

THE JOURNAL

OF THE
WORCESTERSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
AND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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WIALHS JOURNAL
(ISSUE 37 – WINTER 2009)

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Front cover illustration “Sansome Street 1971” by kind permission of John Mason.

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.

EDITORIAL

When I took over editorship of the Journal I suggested that the more articles I received from members, the shorter these editorials would be. Congratulations WIALHS members - you have contributed enough pieces over the summer to silence me ... almost!

I only need to say one thing

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Please don't rest on your laurels – let me have any articles, letters, reviews or pictures whenever you find the time to write. Don't wait until the next edition is due – just send 'em in! I'll keep them on file and they WILL appear, if not in the next Journal then the one after. My only gripe (yes there has to be one) is that some of the summer visits have gone unreported – could nobody on the trip have penned a few words?

Glyn Thomas

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Now that the Conference is over, (see separate report) life is taking a much more tranquil route in the Tapping household. In addition my postman wonders where all the letters and replies for events have gone? In fact they have gone mainly to Mike Hayzelden who has taken over the role of Summer Programme Coordinator and just happens to have the same postman!

Once again this year the response to the programme has been fantastic with most events being very heavily subscribed. Whilst this indicates the quality of programme and interest of our members there is one member

who really feels the effect. Spare a thought for and give many thanks to our Treasurer David Sharman. This year he has handled cheques for the Conference, 144 delegates attended, and all the cheques for the Summer Programme. At the last count these were in excess of 450 individual cheques, giving a grand total of incoming cheques to around 600 for this year, not forgetting the normal membership renewals. These all have to be entered individually on David's paying in slips.

We have in recent years pushed for individual cheques for each event but in the light of this colossal total we will have to review this approach. We will look firstly at how many trips could be paid on the day, directly to the venue and then maybe reconsider a single cheque application although this will mean all trips being paid for when the cheques is cashed, something we can regulate by having multiple cheques.

However, the real point to make is that we owe David a huge debt of gratitude for the painstaking and meticulous way he continues to administer our accounts.

Roger Tapping

THE THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN SIVESTER

This will be the last Chairman's Piece I will write as I come to the end of my term as Chairman at the next AG.M. I have enjoyed every minute and hope to continue on the Committee for many years.

The first item on the Summer Programme was the AIA Conference at Winchester on 25th April, a small group of us attended and managed to attract a good number of

delegates for our own Conference on 16th May.

Our first outing of the Summer Season was the visit to the Waterworks Museum at Broomy Hill Hereford. We met at our usual spot, the New Inn in Ombersley Road and almost filled the coach. We had time to see the sights of Hereford before our visit to the Museum, which was in steam and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

The Spring lunch was once again at the Royal Oak, Broadwas on 10th May and was well attended and the food and service was up to the usual high standard.

The A.I.A Regional Conference was held at the Charles Hastings Education Centre on 16th May. We had over 140 delegates plus trade stands. The speakers were all of interest and the visits afterwards were all very well supported. They were to Droitwich Canal, Worcester IA Trail and Shrub Hill Engineering Works. The Shrub Hill visit was so popular, led by Anthony Glossop of St. Modwen, that I will try to arrange a further visit for the Society in the Spring.

The Masonic Hall visit was not so well supported, If you have an opportunity to visit on another occasion it is well worth attending as they have probably the best collection of Masonic Ceramics in the World.

Saturday 30th May was our first visit to Bristol and the Brunel Trail by train. I found it quite exciting as I rarely use the train and I think it may have been a first for the Society. There were two reasons for using the train, one was because the Brunel Trail starts at Temple Meads Station and the second was the price. It was far less expensive to have group travel by train than to travel by coach. We were met by Ken Andrews from B.I.A.S. who was an excellent guide. The second

visit was on Saturday 5th. September and was also in good weather and well attended.

The Vintage Bus Tour round Birmingham on Saturday 13th June started at Wythall Transport Museum on a bright sunny day. One very nice point was that John and Ruth Bennett were in the party and unknown to them there was a Bennett's Dairy Milk Float in the collection and John arranged for the Museum to have some Bennett's Milk Bottles to make the display more authentic. If you have never visited this site and have any interest in old transport please give them your support. It is amazing how the enthusiasts manage to rescue and restore old buses etc. Some are owned by the museum and some are privately owned and garaged there. Our bus tour started there and stopped at Sarehole Mill, Aston Manor Transport Museum and Bournville, where we found some Bennett's Dairy Ice Cream.

Our visits to Morgan Motors on 24th and 25th June were very well supported, hence three visits. I was amazed at how generous they were with their time and just how much of the factory we saw. It is easy to understand why the cars are so expensive as they are really hand made. Customers come regularly to see how their cars are 'coming along' and probably by the time they are completed they are part of the family. 2009 was a special year for Morgan as it is their centenary year. There is a small but very interesting museum on the site and quite surprisingly the suspension has altered very little over the last century simply growing as the cars grew.

There were originally two dates for the Hewell Grange visit but they were reduced to one as our contact was in South Africa to see the rugby until the day before our visit. I was amazed at just how open an open prison is and also how little the house had been altered (fire escape at rear) and when we

went inside just how excellent the condition of the building is. The residents were in the building and we were asked to respect their home. The grounds are extensive and I had thought that there would be plenty of labour for gardening but that is not so as the residents are training for work on the outside. The farm breeds prize winning cattle, sheep, pigs etc and sells the meat and other products at their shop behind the Tardebigge Inn. The house was originally the home of the Earls of Plymouth and has been in institutional use since the 1940's.

A bright spot of our Summer for me was the visits to Madresfield Court. We were all fascinated by the choreography of the guides - we were divided into 3 groups but never met up with one another while moving round the house. The building is interesting, especially the staircase hall which is only top lit and the balusters of the staircase are of Rock Crystal. The Brideshead Revisited connection was interesting and the painted chapel, which took 28 years and wasn't completed, was also intriguing with portraits of the family.

If Madresfield Court was a bright spot then our visit to Henley on Thames on Sunday 9th August was definitely the highlight. We actually had two coaches and hired an entire River Steamer from Salters. Our 5 hour cruise to Maidenhead was a lovely way to spend a Sunday afternoon. We travelled through a most beautiful part of the Thames Valley past really wonderful houses but also seeing people enjoying themselves, swimming, canoeing, boating on small and large craft or simply walking, running, cycling picnicking or just enjoying themselves on the riverbank. We ended our cruise at Maidenhead and returned home tired and happy. I was disappointed the next day when I walked along the Severn to see how little we make use of the River and the

Council actively discourage boats mooring near the City Centre.

Friday 14th August was our visit to The Glass Museums at Stourbridge. This was another popular visit and earlier I had encouraged some of our group to join another group. We met at Ashfield Nurseries near Kingswinford, then carried on to Broadfield House, with a wonderful collection of Stourbridge Glass housed in an early Victorian House. It is due to close next year, one reason for arranging the visit. Our next stop was the Red Cone Museum, housed in a glass cone with interesting interpretations and explanations. We also had time for tea and a walk along the canal.

I was not on the Purton visit on Saturday 19th September as I was on holiday and visiting the Jours de Patrimoine in France, the equivalent of our Heritage Open Days. I hope you all had a good day.

I look forward to seeing you all at our Winter Meetings on Friday evenings. My continuing thanks go to the Committee and to all members for their support for all events.

Christine Silvester

SUMMER PROGRAMME 2009

Members' Reports

**WATERWORKS MUSEUM
HEREFORD**
(26/4/09/)

The day was bright and sunny and we collected in the usual place at the New Inn to

board the coach for Hereford. We arrived in Hereford at about 11.30am and went our separate ways to explore the town and have lunch before leaving for the short trip to Broomy Hill and the Waterworks Museum.

Some of us visited the Town Hall - very impressive - built from brick and terra cotta and opened in June 1904. The Architect was Mr. H.A. Cheers of Twickenham and the builder was W.J. Bowers.

The foundation stone to the right of the main entrance weighs over a tonne and was laid by Princess Henry of Battenburg. It is unusual because the Mayor named on the stone died the evening before the stone was laid.

The four black columns on either side of the stairs are made from Otta Phyllite from Norway. They would cost more to buy today than the entire building cost in 1904.

The building is well worth a visit if you are in Hereford.

Our next call was the Old House - one of Hereford's finest buildings, open every day and free. It is a remnant from a previous age, a wonderful timber framed building dating from 1621 and the only building to survive from Butcher's Row which once occupied the South side of the High Street. It is a three storey building with an attic and central stone and brick chimney stack. The original roof was stone tiled, cleft oak and hazel with daub infill panels, including much lavishly decorated carvings and jettied second floor. The original owners, probably Mary and John Jones, a butcher, must have been quite wealthy to have built such a grand house. It is beautifully furnished with appropriate furniture and small items and, quite wonderfully, no notices everywhere telling visitors not to touch exhibits.

We managed to have lunch before walking to the Cathedral to meet the Coach but were delayed a little by a parade of what seemed like thousands of boy scouts.

The Waterworks Museum is fascinating for children of all ages. The day we visited it was 'In Steam' and there were exhibits of Vintage Cars and standing engines and pumps all with display boards showing rosettes from previous shows. The waterworks has survived probably because when the Herefordshire Water Board was formed in 1960, the first Chairman, Stephen Southall, visited Broomy Hill and recorded that the sight of the massive steam engines lying idle took his breath away and resolved there and then that the pumping station would become a museum dedicated to water supplies.

The pumps are fascinating and include a Climax Pump from Worcester. There is also a model railway on the site and many of our members were seen having rides. The volunteers also run a tearoom which was well supported.

Christine Silvester

Editor's Note: Christine provided me with some additional material which I thought could usefully be included for those unable to make the trip – see later article.

AIA CONFERENCE WORCESTER (16/5/09)

After a slow initial response the Conference opened with the wonderful total of 144 delegates of which 50 were from our own Society, thanks to you all for making the effort to attend. The catchment area of delegates is a little vague but the main

players now left after 40 years are Bristol, Gloucester, Somerset, South Wales and Worcester.

A small team of committee members met to assess the possible venues in Worcester and to determine the format and style of the Conference. It was agreed that as the restoration of the Droitwich Canal was in full swing and was on our doorstep the canal would be our main focus.

The Conference was held once again at the Charles Hastings Medical Centre, alongside the Worcester Royal Hospital. This venue has the advantages of being very close to the M5 motorway, a very well equipped lecture theatre, a magnificent dining room and of course the Charles Hastings Medical Museum.

Max Sinclair, a founding member of the Worcester IA Society, opened the proceedings with an account of his personal involvement with the Droitwich Canals, which stemmed back to his boyhood days of WW2 when the canal bridge at Hawford, close to home, was considered to be a bottleneck preventing the long convoys of armoured vehicles proceeding from Liverpool to the south coast. The site is now the scene of a major new tunnel/bridge where the A449 crosses the canal. Max later started the campaign (1959), to restore the two canals to full navigational standard. In 1971 the first working parties were at work clearing trees and in 1973 he was elected Chairman of the newly formed Trust, later in 1993 to be elected Life President. His dream to see full restoration will now be realised in 2010.

The first speaker of the event was Dr Martin Gregory who gave a fascinating illustrated talk on the history of the sewing machine. He has collected and researched sewing

machines for over 30 years and described the original mechanical problems, which had to be overcome and further development through to the start of the computer age of machines. His photographs showed the beautifully decorated machines and included those from the USA, UK, Germany and Japan.

During their talk on "Post GWR Swindon", Bruce Hedge and Henry Gunston described how their interests had moved on from early trainspotter days and a keen interest in industrial buildings. They combined their talents to present a very interesting talk based on the way Swindon has evolved and been regenerated.

John Watts concluded the morning session with a nostalgic look back at early domestic water supplies from the basic wells, buckets and pumps to the modern day. Of particular interest was his slides showing the Climax wind-powered pumps manufactured in Worcester by Messrs "Pumpy" Thomas and Son.

After lunch Sandy Buchanan's talk was about "Silk, Sailcloth and Sacking", three of the textile industries, which expanded in the County of Somerset as the older woollen industries, contracted in the hundred years after 1750. The new processes were developed along with new machinery and were often sited in premises previously designed and occupied by other industries.

Michael Jones gave a presentation, again with some very evocative photographs of the enormous amount of work that had to be done to "make safe" a collapsed mine shaft in the Newport area of South Wales. What began as a humble landslip developed into a major engineering problem resulting in a massive excavations and civil engineering project.

The final speaker, David Viner returned to the theme of the restoration of the Droitwich Canals. He became a member of BWB's restoration team for both the Cotswold and Droitwich projects in 2004 and in particular he fronted the "Heritage Consultation Group" for the Droitwich project in 2006. His talk focussed on the difficulties that the project faced and the ways in which a partnership of many organisations was tackling them. The restoration was being tackled from both ends and was on target to reopen both canals to full navigation by spring of 2010.

Following David's talk a presentation was made to members of the host society who had been selected by BWB as winners of the Heritage Recording Award for the Central Region.

At the close of another very interesting conference delegates were offered the choice of three local sites of IA interest: The Droitwich Canal at Vines Park, Droitwich, The Shrub Hill Engineering Works in Worcester or a guided walk around the Victorian Industries in Worcester.

Roger Tapping

Summaries of some of the papers presented are included in a later article - Ed

**MASONIC HALL
WORCESTER
(20/5/09)**

NO REPORT RECEIVED

**BRUNEL TRAIL
(30/5/09)**

NO REPORT RECEIVED

**VINTAGE BUS TOUR OF
BIRMINGHAM
(13/6/09)**

It was a warm sunny day when 42 members visited the famous museum which hosts a fabulous collection of vintage vehicles, from modern Motor Buses to vehicles produced at the turn of the twentieth century.

It is not only passenger vehicles which have found their last resting place at Wythall but various old vans, lorries and a sizeable collection of electric vehicles as well. We were quite impressed when our own John Bennett, was able to identify a milk float that he had purchased as new many years ago.

A recent lottery grant has enabled the museum, (which is mainly to preserve the historic buses of Midland Red and Birmingham City Transport) to build a new permanent home for them. The new building is designed to faithfully replicate the standard garage design appearance of Midland Red and has achieved this end with distinction. The new part of the museum was opened in 2007 by Julie Kirkbride MP *and a thorough search failed to find any trace of furniture, which may suggest a second home there!!!*

After a guided tour of the museum we boarded the ex City of Birmingham Transport double deck Guy Arab bus, resplendent in the familiar dark blue and cream livery for which the fleet was famous.



Our schedule would follow the inner circle anti-clockwise path of Route 11 and after a brief stop at Sarehole Mill (of J.R.R.Tolkien fame), we progressed to the old tram depot at Aston which is now the Aston Museum of Vintage Vehicles. Once again many vehicles in various states of repair and decay were on view and after a lunch interval we moved on via central Birmingham to Bourneville Village for our last comfort stop.

Finally our day ended with a return to the leafy lanes of Wythall and to the museum.



It is worth noting that the site of the museum was in fact the location of RAF Wythall from 19 until 19 when it was the HQ. of Balloon Command, (Barrage Balloon Defence). Subsequently the base was used for Cold War covert surveillance, listening-

in to Russian and Chinese transmissions and to facilitate this; a special language school was set up there to train RAF, Navy and Army personnel and to learn the Russian and Chinese languages. I was posted there myself very briefly in the RAF in 1955 before going overseas.



This was a super day out, following up on a similar trip organised by Roy some seven or eight years ago but this time the weather was perfect.

John Mason

**VISIT TO MORGAN MOTORS
(24&25/6/09)**

NO REPORT RECEIVED

**HEWELL GRANGE
TARDIFF
(7&9/7/09)**

NO REPORT RECEIVED

**MADRESFIELD COURT
(22&23/7/09)**

NO REPORT RECEIVED

HENLEY ON THAMES RIVER CRUISE (9/8/09)

When I looked at running this joint coach/boat trip I was concerned that the total cost may be prohibitive and we would not have sufficient numbers. How wrong I was. For the first time in its history WIA&LHS had to run a trip with two coaches and a total of 93 members/friends on board.

Due to the numbers we had to relocate the start point away from our favoured New Inn as car parking would have been difficult and so at 9.00 am we assembled at Croft Road to board the coaches. In anticipation of total chaos all passengers were allocated to either coach 1 or 2.

The day had dawned very bright and sunny exactly what we wanted for a trip down the river and we travelled to Henley on Thames to board the good ship "Oxford" for the relatively short journey to Maidenhead. Although only about 20 minutes by road we were to be on board for about 5 hours, passing through 5 locks en route.

These days commercial traffic has no preference at the locks and so we were likely to be queuing with other boats to wait our turn.

Our route was via the M5 and M42 until we reached junction 6 and turned off through the lanes. A route not too easy with 2 large coaches in convoy and some tight bends. At Henley the signage once again left much to be desired but eventually we pulled up at a very busy approach to the River & Rowing Museum alongside river meadows, which were thronged with people. All we had to do now was find the boat! After legging it around the riverfront we made contact and slowly transferred our passengers from the

coaches to the boat leaving the drivers the difficult manoeuvre of turning the coaches before heading off to Maidenhead. I was pleased to be informed by the skipper that we had 93 people on board as I had no chance of counting them myself.

We were now on board, all seated, some under cover and some out in the glorious sunshine and so we set off on our journey. This stretch of the river is famous for the magnificent buildings and residences that line its banks. The boat was facing upstream and so our first task was to turn and head towards Maidenhead and the river bridge at Henley.

We passed through the famous regatta course passing Phyllis Court which is a "gentleman's club" and headquarters of the regatta organisation, followed closely by Fawley Court and Temple Island. Our first lock was passed without incident and we continued our gentle way downstream.

The river was absolutely heaving with boats of all shapes and sizes and the banks packed with walkers, riders, bathers and every other sort of activity. What a joy to see a river being so well used compared to our own River Severn.

On our way to Marlow we passed Bisham Abbey and church and we were all delighted to have on board Henry and Rosemarie Powe who were married at Bisham Church on November 5th 1957. They were telling us about their days spent in that area and the fact that Henry when in the RAF flew a Tiger Moth over the area to impress his young girlfriend on the bank below. As if by magic at that precise time a yellow Tiger Moth flew across the river in front of us. (A personal record of the day from both Henry and Rosemarie follows this article).

Our route continued via Cookham and at Cookham Lock many passengers alighted to purchase an ice cream, again another welcome feature of the river is that all the locks have car parking and picnic areas and most have a little shop or an ice cream van in attendance.

Time was now running out for our cruise and because of that we were unable to pass through the famous Boulton's Lock, the subject of a famous painting by Edward John Gregory in Victorian times. We had to make contact with our coaches, which had been laid up somewhere in Maidenhead and after a short conversation with lead driver Paul we arranged for our passengers to disembark by the road, which runs alongside the river at this point. So there we were with 93 passengers standing on the pavement, the boat disappearing backwards to turn and return to Marlow and no coaches in sight!! My thoughts turned to "Plan B" and how we would get everybody home. However within a couple of minutes the coaches arrived and we all boarded and set off for home taking the alternative route via the M4 and across the Cotswold Hills.

We arrived back in Worcester just a little late but everyone had enjoyed the day so much. The weather had been glorious and the scenery fantastic. Thank you all for your support, perhaps we will do another section of this lovely river some other time.

Roger Tapping

Note by Henry Powe

Yes such a fantastic journey along that part of the Thames and indeed the whole of the Thames I have known from childhood. My eldest brother used to take me on merchant ships in the Port of London, meeting the captains of the merchant ships. It was my brother's job to see that the boats had been

loaded correctly before sailing. The Thames is indeed a great river, however I also got to know it well from the air as I flew Tiger Moths out of White Waltham and as Rosemarie would tell you I was a right show off, doing aerobatics over Bisham and Marlow as that part of the river was a low flying area. The Thames from the air on a good day is great to see, with the wind blowing in your face and not a care in the world, very happy days indeed over Henley and Marlow. (also knowing that a very good looking woman in Bisham Grange was looking up) and seeing Bisham Church from the air, the place we were married in 56 years ago.

Note by Rosemarie

A trip to remember. Superb weather, excellent boat and great company. A most nostalgic trip for us both. We went along 6 years of my life along that lovely river Thames, passing Bisham where I nursed Miss Phyllis Hart-Neale, one time owner of Bisham Abbey. Punting with friends to Temple Lock or Marlow Bridge. Passing Bisham Church where Henry and I got married on Guy Fawkes day in November 1957. I shall always be very thankful to WIA&LHS for taking us to Cambridge, which was our honeymoon destination and for that truly wonderful boat trip.

Thanks a million!

**GLASS MUSEUMS
STOURBRIDGE
(14/8/09)**

NO REPORT RECEIVED

ISIT TO PURTON (19/9/09)

On a hot, clear and dry day, 28 members boarded the coach at the New Inn for the journey down to the Gloucester Docks. This area has been developed from being a run down and dilapidated inner city area to an impressive shopping area containing several large and impressive buildings of historic interest.

The first part of the excursion consisted of a two mile cruise down the Berkeley Ship Canal. The boat that we were travelling on had the distinction of having taken part in the evacuation of British and French troops from Dunkirk in 1940. There was a commentary by the helmsman about the history of the buildings and areas that we passed, including a very amusing account of how the Royalist Army failed to capture the city during the summer of 1643 (the large and primitive canon that they were using blew up!). I noticed three interesting old industrial buildings near the city centre and on the east side of the canal that had obviously been part of a much larger factory. When the cruise was finished and the boat had returned to the canal basin wharf, members of our party had an opportunity to explore the area around. This includes not only very modern shops, but the National Waterways Museum, the Museum of the Gloucestershire Regiment, the Mariners Chapel (1848), various railway wagons and similar rolling stock, several schooners and a dredger. You could spend the best part of a day visiting everything that there is to see in this part of Gloucester.

The coach then took us to the village of Purton, which is situated two miles north of Sharpness on the strip of land between the Berkeley canal and the Severn estuary. We embarked from the coach and first had a

look at Purton village church (named St. John the Evangelist and built in 1874), before we walked over the canal bridge and then followed the canal for a short distance. We then met our guide, Paul Barnett. He then gave us a conducted tour of the site, which is about a mile in length and lay on the embankment between the canal and the estuary. The remains of a large variety of vessels, which have been deliberately abandoned on the sea shore so that they can disintegrate and disappear, are located here. Most of the remains are now covered by earth and sand. Such sites are very common around our coast, but this particular site is the largest known one in the country. There are the remains of at least 71 vessels here, some of which have been identified and researched. Paul spoke in detail about a few of the wrecks before taking us to the end of the site where an archaeological excavation was taking place on the remains of the Harriett, a barge that carried coal on the Kennet and Avon canal.

A slightly unusual excursion, but a most interesting one. It certainly gave us an insight into one branch of archaeology that is not well known – marine archaeology.

A visit to the Mary Rose next year?

Chris. Hart

CONFERENCE PAPERS **2009**

I thought it might be useful to give members a record of some of what was presented at the AIA conference held this year in Worcester – in the hope that even more of you will attend next time. My thanks to Sue Bradley for providing these summaries - Ed

Restoration of the Droitwich Canal.

David Viner, British Waterways Board

The salt industry in Droitwich dates back to the Romans and before, brine pits and drying pans were listed in the Domesday Book, it was used in the dying industry as well as flavouring. Illustrations in of the town in the nineteenth century show so much smoke it gave rise to the allegation of the dirtiest town in Britain.

The Droitwich canal was needed to carry the narrow 14ft wide flat bottomed Wych Barges (usual barge size 18ft wide) to ship coal needed in the evaporation of brine and to carry salt back to the Severn for export via the Channel. It was later connected to Birmingham by the Junction Canal. It was abandoned 70 years ago.

The Droitwich canal was built by Brindley within ten years of the construction of the first canal and it followed the contours of the land, dropping fifty nine and a half feet from Droitwich to the Severn. Unfortunately Brindley left no plans of the work but there is a map of 1779 showing swing bridges, road bridges and locks.

A barge lock connected two different water levels, the river level was generally higher than the barge lock, in summer there was a possibility that this could be reversed, so there were two sets of lock gates to combat this .

Chronology:

1768: Act of Parliament passed. The locks on the canal to be 6ft 4 by 14ft 6
 1771: Canal opened
 1806: Towpath added. Until then the barges were hauled manually
 1852: Act to build the Junction Canal, locks to be 7ft 6 by 7ft 2, consequently barges

could not continue to ship from Birmingham to the Severn without offloading
 1872: Droitwich Canal taken over by the Sharpness New Docks Company
 1918: Last trade on the Barge Canal
 1928: Last trade on the Junction Canal
 1939: Droitwich Canal abandoned
 1968: Clearance work by the volunteers started to remove some of the rubbish that had been dumped in the canal
 1973: Droitwich Canals Trust formed
 2001: Droitwich Canals Restoration Partnership formed

Research Projects undertaken:

2000: Heritage survey
 2001: Droitwich Canals Restoration Partnership formed.
 2003: An archaeological assessment was undertaken
 2006: Trow investigations
 2007: Lock pier investigation by David McDougall
 2007: List of archives and their whereabouts, compiled by Dr Malcolm Nixon
 2008: Record of all existing structures along the canal by R Tapping & M Hayzelden.

Work started in 2004 to clear and dredge the waterway, renew the locks, canalise the river where it has been impossible to follow the original course and open up a passage under the A449 to join up with the Severn at Hawford, for completion in 2010.

After the talk David Viner presented a BWB award for Heritage Recording to WIA&LHS members Roger Tapping and Mike Hayzelden, for the work they had undertaken in recording the structures along the canal.

Silk, Sailcloth and Sacking. Archaeology of Some Textile Industries in Somerset before 1850.

Sandy Buchanan (SIAS)

The flax and hemp industries operated in factories of varying sizes and from those employing a couple of children, to three storey buildings. Flax and hemp was cultivated in Somerset until 1820's, when the Government subsidy was withdrawn and it had to rely on imports. Silk had always been imported.

The group have conducted detailed investigations into greenfield sites revealed and building remains have brought to light the solid basis of the old industries.

A silk factory employing children silk throwing and spinning was operating between 1780-1840's was revealed indicating a round store house, and an outflow taking water away under the river by a tunnel. Digging revealed a roof fall had been held up by a wheel.

John Sharroard's factory in Bruton operating between 1790's-1850's still survives. A narrow three storey building with later addition of a high chimney which shows that the original power source may later have been replaced by steam. It is now used for housing. Another Sharroard factory in Evercreech of similar design shows no obvious source of power.

One mile from Bruton a fulling mill operated at Gantsmill about the fifteenth century, it was later reused for silk. A wing added between 1812-1815, was probably used to accommodate the many working children. There was a later plan to use the water turbine to generate electricity for the Grid.

Small cottages were used in the silk industry, though poorly documented. One

dated 1797 on a site in Crewkerne with a mill pond, links to a later development of an engine house and a second building with chimneys.

Plans exist giving details of the larger factories including a flax hoist, mill pond and retort house as gas was brought in for lighting in 1840's. Bleach fields adjacent to one factory indicate the vast areas needed in the sailcloth industry.

Castle Carey was the centre of the flax trade in the 1870's, producing twine and rope, the remains of one of the old rope walks was considered for Restoration in the BBC TV series.

These three industries have left behind them a solid legacy of small cottages and large factory buildings many of them now still in use as domestic housing, a positive documentation of the land use in the form of maps plans and prints, or local mythology which has lead the group in their research - although they didn't believe the tale that the region provided the sails for Nelson at Trafalgar, the dates did not add up!

The Collapse of a Capped Pit Shaft and the Consequent Surprising Revelations

Michael Jones, (Oxford House)

Merthyr Tydfil valley was at the centre of the steel and iron industry and many pits were opened before 1860 to provide coal for them. On January 12th 2008 one collapsed after heavy rain washed away the steel girders and wood used to cap the shaft.

The site was close to a main road but work had to be undertaken to provide a roadway so that remediation could go ahead, Michael Jones kept an eye on the ensuing works, making an ally of the night watchman who

would tell him when the coast was clear, so that he could make a photographic record.

The fall dislodged a large fan which had been used to ventilate the shaft, it came to rest eight yards down from the top of the hole at the entrance to a four foot seam, and some of the shaft lining was recovered.

At the top of the hole there was a curve which shadowed a casting that had been mounted on the face. Measurements showed the casting to be part of a fan 16ft long by 4ft high and 3ft wide, weighing 6-7 tons and held in place by 12ft bolts, anchored to steel plate to keep it in position.

From these measurements and the diameter of the impeller research revealed a Guibal fan 31ft diameter 9ft wide as depicted in the catalogue of James Nelson Marine and Stationary Engine Works, Gateshead.

Further excavations revealed the shaft ran two cages along side the fan drift entrance and slight evidence of steps which lead to a trap door used for clearing out any rubbish extracted with the air.

The hole continued to grow and next revealed an enormous casting, a base with four smashed columns 16ft long 6ft wide and other unidentified protuberances. Conjecture about its purpose suggests it could be housing for a vertical engine or reinforcement needed against vibration caused by the Guibal fan.

The hole continued to grow and drilling machines were brought in. The shaft went 88 yards deep, when the hole reached 90 yards infill started.

Shuttering membrane, reinforcing steel bars, concrete and a vibrating roller were used to reinstate the countryside. The site has become a Site of Special Scientific Interest,

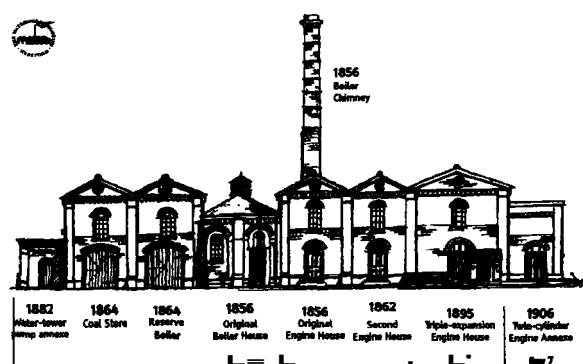
the heavy old engine casing could not be removed so remains on site as a reminder of the history of the site.

The future will have to balance the need for coal against guarding against the unparalleled risk to the public from old workings.

HEREFORD WATERWORKS MUSEUM

Reproduced from additional material supplied by Christine Silvester following the WIALHS visit this summer (reported above)

Chairman of the Waterworks Museum at Hereford, Dr Noel Meeke, outlines the history of the waterworks from its establishment in the mid-1850s to the present day when it has become a highly successful museum of the water industry run by its enthusiastic volunteers. The museum trust's newsletter WaterWords is an award winner in this year's AIA Publications Awards.



The Hereford Improvement Act of 1854 allowed the city fathers to pave the streets of the city centre, install gas lighting and provide a supply of potable water. For a suitable source of water there was little

choice. Herefordshire has no natural lakes, the topography is not suitable for open reservoirs, and it has no aquifers large enough to sustain the population. What Herefordshire does have is the magnificent River Wye, bringing large quantities of fresh water from the Cambrian Range in mid-Wales right through the heart of the county.

Within two years of the Act the pumping station was erected on the first river terrace, fed directly from an intake at the riverside. The water treatment works was perched above on Broomy Hill. The situation was almost perfect. Historically, water intakes were generally upstream of the city they served to minimise pollution and effluent. The first river terrace ensured that the pumping station was above the flood plain, and the storage reservoirs on Broomy Hill were conveniently higher than the city centre. This meant that the houses and businesses could be supplied by gravity.

By late 1856 the first water supply system was in place and drinking water was being provided. The pumping station consisted of two adjoining buildings: boiler house and engine house, with the tall boiler chimney behind. Within a few years the original Simpson beam engine could not satisfy the increasing demand and a second was installed to the west followed by an extra boiler room to the east, plus a coal store. In the mid-Victorian period houses were being built away from the centre of Hereford along Aylestone Hill and this caused immediate problems because they could not be supplied with water by gravity from the Broomy Hill reservoirs.

In 1883 a water tower was erected, designed to provide water to the theoretically highest house in Hereford. The junction of Aylestone Hill and Folly Lane is the highest point in the city and a three-storey house was imagined at that point. The beam

engines were not suitable for the extra lift required and an annexe was built at the east end of the pumping station to house a high pressure Joseph Evans' pump to supply the storage tank in the tower.

Within a decade the beam engines and boilers were coming to the end of their useful lives and the technology was moving on. By 1895 a Worth Mackenzie triple-expansion steam engine had been installed and commissioned. It was at the forefront of steam technology for the time and could pump one million gallons of raw river water every 12 hours. However, the demand for water was ever increasing and by 1906 an extra two-cylinder Worth Mackenzie steam engine was installed in an annexe at the far western end of the building to supplement the lift of clean water to the water tower.

With the start of the twentieth century the technology was changing and many towns opted for internal combustion engines. Hereford, however, took quite a leap and went straight to electric power, which was in its infancy. The first electric pumps were installed in the base of the water tower in 1911 and at the pumping station in 1914. During the Second World War, and in time of floods into the 1950s, the steam engines were still used but were shut down thereafter.

Throughout the post-war years there were numerous small water undertakings in the county, in addition to the water services in Hereford city. In 1960 the Herefordshire Water Board was formed with Stephen Southall as its first chairman. This brought all the water undertakings in the county into one organisation. He was taken on a tour of all the water supply sites and saw for the first time the massive steam engines lying idle and covered in cobwebs at Broomy Hill. He records that the sight 'took my breath away' and he resolved there and then that the

pumping station would become a museum dedicated to water supplies. However, the magnitude of the task of providing piped water for all the rural areas of the county could not carry his dream into reality at that time.

Water undertakings were privatised in the early 1970's and Herefordshire was incorporated in the interim Welsh National Water Development Authority. In 1974 privatisation was complete and the local supplies formed part of the south-eastern division of Welsh Water. The company installed a new pumping station and helped to set up the Waterworks Museum as an independent charitable trust with Stephen Southall as its founder and chairman. He is now the Museum's President.

The early days of the Museum were hectic and a great deal was achieved in a short space of time. Most importantly, the Lancashire boiler and the steam engines were brought back into operation. The 1980s was a difficult period but a few dedicated volunteers managed to keep the Museum in operation and open to the public. Through the 1990s the Museum developed in a number of ways. The water-pumping station at Leominster was rescued from the bulldozers and re-erected at the Museum as the Tangye House. A quite superb 97 litre single-cylinder Tangye diesel engine and triple pumps (1932) from Pembroke Dock were rescued, installed and brought back to life. A small visitor centre was created and the historic pumping sets from Ross-on-Wye were installed and refurbished. It was a period of great activity.

However, in 2000 the Trustees were informed by English Heritage that the main Victorian building, Listed Grade II and a Scheduled Monument, had been placed on the Register of Buildings at Risk. This threw great responsibility on the shoulders of the

Trustees and, in discussions with English Heritage, they were encouraged to think through their future requirements in total. After the usual round of designs, consents, fund-raising and many problems, an excellent building emerged which provided a visitor centre, education area, small engine gallery and workshop facilities. The new building was officially opened by Sir Neil Cossons, then Chairman of English Heritage, in June 2006 (see IA News 138, p12).



The Hereford & District Preservation Society visited the waterworks museum in April 2008
Photo: Waterworks Museum Hereford



Inside the new engine hall
Photo: Waterworks Museum Hereford



Triple expansion pumping engine on display in the waterworks museum
Photo: Waterworks Museum Hereford

Images of the Museum

At the Waterworks Museum nothing stands still. During the traumatic period of the new build the Trustees' attention was drawn to a massive pumping engine installed at the

WW2 Royal Ordnance Munitions Factory in Hereford. This was a Blackstone 5-cylinder diesel engine with all its ancillaries intact, installed in 1939 and due to be excavated to expand a business park. Clearly it had to be rescued but would require a new building of its own. This was designed to house, in addition to the engine, a permanent exhibition of the role Hereford played in WW2. The building was opened officially by the Mayor of Hereford in September 2007.

The future? This is the only working museum in Herefordshire and, whilst a period of consolidation is required following a turbulent few years, there is no question of resting on laurels. More artefacts are awaiting renovation and more are in the offing. The long-term aim is to display representative working examples of pumping engines from every decade between 1850 and 2000. T

Editor's Note: For those who were unable to make the WIALHS visit, but would like further details, the Waterworks Museum is at

Broomy Hill, Hereford HR4 0JS

Tel 01432 357236

website: www.waterworksmuseum.org.uk

THE WORCESTER EXHIBITION

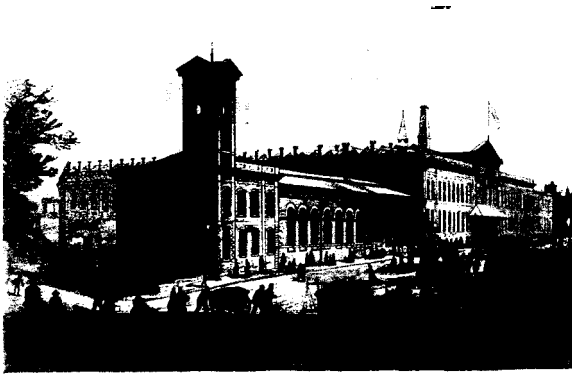
Glyn Thomas

I found this information while "rummaging" on the internet and pieced together a few more details and a photo from the MIAC website (Malvern Industrial Archaeology Circle) – who I hope will accept this as an acknowledgement of source material).

I am told that this site was the old Engine Works and that WIALHS have visited it, but does any WIALHS member have more details on the exhibition ? - Ed

Source: *The Illustrated London News*, No.2255— Vol. LXXXZ, Saturday, July 22, 1882, p.100

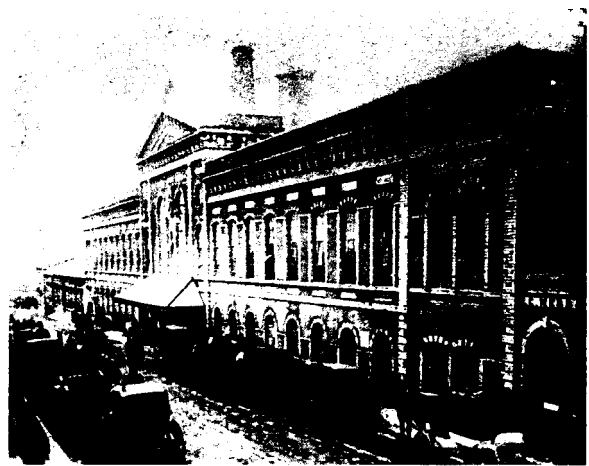
"An Exhibition of "Fine Arts, Industries, and Historical Objects" was opened on Tuesday at Worcester, being quite a county affair, under the presidency of the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Beauchamp, supported by the Worcestershire noblemen and gentlemen, as well as by the Mayors and civic corporations of Worcester, Kidderminster, Evesham, Dudley, Droitwich, and Bewdley. The Mayor of Worcester, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Stallard, is Chairman of the directing Committee, and the authorities and public of that city have used their best efforts to promote the success of this laudable undertaking. A large and handsome building on Shrub Hill, formerly designed for the business of some ironworks, was secured, and £2000 has been spent on its adaptation to its new purpose.



*Exhibition of Arts and Industry at Worcester:
Exhibition Building at Shrub Hill*

It is in convenient proximity to the Worcester Central Railway Station. It has been divided into four courts, at the north end of which is raised a gallery capable of holding 200 persons, with an organ in the centre. The floor of the nave is occupied by statuary, flower-beds, and space for a promenade. At night it will be lit up with the electric light inside and out, and gas has also been laid down to use in case of necessity. One of the courts is devoted exclusively to the fine arts, which are not limited to the works of local artists, but embrace the old masters and modern paintings as well as statuary.

Among the pictures are master-pieces of Landseer, Holman Hunt, and several landscapes by the local artist, B.W. Leader. In the industrial exhibits Worcester china forms a prominent feature, and the stand of the Worcester Royal porcelain work is replete with the choicest productions of ceramic art. There are also other products, for which the county of Worcester has earned celebrity. The history of the county is also illustrated pictorially and by the exhibition of ancient charters. The exhibition will be kept open for three months."



This photograph (from the collection of Andrew Smith) shows a large number of carriages on Shrub Hill Road and is believed to have been taken on the day that the exhibition was opened on 18th July 1882. The exhibition closed on 18th October 1882.

THE SPIRITUAL RAILWAY

Mike Wall

Some years ago when I was responsible for the Newsletter/Journal there was considerable correspondence regarding grave memorials to those early pioneers of the railways who gave their lives owing to accidents etc.

I came across one recently when I investigated a seldom used doorway from the south aisle to the cloisters [or what remains of them] at Ely Cathedral. Near this was a stone slab, simply carved and fixed to the wall with iron cramps. It seems that these two railwaymen were working on the local line during its construction. I take it that this line is the one running over the far bank of the River Great Ouse on its way from King's Cross to King's Lynn, but I'm no railway expert. Beatrice and I saw several trains, mostly local, going by while we were enjoying our chicken and chips at the Cutter

Inn on the edge of town. Nearby a giant maltings, now a hotel-cum restaurant and plenty of river traffic to delight Capt. Tapping and his friends!



The inscription is rather more religious than the men at Bromsgrove had, but I thought perhaps it may be of interest.

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM PICKERING
who died Dec. 24 1845 aged 30 years.

ALSO RICHARD EDGER *who died Dec. 24 1845 aged 24 years.*

THE SPIRITUAL RAILWAY

The line to heaven by Christ was made
 With heavenly truth the rails are laid.
 From Earth to Heaven the Line extends
 To life eternal where it ends.
 Repentance is the Station then
 Where Passengers are taken in.
 No fee for them is there to pay,
 For Jesus is himself the way.
 God's Word is the first Engineer

It points the way to Heaven so dear,
 Through tunnels dark and dreary here
 It does the way to Glory steer.
 God's Love the Fire, his Truth the Steam
 Which drives the Engine and the Train.
 All you would to Glory ride,
 Must come to Christ in him abide.
 In First and Second and Third Class,
 Repentance, Truth and Holiness,
 You must the way to Glory gain
 Or you with Christ will not remain.
 Come then, poor Sinners, now's the time
 At any Station on the Line,
 If you'll repent and turn from sin
 The Train will stop and take you in.

I don't think you will find this in the Book of Common Prayer or any other!

Mike Wall

**A HORSE, SOME FISH,
 AND THE BRANDY
 WENCH**

R M Peberdy

A Horse

At the end of the Holloway, near to the Hanbury Road in Droitwich, stands a fine row of seventeenth century dwellings, originally called The Coventry Work House, later The Coventry Alms Houses and more recently The Coventry Homes .

Legend has it that they were built as a result of a wager between Henry Coventry, son of Thomas Lord Coventry of Croome and Sir John Pakington of Westwood House Droitwich as to who owned the fastest horse. A race was arranged, the stakes being that the loser should build and endow a

workhouse for the indigent poor in the name of the winner. The race was run and the 'workhouse' built. A inscribed plaque on the building announced to the world that it was 'founded and endowed' by Henry Coventry.

In fact it was Sir John Pakington that lost the wager and paid, at least in part, for the building and endowment. However, Pakington seems not to have been able to bear the the financial burden of the wager and was, in true sportsmanlike manner, considerably helped by Henry Coventry who not only bought the land on which the Homes are built, but also purchased 3 farms in the vicinity of Westwood from Sir John and arranged for the rents of those farms to be used for the benefit of the Coventry Charity which was to be administered by a board of Trustees made up of members of the nobility and local Droitwich people of note.

Whether the horse race story is true or not, cannot be proved, but the Workhouse was built and endowed as described.

However, thanks to the salt making industry, Droitwich, was a thriving industrial - though very dirty - town in the seventeenth century, and enjoyed more than full employment. There was therefore no actual need for a workhouse 'Wherein poore people should be set to work and employed in such manner as is thought fit' and it soon became residential almshouses accommodating a number of 'poore people of the town' who were no longer capable of useful work.

For some years all was well, the chosen poor enjoying a somewhat regimented but sheltered life - men and women (even married couples) being kept strictly segregated and wearing a uniform provided by the charity. They all received a small pension and ate a controlled and healthy

communal diet and attended divine services regularly. The Charity also provided an Infirmary on the premise for their care when sick and also ran a small school for children of the local poor....

And then one day the descendants of Sir John Pakington decided that he had not, in fact, sold the lands of the three farms that provided the Alms Houses with their income to Lord Coventry outright at all, but merely leased them to him and now that the lease had expired! The Pakingtons announced they they wanted the farms - and the associated income derived from them - back!

A long drawn out legal case (are legal cases ever anything other than long drawn out?) ensued, during which times were hard in the Alms Houses and relations were strained between the Pakington Family and the Trustees of the Coventry Charity. The matter was finally settled however and the Alms Houses' revenues were restored, although the income from the farm rents was replaced by investments.

When the charity no longer needed to provide a school or an infirmary, or to pay its residents a pension - the state having taken over all of these functions, the investments were used to build additional accomodation units and internally modernise the older ones.

The Charity, which is still run by a board of local voluntary Trustess, now derives the bulk of its running costs from the 'maintainance contributions' paid by the residents in lieu of rent.

Some Fish

In 1721, young Herbert Perrot Pakington (known as 'Poll', presumably a reference to a 'Polly Parrot!') son of the incumbent baronet of the time, maybe seething with

resentment at his reduced inheritory expectancy, decided to get a little of his own back. One day, 'with several other persons attending', one night, by lantern-light, he took a boat and nets and 'unlawfully and riotously entered onto a Pond by the name of High Stank Pool, which hath long been in ye possession of the Trustees of ye Right Honourable Henry Coventry's Charity and did catch and carry away from ye pool ye number of seventy brace of a fish called **Carpe**' (High Stank Pool is still there and named on the OS map)

The Trustees were naturally affronted by this blatant piece of poaching and took legal action against Poll Pakington and his cronies to seek legal redress and compensation for the 140 stolen fish.

Once again a long drawn out legal case ensued, involving several visits to Worcester and even London by representatives of the Trustees and their lawyers (and several overnight stays and good dinners) but eventually the case petered out, the expenditure involved in pursuing it having far exceeded the value of the fish!

And the Brandy Wench?

At time when the Trustees were paying their Schoolmaster an annual salary of £12..12..00 (£12.60) to teach and care for some 20 'Blewcode boys', they were also paying £2..12..00 (£2.60) a year to a young lady listed in the accounts as 'The Brandy Wench'.

What is more, in 1743 they spent 6d (2.5p) on buying her 'a pair of second hand shoes' and in 1745 she was equipped with a 'new cap and apron' at a cost of 5 shillings (25p) 'by order of Mr Wheeler'!

In 1748, after some 5 years of faithful service (what her duties were is not

specified) payments to the 'The Brandy Wench' - and her clothing allowance - disappear from the accounts!

The above details were gleaned from the Minute Book and the Accounts Book of the Coventry Charity. The former is still the original seventeenth century leather bound book which contains the details of the founding of the Charity and the minutes of the meetings of the Trustees from its earliest days until the present day.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the present Trustees are still entered into this same original book each year and signed by all the Trustees - and there are still enough pages for a few more years of AGMs left! How's that for forethought on the part of whoever it was that ordered the office stationary back in 1686?

R M Peberdy

QUARRRIES IN MALVERN SINCE 1884

Gill Holt

An 1884 Act of Parliament for Malvern Hills was passed to prevent encroachments upon the Malvern Hills. Fifteen Conservators were appointed with powers to prevent encroachments. The lands were to be preserved for open spaces of public resort, and to respect the ancient rights of the commoners. Manorial lord landowners could pay £5 a year to retain their mineral rights for allowing their land to be used by the public.

Towards the end of the century there were worries about quarrying disfiguring the hills.

North Malvern Quarry was the largest and was owned by Malvern Urban District Council, which supplied stone for local roads.

Tank Quarry was worked by T. Morgan (now owned by WCC)

Scar Rock was worked for Duke Gandolfi, head of the Hornyold family.

Some land owned by the Berington family of Little Malvern had been excluded from the Act of Parliament and was leased to Pyx Granite Company who quarried it.

In all there were ten sites being commercially exploited.

The Conservators wanted another Act to plug the loophole of manorial lords being allowed to lease their land and for machinery to be used. The proposed Act was watered down because of objections from those who benefited from the quarrying, Duke Gandolfi, Sir Henry Foley Grey (chairman of Malvern Urban District Council), MUDC itself, and Pyx Granite Company. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who were also manorial lords, withdrew their opposition from the Bill and leased their quarries to the Conservators at a very low rent.

The 1909 Act gave the Conservators the power to raise money by claiming a penny in the pound from the rates, instead of a halfpenny, in order to pay compensation to manorial owners who gave up their mineral rights.

In 1909 the Conservators lost a high court hearing to stop Mrs Cave Brown Cave, Lady of the Manor of Farley, encroaching on the commons with quarrying equipment. The 1920s saw Malvern threatening to become a quarrying town with complaints

about destruction of beautiful scenery, comfortable profits for the employers of the quarries at a time of national distress, and destruction of the roads by heavy quarry machinery. Road repairs were becoming very costly for the council. Heads of private colleges worried about Malvern losing its attraction for fee paying parents. The private schools were important to the town because they employed a lot of people. On the other hand the quarries were important to a lot of men who would have been unemployed without them.

A third Act of Parliament in 1924 allowed the Conservators to have compulsory purchase of manorial rights provided it was done within five years. (Voluntary sales could continue). The money was to be raised from the rates and could be borrowed. Purchase of the Berington mineral rights cost £10,000 but the Ecclesiastical Commissioners let theirs go for £1,000. Purchase of the Foley manor cost £15,000 and the Conservators became the Lords of the Manor of Great Malvern. There was insufficient money available to stop all quarrying, which went on for many years, although it was limited to certain times and the public had to be given notice. Discreet siting of machinery and buildings was also insisted on. There was some talk of compensation for the workers who lost their jobs when quarries closed but this came to nothing.

In 1931 the Conservators bought the West of England Quarry for £24,654 and planted the disused site with trees. In 1944 this site was requisitioned by the government War Department and the US army removed stones and spoil.

In 1953 the Ministry of Housing and Local Government ordered that all quarrying should cease in Malvern but gradually, in order to minimise adverse effects on the

economy and unemployment. Pyx Granite Company got this order overthrown by the House of Lords, but by the late 1960s PGC had sold Tank Quarry to Worcestershire County Council, who in 1971 leased it the Conservators. Tank Quarry was worked until 1966. PGC's leases for North and Scar Quarries had run out in 1960 and not been renewed. PGC contributed to the cost of rehabilitation of the land. Earnslaw Quarry was largely worked out by 1960 when WCC bought the site and leased it to the Conservators, who turned part of it into a car park. Gullet Quarry was worked until the 1970s.

By 1977 all the quarries on the Malvern Hills that were owned by the Malvern Hills Conservators had closed, after a 70 year struggle. Hollybush Quarry, owned by the Eastnor Estate was worked until later.

Gill Holt

**WEST WINDOW OF
ST OSWALDS HOSPITAL
CHAPEL**

John Sanders

West Window of the Chapel at St Oswalds Hospital Worcester, dedicated to the memory of Mary Fanny Louisa Ponsonby.

Mary Fanny Louisa Ponsonby

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace".

So reads the inscription on the large, three panelled west window in the Chapel of St.

Oswalds Hospital Worcester. But what do we know of the lady?

She was born on the 21st of April 1879, at the family home, 14, Chapel Street, London SW1. Her father was the Honorable Frederick John William Ponsonby, described in the 1881 census as a Stockbroker; her mother was Margaret Fanny, nee Howard, of Eastbourne where the couple had been married on the first of February 1877.

Mary's Grandfather was Charles Frederick Ashley Cooper Ponsonby the second Baron de Mauley of Canford, and at the time of the 1891 census the whole family was resident at Langford House, Great Farringdon in the County of Oxfordshire, the seat of Lord and Lady de Mauley. By this time her younger sister Evelyn Margaret had been born, on the 24th of October 1887.

In 1901 the census shows that the family were again in residence at 14, Chapel Street, SW1 and still recorded there in 1911, when Mary and Evelyn were 32 and 23 respectively. Research has failed to uncover any details of the next thirty years! Until, that is, we discovered their move to Worcester. To explain this we have to research another branch of the Ponsonby family.

Their Aunt the Honorable Emily Priscilla Maria Ponsonby had married, on June the 2nd, 1870, the Reverend Charles William Norman Ogilvy, who became vicar of Hanbury in Worcestershire during 1878, before moving to Oswestry, Salop. Reverend Ogilvy died on the 7th June 1903, at sometime before the First World War his widow, together with her twin daughters, Alice and Diana moved back to Worcester, living at the Bishops House 18, Lansdowne Crescent. Diana Ogilvy became the first woman to be an Alderman in the City,

becoming the first woman to be Mayor of Worcester, for the 1931 to 1932 term.

Checking the voters' list for 1939-40 (the last list printed during the war) we find that No.6 Lansdowne Crescent was un-occupied. If, like so many people, the Ponsonby sisters were anxious to move from the capital with its air-raids their cousins would have known of the vacant house only 100 yards along the road. Next, the research centres on the Birmingham Area telephone directory. The 1943 issue lists the number (4751) to "Ponsonby, Miss M. 6, Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester. Records from the war years are not of any help, but the Civilian Residents Register lists Evelyn and Mary living still at No 6, with two other women, possibly servants, in 1946. No records exist for 1947 but the 1948, new Electoral Role shows the sisters still in residence and through to 1955.

In 1949 Miss Diana Ogilvy had sold her property, the Bishops House and moved to a flat in London, where, the obituary to her, in March 1955, says, "she kept open house there for friends". With this in mind when Mary passed away on the 1st of June 1955, although the notice of her death in the local paper gave her address as Lansdowne Crescent, the place of death was 96, Marsharn Court, London SW7. Could this have been Miss Ogilvy's residence? The funeral was private, with no indication of its whereabouts, or where she was finally laid to rest.

The Worcester Cathedral Library has found a reference in the Chaplain's report for St. Oswalds of November 1955 to October 1956 that he had received an offer of a donation for a memorial window to Mary Ponsonby, the design to include the figure of St. Francis of Assisi. He had consulted with his cousin, Miss Margaret Cowell, A.R. CA. F.R.S.A. who was a leading female artist in this field. Her design had been submitted and approved

by the donor, (unnamed) and both the Master of the Hospital together with the Bishops Advisory Council and a faculty had been issued. The work was carried out and the window installed during late 1956.

We have a note of the dedication of the "Ponsonby" window, from the register of services at St. Oswald's on Palm Sunday, the 14th of April, 1st 1957, during the 11.00am Matins service held by the, then, Chaplain Canon B.H. Green.

The Electoral Role of 1956 shows that No.6 Lansdowne Crescent was vacant. When we received information from Maxine, Lady de Mauley that she had visited Miss Evelyn Ponsonby at an address in Britannia Square the Role was rechecked and certainly Miss Ponsonby had moved to No 4 Britannia Square, (bringing her closer to St. Oswald's) living at the address until the year of her death. A page in the register of services at St. Oswald's records that in December 1964 a private celebration (communion) was held for a Miss Ponsonby, as there were only two communicants, this would suggest that the celebrant went on a home visit at the request of Miss Ponsonby.

The Worcester Evening News of April the 5th 1969 carried the death notice of -

"Ponsonby - On April 4th, 1969, at Clanmere Nursing Home, Malvern, after many years of suffering borne with great fortitude. Evelyn Margaret, younger daughter of the late, the Honorable Frederick Ponsonby. Funeral Tuesday April 4th (sic) at 12 noon at Little Faringdon Church, near Lechlade Glos".

On May 1st, 1969, the register at St. Oswald's records that at 2.30pm, a Memorial Service was held in the Chapel for Miss Evelyn Margaret Ponsonby. "A faithful worshipper here and a benefactress of the

Chapel of St. Oswald's. Died on Good Friday, April the 4th 1969".

The register is signed by the Archdeacon of Worcester, also Canon B. Green, (the ex-chaplain) and Canon T. Charles-Jones then chaplain.

The researchers do feel that although Mary Fanny Louisa is commemorated with the marvellous window, Evelyn Margaret, who MUST have been the anonymous donor, has never been recognized.

Researched by John Sanders, Pauline and David Holmes, of St Oswalds Hospital Worcester

WORCESTER AT WORK

This piece is taken from a publication dated 1903 and titled "Worcester at Work", published by the Worcester Daily Times.

Roger Tapping kindly scanned this item and has a number of similar articles, which may well appear in later editions – Ed

Messrs. THOMAS and SON

Builders of the Famous Climax

Windmill Motor

Close to the famous Vulcan Works, on Shrub Hill, is situated another engineering works: which, if it cannot compare in size with its more imposing neighbour, yet shares with it the proud fame that there is no

civilised country in the world in which its products are not known.

The foundation to the present magnificent business of the firm of Thomas and Son was laid as far back as 1822 by Mr. James Thomas, a maker of wood pumps in this city. His son, the head of the present firm, succeeded him in 1872. Mr. E Thomas added many new types of pumps to those built during his father's time, amongst them a, deep well pump, with horse gear working arrangement, and wheel pumps, but being keenly alive to the rapid progress made in every field of industry he soon perceived the wonderful possibilities of an industry which would be capable of harnessing the wind to do the work of man and horse.

There were already, it is true, windmill motors of various makes, mostly American. They were however, so lightly built, and got so easily out of gear, that the cost of continual repairs was as often as not greater than the advantages that the replacing of manual or horse power by the wind should have yielded. Having made an exhaustive study of all the weak points as exhibited in the various makes then on the market, the firm at last resolved to build windmill motor plants of its own. From that resolve, dates the truly astonishing progress made by the firm of Thomas and Son. Gaining experience as they went along they added improvement to improvement until they have now evolved a windmill motor plant, which by almost universal consent represents the climax in water works engineering.

The tower, of which we give an illustration, combines with the elegance of American make the solidity of English manufacture, and although the wind pressure, as even the uninitiated can see, must at times be enormous, yet the firm warrants the towers not to buckle or blow down if properly anchored. Another unique feature of these towers is that owing to

the wonderful simplicity of their design they can be erected easily within the space or a few hours.

The whole plant has all the good points of all the best makes whilst having eliminated all their disadvantages, and there can therefore be no question that as a means of water supply for villages, estates, mansions, stock farms, nurseries and other places requiring a constant supply of water, there is no installation which is at once more powerful and more economical than the windmill motor built by the firm of Messrs Thomas and Son. If a storage tank is provided to hold at least three days' supply, the firm, which has no superior in this class of pumping plant, state that there need be no fear as to the advantageous results of selecting its machinery for water distribution purposes. The proof, however, of a pumping plant is in the extent of its pumping capacity, to vary an old saw. This proof the firm states with pardonable pride is not only supplied by official figures, taken at tests which their motors have undergone, but also by the many hundreds of testimonials which are almost daily received from almost all parts of the world. All these letters speak in the highest terms of the economy of the plant supplied, and also of the way in which, in consequence of their durability, the towers have with stood the severest gales. The best testimonials for any businessman, however, as the head of this firm said with a smile, are repeat orders. After just having executed an extensive order for the West Indies, the firm has now in hand a similar large order of complete pumping plants for South Africa, to be, supplied in lots of six plants at a time, besides numbers of orders which pour in every day from places nearer to home.



Designed and Manufactured by Thomas & Son.

To cope with this fullness of work requires workshops fitted with the most modern machinery and tools and it would indeed be difficult to point out another works in the city that could boast a finer equipment than that of Messrs, Thomas and Son. In the machine and fitting shop we see lathes, planing, shaping, milling, screw machines, and drills, all of the latest, and best, English make. The smiths' shop gives us a view of the various processes the steel has to undergo for steel is the chief material used by this firm. Instead of the old blacksmiths' hearths, we get here forges blown by powerful Root's blowers. The draught of these blowers is sufficient to blow eight fires, and is so powerful that it enables the firm to deal with iron and steel practically of any size. There is here, further, a pneumatic hammer used for hammering and stamping, which is the finest in the city. We further noticed the powerful punching and shearing machine and a large lathe, which can turn a wheel, six feet diameter. A convincing proof of what this powerful equipment is capable

of doing, is a large rolling and corrugating machine, one ton in weight, which was specially designed for rolling and corrugating the fans of the windmill shown in our illustration, and every part of which is made on the premises.

Many more matters of interest might be mentioned, but it would be impossible, within the short space at our disposal, to fully describe this veritable beehive of industry. Modest and without pretensions, it is one of the most important industries in the city, and the wonderful expansion of its trade is due to the long experience, tried energy, and determination to succeed of the present head of the firm, Mr E. Thomas, and to the expert knowledge of every branch of engineering and the inventive genius of Mr Percy Thomas, who for the last ten years has been his father's most valued lieutenant.

Footnote: A brief internet search on the above gave the following additional snippet of information. Maybe one of our members can add more? Ed

From the 1890's until the 1940's Thomas & Sons manufactured wind pumps in Claines. These were sold all around the world as "Climax" Windmills and won awards at the 1903 Royal Agricultural Society of England Show. The patent still exists and "Climax" windmills are now made in South Africa.

Both father and son were tremendous benefactors to Claines Church. There are numerous memorials in the tower noting the gift of the Church Clock, the re-casting of the old bells and the gift of several new bells from Ernest Thomas in memory of his father Emanuel, mother and wife.

Known locally as "Pumpy" Thomas he is well remembered and is immortalised by "Windmill Cottages" a row of houses erected for his workers, as well as by several windpumps still standing in the parish.

**JOHN RUSSELL
IRON AND COAL MASTER
Research from WASP
(Worcester Archive Source Project)**

E Roper and R Jeffries

Editor's Note: By way of introduction, I recently came across some information on WASP (Worcester Archive Source Project) on the County Records Office website and asked whether they could give me any information on what it was all about, and perhaps how members of WIALHS might get involved if they were interested.

The end result was some fascinating information on a Worcester man called John Russell from Ruth Jeffries who did the detective work on the project, and some further information on Ruth's project and on WASP in general from Elizabeth Roper of the CRO.

If you want to get involved in WASP, details are given the end of the article

Eliabeth Roper:

Worcester Archive Source Project (WASP) is a three year Heritage Lottery Funded project, based at Worcestershire Record Office. WASP was established in order to catalogue the contents of the Worcester City collection (sometimes colloquially referred to as "the WASP material/ documents"), which is available to access by all Record Office users and stretches to 800 archive boxes, plus hundreds of volumes, maps and plans of the city. These document the organisation and development of the city over five centuries, from the 15th century to the 1940s.

WASP employs two full time members of staff – Kathryn Steenson, our cataloguing archivist and myself as an Outreach Worker.

Within my role I share the contents of the collection with schools, interest groups and - in the case of the St Johns and Cripplegate project - with whole communities. At St Johns we worked with an older persons group, a primary school and with the general public at research sessions at St Johns Library.

As well as being an accomplished amateur historian, Ruth has been involved in community history research projects organised by WASP. She was a member of a nineteen- strong volunteer research group who uncovered the documentary evidence for the chronology of the Butts site in Worcester and her findings were presented with others' in April 2009 at the WHEAS Butts Day School.

In June 2009, the story of John Russell and other tales of the history of St Clements were recounted at a storytelling performance held in Worcester's Cripplegate Park at midsummer.



Professional storyteller, Anne Lister recounts the 'Mystery Tale of Cripplegate', including the tale of John Russell at Cripplegate Park in June.

WASP invited those like Ruth who had involved in research, plus other local people to come and hear the "Mystery Tale of Cripplegate" revealed.

Ruth Jeffries:

I became involved with WASP when I did a course on the social history of Worcester involving the documents and Beth Roper asked for volunteers to list unsorted boxes. Through my research on the Butts area (where I had ancestors in the nineteenth century) I met Pat Hughes and joined her research into the Butts Dig where I concentrated on Joseph Woods Yard. Then Beth invited me to help with researching the Cripplegate Story (I was born in St Johns) so then I got hooked on John Russell! This is his story -

JOHN RUSSELL 1798-1871 IRON AND COAL MASTER

John Russell aroused interest when WASP documents were being researched for the Cripplegate Story. His name appeared on numerous indentures as he purchased land in the area from the Cathedral and Worcester city ownerships. He was producing clay tobacco pipes as the Worcester Pipe Works in his factory which was between Cripplegate Park and just above where St Clements School is built. He is listed in Lewis Directory of Worcester in 1920 as "pipe maker."

In a few years he owned many houses in Church Walk, Hylton Road and Tybridge Street and had Russell Terrace named for him.

How did he start his enterprise when he was born in humble circumstances in Bromley, Shropshire in 1798?

From the WASP material, it was ascertained that a Sarah Southam, fishmonger, funded him in the form of mortgages. She was listed as a partner in trade with another fishmonger called Sarah Bobell, a widow in the 1851 and 1861 Censuses but it is unknown how she had money earlier. She was born in Droitwich, maybe to wealthy parents.

John met the daughter of a wealthy family from Alton Court, Herefordshire called Mary Downs and although the family looked down upon him, married her in 1817 in Claines Parish Church. He promised them that by the end of the year she would have a "carriage and pair."

By the 1930s John was the owner of Worcester Pipe Works and Russells Brickworks. In the 1980s a clay pipe was found during renovations in St Johns with "Russell Worcester" and a cipher. This can be seen in the Worcester Museum.



He also moved into working with iron and brass. He owned The Risca Coal and Iron Joint Co and it seemed that everything he touched turned to gold! In 1836, John Russell and Co bought Waunfawr Colliery with a site covering 1000 acres and in 1841 he had a new shaft of 559 feet sunk at Coed

Waunfawr (Blackvein.) In 1842 the Company were awarded the contracts to supply steam coal to the East India Co, Peninsular and Orient Co and The Royal West Indian Steam packet Co.

John was also a partner with Thomas Brown in the Blaina Iron Works, which they took over in 1839, and the Cwmtillery Colliery which he took over in 1852. In 1853 he sank a new shaft of 785 feet and was shipping 350 tons of coal per week In 1859 he sank a further shaft and in 1864, he incorporated Cwmtillery into his South Wales Colliery Company.

In the development of his South Wales interests John was in partnership with George Randall Hookey who lived at Risca House . In 1840, George married Susannah, Russell's eldest daughter.

Other interests of John at this time were iron workings in the Forest of Dean, The Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Co and he was active with Sir Charles Morgan, (Lord Tredegar,) in the development of Newport. He is also associated with the development of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire.

John had a house in Cheltenham called Terhill House and he bought The Wyelands at Chepstow. In 1852 he leased Piercefield , the neighbouring estate and subsequently bought it in 1856. The house was designed by John Soane in the eighteenth century.

Russell's colliery interests suffered a series of disasters and loss of life. At one time he had to bring men in from Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset and Gloucestershire to work for him.

In 1846 a gas explosion at Blackvein killed 35 men, two were killed in 1849 and in 1853 10 men were lost. The worst disaster was in

December, 1860, when a major explosion killed 146 men. It was thought that there had been a naked light used although this had been banned for some time and men could be fined if caught.

This was a severe financial loss and both The Risca Colliery Co and George Randall Hookey were bankrupted. To establish a trust for the miner's families, John sold Piercefield and returned to Terhill House In 1866, Blackvein was sold to Thomas Rhodes.

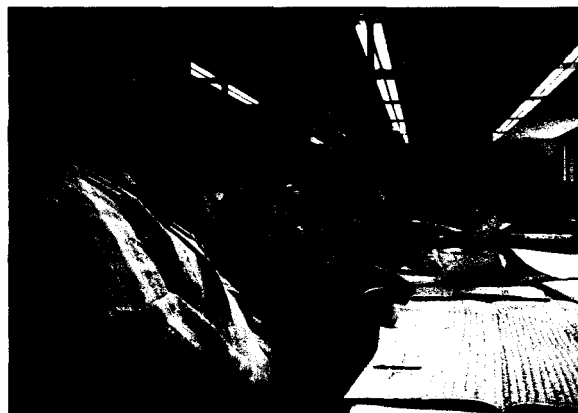
John bought Badgeworth Court in Gloucestershire and is commemorated in the great east window of the Parish Church. He chose to be buried where his fortune started in St Clements Church, but unfortunately his and Mary's graves disappeared when Henwick Road was widened.

John Russell was made a Justice of the Peace in 1842, High Sherriff of Monmouthshire in 1855 and at the time of his death was one of the oldest magistrates in Monmouthshire. He also owned a house in Westbourne Park in London.

Further information on the project and on WASP (from Elizabeth Roper):

Events and projects like these are being organised by WASP for another two years. It is hoped that new audiences for the collection that are encouraged to become involved, will then be able to make good use of the new Library and History Centre for Worcester which will be opening at around the same time.

The archive collection features a broad range of records. 19th century apprenticeship agreements sit alongside chamber order books which date back to the Civil War.



L-R Jeannette Roe, Pat McClevy and Ruth Jeffries researching the history of John Russell and St Clements at Worcestershire Record Office

There is also scope to read about the fate of individuals in Worcester's past – as revealed by records such as the policeman's charge book, and the rather shocking sanitary survey of the state of the city's health in 1849.

The collection's hundreds of boxes, volumes and plans also cover education, markets, railways, navigation of the River Severn, city charities, the canal, Worcester Bridge, the gaol, sewerage and the militia amongst other topics. As a result, there is likely to be something to be discovered that is relevant to a broad range of research topics.

To find out more about collection, and the activities of the WASP team, visit the website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/wasp or to be added to the WASP mailing list, email ERoper@worcestershire.nov.uk and you will be kept up to date with discoveries and forthcoming events.

**BOOK REVIEWS
WEBSITES ETC**

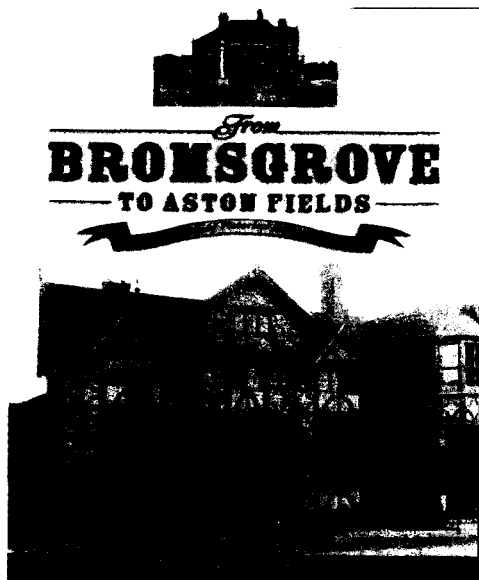
From Bromsgrove to Aston Fields: A Story of Victorian Expansion

Jennie McGregor Smith.

Published by Brewin Books. 252pp

Price £14.95. ISBN 978-1-85858-439-3

Jennie McGregor-Smith's excellent book interweaves detailed local history research with excellent (and numerous) illustrations to tell the story of the development of the Aston Fields community, to the east of Bromsgrove. The story covers the period starting from the 1830's, through the great period of growth in public institutions during Victorian times, and right up to the present day. It has a level of detail which will fascinate anyone familiar with Bromsgrove and its landmarks, but is written in an approachable way which will engage even a stranger to the town – who will not feel like a stranger when they come to the end!



The book covers topics such as the coming of the railway, housing (including some of the more notable local properties), local industries, institutions such as gas and water supply (even sewerage!), social history and much else besides.

Written in an informal, but very informative style this is one of the best local history books I have read in a long time.

NB The author has advised that the book is available directly from her at a reduced price of £13 (+ p&p). I can give details if required.

Glyn Thomas

Rice's Architectural Primer

ISBN 978-0-7475-9748-3 price £14.99

This is a really useful book whether or not you already know anything about architecture. It is full of watercolour illustrations that are probably more useful than photographs and gives excellent examples of various types of buildings and regional variations.

If you would like to know your aedicule from your architrave this is the book for you.

Christine Silvester

Vernacular Architecture An Illustrated Handbook. R. W. Brunskill

ISBN 0-571-19503-3 price £20.00

This book is in its fourth edition and is a really helpful guide to the architecture of manor houses, farm cottages, barns, stables, mills, inns shops and early industrial buildings.

It is packed with information, black and white photographs and many line drawings,

illustration the forms of building materials and ornamentation.

The appendices are of immense value as they show how to study the subject, make extensive and detailed records and how to carry out surveys. It is also of great help to anyone wishing to restore a building or possibly needing ammunition to oppose insensitive planning proposals.

Christine Silvester

Sons Of Vulcan: Ironworkers and Steelmen in Scotland, Robert Duncan

Published by Birlinn Ltd.

ISBN 9781-84158-769-1 £14.99

As the title of this book indicates, it has nothing to do with Worcester, Worcestershire - or Industrial Archaeology. However if any of our members worked in a foundry or had previous generations in the industry (perhaps Hardy & Padmore, or somewhere in the Black Country) then they would find this book of interest – and even with only a little knowledge of the industry it is still readable. I do possess a little knowledge of foundry practice, having worked in a factory which, until plastics took over, ran a two-furnace casting foundry.

The book charts the story of iron and steel making, principally in Lanarkshire, beginning with the small scattered foundries using charcoal, then the use of coal, the transition from cast iron to malleable (wrought) iron and then steel production. Scotland was late to take advantage of the use of coal and at first expertise had to be brought from Staffordshire and Wales, until Scots and incoming Irish workers could be trained. I was surprised to read of the hierarchy within the various processes involved and the control that most of the

ironmasters exerted over their workforce, with poor rates and long hours. The masters fiercely opposed any form of trade unionism in bargaining for better pay and conditions. Although accommodation was provided it was poor, small and insanitary. Trade unionism did eventually prevail, but not always for the best.

As we all know, the British steel industry withered and this well constructed, readable account, albeit with reference only to Scotland, goes some way to explaining why. How ironic that the Ravenscraig works, in excelling in production in early 1992 and awarded medals for the effort, saw the plant closed forever in June 1992. No wonder most threw their medals away!

The book makes use of the North Lanarkshire Council photo archive and draws on some oral history and a few workers' personal diary accounts.

Betty Wright



No recent discoveries – but keep looking! Ed

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 too – another member may know the answer !

ENQUIRIES TO WIALHS

BOUNTY BOYS

Soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, the Royal Navy was suffering from a lack of trained wireless operators due to the long period required to train them from scratch.

The answer was the Admiralty's 'V' Scheme. This radical idea was that young men over 16 ½ years of age, already members of the Sea Cadet Corps and with the ability to send and receive Morse code to an acceptable level, could volunteer to join the programme (anecdotally, thereby avoiding call up to the Army!).

Several shore bases were made available where the young men received more advanced training before being drafted to a ship. One of these bases was here in Worcester, the Admiralty commandeered the

replica 17thC 'Man-o-War' that had been the first HQ of the Worcester Sea Cadets. The ship was moored in Diglis Basin, alongside the 'Grist Mill' (that is still standing) its name was T.S. Bounty.

The photograph shows one of the intakes with the C.O., his two Lieutenants together with the Petty Officer P.T.I and was taken sometime during 1943.

(I have moved the photo to the Photo Section below in order to reproduce it in larger format – Ed)

The photograph is reproduced with kind permission of Ex Leading Telegraphist Bill Bowyer from Bexhill-on-Sea, one of the few surviving 'Bounty Boys'.

Do WIALHS members have any more information?

John Sanders (WIALHS member)

WIALHS ON THE WEB

An example of how our website "spreads the word about WIALHS -

Email received by our web-guru Peter Wheatley earlier this year:

Dear Pete

The Cumbria Industrial History Society is holding photograph albums and a collection of brochures etc relating to "High Duty Alloys" - a company which had a foundry at Distington, near Workington and also at Redditch and at their headquarters at Slough. Unfortunately very few of the photos are catalogued or labelled and it is not always clear which site they feature. The brochures are of as much interest to a social historian as to an industrialist as they feature such things as washing machine impellers, mangles, hot-water bottle moulds etc.

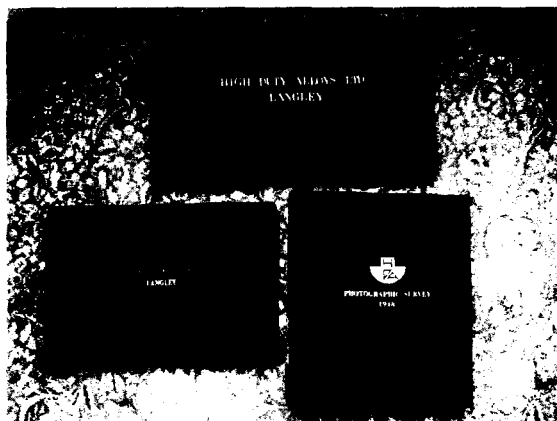
They belong to someone whose father held a senior position with the firm, and he is happy to loan them to anyone interested before he decides on where to deposit them. If you were interested in seeing them, we would need to negotiate how to deliver them as they are too heavy to send in the post.

Helen Caldwell, Hon.Sec. CIHS

We were able to confirm to the sender that HDA still operates in Redditch (albeit as Mettis Aerospace) and that the company would be interested in viewing this forgotten information on its history. By a complex transport chain, somehow involving Roy Fidoe, the albums have been brought south and are (we hope) to be lodged with the CRO once HDA have finished with them.

The albums contain many superb, professionally-taken B&W photographs of industrial sites and processes relating to HDA and its operations in Redditch and elsewhere. Two shots relating to the Redditch site are copied below to illustrate the quality.

The albums (below) were displayed at a recent WIALHS Friday meeting and one member was pleasantly surprised as she used to work in the company laboratories – but somewhat disappointed that she did not feature any of the photographs!





Two industrial scenes from HDA in Redditch (1940s)

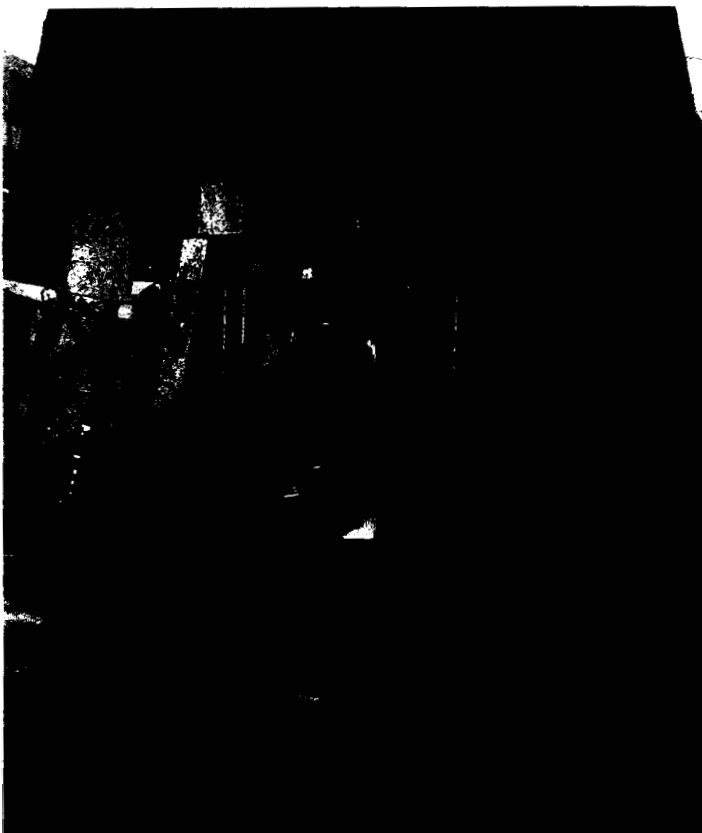


PHOTO SECTION – SEND ME ANYTHING INTERESTING!



Photo accompanying "Bounty Boys" enquiry from John Sanders

My thanks again to Max Sinclair for this set of pictures – the final ones (unless Max can find a few more!) Once again I hope I have managed to attach the captions correctly.



As night was falling a Belgian family came down the Severn from Stourport and passed Bevere Island on the wrong side going over the weir. Don Smith the very skilled Lockkeeper lowered himself down in his Severn Punt and hauled the family back to the Lock Island and safety. He then made the boat fast and next morning a tug from Diglis came up and towed the casualty back from the weir undamaged.



The dumb barge (No engine) Sabrina brought 300 tons of aluminium ingots to Diglis wharf and was moored up for the night. Unfortunately it broke free and passed over the weir. After several attempts a powerful tug from Gloucester hauled the miscreant free.



When Severn Trent Water wanted to lay a large diameter water pipe under the bed of the Severn between Pitchcroft and Hylton Road they employed British Waterways to use their steam bucket dredger to dig the channel. This vessel was reputed to be the oldest steam dredger in the world.



In 1963 the Steam Launch Belle was moored in Diglis Basin when we had a terrible winter with deep frosts. I bored a hole in the ice and found it to be 2ft 3 ins. thick. This was not good for the teak hull of this graceful craft. A few years later she was taken by road to London never to return.

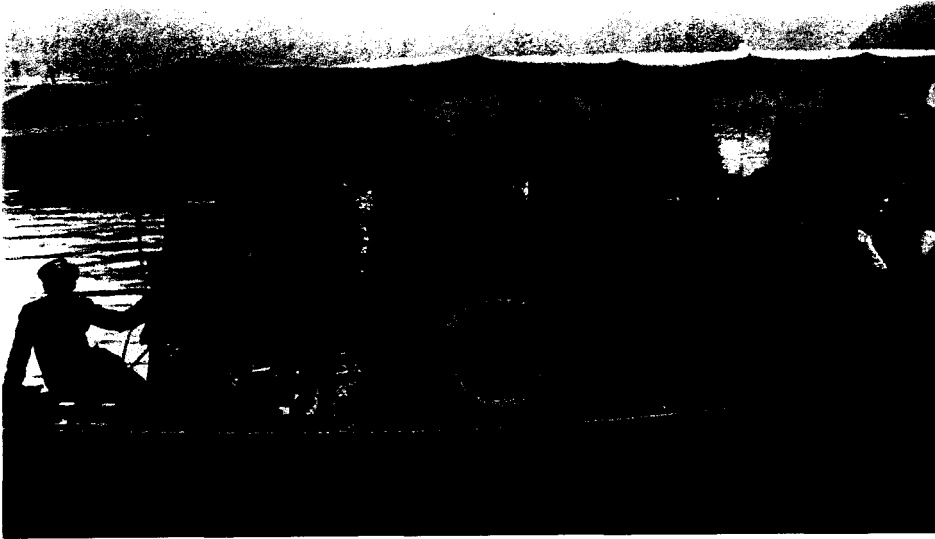


When needed the steam bucket dredger is used to remove silt which accumulates at Lock entrances and exits where flood water slows and swirls dropping its deposits. The Severn carries up to 30% silt in times of flood. Seen here working at Holt Fleet the punt allows the crew to escape to the pub. Dredging has absolutely no effect on the Severn's capacity to carry flood water as all excess water has to pass over the top of the weirs, and can be 25 feet deep. The Severn is 6 feet deep from Stourport to Worcester and 8 feet to Gloucester with a mainly rock bottom.

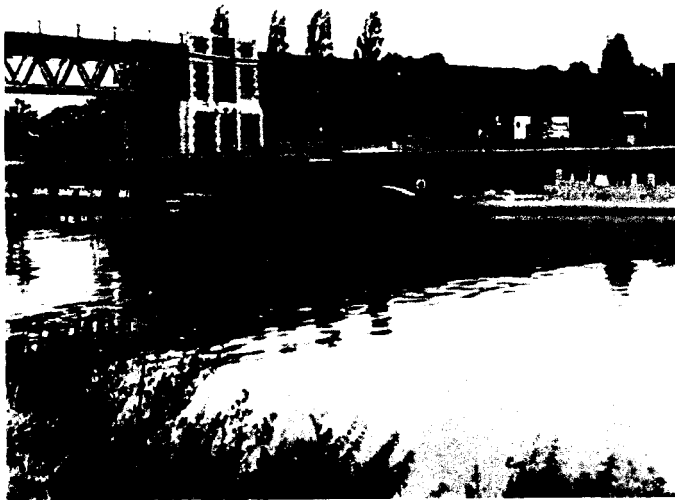


*Tom Rolt, author of the book *Narrowboat* which started the campaign to save our canals from Government closure, came to join us on our narrowboat "Vesta" in 1962. Sadly this was his last canal voyage. He came with his wife Sonia, and their two boys, in their open Alvis vintage tourer and my friends Paul Hocquard Vintage Car expert and John Stanford author of *The Vintage Sports Car* and owner of a Vauxhall 30/98. We had a lovely day, with my wife Jocelyn providing the victuals, cruising from Kinver to Kidderminster and return. As we entered the canal basin at Ashwood as the evening darkened there was a splash as a little Rolt fell in followed by a larger splash as Sonia jumped in to rescue him.*

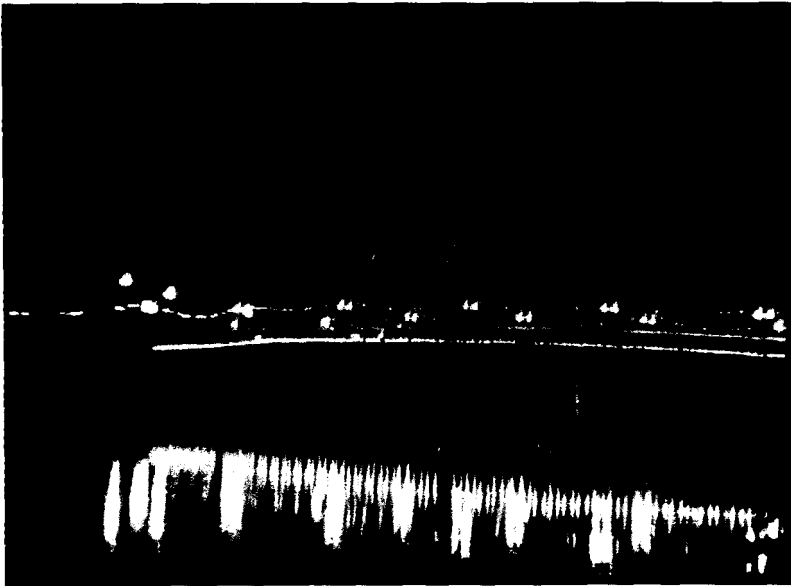
They left for Stanley Pontlage wrapped up in the curtains my wife was making for our boats cabins when I had finished the conversion.



When the steamer "Jubilee" from Tewkesbury arrived at Worcester's South Quay full of trippers the photographer from the Empire Studio in Broad St took a picture and rushed his heavy equipment back to base to produce handfuls of postcards for sale. Nearly as fast as digital photos.



The Royal Navy had a fleet of narrowboats built as replicas of their various warships to cruise the country campaigning for recruits. Here the atomic submarine "Nautilus" and a frigate are moored by Worcesters Railway Bridge. It was good to see the navy having confidence in our canals when the Government was trying to destroy them.



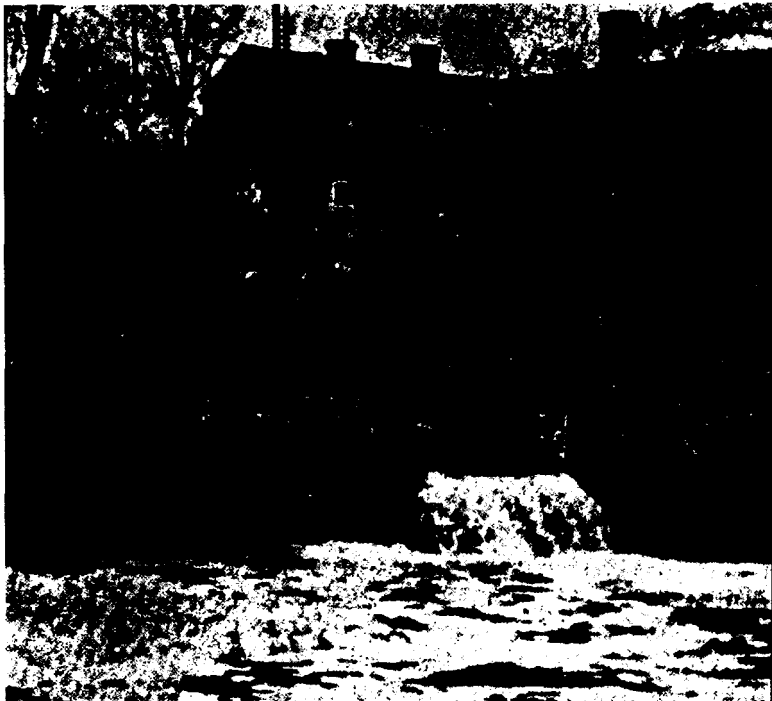
For the 1950's Coronation Worcester Bridge was beautifully illuminated with the City's Power Station behind decorated two large funnels.



From Roman times until the railways came to the River Teme valley the only reliable transport was by water. The state of the muddy roads made heavy transport virtually impossible. The Romans built weirs to raise the water level and by the 19th Century 25 weirs and water gate locks existed between Leintwardine and the Severn. This 1860's photograph shows one of the weirs with its opening gate at Powick to allow boats through. Wheat was taken up to the mills and flour and iron from Downton was brought downstream.



A painting of Ludlow Castle before 1830 shows Dinham Bridge and Mill with square rigged River Severn trows unloading wheat and carrying flour to the villages. Above the bridge a square rigger can be seen sailing upstream, possibly to the iron works at Downton for bar iron which was kept in warehouses and caves at villages like Eastham for the blacksmiths. Roman Lead went to Droitwich for salt pans and Iron to the Stour for the forges.



*The River Stour from Stourbridge to the Severn was a navigation for many years before the canal was built. Weirs and watergates like this one at Cookley allowed laden boats to pass. The first Railway Engine in the USA was brought down river from Foster and Rastrick Ltd Stourbridge on a "Flote", a raft with sides. Stourbridge has an Iron Bridge which predates Ironbridge.
Max Sinclair*

AND FINALLY

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

- 2009**
Sep 11th **'MOTHER of PEARL'**,
by George Hook - the last of the pearl workers in Birmingham
(*This is the talk that was cancelled in February 2009 due to bad weather*).
- Oct 9th** **'PUB SIGNS AND THEIR ORIGINS'**,
by Alan Rose - *Where do pub signs come from?*
- Nov 6th** **'WHISTLES THROUGH THE AGES'**
by Simon Topman of J. Hudson & Co (Whistles) Ltd,
- Dec 11th** **'LADBROKE GROVE : CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES'**,
by Andrew Weyman - *A talk about a railway crash.*
- 2010**
Jan 8th **'BOUNDARIES, HEDGES AND WALLS'**
by Richard Churchley - *A very interesting talk.*
- Feb 12th** **'WHAT IS A RIVER?'**,
by Brian Draper - *a speaker well known to our Society.*
It should be a very interesting evening.
- Mar 12th** **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**
To be followed by a members' evening.
- Apr 23rd** **'WATER MILLS OF THE WEST MIDLANDS'**,
by Tim Booth - *a speaker with an enthusiasm for mills*

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<p align="center">The WIALHS website (www.worcester-wia.co.uk) has details of the Society, membership information, information on meetings and events – and more!</p>			