.

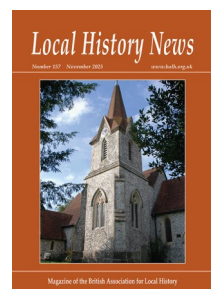
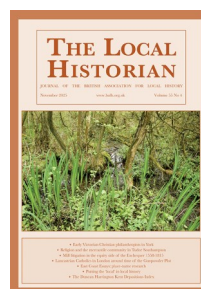
*We would like to encourage you to opt for the digital version of the Newsletter if you can, this would help us to keep our cost down; please let the membership secretary know about your choice. Many thanks in advance.*

## 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): The Local Historian volume 55 & The Local History News number 157



(Pictures courtesy of BALH)

**Unfortunately, no books were delivered this quarter!**



**BARROW ALMSHOUSES RESIDENTS PHOTOGRAPH by Janet Doody** *(Picture courtesy of BLHS)*

For a number of years the Society has been attempting to identify the residents on this photograph; well everything comes to those who wait! Whilst researching the British Newspaper Archives website (for something else entirely!) I came across the very same photograph with the all their names and ages!

The Shrewsbury Chronicle on Friday 17 June 1938 published this photograph with a number of others entitled "A Page of Shropshire News Pictures"; so I can now reveal these 'lost' people as follows:

Standing from left to right

**MRS E. ANSLOW:** Emma nee Hombay (1858-1945), born at Alveley to William, a boot maker and his wife Elizabeth; married Thomas Anslow, as under.

**MR T. ANSLOW:** Thomas Anslow (1859-1944) born in Bridgnorth to Charles, agricultural labourer and his wife Elizabeth; married Emma Hombay (1858-1945) on 17 October 1880 at Oldbury, Shropshire;

**MRS J. KYTE:** Jane nee Cleeton, (1858-1940); born at Shirlett to William, a farmer and his wife Jane; married James Kyte (1854-1897), a horsebreaker of Morville on 28 November 1883 and died at home in February 1940.

**MR G. POWELL:** George Powell (1852-1938) born at Acton Round to John, a farm bailiff and his wife Sarah; he worked was an agricultural worker all his life. In 1921 he worked for Samuel Acton Powell of The Dean; at time of his death he had lived at Almshouses for 17 years.

Seating from left to right

**MISS J. BROWN:** Jane Brown (1847-1943); born at Lillington, Warwickshire to John, a farm bailiff and his wife Alison; Jane's twin Euphemia married and emigrated with her family to the USA. Their father, John was farm bailiff on the Willey estates for 47 years, and Jane was employed at Willey Hall; she died, aged 95 at Smithy Bank. the home of her niece Miss Annie Botfield,

**MRS E. LAWLEY:** Elizabeth Forest nee Taylor; born 1851 in Bridgnorth; married Francis Lawley in 1873

**PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

In November 2025, there was the joint talk with the friends of IGMT, by Rob Higgins "More on Maw".

There was a big attendance and it was a very enjoyable evening.

In December, The Lion held the Society's Christmas party It was a jolly gathering with 2 excellent quizzes created by Dot Cox and Reha Derici.





(Pictures courtesy of Gillian Pope)

### ***The January meeting was cancelled due to adverse weather***

In December the local author Charlie Garratt's new novel, *Lost Lane*, was out. It's the second in the Meg Valentine Mysteries and is set in Broseley in 1751. The first in the series, *The Thief-Taker's Apprentice*, is set in Bridgnorth.

This latest one sees Meg working on her own account as a thief-taker, when she's invited to Broseley by an ironmaster to investigate some thefts and burglaries. However, she's soon caught up in a game of cat-and-mouse when a local man and woman are found dead.

The novels are available through Amazon and other outlets. See all Charlie's books at [charliegarratt.com](http://charliegarratt.com)



**Janet Doody**

### **1) UNUSUAL NAMES**

*I have been researching a family tree for a cousin and an article in the recent BALH publication on unusual names came at a fortuitous time as my investigations turned up the following family:*

Thomas and Jane Mason nee Butler who married on 27 November 1837 at St. Phillip, Birmingham and lived in Dudley.

#### **Children:**

- Western Jane Mason: born 1839
- Avina Victoria Mason
- Caralode Lichfield Kinger Daker Mason: born 1842 (daughter) (sometimes uses Caroline)
- Eastern Angel: born 1843 (daughter)
- North Angel Mason: born 1846 (son) (sometimes uses just North)
- Southangel James Richard Butler Mason: born 12 October 1847 and baptised on 1 August 1849 at St. Thomas, Dudley; (later generally goes by Richard)
- Westangel Honourable Depthany Mason: born 29 March 1849 and baptised on 12 August 1849 at St. Thomas, Dudley (son)
- Angel Alice Fanny Butler Mason: born 18 November 1850 and baptised on 7 October 1860 at St. Thomas, Dudley

*I'm sure you must agree that these names, especially in one family can be classed as 'unusual'! Have you or your family unusually names that may have come 'down the line'?*

### **2) DEMISE OF ONE OF THE LAST OF BROSELEY'S THATCHED COTTAGES:**

The Shrewsbury Chronicle of Friday 17 September 1926 reported that "thatched cottages in Broseley, the heart of a thriving roofing tile industry, are practically non-existent. There are not more than three or four in Broseley itself still wearing the old fashioned thatch. This week bare shinning tiles on one of them in Balls Lane are taking the place of the thick straw. This cottage is occupied by Mr William Harvey, whose family have lived in it for over half a century. The cottage is believed to be 200 years old."



In 1921 William (Henry) Harvey (1876-1941) lived at 6 Woodlands Road, also known as Balls Lane with his brother, Septimus (1867-1943) and their mother Ann nee Higgins (1833-1922). William worked at the Coalbrookdale Company in charge of patterns and Septimus was employed at the Fire Clay Works. Benthall as a clay miner; also living with them was their niece Lizzie Roden (1906-1991). Lizzie was the daughter of their sister Rhoda and her husband George Roden. The two brothers were still at the house in 1939, and William's obituary in 1941 stated that the Harvey family had lived in the cottage for over a century.

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## ARTICLE:

**By STEPHEN DEWHIRST**

### Broseley Spa

The nearest spa to Broseley was at Admaston, which had opened by 1750, with water of high salinity, similar to that of Droitwich. Still open in the 1850s, this had closed by 1890. However, is it possible that Broseley could have become a spa town, and the following appeared in Aris's Birmingham Gazette of 19th May 1746:

To the Printer of the Birmingham Gazette.

Water-drinking being a Thing so much in Fashion at present, and the season now coming on, when so many Persons may make life of it, I beg leave to acquaint them by the Means of your News-Paper, that there is lately discovered at Broseley in Shropshire a Chalybeat Water; which is thought to be the strongest in those Parts or perhaps anywhere else; for a little of it, being lately try'd with a few Tea Leaves, it turn'd in about a Quarter of an Hour's Time to so deep a Purple as approach'd very a black; and a Person taking a Pen and writing with it, the Letters appeared as if wore with pale Ink. So that there is no doubt but it will have as good an Effect, when drank as any Water whatsoever of that kind.

*There is also at the same Place a Spring, which throws up on its Surface a kind of Bitumen or Tar, and which is frequently scum'd off and used as Tar. The Taste of the Water is like that of Tar-water, only not quite so strong nor so disagreeable to the Palate or Stomach. One great Objection as I remember, against the artificial Tar Water relates to the inflammatory Part of it, but this natural Tar Water is believed to be, in a great Measure, discharged from that Quality, though at the same time it has all the good effects of the other, appears from the following instance, viz. a person, who was in a deplorable State of Health; had swelled Legs, Loss of sleep, Shortness of Breath. and Want of Appetite; in short, was in the most declining way, took to drink this Water, and in a few Months, his health was restored that he was as well as he had been at any time for a great many Years before. More instances given, but this is sufficient to show how beneficial the Water is even in desperate cases.*

*If any Persons are inclinable to make use of either Waters they cannot perhaps be more agreeably situated any where at this Time of the Year; having the most of the Convenience of a Market Town added to the Pleasantness of a Country Village; And the River Severn, running for a considerable by the Side of the Parish, affords not only an easy Passage to it, but also a ready Conveyance of whatever they might have occasion to bring along with them; Wherries go by three or four Days in a Week.*

*Yours &c. B.P. May 12, 1746*

*Al states that Chalybeate refers to water rich in iron salts, giving it a metallic taste and often a rusty, reddish tint from iron oxide, historically valued for its perceived medicinal properties, with the most famous example being the Chalybeate Spring in Royal Tunbridge Wells, England, where people would "take the waters" for health. The word comes from the Latin chalybs, meaning steel, referencing the iron content.*

*Although Broseley was an important town at this time, it remained mainly rural, with key industries being coal mining and pottery production, which had little effect on the landscape. No further information has been found about the water's source, but the description of it turning to the colour of ink does not sound particularly appealing.*

*Regarding medicine, Martin Eele extracted bitumen from local rocks since the late 1690s, which was used to treat aches and pains. The 1746 reference probably pertains to 'Betton's British Oil,' patented by Michael and Thomas Betton in 1741; however, in 1745, Edmund Darby, who sold the rival 'British Oil,' stated that it had been made for over 50 years. See Paul Luter's article on 'British Oil' in the 2005 Journal.*

## THE BUILDWAS CHURCH 300 RESTORATION PROJECT

The focus of this project is restoring the church building and churchyard for future generations and sharing its history. Its aim is also to record, store and share the history of the people buried at the church –  
[www.buildwaschurchrestoration.org](http://www.buildwaschurchrestoration.org)

They have also joined the Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) 'Our Digital Ancestor's Project' funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England. This aims to record details of all visible monuments in a churchyard, including a photo, details of wording and condition and once completed will be available online –  
[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-digital-ancestors/](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-digital-ancestors/)

The Restoration Project is asking for volunteers who might be interested in helping supporting this work which will be of extraordinary assistance in both local and family history research. There will be free online training available covering topics such as  
Memorial Photograph Skills  
Memorial Recording Skills  
Researching people from the burial ground.

If anyone is interested in this project please contact:  
Nigel Bowen, Chair of The Buildwas Church 300 Restoration Project at [nigelbowen@outlook.com](mailto:nigelbowen@outlook.com)



PICTURE BY Selwyn Ray

## GET ACQUAINTED WITH A COMMITTEE MEMBER, THIS MONTH MEET...

Jocelyne Barbier

### 1. What or who made you interested into improving your knowledge of History?

When I attended secondary school, I had the most inspiring History & Geography teachers who made me understand the importance of the past, so I could better understand what was at stake for the future of my country (France) and for myself (a soon to be voting citizen).

### 2. Who is your favourite historical character and why? (doesn't have to be British)

Mainly people behind the scenes, like all the entourage of great kings, politicians, etc. Also all the philosophers, writers, artists, scientists who tenaciously (and often bravely) worked at improving the life of their peers .

### 3. For you, what is the most important legacy that the Industrial Revolution left behind?

It enabled people to travel further and cheaply, it improved communications between groups of people, who, otherwise, would have probably never met!  
It was associated with the ideas of exponential "progress" and "knowledge", with the machines /mechanisation freeing men of their manual labour.  
And, since my early years, I saw the start of the Industrial Revolution as the start of the space exploration.

## 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](mailto:steve@broseley.org.uk)

## 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 who 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 and £15 for a joint subscription)**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT ALL PAYMENTS TO BROSELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Broseley Local History Society has changed its bank account to Dudley Building Society.

You can still make your cheques payable to: Broseley Local History Society.

However if you wish to pay your subscriptions through bank transfer, our account details are as follows:

Dudley Building Society

Payee Name: Broseley Local History Society

(\*) Account Number: 10001008

(\*) Sort Code: 60-83-18

(\*) Roll Number: 550434577

(\*) All three references are needed for your payments to reach us. Depending on your bank's system the Roll Number may be entered in the "reference" field.

## Broseley Local History Society Committee

### Committee Members

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | <i>Kathryn Warren is acting as Vice Chair</i>   |
| <b>Secretary</b>                              | Dot Cox   |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                              | Reha Derici   |
| <b>Membership Secretary</b>                   | Janet Robinson<br>26 Coalport Road<br>Broseley<br>TF12 5AZ<br><b>01952 882495</b><br><a href="mailto:janetc46.jr@gmail.com">janetc46.jr@gmail.com</a> |
| <b>Programme Secretary and Journal Editor</b> | Neil Clarke   |
| <b>Newsletter Editor</b>                      | Jocelyne Barbier  |
| <b>Publicity</b>                              | Jocelyne Barbier  |
| <b>Research</b>                               | Steve Dewhirst<br>Janet Doody<br>Richard Sells<br>Neil Clarke   |
| <b>Other Members</b>                          | Gillian Pope<br>Margaret Hazeldine<br>Kathryn Warren  |
| <b>Website</b>                                | <a href="http://www.broseley.org.uk">www.broseley.org.uk</a>  |
| <b>General Email</b>                          | <a href="mailto:steve@broseley.org.uk">steve@broseley.org.uk</a>  |
| <b>Social Media</b>                           | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/BroseleyLocalHistorySociety/">www.facebook.com/BroseleyLocalHistorySociety/</a>                                     |

To see this *Newsletter* in full colour, go to  
<https://www.broseley.org.uk/news.htm>

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## **BROSELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY SURVEY**

Broseley Local History Society would like your help in organising a yearly event to enable our members to gather together and, enjoy a sociable evening. Over the years we hosted Christmas dinners, however, we noticed that the number of attendees was not matching our expectations. This is why we would like your thoughts on what a great social gathering could look like.

This survey is anonymous (no postal or digital address required) and you can either use the free online survey <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/KNEP6I/> or, for those of you who have/prefer a paper version (attached to the back of the February 2026's newsletter), you can hand it back to us at the next society meeting (March 4<sup>th</sup> or April 1<sup>st</sup>) or send it by post to Janet Robinson (address on page 7). **Please fill in and return the survey by the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2026.** Your participation is important to us, so many thanks in advance for your contribution.

**Did you attend the last Christmas dinner (Dec 2025)? Explain why you did or didn't.**

**Would you like a social evening to be held around the Christmas time or at another time of the year, and if so when do you think it would be suitable?**

**Do you prefer a sit-down meal or would you be happy with alternatives such as a buffet, canapes etc.? Tell us more about your preference (s) and why?**

**Where would you like the event to happen? Propose some names of venues and/or locations.**

**Any additional comments:**