

# Newsletter

## Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

*Incorporating the Wilkinson Society*



May 2011

### 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.

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### PROGRAMME

- 1 Jun *Rocks and History of Loamhole Dingle*, a guided walk with Chris and Mike Rayner. See below for details.
- 2 Jul Trip to Blaenavon, Monmouthshire. See page 2 for details.
- 7 Sept *The Wenlock Olympian Society* by Helen Cromarty.
- 5 Oct Annual General Meeting followed by a talk by John Powell *The Coalbrookdale Institute*.
- 2 Nov *Fords and Ferries on the Shropshire Severn, Part 2* by Neil Clarke (joint meeting with Friends of the IGM at Coalbrookdale).
- 7 Dec Annual dinner.
- Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

### NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

- John and Mary Guest, Church Stretton  
Maxwell Jones, Broadstairs, Kent  
Derek Boulton, Broseley  
Jim and Lesley Leek, Broseley

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

#### Summer Walk

Loamhole Dingle  
Wednesday 1 June

7.15 pm for 7.30 start

Meet at Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's new premises in Darby Road, Coalbrookdale.

This year the Society's Summer Walk will start at the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's premises in Darby Road, Coalbrookdale and, with Chris and Mike Rayner as guides, will follow the footpath down Loamhole Dingle. Please wear suitable footwear. This will be followed by a tour of the SGCT's offices, a state of the art eco-friendly

building using indigenous materials. Non walkers are welcome to stay in the meeting room, where light refreshments will be served. Parking is limited so sharing cars would be advisable.

Those members intending to come to this event, whether to walk or just sit and enjoy the evening, are asked to contact Gill Pope on 01952 883960 **by Saturday 28 May** so that arrangements may be made for refreshments.

## July Outing

Blaenavon World Heritage Site

Saturday 2 July

Dep: Broseley Square, 8.15 am

Ret: Broseley, approx 7.00 pm

Cost: Admission free

Coach: £10.00 per person

Lunch (optional): £4.50 per person

Parking: Free parking in the Library car park, Bridgnorth Road

This year's outing will be to the Blaenavon World Heritage Site on the edge of the Brecon Beacons. The morning will start with an optional tour down the Big Pit, an award winning national museum. Sunk in about 1860 this was the last working coal mine in South Wales, closing only in 1980. The guided tours last for about an hour and members are advised to wear adequate footwear. For those who would prefer to remain above ground there is plenty to see, such as the winding engine house, the pithead baths, the blacksmith's workshop and the history of coal mining.

In the afternoon members can visit the nearby ironworks which were built in 1788 and are the best 18th century preserved ironworks in existence. Opened in 1789 the ironworks had three

*The Big Pit at Blaenavon is now an award winning national museum*



Photograph courtesy of Gillian Pope

blast furnaces and employed about 300 men, and were of crucial importance in the development of the ability to use cheap, low quality, high sulphur iron ores worldwide. The site finally ceased full scale production in 1904.

There is a good licensed cafeteria on the Big Pit site which will serve either a ploughman's lunch or a traditional welsh cawl (a soup with meat and vegetables) with a bread roll at a cost of £4.50 per head. This must be booked ahead, or bring your own packed lunch.

To book your place on what promises to be a very interesting day, please complete the form on page 13 and return it, together with your payment, to Michael Pope, Rivendell, 2 Dark Lane, Broseley TF12 5LH, tel: 01952 883960, **by not later than 15 June.**

## PREVIOUS MEETINGS

### Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth by Boat

At the February meeting a full house of members thoroughly enjoyed a virtual trip with Ron Miles when, some 45 years ago, he and his three small daughters took an inflatable canoe down the River Severn from Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth, photographing everything of interest along the way; some of these photographs formed the basis of his slide presentation.

Members were reminded of the fun of the Shrewsbury Carnival, as well as how some of the streets in the town used to look, before Ron launched his canoe and set off downstream to Atcham with its twin bridges. The older of these bridges was built in 1774 while the newer one, opened in 1929, now carries the traffic over the Severn.

*Shrewsbury Carnival about 1966*



Photographs in this article courtesy of Ron Miles



*Of the two bridges at Atcham, the near one was built in 1774, the far one in 1929. This now carries the traffic over the river.*

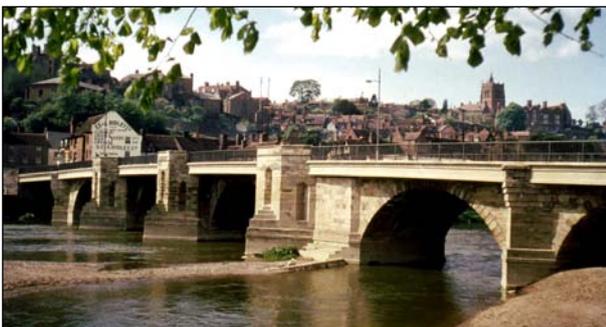
Further downstream they came to the bridge at Cressage from where there is a splendid view of the Wrekin. Here a side trip took them to Much Wenlock to the cinema opposite the Guildhall, although today this building houses the museum and tourist office.

From there it was on to Buildwas and the Iron Bridge where they stopped off to photograph the Jackfield Band being filmed for the Dr Bronowski television series *The Ascent of Man*.

After that it was plain sailing the rest of the way to Bridgnorth where, having successfully reached their goal, Ron finally deflated the canoe, packed up their gear and caught the bus back to Shrewsbury.

*Jackfield Band being filmed for the 1970s BBC television series *The Ascent of Man**

*Last stop, the bridge at Bridgnorth*



## OUR WILKINSON HERITAGE

At this year's annual Wilkinson lecture Vin Callcut reviewed the life and achievements of John Wilkinson, relating them to conditions today. Wilkinson had made most of his early fortune in sales of improved products by better methods of ironmaking, casting and machining. Having learned a lot from his father in Cumbria and Bersham he successfully started his own business in Broseley and soon expanded his interests in areas of East Shropshire and South Staffordshire. Many products were made practicable with his improved production techniques including vital developments of reliable cannon and effective cylinders for steam engines. These gave Britain a great advantage over other counties although he did not gain realistic royalties.

Having reached his capacity in the ironmaking industry, he expanded into other enterprises including copper extraction, refining and dealing, lead mining, refining and fabrication and the metallurgical chemical industry. Other interests included banking, warehousing and canal building. Having bought plenty of land to provide supplies of fuel, ores and limestone he became very interested in agricultural developments. He had some interests in local administration and was key in coordinating the efforts of the residents of Broseley in promoting the building of an iron bridge across the Severn Gorge. Without his persistence Pritchard's design would not have been accepted and pushed through its parliamentary stages. If the bridge had not been built of iron there would be no place called Ironbridge and hence no local World Heritage Site. Wilkinson therefore deserves great credit for the extensive local tourist income although little effort is made to make visitors aware of their good fortune in having such an inheritance.

The slide presentation related many Wilkinson activities to what can still be seen today and is supported by a 24 page paper with about 60 references. An edited version of this will appear in the 2011 edition of the Society's Journal. For the present the paper is available for comment on the website [www.oldercopper.org.uk](http://www.oldercopper.org.uk), but without illustrations.

## SHROPSHIRE'S ORIGINAL IRON AGE

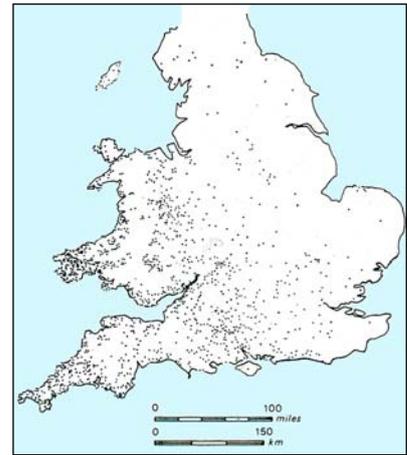
In April Shelagh Lewis, Madeley Living History Project manager, gave a talk on the various hill forts to be found in Shropshire. These had been built during the Iron Age which, in Britain, stretched for about 1,000 years from about 800 BC. Shelagh opened her talk by describing the population of Europe at that time, made up as it was of a number of different tribes, including Celts and Gauls, who shared a similar language. Although there was a distinct hierarchy within the tribes most of the people were farmers who, it seemed, were anxious to make themselves look more warlike – washing their hair in lime apparently made it stick out in a very aggressive fashion. They also let their moustaches grow long – perhaps, Shelagh suggested, to strain the bits from their home brewed beer! Their normal dress was trousers, known as brachae from which comes our word breeches, while both men and women wore cloaks and decorated their bodies with woad or tattoos. The women wore jewellery made from gold, silver or copper alloys, depending on how well off they were.

Although no burial sites have been found in Shropshire, others elsewhere have revealed that there was a definite division of labour between the sexes, the men being buried with things like swords and spears and the women with spindles.

In Britain the names given to the tribes were not, as may be expected, necessarily Celtic but came from the Roman administration. Shropshire, for instance, was known as Cornovii which could mean the 'people of the horn', in other words cattleherders. In pre-Roman times the capital of the area was probably a hill fort on the Wrekin, although under Roman rule this was changed to Wroxeter. The actual boundaries of Cornovii were not as clearly defined as some areas, which had coinage indicating their territories.

Cornovii had an abundance of resources such as lead, copper, coal and iron and was dominated by the River Severn. This river was of such importance to the people of the area that they named it Sabrina – both the name of the goddess of that river in Celtic mythology and the Latin name.

*Distribution of hill forts throughout England and Wales during the Iron Age*



*Photographs in this article courtesy of Shelagh Lewis*

The Iron Age is known for its building of hill forts. A considerable influx of people into the Wrekin area at this time, coupled with a change of climate resulting in harder winters, caused pressure on available land. People began to feel the need for protection, with the result that clusters of hill forts began to be built throughout the area. Whether these were built as cattle stockades rather than defended settlements is open to question, but the design and building of some of these showed remarkable ingenuity. By the end of the Iron Age Cornovii had some 50 hill forts, varying in size from ones big enough for only two families to Titterstone Clee fort which covered 71 acres.

Hill forts were typically situated on elevated ground in order to take advantage of the defensive nature of the site. Some, however, were sited in the marshes which also offered protection. The forts were built with one or more circular earth or stone banks following the contours of the land and often had external ditches. Within the fort would have been round or square huts, some used for housing and others for grain storage.

Prior to the Roman invasion of Cornovii in 47 AD the most significant hill forts were Titterstone Clee, Chesterton Walls, Bury Walls, the Wrekin and Old Oswestry. Of these, Titterstone Clee hill fort, once the largest in Britain, has now been extensively quarried for its dolomite, used for road building. Chesterton Walls covered around 22 acres and is on private property, although a public footpath does run across the site. Bury Walls was planted with forestry in the 1950s which makes it difficult to see in detail. The fort on the summit of the Wrekin covered just under 20 acres and was



*Old Oswestry is now the largest surviving hill fort and is particularly elaborate being unusually sited on a low hill*

once the capital of the Cornovii. It is iconic tongue shaped and was possibly built in two stages; Iron Age pottery has been found there. One of the finest, and now the largest surviving one, is Old Oswestry. Unusually this fort sits on a low hill and consequently its defences are particularly elaborate with a series of five ramparts and ditches as well as two entrances which would have been protected by guard towers.

Another hill fort mentioned by Shelagh was that of Nordy Bank on Brown Clee near Ludlow. This was the setting for Sheena Porter's children's novel of the same name. Published in 1964 the book was awarded the Carnegie Medal for that year.

Perhaps the most interesting of all, however, is the Berth at Baschurch near Shrewsbury. This is unusual because it was built on marshy ground. The site was actually two enclosures joined by a causeway, while another causeway built just under the water linked the fort to firmer ground. While

*The Berth at Baschurch was built on marshy ground and is linked to firmer ground by a submerged causeway*



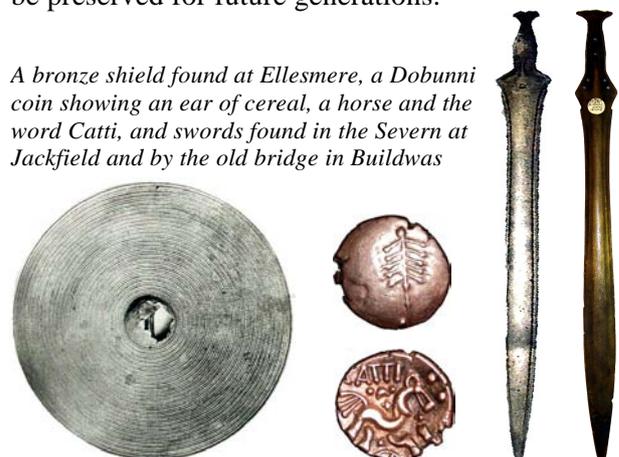
strangers would not know where to find the track, the inhabitants of the fort would appear to be literally walking on water as they crossed the marsh. In 1906 a bronze cauldron some 12 inches wide was found there in the bed of a stream. The site was excavated in the 1960s and in 2005 spoons made from a copper alloy were found in a nearby field.

While ideally archaeologists would like to excavate as many sites as possible, this is both difficult and very expensive, although some of the finds have proved very interesting. For example a shield made from bronze was found in a bog in Ellesmere. Once owned by the vicar of Ellesmere the whereabouts of this has now sadly been lost. Other finds have been a Dobunni Iron Age coin decorated with an ear of cereal, a horse and the word Catti; the Dobunni were a Celtic tribe living in present day Hereford. Nearer to home, a gold torc was found near Telford, an early Iron Age sword was recovered from the Severn in Jackfield and another was found by the old bridge in Buildwas; this is now in the British Museum.

Despite the chance of finding such artefacts as these, the preferred action today is to use non invasive technology, aerial photography having proved particularly useful in identifying hill forts near Shrewsbury.

Unfortunately many of the sites in Shropshire have now been destroyed by the building of roads and the working of farmland or, as is the case with Titterstone Clee, by extensive quarrying. Thanks to the work of people such as Shelagh, however, it is to be hoped that those that do remain will now be preserved for future generations.

*A bronze shield found at Ellesmere, a Dobunni coin showing an ear of cereal, a horse and the word Catti, and swords found in the Severn at Jackfield and by the old bridge in Buildwas*



## Who do I think I am?

This was the question posed by Glyn Bowen at the May meeting when he shared with members the trials and tribulations of researching his ancestors. While doing so he had also asked himself these questions: Where do I come from? What did my ancestors do? Am I part of a large family? Did my family travel? These are some of the answers he found.

While he himself was born in Middlesex, one of his earliest family records is that of a Robert Wild who was born in Broseley in 1663. Another Broseley connection was the entry in the 1841 census showing that one of his forebears, Ann Griffiths (née Hill), was living at Town's End, presumably the present day Pound Lane.

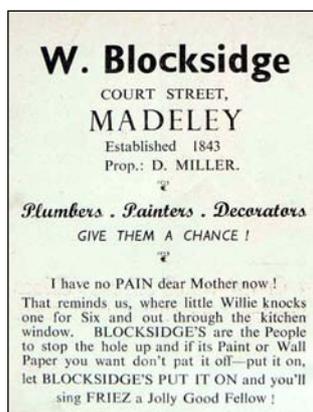
Glyn then showed a very early photograph, taken in 1860, of his great great grandparents, John and Sarah Bowen, who were both born around 1796. The photograph was believed to have been taken in Madeley where they had relocated from Wales about fifteen years earlier. Their son Aaron, the last of their seven children and Glyn's great grandfather, was born in Montgomeryshire in 1839. What took them to Madeley no one knows, but it is possible they went to join other family members.

In 1870 Aaron married Ellen Dyas in Madeley. The Dyas family appear to have lived in Madeley for some time, as a Charles Dyas, born in 1806, was recorded as being a china painter in Coalport. In due course Charles Dyas married a Mary Anne Blocksidge, and was presented with a grandfather clock inscribed W Onions, Broseley. Aaron worked for most of his life on the railways, living in various railway cottages on the Central Wales line.

*Detail of the clock inscribed W Onions, Broseley, presented to Charles Dyas.*

*A poster advertising the services of Blocksidge's, who had premises in Court Street, Madeley*

Photographs courtesy of Glyn Bowen



*Until 1926  
17 High Street,  
Coalport was  
a shop and post  
office. Today it  
is a tearoom  
catering for the  
tourist trade*



The Blocksidges obviously came from a well known local business family. At one time a John and Anne Blocksidge lived at 17 High Street, Coalport where they opened a shop. This building is situated near the bottom of the Hay inclined plane and the entrance to the Tar Tunnel is in the courtyard. In 1845 they opened a post office service there, although it did not have a licence to process money orders until a few years later. The Post Office was finally closed by their granddaughter in 1926. Today it is a tearoom catering for the tourist trade.

The Blocksidge family were also in the business of plumbing, painting and decorating and had premises in Court Street in Madeley. A poster from the 1930s claimed that, should little Willie manage to knock a ball for six through the kitchen window, then Blocksidges were the best people to 'stop the hole up'.

One of the difficulties Glyn says he faced when tracing his ancestors was the fact that the family surname of Bowen was misspelt as Brown on one of the early census transcriptions. Entries were also sometimes duplicated which made it very difficult to follow up any references.

One thing that Glyn had found useful, however, if he went to look at houses where his ancestors had lived, was to take along documentation relating to the search. This had certainly proved useful when he had gone to look at the house where his great grandfather Aaron had been born. Seeing the present owner out in the front garden he had started chatting to her. When he returned to his car, however, he was disturbed to find the local policeman waiting for him, concerned as to his business in the area. When Glyn explained his mission, and produced his documents, the policeman said that they had had a lot of burglaries

lately and a neighbour, seeing him ‘snooping’ outside that house, had become concerned and phoned the police. He was immediately invited into the neighbour’s house for tea and scones.

In conclusion, Glyn said that although he originated from Middlesex, he had lived in various parts of South Wales but was now back in the Telford area where his family had lived 150 years ago.

### JOHN RANDALL, 1810-1910

The proceedings of the recent John Randall day school have been published in the latest issue of the *Transactions of the Wrekin Local Studies Forum*. The day school, organised by Shelagh Lewis, of the Madeley Living History Project, and hosted by the John Randall Primary School in Madeley, commemorated the bicentenary of the birth and centenary of the death of Shropshire’s Grand Old Man. Included in the publication are the presentations of the six speakers at the day school as well as a bibliography of Randall’s works.

In his paper, Neil Clarke covered John Randall’s early years from his birth at Ladywood to the time of his return from his apprenticeship in 1835, and included the descriptions of the area in his boyhood and youth which Randall later gave in his *History of Broseley*. Roger Edmundson briefly described Randall’s work at Coalport China Works where he was the leading artist, specialising in bird painting for 45 years. In a lengthy paper, Hugh Torrens analysed John Randall’s contribution to geology through his fieldwork and writings, which included the publication in 1863 of an important paper on his discovery of Upper Silurian passage beds at Linley which led to his election as a Fellow of the Geological Society.

Barrie Trinder’s short study examined Randall as a historian, and concluded that the series of articles on the Severn Valley which appeared in the Shrewsbury Chronicle during 1858 and 1859 represented Randall’s best historical writing. In a detailed paper, George Baugh described John Randall’s involvement in local government and politics, in particular his six years as a Wenlock borough councillor and his newspaper publishing on behalf of the Liberal cause. Shelagh Lewis’s

piece on Randall’s years in Madeley dealt with his active participation in local affairs and his role as Postmaster for the last thirty years of his life.

A chronological list of all of John Randall’s known published works, compiled by Marilyn Higson, appears at the end of the publication.

For copies of the *Transactions* (60 pages, 8 in colour; price £5.00), contact Shelagh Lewis, tel: 01952 567288 or Neil Clarke tel: 01952 504135.

### COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

The latest commemorative plaque has now been affixed to the porch of the Cemetery Chapel in Ironbridge Road. This chapel was built in 1884 using local bricks and tiles and the first burial took place in the cemetery in the following year.



The chapel, which is no longer used as a Chapel of Rest, has recently been restored and now houses a display of artefacts of local interest, including a number belonging to the Society.

Further such artefacts would be welcome and anyone who may have items of local interest is asked to contact Michael Pope on 01952 883960.

### JOHN WILKINSON MONUMENT

Many members will remember the Society’s 2005 trip to visit Castlehead, John Wilkinson’s home in Morecombe Bay. They may also remember seeing his cast iron memorial in the nearby village of Lindale. Now this vast 40 feet high iron obelisk is undergoing some much needed restoration. After three years of fundraising by the community, English Heritage has agreed to make up any shortfall and during the next few weeks work on both the interior and the exterior will be taking place. Already scaffolding has been erected and the exterior is being prepared and coated to make it, in the words of Jane Hall who has been heading up the fundraising, ‘the smartest chunk of cast iron around’.

Anyone who would like more information on this should contact [janehall47@sky.com](mailto:janehall47@sky.com) or visit <http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=289557&id=646204359&l=85f6e654ae>.

## **SEVERN GORGE COUNTRYSIDE TRUST**

The Telford Access to Nature Partnership, run by the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, has received further funding to improve access and interpretation in 15 woodland and green places from Apley Castle to the Gorge woodlands.

Interpretation panels are being installed in Lloyd's Coppice, Benthall Woods, the Ropewalk, Dale Coppice and Lincoln Hill while Green Gym volunteers have installed two benches in Rough Park and built a raised garden bed in Madeley Orchard.

During the Ironbridge Walking Festival in May a new circular way-marked route was opened in Dale Coppice and Lincoln Hill, while four panels interpret locations along the Sabbath Walks. These latter were built by Quaker ironmaster Richard Reynolds in the 18th century to encourage workmen to walk with their families on Sundays instead, it is said, spending their time in the local alehouse.

During the summer holidays a programme of weekly guided family walks will be held. Cost will be £1.00 per person and booking is essential.

For more information tel: Cadi Price 01952 433880 or email: [cadiprice@severngorge.org.uk](mailto:cadiprice@severngorge.org.uk).

## **BOOK SCENE**

Some while ago the Society published a book, *John Wilkinson – Ironmaster Extraordinary*, by Ron Davies of Bradley. This is a first rate brief account of Wilkinson's life and work, illustrated with exceptional line drawings by the author.

Now they are about to publish a further book, *John Wilkinson, King of the Ironmasters*, by the late Frank Dawson of Castlehead. This is a more extended account giving a remarkable insight into Wilkinson's thinking and relationships. Neither author has charged for their copyrights.

The Society is now pleased to say that the History Press of Brimscombe Port has agreed to publish this book. This will give the Society the benefit of their distribution network, greatly extending national and international awareness of the importance of this local hero. They offer generous terms and the Society is in discussion with them regarding going ahead with a target date of late 2011.

## **BOOKSHOP**

The proceedings of the John Randall day school held in Madeley in September 2010 have been published in the latest issue of the *Transactions of the Wrekin Local Studies Forum*. For copies of this publication (60 pages, 8 in colour; price £5.00), contact Shelagh Lewis, tel: 01952 567288 or Neil Clarke tel: 01952 504135.

## **WHAT'S ON?**

### **Museum of the Gorge**

Season of evening plays

April-September, 7.30 pm start

Tickets £10.00 (concessions £7.50)

This season of light hearted plays suitable for all the family will be staged by the Sundial Theatre Company at the Museum of the Gorge from April to September. *Weekend Breaks* by John Godber will run on selected dates from Easter while *A Bolt from the Blue* by Shropshire author Davis Tristham will run from July.

Further information from Ironbridge Visitor Information Centre tel: 01952 433424 or visit [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk).

### **Blists Hill**

Shropshire Team Challenge

Sat 28 May, 2.00 pm

On Saturday 28 May Ironbridge Gorge Museums and Shropshire Countryside Access will be competing for a place in the Shropshire Team Challenge, part of the Shropshire Olympian Festival being held in Shrewsbury Quarry from Friday 17 June to Sunday 19 June. The teams will be dressed in Victorian costume and will be competing against one another in a range of traditional sports including tossing the bale, catching the pig, putting the shot, the eight legged race and jingling.

Twelve teams of twelve people representing towns and villages across Shropshire will take part in the grand finale of the Shropshire Team Challenge and the overall winners will be presented with a cup, donated by sponsors Tanners Wines, by the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire at the closing ceremony on 19 June.

Further information from [www.shropshire1864.org.uk](http://www.shropshire1864.org.uk).

### **Blists Hill**

Queen Victoria's birthday celebrations

Sat 28-Mon 30 May

The highlight of this weekend will be the daily concert on the Green, starting at 2.00 pm, which will include bagpipe players, drummers and the Wellington Brass Band. There will also be a Punch and Judy show and hands on activities for children as well as performances by the Kaleidoscope Theatre Company and the Prince Albert Players, a company of strolling players.

Further information from the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre tel: 01952 433424 or visit [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk).

### **Severn Gorge Countryside Trust**

Telford Access to Nature Guided Walk

Fri 3 June, 2.00-4.00 pm

Meet at Station Car Park, Ironbridge

This guided walk will be along the Severn Valley Way from Ironbridge to the cooling towers and back, with opportunities to explore both nature and heritage along the way. The walk, which is flat and level along a wooded track, is suitable for families but under 16s must be accompanied. Sturdy footwear is essential.

To book your place tel: 01952 433880 or email: [cadiprice@severngorge.org.uk](mailto:cadiprice@severngorge.org.uk).

### **Tenbury on the Home Front 1941**

Sat 9 and Sun 10 July

Tenbury Wells

Tenbury and District History Society is planning a Living History Weekend to remind people that everyone, even in their quiet part of England, had a role in winning the war. The weekend of activities is planned to recreate this unique time in the history of Tenbury and will showcase such things as how people were able to make do and mend and what a week's food ration looked like.

Anyone who would like to participate or find out more should visit [www.tenbury1941event.co.uk](http://www.tenbury1941event.co.uk).

### **Step Back in Time**

Sat 16 July-Tue 19 July, 10.00 am-6.00 pm (Tue 4.00 pm)

Claverley Village Hall

Admission £1.00

Claverley Memories Local History Society is holding a family history exhibition where information on family and house history will be available to everyone. There will also be stories, photographs and memorabilia of its people from estate owners to farm labourers as well as the travellers who journeyed to and from Claverley.

This exhibition coincides with the village's Flower Festival making it a worthwhile day out for visitors.

For more information tel: 01746 710154 or email: [claverleymemories@hotmail.com](mailto:claverleymemories@hotmail.com)

### **Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron**

Ironbridge Gorge Brass Band Festival

Sat 16 July, 11.00 am-5.00 pm

Sun 17 July, 11.30 am-6.00 pm

Last Night of the Proms Concert

Sun 17 July, 7.30 pm

This year, the Ironbridge Gorge Brass Band Festival will be celebrating the World Heritage Site's 25th anniversary with a specially commissioned piece of music by British composer Matthew Hall. It will also showcase some of the finest brass bands from Shropshire and surrounding counties. The Last Night of the Proms concert will be held on the Saturday evening at 7.30 pm.

For further information, or to book tickets online, visit [www.ironbridgebandfestival.co.uk](http://www.ironbridgebandfestival.co.uk), or tel: 07980 475335. Tickets are £10.00 per person and the proceeds of this concert will be donated to the Severn Hospice.

### **Blists Hill Victorian Town**

Outdoor performance of Macbeth

Sat 23 July, 7.00 pm

Tickets £11.00 (concessions £8.00)

Oddsocks theatre company will be presenting Macbeth, one of several events celebrating the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad Open Weekend. Tickets in advance from Blists Hill entrance shop or the Ironbridge Visitor Information Centre, £11.00 for adults and £8.00 for concessions. Available at the gate on the night, subject to availability.

For further information tel: 01952 433424 or visit [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk).

### **Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival**

Ironbridge

Sat 24 September, 12.00 pm onwards

This, the 7th Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Festival, is particularly significant as it celebrates the 25th anniversary of the designation of the area as a World Heritage Site.

The Wharfage will be closed to traffic during the day to allow for a giant street market, while in the evening there will be a spectacular light show and firework display against the backdrop of the Iron Bridge. There will also be a variety of community and art activities as well as street entertainment.

For further information call the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre tel: 01952 433424 or visit [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk)

### **Ironbridge Coracle Regatta**

Dale End Park

Ironbridge

Mon 29 August, 12.00-4.00 pm

Coracle makers and paddlers from all over Britain will be participating in a series of fun races such as coracle polo matches and team games, while beginners can have a go using traditional coracles handmade by the Green Wood Centre charity, or bring their own. There will also be a variety of land based activities as well as arts and craft stalls.

For further details call the Green Wood Centre tel: 01952 432769 or visit [www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk](http://www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk).

### **Our Sporting Life: Sporting Heroes**

Coalbrookdale

21 March 2011-29 February 2012

This exhibition will celebrate local heroes and their achievement and will include photographs and prints relating to local football, cricket and quoits teams, as well as rowing clubs and coracle racing. Featured will be Billy Wright, Richie Woodall and Captain Matthew Webb.

### **Our Sporting Life: The Science of Sport**

Enginuity

4 April 2011-9 September 2012

This exhibition will focus on the relationship between science and sport, including how technological advancements have shaped

achievements and performance in the elite sporting world. The star exhibit will be the Olympic Eight rowing boat which won gold for Great Britain in the Sydney Olympics.

### **MAILBOX**

**Can anyone help me with information about Orchard House/Farm and who the past occupants may have been?** I am trying to determine if my Jones ancestors would have lived there from about 1790 onwards. I have been told that William and Maria Jones, plus William's grandfather, another William, had a farm there in the mid 19th century. I have also seen a copy of the 1838 tithe apportionment record and wonder how to find out more about some of the names on the list.

Shirley Runte

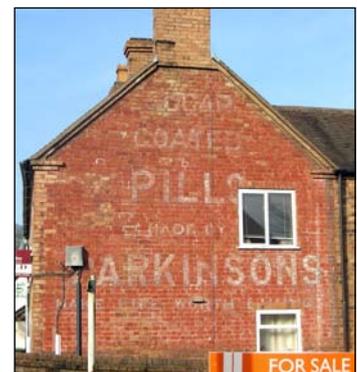
[Shirley.Runte@cspconsult.com](mailto:Shirley.Runte@cspconsult.com)

*The only source I know of is the census. I do not think it was ever a farm as I have never come across a reference to this and its location makes it unlikely. Perhaps one of our members can help.*  
Steve Dewhirst

**In your report on Neil Clarke's talk on *Memories of the Coalport Branch* in the February 2011 Newsletter**, he quotes Ivor Brown as referring to the building near Madeley station on which was painted the advertising slogan 'Pilkington's Pills are good for you'. I fear Mr Brown's memory does not serve him too well as on the end of that building in Station Road there is still the sign, now somewhat faded but surely the one he means, reading 'Sugar coated pills made by Parkinsons make life worth living'. Or perhaps there were two signs?

Rob Breeze

[robbreeze52@gmail.com](mailto:robbreeze52@gmail.com)



*Pilkington's or Parkinsons'? This sign can still be seen on a building in Station Road, Madeley*

**I am trying to find records of the baptism of my ancestor Harriet Asbury or Astbury (1792/3-1871).** In 1816 she married Edward Jones at Wrockwardine and they lived at Hadley. In the 1861 census her place of birth is given as Broseley. In the 1851 census it could be either Broseley or Madeley. Her brother William was a popular nonconformist preacher and the Asbury Memorial Chapel (Holyhead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham) was erected in commemoration of him.  
Dr Selby Whittingham

[selbywhittingham@hotmail.com](mailto:selbywhittingham@hotmail.com)

*I am familiar with the name Astbury from Francis Astbury who was also a well known Methodist Preacher from near West Bromwich but it is not a name which was common in Broseley. Unfortunately I do not have any records which mention the Astbury family in Broseley. I would suggest you contact the Shropshire Family History Society who may be able to help.*

*Steve Dewhirst*

**I am looking for any information on Rudgewood Farm and Rudgewood Cottages.** From my research I have found that both my great great grandparents Richard and Ellen Penny, born 1846 and 1851, and my great grandparents Thomas and Helen Penny, born 1873 and 1874, lived in the cottages and worked on Rudgewood Farm and also in the brickworks. I have traced their children but would like more information on where they may have lived.

Jackie Bacon

[jackie.bacon@sky.com](mailto:jackie.bacon@sky.com)

*If you look at the map on our website <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/Shitlett.jpg>*

*Rudgewood Cottages are in the top left hand corner marked B.M. Rudgewood Farm is in the top left hand corner of the map to be found here <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/apley.jpg>.*

*The cottages and farm still stand.*

*Steve Dewhirst*

In reply Jackie Bacon writes:

It is not often that my mother of 82 is stuck for words, but the pictures you sent certainly did it! In fact, she had to sit down! Apparently my mother and her five brothers were brought up in



*Rudgewood Farm is still there, while the cottages are situated along the Bridgnorth Road*

Rudgewood cottages, as were her mother and all her five sisters and one brother. My mother has told me many stories of the cottages and their life in Rudgewood, to see them again was fantastic for her. It is hard to believe that so many families were brought up in the tiny three roomed cottages, as they were then. I believe that the cottages were paupers' cottages and that they were tithe cottages which went with Rudgewood Farm. Do you also have any information on Willey Hall as it seems that the men in the family worked on the farm and Hall estate and the women were in service at the Hall.

I had no idea that researching my family would be so fascinating and bring back so many happy memories for my family. Many, many thanks for your help and time, you have not only made my mother very happy but also got her and her brother back on speaking terms as they could not help reminiscing over old times!

*The cottages would probably have been owned by the Willey Estate and rented out to workers on the estate; you can find out details of Willey Hall at [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22889#s2](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22889#s2). The Hall is still occupied by the Forester family.*  
*Steve Dewhirst*

**The photograph of a house in King Street which appeared in the November 2010 Newsletter** reminds me of a story we have been told about that building. We live in the house just behind and to the right of the man in the picture, and the buildings on the left were once attached to our cottages. One of these buildings contained a baker's shop which regularly displayed its wares in the sunny window. These apparently proved a great attraction to the bakery cat which would



*The house in King Street on the left of the picture was once a bakery where the cat used, so it is said, to sleep on the warm loaves in the window*

sleep in the window, sunbathing on the warm loaves. Perhaps the local bread buying populace was put off by this unusual addition to the window display, as the shop was closed and demolished in the 1960s or early 70s!

Dot Cox  
ericanddot@yahoo.co.uk

**I was interested to read the article in your Society's 2010 Journal** regarding the Syner's Hill windmills as this made clear to me why the Syner's Hill pit was said to be in Broseley rather than Benthall, whereas all the Syner's land in the 17th century had been the other side of Benthall brook.

I have been trying to locate exactly where in Broseley Thomas Taylor (1693-1740) had his pipemaking shop and have found that Thomas Syner (1604-1685) is likely to have inherited William Oakes' house when he married his widow in 1675 and following her death in 1676. It would appear he was already living there in 1669.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<i>Chairman</i>	Gillian Pope
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William Oakes seems to have been running an inn in 1645 (as well as being a collier) and his inventory suggests that this may still have been the case in 1669. Any reference you might find to this William's house would be of great interest. I know his son William had his own separate house in Broseley.

Peter Taylor  
[peter.taylor@bristolport.co.uk](mailto:peter.taylor@bristolport.co.uk)

*Oakes certainly was a local name and from the 1676 map a William appears to be living by the river at Jackfield. This may be the house occupied by his widow. Some of the Oakes family had pubs but the first reference I can find is in 1795. If you have any more details of William as an innkeeper we may be able to track the house down from that. It is unlikely that the building survives as most if not all of the buildings in that part of Jackfield date from the 18th century or later.*

*Steve Dewhirst*

In reply Peter Taylor writes:

If the 1676 date is correct, the house on the map is probably William Oakes Jnr's house. As William Oakes Snr died intestate his widow Jane would have got the inn/house, and the Hearth Tax of 1672 shows widow Oakes and William Oakes as owning two separate properties. Evidence of William's involvement as an innkeeper comes from several sources – Randall's *History of Broseley* which refers to two trowmen drinking at William Oakes' house where one had 'spent but a penny'; Bailiff's Court cases relating to his widow Jane having debts for hops and barley malt; and an inventory showing more beds than his family would have needed.

*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](mailto:steve@broseley.org.uk). Any respondent without access to email may pass on information to any member of the committee.*

**To see this Newsletter in full colour visit the website at [www.broseley.org.uk](http://www.broseley.org.uk).**

# BROSELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## July Outing to Blaenavon World Heritage Site

Saturday 2 July 2011

Leaving Broseley at 8.15 am and returning approx 7.00 pm

*Michael Pope, who visited the Big Pit earlier this year, gets ready to go down the mine*



This year's outing will be to the Blaenavon World Heritage Site in southeast Wales. The morning will start with an optional guided tour down the Big Pit. This lasts for about an hour but for those who would prefer to remain above ground there is plenty to see, such as the winding engine house, the pithead baths, the blacksmith's workshop and the history of coal mining.

In the afternoon members can visit the nearby ironworks which were built in 1788 and are the best 18th century preserved ironworks in existence. Opened in 1789 the ironworks had three blast furnaces and employed about 300 men, and were of crucial importance in the development of the ability to use cheap, low quality, high sulphur iron ores worldwide. The site finally ceased full scale production in 1904.

There is a good licensed cafeteria on the Big Pit site which will serve either a ploughman's lunch or a traditional welsh cawl (a soup with meat and vegetables) with a bread roll at a cost of £4.50 per head. This must be booked ahead, or bring your own packed lunch.

Please return the booking form below, together with your cheque made out to Broseley Local History Society, to Michael Pope, Rivendell, 2 Dark Lane, Broseley TF12 5LH, tel: 01952 883960, **by not later than 15 June.**

## BOOKING FORM

### July Outing to Blaenavon World Heritage Site

Saturday 2 July 2011



Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

No of persons @ £10.00 per head: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: £ \_\_\_\_\_

No of Ploughman's  
Lunches @ £4.50 per head \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: £ \_\_\_\_\_

No of Cawl  
Lunches @ £4.50 per head \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: £ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total payment:** £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to Broseley Local History Society and **return this form by not later than 15 June** to Michael Pope, Rivendell, 2 Dark Lane, Broseley TF12 5LH, tel: 01952 883960.