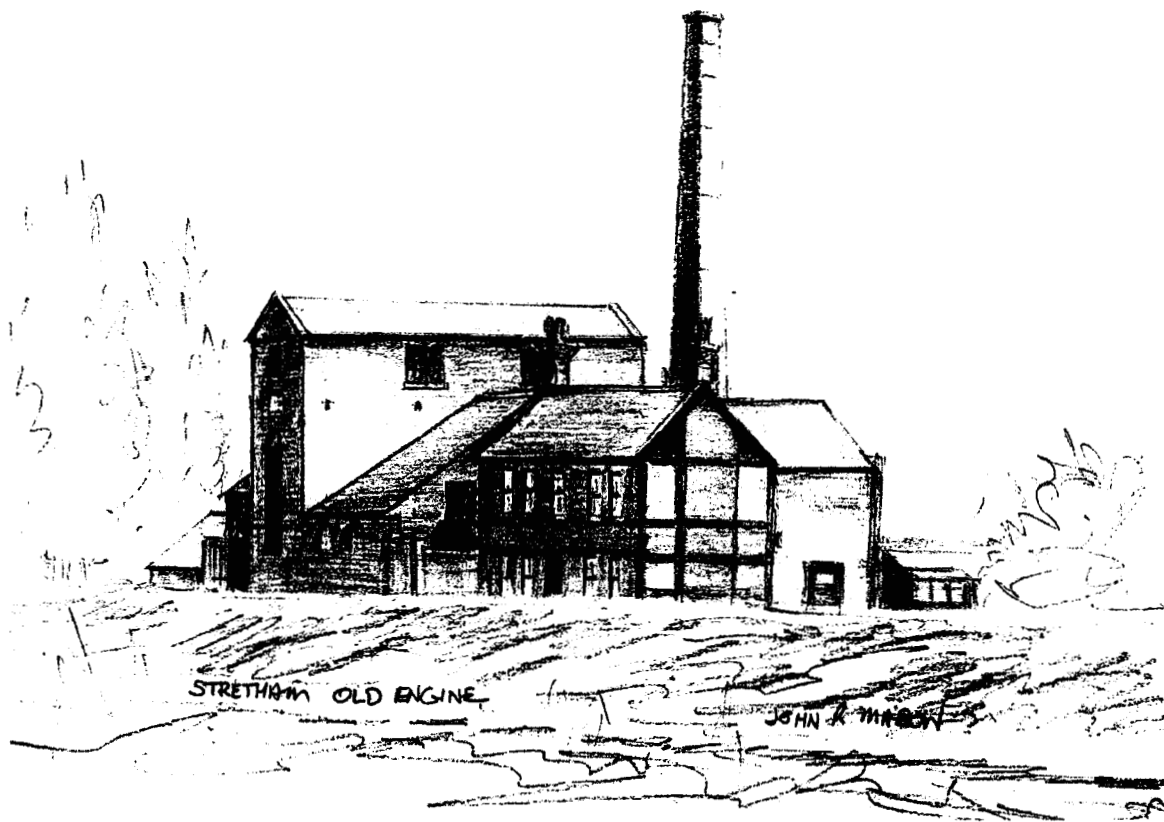


THE JOURNAL

OF THE
WORCESTERSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
AND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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WIALHS JOURNAL
(ISSUE 35 – WINTER 2008)

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Front cover illustration by kind permission of John Mason (Society Member)

EDITORIAL

Recognising that I may be making myself unpopular as I "harp on" yet again, I would ask you as WIALHS members to consider this question - *What is the WIALHS Journal for?*

In my own view it is to allow members to communicate their experiences, interests and opinions to each other.

An editor's job, as I understand it, is to put together the work of other contributors in order to give a reasonably coherent final publication. As Journal Editor I cannot, in isolation, produce a constant stream of new articles, which are relevant to the Society, to serve up to members "on a plate" in each edition. The Journal should reflect WIALHS members' interests, not just the outcome of my own attempts to fill the available space. As a WIALHS member, what are your interests? I don't know – please tell me, or better still write something about them in an article.

Despite the many ways in which we can communicate these days, we seem to interact far less. Fewer people seem prepared to get involved or "have a go" - in any sense. The Journal can only survive if WIALHS members are prepared to get involved and contribute material to it, not just to turn up at Friday meetings. Please **"have a go"**.

PS You may notice that I have listed all the Summer Programme visits in the Reports section. Against some I have recorded that no members report was received. I hope you will agree that it is important to record the visits for the benefit of those members who were unable to attend – perhaps because the visit was fully booked. Our Winter Programme talks are always well-reported

thanks to the excellent work of John Belt (and occasionally others), scribbling away in the dark. Please consider writing a report for a Summer Programme visit next year – don't wait to be asked. I don't mind getting two for the same trip – there could be interesting differences of opinion!

Glyn Thomas

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Do you believe in coincidences?

Our last copy of The Journal (Spring 2008) contained the first part of an article about The Golden Pipeline in Western Australia, just outside Perth. This pipeline is so remote that I could not imagine many people journeying there, although the project did feature on Australian TV as one of a three part series on Australian Industrial Heritage.

When I received the Summer 2008 edition of the Industrial Archaeology News, there on the front cover was a picture of a water tower at Kalgoorlie, followed by an article on Industrial Heritage in Western Australia, which of course centred on The Golden Pipeline. A tour arranged by Heritage of Industry had included a few members of the AIA, GLIAS and the Newcomen Society. An interesting note from the article is that when the town of Coolgardie, where the gold rush started, was laid out the streets were made very wide to accommodate the space needed to turn the camel trains which then were the only means of transport. The camels and drivers coming from NE India and Afghanistan!

Strange how it happens that you visit or hear of somewhere you have never been to and the next week it pops up again.

Work continues apace on the restoration of the Droitwich canal and I have been fortunate to see the major construction works on the Hanbury side of the M5. Three new locks and a new section of canal are being constructed here and it is amazing how wide the base has to be for a seven feet wide lock!

One immediate problem encountered when digging out for the canal channel was the discovery of a quite extensive area of peat. Back to the drawing board for the engineers to devise a new construction method for this area!

Lock six is to be sited where the brook currently flows, meaning that the brook has to be diverted. To do this a new channel dug to the same profile of the old has to be constructed, the fish then have to be netted and moved upstream (apparently there are some rare "bullhead" fish in this section. Once they have moved the new line will be filled then the pebbles and boulders from the old brook will be placed in the bed of the new, presumably so the fish won't notice they have been moved.

The more I see of this project the more I understand the reason for the enormous costs involved in construction and conservation. Don't forget before any work could start on the Barge Canal, extensive new reed beds had to be created since those at the side of the canal would be destroyed.

Naturally the Great Crested newts, Sloe Worms and Grass Snakes have all been dealt with by trapping and relocating prior to the site being fenced to stop them going back in. During the summer the Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) have been hard at work restoring the Barge Lock in Vines Park and boats are expected to be in Vines Park by early next year. The next major construction

work will be the "tunnel" under the A499 at Hawford.

Next year, possibly May 16th 2009, we will again be hosting the AIA Regional Conference. We are exploring the costs for both County Hall and The Charles Hastings Centre where we held the last one. This conference is not heavy and boring. It consists of 5 or 6 brief talks about a subject associated with Industrial Archaeology and in will include a number of Society/Trade stands for those of you interested in books and pamphlets about your chosen subject or location. The conference will close with a few visits for delegates to places of local interest.

The reason for the early notice is that we shall need your help, either, by actively assisting to run the event or at least coming along to support us. We have a reputation for providing the best conference on the circuit and we do not intend to lose that reputation.

As you know this will be my last year in organising the summer programme. I have had a very good innings and your support has made it all worthwhile. There have been many memorable trips and this year has been no exception. The weekend visit to Cambridge was absolutely wonderful. Our accommodation at Queens' College, arranged by members Hugh & Jenny Field, was superb and the private tour of the College on the final morning was an absolute privilege. We were able to visit parts of the College that the public tours do not include and some areas that even the students don't see.

I have been blessed on many occasions with "things that happen by chance", be it a flypast of the Red Arrows (Clee Hill), flypast of a Spitfire & Hurricane (Stroud), steam trains passing by etc. This time I think

topped them all as we were returning from Stretham Old Engine, on the Old West River, to our coach on the other side of an accommodation bridge, I heard a distant toot of a steam whistle. There, appearing before us in full splendour and towing a butty was the preserved steam powered narrow boat "President". This boat is normally based at the Black Country Museum and was therefore over a hundred miles from home in waters where she would rarely travel. What is the chance of that boat passing beneath the bridge as I stood on it?

Finally this year also brings to an end my term as President for the Society. I have had the honour and privilege of representing you all on several occasions and of "overseeing" the activities of the Committee and Society, not that that role has presented any difficult challenges at all. During this time we as a Society have achieved our target of publishing a number of books and maps about the area and we have seen our membership grow to record levels of just over 200 members. Our Society is the envy of many other similar bodies within the County.

The time will come at the next AGM to announce a new President and papers for nomination and voting will be distributed prior to this. Please support this initiative by making your own nomination initially and then completing the ballot forms when the candidates are known.

Once again my thanks to all of you, old and new members alike.

Roger Tapping

THE THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN SILVESTER

I seem to have so much to be grateful for, a very successful society, with enthusiastic members, a **hardworking** Committee and very efficient Officers and Programme Secretaries who have made our lives brighter by taking us to places we hardly dreamed of visiting and by finding speakers who informed and sometimes amused us but always kept us alert.

We need to give a very special thank you to Roger Tapping who is stepping down as Summer Programme Secretary after doing the task over 28 years. Some of you have probably been on every visit organised and some perhaps only a few - but none of you will ever have been bored and will always have had very good value for their money. We are very aware that a Summer Programme organiser like Roger will be a very hard act to follow.

This Summer the highlight was our visit to Cambridge, staying in Queens' College. We must give very many thanks to Jenny and Hugh Field for arranging our stay and for organising our tours of the College. We all spent a very enjoyable weekend staying in student rooms, all ensuite and very comfortable, and ate in College most of the time. One of our group even thought that he would return to University.

Apart from seeing both Cambridge and Ely we also visited the drainage systems of the Fens and now have a much clearer view of how the system works. Roger had organised a pleasant weekend with the odd shower to refresh us and, as usual, a surprise on our way home.

Although we have apparently had a very poor Summer, my memories are mainly of sunny days for our visits. Our visit to Bransford Chapel was in bright sunlight and so was our evening visit to Westwood House. The visit to Long Marston Depot was also in good weather as I remember, but I do recall that the visit to Wellesbourne was extremely windy. The afternoon picnic at Avoncroft Museum was in a period of very wet weather but we did manage to sit outside to eat and it was dry when we walked round the buildings. The tour of the Bishop's Palace in Deansway was on a perfect evening and so was our visit to Swansea.

On sunny days it still feels like Summer but we have already started on our Winter Programme, which promises to be another excellent one - and the Summer Programme for 2009 is well under way.

We have one date for your diary for next year - 16 May 2009. We are hosting the Industrial Archaeology Conference, to be held at the Charles Hastings Postgraduate Centre, Worcester Royal Hospital.

If you have never attended a Conference you will find the day very interesting and informative. The day consists of a series of talks, similar to our ones on Friday evenings, and no-one should find it too high powered. We will have tea and coffee breaks and a lunch break with time to visit the stands of other IA Societies and time to socialise. After the Conference there will be a series of local visits. Let us try to have a really good attendance!

Finally, if you have any article for the Journal, however small, please send it to Glyn Thomas. You may not think that your memories of your work, your childhood, the war and holidays are very interesting but

they *are* local history and everything has changed so much in the last few years.

I look forward to seeing you at our Friday meetings during the winter.

Christine Silvester

RAMBLINGS FROM THE WIFE OF A SUMMER PROGRAMME SECRETARY

I have visited some wonderful, beautiful, dangerous, inspiring and some positively boring places, following my man around. Beauty as they say is in the eye of the beholder.

I have been on many journeys early in the year on cold, damp, early spring days to check whether intended events would be viable, only to find how lovely the places are in the summer sunshine. I have spent many happy hours and days researching for the forthcoming programme, both near and far. Roger certainly has had more than his fair share of good weather; I can only recall a couple of trips that have been disappointing because of a constant downpour.

With the coming of the internet to 155 a whole new world of information was opened up, making communication so much simpler.

On a personal note I have enjoyed chatting to many of our members be it face to face or on the telephone about future events and availability on them. I have been offered bribes for a sneak preview of coming events and dates, sharing disappointment with those who have had to cancel. I've enjoyed getting so much post because as a W.I. member I collect all the stamps!!

I have helped to juggle the lists, confirm that member's cheques matched their places and that the correct amount had been paid. Thank goodness we moved to single event cheques.

Lastly I shall not be sad to give up the front seat on the coach, it really does have the least legroom!

I realise that we are all 25 years older, even Roger; we no longer are able to get on and off the coach 15 times per trip. We still have most enjoyable days but at a slower pace. As the popularity of the coach trips grew so did the camaraderie between members.

Roger has so many interests he won't be at a loss as what to do with his time, maybe spend a little more time tending the garden perhaps. We will no longer have to plan the programme around the cricket fixtures only to find that dates have to be changed.

Sheila Tapping

SUMMER PROGRAMME 2008 VISIT REPORTS

I must thank those members who have contributed reports on Roger's excellent (and final) Programme. Tapping's Tours has ceased trading – any volunteers? -Ed

B SEFORD CHAPEL AND THE HOP PICKERS BARRACKS (18/5/08)

After an aborted visit last year due to the floodwaters, we assembled a large force of members at Bransford Chapel on a fine sunny day. We were met by the very helpful

Churchwarden, Jean Colley, who gave us a very instructive history of the Chapel. I think it is fair to say that many of our members had no idea this little chapel was hidden away on their doorstep.

My thanks again to the Churchwardens who gave permission to use the article below.

Following the visit to the chapel an army of us set off across the fields for a short walk to the site of the hop-pickers barracks. These are now in a very dilapidated state with some living and community blocks already demolished. There is enough to see to understand the conditions the pickers would have put up with. However for them it was a working holiday and a pleasant relief from the rigours of the Black Country and Birmingham areas where most came from.

I came across an article reproduced in the "Malvern Gazette" about 100 years ago, which gives a little insight to the daily happenings.

"The hop-pickers, or rather some of them, have always been a source of trouble during their annual visit and this year they have not failed to give ample evidence of their presence". Two female hop-pickers, Annie Audley and Mary Walker had ended up in court as they had been fighting. "Complainant Walker, who appeared with her head and eyes bandaged, stated that she was employed as a hop-picker at Leigh Court Farm. On the date mentioned, her son was pulling down some wires in the hop-yard and he told the defendant to go down the road and start upon another row of hops". Audley refused. Walker was sent for and the situation escalated until Audrey dragged the other woman into a ditch, rubbed her in the stinging nettles and kicked her in the face. The result was a month's hard labour for Audley.

Sounds like Worcester on a Saturday night!!

We made our way back across the fields having enjoyed a pleasant day out in beautiful countryside.

Roger Tapping

Bransford Chapel - A Brief History and Guide

The Chapel of St John Baptist, Bransford is a simple rectangular building, internally 54.5 ft x 18 ft, whose foundation probably goes back to the 11th century. The grey stone comes from Cradley and the various sandstones are probably also local. The end of the original building can be distinguished on the exterior by changes in the masonry and in the interior by the presence of a piscina on the south wall.



A consecration cross may just be seen on the southwest corner, doubtless inscribed by the Bishop of Worcester. On the south wall near the porch is an ancient mass-dial, also very faint.

There was a major reconstruction in the 13th or 14th century when the building was extended to include the present chancel and the roof was built. The bell-turret probably dates from this period as the oldest bell, the

treble, is mediaeval and has been dated by Christopher Pickford of Hereford as c. 1300. By far the best-known mediaeval native of Bransford is Wulstan de Bransford, Prior of Worcester 1317-1338 and Bishop 1338-1349. He is known to have lived at Bransford Court and to have built Bransford Bridge in 1338; until the early part of the 20th century the occupier of the Court was responsible for the maintenance of half the bridge. No positive evidence has come to light, but Wulstan De Bransford may well have reconstructed the church including the ogee south doorway. The other possibility is that it was one of the De Bracy family from Braces Leigh, half a mile away by footpath. Noake quotes Assize Records "About 126516 William Beauchamp subtracted the suit of his men at Bransford from the Hundred Court and made them go to his own Court at Powick". Bransford Court has remained in Powick ever since.

The roof, mostly from this reconstruction, is the dominating feature of the interior and helps the church to retain much of its ancient character. The roof timbers still carry the original carpenters' marks, indicating that the trusses were constructed elsewhere and re-assembled here.

The interior walls would have been painted. In 1957 Mrs E Baker found two subsequent series of paintings but the cost of uncovering them was prohibitive. A small section has been left at the east end of the north wall. Different authorities have considered the porch Elizabethan or Jacobean and the altar rail, altar table and pulpit are all Jacobean. The mediaeval bell is not inscribed; the older of the other two bells was cast in Worcester in 1621 by an unknown foundry - possible the one uncovered in Powick Lane some years ago. It is inscribed 'SANCTA TRINITAS UNUS DEUS MISERERE NOSTRI' (Holy Trinity, one God be

merciful unto us). The third bell was cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester in 1717 and is inscribed 'PROSPERITY TO THIS CHURCH AND PLACE'.

The window west of the porch is considered to be 13th century, the one east of the porch is a copy of a 15th century window, perhaps placed there in 1812 when the east end was rebuilt. In 1812 after complaints that the chapel was too dark, John Winnall of Braces Leigh, then churchwarden, rebuilt the east end, inserting the present domestic style rectangular window and the adjacent window on the south wall. The old three-light east window went to his farmhouse, now since demolished, and the window lost. It all cost £101-11-7d.

The two-light window in the north wall contains modern stained glass depicting scenes in the life of St John Baptist and is a memorial to the Spilsbury family of Braces Leigh. There is some canopy work in the other north window, c. 1400. Parish minutes go back to 1798 and Churchwardens' Accounts to 1605, held at the County Record Office, Worcester. It is recorded that Revd. Somers Cocks repaired the chapel at his own expense in 1869 when it had become much dilapidated. The entrance door was made by Josh Asprey in 1879 costing £3-5-8d.

After two world wars the chapel again needed repair and a restoration was undertaken in 1956/57 (by Robert Potter according to Pevsner). A dormer window on the south side was removed, as was the cow-hair plaster ceiling, which had been suspended beneath the roof timbers. The north door, which originally seems to have led to a small cell or bedroom for the use of passing monks or friars was unblocked and a window inserted. The bell-turret, formerly clad in elm boards was re-clad with oak and several of the original oak posts were

replaced by new ones given by Mr Christopher Norbury. They can be seen in the vestry behind the timber wall- ill the west end of the chapel!

A prayer desk was given by Mrs T R Jones of Bransford Court in memory of her son, killed on active service in 1942. The sanctuary lamp was given in 1948 by Mrs-Olive Owen, formerly of Bransford Manor (the Hall House), in memory of her husband Col Owen DSO JP. In 1951 the Senter family made a gift of the Altar cross and candlesticks, another parishioner giving the matching flower vases. In 1952 Mrs Own also gave the alter frontal in memory of her mother. The credence table was given by Mr HA Yarnold of Leigh Sinton in memory of his wife.

The chapel stands in a small grass enclosure known as the Chapel Garden. It is a beautiful and peaceful spot on the top of a low hill with splendid views in all directions.

Acknowledgements are given to the Churchwardens of Bransford Chapel for permission to use the above article.

WESTWOOD HOUSE
DROITWICH
(22&29/5/08)

A highlight of the summer programme was an evening visit to Westwood House, Droitwich. This visit proved to be so popular that Roger organised further visits. A three quarter mile drive over farmland, through the archway of the Lodge and Gatehouse brought the party to the spectacular front of Westwood House.

Whilst waiting for the party to arrive, there was time to appreciate the peace and beauty of the gardens and also to be serenaded from

one of the upstairs windows by two very noisy parakeets!

Westwood House, was built in the 17th century for the Packingtons, a Royalist family. Dorothy Packington provided shelter for men of the cloth in turbulent times. Charles the second recognised their loyalty and provided the striking baroque ceilings and covings which quite take the breath away.

Entering through the main door into a communal reception Hall ahead is a staircase having Corinthian column newel posts topped by large wooden balls rising much higher than the balustrade. Deep leaded mullion windows provide light. Doors are panelled with ornate polished swan neck pediments. Stairs, hidden behind a door, lead to the third floor.

As we were about to leave, a resident most kindly invited us to view the apartment known as The Saloon., currently up for sale.

The main room in the Saloon has windows on three sides, is the 57' by 28' living room, which whilst beautiful and spectacular, accommodates playroom, dining room and living area. Children would need to be tidier than my grandchildren! I did envy the beautiful white carpeted master bedroom with its mezzanine floor accessed by a spiral staircase. The decor and views over the County to Droitwich and beyond are truly beautiful but I didn't hear anyone eager to swap their home for it. With no central heating, it was surprisingly warm supplied from modern electrical storage heaters.

Externally, the large building is a curious shape having had turreted additions, not entirely symmetrical. Tall chimneys, the coat of arms – stars and wheat sheaves embellish all around the top of the house.

Each resident leases their own piece of garden. For those who love trees, these gardens are a joy. Did the cedar stand here during the civil war?

If you wanted to live in Westwood House (no lift) a long lease plus service charge and house insurance would be a very costly investment but with such thick walls there would be no noise problems from neighbours!

This was a most enjoyable evening visit.

Pauline Arksey

LONG MARSTON DEPOT AND HIDCOTE MANOR (7/6/08)

No Members Report received.

CHEDHAM'S YARD ESBOURNE ! RUIE AND CHARLECOTE PARK (22/6/08)

CHEDHAM'S YARD

A coach full of our members set off on bright sunny morning to visit the above. Roger introduced us to our driver Paul who did a grand job driving through the beautiful Warwickshire countryside, well away from the motorways.

We soon arrived at Chedham's Yard an old blacksmith's yard dating from about 1850 and the character of this place has changed little over the years. We were met by two of their guides who explained the current situation about the restoration work. This site won £1,000,000 as one of the winners in the BBC restoration programme in 2006. I

watched this at that time, but what we saw was something very different. For obvious reasons all of the tools and artefacts have been carefully removed to a safe place ready for the contractors to start the incredible task of restoration.

Although some minor repairs and all archaeological surveys have been carried out, little visible progress has been made. To make matters worse, the yard was hit by last July's flooding, when the River Dene burst its banks and flooded the place with four feet of water, potentially damaging some of its largest artifacts. All we saw was empty, very sad looking buildings, so that it's very difficult to imagine where the restoration work will start. The old chimney stack from the main forge was so badly damaged by the ivy growing all over it, it looked like it was about to fall down. I was amazed that the H&S allowed us anywhere near it all! I can't wait to visit this place again when it's been completed and all the tools put back on the hundreds of old nails that we saw in all the walls and beams.

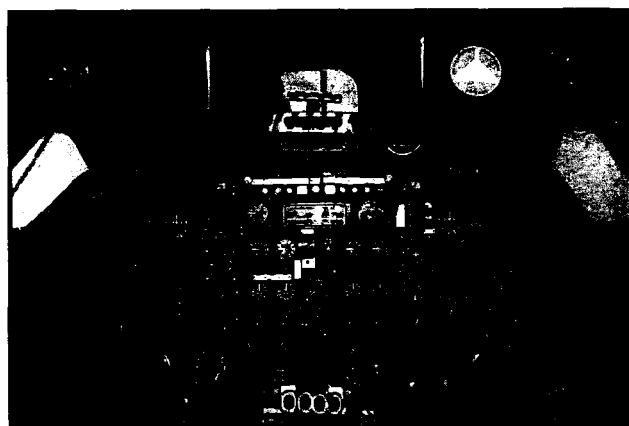
WELLESBORNE AIRFIELD

We went next to Charlecote Park where several people alighted and only the very keen members stayed on the coach and went to the airfield. Early in 1941 the Government purchased some 200 acres of land and by the summer soon had new runways running across this landscape. It was known as the No. 22 Operations Training Unit and devoted to training pilots, navigators, bomb-aimers, wireless operators and air-gunners. At its peak in 1944 it was turning out 113 crews a month.

The sun was shining, but it was windy; very windy, gusting 32 knots and all the local flying had been cancelled. We had come to see the main attraction the Avro Vulcan

Bomber XM655, which has seen service in the Falklands War and has been here since 1984. The Maintenance and Preservation Society have been working on restoration to keep this wonderful aircraft in a condition where it can achieve high speed, taxiing runs up and down the runway. Sadly CAA regulations now make it impossible for it ever to fly again.

XM655 is a B Mk.2 Vulcan, and the youngest Vulcan in existence (the third to last produced in 1973). When she was put up for disposal in late 1983 she was bought by businessman Roy Jacobson who had hopes to fly her on the air show circuit. She had only flown 5,744 hours, making her a viable proposition for taking to the air once more.



XM655 Cockpit

The CAA, within a week made it clear that the aircraft would not be flying again without stringent conditions being satisfied. Sadly these never materialized and the aircraft stood in the corner of the airfield in all weathers her condition deteriorated, hooligans got in a smashed up the instrumentation in the cockpit. Parking fees were mounting and eventually the airfield owner took Jacobson went to court to recover them. The result the aircraft passed to the airfield owner (John Littler). The Delta Engineering group was formed to look

after XM655 and they made it clear from the outset that their intention was to get her into ground running condition only, and that efforts to make her fly would be a waste of time and money

Now what we had been waiting to see, the actual runway dash –

The four huge Olympus engines eventually started and slowly she taxied from her parking position to the main runway. I was standing at the corner with several others taking a video of this as she turned onto the main runway, when we were hit by the blast of the exhaust fumes and stench of paraffin jet engine fuel as she opened the throttles of the four Olympus engines and commenced the **run**.



XM655 Start of a Run
Photo courtesy: Carl Woodend.

Due to the very high cross winds, we were told afterwards by the pilot, Wing Commander Mike Polit, gusts were affecting the steering of the aircraft so much that he was not able to lift the nose wheel off the ground which they normally do. It had to be kept on the ground so that they could keep the aircraft on the runway in a straight line. Normally he would use the rudder when the nose wheel is off the ground, but due to the slow response of the rudder action this was considered unsafe in these gusty conditions!

For those who love old cars there was also an interesting selection on display. Lovingly restored classic cars gleamed in the sunshine, bringing back memories for me personally, as I once owned a Ford Capri "S" and there was one on show in original absolutely mint condition, for me to gaze at.

We then had an unexpected hour to spare, so we had a quick visit to the Wellesbourne Wartime Museum, opened in the 1980s and built on the other side of the airfield in an old wartime underground command and control centre. I have never seen such a collection of almost unrecognizable aircraft bits that have been dug up from various crash site around the country, some buried for over forty years!

My thanks to the following website for making available some of the facts used:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070424164212/www.xm655.com/>

Pete Wheatley

CHARLECOTE PARK

The afternoon before my visit a friend insisted that I borrowed and read her copy of *Mistress of Charlecote - The Memoirs of Mary Elizabeth Lucy*; this was well worthwhile for the influence of Mary Elizabeth (1803-1890) is all around. As you approach the Gatehouse it soon becomes apparent that this is the only part of the building that after four hundred years remains unchanged. The original house and grounds date from the first year of the reign of Elizabeth 1 and here she was entertained in 1572 by Sir Thomas Lucy. Another Elizabethan claim to fame was in 1583, when a young William Shakespeare was caught poaching the fallow deer that can still be glimpsed in the park.

The house itself has been called a 'revivalist fake'; it was George Hammond Lucy (1789-1845) and his wife Mary Elizabeth who, in their ambitious desire for improvement, reconstructed the crumbling outer walls and refitted and enlarged the main rooms in an Elizabethan revival style. With the advice of Thomas Willement they installed heraldic stained glass and furnished their new rooms with nineteenth century interpretations of furniture, books, pictures and ceramics. A sudden dramatic reminder of the presence of Mary Elizabeth is in the Drawing Room, which dates from the 1850s but is originally the site of the room in which Queen Elizabeth stayed. In this room the placement of the Erard harp, denotes Mary Elizabeth's welsh origins and announces with its presence that Queen Victoria's harpist often stayed at Charlecote and gave Mary Elizabeth lessons. The rose pink Outbuildings and Service Wing, with scullery, kitchen, laundry, brew-house and accommodation for servants and guests were added in 1829, reflecting their aspirations for entertaining. The Coach House and Carriage House are complete with nineteenth century vehicles in a collection revealing armorial devices of the pike and cross crosslets.

Split oak palings remind the visitor of the Elizabethan gardens in a landscape that has evolved with the use of the Rivers Avon and Dene, and become further enriched with the alterations of Capability Brown. Mary Elizabeth added parterres, reinstated by the National Trust, but alarmingly she decided, in typical nineteenth century fashion, to pull down the old church in 1851 and rebuild it in a gloomy Gothic Revival style. Fortunately the three early Lucy monuments were re-instated.

Even Alice Fairfax-Lucy, who introduces the memoirs, 'found it hard to forgive what Mary Elizabeth and her husband did to

Charlecote in their zeal for improvement...' But it has to be remembered that this was their nineteenth century interpretation of 'merrie England', and as such it still remains a delightful place to visit on a sunny, although blustery, afternoon in June.

Once again our many thanks to Roger and Sheila for organising another wonderful day out and they did it again with a bright sunny day, albeit very windy. But at least it was dry!!

Jannine Wheatley

AVONCROFT (6/7/08)

No Members Report received.

CAMBRIDGE WEEKEND (18-20/7/08)

PRICKWILLOW DRAINAGE ENGINE MUSEUM

We visited this site on the Friday. The museum is located at the eastern end of Prickwillow village, a few miles from Ely. It is on the River Lark, about 5 feet above average sea level and 40 miles from the sea. The museum is located in the engine house which was built in 1890, and has been altered to house the museum. Our Museum guide explained to us the principles involved in draining the Fens. We were to hear quite a lot more on this subject as the week-end unfolded.

In 1634 the Dutch engineer Vermuyden cut the Old Bedford River, which enabled the marshy Fens to drain by gravity to the sea. This enabled the land to be farmed. As the land, which is peat, was drained, it shrunk

and became lower than the main rivers. Consequently drainage to the sea by gravity became impossible. To overcome this problem, scoop wheels driven by windmills were used to raise the water up to the main rivers, but this was not a reliable system. The first steam pump was used in the first half of the nineteenth century, and steam pumping proved very successful. The first steam pumps needed to lift the water about five feet, but as the land continued to sink the height has increased to fifteen feet. The rate of change is now much slower, and the land is not expected to sink much more. It is necessary to pump about a quarter of the rainfall. The other three quarters is used by the crops. Most pumping takes place between November and April.

The first steam-powered pump at Prickwillow was installed in 1831, in a different building. This was replaced by another steam engine in the 1880s, which in turn was replaced by the 1929 Mirlees, Bickerton and Day diesel engine. This was used until the 1970s and is the centrepiece of the Museum. It is a huge, 5-cylinder engine coupled to a pump made by W H Allen of Bedford. It was started for us (by compressed air) and was quite quiet and extremely impressive. Near the Mirlees engine is a small Lister diesel engine which can be started by hand cranking. It was used to power a compressor which primed the Allen pump before the Mirlees engine was started.

There are other engines at the museum which have been brought in from elsewhere. They all appear well cared for, and include a sizeable Allen 3-cylinder; a Vickers-Petter 2-stroke, which could produce 80% as much power as the Mirlees although it is only half its size; and a Ruston 6HXR. There were also collections of old tools associated with the drainage of the Fens, and numerous

photographs showing life in the Fens. A most interesting visit, and a good introduction to the subject of Fens drainage.

Paul Dunleavey

THE DENVER COMPLEX

On Saturday morning our coach took us past Ely to Denver, just south of Downham Market in Norfolk, where, about a mile to the west of the village with its windmill, we arrived at the Complex. This is an intricate system of sluices, which control the outflow and inflow of water from and into the various rivers and channels which come together at Denver. The management of this system is a responsibility of the Government's Environment Agency. We were met at Denver by the manager, Daniel Pollard, who, together with the resident lockkeeper, is responsible for the operation of the sluices to control the water levels and to prevent possible flooding under extreme conditions. In the control and visitor centre Daniel gave an illustrated talk about his work and the complexity of the system he operates. He then took us on a guided tour of the site to see the sluices together with the locks, which make through navigation possible. We were greatly impressed by the massive sluice structures and the water features.

I think many of us found the detailed workings of the complex difficult to comprehend, and I, on my part, found it helpful to do some homework before writing this report.

At Denver we have the outflows of two 21-mile long artificially created parallel rivers, straight and wide, which run north-eastwards from Earith near Huntingdon to Denver. They were part of the scheme of the Dutch engineer, Cornelius Veymuyden, for the

drainage of the fens. They were dug out in the years 1631 and 1651 and are known as the Old Bedford and the New Bedford Rivers. Their purpose was to bypass a long circuitous section of the Great Ouse River and to provide quick and easy drainage from the many channels or dykes which feed into them from the surrounding fens. Also passing through the Denver Complex is the original Great Ouse River, which from Ely to Denver is known as the Ely Ouse, and which flows out into the Wash via Kings Lynn. It is tidal up to Denver Sluice. The present sluice, designed by Sir John Rennie and erected in 1834, replaced former sluices there, the first being created by Veymuyden in 1651, which lasted until its collapse in 1713. On its approach to this main sluice, the Ely Ouse, joined upstream by the Rivers Little Ouse and Wissey, encounters an impounding sluice which effectively turns this section of the river into a reservoir from which water is extracted and piped to reservoirs in Essex which, being in the driest part of the UK, need this extra supply.

From Denver down to Smallbow, near Kings Lynn, a relief channel was created between 1949 and 1964 under a government scheme, and a further sluice was constructed at Denver to control the flow along this new cut.

As to the future, there are problems with the tidal Ouse River as it becomes increasingly silted up by the tides, though this is offset to some extent by a downflush of fresh water. The other main problem for the future is the expected rise of sea levels due to global warming.

Our thanks to Daniel Pollard for a most interesting visit.

Alan White.

STRETHAM OLD ENGINE, WATERBEACH LEVEL, NEAR ELY

This was our second visit of the day and again it was a pumping station.

Our guide, Brian Callingham, and his wife Margaret, are very much involved with this historic site and the continuing work of further restoration.

Before describing the site it is helpful to know the background as to why these pumping stations were required in the Fenland.

Until the 17th century Fenland was mostly a vast marshy swamp with some islands of higher ground – such as the Isle of Ely. In 1630 the Earl of Bedford employed the Dutch engineer Vermuyden to drain the southern Fenland in order to create land for agriculture

The exposed drained soil began to shrink and sink until the ground level was lower than the rivers. It therefore became necessary to pump rainwater from the fields up into the rivers which had remained at the pre-drainage levels.

At first, windmills were used to 'pump' the water by pushing and lifting up the low lying water. However the land levels continued to shrink further and the windmills could not deal with the height of the lift required, the fen in some areas being some 6 metres below river level.

Steam was the saviour and provided the technical solution to resolving the problem. In the 1800's there were some 800 windmills in the Fens and these were replaced by 70 steam driven pumps

The Waterbeach Level Commissioners ordered a Watt double-acting rotative beam engine and this was supplied by Butterly and Co in 1831 together with three 'Waggon' type coal boilers and scoop wheel. This cost £2900, the building to house the pump being constructed by another contractor for £2000. The three 'Waggon' type boilers were replaced in 1878 by three Lancashire boilers.

Water was pumped into the Old West River adjoining the site, this river also being used for the delivery of coal for the boilers. It worked for nearly 100 years until 1925 and then it was used as a stand by pump until 1941. In 1925 a Mirrlees, Bickerton and Day 4 Cylinder Air Blast Injection Diesel Engine was installed. This drove a Gwynnes centrifugal pump which had a pumping ability three times that of the steam engine and scoop wheel. The steam engine supplemented diesel power in the 1939 and 1940 floods and it was last test run in 1941.

My first impression in seeing the site was the chimney rising above the flat countryside.

Our guide Brian was enthusiastic about the building and gave us background to the preservation fight which has kept this industrial plant in the Fens which it served so well. We were able to roam within the whole of the building. Brian pressed the button for the electric motor to start the engine and the engine came alive with the noise. I am always in awe when I see these large beam engines working to power the equipment.

This was no exception... How did they cast the beams, how did they transport the equipment and how did they get it high up in the building? An invitation for a winter programme talk?

As we left some of us could see the halo appearing above Roger's head. We thought it was a feeling of well being that the weather was dry; Paul our coach driver had performed miracles in turning and parking the coach in the space of a sixpence. (Given the age of our members I know I don't have to convert to decimal currency!) And our guide and the visit had turned out excellent. But more was to come.

As we made our way back to the coach over the river bridge we could see in the distance two canal boats. We stood on the bridge watching and the lead boat responded with a blast on the steam whistle. This meant only one thing, the lead boat was President, the only remaining steam powered canal boat which is based at the Black Country Museum in Dudley. As she drew closer we could see the booty, Kildare. The crew were dressed appropriately in Victorian dress, waved to us and passed under the bridge at exactly 4.30 p.m. What planning!

We continued over the bridge, Roger taking the short cut by walking on the water*.

This was an excellent start to our Cambridge weekend. If you are in the Fens I would recommend visiting the site. Details can be obtained from 01353 648578 or www.StrethamOldEngine.org.uk

* One of the memorable happenings on Tapping Tours. See the article later in this edition.

N.B. In 1959 the Stretham Engine Preservation Trust was formed becoming the Stretham Engine Trust in 1988 and a 99 year lease obtained from the Waterbeach Level Internal Drainage Board. 1993 saw phase 1 of the renovation works. The Engineers House is let as a holiday unit thus providing funds for continuing renovation. It

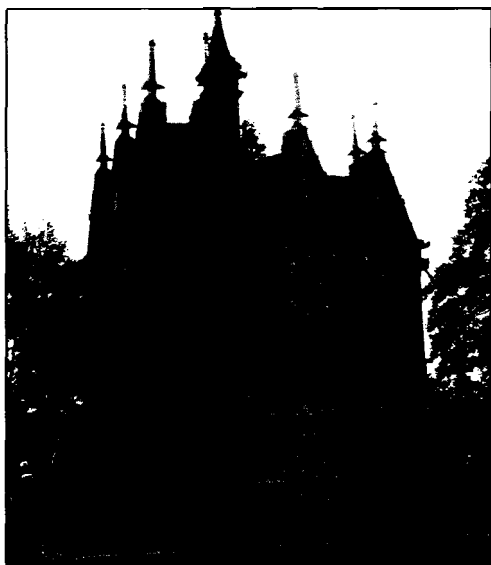
is hoped one day that steam will return. I have drawn extensively on publications produced by The Trust and am grateful for their permission to reproduce part of the text.

Roy Fidoe

RUSHTON TRIANGULAR LODGE

What an enigma. What an interesting, intriguing finale to the Cambridge weekend. Now seemingly tucked into the corner a field behind a housing estate.

Its three sides each have three gables over three floors, each floor with three windows, of a triangular and trefoil design. The decoration includes Latin texts and various letters and numerals, which form an enigmatic code. Two sides are ornamented with large numerals "15" "93". The third side has "TT", which are the initials of its builder, Sir Thomas Tresham.



Built in 1593, this lodge, on the edge of Sir Thomas Tresham's estate, was ostensibly a warreners' lodge. Rabbits, however, were good business, particularly for Tresham,

barred from remunerative office, as they could be sold for £3 per 100 (grey rabbits) and black pelted ones for £5 each.

Sir Thomas Tresham was from a very influential family - his grandfather (another Thomas) was controller of Henry VIII's household, but subsequently supported Queen Mary - but lost favour under Elizabeth. Thomas was knighted by Elizabeth in 1557, but remained under suspicion being a Catholic recusant (not attending Protestant church services) and heavily fined. All Catholics were put under increasingly restrictive laws between 1581 and 1593. Thomas suffered house arrest and imprisonment on several occasions. He was excluded from any political position of influence. His eldest son and heir, Francis, was a cousin to Robert Catesby and implicated in the Gunpowder Plot. Francis avoided a death sentence through influence, 'bribes' and heavy fines taken from the estate. The estate was still heavily in debt on Thomas's death in 1605.

During twelve years, when he was excluded from his estates, he planned this lodge and on his return in 1593 he had it built. The design, layout and decoration are coded references to his Catholic beliefs. Elizabethan intellectuals amused themselves with coded messages and double meanings. For Tresham, the Latin pun on his name "I am three" - trefoils were also in his coat of arms - appealed particularly to him as it also reflected the Catholic Trinity. Three is the basis of the design and for many of its motifs and 'devices'. The sides are 33ft long (the age Christ died) each side with a 33 letter Latin inscription from the bible and the 18 spaced letters below (six each side) form another Latin quote from a hymn.

The numbers over the entrance door [5555] and those in the gables [3898, 3509, 1641,

1626, 1595, & 1593] have variously been interpreted as dates or years from the then accepted date for creation (3962BC), possibly cryptograms for Catholic phrases; 55 was used for 'Jesus Maria', which Thomas Tresham used in all his letters. The chimney also has monograms of the Latin mass on each of its three sides. Internally, finishes are quite plain for the warrener's use.

Michael Hayzelden

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY **AND HIGHLEY ENGINE HOUSE** **(1618108)**

A small group of enthusiastic WIALHS members collected at Kidderminster Station on the morning of 16th. August. We were so keen that we all arrived early, one pair even alighted on the earlier train- but fortunately 'de-trained' and met us. We had time to have a really good look at the station and museum and were all surprised and delighted with the changes since our previous visits.

When we boarded our train we were all surprised at how full it was and discovered that it was mainly a family party with Severn Valley connections. There is something very nostalgic about steam trains and my memories are mainly of war-time travel and the itchy seats, hot air coming around my bare legs and the sound of the train on the rails.

We looked for the repairs to the bank, with the aid of an excellent booklet supplied to us by Ralph Dunham and were agreeably surprised at how quickly the areas had 'grassed over'. The Safari park is always a delight, seen from the train. Elephant and Giraffe seem almost surreal.

At Highley station we alighted and were led to the Engine shed by Ralph. The building

was a surprise as it is modern and multipurpose. The locomotives are on the ground floor (of course) and the approach is up quite a steep incline. The design is very innovative, at first you view the trains from ground level, walk to the end of the shed and then turn onto a platform and view them from the normal position, it is also possible to view them from above on the cafeteria level. When we entered the shed engines were gently steaming and we discovered that this is a glucose solution that gives life to the scene.

We visited the exhibits and then had lunch in the cafeteria, sitting outside on the balcony with an excellent view of the track and a good position for train spotters and photographers.

After lunch we caught another train for Bridgnorth went via the cliff railway to high town (I think it is the only inland cliff railway in England). We wandered the narrow and interesting streets, had tea in an old fashioned cafe and then caught the train home as the weather deteriorated and all agreed that we had spent a very enjoyable and nostalgic day.

If you wish to visit the Engine Shed, go as early as possible if you also wish to visit Bridgnorth as there is a great deal to see; or you could spend a good day there and even have a walk to Highley along the old miners track. There is also a snack bar and book shop on the station which sells bacon and sausage **butties** if you do not have time for a cafeteria lunch.

Christine Silvester

THE BISHOPS PALACE
WORCESTER
 (14&21/8/08)

No Members Report received.

SWANSEA WATERFRONT
MUSEUM
 (719108)

No Members Report was received, however Roger Tapping gave me a few publicity items which he obtained for the trip. These are copied in the short article below - Ed

SCOTT'S PIT

A fine Cornish engine house built in about 1823/24 to pump a shaft that was sunk over 500 ft to the Swansea Four Foot Seam. Although commonly known as Scott's Pit, its original name was Venture Pit or Pwll Menter.

John Scott, from whom the pit takes its name was a London solicitor. He took a lease of the minerals under 505 acres in 1816 and started to sink a new pit. He brought his first coal to market in 1819. Scott and his partners had a low opinion of local mining skills and asked Nicholas Wood to recommend a viewer and an engineer. He also ensured that his colliery was built to the best current standards to be found in the north-east of England. The result was a well built, highly specified, but very expensive outfit.

The venture proved unsuccessful. Although Scott initially developed a decent export trade (over 15,000 tons p.a.), output soon declined and he ran into severe financial problems.



In 1828 he surrendered his lease and the colliery was taken over by his neighbour, Charles Henry Smith, whose family had been one of the leading coal owners in Swansea since 1750. Coal production continued until 1838. After that the pit continued to be used intermittently as a pumping shaft and an emergency exit for neighbouring pits. Mining in this area ceased altogether in 1930 and Scott's Pit was finally abandoned.

Apart from the engine house itself features that can still be identified include:

- the single stone-lined shaft, now capped, divided by a central brattice
- the mounting of the original haystack boiler
- the mounting of a later Cornish boiler added in about 1900
- tunnels probably intended for the original winding engine and a surface ventilation furnace.

A railroad (or tramroad - the evidence is inconclusive) was built to carry the coal down to a shipping place on the river Tawe. A feature of particular interest is that a locomotive built by George Stephenson was supplied in 1819 and used on this line for a short period. It seems to have been under-boilered and it soon had its wheels taken off and was confined to pumping duties. A

further manifestation of the Wood/Stephenson connection was the introduction of safety lamps in 1825, their first use in Wales - not that the local colliers were impressed.

The importance of the building as the last surviving Cornish engine house in the district was recognised when it was scheduled in 1972. It was restored by the SWWIAS in 1976-79 and is now the property of the City & County of Swansea.

MORRIS CASTLE

An early block of industrial flats, built by the coal and copper master, Sir John Morris I in 1773, ostensibly to provide housing for some of his colliers and coppermen, but almost certainly also as a way of making his mark on the landscape, since it occupies a highly prominent position overlooking the Lower Swansea Valley which was the seat of his operations. Morris & Lockwood were smelting copper at the Fforest copperworks, about a mile up the valley and mining coal from a variety of pits and levels on its western side. As originally built the Castle comprised four towers, each four storeys high, with interconnecting ranges to form a quadrangle.



It was constructed of the local sandstone with string course of blocks of copper slag blocks (a common form of architectural embellishment in the Swansea region) and

some brickwork. It has been worked out that it contained 24 tenements, although some early descriptions refer to 40 families living there. Each tower contained a basement and three storeys. Traces of plastering remain on some of the inner walls and these show up the outlines of the staircases.

Fireplaces can also be seen. To the north of the building earthen banks divide the ground into a number of small plots and it is thought that these may have marked out potato patches for the residents.

The lofty position of the Castle and the absence of running water close at hand cannot have made it popular with the workmen for whom it was intended and their families. But it was certainly still occupied in 1814 and it may have continued to be occupied until 1845 when the ground lease from the Duke of Beaufort to John Morris II (the son of the first Sir John) expired. It was then abandoned (if not before) and much of the stone was subsequently robbed for housebuilding in the valley below. By 1880 it was in ruins, and today only fragments of the two northern towers remain.

John Morris did not repeat the idea of providing flats for his workers. A few years after building Morris Castle he established Morriston, a settlement of conventional houses which was laid out on a grid pattern close to his copperworks.

Editor's Note:

I greatly regret missing out on the Swansea trip as my family originate from the Swansea Valley, and it is an area which I know well and return to often.

While at Swansea University, in the early 70s, I shared accommodation with a chap called Steve Lavender who later became

"Conservator" with the Lower Swansea Valley Regeneration Project and wrote a book called "New Land for Old" – now long out of print. The book contains some fascinating images of former industrial landscapes and describes how the project brought about the restoration of what was described as "the most concentrated and uninterrupted area of industrial dereliction in Britain".

I bought a copy of Steve's book to show my support for his work. As he signed it for me in gratitude, it now hold pride of place on my bookshelf– the only signed first edition I own.

The landscape you may have seen on your visit to Swansea bears no relation to the barren "moonscape" I remember from my childhood when travelling down the valley from my grandparents' home. I will try to do a short article on the area for the next edition.

THE FIFTH BILL GWILLIAM LECTURE

Bonts, Bags and Bottle Ovens A Personal Odyssey

Dr Malcolm Nixon

17th October 2007 at
Huntingdon Hall

This article was submitted for the Spring 2008 edition (No. 34), but due to a printing error a substantial part of it did not appear. With apologies to Malcolm Nixon, the article is repeated here in full, with a bonus picture subsequently provided by Malcolm – Ed.

This year, the 5th Bill Gwilliam Lecture was given by Dr. Malcolm Nixon - a member of the Society for over 30 years - and was a highly individual telling of the story of how Worcester and Stoke upon Trent became potting communities, sharing a common industrial heritage and even, to a surprising degree, a common cultural and social background - while preserving their distinct individuality. Malcolm has spent much of the last fifty years working in, on and sometimes even under these landscapes and the talk reflected his passion for and knowledge of the potting trade and those who worked in it. This was indeed a personal odyssey incorporating slides, poetry, prose, oral history and the often very poignant testimony of the past generations of potters and their children.

Brought up in Stafford - a world away from Worcester, but on the PMT No 10 bus route to Hanley, where family shopping expeditions were enlivened by top-deck views of a landscape still smoke enveloped and grimed by generations of potting, mining and iron making; here was an unlikely 'spiritual' affinity but one to last a lifetime. During his school years he was further inspired by the paintings of Lowry and eagerly took up painting and drawing of the Potteries streetscapes and in particular the still prevalent 'bottle ovens' which had once fired the crockery made there. Often these trips meant disobeying a strict edict not to cycle beyond Stone - some ten miles short of his wished-for destination! On these trips he discovered for the first time the natural warmth and spontaneity of the potters and their friendly banter. Later still, while at Aston University training as an architect he found encouragement and support to not only continue with painting, but also to survey, measure and record what was rapidly becoming a vanishing world (the impact of the Clean Air Act was to profoundly change

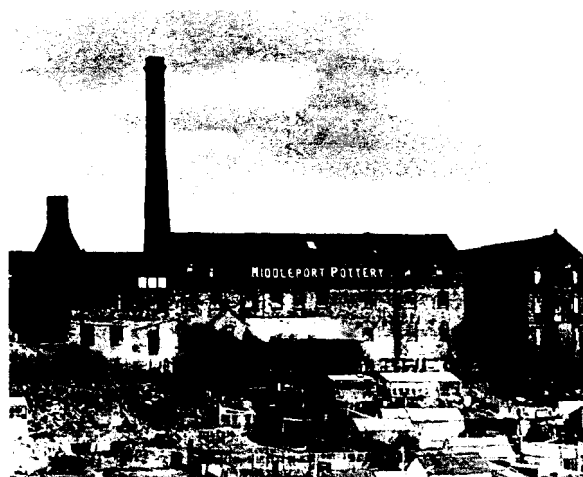
the Worcester skyline too.) These were to be skills which were to be developed and fostered on countless 'potbanks' for the rest of his life. However, in a supreme stroke of irony he used to visit Worcester at the very time the former Warmstry House porcelain works site was being demolished and used to eat his lunch by the river - in blissful ignorance of the demolition going on behind him or of its significance!

While working on his PhD on the development of the pottery factory, Malcolm was introduced to Henry Sandon and a life-long friendship and collaboration ensued, with Malcolm a constant visitor to the Dyson Perrins Museum and digging partner on the later Warmstry House Archaeological excavations. These digs, research in Worcester and recording projects for the Gladstone Pottery Museum in Longton and the Spode factory in Stoke were somehow slotted into a busy teaching schedule at the Cheltenham School of Architecture and family life in Claines!

Teaching became another of Malcolm's passions, allowing him to introduce generations of college and mature adult education students to the delights of urban archaeology, archival research, measured surveys (preferably of factories) industrial archaeology in general, the Arnold Bennett 'Five Towns' novels and by no means, least - the Staffordshire oatcake - a rare delicacy!

Field trips would be punctuated by Malcolm whooping with delight at some new discovery and the tour guide exiting down an alley way or into an abandoned bottle oven where he would enthusiastically explain how these structures were built and fired and what terms such as 'bonts' and 'bags' meant. It was to be on one of these visits that he met the Dorling family - Rosemary and William - who with equal enthusiasm encouraged

Malcolm to work at their Middleport Pottery, an 1888 'model pottery' requiring intensive and lengthy investigation, recording and interpretation.



Middleport Pottery

This canalside potbank became a spiritual home and with a nearby oatcake shop supplying both Malcolm and his family with copious supplies of this North Staffordshire delicacy he found himself in 'heaven'.

The evening was a story of how two communities, located at opposite ends of the West Midlands, came to share a common heritage and, tragically, a common sadness through factory closures. It was a personal odyssey interspersed with poetry, prose, slides, the words of the potters themselves, and a liberal sprinkling of anecdotes about the many fascinating larger than life characters who accompanied Malcolm on this wonderful journey through two pottery landscapes.

MORE CAST IRON MEMORIALS

Glyn Thomas

As a follow up to Mike Wall's excellent piece in the last edition, I was visiting a National Trust property recently (Benthall Hall, near Broseley in Shropshire) when I spotted these in the nearby churchyard.



Not quite as elaborate as Mike's examples but I thought I would include them just to show that I do pay attention to what goes into the Journal. Wife and daughter looked very puzzled as I suddenly exclaimed "Oooh! Cast iron memorials!" and dashed off, wielding my camera.

Given the proximity to Ironbridge it is perhaps surprising that there were only two in the churchyard – all the others being of conventional stone.

The right hand one was almost impossible to decipher, and was an incised script. The more elaborate one on the left was in very good condition, with the script in relief. As Mike previously pointed out, this must have needed a special casting for every memorial – or a lot of chiselling!



The memorial was to one Hiram Hill who died on October 27th 1828. The rather sombre inscription reads –

*Farewell my friends and children dear
My blessed redeemer has called me here
My debt is paid, my grave you see
Prepare yourself to follow me.*

A happy note on which to conclude!

A TYRO'S ADVENTURES IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Jeff Wilmot

Still think it's too difficult to write an article for the Journal? This just shows it can be done – even all the way from Australia!

Jeff first got in touch with WIALHS having found our website. Through email contact with our Membership Secretary he was able to contact a local researcher and to follow up on his family history research in the area. This work is, I gather, still ongoing but Jeff has been kind enough to pen the following article - Ed

In Issue No. 34 of the Journal your editor Glyn Thomas encouraged readers to take on history research, an activity that I, a retired electrical engineer, can heartily endorse. I am now fascinated by British and Australian history, amazed by the amount and age of material that still exists and how much of it is accessible on and through the **internet** and impressed by the willingness of strangers to help. All that enlivened by Eureka moments and disappointments.

I began of course with a curiosity about my own family history, particularly since it was discovered that two of my ancestors were convicts: a cause for celebration now in Australia as we regard ourselves as a new aristocracy. Previous generations were kept ignorant of the "stain".

My great great grandfather John Wilmot was a watchmaker who in 1832 had a death sentence commuted to transportation for life for stealing five watches from his employer's dwelling house in Great Faringdon, Berkshire. In Australia he married Mary Bryant, an illiterate Irish girl who was transported for seven years in 1840 for stealing money from her employer at the Life Guardsman public-house at Knightsbridge in London.

The search for John's antecedents began easily enough because he was a Quaker from Bristol. Much of the lives of his parents James and Elizabeth and his siblings were revealed in the registers and minutes of meetings that I found were accessible through the Family History Centre of the Church of Latter Day Saints in Seymour near where I live in central Victoria.

It was the **internet website** International Genealogical Index that led me to the marriage of James and Elizabeth and her birth at Dursley, and I was able to confirm

these events in the parish register. Another **website**, ancestry.com gave me Malmesbury as the birthplace of James (unmistakeably correct by the details of his family) and Robert as his father – no details given of Robert except his birth in Tewkesbury in 1740 to Robert and Phillipa. I had no time to confirm this before my wife and I went to England on holiday in May 2006 and included Tewkesbury and Malmesbury in our itinerary.

At Tewkesbury the database at the library (which I later realised was taken from Ralph Bigland's "Monumental Inscriptions") informed me that Rev. Robert Wilmot and Phillipa were buried in Tewkesbury Abbey. We were directed to the verger, Pat Webley, who took from a drawer a plastic-wrapped, hand-written book in which he said his great grandfather had noted all the inscriptions in the abbey in the 1890s. "Ah yes" he said, "Follow me". Under the carpet in St. Margaret's Chapel, a chapel that tourists are discouraged from entering because it is used for prayer, we found the gravestone of Rev. Robert, Phillipa his wife and four children who died in infancy, and John Hayward, gentleman who turned out to be Phillipa's uncle. On Pat's advice I went to the Gloucester Records Office and found out more about Rev. Robert.

We didn't spend much time in Malmesbury because we couldn't get a **B&B** in the area, which in retrospect was a mistake: time spent exploring the area, asking questions and looking at burial grounds might have saved a lot of time later. On the other hand I would have missed out on some engrossing detective work.

After returning to Australia I emailed Pat with a few basic questions and he replied with more information about Rev. Robert that he had extracted from the Diocesan

recordst – his ordination, etc. and, most usefully, his parents Thomas and Mary and place of birth Lower Mitton. And that brought me to Worcestershire and the registers of Lower Mitton (where I learned that Thomas' father was Pinson), Hartlebury and an ever-widening spread of parishes from which I started collecting the names of many Wilmots, ignoring the many variations of spelling.

Meanwhile the search for Jarnes and Robert and confirmation of the ancestry.com postings in the registers of Anglican and non-conformist parishes all around the Malmesbury district uncovered some signs of their presence but they were inconclusive. The Tewkesbury registers confirmed that Rev. Robert and Phillipa had a son Robert born in 1740, but there was nothing about him after that.

A catalogue of names is not enough: to know what, where, why and in what circumstances gives their lives meaning and context. So putting any doubts behind me I googled "Kidderminster history" and discovered the Victoria County History and in its chapter on Kidderminster a reference to "several fulling mills on the Stour near Lower Mitton, in the occupation of different members of the Wilmot family, who appear to have been successful, as they registered their pedigree in the visitation of 1682". Maybe Thomas was of that family. It rang bells because James was a millwright who was involved in the conversion to factories of fulling mills at Dursley.

There was also a reference in the VCH to a Robert Wilmot, treasurer to the County Committee at Stafford. More googling wasn't very informative about what a County Committee was, but there was somewhere a mention of a book called *"The Committee at Stafford 1643-1645"* by

Pennington and Roots published in the 1950s. I had to see it - it wasn't in our libraries but there were seven copies around the world available for purchase and I bought one. It revealed that Robert was from Smethwick but an instruction had been issued to the Parliamentary army to refrain from looting his fulling mills at Kidderminster. The source of this information was the Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts and following a tip off from Tim Booth, a copy of the relevant page was sent to me by Robert Ryland of the Birmingham Library. It was the Earl of Denbigh who issued the instruction during the siege of Dudley in June 1644.

I wanted to find out more about these fulling mills, but where to start? Once again the willingness of strangers to help came to my rescue. On the internet I found the Worcestershire Archaeological and Local History Society (*that's us!* – Ed) and fired an arrow into the air in its direction. Jacky Hollis picked it up and passed it on to Tim Booth who sent it further to Dr. Peter King who responded with much more about Wilmots and mills than I expected.

My growing collection of Wilmot events and names from the registers included many of those that Peter King mentioned, but they remained unconnected. That pedigree – what was the visitation of 1682? With not much hope and after many false starts I googled "visitation Kidderminster" whereupon the world of the College of Heralds and their county visitations was revealed; the 1682 visitation had been published, was now on CD and was accessible on line. Within an hour from complete ignorance I had the Wilmot pedigree on my computer screen and all those names I had been linking up, including Thomas' father Pinson. There was more about them in Glazebrook's *"The*

Heraldry of Worcestershire" and William Salt's "Collections for a History of *Staffordshire*", both discovered through the internet.

The pedigree had been submitted by a James Wilmot, son of the treasurer Robert, in support of a claim for the coat of arms of the Earls of Rochester - which family died out the previous year - based on a belief that the two families had a common ancestor in ancient Worcestershire. He couldn't prove it so the claim failed. But the belief in a family connection rang more bells because the descendents of the convict frequently speculate on that possibility. Was there some knowledge passed down through generations, or was it only imaginations being sparked by the common name John Wilmot?

At his request I sent the genealogical information to Peter King. He prompted me to look for wills, particularly the PCC wills that were available on line from National Archives/DocumentsOnline and within half an hour I had four of them.

The four included that made by Phillipa in 1768. I was eager to find out what it said about her son Robert. In her words "he was now in parts remote beyond the seas" - whereabouts unknown. If he turned up within seven years of her death he could share in her substantial estate, otherwise it all went to his sisters. The wishful thought occurred to me: if they didn't know where he was he might have been in **Malmesbury** - **mightn't** he? But it really didn't seem likely.

Without much expectation I explored some more genealogical websites. On one, familyhistoryonline.net, I found the burial of Robert Wilmot at Malmesbury in 1810. Well, I knew that. But it also said that he was buried in the Moravian Burial Ground.

That was new. The catalogue of the National Archives listed records of the Malmesbury Moravian Church; I passed this information on to a distant relative in England - our common ancestor was James - to follow up. As a result someone there searched the IGI with a more adventurous attitude to the spelling of Wilmot and found the birth of James Willment, father Robert Willment, in 1764 in East Tytherton near Malmesbury. Yes, there it all was in the register of the Moravian Church at East Tytherton - a marvellous document that included all the details of the members, including the date and place of birth. This is the moment of truth: what does it say about Robert? Born on 3/4 April 1738 in Crewkerne, Somerset. What disappointment: there were two Roberts, the ancestry.com posting was wrong and there was no connection with Worcestershire or the Earls of Rochester!

Now I am finding out what I can of the history of the Moravian Church and its spread in England, and its practices. At the same time the research into the Wilmots of Worcestershire continues in tandem with Peter King. The genealogy is merely the framework for the story of the advance of a family from being yeomen in the 15th and 16th centuries to being gentlemen in the 17th century, owners of land and fulling mills that evolved into iron forges, and their interest in the Stour Navigation; a story that Peter is discovering by long search through documents in Records Offices.

In this I envy him. I know from the experience of researching my Australian family in State and National Archives, in visits to local museums and in newspapers that there is so much that is not and never will be available on the internet and that you cannot predict what you might find - the chance facts that provide more leads. Even so the internet is a magic tool that has

enabled the exploration of history to an extent previously impossible, particularly from 12,000 miles away.

Now, there was a Robert Wilmot migrated to Maryland in 1759 and bought land. I wonder... ?

DOWERY DELL VIADUCT

Glyn Thomas

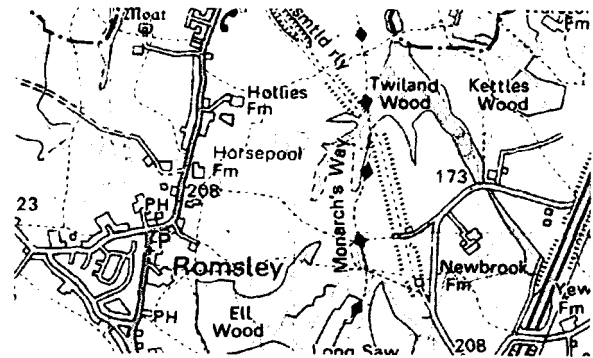
Here's one wot I wrote - Ed

While rummaging around the internet to find "stuff" that might be of interest to members I discovered what might be an interesting summer evening visit. I commend the proposal to our next Programme Secretary!

On a website (more details in the Reviews section) I found a series of pictures of a Worcestershire railway landmark of which I was totally unaware – although there will no doubt be WIALHS railway buffs who already know every detail. For those, like me, who are ignorant in such matters ... read on!

The landmark in question is (or rather was) the Dowery Dell Viaduct (also apparently known as the Hunnington Viaduct), on the Halesowen Railway. This was located close to Romsley (where the Monarch's way footpath crosses a stream in Twiland Wood near the Clent Hills – see map below).

A little more internet searching gave the following brief description of the railway's history -



"The Halesowen Railway is a much-lamented curiosity in the railway heritage of Birmingham and the West Midlands. The line was, in reality, two distinct branch lines that met at Halesowen station: one the GWR branch linking Dudley with Halesowen, and a second line built under the auspices of an independent railway company, the Halesowen Railway (a company later to be jointly purchased by the Midland Railway and the GWR when in administration), linking the Midland Railway's Birmingham to Gloucester line with Halesowen.

Opening to passenger services in 1883 (some 18 years after the Act authorising its construction was passed), the line was operated by the Midland Railway (although occasional GWR traffic did pass through), and carried services from Northfield station which left the Midland line at Halesowen Junction passing through the Austin car works to Longbridge (not to be confused with the current Longbridge station), Rubery and Hunnington stations before arriving at Halesowen.

However, passenger traffic was largely insignificant and the stations on the line closed in 1919 with the line remaining open for goods traffic and 'Workmens Trains' carrying 'commuting' Austin workers from Halesowen to the Longbridge works.

The small branch line had itself three branches stemming from it at various periods of its history: a short branch leading to the Frankley waterworks and reservoir for construction traffic, a short branch leading to Hollymoor Hospital for the same reason, a goods siding at Hunnington serving the nearby Bluebird Toffee factory and a link to a quarry near the site of Rubery station.

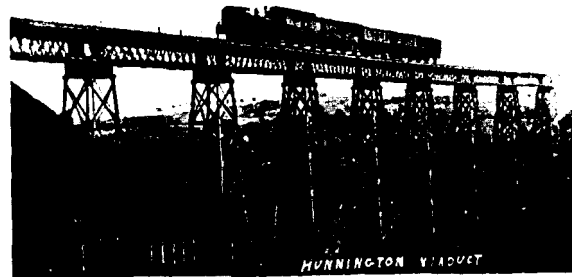
Arguably, however, the most impressive part of the branch was the 660 feet long, 100 feet high Dowery Dell trestle viaduct that was sadly cut up for scrap shortly after the line's final closure in 1964.

(Dowery Dell was the area surrounding a small stream running through Twiland Wood between Rubery and Hunnington)"

The photograph below, apparently taken in the 1950's, was what first grabbed my attention -



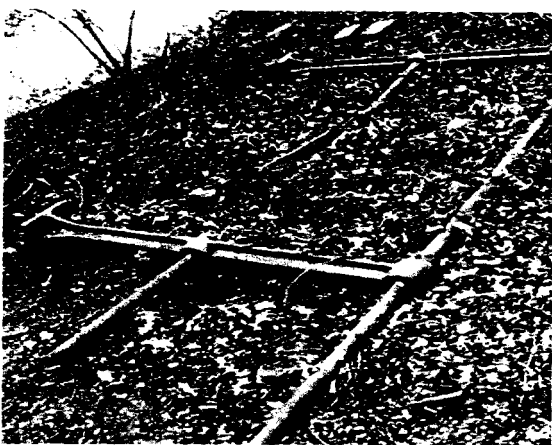
Further searching showed the following – not a train ride for the faint hearted I think!



Other photographs and articles showed that despite demolition in the 1960's, some remnants of the structure still remain, such as the brick pillar bases -



and even parts of the railings from the top of the viaduct, which can be seen in their original place on the viaduct in the older picture which follows.



The site now forms part of a local path known as the Illey Way, which is well signposted and described in leaflets. You can **download** a copy of the leaflet from the Worcestershire County Council website.

Apparently access is quite difficult as the site lies some way from the nearest road but I shall be donning my walking boots and setting off in search some time – anyone care to join me?

Glyn Thomas

MEMORIES OF TAPPING'S TOURS

Roy Fidoe

Roger has given us many interesting and memorable times with his long service as Summer Programme Secretary.

I started to think back to our trips. Whilst many visits were notable for the fact that Roger managed to get us to parts that no one had ever visited before (Do you remember the tree house in Shropshire?) it's the amusing incidents that I fondly remember.

We were in the small valley near Stroud having an interesting visit to the man who collected, amongst other things, British Railway timber transporter lorries. The old water closet discharging above the stream was of particular interest to me. I was then aware of the unmistakeable sound of a Spitfire. Coming down the valley, at a fairly low height, was a Spitfire and a Hurricane. I looked at my watch, it was 3.37 p.m. I said to one of the members (who shall be nameless) 'That's not bad. Roger asked for them to come down at 3.30 p.m. so they are only a few minutes late.' The member turned to me and said, 'Did he really ask for them to fly down the Valley for us?'

I think it may have been on this trip that we had to jump start the coach at the Little Chef car park. The battery had failed when we returned from our comfort break. It was a good job that there was a slight downhill slope.

On another occasion we had gone to the back of beyond in the Highley area of the Severn Valley looking at industrial remains in a wooded area.

Roger always plans his trips meticulously. Coach drivers know that Tapps will have sussed out low bridges which the coach cannot go under. We do however go down many narrow lanes where passing, if you meet another vehicle coming the other way generally means reversing for the other vehicle.

This trip was different. It wasn't a low bridge; it was a ford at the end of a narrow country lane. No problem, the level of the water was less than 12 inches. We got off the coach to view the site. I seem to remember there was a small pedestrian footbridge over the stream. Some of the members got back on the coach. In the meantime, Alan, our driver, had viewed the coach parked on the incline to the ford and concluded that if he drove through, the 'skirt' (part of the body moulding at the bottom of the front of the coach) would be damaged to the extent it could be ripped off. He couldn't reverse back, there was no where to go and he certainly couldn't turn around.

The solution was in the loading of the coach. Every one got off the coach except for about five people who were told to sit on the back seat. Alan then asked for other people to board the coach, one at a time, and go to the back. When he was satisfied the back end of the coach was lowered enough he drove through the ford with Tapps, as organiser, taking the responsibility to call Alan through the water. Clearance of the 'skirt' was no more than 2 inches!

There was Lou, the immaculately turned out retired Midland Red driver. Down in the Forest of Dean we had gone to see, amongst other things, a person who had devised his own engineered pump for a water supply to his house. He told us that if we had arrived in a mini coach, as many parties did, we

could have parked on the lawn. The coach could have then turned around on the front lawn to leave. However he felt the entrance gate pillars were too narrow for the coach to drive through and we should park on the road and walk down to the house.

'No problems said Lou, I'll take her through.' Do we need to get off? 'No, stay on' said Lou. He drove between the pillars and I don't think there was more than 2 inches either side. He then turned on the lawn between various trees and shrubs to drive back out. It may not have been a three point turn but it wasn't much more.

As I said, there are many happy memories of Tappings Tours. Roger, you have served the Society well and given us immense hours of pleasure. Many Societies would have liked a Tapping. Have a well earned rest, but we will miss you.

I would like to hear other member's memories of Tapping's Tours.

Roy Fidoe

NORTON BARRACKS AND THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT [continued]

This article follows on from the one in the Spring 2008 Journal. I hope that I have not lost any of the sense in rather severely editing the original text from the website - Ed

In July, 1946, orders were received for the Corps Training Companies and Headquarters to move to Oswestry to establish a new Infantry Training Centre. But a Primary Training Wing of two

companies was left behind at Norton to be administered by No. 20 Holding Battalion, which had just arrived.

Throughout these changes the Regimental Depot party had continued to function. Not the least of its duties was to guard jealously the interests of the Regiment in the face of many minor problems raised by officers in authority who had only a passing interest in Norton Barracks as the permanent regimental home. In addition, it was, of course, responsible for the permanent records and administration of all matters pertaining to the Regiment.

Administrative changes followed thick and fast. The background to these changes was clearly and convincingly set out in a letter of June, 1948, from the Colonel of the Regiment, Brigadier B. C. S. Clarke, to all officers:

"An even greater change is the introduction of the group system by which regiments are brigaded together in county Groups. It was found to some extent in the 1914-18 war, but very much more so in the recent war, that more often than not it became impossible to post reinforcements to their own regiments. As an alternative to a Corps of Infantry it is thought that by confining such postings within brigades much of the regimental spirit may live again within the brigade group. We have been grouped with the Cheshire, North and South Staffordshire Regiments under the name of the Mercian Brigade. Unwelcome as these changes undoubtedly are, it must be admitted that it is difficult to find a practical alternative, and officers and men may now be called to serve in any regiment of the group."

The conditions of modern war demand that personnel be available for posting over a far wider field than previously obtained. A

modern recruiting system has to be both fluid and flexible; and in fulfilling these requirements the old personal attachment and interest of a recruit for the regiment of his choice must to some extent be sacrificed in general administrative interests. The Regiment has taken these changes with calm resignation; and it is some slight compensation that in April, 1948, the Depot Staff was increased to four officers and twenty-two other ranks with a clear-cut function as the custodian of all regimental property and with general responsibility for the regimental home.

It was with the object of ensuring that subsequent to the infantry reorganization in June, 1948, the full weight of preserving the regimental home should not fall on the small Regimental Depot that the Colonel of the Regiment issued an appeal to all officers, past and present. In particular, attention was drawn to the difficulty of maintaining the Officers' Mess, a difficulty accentuated when officers of the Depot lived out. The appeal covered proposals for an annual subscription from all officers. As a result the Regiment still had its own Mess at Norton Barracks, which was a gathering place from time to time for numbers of officers, past and present. In the same way the Sergeants' Mess was also made a Regimental Mess, fulfilling the same function for past and present members of the various Sergeants' Messes of the Regiment.

The establishment of the Regimental Room at Norton was a happy way of realizing the need to provide a room for present and past other ranks of the Regiment to meet and use as a home. It was furnished and decorated with pictures and trophies and readily combined the pleasant atmosphere of a club and a home.

To a layman the scope of the Regimental Museum and the care with which it is maintained come as something of a surprise: and if an outside comment were permitted it might be to the effect that such an institution lies so far from the centre of the city of Worcester, whose citizens should share facilities to view those many exhibits connected with the history of a Regiment which to a real degree is their proud possession. The Museum is, of course, open to the public, and a new Worcester Guide Book is to draw attention to it.

From such a wealth of material, it is difficult to pick out relics of particular interest. Exhibits range from an officer's sash of the 29th dating from the American War of Independence to the 75 mm. mountain gun captured at Maram Spur in Burma by the 7th Battalion in 1944. This, together with other Japanese weapons, was brought home by C.S.M. J. J. White, of Kidderminster, in the face of much opposition from Railway Transport Officers and Embarkation Staffs.

The portraits include Eric Kennington's splendid pastel work of Private Hunt, D.C.M., of the 1st Battalion, and J. P. Beadle's action picture of Gheluvelt. There is also a fine work by Matania of the battle of Neuve Chapelle. The artist is, of course, known for his vivid illustrations in the Sphere over a number of years. There is Sir Hubert Rance's flag flown by him as Governor of Burma, an emblem of British authority which will presumably never fly again. There is the Nazi flag captured by the 8th Battalion in France and a *khidmatgar's* belt to commemorate the association of the 2nd Battalion with the 6th Gurkha Rifles from 1942 to 1946.

Perhaps one of the most striking exhibits is the bronze statuette, "The Sentry," by the late C. S. Jagger, who served with the

Worcestershire Regiment in World War I and who used men of the Regiment as his models.



The Sentry by C.S. Jagger

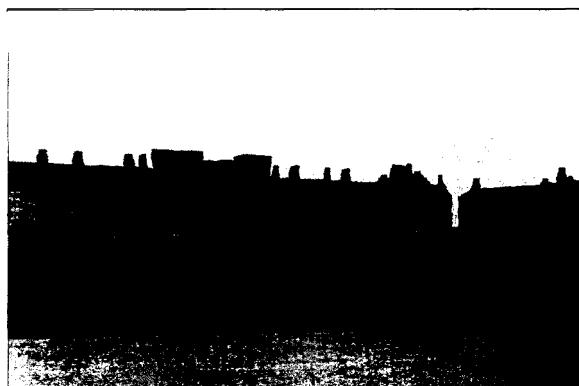
"The Sentry" is a replica of his War Memorial at Paddington Station. His more familiar work is the impressive artillery memorial at Hyde Park Corner. These are but a few of the 1,400 exhibits which cover every phase of the life of the Regiment from the days of Farrington until 1950. Finally there is an excellent display of medals.

At some point the historian is faced with the choice of a date on which to close the present record of a great regiment: and in the present case there can be little doubt that 15th April, 1950, is as certain a landmark as would be found within the day-to-day events which comprise regimental history. The 1st Battalion were recently back from Germany and the opportunity was taken to concentrate several functions in one memorable day, a

task which must have taxed the patience and capacity of the entire Depot Staff to the full. They rose nobly to the occasion and the day passed only too quickly for those hundreds of old comrades who had gathered from all corners of England to witness the parade on the county cricket ground, the ceremony in the Cathedral, and finally to dip into memories of the past for an hour or so in a great family gathering at Norton Barracks.

There followed a march through the town and some 2,000 Old Comrades fell in behind the Escort to the Colours and marched through crowded streets, the Mayor taking the salute in front of the Guildhall. The parade marched on into the Cathedral, where the scene was laid for the unveiling of the Regimental War Memorial in St. George's Chapel and its dedication by the Bishop.

After the service there was a move to Norton Barracks, where tea was ready in a tent large enough to accommodate a circus. Here many old friendships were drawn out of their "cold storage" and experiences over the years exchanged. The outgoing and incoming Colonels of the Regiment made short speeches and, generally helped by beer, this happy reunion proved a great family party when many old friends could at last find out how fate had dealt with him or her since those more leisured days when friendships were not made in a hurry.



Norton Barracks in 1955

In early 1960 a plaque was placed on the entrance to the Keep to commemorate the years of the Depot. The wording reads:

FROM 1881 TO 1959 MANY THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT MARCHED THROUGH THIS KEEP IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY IN PEACE AND WAR.

In 1960 Worcestershire Regiment returned from the West Indies to Norton Barracks and on 16th July, 1960, General Sir Richard Gale presented new colours to them on the Green. The Battalion remained based in Norton Barracks until they moved to Germany in 1962.

In early 1969, 14 Signal Regiment moved into Norton Barracks and remained until they disappeared under defence cuts in January 1977.

On 28th February, 1970, on the amalgamation of the Worcestershire Regiment with the Sherwood Foresters, the name of the R.H.Q. was changed to R.H.Q. The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment.

The R.H.Q. remained in its location, as the sole occupants of the old Barracks until 14th June, 1978, when it moved to Building 97, a brick block building on the extremity of the Western side of the new camp.

In the 1990's the the whole site was sold off by the M.O.D. to property developers. The area immediately to the west of the old "Farrington" and "Charlemont" blocks were developed by Wainhomes as an estate of some 46 detached houses, while Persimmon Homes built a further 60 houses.



The "Keep" at Norton Barracks in January 1987, now decommissioned and about to be sold to Property Developers.

The Worcestershire Norton Sports Club now own and are retaining the cricket ground, football pitch and ranges, plus the old Depot Sergeants Mess, which is used as a Club house.



Norton Barracks in January 1987 just before they were about to be demolished

Acknowledgement is again gratefully made to The Worcestershire Regiment Museum for their permission to publish this material from the website –

www.WorcestershireRegiment.com

If you wish to make a visit to the museum, contact details were given in the Spring 2008 Journal (No 34).

HISTORY OF WORCESTER RUGBY CLUB

Following the visit to the club by WIALHS – here's some historical background for those who missed it. Part 2 in the next edition.

My thanks to Worcester Warriors for their permission to publish this extract from their website - <http://www.wrfc.co.uk>

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS (1870-1920)

"The game is more than the player, the ship is more than the crew" – Rudyard Kipling

Worcester Rugby Football Club owes its foundations to the cleric, the Rev Francis John Eld (died in 1922), a headmaster of the Worcester Royal Grammar School. It is recorded that the club began under 'most favourable auspices' with members paying a small subscription, and were each asked to find a friend to play who lived within three minutes of the city.

By November 8, 1871, in white shirts bearing the city's coat of arms, and blue knickerbockers, the team turned out for their debut against the Worcester Artillery at Somerset Place, subsequently the site of the Flagmeadow Walk ground. Of this first season of only nine fixtures, the first recorded victory came against Gloucester College. Although no score was recorded it is understood that Worcester won easily.

In 1893 the club moved to Pitchcroft and a field adjoining Worcestershire County Cricket Club at New Road. Unfortunately in 1896 the club was disbanded, despite the fact that it was in good health. However, it was also suggested that difficulty in fielding a side consistently for away matches may have been a contributing factor.



Earliest Team Photo mid 1880s

In 1908 the club was revived and re-energised with matches being played at Pitchcroft and Northwick, with players changing at the Northwick Arms. The club's determination to succeed and put in place elements of infrastructure began two years later with the formation of annual meetings – these still occur today. Playing membership hit 40 and the team was turning out in light and dark blue colours.

Only one game was played in 1913 – against Gloucester Franciscans – before the onset of the First World War meant no further matches were played. But the club was to rise again....

THE CLUB REVIVAL (1920-1929)

Worcester Rugby Football Club folded at the onset of the First World War but was to rise from the ashes in the 1920s and again start to grow. The club was reborn with an inaugural meeting in the upper room of the Crown Hotel in the city. Practice games were held for the club at Perdiswell before the new club embarked on its first match away at Bromsgrove. The first win of the new era was registered at Harper Bean RFC, the early name of what is believed to be Dudley

Kingswinford, on the canal side at Perdiswell. New recruits started to arrive from Malvern, Droitwich, Pershore and Bromyard as well as young doctors from the infirmary and officers from nearby Norton Barracks. With the increase in members the committee decided to create an 'A' team and 'B' team as expansion continued at pace.



Worcester XV 1921-22

The club headquarters moved from the Bull's Head to the Hop Market Hotel and then Saracens Head where a clubroom and baths were installed by the brewery. It made a change to the usual bucket of cold water which was normally provided by the opposition, the notable exception being Birmingham University and Bournville where teas were put on for the players.

CHANGING HOMES (1930-1939)

The thirties saw the club with a very strong team and huge community spirit, which reflected in the results. Charles Kimber succeeded Viscount Deerhurst as president and remained in office until 1935.

During the 1931/32 season the club played in 30 games and won 27 of them, losing two and drawing one. The team scored an impressive 409 points and only conceded 129 against. Wins including the scalps of Gloucester United, Moseley 2nd XV, Old Edwardians 1st XV and Coventry Extras.

Throughout the thirties the club was very much concerned and worried about grounds. In the early years of the decade the club had two pitches on what is now the Recreation Ground in Northwick. The ground was then privately owned and in 1934, due to landlord demands, the club was forced to move home again. This time they shifted to Perdiswell Park with the aid of the city council. Admission to the ground was 2d. This ground proved satisfactory until early 1936 when the club was forced to move again in February so that arrangements could be made for the Three Counties Show. Fortunately the club arranged for a pitch to be provided on Pitchcroft.

Just before the war broke out, due to the constant upheaval, the club negotiated and paid the deposit to purchase its own ground for £1,000 opposite the Ketch Inn in Kempsey. Unfortunately the war broke out, negotiations failed and the deposit was lost.

GOING FORWARD AFTER THE WAR (1940-1949)

During the war it was decided to close down owing to the difficulty raising a team and also of finding opponents close to home, as transportation was difficult. Among those who did not return after the war were C.R.B. Inch, Tom Pye, Bob Hall, Don Hemming and Ken Heard. *[to be continued -Ed]*



1st XV 1948-9

BOOK REVIEWS WEBSITES ETC

WEBSITES

If you find anything of IA or Local History interest on the internet then let other members know about it here - Ed

This is the website referred to in the article on Dowry Dell Viaduct - Ed

<http://www.photobydjnorton.com>

The introductory page to this fascinating website reads –

"D J Norton - Dennis John Norton - was my father. Born in Birmingham in 1930, he suffered ill health throughout his life. He died from an asthma attack at the age of 35 in Ledbury, Herefordshire where my family had moved hoping that a country location may help alleviate the symptoms of his illness. He left my mother, brother (aged 4) and me still 9 weeks away from being born.

Although I never met him I developed many interests that were similar to his - electronics, astronomy and photography. It was this latter interest that he left most evidence of. We have several hundred black and white photo's from the 1950's and 1960's that he took and developed himself. We also have several hundred full colour slides, also from the 1950's and 1960's.

Many of the photographs are railway related - another great interest of his. The ones that captured my imagination were of Birmingham prior to and during the development of the inner ring road. It was these that inspired me to take these

fascinating images out of their dusty old boxes and make them available to the world.

This is a project that will take time to complete. My aim is to expand the site as and when time allows. Eventually I hope it will stand as a suitable memorial to my father and a life that was cut tragically short."

And what a memorial it is.

Even though I am at best a "casual" railway enthusiast, I stumbled across this site accidentally and an hour later was still looking at the fascinating, high quality black and white photographs of a bygone "steam age" – and there are hundreds of them.

Not just steam engines either – how about this picture of Worcester taken from the railway bridge in the 1960s (*apologies for the poor quality here, the images are razor sharp on the website – Ed*)



<http://www.miac.org.uk>

Another fascinating site, this time by a neighbouring IA group. This has a lot of material on local industrial railways, maps, photos and information on the industries themselves.

The introductory page reads -

RAILWAYS IN WORCESTERSHIRE

This site records the railways of Worcestershire and is the work of members of the Malvern Industrial Archaeology Circle (MIAC), formed by members of the Worcester Locomotive Society. The MIAC has been active for over 30 years recording railways in Britain and overseas. An increasing number of commercial and industrial concerns are kindly making information and photographs available for use on this site in addition to material held by the MIAC.



Rust In Peace, by Malcolm Tucker

Pub: Dalton Watson Fine Books, 1 Arundel Court, Elverlands Close, Ferring, West Sussex BN12 5QE; 256pp, hard cover, approx 500 photographs, mostly in colour, price £27, ISBN 1-85443-225-7.

Amongst my many faults (or those I admit to in public) is an interest in old but defunct objects or buildings. This is often more than if the building is still in use. I have an affinity for the derelict and 'past-its-sell-by-date', more than perhaps if the object was still being lived in/sailed/prayed in/or driven. Books about various buildings in this category abound but here is one which deals with motor cars!

The pictures are taken from the files of Michael Worthington-Williams, the doyen of the snoopers of old barns or hedgerows. For about 50 years he has been responsible for finding new homes for literally hundreds of derelict vehicles. He is no sluggard himself having restored about 30 examples and until very recently drove about every

day in a rough but faithful Austin 20, covering over 300,000 miles in it!

These rusty relics leap from every page, the photography is mostly superb. It is in some ways a sad book. What dreadful occurrence sent a 1934 Wolseley Wasp into a shed for over 30 years, it is just about restorable, but has it been? Will the 1946 Jaguar ever run again as it slumbers under the dappled shade of its wrecked shed? A 1929 Triumph Super Seven, an uncommon car today, lies in a hopeless condition amongst detritus of former occupants of the premises. One can feel the sticky summer heat of Indiana beating down on a 1922 Buick 6.

The saddest of all is from the village of Oradour-sur-Glane where all the inhabitants were massacred by the SS in 1944 as a reprisal. An incredibly rare, huge and rusty 1934 Panhard . with its companion, an earlier Citroen (pre front-wheel-drive) stands for ever next to the burnt out ruins of this holy place, now, rightly, a French war memorial.

Another look reveals another war casualty, this time from 1914. A useful Peugeot 22/30 of 1912 was commandeered by the British army for use as a staff-car in 1914. Sometime it received a near-miss with a shell which wrecked its near-side tyre and wheel. It was pushed into a shed and there it lay for 80 years, still with its army number stencilled on its bonnet. Why? Did the officers plan to return and obtain a free or cheap motor car, but were otherwise detained? Finally, to illustrate that Australia is the best place for these relics (very slow rusting there!) a 1926 Armstrong Siddeley 18hp Mk II, a very rare vehicle nowadays and perhaps not surprising as it is rather ugly to say the least There it is, being pushed on to its trailer to be restored and used. It was!

Mike Wall

Free Mines In The Forest, by Ian Hayes.

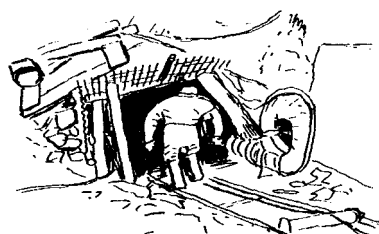
Published by Ian Hayes, 441 Birmingham Road, Redditch, Worcs. A5 booklet (18pp) £1.20 inc postage.

Ian Hayes (WIALHS Member) has produced a 2008 edition of his book on Forest of Dean Mines. Updating the previous information on this unique but vanishing tradition, Ian's book describes the remaining mines with the aid of sketch maps and some very clear photographs (*much better than those in this publication – Ed*).

FREE MINES IN THE FOREST

The Forest of Dean Coal Mines
at the commencement of the
New Millennium

Ian Hayes



Ian gave us a very interesting talk on the mines a while ago and this publication would be ideal if you wanted to go "mine hunting" in the Forest yourself.

Glyn Thomas

LETTERS AND ENQUIRIES

***Editor's Note:** In addition to members' letters, we now receive occasional email enquiries from people all over the world who have discovered WIALHS through our website and are trying to find out about some aspect of Worcestershire history – perhaps for family history research or more general interest.*

In the hope that members may be able to help with such enquiries I will publish them here. If you have any information which may be of relevance to the enquiry please contact me.

If you have enquiries of your own, why not put them here – another member may know the answer !

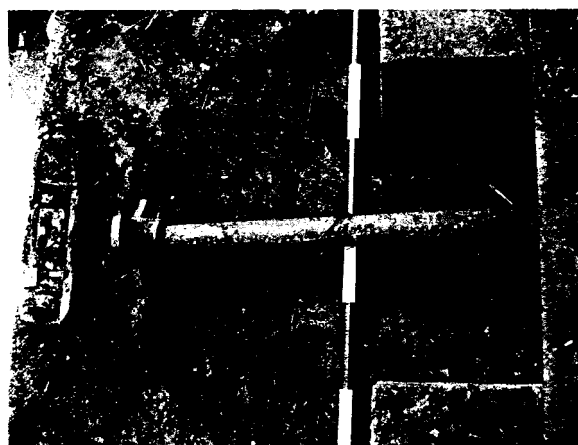
ENQUIRIES TO ALL

A Mr Tapping, formerly of Tapping's Tours has sent the following -

I have attached 3 photos taken from the Droitwich Barge Canal by the St Georges Playing Fields. These form part of the recording of the length of the canal which Mike Hayzelden and myself are doing prior to full restoration. We do not have any idea what purpose the object had and when it was in use. There is quite a large concrete base and the metalwork appears to be a shaft with a connection at the end. There appears to be a mounting for a bearing at the edge of the concrete and end of the shaft.

Could you ask members for their help.

Roger



So do you know what it is? If so, let Roger know - Ed

Another email, received only last week

Dear Glyn Thomas,

I have just received a photo of the memorial to Col. Sir Henry Ellis in Worcester Cathedral. He was a native of Worcester and died of his wounds after the Battle of Waterloo.

I am the webmaster of british-cemetery-elvas.org and would like to add a page about this survivor of the Battle of Albuera and the Siege of Badajoz and link it to the following site -

<http://british-cemetery-elvas.org/royalwelchfusiliers.html>

- as I have for Lt.Col. Sir William Myers.

I would be very grateful for any information you can give me about Lt.Col. Sir Henry Ellis and his family.

Sincerely,
Sarah King

Please let me have any information and I will forward it - Ed

PHOTO SECTION – SEND ME ANYTHING INTERESTING!

My thanks to Max Sinclair for this note and an excellent set of pictures, which I hope I have assembled with the correct captions from Max's series of emails. Max is sending further sets of these fascinating photographs, which I will publish in future editions – Ed

Glyn, Hope this interests -

John Mason has produced a superb drawing of the salt Trow 'Hastings' trapped at Worcester Bridge by the floods in 1886 for me from one of my old photographs. I supplied him with the history of the event and asked him to pass them on for the Journal.

As water seems to be topical I thought you might be able to reproduce my photos in black and white. These are a record of the last trade on the rivers and canals in the Worcester area.

Max Sinclair



On a foggy day in 1962 Charlie Ballinger's boat 'Bridget' a "Severner" from Gloucester came to Worcester, despite the floods. He arrived unexpectedly at Diglis Basin and when Deny Merrell the lock keeper said he hadn't heard from the lock keepers lower downstream he said "No I came over the fields" which avoided the lock charges and the current. He was carrying Cadbury's chocolate crumb from Frankton, a mixture of milk, sugar and cocoa in sacks. During the war if we helped with the locks we were given a lump, all sweet and sticky.



Having unloaded 300 tons of Paraffin at Stourport the empty tanker returns through Upton on Severn. This trade also travels now by pipe with a 'pig' in the pipe to separate the different grades of fuel.



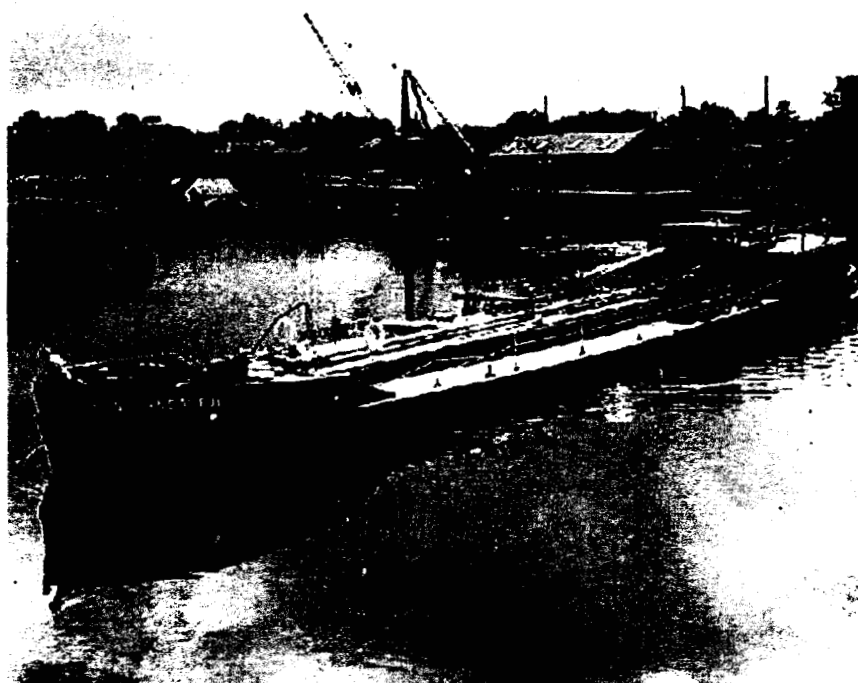
The great frost of 1963 threatened closure of the Midland canals and old wooden horse ice breakers were pushed along by Bantam tugs, with a swinging brazier to keep the hard working boatmen extra warm.



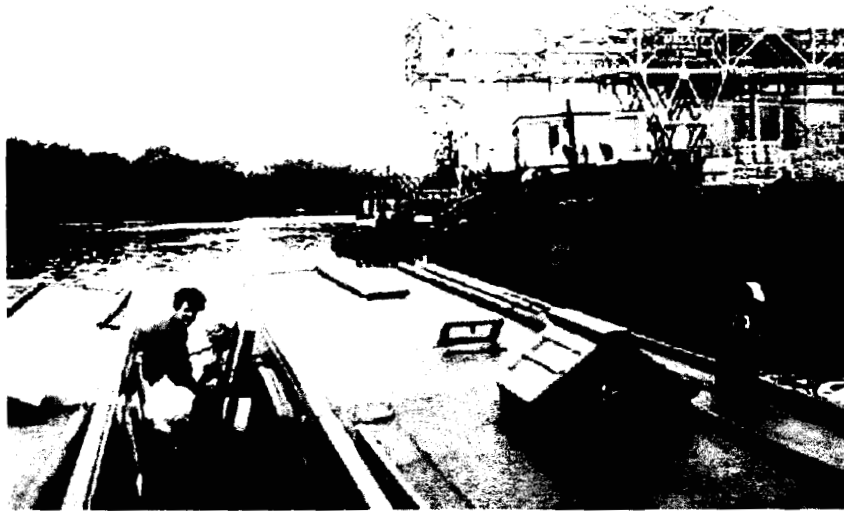
Eventually the ice became over two feet thick and all trade stopped for many weeks. A lot of business was lost. We took our boat in May to Chester and in the cutting at Kinver ran into thick ice.



In 1965 Ballingers boat 'Olive' a "Severner" awaits sale in Gloucester Docks with the steam tug 'Mayflower'. 'Olive' was cut in half to make two pleasure boats and I saved its unique Petter engine which is now in the 'Oak' Motor boat at Gloucester Museum.

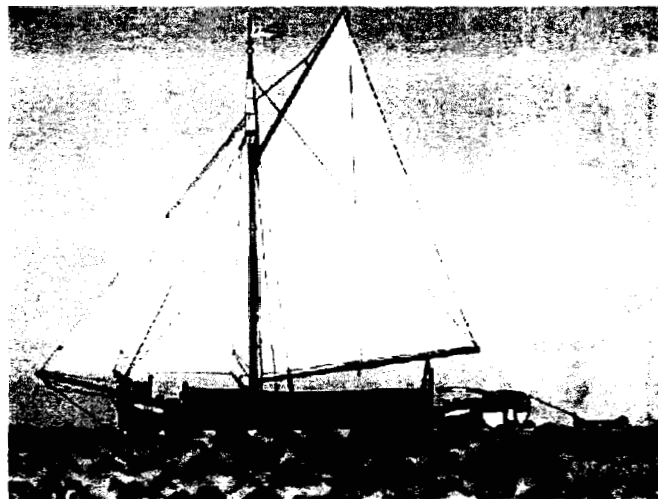


Having loaded at Avonmouth a tanker brings 400 tons of petrol into Diglis Dock. A pipeline to Birmingham and Stourport replaced all water transport in 1963.

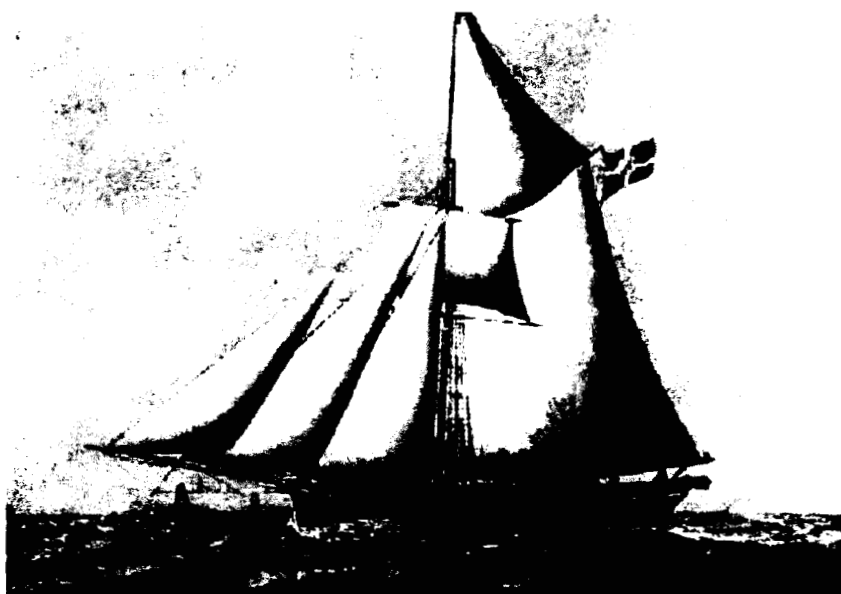


The last load of aluminum ingots from Canada is unloaded at Stourport in 1963. These were taken by canal and road transport to the Star Aluminium Co. to be rolled into kitchen foil.

Max also included pictures of two paintings –



In 1916 the Droithwich Barge Canal closed with the last Trow taking two hayricks commandeered from Mildenhall Mill for the army in France. George Harris painted a series of lovely pictures correct in detail with the rigging but banana shaped hulls to show the Bow and Stern decoration. These Wych Barges carried about 100 tons of salt to the English and French fishing ports as well as domestic blocks for the shops. The last trade was to the British Alkali works in Bristol for use in the explosives industry.



In the 1840's the directors of the Copenhagen Company Gronbech and Sonner purchased this fast revenue cutter to start their sea trading. It made monthly voyages to Worcester Porcelain works and was named the 'Interessant'. Sadly the company records were destroyed during the war so we shall never know what it was carrying.

AND FINALLY

Just in case you need a handy reminder of the dates for the Winter Programme.

12th September 2008. 'A Small Cog in a Large Wheel'

A talk by Mrs Webb about the code breaking at Bletchley Park during the Second World War. ('Tapping's Tours' visited there in 2002).

10th October 2008. 'Herefordshire Beacon'

A talk by Paul Remfry about the history of that part of the Malvern Hills.

7th November 2008. 'Another Man's Shoes'

A talk by Ellie Targett about her father's escape from German-occupied Norway in 1944 and her attempt to retrace his route 60 years later.
(Ellie is a well-known Presenter on Hereford and Worcester Radio).

5th December 2008. 'Banners Bright'

A talk by Ned Williams about the history of the colourful Banners of Trade Unions, Chapels, etc. (Many of our members will remember previous entertaining talks he has given to the Society).

9th January 2009. 'Uncovering a Hidden Landscape: LIDAR Survey in Wyre Forest'

A talk by Adam Mindykowski from the University of Worcester Archaeology Department.

6th February 2009. 'Mother of Pearl',

A talk by George Hook, the owner of what is believed to be the last factory working Mother of Pearl in Birmingham.

13th March 2009. 'A.G.M. and Members evening, to include a short talk about the

Pakingtons. ('Tapping's Tours' visited *Westwood* House during the Summer Programme, a formerhome of the Pakingtons).

3rd April 2009. 'Purton Boats'

A talk by Paul Barnett about the many boat wrecks, including several Trows, at Purton.

Note: All meetings will be held in the Lecture Theatre, Royal Grammar School, Worcester, on Fridays staring at 7:30pm unless circumstances require otherwise.

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NOTE: The material contained in the Journal does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy of the Society.
Articles, letters, book reviews, photographs or questions for publication are always welcomed by the Editor.

