

August 2012



WORCESTERSHIRE I.A. & LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Summer Newsletter

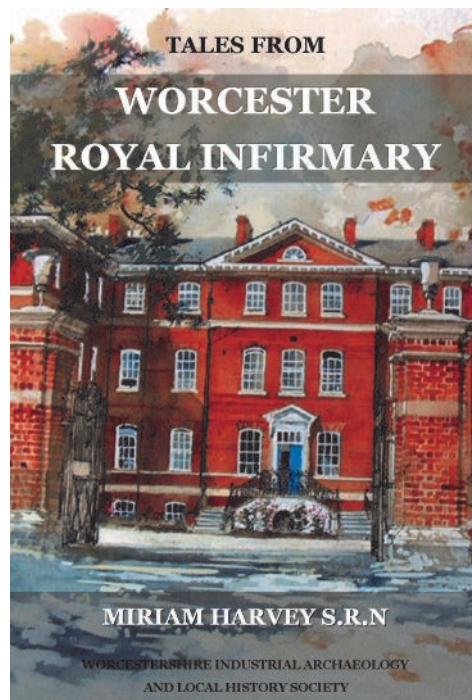
The first of many?

Your society has long held the ambition to help its members to get their research available to a wider audience. We were determined to get the project off the ground with a book to be published under the auspices of the Society, and were keen that this would be a professional publication that would be available through booksellers that would also raise the profile of the Society.

By happy coincidence Miriam Harvey was well advanced writing a book of recollections of Worcester Royal Infirmary! We chose Aspect Design of Malvern to print and publish on our behalf, they are a very affordable and helpful. Digital printing makes small print runs of even single numbers affordable at a later date.

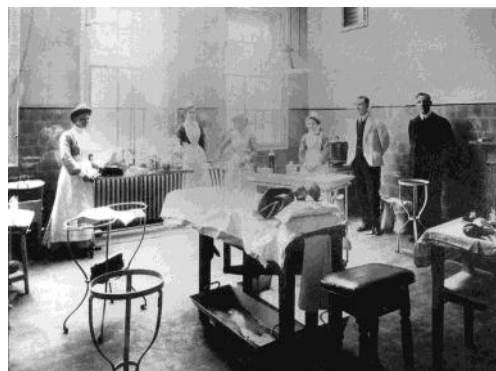
Muriel and her husband Godfrey had done most of the hard work by researching and creating the material, typing it up and locating photographs. It was relatively straightforward for yours truly to digitise the images and lay out the manuscript. We are indebted to Mollie and John Pringle for detailed proof reading at several stages, and to Roger Tapping and Michael McCurdy for their help and support. David Birtwhistle's permission to reproduce his wonderful painting of the building gave us the basis of a striking cover.

"Tales from Worcester Royal Infirmary" was launched following the AGM of the Nurses League in the Board Room at the former WRI on the 19th May, attended by our Patron Henry Sandon and his wife, Barbara. We are pleased to report that sales have gone extremely well. If you have not yet bought a copy, why not? Subject to stock Miriam is selling copies to WIALHS members for only £8 (excluding carriage). Alternatively it is available from Aspect Design (Newtown Road, Malvern 01684 561567) at the cover price of £12. It should also be available to order through bookshops using ISBN 9781908832115. Online sellers will show out of stock, but persevere as it will be printed to order.



Your committee is already working on the next project. Do let us know if you have a book project you are working on, we would love to help!

John Beale

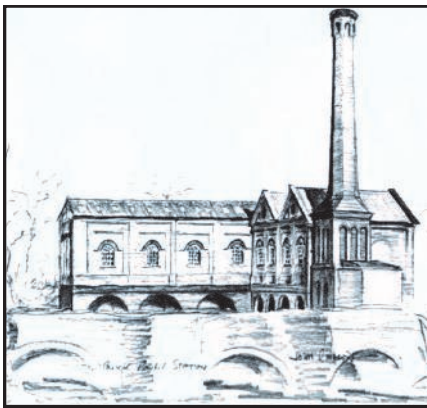


Winter Programme Revealed...

We are pleased to announce with this issue the 2012/3 Winter Programme, which is detailed on the inside pull-out section.

Thanks are due to Christine Silvester for another interesting and varied programme which will include talks on railway navvies, an oral history of the Droitwich Canals, fords and crossings on the Severn, Bredon Hill and the development of universities. There will also be a talk about and a private visit to Croome Court.

We are undertaking something of an experiment this year, following a review of the AGM format which has always included a (sometimes chaotic) members slides session afterwards. To give you all a more organised and structured evening, as well as a platform to present your slides and videos, the December meeting will be dedicated to members contributions. This will be planned in advance to mitigate IT problems! See the programme for more details.



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Welcome!

We are pleased to welcome Teresa Broadbent, Steve & Sue Southwick as new members.

Sir Winston Churchill's visit to Worcester

Extract from Worcester News, Friday 22nd June 2012:

"A MAJOR historical find gives details of Sir Winston Churchill's visit to Worcester and the five-year campaign by city mayors to get him here.

Hundreds of original documents, including seven signed letters by Sir Winston dating from 1947 to 1949, were found in the Guildhall in the drawer of a filing cabinet in the manager's office where they lay undisturbed for more than 60 years.

The collection tells the story of how the city of Worcester offered the then Mr Churchill the Freedom of Worcester at the end of the Second World War and efforts by the mayors between 1945 and 1950 to secure his visit to formally receive it. When he arrived in the city on May 20, 1950, thousands of people lined the High Street around the Guildhall to welcome him.

The documents also detail the arrangements for the ceremony and luncheon.

Sheena Payne-Lunn, Worcester City Coun-

cil's historic environment record officer, said: "What is so remarkable is just how much detail is contained within the collection – it is such a colourful reminder of the impact Churchill had on our nation during its darkest hour, and of the outpouring of public gratitude that he received in the years after the Second World War.

The documents, which are now securely stored, will be recorded in detail and placed in the Hive before going on display in Worcester City Museum in Foregate Street later this year.

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the recent death of Terry Keegan, who gave us a wonderful talk on milestones. (ed.)



TERRY KEEGAN

Terry Keegan was known to many in Worcestershire as an excellent and entertaining speaker on milestones. In 2000, after a letter in the Guardian about milestones, there was a huge response from enthusiasts across the country and the Milestone Society was born. Terry was national secretary and he was the man with the vision.

The Society works to preserve restore and record these reminders of a different, slower age and most counties have their local groups. Terry was our Chairman and inspiration for finding, replating, repairing and sometimes replacing many stones, including all between Worcester and Great Witley, Worcester and Bradley Green and our current project, Worcester to the Gloucestershire border at Eldersfield. We have published two books. He found the necessary skills among us to record findings on a database, make replica plates for casting in iron, drill the plates, make a mould for new stones, find stone-masons, dig holes, persuade individuals and councils to contribute money and effort to heritage work.

Thanks to Terry, the Worcestershire Branch led the way.

His last brainchild was the Diamond Jubilee milestone in North Claines Parish, 3 miles from Worcester on the A449. Despite his illness he kept tabs on progress,

came to see the new milestone cast, to see it installed and, two weeks before his death, made an excellent Chairman's speech at the unveiling on June 5th.

Terry had also founded the National Horse Brass Society, and the Cast Iron Seat Society.

His well-researched book, 'The Heavy Horse, its Harness and Harness Decoration', published in 1973 was reprinted four times and he was a consultant to 'Heavy Horse World', a leading magazine in its field, for many years.

In 1952, Terry's picture was on the cover of 'Athletic Review' when he was one of a team that beat the Americans' All-comers' Record in a national Cross-country event.

But it will be the Diamond Jubilee Milestone, with two Jubilee horse brasses inset, that will be his most poignant memorial. What a man!

Chairman's report

Michael McCurdy

The last few months have been an unusually high profile period for the Worcester. Firstly the progress of the Olympic Touch through the city and all the attendant interest generated in the press and then, following closely behind, the visit of H.M. the Queen which included the formal opening of our new library the "Hive". No matter what you think of the architecture of the new building one can't help but be impressed by the space and facilities provided. The pulling together of the university and county libraries, records office and archaeological services under one roof can only be a huge benefit

to us all. So how will it benefit WIA in particular? I am confident that the meeting areas and lecture facilities will prove useful over the coming years and perhaps we could consider using some of the display space in the future but, more importantly, I am hoping the new facilities will act as an impetus to encourage our members to do further research into our Industrial and historical past.

On a more serious note, I am sure most were as disappointed as I was when the Society was unsuccessful in our bid for a Heritage Lottery Grant to look at the glove industry in Worcester and Alwyn's

company in particular. Malcolm Nixon had persuaded Eliza Botham, who has had wide experience of working with the Heritage Lottery Fund, to help us construct our application. I would like to record my thanks to both Eliza and Malcolm for all their hard work in trying to get over all the hurdles required by the HLF. We gave it our best shot. However we, as a society, are still hoping to do some recording of Alwyn's factory but as yet details are not available.

Michael McCurdy, Chairman

What is happening to *The Journal*?

Malcolm Nixon

The Committee have agreed that it is unlikely that there will be enough society generated research material to warrant the publication, on a regular basis, of a Journal; accordingly we have decided to pursue a different tack which we feel you will enjoy and appreciate.

The Newsletter has been a spectacular success and so we intend to capitalise on its strengths and use it (perhaps in alternate issues) to publish short articles and book reviews. John will continue to edit this and it is not anticipated that any 'house style' changes will be necessary. So reviews, news, short articles to him

please!

However, the society does produce from time to time more substantive research (David Attwood has undertaken some excellent work on housing in St. Johns) and the committee wish to see this material published as a series of 'Occasional Papers' which will be edited by myself and will develop a fresh 'house style' commensurate with this more lengthy and highly illustrated journalism. So lengthier papers to me please!

Both publications will be circulated to members as part of their subscription and

it is anticipated that both will find a retail market through fairs, conferences and perhaps libraries and museums.

The committee are excited at the prospect of building on the proven strengths of the new 'Newsletter' while enabling members to see their endeavours in print and we look forward to receiving articles and snippets - the more the merrier! When offering work do indicate which publication you see your work fitting, although inevitably the editor's decision will be final!

Dr. Malcolm Nixon

Summer Programme Reports

WOLVERLEY

Sunday 29th April

It was provident that the visit had been arranged to coincide with a village open day at the Village Hall. Here, under cover from the persistent rain (with refreshments available) were various displays from the village's local societies, genealogical as well as other aspects of the past including the Wolverley & Cookley History Society's display, who were our hosts. Janet Morgan, from the society welcomed a small stalwart group of us. Part of our invitation included a guided walk around the village and at 2pm despite the weather we set off in the hands of Janet and one of her knowledgeable local members.



Wolverley is an old Saxon settlement (clearing for Wulfweard's people) recorded in a charter of 866, but does not feature in regional or national history till the 18th Century. The River Stour flows through the parish, to the east of the village, splitting into several separate watercourses. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, projected in 1766, follows the course of the river on the opposite side from the village. John Baskerville was born at Upton House, known latterly as Sion Hill Farm, in Wolverley in 1706, but he removed to Birmingham, where he established a japanning business, and later set up his celebrated printing press.

Our walk took us past the church of St. John Baptist, replacing an earlier one (pulled down in 1769) though parts of the tower were incorporated in the brick rebuild of 1770-2 in the Italian style (a wedding left this for a future visit). The heart of the village is on the north side of the church via a hollowed out road through the sandstone hill. Houses on the east side of this are built on and against the bedrock. The the oldest houses in the village are here. It is at the centre of this small village that its unusual history appears.

The Old Sebright School Buildings cover one side of the village. The 1620 date on the grand central building (built 1829) commemorates a bequest (William Seabright) for a Grammar School. The present range of buildings represent an aggrandisement of the early origins, which is a smaller 17th Century Masters House to the left side of the central building and a slightly later matching one to the right. The old schoolhouse of 1787 (later girls only) encloses the yard to the north and one of 1829 for boys). All are now desirable homes!

We then took a walk along the canal from the lock and back by a footpath over the flood meadow to the Village Hall.

Mike Hayzelden

VINTAGE MIDLAND RED BUS TRIP TO STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Saturday 12th May

The weather on this most changeable year was fortunately warm and welcome. After several years with few trips I decided to attend this one. The reason - the photo on page 2 of the Summer Programme listings. A dismal wreck of a double decker bus sparked a memory that I had seen it before at the Oxford Bus Museum at Long Hanborough about 10 years ago. There I was told it was an old Midland Red double decker of which this was the only one to survive. Not surprising as I knew that they scrapped all their old double-deckers in the late '40s and '50s. The Oxford bus enthusiasts discovered it in a wood and acquired it to add to their collection. A volunteer told me that they had to cut it out of the wood with saws etc. The starting handle was totally imbedded in a tree trunk.

It seems that the Oxford people could not deal with this far-gone relic, perhaps they did not possess enough time or resources to do this and after some time via the Black Country Museum [they said] it has now arrived at Wythall. I immediately made my way to the far shed there and found it. The extreme angle of the front was the clue. I remember occasionally using one for school journeys from Bromsgrove to Worcester. Mostly we had the ubiquitous front-entrance

models, much loved by their makers, Midland Red. This 1931 model was petrol-engined, the 1933 front entrance ones diesel. Already I could see work had been done; the cylinder block looked free of dust, rust and other detritus. To complete this will take quite a few years but I can't wait for a trip! I almost missed Wythall's canteen delights but, on to the main function of the day, the journey to Stratford.



We boarded the mid-1960s D9 [as Roy Fido defines it in the listings, page 2.] It closely resembles the new post-war double deckers and has a strong hint of the Routemaster much loved by Londoners. Impeccably turned out it jogged along at about 30 mph and eventually arrived at the Stratford coach park. It looked superb as it dominated all the colourful day-trippers' vehicles! The rest of the morning was devoted to a boat trip down the River Avon and on their return everyone seemed very satisfied with their journey. I did not go on this voyage but walked to the Parish Church to see the



Summer Programme Reports (Continued)

Clopton chantry as this opportunity now presented itself.

After lunch [an ice cream for me] we left Stratford at the appropriate time and made our stately way to Kenilworth where I had a second ice cream! Kenilworth is a bustling little town without the international crowds who pack Stratford. A few strong walkers saw the Castle. Our bus was an unusual attraction in the town centre. I don't think many people had seen a Midland Red for many years and it provided a subject for photographers.

We returned via several places almost unknown to me but all much enjoyed nevertheless. The outskirts of Coventry, Solihull, Meriden and others steadily went by. A most successful day out and full marks to Roy Fido and the Wythall staff for coffee and technical help.

Mike Wall

COACH TRIP TO BUXTON

Friday 8th June

Commandery Coaches chose to take the scenic route along the Derwent Valley from Derby, providing us with a leisurely, scenic ride via Belper, Matlock and Bakewell, passing the Arkwright Mill (Masson Mill), before the weather closed in on us.

Buxton is a spa town popular from Roman times but its popularity has waxed and waned, closed by Henry VIII, reopened by Elizabeth I and favoured by the ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots. The Old Hall opposite the Opera House was built around 1580 for Mary Queen of Scots.

Much of the town was developed in the 18th Century by the 5th Duke of Devonshire. The Crescent, he developed, is currently under restoration. Later in the 19th

Century, after the railway arrived in 1860s, further development in the form of the Pump Rooms (1894), Pavilion, Conservatory (1871-6) and their extensive gardens.



The Opera House

Our first venue for a guided backstage tour, the Opera House was added in 1903 attached to the end of the Pavilion. It was designed by the celebrated theatre designer Frank Matcham (120 theatres and entertainment venues, including The Hackney Empire; The London Coliseum; the Gaiety Theatre, Douglas; The King's Theatre and the Blackpool Tower Circus and Ballroom) and is one of his finest smaller provincial theatres. West End successes, ballets, concerts and musical comedy were regular visitors to the Opera House and in 1925 the great Anna Pavlova performed the Dance of the Dying Swan.

The film era came to Buxton in 1927 when the theatre was turned into a cinema (1932 it was refitted to show 'talkies'). The demand for live theatre persisted and Lillian Bayliss, the manager of London's Old Vic, brought Festivals to Buxton in the summers of 1937 and 1939.

All the auditorium fixtures and many of the fittings remain from the Matcham design, including the unique 'Matcham' style ceiling vent part of a gasolier providing heat and light, a rare survival.

The interior plaster decoration, painting and gilding are the result of a major restoration in 1979. The theatre had closed in 1976 due to dwindling audiences for the cinema. In order to benefit from the prospect of a revived festival for opera, a much larger opera orchestra pit was created

below the stage. Previously a tiny orchestra was only fitted in with the removal of the front rows of seats. An engineering feat (cantilevered stage and deepened basement) but has removed any vestiges of former under stage 'lifts' and machinery. The auditorium remains a stunning jewel for this small Peak town.

Leander Architectural

I have known Ted and Sue McAvoy, the owners of Leander over 30 years initially (they have been operating over 40 years) through obtaining replicas or replacement castings in my local authority work. I also spent many months developing, with Ted, bespoke designs for Oxford, visiting the works to approve patterns and the initial castings.



All present on the visit can attest that Ted and Sue are very hands on and enthusiastic about the whole process of design, casting and installation. It was, however, always easy to distract Ted onto any engineering topic, particularly his hobby and collection of industrial railways, where his factory



Summer Programme Reports (Continued)

yard proves is a benefit over a back garden, though Sue is also so involved in the engineering that maybe there is also a collection at their home in Buxton.

Their product remains hand produced from the chaotic design studio alongside racks of newly painted products drying and awaiting packaging and all done by their local workforce; nothing electronic visible, though they do email artwork artwork. Leander took over the business of the Royal Label Factory in the late 1960s together with the production of all Oxford's street nameplates, cast signs and park signs. The origins of the Royal Label factory were in providing cast iron plant-labels for Queen Victoria's her rose garden at Sandringham. I was interested to see all these still in production (a large box of blanks below one of the tables), but now almost exclusively ordered by crematoriums as plot markers.

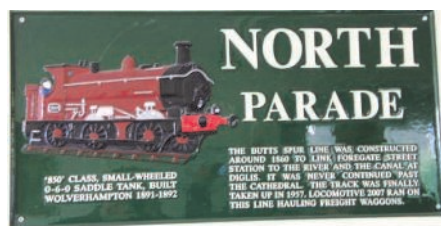


Leander's works is a collection of craft workshops where they produce hundreds of items a month in four small areas, a low timber workshop with at one end the design & pattern room (plus an office), adjacent to two corrugated sheds, one the casting workshop (plus a loft pattern store), the other the fettling/fabrication workshop, then the painting area (spray booth and painter's art room), which also shares the end of the pattern room. The highlight painting (lettering, coats of arms, etc.) is all done by skilled hand and eye, lithography only used (rubber patterns) for intricate artwork, such as coats-of-arms at the pattern making stage, otherwise they are timber with letters attached by hand and

graphics created with plasticine. These then have to be painstakingly painted, by hand at the finishing stage. With larger commissions (we saw a new bandstand for Llandudno in fabrication) the workforce will also undertake the installation and erection on site.

Our visit of 3 dozen members (twice their workforce) meant it needed to be on Friday afternoon after they had left, even so, there was little room to walk past the part fabricated bandstand, brush past the recently painted posts & plaques (between the spray booth and pattern tables!) and squeeze into the painters finishing room. The only open space was the casting workshop a 'Marie Celeste' of cooling castings, upturned ladles and solid pools of spilt aluminium, scrap castings and heaps of used black casting sand.

The works were littered (though they would say prudently set-aside) patterns awaiting repeat orders and a number of finished cast & painted duplicates awaiting replacements orders (the increased theft of cast plaques has noticeably increased repeat orders!). Historical plaques (including the blue Civic Society ones) provide fascinating snippets of the country's history and we were intent on spotting known sites, even ones local to us: Now do you know where this one is installed?



Leander's restoration work is not confined to buildings: the firm's craftsmen have been engaged in the restoration of a WWI locomotive that was used to ferry supplies to the trenches. This project is close to Ted's heart, because he is a great railway enthusiast, who named his firm after a famous class of steam locomotive and even has a narrow-gauge railway running around the perimeter of his factory.

The weather, not affecting our workshop tour, however, allowed only a damp, superficial look at Ted's private railway setup in the yard.

Ted & Sue were, typically, reluctant to accept any payment for this visit but were eventually persuaded to accept a cheque on

behalf of a charity of their nomination.



Mike Hayzelden

Droitwich Churches

Sunday 24th June

On a day that actually felt like a June day we settled into the cool, interiors of two of the churches in Droitwich, to hear Mike Wall's take on their traumatic history.

St. Andrews on the corner of the High Street was once cheek-by-jowl with the medieval Town Hall (long demolished). The church has an unusual configuration due to its confined site, with a C13th north tower beside the chancel. This is its best internal features with richly carved crocketed capitals with numerous carved heads within the carved foliage of these capitals. The rest of the church was rebuilt in the early C14th after the devastating town fire of 1290, though there are further interesting carved heads supporting the south chapel arch. Mike highlighted the many internal alterations, mostly C19th, buttressing and repairs to the internal walls of the tower, rebuilt north outer aisle wall, west window and removal of box pews and galleries.



Mike eulogised over the monuments, of course, particularly the grandest to Capt. Coningesbury Newbury, 1734 with many carved representations of naval trophies.

(Continued on page 11)

WINTER PROGRAMME

Pullout Page 1

As in previous years, all talks will be held in the Lecture Theatre at RGS Worcester and will start at 7.30p.m. Entry is via Perrins Hall. Car parking is normally available by Perrins Hall, entry is off Little London.

Please contact Christine Silvester on

01905 354679 if you have any queries.

As a new idea, the December meeting will be an extended opportunity for members to show their films, DVDs, slides, etc. which may include records of our summer visits. To make it a special occasion prior to the festive season, our pa-

tron, Henry Sandon will be our guest and mince pies and mulled wine will be served. To enable him to plan a successful evening and mitigate any technology issues, please let Roger Tapping have any material about four weeks beforehand—for example, the November meeting would be an ideal time.

MONTH/DATE	TITLE	SPEAKER	NOTES
SEPTEMBER 2012			
FRIDAY 14th	THE RAILWAY NAVVIES	COLIN BARGERY	A history with songs and pictures - the format is different from our usual talks and it should be a very interesting evening.
OCTOBER 2012			
FRIDAY 5th	THE PAST COMES TO LIFE - THE ORAL HISTORY OF THE DROIT-WICH CANAL	MALCOLM NIXON	An oral history project was executed as part of the restoration project, recently completed.
NOVEMBER 2012			
FRIDAY 9th	CROSSING THE SEVERN	HEATHER FLACK	A talk with pictures on the various fords and crossings of the river
DECEMBER 2012			
FRIDAY 7th	MEMBERS EVENING	An opportunity for members to show films, DVDs, slides, etc. records of our summer visits, with Henry Sandon, mince pies and mulled wine. Please let Roger Tapping have any material about four weeks beforehand (e.g. November meeting).	
JANUARY 2013			
FRIDAY 11th	CROOME COURT	PHIL DOUCE	A talk with pictures followed up by a visit on a Tuesday (TBA) when the house is normally closed to visitors.
FEBRUARY 2013			
FRIDAY 8th	BREDON HILL - A HILL OF HISTORY	DEBORAH OVERTON	Deborah is from the Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service and will present an illustrated talk.
MARCH 2013			
FRIDAY 8th	AGM AND REVIEW OF SUMMER PROGRAMME		
APRIL 2013			
FRIDAY 19th	HONOR RIDOUT	Honor spoke to us on the Stourbridge Fair on the Cambridge visit in 2011 . The talk will probably be on the subject of how	

WLHF PROGRAMME

Pullout Page 2

WIALHS is part of the Worcestershire Local History Forum (WLHF). Other member societies will welcome WIALHS members as guests, although a fee may be payable. Please visit the WLHF website (www.wlhf.org.uk) for more information and contact telephone numbers. Below is a selection of events in the Worcester area which may be of interest to our members.

Date	Month	Details
Three Counties Ancient History Society, Village Hall, Upton Snodsbury 7:30pm		
20	Sep	AGM followed by The Battle of Kadesh Ray Aspden
Droitwich History & Archaeology Society, Community Hall, Heritage Way, Droitwich: 7:30pm		
5	Sep	History of Kays Bernard Mills
3	Oct	Water over my Wellies Brian Draper
7	Nov	The History and Archaeology of Rabbit Warrens Deborah Overton
5	Dec	Old Mugs and Jugs Roy Murphy
5	Jan	The Fairground Calendar Graham Downie
6	Feb	The Nash Connection Anne Owen
6	Mar	Postal History Alan Godfrey
Friends of Malvern Museum, Christchurch Hall, Avenue Road, Malvern: 7:30pm		
29	Sep	Victorian Railway Stations Alan Atkinson
26	Oct	England's Secret Army Malcolm Atkin
30	Nov	Stained Glass Windows of AJ Davis Roy Albutt
25	Jan	Croome Park Eric Jones
22	Feb	Annual General Meeting
29	Mar	Malvern Memories and Marvels Ray Sturdy
Friends of Worcestershire Archives. The Hive, The Butts, Worcester: 7:30pm		
18	Sep	"Upstairs," Downstairs: High and Low Life - at The "Hive," The "Butts," Worcester Chris Upton
16	Oct	Canal Boatwomen: canal life 1830 to 1960 - at The "Hive," The "Butts," Worcester Michael Miles
20	Nov	Worcestershire Carriers - at The "Hive," The "Butts," Worcester Richard Churchley
19	Feb	Woven in Kidderminster - at The "Hive," The "Butts," Worcester Melvyn Thompson
19	Mar	Our Victorian Architectural Heritage Keith Cattell
Malvern Civic Society, Christ Church, Avenue Road, Malvern: 7:30pm		
14	Sep	The Arts and Crafts Movement in Chipping Campden Sarah McCormick-Healey
4	Oct	"Greyfriars," Worcester – afternoon talk Rachel Bannon
12	Oct	The Buildings of Bromyard Duncan James
1	Nov	Abberley Hall and Clock Tower Jo Roche
9	Nov	AGM and Worcester Library and History Centre-The work of WRO TBA
Malvern Family History Society, The 6th Form Centre Annexe, Chase School, Geraldine Road, Malvern WR14 3NZ: 7pm		
5	Sep	Field Names Ruth Richardson
3	Oct	Research on free websites: UKGDL and UKMFH Sharon Hartas
7	Nov	A Child under German Occupation Yvonne Stayt
5	Decand the band plays on Jan Stoney
Temple Valley Historical Society, Village Hall, Abberley: 7:30pm		
25	Sep	Francis Drake Max Keen
30	Oct	Strike a Light – The History of Matches Peter Bloore
27	Nov	Lost Mansions of the Black Country Ian Bott
11	Dec	Christmas Party
Worcestershire Local History Forum		
29	Sep	Day School – Wilden Church- £10/£15 with lunch - booking essential – 1527 542516 Anne Bradford

Worcester's Battlefields

On Saturday 6th October Tony Spicer of The Battlefield Trust is conducting an all day walk of the sites of the Battle of Powick Bridge (1651) and the Battle of Worcester (1651). The cost is £5 (accompanied children free) and is free to members of The Battlefield Trust and The Battle of Worcester Society.

One of the difficulties with walking the Worcester battlefield is that it covers a very large area and previous walks have tended to be confined to a particular aspect of the battle. This time however the intention is to give people an understanding of the battlefield as a whole and also to include the Battle of Powick Bridge (it being the 350th anniversary). The walk will be divided into three stages:

Stage 1. This will concentrate on the Battle of Powick Bridge (1642) and the western part of the Battle of Worcester (1651). Meet at Manor Farm Pub, Malvern Rd, Worcester WR2 4BS (near Lower Wick roundabout) from 10:30 AM where coffee

can be obtained prior to an 11 AM start. The walk will return to Manor Farm where lunch/bar snacks can be obtained.

Stage 2. This will start at 2 PM prompt at the Ketch Viewpoint which overlooks the Ketch roundabout at the junction of the A 38 and A 4440, grid ref: – S0853516. The entrance to the viewpoint is about 100 yards to the south of the roundabout on the A 38 to Tewkesbury; turn right where it is signed "Viewpoint". This is the centre of the 1651 battlefield and we will walk to the area near the confluence of the Teme and Severn, where Cromwell built his bridge of boats, before returning to the Ketch Viewpoint.

Stage 3. This will start at St Peter's Baptist Church, Eden Close, St Peter's Drive, Worcester WR5 3TZ and will follow on from stage 2. We will aim to arrive at St Peters at around 3:30 PM. After a refreshment break, the final part of the walk takes in the eastern part of the 1651 battlefield - Battenhall, Redhill and Perry Wood with

an estimated finishing time of 5.30 to 6pm.

The walks are partly on footpaths which can be muddy/overgrown in places so suitable clothing and footwear is advised. Parking is available at each of the three stages (at Manor Farm those leaving their cars there during the walk are asked to park at the far end) and it is envisaged that people will make their own way by car between them. Owing to the nature of the battlefield this is a longer walk than usual and it is realised that some people may not be able to do all three stages, in which case simply let me know when you are joining/leaving. We are unable however to give part refunds.

Although not essential, it would be appreciated if those coming could let Tony Spicer know in advance (Tele 01684 572925 or email a.spicer@btinternet.com) and provide contact details (email if possible) in case of any late alterations.

Mainline Steam at Shrub Hill

For the benefit of people like me who like to see preserved steam locomotives on the mainline, the following are expected to visit Worcester over the next few months:

Thursday 23rd August, 6201 "Princess Elizabeth" arrives at Shrub Hill from Victoria at about 13:45 leaving again at 16:45.

Saturday 6th October, 70013 "Oliver Cromwell" braves the Faithful City arriving from Euston about 13:00.

There are then two trips organised by

Vintage Trains from Tyseley:

On 20th October, GWR Castle Class "Earl of Mount Edgcumbe" will operate from Birmingham to Worcester (SH) then via Cheltenham, Stroud, Swindon and Didcot to Oxford, then return to Worcester via Evesham.

On 3rd November a double headed train hauled by ex-GWR Pannier tank engines 9600 and L94 (which operated the last steam train on the Metropolitan Line in 1971!) will operate from Tyseley to Stratford, then back to Worcester (SH) via Stourbridge, then returning to Tyseley via



Bromsgrove and the Lickey incline. I might do that one myself! *John Beale*

M.V. Balmoral & Paddle Steamer "Waverley"



M.V. Balmoral is operating in the Bristol Channel until 28 August then P.S. Waverley from 29th August to 9th September. The schedule includes several trips from Clevedon and Penarth to Ilfracombe but there are also shorter trips to/from Bristol on 26/27 August, also trips to Lundy and Minehead. Let me know if you want more details. *John Beale*



POSTBAG

Page 4

2 April 2012

Dear Mrs Silvester

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of 27 March enclosing a cheque for £250 for Emboreet School in Tanzania. It is an extremely generous gesture and I am told it will cover the cost of all the mattresses that the boarders are in such desperate need of. It will make a big difference to the children and we are very grateful to you all.

One of our teachers, Mrs Sheila Mather, is taking a group of students out to Emboreet in July and she has asked me to tell you that she will let you have some photographs of that trip on her return. In the meantime, I enclose a copy of some of the Emboreet pages from our website (unfortunately, I do not have a colour printer!) which gives you some information. If you would like to look at all of this on line, go to www.rgs.org.uk → Co-curricular → Tanzania Expedition or Charities.

With many thanks again,

Yours sincerely

Margaret Sturdy
Margaret Sturdy
Secretary to Deputy Heads
RGS Worcester

Hi, I have been given your email address as a possible source of help.

I am trying to obtain a plan or map of the old county gaol within the old castle.

I have tried the hive without success.

Can you please help?

David Clark

Reply through Sue McCurdy



David Attwood
Secretary
WIALHS
North Wing
Himbleton Manor
Himbleton
DROITWICH
WR9 7LE

11 May 2012

Dear David

Visit by MIHS - 4th to 7th May

I am writing to thank all the members of your society who helped us with our visit to the Worcester area last weekend, and especially Roger Tapping, Michael McCurdy and Malcolm Nixon for their hosting and guidance.

My members thought the weekend a great success and much of this is due to the great assistance we had from your society. If we can reciprocate in any way we would be very pleased to do so.

Could I ask you to please pass on our thanks to your committee.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Verity

Malcolm Verity
Secretary - MIHS

I am interested in finding out about the early history of the Keepax Ferry in Barbourne, aka Bailey's Boat, (which was run in the 19C by my 3GGF John Bailey, his son Frederick and his son-in-law John Cheston and his son Albert). I have traced back through the censuses and local newspapers but am particularly interested in the history before 1841 and the link to the Keepax family in the area.

I was wondering if you or any of your members could help in this or recommend other sources of information.

Many thanks, and best wishes,
Tessa Bailey

Reply through Sue McCurdy

Dear David

I hope you don't mind me contacting you. I'm the historian at Worcester City Football Club.

As you may know, we will be leaving our ground at St. George's Lane at the end of the forthcoming football season, having played there since 1905.

I will be producing a special publication in April 2013 to mark the occasion, but I wanted to put out a request for some assistance as our archive isn't that extensive.

Most of my knowledge is gained from contemporary newspaper reports.

Principally I'm looking for anyone who might have photographs, documents or memories in relation to watching football at St. George's Lane. Can the Society help at all - even just a quick request in a newsletter might generate some interest!

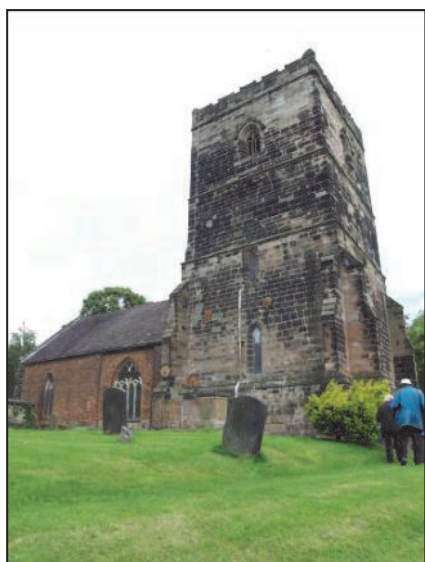
Many thanks, Julian Pugh

Reply through David Attwood

Summer Programme Reports (Continued)

(Continued from page 6)

The main impression is of an unsteady church, plagued by subsidence, much repaired, and with its tower shorn of its upper stages removed in 1926 through fear of further subsidence, due to local brine pumping in C19th.



The next church, St. Augustine's is on Dodderhill overlooking the town from the north. Helen Peberdy led us on the shortest path between the two, across Vines Lane, a barrow crossing over the main Birmingham railway lines and straight up the hill! This only come into Droitwich Parish in 1987 formerly having its own very extensive rural parish extending to Bromsgrove including all of present Wychbold.

Another much changed church, not only the ever present problem of subsidence but principally the Civil War. Occupied by Roundheads, it was stormed and burnt down by Royalists. Only the chancel and north transept remained and it was not till C18th that significant rebuilding took place, with a new tower where the south transept once stood and repairs to remaining areas.

The visit concluded with some taking the strenuous climb to the tower roof (others had tea & cake!), providing clear commanding views from the Malverns to the Lickeys, plus below us in Vines park the additional attraction for the afternoon, the Droitwich Summer Festival; music, booths and boats on the canal.

Mike Hayzelden

Perrycroft

Sunday 1st July

"What a very nice man!" was the main reaction during the day and Mark Archer was, undeniably, a genial and knowledgeable host, conducting us into the furthest reaches of his outstanding Arts & Crafts property. The Brunswick Green joinery of this idyllic Voysey 'cottage', however, has become the new shade of 'envy' with its glorious setting and views of British Camp.

Mark and his wife Gillian (unfortunately we did not meet her) bought this property in 1999 after the Boys Brigade had left. Voysey, the architect, designed most of the internal fittings and surprisingly much of this remained intact, though the Brigade had installed several extra bathrooms and a full catering kitchen. Their removal has been seamlessly erased and domestic facilities re-instated, often with period or reproduction fittings, throughout the areas we saw. Mark is committed to the re-instatement of the Voysey ethos, sourcing



period replacement furniture and fittings and commissioning reproductions or new features in an harmonious style, retaining light and airy interiors.

He has also replaced the black & white decoration by the Boys Brigade back to the matt Brunswick Green that was (after paint sampling and using specialist lead-based linseed oil paints) the original finish. Chosen by Voysey to harmonise with the Malvern Hills (and also the colour of pre-war GWR Castle engines used regularly on the London – Malvern line).

Externally the house has been 'gently' reinstated, without removing original features or fittings (even the vine-eyes – built into the rendered walls – are now supporting ever growing vines – *vitis coignetiae*, at a guess, but I stand to be corrected) with deft insertions such as his wife's studio.

The gardens, under his wife's direction, are being reinstated (the Boys Brigade maintenance was to graze sheep) and extensively replanted, taking advantage of the south facing slopes. An idyllic spot during our sunny Sunday afternoon to contemplate the care this couple have taken in resurrecting this Arts & Crafts vision. The garden is open twice a year for the NGS, though we saw it pretty much as its Spring best, the 2 weeks after its first opening (next 30th Sept).

Mike Hayzelden



Summer Programme Reports (Continued)

Boughton Estate

Tuesday 24th July

Beatrice and I booked for the coach trip on July 24th, our Silver Wedding anniversary was only 10 days earlier! The actual trip in fact was neither Local History nor Industrial Archaeology, so must have been a rarity. Not cheap our organiser warned us. Roger Tapping need not have worried; it turned out, for us anyway, to be first class. Our destination was Boughton Estate with the emphasis on the house itself.

We arrived amid brilliant sunshine, another rarity this summer. Travelling via the notorious A14 to Kettering, the estate was only a mile or two from the big town. Once there we were invited in for coffee and soon were being escorted by a pair of very knowledgeable and pleasant guides. The one we had was an elderly gentleman who knew the house quite intimately during and after the War. He gave us a survey in every room, omitting needless repetition but using his sense of humour and local dialect.

The House is vast; its 17 and 18 century centre seems to consist of a long loggia-based front with two projecting wings. The mansard roofs are a French influence, much as the furnishings within. Thereafter several side blocks were added by members of the Montagu family and by the 18th century, the Dukes of Buccleugh. As the latter already possessed several Scottish castles, Boughton was virtually abandoned for about 150 years and brought to life again by the late 19th century 7th Duke.

Room after room was visited, most with huge ceilings painted with swathes of sheets blowing in a heavenly or mythological wind incorporating nude or nearlyso ladies, cherubs and red-faced villains, all tumbling to who-knows-where. One had a trompe l'oeil effect - an attractive unclad lady reclines on a couch, but viewed nearer to the exit door, she appears to be rising up on her elbow! If you don't believe this, go and see for yourself! The walls contained tapestries of immense size, some French, some Mortlake, all very fine. The amount of these was staggering - I forget the figure but perhaps 80-100 would fit! The furniture matched the walls and ceiling for craftsmanship and rarity. Here the French

cabinet makers such as Boulle and Langlois were frequently mentioned.

The floors were mostly highly polished and newly repaired, and almost every room boasted a carpet from Europe or the East. One such was the earliest known by an English factory. Other rooms worth mentioning were the Great Hall, the Audit Room [where rents were paid] and a section at the end of one block which was



never completed and stands almost ready for completion to this day. The paintings, about 1,000 we were told, were a wonderful tutorial for the prospective art student; Van Dyke, Gainsborough, Kneller, Lely and Murillo are just a few.

By this time we were ready for lunch, a picnic within their cafe. A quick look at their stables museum of ancient agricultural and domestic equipment as well as their early 19 century coach and we embarked on our second rendezvous to explore some estate villages or so we were promised. This proved to be almost the climax for me. The actual gardens and immediate surroundings of the House had in times past gobbled up several villages so that hardly a trace of them now exists. What are left are surely some of the most beautiful places anywhere in England.

The first was Grafton Underwood, the site of a Wartime airfield for the US to fly their B17 Flying Fortresses to bomb Germany. The loss of life by our allies was huge and a poignant reminder of this was pointed out - the 384th Bombardment Group, 1943-1945 carved marble monument with poppy wreaths is immaculately preserved by the villagers. The village itself with plenty of thatch and local stone: the church here, up a long grassy drive was not explored as no

Boughton gentry were interred there.

Further on, we passed through Geddington with its Eleanor's Cross and narrow streets to Warkton. The church here lies within a square, the bulk of the village surrounding it. Within, our new guide told us, the chancel had been rebuilt to contain huge sculptural monuments to the Montagus. Two were by Louis François Roubiliac - they are like miniature stage sets and are recognised as masterpieces. See Bishop Hough's in the Cathedral of you want a taste! Another was by P M Van Gelder and Robert Adam. Our Worcestershire answer to these is to go to Croome!

Lastly, via sets of double avenues to protect the Montagus' on their travels to London [it never worked, the Duke of Bedford further down the road had other ideas!] we arrived at Weekley where earlier Montagus are buried; these are on a more normal basis, not unlike Spetchley.

We said goodbye to our afternoon host, a most kindly lady, and consuming much needed tea and

cakes, we set out for home. The villages and countryside hereabouts have a timeless quality, reminiscent of pre-1914 or the music of Vaughan Williams. Northants remains a most under-rated county, always a pleasure to explore. An extraordinarily good day and our thanks to Roger Tapping for fixing the weather as well.

Mike Wall



Remember these? One of Bennett's Farms milk floats can be seen in the Wythall transport



The main entrance remains the same and what a wonderful welcome to be greeted by that curved fireplace which signified that this building was something special. I'm sure it had a similar effect on all who entered it and why it was always treated with respect.

Gone were the dorms lined with bunk beds and the bedrooms now reflect the original style.

The basement had four table tennis tables and other table top games were played there as well.

The grounds show the most significant change. Gone are the robust sports and adventure equipment which covered most of the outdoor area. The restoration of the garden must have been a Herculean task. It was a wonderful moment to sit on a beautifully designed garden bench and take in the scenery and restored flower beds.

I last visited twenty five years ago as an officer of the Boys Brigade* for the younger boys ages 6 -11. For those of you who are not acquainted with the organisation it is a uniformed Christian organisation for boys from the age of five years and pre dates the scouting movement. It is still thriving today and one of its distinguishing attributes is the marching band. Perrycroft was given to the Birmingham Battalion for use as an outdoor centre. Walking in the Malverns, country and survival skills were always popular. It became increasingly costly to run and was

sold. The Brigade then bought into weekends at outdoor centres. Michael McCurdy is an 'old boy'

There was no need of the bell (now missing) as the bugle was the rallying call.

The house was then painted white with black window frames. My outstanding memories of the building were the hinges – black on white doors. It was with relief I spotted them in the library now along with the paintwork restored to their natural state.

The motto of the boys brigade is 'Steadfast and Sure' and Perrycroft is just that nestled in a fold of the Malvern Hills.

Eileen Porteous

**The Boys' Brigade was founded in Glasgow on 4th October 1883 by Sir William Alexander Smith. From this one Company formed in Scotland the BB has grown in to a world wide movement having worked with millions of children and young people for well over a century.*



Crawshay Bailey's Engine

Ian Hayes

Crawshay Bailey was an ironmaster who, in about 1822 constructed a tramroad from Nant y Glo ironworks along the hillside to the head of an inclined plane which took the rails down to a wharf on the Brecon and Abergavenny canal at Govilon. To work the supposedly level top section he obtained a locomotive, and it is this machine that gave rise to the Welsh Rugby song which has survived for many years, and appears to be still developing. There are one, possibly two, links with the Midlands.

Thomas Cartwright, of Northfield, was engaged by the Worcester and Birmingham Canal as an engineer. When money ran out at Hopwood in 1797 he had to look for another position and re-appears as an engineer on the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal, being responsible for the section between Llanfoist and Govilon. This was opened in 1802. He also drafted out the first route of the Hay Railway from Brecon, but this was not constructed for another twenty years. He returned to Hopwood and drove the W & B through to Tardebigge in 1807.

There is an unsubstantiated account which states that at least one of Bailey's engines was built in Birmingham, but I have not yet found written evidence for this.

Crawshay Bailey ran his tramroad until 1859. For the purposes of the song his name was corrupted to Crosher or even Cosher, and this has been a matter of concern for purists in the area. The background has been researched by the Tramroads (now early railways) Group of the Railway and Canal Historical Society, but some of the evidence can be a little conflicting.

The Song

Normally it commences with an introductory verse which, when I first came across

it, was quite appropriate:

"Have you ever been to Wales
Where they brew the finest ales?
You can have a drink on Sunday
You just have to wait til Monday"

Chorus:

*Was you ever see, was you ever see, was
you ever see or hear
Such a funny thing before.*

The earliest verse concerning the loco is something like this:

"Crosher Bailey's famous engine
was a puffin and a blowen
Oh and by its mighty power
It could do four miles an hour"
Was you

However things went wrong:

"Crosher Bailey had an engine
But because it would not go
He tied it up with rope
And pulled it up to Nant y Glo"
Was you etc.

And some more:

"Crosher Bailey had an engine
Which was puffing and a blowing
When it stopped it would not start
When it started it would not stop"
Was you etc.

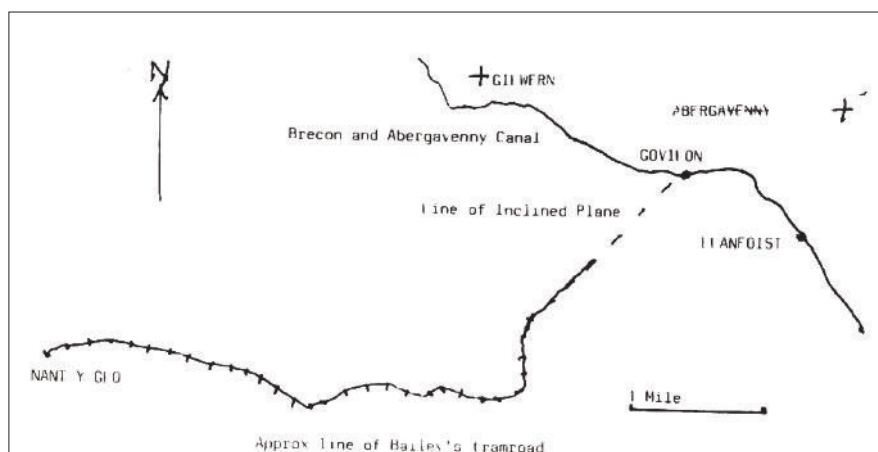
The remains of an old locomotive of that era were discovered in Crickhowell in about 1907, but these have since gone. The song, of which I can remember about a dozen verses from my University days, continues to develop:

"Bailey had a brother Tom
Who built an early atom bomb
But he dropped it on the floor
And has not been seen no more."

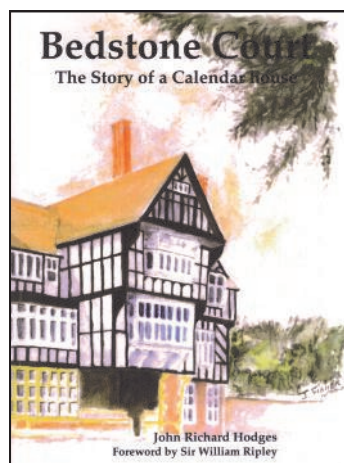
References:

- Canals of the Welsh Valleys, D & J Gladwin. Oakwood Press 1974
- RCHS Tramroad Group Research Papers Nos 1, 9, 101, 107.
- And of course my Welsh colleagues at University 60 years ago.

Ian Hayes, April 2012



Map showing the approximate line of Bailey's tramroad



Bedstone Court book reprinted

I have just had my original book reprinted on Bedstone Court in Shropshire- an example of a 'Victorian Calendar House'. I have attached the cover for your interest [.....] If you would like a copy please get in touch.

My website which shows my other books is:

<http://www.johnrichard.fast-page.org/>.

Hope you find it of interest - thanks

John Richard Hodges
7 Amber Reach
Spring Lane
Worcester WR51AU
Tel: 07970770144

Newland East Signal Box

David Guy, Malvern Civic Society

My friend, David Guy, has recently undertaken an informal survey of Newland East signal box for the Friends of Malvern's Railway (see below) and has kindly given permission to reproduce much of it here. He is not an expert on signalling and though he has checked current details with Network Rail staff, he is happy to receive corrections or more details of a historical or technical nature. John Beale

Introduction

Newland East Signal Box is located where the railway crosses Stocks Lane, which connects Newland and Leigh Sinton. The signal box is in the Western corner of that intersection, i.e. on the Leigh Sinton side of the railway, the Up side, and - in railway terms - on the Malvern side of the road. The box contains a manual lever frame, has 3 signals (distant, home and section signals) in each direction and controls two full-width, skirted barriers across Stocks Lane. Pointwork is now confined to a rarely-used trailing cross-over outside the box. A refuge siding on the Down side of the railway was removed some years ago. The box formerly controlled access to and from the East end of an extensive yard on the Up side of the running line, which was latterly a permanent way depot until it was lifted some years before the Down Refuge Siding was removed. The adjacent signal boxes to Newland East are Malvern Wells and Henwick.

Newland East Box is a GW Type 7A box built as a replacement of an earlier box in about April 1900. It was originally known as Stocks Lane, and from 1929 to 1943 as Newland. The box is therefore not original to the line, which opened in 1860.

The box retains its cast 'Newland East Signal Box' nameplate, in brown on a white background, supplemented by a small black modern plate which displays the two-letter designation for the box, 'NE', in white letters.

A number of planned re-signalling schemes have priority over that of the Malvern Line and it seems that Newland East will survive as a working signal box for some years to come.

Construction

Newland East box is a standard Great

Western Railway rectangular box of red brick and slate construction, apparently of 'Type 7A'. The box is relatively small, having two full-size and one small window along its front elevation. It appears to be very similar to the long-gone Malvern and Tewkesbury Junction Signal Box which backed onto the common not far from Thirlstone Road, Malvern, and opposite the former coal yard which is now a building supplies facility. Newland East has an external staircase on the Malvern side of the box, away from the crossing, like Henwick but unlike Malvern Wells and many other GWR boxes which have internal staircases. A lavatory provided for the signaller's use is located outside the brick part of the box



on the wooden balcony at the top of the stairs within an outer door. The balcony is not visible from Stocks Lane, although it is visible at a distance from Lower Howsell Rd bridge.

Notes on the condition of the box

Brick base:

The brick base of the box, which extends up to the windows of the operating (1st) floor, is generally in good condition, but there are two significant areas of cracking in the brickwork, one above each of the windows of the ground-floor 'Locking Room'. This may be typical of boxes of this design. The cracks have apparently not been treated.

This design of box has slots in the brickwork at ground level to enable signal wires and point rodding to exit the structure. These slots have been partly filled in with newer, non-structural brick where they are no longer serving their intended purpose. This lends a haphazard appearance to the ground-level front aspect of the box, but this is not a major feature.

Windows:

The windows of the operating floor extend from the doorway on the South-East side of the box, right round the front elevation and the crossing side of the box, ending with a small window in the rear elevation. This ensures good views of the railway and crossing from the box.

The traditional, possibly original, wood-framed single-glazed beaded sliding windows were replaced by modern double-glazed sliding U-PVC units in around 1998 when Railtrack Great Western replaced the windows of several local boxes. The new windows undoubtedly provide a more uninterrupted view of the railway and road-

way for the signaller, and probably cut down the draughts, but they totally lack the ambience of the former design and were the subject of correspondence between myself, the Cotswold Line Promotion Group and Railtrack at the time.

The new windows remain in good condition, but the brown-painted wooden outer frames need repainting.

Staircase and lavatory:

As far as can be seen from the road, the staircase, and landing are in good condition. The wooden structure housing the lavatory is not visible from Stocks Lane as noted above. All external surfaces visible from the road are brown (having been painted or treated).

Roof:

The slate roof is generally in good condition and appears uniform except where a few slates have been replaced on the front elevation.

All photographs were taken by David Guy on 11 March 2012 from publically-accessible areas on and adjacent to Stocks Lane.

Further References:

<http://www.greatwestern.org.uk/sig12.htm>





The inside of "The Worm" at Great Malvern Station.

Photograph © Copyright Bob Embleton
<http://www.geograph.org.uk/profile/125>

Network Rail was persuaded to allow the Pedestrian Archway at Great Malvern Station, known locally as the 'Worm', to be opened up to the public week for Civic Week 2-9 June 2012. The passageway connects the down platform 2 to the Imperial Hotel, now Malvern St. James School.

Over 1000 members of the public entered

the 'Worm' during the week (including many of our own members - Ed.). A report on the opening was requested by Network Rail and as a result they are now looking to carry out improvements to the structure.

The Malvern Civic Society (MCS) has been trying to get the rail authorities to carry out improvements since 2005. As a result of public interest MCS decided to set up a sub-group to monitor the 'Worm' and keep an eye on all railway structures

from Newland East Signal Box north of Malvern to Colwall Station in the South.

The Friends of Malvern's Railway had its first meeting on 28 November 2011 attended by 11 members. The geographic area (see above) and aims of the group were set at this meeting and members were initially allocated tasks to carry out

audits of the structures and make a photographic record. The aims are to:

1. Set up an inventory by making an initial Inspection to assess the state of the stations, bridges and signal boxes and any accessories.
2. Campaign for improvements to bring any identified elements up to an acceptable level to improve the surrounding environment.
3. Create and maintain links with
 - Cotswold Line Promotion Group (CLPG)
 - Rail for Herefordshire
 - Branch Line Society
 - Worcester Locomotive Society
 - Generate funding where required

If anyone has any historic plans or photographs covering the area described above or if they would like to join the group please contact Peter Clement on 01684 891815.

Stott Park Bobbin Mill

SueMcCurdy

Those of us who visited Leander Architectural Castings on the Buxton trip in June may recall seeing the plaque in the photograph. The original is sited by a stream, which flows down to Stott Park Bobbin Mill, near Finsthwaite, Cumbria.

Prior to the boundary changes in 1974 the area was part of Lancashire and produced millions of bobbins for the cotton weaving industry. There were 65 bobbin mills in the area now known as South Lakeland, of which Stott Park was the last to close in 1971.

At its height in the very early 1900s the town of Oldham had more than 20million spindles, each of which required several bobbins, which frequently needed to be replaced. This equalled the whole spinning capacity of the USA and was two fifths of the UK total.

As the industry began to decline in the latter part of the nineteenth century, almost as quickly as it had blossomed, many of the mills closed. Stott Park remained viable due to diversification. They produced a number of different kinds of bobbin and exported them all over the world.



far this year when it has been in steam.

This memorial can be found a short distance from the mill at High Dam Car Park. The wording around the plaque reads, "This is the water that turns the wheel, that spins the lathe, that shapes the wood, to make the bobbin, to wind the thread, that wove the wealth of Lancashire. These are the trees, that cut by man, will sprout again, feed Stott Mill, to make the bobbins, to earn the pay, that fed the folk of Finsthwaite."

Sue McCurdy

I am sure many of us remember doing French Knitting on discarded cotton reels with four small nails hammered into the top, impossible with modern plastic cotton reels. It is very likely that bobbins for the carpet industry in Kidderminster were made at Stott Park. Tool handles, croquet mallets and duffle coat toggles were among the other products being produced by the time the mill closed.

The mill became a working museum in 1983 and is now in the care of English Heritage. We were lucky enough to visit the mill on one of only three occasions so

