

Newsletter

Newsletter of the Broseley Local History Society

Incorporating the Wilkinson Society



February 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.

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PROGRAMME

- 4 Mar *Broseley's Water Supply*, by Michael and Gillian Pope
- 1 Apr *Wenlock Edge, its Geology and Mineral Exploitation*, by Chris Rayner
- 6 May Annual Wilkinson Lecture, *John Wilkinson and the Steam Engine*, by Jim Andrew
- 3 Jun Summer Soirée and Haycop walk, see this page for details
- 4 Jul Coach trip to the Black Country, see this page for details

Further details from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Mr M A Houghton	Broseley Wood
Dr I Hunday	Broseley Wood
Mr J Rowe	Matlock
Mr R Wilkinson	Uttoxeter

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER EVENING

Wednesday, 3 June

Walk down to the Haycop to experience the improvements made by the Haycop Conservation Group and return to the home of Michael and Gillian Pope for refreshments. Those who do not wish to do the walk will be welcome to sit in the garden and await the return of the main party.

Further details available later, but do book this date now for what is always a pleasurable summer evening.

VISIT TO THE BLACK COUNTRY

Saturday, 4 July

This year the Society is arranging a Summer Outing to the Black Country where Ned Williams,

a well known Black Country historian and author and president of the Black Country Society will lead a tour of the area.

To quote Williams “the tour will aim to introduce you to the Black Country, not by showing you the region’s excellent museum, but by taking you around the region itself. You will see the Black Country landscape and topography, as well as evidence of the way it was once industrialised and urbanised. You will also see some of the infrastructure (particularly the canal system) that made these processes possible. Expect to see vast panoramas and tiny details of the region’s past. Come along and be prepared for exploration that takes you off the normal tourist trails.”

Stops will include Sedgley Beacon, Bennett’s Hill, Parkhead Locks, Windmill End (where the Bumble Hole Conservation Centre will provide tea/coffee and a modest buffet), Mushroom Green, Merry Hill (not the shopping centre!) and the Red House Glass Cone at Wordsley. There will be other ‘pauses’ as the day allows.

Details of cost and booking forms available later, or contact Michael Pope 01952 883960.

In the meantime, book this date now for what promises to be a fascinating day out!

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Once again the Society’s Christmas dinner was held at the Lion Hotel in Broseley where guests enjoyed an evening of good food and good company. Mezzo soprano Helen May entertained members with a repertoire of Christmas carols, in which all were invited to join.

An appreciative audience at the Society’s Christmas dinner



Some sang the chorus and some just listened, while Jim Cooper shared a joke with Vera Francis and Richard Sells won two passports to the Ironbridge Gorge Museums



A raffle in aid of the Save the Children Fund raised over £43.00 and the prize of two passports to the Ironbridge Gorge Museums, donated by the IGMT, was won by Richard Sells.

JANUARY MEETING

January traditionally being a Memories Evening, Steve Dewhirst began the New Year by showing a fascinating selection of old photographs from his extensive archive. From the old Linley station he took members on a rollercoaster ride past Apley Hall, which lays claim to being P G Wodehouse’s famous Blandings Castle, to old coal pits, pubs, ferries, bridges, shops, hospitals and people before finishing off with footage from an old newsreel of the 1952 Jackfield slip, with commentary by Eamonn Andrews. Here are just some of the photographs which he shared with the meeting.



From the top and left to right

The railway line running through Linley station, opened in 1862, was rerouted because the owner of Apley Hall did not wish trains to go through his property. After a change of heart, he later cut down trees so he could better watch them go by.

Apley Hall was originally owned by the Whitmore family. The suspension bridge, inset, was built in 1905 to replace the ferry and allow direct access from Apley Hall to Linley station.

This old beam engine at Guests Deep Pit off the Coalport Road was offered to the Science Museum, but was considered too 'make do and mend' to be of interest - but it worked!

An 18th century painting of a coalpit near Broseley showing pithead, banksman's hut, whim, packhorse, ventilation chimney and tramway.

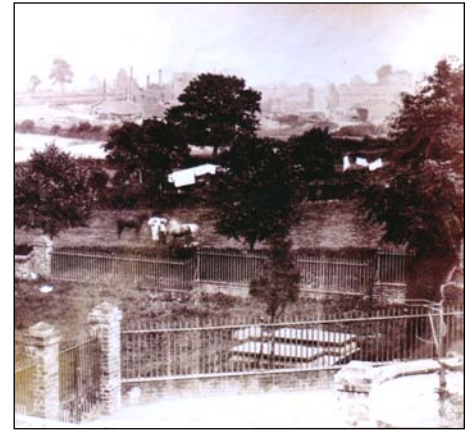
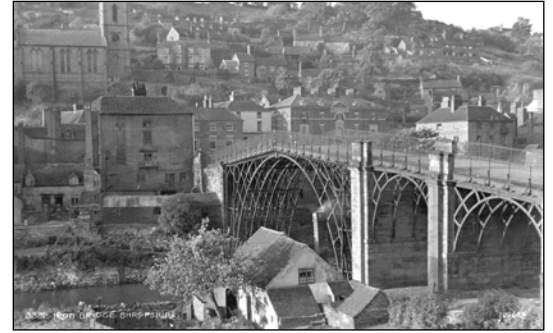
John Dixon's store in the High Street which sold haberdashery, newspapers and stationery. Also in the picture is John's wife Amelia, left, and their daughter Louie. John Dixon was Society chairman Gillian Pope's great grandfather and her father took over the business in 1943. The shop, which is known locally as The Old Post Office, is situated where the florist's shop now is.

Bank House, once the home of philanthropist George Pritchard, before becoming Lloyds Bank in 1888. When in 1922 a new bank was built next door the building was converted into the Social Club. The Society will shortly be installing a plaque on this building to commemorate George Pritchard.

Chippy Reynolds' fair held at Pitt's Pottery around 1908. Pitt's Pottery later became Woolfsons Pottery and later still Southorn's Pipe Works. It was last used in 1950.

The Duke of Cumberland Inn used to be on the corner of Duke and King Street. First licensed in 1841 it closed in 1948; its licence was taken over by the Cumberland Hotel, which is itself now closed and turned into apartments.

A tea party for wounded soldiers being held at Broseley Tennis Club in 1916.



Photograph courtesy The Lady Forester

All photographs, except those indicated, were provided by members of the Society and form part of the BLHS archive

Photograph courtesy The Lady Forester

From the top and left to right

A social occasion at Jackfield Village Hall. Bert Shinton, father of the Rev'd Dave Shinton, curate in the Broseley Group of Parishes which includes Jackfield, can be seen on the right smoking his pipe.

Residents of the newly built Broseley old people's group housing at a party in 1968. Seated at the table on the left with cards in her hands is Mrs Annie Cross who died in 1974.

Coalport Ferry was originally opened by Richard Reynolds to give workers from Broseley better access to his Coalport China Works. In 1799 an accident resulted in the loss of 41 lives. When the river was low, the boat would sometimes be moored crosswise to form a bridge. In 1912, after the Free Bridge further upstream was opened, it received a closure notice. Captain Beard can be seen second from left.

This pedestrian bridge was built by public subscription in 1922 to commemorate those who died in WWI. Costing £1,046 it was opened by the then Lady Forester.

A fund raising rally during WWII outside the old Broseley Town Hall. The building was demolished in the early 1960s and replaced with a supermarket.

The Iron Bridge was closed to vehicles in 1934. In 1937 the proposed construction of a new bridge by Salop County Council was shelved due to rising costs, whereupon Councillor R A Jones moved to scrap the iron bridge, saying there were enough ancient monuments in the area; they could then build a new bridge in its place without the need to compulsorily purchase land alongside. Fortunately for posterity, the County Council had already instigated such clearance, although the owners of the shops and houses on the Tontine may not have been so pleased.

Church Street from the Rectory. The buildings on the left were presumably demolished to make way for the new hospital. A Lucy Bridgeman photograph taken in 1854, it formed part of an album belonging to the Rev'd Orlando Weld Forester, rector of Broseley from 1841-1859. Lucy and her sister Charlotte are reported to have died tragically when their crinolines were set alight by an ember from the fire at their home in Weston Park.

The same view today.

Taken from Broseley Rectory looking out over what is now the Lady Forester Day Care Centre; Broseley Tileries can be seen in the background. These latter were started in 1828 by John Onions on the site of Broseley's last furnace. On his death in 1859, they passed to his daughter Penelope Thorn who ran them until 1877. The area was developed for housing in the 1970s and is known locally as the Tileries.

FEBRUARY MEETING

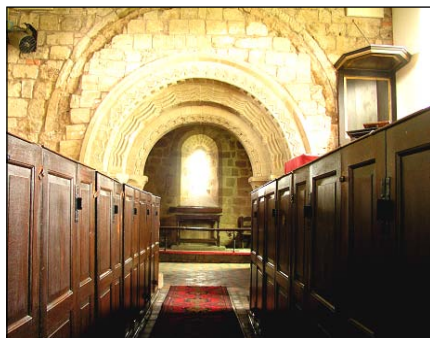
In February Richard Bifield of Telford and Wrekin Council, who in 2007 had given members an insight into the life of Thomas Telford, gave a talk entitled *A Brief History of Telford, or 2000 years in 60 minutes*.

Life in the Telford area, he said, did not start with Abraham Darby and the industrial revolution, but way back in pre-history when our ancestors lived on the top of the Wrekin.

Then came the Romans and the building of the important town of Viroconium, or Wroxeter as we know it today. In its day, Viroconium was the fourth largest city in Roman Britain and was spread across an area as big as that of Pompeii. Centuries later it was Thomas Telford who first began officially excavating the site with the help of prison labour, when a blacksmith would cut off the convicts' shackles in the morning and replace them at the end of the day before the prisoners were sent back to Shrewsbury gaol.

From Roman times Bifield went on to the Dark Ages and the town of Wellington, the name of which means 'the settlement by the temple'. Evidence suggests that this sacred Druid temple and grove was on the site of All Saints' Parish Church which is in the centre of the town. Wellington also has one of the oldest markets in the county, receiving its charter in 1244.

The Dark Ages were followed by the Normans and their churches, one of which, St James' Church, may be found in Stirchley. The Norman tower of this church now has a Georgian casing, but Norman stonework may still be seen inside. A Norman chapel also stands in Telford Town Park, having been moved from its original site during the rebuilding of the area. Also in the vicinity is



Norman stonework may still be seen inside St James' Church in Stirchley

Philip de Louthembourg's famous painting Coalbrookdale by Night



Madeley Court, now a hotel, where the main hall has features of 13th century architecture.

And so it was down through the centuries to Wellington again, where the White Lion pub is still a fine example of a black and white building, before Bifield brought the meeting into the industrial era by showing a copy of Philip de Louthembourg's famous painting *Coalbrookdale by Night*. It is thought that it was here at the Bedlam Furnaces that the ribs for the famous Iron Bridge were cast. This bridge was built in 1779, but it was to be another 17 years before iron was again used in this fashion and it was Thomas Telford who was brave enough to do so. His bridge at Buildwas, built to replace the mediaeval one washed away in the great floods of 1795, was wider than the Iron Bridge but weighed only half as much.

Bifield also spoke of the many famous people other than industrialists who had come from, or were involved in, this area. One of these was Dr William Withering who was a member of the Lunar Society; his discovery of digitalis, extracted from foxgloves, for use in heart conditions is still valid today. And how many people know that Patrick Brontë, father of the Brontë sisters, was

William Withering's discovery of digitalis for heart conditions still has applications today



Patrick Brontë, father of the famous Brontë sisters, was once curate at All Saints' Church in Wellington





Edith Pargeter, better known as the author Ellis Peters, once served in a sweet shop

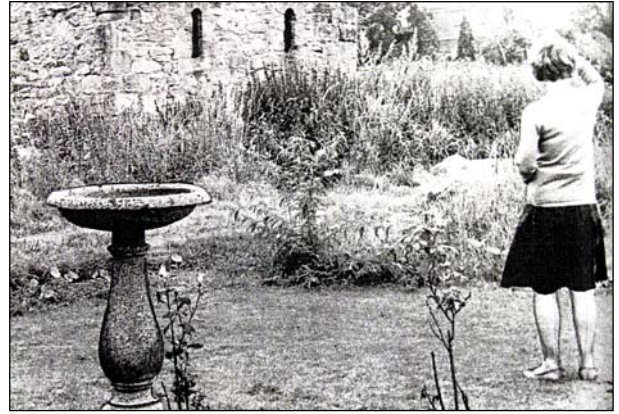
once curate at All Saints' Church in Wellington and changed his name from Prunty when he moved to Haworth in West Yorkshire?

Nor should one forget Matthew Webb, first swimmer of the English Channel in 1875, who met an untimely death swimming the rapids below Niagara Falls. Or footballer Billy Wright from Ironbridge who captained the English side 90 times. And then there were the writers Sarah Smith from Wellington, aka Hesba Stretton, author of *Jessica's First Prayer* and co-founder of the NSPCC; and Edith Pargeter from Horsehay, who as Ellis Peters became famous for her Cadfael mystery stories.

By this time, however, the industrial revolution in Shropshire had run its course, businesses had moved away and what had once been a thriving industrial area was in dire need of regeneration. In 1963 a survey of the Dawley area revealed



Before clearing and reconstruction



Awaiting clearance before redevelopment



The same spot, now in the middle of Telford shopping centre
thousands of acres of derelict land, spoil/waste deposits, abandoned mineshafts and opencast mines, as well as over 100 miles of disused canals, railways and tramways.

Extensive redevelopment of the area began soon after and the small town of Dawley quickly became Dawley New Town. As this rejuvenation spread to include adjacent towns such as Wellington and Oakengates, it was felt appropriate to give the whole area a completely new identity. Composite names such as Dawelloak met with a considerable lack of enthusiasm and in 1968 it fell to Anthony Greenwood, Minister for Housing and Local Government and an admirer of Thomas Telford, to give it its present name of Telford.

Forty years on the borough of Telford covers some 28 parishes and has a thriving business and shopping centre visited by over 15 million shoppers every year, as well as impressive sports and leisure facilities. Still growing, plans for major redevelopment will soon see the retail area increased by 50 percent, bringing it firmly into the 21st century.

All photographs courtesy Richard Bifield, Telford & Wrekin Council

OBITUARY

TOM ROBERTS

It was with regret that *Newsletter* learnt of the death of Tom Roberts early in January. Tom, who was born in Broseley, came from the well known family who once owned the garage and haulage business in the High Street. While his father ran the garage and workshop, Tom was responsible for the haulage contracting and would often reminisce about the long hours he spent on the road.

Tom had many interests, in particular his love of classic and vintage cars, of which he had an exhaustive knowledge. He was also a lover of cricket and football and was proud of the fact that he used to play soccer with Billy Wright.

A member of the Society, he was an occasional contributor to *Newsletter* and readers might like to refer to the account, which appeared in the August 2007 issue, of his school trip to Merioneth in 1936 where pupils from Broseley School 'learnt to be self reliant and act on their own initiative'.

HAYCOP CONSERVATION

The Haycop Conservation Group has received a further grant from the Broseley and Barrow Joint Committee which has been used to provide four oak benches along the walkways as well as for training and amenities for volunteers. The now replaced wooden signposts from Broseley Wood jitties have been reused as signposts for the footpaths and bridleway. Adrian Miles, chairman of the project and one of its instigators, reports that a survey of pond life in the reinstated pool has rated it as of 'fairly good' conservation value, a



rating he hopes will soon be upgraded to 'very high'. A wide variety of freshwater insects has been recorded as well as 45 species of birds, including a kingfisher.

The Society's Summer evening will include a walk down to the Haycop, see page 1 for more details.

HISTORICAL PAINTINGS

Ray Johnston, joint president of the Society, has recently completed a series of copies of paintings of historical sites in the area, including one of the Bedlam Furnaces based on Paul Sandby Munn's 1803 painting. These are available at a cost of £8.00 each, ready framed, from David Lake, tel: 01746 762813. At Ray's request all proceeds from sales will be donated to Society funds.

Ray Johnston with his painting Winding Gear at Lightmoor

John Freeman, below on the left, past chairman of the Society, has now hung the complete set of 18 along one wall in his offices in Halesfield



Ray Johnston's picture was based on Paul Sandby Munn's 1803 painting of the Bedlam Furnaces. From the same viewpoint as that of Philip de Loutherbourg's famous Coalbrookdale by Night, this daytime scene allows the furnaces to be identified as close to the river and to Waterloo Street



COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

The Society has received a grant of £1,000 from the Broseley and Barrow Joint Committee for the purchase and installation of commemorative plaques around Broseley. Two have already been installed on The Lawns and Raddle Hall, while a further one commemorating George Pritchard is planned for the Social Club where Pritchard once lived. Suggestions for further plaques honouring famous Broseley people are welcome.



CHAPEL OF REST

Despite everyone's best efforts, the bid for funding from The People's Millions for the refurbishment of the disused Chapel of Rest in Broseley Cemetery was not successful. However, further avenues are being explored and it is hoped that plans to turn it into a Cultural and Visitors' Centre will eventually be able to go ahead.



KIBLING MACHINE GOES HOME

The kibbling machine, which has been on loan to Broseley, being returned to the Ironbridge Gorge Museums, where it will form part of the display at the new entrance to Blists Hill.

The machine formed part of Broseley's 'local roots' Broseley in Bloom entry in the Heart of England Britain in Bloom contest in 2008, in which Broseley was awarded a Gold for the third year in succession.



BLISTS HILL DEVELOPMENT

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust's development of Blists Hill Victorian Town is making progress where major works will include a new visitor centre, an artisans' quarter, a narrow gauge railway, a mine experience and an inclined plane lift.

The design of the visitor centre, which will form a gateway to this World Heritage Site, was inspired by the huge blast furnaces which once dominated the landscape, and as visitors pass through it they will find themselves transported back to the Victorian era.

They will also be able to explore a whole new street of shops, where the buildings along Canal Street have either been copied from existing buildings in Telford or have taken inspiration from historic archive material.

They will also enjoy improved access to the more remote parts of the site where a new narrow gauge railway will carry passengers through the woods towards the Hay inclined plane. Inspired by this inclined plane, a smaller version will take visitors up the side of the Gorge to the canal.

The first phase, Canal Street, should be open by Easter, followed by the visitor centre in the summer, with the entire project being completed by late autumn.

The work is being funded by Advantage West Midlands, the European Regional Development Fund and a variety of independent donors.

WHAT'S ON?

IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUMS

Coalbrookdale Gallery, next door to Enginuity

Exhibition of paintings by Michael Collins

26 January - 6 March

10.00 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Admission free

This exhibition of paintings by Michael Collins includes scenes of the Iron Bridge and the surrounding area. Originally a teacher, Collins found a second career as a full time artist, concentrating on landscape and portraiture. Now living in Benthall, near Broseley, he also features scenes of this area in many of his paintings.

Enginuity

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fair

Saturday 7 March

10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Admission free to teachers and their families

Normal admission prices apply to the general public

The aim of the Fair is to support schools in raising awareness of science, technology, engineering and mathematics through interactive displays. Visitors can take part in activities such as robotics, space, forensics, sports science and mathematics. There will also be a Space Today exhibition displaying the digital video globe Magic Planet. Other exhibitions will include the Assault Glider Trust, RAF Museum Cosford and Thinktank.

Blists Hill Victorian Museum

Queen Victoria Celebrations

Whitsun Weekend 23 - 25 May

10.00 am - 5.00 pm

Blists Hill celebrates the birthday of Queen Victoria, with each day offering a fitting tribute of colour, music and song. Visitors will also be able to watch craftsmen at work.

COALBROOKDALE 300 CELEBRATIONS

1709 being the year in which Abraham Darby I successfully smelted iron using coke instead of charcoal, this year will see various other events and celebrations being held to mark the significance of Darby's discovery.

Coalbrookdale Gallery, next door to Enginuity

Coalbrookdale 300 Exhibition

2 April - January 2010

10.00 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, check before travelling

Admission free

This exhibition will celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of the Industrial Revolution and will include works from the Sir Arthur Elton Collection, held by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, as well as material from further afield.

The highlight of the exhibition will be three key landscapes painted by artist William Williams in the 1770s. The *Morning View of Coalbrookdale* and the *Afternoon View of Coalbrookdale* illustrate



William Williams' Afternoon View of Coalbrookdale will be on show at the Coalbrookdale Gallery later this year

the impact made by iron making on the Coalbrookdale valley, while a third painting, on loan from the Shrewsbury Museums service, will be Williams' picture of the Iron Bridge itself. Commissioned by Abraham Darby III in 1780 it is an artist's impression as the Bridge was not completed until 1781.

Fe09 Conference

Coalbrookdale

Wednesday 3 - Saturday 6 June

An international conference exploring the impact of the industrial revolution on society, the landscape and globalisation.

Museum of Iron, Coalbrookdale

Dates to be advised

The Museum of Iron is hoping to host an exhibition of new archaeological research uncovered around the Old Furnace and visitors will be able to learn how the furnace functioned as well as the significance of the year 2009.

Coalbrookdale Festival

25 - 26 July

A weekend of events including casting and the opening of a contemporary cast iron sculpture exhibition with contributions from British and international artists; opening of revised interpretation and display of the Old Furnace.

Blists Hill Victorian Town

Ironworks celebration

Friday 7 - Monday 10 August

A programme of cast and wrought ironworking demonstrations at Blists Hill, as well as tours, lectures and hands-on opportunities for visitors.

For further information on this and other activities contact tel: 01952 884391 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.

A CELEBRATION OF IMAGINATION

2009 is a milestone year for the West Midlands with significant anniversaries for many prominent local innovators and entrepreneurs; these will be marked by a region wide initiative entitled *A Celebration of Imagination*. Amongst these famous people are Dr William Penny Brookes, who inspired the modern Olympic Games, and Charles Darwin who were both born in 1809. 250 years ago in 1759 Josiah Wedgwood opened his first china factory, although this has now been closed down; while in 1959 the first Mini motor car rolled off the production line. For further information on these and other events visit www.acelebrationofimagination.com.

BOOKSHOP

The Industrial Heritage of the Rural Parishes around the Wrekin, Part I

Published by the Industrial Heritage Research Group

Shortly available, this A4 booklet includes papers on coal mining, stone quarrying, iron making and industrial unrest. Copies of Part II, which was published in 2008 and contains in-depth studies of the local lime industry and the road (Watling Street/Holyhead Road) forming the northern boundary of the area of study, are still available from Neil Clarke 01952 504135.

Cost of each £4.00 plus 50p postage; or £6.00 plus 75p postage for two.

John Ruskin, Henry James and the Shropshire Lads

by Cynthia Gamble

New European Publications Limited

14-16 Carroun Road

London SW8 1JT

Published 2008, 340 pages with illustrated section. Price £18.50.

Written in two parts, this book tells the story of John Ruskin's life and his interaction with his contemporaries, in particular his lifelong friend Osborne Gordon and Gordon's philanthropist

brother-in-law John Pritchard, both of whom were born in Broseley. Ruskin himself visited Shropshire from an early age, on one such occasion staying at Broseley Hall.

The second part deals with Henry James' time spent in England and the deep influence his visits to the abbeys and castles of Shropshire had on his work.

The book has an illustrated section which includes photographs of local abbeys, castles and churches as well as portraits of both John Pritchard and Osborne Gordon.

MAILBOX

In trying to identify an item

which has come down to me from my great grandmother, I came across the Broseley Archives. My wife's family originated from Broseley, her great grandfather Henry Legge having been born in Broseley in 1848; in 1883 he emigrated with his wife and three children to Australia. I

have a reasonably comprehensive amount of information regarding the family in Australia (and some of the history of the family in Broseley) which I should be happy to pass on to anyone who would be interested.

Incidentally, the item I am trying to identify (above) is made of bronze and is about 10 cm high and 5 cm wide in the 'spoon' part. There are two numbers on the back: RGD. NO: 695314 on the 'spoon' part (the number 5 has actually been stamped upside down) and the number 11256 in the body of Mr Pickwick. Perhaps some of your members could help me?

Russell Swinden



I am trying to find out more about my great great grandparents Michael and Mary Gallagher who were both born in Ireland, Michael in 1809 and Mary in 1819. Exactly where in Ireland I can find no trace but their first son John was born in Broseley in around 1839 although I

cannot find him in the BMD Index. They must then have moved on quite quickly because their second child Bridget was born in Wolverhampton in 1841. Michael's occupation was described as a stone miner in both towns but subsequently as a collier or coal miner.

There was a huge movement from the Wolverhampton area to the Yorkshire coalfield in 1880 when in one year all eight of Michael's children with their eight families moved en bloc to Normanton/Castleford in the West Riding. Every male of that generation then went "down pit". There was social improvement for the next and subsequent generations but from the original Michael there issued ten coal miners.

The families all belonged to the Roman Catholic church and I am seeking information from the various dioceses.

I have found much interesting information on the mines around Broseley and look forward to visiting the area this summer. If anyone has any further information on the original Michael and Mary, particularly from where they came in the Irish Republic, I should be very grateful.

Paul Gallagher

According to the 1851 census there were over 20 people from Ireland, out of around 300, involved in mining in Broseley. They seem to have originated from Mayo and Sligo. I find it hard to understand why they came to Broseley as this was an area in decline from the boom days of the early 19th century. The furnaces had closed and the mines were all but worked out, with many of the local people having moved on to the Wolverhampton area. The lack of prospects is presumably why the Gallagher's quickly moved on to Wolverhampton.

The question is why did these people come to Broseley in the first place? It is a small town on the edge of the relatively isolated Coalbrookdale coalfield. One would have expected them to go to Lancashire, Yorkshire or the other large industrial districts. Somewhere there must be a link between this area and Ireland which led to them emigrating here.

With regard to Michael's occupation a stone miner dug ironstone for use in the furnaces, while collier and coal miner seem to have been interchangeable terms. Broseley had both coal and ironstone mines as did the Black Country.

I am not surprised by the move to Yorkshire. In the 1880s large mines were being opened up between Normanton and Castleford and they would have needed extra labour.

The only Gallagher name I can find is in 1902 and 1909 when there was a W E Gallagher who ran the Horse Shoe Hotel in Madeley, but that is on the other side of the River Severn from Broseley.

If as you say John is not in the BMD index then he is going to be difficult to trace. I understand that, although it was a legal requirement to register a birth, this was not always done. As the family were recent immigrants it seems even more likely it was not registered. I believe that the Catholic baptism registers for the local areas no longer exist but you should check with Shropshire Family History Society to confirm this. <http://www.sfhs.org.uk/>. I assume that you are familiar with the link below http://www.familysearch.org/eng/search/frameset_search.asp?PAGE=/eng/search/ancestorsearchresults.asp.

Steve Dewhirst

I am trying to trace some Firmstone ancestors from the Staffordshire area.

In your May 2008 Newsletter I see that Paul Luter gave a talk on several South Staffordshire "iron families" including the Firmstones.

Can any of your readers help me untangle the large number of Firmstones who lived in that area between 1750 and 1850?

John Bidwell

There are Firmstones in Broseley and I think the family has been here for some centuries.

However, I do not know if they are associated with the Staffordshire branch.

Steve Dewhirst

I am looking for information on my grandfather
John Rowe who had connections with a pipeworks
in the 1920s.

John was the son of Walter Rowe who ran a
transport business from Benthall and was involved
with a Benthall pottery. He lived at a house called
Little Benthall.

Derek Rowe

*According to the Victoria County History, in 1922
Woolfson, Rowe & Co were making earthenware
in Bridge Road as the Salop Pottery Co Ltd. This
would be next to the now closed New Inn. There
are also various mentions of the Rowe family in the
newspapers on our web site www.broseley.org.uk.*

Steve Dewhirst

I am interested in finding out more about the
family of Samuel Ward who was born in 1780 and
who, in 1804, was married in Benthall church to
Elizabeth Tunkis (or Tonkis). Their son Samuel
was born in 1812 and christened that same year in
Benthall church. He married Harriet Walford,
born 1811, in Astley Abbots in 1834.

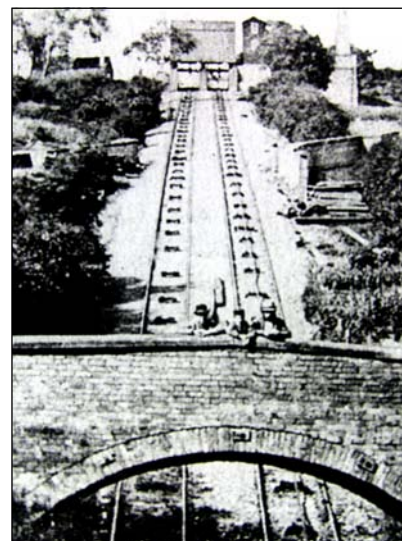
I do know that my past family were miners and
iron workers who moved from Shropshire to
Staffordshire and finally to Warwickshire. Any
further information would be appreciated.

Tony Ward

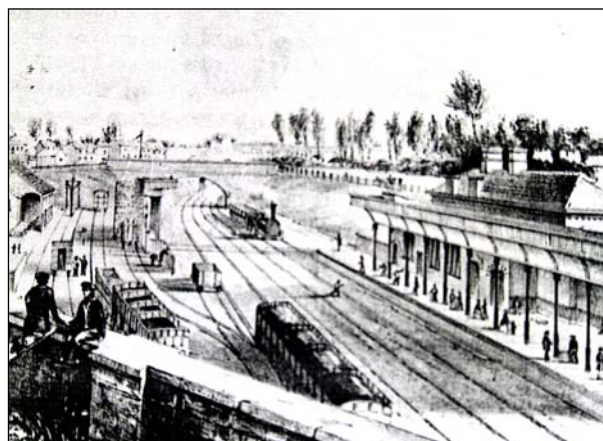
Newsletter is sympathetic to the concerns of
certain of its correspondents who are reluctant to
see their email address appear in the public
domain. If there is anyone who does not wish
their contact details to be published, they are
welcome to make use of the Society's email
address steve@broseley.org.uk.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

**To see *Newsletter* in full colour visit
www.broseley.org.uk.**

*The Hay
inclined
plane
transported
goods from
Blists Hill
down the
valley to the
Coalport
Canal. It was
still working
up to about
1900*



*The old
railway
station at
Wellington*



Photographs courtesy Richard Bifield, Telford & Wrekin

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