

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



November 2009

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

- 6 Jan *More Memories of Broseley* with Joan Griffiths
3 Feb *The Origins and Legacy of the Royal Oak* by Alan Lewis
3 Mar *Watermills in the West Midlands* by Tim Booth
7 Apr Annual Wilkinson Lecture, *William Withering*, by George Evans
5 May *The Life and Times of George Pritchard* by Michael Pope

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

CONTENTS

Programme	page 1
New Members	page 1
Christmas Dinner	page 1
Annual General Meeting	page 2
Previous Meetings	
The New Free Bridge	page 2
The Wrekin Brewery	page 6
Obituary	
Mollie Dixon	page 8
Broseley Jitties Trail	page 8
Antiques Roadshow	page 9
Broseley Cemetery Chapel	page 9
What's On?	page 10
Bookshop	page 10
Mailbox	page 10
Christmas Dinner booking form	page 13

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Graham Hollox, Jackfield
Pam Hurley, Abbots Langley, Herts
David Old, Padstow, Cornwall
Alan and Pam Wood, Homer
Ann Wynn, Jackfield

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Wednesday 2 December
The Lion, High Street
7.30 for 7.45 pm
£19.95 per person



The Society's Christmas dinner is once again being held at The Lion in the High Street. Make sure to book your place by **not later than Wednesday 25 November** by completing the form on p13 and returning it with your payment to Janet Robinson, 26 Coalport Road, Broseley TF12 5AZ.

Cheques should be made payable to the Broseley Local History Society.

Please note that if you were given a booking form at the November meeting, the menu did not include turkey and all the trimmings. This has now been rectified, so if you have already

Newsletter

would like to wish all its readers a

**Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year**



made your choice and wish to change it please contact Janet Robinson on 01952 882495.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the AGM chairman Gillian Pope reported on the year's activities. These had included an interesting programme of talks as well as a guided tour of the Hay Cop and a personalised tour of the Black Country.

The Society was continuing to commission commemorative plaques for places of interest around the town. Two had already been installed on Raddle Hall and the Social Club; another two, for Whitehall and Victoria Hall, were in hand. These had all been made by Roger Fewtrell at Blists Hill.

In addition to thanking the committee for their ongoing support, Gillian also thanked Steve Dewhirst for his upkeep of the Society's website which contains such a wealth of information.

The treasurer's report showed that the Society's finances were in a reasonable state. It was, however, proposed to increase subscriptions to £6.00 for a single member and £10.00 for a couple. This motion was carried with immediate effect.

All members of the committee were unanimously re-elected. In addition Shelagh Keenan, who had indicated she would be willing to stand, was elected. Gillian Pope was then confirmed as being chairman for the coming year.

All subscriptions are now due and should be made to Janet Robinson, 26 Coalport Road, Broseley, TF12 5AZ, tel: 01952 882495. Please make your cheque payable to the Broseley Local History Society.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

THE NEW FREE BRIDGE

In September John Freeman gave an illustrated talk on the construction in 1994 of the Jackfield Bridge, more commonly known as the New Free Bridge, which spans the River Severn downstream of the famous Iron Bridge. John was uniquely placed to give this talk, as his plant hire firm supplied equipment to almost every contractor involved in its construction.

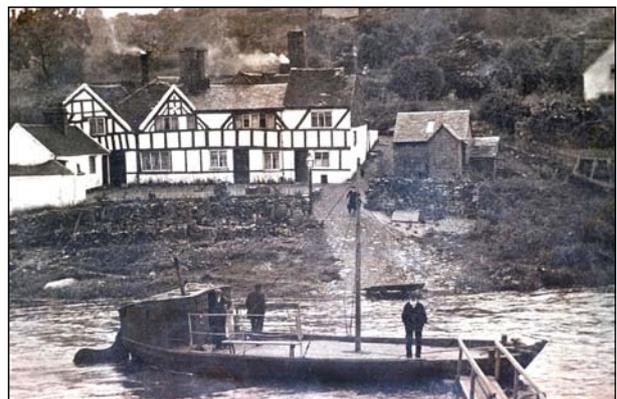
In the late 1700s the only bridges across the Severn Gorge had been at Buildwas to the west and Bridgnorth to the south. With the growth of industry in this area, however, it was becoming increasingly apparent that there was a need to replace the existing ferries with a safer and more commercially viable method of crossing the river.

In 1779 the construction of the world's first iron bridge, linking Broseley with Coalbrookdale, was begun. Further downstream, a wooden bridge, linking William Reynolds' Coalport china works with the south bank, was built in 1780. This bridge, however, was swept away in the disastrous floods of 1795 and was only rebuilt in 1799, using part wood and part iron. The medieval stone bridge at Buildwas had also been destroyed in these floods and was subsequently rebuilt to a design by Thomas Telford using iron cast at Coalbrookdale.

Despite these new bridges, however, the workers at the busy port of Jackfield on one side of the river and the industrial workings of Madeley on the other still had to cross either by coracle or by the ferry operated by the owners of the Dog and Duck public house. It was to be another hundred years before any further bridges were built in this area and it was only in the early 1900s that public demand grew so great that plans were made to build a bridge at this point.

Funded partly by public subscription and partly by a Mr R Haynes, who left an amount of £600 for the benefit of the residents of the town of his birth, it was completed in 1909 at a cost of £1,596 and was the first toll free bridge crossing the Gorge.

The ferry run by the Oswell family, who also kept the Dog and Duck pub on the Jackfield side of the river



Although officially named the Haynes Memorial Bridge, it very quickly became known as the Free Bridge.

The proposed erection of this bridge did not, however, meet with everyone's approval. Not unnaturally the owners of the ferry did not relish the loss of income which they would suffer. Neither did the owners of the Iron Bridge. Their answer to the loss of their toll fees was to build a barricade across the access road.

Unfortunately for them, this road ran through land belonging to Lord Forester who, being fully in support of the bridge, ordered them to take the barricade down. For the general public, however, a bridge promised huge advantages and some 5,000 grateful people attended its opening.

The bridge was completed in six months at a cost of £1,596.

The opening on 26 June 1909 was attended by some 5,000 people. Officially named the Haynes Memorial Bridge it quickly became known as the Free Bridge as it was the first toll free bridge across the Gorge



The bridge had an open spandrell design spanning 230 ft (approx 70 metres), with a central span of 87 ft (approx 26 metres) and two half arches springing from eight piled points



As its name suggests, the Iron Bridge had been the first bridge in the world constructed entirely of iron. Telford's design for the new Buildwas bridge had also used this material, although developments in this field had allowed for a much lighter framework. The new bridge at Jackfield now followed this trend for using the latest technology by being one of the very first bridges to be built of ferro-concrete.

Ferro-concrete was a relatively new material, the development of which had been pioneered by François Hennebique. Although Hennebique held the patent, it was another Frenchman, Louis Mouchel, who introduced the use of it to Britain when he designed the Weaver & Co Mill in Swansea. Built in 1898 this was the first entirely reinforced concrete fully-framed structure in the country.

As early as the 1930s, however, the Free Bridge was beginning to show signs of corrosion and in 1935 and again two years later concrete was sprayed onto the existing structure to strengthen it, a process known as guniting. In 1937 the authorities introduced a weight restriction of eight tons. This meant that, among other disadvantages, beer lorries could no longer cross at that point.

The Weaver & Co Mill in Swansea was the first entirely reinforced concrete fully-framed building in Britain. It was designed by Louis Mouchel in 1898 using Hennebique's patented method



It could be a perilous crossing when the river was in flood



The idea that the supply of ale to their inns and pubs would be severely hampered was too much for the people of Broseley and the restriction was changed to 12 tons. Later on it was changed yet again to 10 tons – presumably beer lorries had got lighter in the intervening years!

Guniting was again tried in 1961 and 1969, but by the 1980s it was becoming obvious that more drastic action had to be taken. In 1985 a Sandberg Analysis was carried out which showed signs of severe corrosion and it was clear that the bridge was in urgent need of rebuilding. As a temporary measure a bailey type bridge was built on top of the existing bridge but this could only take a single lane of traffic and was controlled by traffic lights.

Following the Gifford Report on the replacement of this bridge, a public enquiry was held in 1990 with regard to both its design and its positioning. After much debate its modern design was accepted and the go ahead was given to knock down the existing bridge and build the new one on the same site.

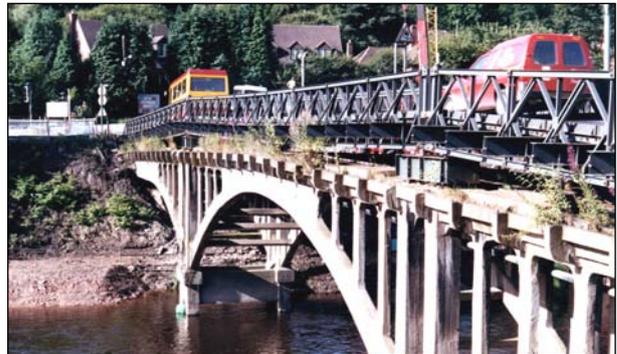
Work proper started in 1993 when a bailey bridge for vehicular traffic was built slightly upstream and the temporary bridge was dismantled allowing the original bridge to be demolished.

Since both the Iron Bridge and the Free Bridge had been pioneers in the use of new materials, it was not surprising that once again ultra modern materials should be chosen for the construction of this latest bridge – in this instance tubular steel and an asymmetrical cablestay design.

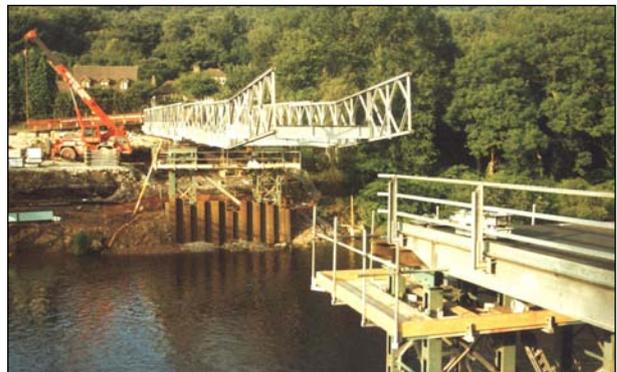
The building of this new bridge was not without its challenges. The design was for a twin A framed tower with an asymmetric cablestay. It had a span of 57 metres, a tower height of 30 metres and an overall weight of 190 tons; the tower alone weighed 70 tons with eight pairs of 96 mm diameter cablestays.

In order to accommodate the combined weight of the tower, the concrete infill and the load borne by the cablestays, 42 concrete piles had to be driven into the south bank. 1.2 metres in diameter, they went down 12 metres through two coal seams and stopped just short of a third. When it came to

As a temporary measure in 1986 a bailey type bridge was built on top of the existing bridge and was designed to allow the existing piers to take the weight of the traffic



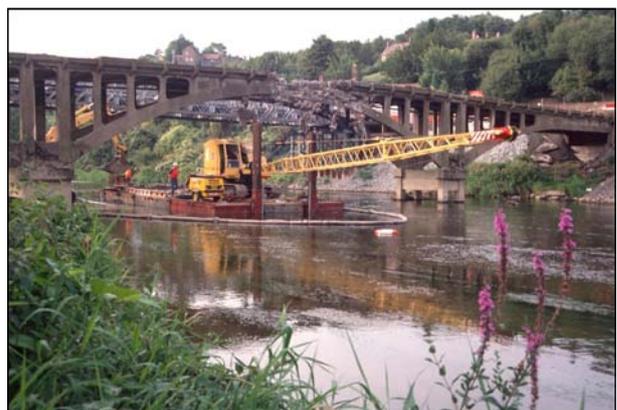
Erecting the bailey bridge before the old bridge was demolished



The Jackfield Band gives the old bridge a send-off prior to its demolition in 1993



A floating crane was used to demolish the old bridge



erecting the tower, it required an 80 ton crawler crane with a 67 metre jib to do the job.

As the bridge started to take shape, however, opinions as to its design began to differ to the point where Gorge Parish Councillor G Newey felt obliged, in July 1994, to write to the *Shropshire Star* in support of its modern design. Residents, he said, had long campaigned for a replacement bridge and had at all stages been consulted before plans were finally passed. He therefore saw no

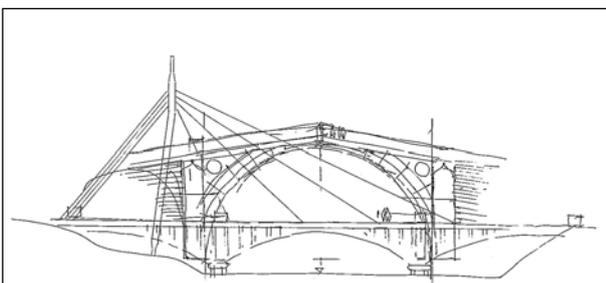


It took an 80 ton crawler crane with a 67 metre jib to hoist the 70 ton tower into place



Andrea Reynolds and Selina Worth, pupils at Coalbrookdale School, bury a time capsule in the new bridge. Does any reader remember what was in it?

A sketch of the proposed new bridge superimposed on one of the Iron Bridge shows their relative sizes



point in people now complaining that they did not like it; what you see is what you are going to get, he said, so get used to it.

The bridge took 16 months to build, cost a total of £1,8 million, and was officially opened by George Raxster, Chairman of Shropshire County Council, on 18 October 1994. Today it has become a modern icon carrying an ever increasing amount of traffic. When it was first opened it carried some 4,000 vehicles a day. Today, where would many thousands more people be without it?

Photographs courtesy of Ron Miles, Gillian Pope, John Freeman and the Shropshire Star

Driving 'Ben', one of John Freeman's company's Benford rollers, at the official opening on 18 October 1994 is Mike Castree of K & M Construction, Wellington, the major sub contractors to Alfred McAlpine. John Challen of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums is driving 'Billy', a Wallis & Steevens steamroller built around the time of the original bridge.

George Raxster, chairman of Shropshire County Council, can be seen on the right walking along the footpath



Like it or loathe it, the bridge is now a modern day icon and the Gorge would not be the same without its contrasting style of bridges



THE WREKIN BREWERY

Following the AGM in October Allan Frost, author of *Breweries & Bottlers of Wellington*, gave a talk on the history of breweries in Shropshire and the Wrekin Brewery in particular. At one time the largest privately owned brewery in England, this latter also made pop and bottled for other firms as well as owning 200 tied houses. Here is a brief overview of just one of the aspects covered in his talk.

While ale and beer had once been the traditional drink of the British people, by the mid 1700s gin had taken over as the most popular drink. There were various factors responsible for this, not least of which was the government of the day's decision to allow the unlicensed production of gin, at the same time imposing a heavy duty on imported spirits. The price of gin dropped sharply, and it quickly became the tippie of choice of the poor. Thought to be responsible for growing social and medical problems, however, in the early 1800s its consumption was discouraged. Since there was no reliable source of clean drinking water,



The original works, trade office and retail shop of the Wrekin Brewery in Market Street, Wellington in the early 1900s

The new premises situated further down the street to which the company moved in 1882



particularly in the towns, the only other choice was to drink beer and ale.

One of the results of this was the opening of central breweries as opposed to existing brewhouses. Among these was the Wrekin Brewery, opened in 1870 by Thomas Taylor in Market Street, Wellington. However, this soon outgrew its premises and by 1882 had moved to larger accommodation in the same street. The original premises, however, were retained as a trade outlet and were eventually sold to Charles Ensor with a licence to produce pop. Thomas Taylor later sold out to John Taylor Williams, George Paddock and Thomas Falshaw. On the death of these two latter, however, it was again sold, the sale including 24 tied houses. Much later it again changed hands when it was put up for auction in 1921.

Enter Owen Downey Murphy, known to all as O D. Born in Ireland in 1874, by 1904 he was a travelling salesman for a mineral water company. When in that year the Ironbridge soft drinks company Long & Co came on the market, O D approached his father for a loan. His father, however, was distinctly unenthusiastic, believing that such a venture could never succeed in Ironbridge, a thoroughly depressed area. He nonetheless lent him the necessary £400.

In some ways, Murphy senior was right. O D soon realised that running a business in Ironbridge, situated as it was in the Severn valley, meant that transport was a problem as it was impossible to take heavy loads in horse drawn wagons more than a short distance. In 1907, therefore, he moved the

O D Murphy bought the Ironbridge soft drinks company Long & Co, despite his father's reservations. The building now houses the Museum of the Gorge, one of the ten Ironbridge Gorge Museums



business to Wellington which, being on the flat, posed no such problems.

It was not long before he expanded his business by taking over the nearby Botanical Brewery and in 1913 bought up Shropshire Brewery, although the terms of the sale dictated that he could not brew beer. He could, however, bottle beer and ales produced by other manufacturers, the most well known one being Guinness. He also owned several farms and as well as soft drinks he began bottling milk – a distinct attraction to the housewife, who had been used to having her milk measured from a churn into her jug.

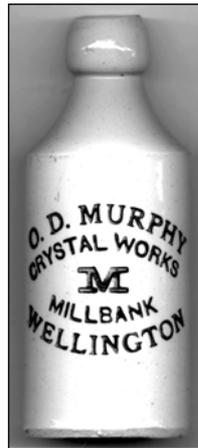
The only thorn in his side now was Charles Ensor's business in Market Street. So he took that over too, effectively ending all local competition in soft drink production.

When in 1921 Wrekin Brewery was again on the market, O D took the opportunity to buy it, retaining John Taylor Williams as brewer/director. This was vital as although the company now had a licence to brew beer, no knew how to do it.

Always the innovator, in 1929 the company began delivery by lorry rather than horse and dray. This had a marked effect on profits as they could now deliver as far south as Kidderminster and as far west as Harlech. In addition the acquisition of Slaney's Vaults in Wellington, Oakengates and Broseley, allowing them to supply wines and spirits, now meant that the company could offer a complete service over a very wide area.

In due course O D appointed his two sons, Graham and Ronald, directors of the company. Like their father, these two men had a good eye for an

O D Murphy's fleet of delivery trucks in c 1930 allowed deliveries to take place over a very wide area



Two examples of the bottles used by O D Murphy's company

Labels of national breweries whose products they bottled

investment and during the years of the great depression took the opportunity to acquire a considerable number of concerns, mainly for their potential property value.

The company was also very conscious of brand awareness, and varying versions of the company name appeared on their bottles.

By 1942 concerns were being raised for the health of O D, now nearing 70 years old, to the point where National Breweries offered to buy out the company which now included 140 pubs as well as the bottling plant and Wrekin Brewery. But on getting the all clear from his doctor O D refused the offer. He died the following year.

O D Murphy's company had mostly catered for the tastes of the working man. In the early 1960s, however, things began to change. Continental lagers appeared on the market and people started taking home bottled beers. The company sought to fight back by introducing Wrekin Ritter, described as 'containing the finest Golding hops and the palest of Shropshire malts'. It was not a success and ideas to invest in lager-producing plant were abandoned.

Another factor was the development of Dawley New Town into the present day Telford and the change from a working population to a middle class one with different drinking habits. Along with this development went the demolition of a number of pubs belonging to the Wrekin Brewery, to be replaced by only nine new ones. But the licences for these were to be put out to tender and

O D's company could not afford to compete with the national breweries.

In 1966 the decision was made to sell out to Greenall Whitley who three years later closed the company down and moved production to Wem. The final nail in the coffin came when Wrekin Ales became known as Wem Ales. In 1975 the old building was pulled down.

With the loss of the name came the end of an era, and when chairman Gill Pope thanked Allan for his informative and nostalgic talk, most members would have agreed when she said that, with Wrekin Ales no longer available, the only thing to do was to go home and have a gin and tonic!

All photographs courtesy of Allan Frost

OBITUARY

Mary Dixon, the mother of Society chairman Gillian Pope and a long time member of the Society, has died at the aged of 94. Mary, known all her life as Mollie, was the only child of Edith and Archibald Oswell who at the time of her birth were the licensees of The Hundred House (now the Punch Bowl) in Bridgnorth. Of her time in Bridgnorth Mollie said that the winter when she was a baby was so cold that she was pushed along the frozen River Severn in her pram.



In 1923 her family moved to Broseley when her father took over the Lion Hotel in the High Street. On moving into the hotel they found that it was extremely run down and so cold and damp that Mollie caught rheumatic fever, from which she fortunately recovered.

Mollie attended primary school in Broseley before going on to Coalbrookdale High School where one of her closest friends was Edith Pargeter, author of the Cadfael novels. At the age of 17 she left school to become a trainee teacher at Coalbrookdale School in Cokehearth, an experience she did not enjoy. She later moved to teach at Morville and then Broseley where she was much happier.

In 1941 Mollie married John Basil Dixon at All Saints' Church, Broseley. The couple made their

home at the Lion Hotel and in 1944 their daughter Gillian was born there. John was a postmaster with premises in the High Street but when Mollie's mother became ill in 1948 she had to give up running the hotel, Mollie's father having died suddenly in 1940. The whole family moved to 81/82 High Street, a shop which had previously been a grocers. Together Mollie and John developed this into a newsagents, toy and fancy goods shop and stationers.

When her husband died in 1980 Mollie gave up the shop and moved to the house in Dark Lane which her husband had built for their retirement just before his death.

Both she and her husband were active members of the Broseley Amateur Dramatic Society and Broseley Tennis Club, while Mollie supported a number of local societies and activities. In addition to being a member of Broseley Local History Society she was a member of the Broseley Horticultural Society, the Severn Flower Club of Broseley and the former Willey WI.

Mollie took great pleasure in her two granddaughters Helen and Caroline, the daughters of Gillian and her husband Michael. Shortly before her death she became a great grandmother when Helen gave birth to a baby boy. Sadly she never saw her great grandson as he and his parents live in Sweden.

Some years ago photocopies of Mollie's extensive collection of photographs of Broseley people and events, taken mainly by her husband who had been a keen photographer, were placed in Broseley Library with a request for information on the subjects. This information will form a valuable asset to the Society's photographic archive.

BROSELEY JITTIES TRAIL

The Broseley Jitties trail was officially launched at the end of September when members of the Broseley Partnership, a steering group dedicated to raising Broseley's profile as a tourist area, walked the quaintly name footpaths which make up the Broseley Wood jitties. These





Gillian Pope, left, Broseley Partnership committee member, and Carol Cooper, Broseley Partnership chairman, demonstrate one of the newly erected swing posts

jitties are of historical interest and were developed over 400 years ago when immigrant workers settled in the area, building their squatter cottages on common land.

The starting point of the trail is the Pipe Museum in Duke Street where an interpretation board has been installed and from where visitors are encouraged to explore the area taking their own route. An illustrated leaflet is now available marking the location of the various jitties and outlining their history and swing posts have been sited along the way. A free audio tour is also available and may be downloaded onto a mobile phone or an MP3 player from a home computer via the Society's website www.broseley.org.uk, or by visiting Broseley Library.

The tour takes about an hour and is already proving popular with visitors to the town.

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW

There was great interest recently when the Antiques Roadshow came to Blists Hill in September, with several Society members anxious to find out what some of their treasures were really worth. Society chairman Gill Pope's great, great grandfather had been a china painter at Coalport China Works and was renowned for his paintings



Vin Callcut, right, also went along. Here Antiques Roadshow's Paul Atterbury examines some of his collection of old copper

of flowers and birds. So Gill took along a copy of his formulae for mixing his colours and was promptly taken off to be filmed and interviewed. Hopefully she will be included in the final programme, which will be screened towards the end of January.

BROSELEY CEMETERY CHAPEL

Last year a plan to refurbish the disused Chapel at Broseley Cemetery and turn it into a Cultural and Visitors' Centre made it through to the finals of The People's Millions. Sadly it did not win. But the project did not stop there and considerable progress has been made this year. The Cemetery Committee of the Broseley Town Council has given the go ahead for the renovation of the outside of the building and work will shortly be starting on making the building weatherproof and safe. The work will include restoring the bell turret and cutting back overhanging trees.



The Chapel was built in 1884 and is a good example of the use of local materials. It has an unusual highly decorative floor, the tiles for which were made by Craven Dunnill between 1868 and 1879. It is thought that they were part of a batch made specially for the Foreign Office in the new Palace Chambers in Westminster and were donated by Craven Dunnill. The Foreign Office has since been demolished so these are possibly the only tiles of their kind in existence. Even more reason why the town should make every effort to preserve its heritage.

WANTED!

Wanted, Santas for Blists Hill. With Christmas fast approaching the Ironbridge Gorge Museums are on the lookout for volunteers to help out at their popular Victorian Christmas Weekends. Anyone who thinks they would make a jolly Santa Claus (or his wife) or even a helpful elf are invited to contact Lucy Andrews-Manion, Volunteer Coordinator at the Ironbridge Gorge Museums on lucy.andrews-manion@ironbridge.org.uk or 01952 601010. White beards, big bellies and red suits provided!

WHAT'S ON?

Ironbridge Gorge Museums

The Engine Shop, Ingenuity, Coalbrookdale

Tuesday 1 December, 5.30 pm

The Ironbridge Lecture 2009

Ironbridge – a Mark of Excellence, celebrating 300 years of innovation and discovery in Coalbrookdale, delivered by Adam Hart-Davis.

Society members are invited to attend and places may be booked by contacting David de Haan on tel: 01952 435934 or email d.dehaan@bham.ac.uk

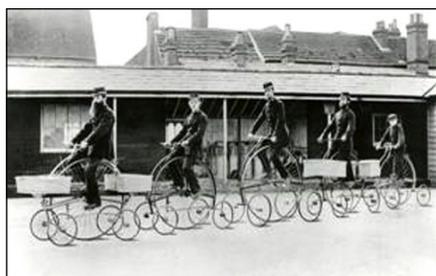
Blists Hill Victorian Town

Sunday 6 December and

Weekends of 12-13 and 19-20 December

A chance to do some Christmas shopping when Blists Hill will be offering a range of unusual gifts in the museum shop as well as a small seasonal market. There will also be carol singers and bands and the chance to visit Santa..

Museum of the Post Office in the Community



Hen and Chicks pentacycles, Hosham, c.1882.

© Royal Mail Group Ltd 2009
courtesy of The British Postal Museum & Archive

A permanent exhibition above the post office in Canal Street, Blists Hill, exploring the role of the post office in the community throughout history, staged by the British Postal Museum & Archive. The first time there has been a modern exhibition at Blists Hill, it will feature a Hen and Chicks pentacycle and a BSA Bantam motorcycle.

Further details from tel: 01952 884391 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

BOOKSHOP

Ironbridge Gorge Geotrails

The Shropshire Geological Society has published another in their series of Geotrails, this time on the Ironbridge Gorge. The glossy pamphlet gives a brief outline of how the Gorge was formed as well as leading you on geological walks through Ironbridge Gorge, Loamhole Dingle, Lincoln Hill, Benthall Edge and the various landslips. It is

available at a cost of £1.95 from Scenesetters, tel: 01938 820777; email: andrew@scenesetters.co.uk.

MAILBOX

I come from a long line of Harris's that originate from Broseley, Ironbridge and Madeley, marrying into such Broseley families as Britton, Hudson, Evans and Powell. Does anyone know how Harris's Green got its name and if perhaps it had anything to do with my ancestors? I know there is not much left of it now as my father remembers it as a larger area, but how big was it?

Sharon Harris

sharmarhar@btinternet.com

In 1621 the area was known as Mr Langley's common after Francis Langley. The earliest reference to Harris Green I can find is from Randall's Broseley and its Surroundings and is from a rent roll of 1745. Confusingly enough the Tithe map of 1838 shows it as Harrisons Green but I think this is a mistake. It was almost certainly named after a Mr Harris who lived there so he may have been one of your ancestors. Exactly why it was called the Green is not clear but there certainly were fewer houses in times past. Have a look at Harrisons Green on the tithe map: <http://www.broseley.org.uk/TitheMap/Broseley%20Tithe%20Map%2004.jpg>

Steve Dewhurst

I am trying to find records of the burial of my great great great grandparents, Samuel and Susannah Mason, who died in the Ironbridge/Coalbrookdale area between 1840 and 1852. Samuel died around 1840 and his wife Susannah definitely died in 1852. It would appear they were both resident in Coalbrookdale at the time of their deaths. I believe that they would have been buried in the area but the church at Coalbrookdale was not founded until 1854, two years after Susannah's death. Does anyone know where people were buried in Coalbrookdale prior to 1854?

Karl Adams

karl.adams@mypostoffice.co.uk

I think it would have been at St Luke's in Ironbridge (1835/6). Burials started from 1846

and it covered Coalbrookdale until the church was built there.

Steve Dewhirst

Can anyone tell me where to look for more details on the marriage of Maria Rowley and William Barker which, according to the IGI, took place on 18 December 1836 at St Leonard's, Broseley. I should like to find the names of Maria's parents. I think her father was called George and I know she had at least one sibling called Elizabeth (Eliza) born circa 1828 in Broseley, but that is all the information I can find.
Pat Wilford
patwilford6@hotmail.co.uk

I am afraid we do not have details of marriages for that period but suggest you contact Shropshire Family History Society who may be able to help.
Steve Dewhirst

I have been looking at your fantastic local history records, in particular the Broseley Registers, and am puzzled by a number of entries that differ by one year exactly from those published on the IGI Index. One instance is in the Broseley Registers which have a John Holmes baptised on 2 February 1746, whereas the IGI has him baptised on 2 February 1747. Can anyone throw any light on the reason for the differences?

Judith Brook
jayb2uk@yahoo.co.uk

Yes this is a little confusing. On our site we have copied the registers as published. The thing I should have noted is that at the time of the registers the year ran from 29 March to 28 March the following year, not 1 January to 31 December. I will update the site to show this information.

I think it had something to do with the change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian calendar to correct a "drift" in the time of midsummer. He deducted ten days from the year 1582 to correct for errors in the Julian calendar. Most of Catholic Europe adopted the new calendar that same year. By 1700 almost all of the Western world had converted from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian. England, however, was a holdout.

Finally in 1751 an Act of Parliament was passed to change the calendar from Julian to Gregorian and to skip 11 days to bring the calendar into line with the rest of Europe. The result was riots all across the country with the people demanding the government 'give them back their 11 days'.

Until then the New Year had begun on 25 March, Lady Day, but following this Act the year 1752 began on 1 January 1752. Later in the year 2 September 1752 was followed by 14 September 1752 to adjust the calendar. So you will often see dates from 1730 to 1752, where the date was from 1 January to 25 March, shown as 1751/2 to indicate that they fall in different years depending on the calendar used.

Steve Dewhirst

According to the 1881 census my paternal grandmother, Sarah Ann Hurdley, then aged 11 years, lived at 25 Foundry Lane, Broseley.

In 1897, Sarah married John Jones at The Birch Meadow Chapel and moved to Cleobury Mortimer, where she and her husband established a grocery/bakery business, and built a bungalow which they named Coneybury. On their marriage certificate my grandmother's residence is cited as Coneybury, Broseley. Her father, John Hurdley (a master farmer) would have been 70 years old at the time. I wonder if he farmed Coneybury Farm at some time to justify the 'Coneybury' in the address or would there have been other residences in the Coneybury area which would have been relevant?

Can one see today where Number 25 and the Foundry itself stood and does anyone know of any photographs contemporary with this date?

Raymond Hurdley Jones
leonora.jones@talktalk.net

There is still a street named Foundry Lane but all the original buildings were demolished around the 1960s and it is now a modern housing estate. I am not aware of any photographs.

Documents from the sale of the estate of John Onions in 1877 show the Lots in the Foundry Lane area. John Hurdley was in a house on Lot 4 and had a garden on Lot 12. In 1880 the local newspaper described the property as having

“good cellering under it, and the Lot comprises Garden Ground, a Good Yard, and Stabling for 6 Horses, with loft over. There is a large Soft Water-tank and a never-failing well of Hard Water with pumps complete, which renders this Lot unusually valuable.”

If John Hurdley was a farmer then he would have been at Coneybury Farm. This farm does still exist and can be found off the Ironbridge Road just outside Broseley.

Steve Dewhirst

Following this correspondence Raymond Jones and his wife visited Broseley and met with James Hurdley in his ironmongers’ shop in the High Street. Mr Jones subsequently wrote again saying:

I cannot thank you enough for linking me up with cousin James Hurdley whom I had not heard of until your email. We met in his shop and it was a dream meeting of two septuagenarian cousins. We



updated a few entries on the family tree which James provided, swapped the odd amusing family anecdote and parted, vowing to keep in touch.

Cousins Raymond Hurdley Jones, left, and James Hurdley outside James’ shop in Broseley High Street

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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	26 Coalport Road
	Broseley
	TF12 5AZ
	01952 882495
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<i>Email</i>	steve@broseley.org.uk

We also visited Coneybury Farm and talked to Jane Roberts there. She said that according to her father, John Hurdley had held a tenancy on part of the farm circa 1900 and we saw the now derelict cottage in which the Hurdley family would have lived. We also visited the cemetery and noted from the gravestone of John Hurdley that he died in 1906 aged 79 years.

A little more information on John and Sarah Jones. Being strong Nonconformists they were instrumental in the building of a new Methodist Chapel in Cleobury Mortimer. They had four children, my father Harold Hurdley Jones who became a haulage contractor, Ralph who worked in and eventually inherited the family grocery business and two girls, Hilda and Amy, who both became teachers.

My wife and I greatly enjoyed our short visit to Broseley, and would like to thank you for the invaluable data you kindly supplied.

Raymond Hurdley Jones

I am currently a student at the Ironbridge Institute taking a masters degree in heritage management. The focus of the assignment I am currently working on is the preservation of working traditions across a number of sites in the Ironbridge area. This will include a number of case studies, one of which will be on Broseley Pipeworks. I should like to include the perspective of local stakeholders and wondered if there is someone able to talk to me about the significance and importance of the works locally?

Sue Barnard

suebarnard@btinternet.com

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 this Newsletter in full colour visit this website at www.broseley.org.uk.

CHRISTMAS DINNER, THE LION, HIGH STREET, 2 DECEMBER 2009

Please reserve me _____ place/s for the Society's Christmas Dinner at a cost of £19.95 a head

Name/s: _____

I enclose cheque/postal order for

Add: _____

£ _____ payable to

Broseley Local History Society

Please return to Janet Robinson,

26 Coalport Road

Tel: _____

Broseley, TF12 5AZ

by **Wednesday 25 November**

Please indicate your choice of starter and main course from the menu below, giving one tick for each person

STARTER

MAIN COURSE

Cream of tomato and onion soup

Roast turkey with stuffing and cranberry sauce

Garlic mushrooms

Roast topside of beef with yorkshire pudding

Duck and pork pâté

Fillet of salmon with cranberry, orange and port glaze

Seasonal melon with fruit coulis

Pork tenderloin with a wholegrain mustard sauce

Crayfish, prawn and lobster tart

Chicken breast wrapped in bacon in a blue cheese and brandy sauce

Vegetarian option - includes Mushroom stroganoff, Nut roast or two other choices

Selection of desserts

or

Christmas pudding

Tea/coffee and mince pies



*Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year*

