

Spring Newsletter

Thanks Roger, over (not out!)



The recent AGM marked the end of Roger Tapping's amazing ten years as President. Roger has been first class (as we all knew he would) and at the forefront of many of our activities during his time in office. A lot of this work goes on quietly behind the scenes, a good example of which is his contribution to the success of the recent AIA regional conference, which we hosted earlier this month. Roger is an excellent organiser, project manager, and ambassador for the society. He has certainly made the Chairman's job much easier on many occasions. We will sorely miss Roger's enthusiasm and common sense on the Committee, but we really do hope we can continue calling on his skills and abilities from time to time. Thank you, Roger, on behalf of us all.

I am delighted that Christine Silvester has been elected to be our new President. Christine has been at the forefront of the society's activities for many years and deserves this recognition. I have no doubt she will continue to be a great ambassador for the Society and I look forward to working with her in the years ahead.



I am sure you will also welcome the news that Max Sinclair has graciously accepted our invitation to become a patron of the Society. It is a fitting way for the Society to recognise and honour his achievements in preserving industrial heritage within the county and nationally.

It has been a great privilege for me to be your Chairman this year, during which so much has happened of significance to the society – and the credit for which must go mainly to your committee, who do so much to keep the society running smoothly, and to my predecessor, Michael McCurdy, who set many wheels in motion, the results of which are now bearing fruit.

An example of this is publishing. This year we have published the second in our series of Occasional Papers, which is David Attwood's study of the development of Bromyard Road. Mike Hayzelden is also leading work to publish a revised edition of Barbara Middlemass's book on "John Corbett, a Pillar of Salt", which was very popular but has been out of print some time. The new edition will feature new updated content and an improved layout taking advantage of modern printing techniques.

The second of the Occasional Papers has been published and provided free members (more of this later). The series was supported and valued by the members at the AGM, but Malcolm now wishes to hand the editorial baton to someone new. Thank you, Malcolm, for your attention to detail and determination to get the project off the ground. We will take the opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned so far, the format, editorial policy, frequency and cost before continuing with any further issues.

For their excellent organisation of the Summer and Winter Programmes I would like to thank Mike Hayzelden and Christine Silvester. David Sharman and Sue McCurdy deserve special mention for the work they do behind the scenes handling the money, the membership lists, keeping accounts and organising mailings and emails. The amount of administration this requires is significant and we are fortunate that we have two such conscientious members on the committee, and I thank them and all the other committee members for their hard work and dedication through the year.

John Beale, Chairman.

Summer Programme 2014 Summary

Mike Hayzelden

Full details and booking forms were sent to members in April. These documents can also be downloaded from the website www.wialhs.org.uk.

Friday 2 May	Evening	WIA&LHS Spring Dinner
Sunday 11 May	Afternoon	Upton Warren, Elmbridge & Rushock churches
Wednesday 28 May	Evening	Drakelow Tunnels
Wednesday 4 June	Full Day	Coach to Abbey Mills, Leicester & GCR to Loughborough
Sunday 22 June	Afternoon	Malcolm Nixon's walk around Worcester's Porcelain Past (1)
Thursday 10 July	Full Day	Coach to JCB, then Sudbury Hall NT (+museum of childhood)
Sunday 27 July	Afternoon	Malcolm Nixon's walk around Worcester's Porcelain Past (2)
Friday 1 August	Full Day	By Train or car to Gloucester
Thursday 7 August	Full Day	Coach to Burton-on-Trent, brewery museum & Claymills
Friday 22 August	Afternoon	Berkeley Almshouses, Worcester

Conferences and Day Schools 2014

John Beale

The AIA Annual Conference will be held in Chester from 5th to 11th September 2014. The newsletter has more information and a booking form for any members who may be interested.

The Worcestershire Local History Forum Day School will be held on Saturday, 11th October 2014 and will be organised by the Evesham Societies. The organiser is Stan Brotherton. Time: 9:30 to 4pm, Venue: All Saints Church, Evesham (we will have use of the kitchen, facilities and downstairs meeting room in Church House). Title: "**Bells and belfries, chimes and time, in Worcestershire**". <http://www.wlhf.org.uk/>

Winter Programme 2015

Christine Silvester

*All meetings (except where stated) are held on Friday evenings in the lecture theatre RGS Worcester and will start at 7.30p.m.
All queries please phone Christine Silvester 01905 354679*

12 SEPT 2014 JOHN MASON - LONDON UNDERGROUND

This is true Industrial Archaeology part 2 of last April's talk.

3 OCT 2014 - ROBERT HEMMING - THE SHAZAM SHOW!

The Story of the Regal Cinema, Evesham and how a Local Cinema affected the social life of a small town.

14 NOV 2014 - DENNIS WILLIAMS - PERSHORE AIRFIELD

The great importance of this small local airfield to British Aviation.

12 DEC 2014 - PETER WHEATLEY - THE LAST DAYS OF METAL BOX COMPANY

With mulled wine and mince pies

WEDNESDAY 17 DEC 2014—EVENING VISIT TO HARVINGTON HALL (BOOK WITH MIKE HAYZELDEN)

Harvington Hall tour by candlelight, mulled wine & mince pies. Forms were sent with Summer Programme

9 JAN 2015 - ANNA FRANKEL - GEORGE'S YARD.

The story of the yard with 10 houses where Greyfriars Garden is today.

13 FEB 2015 - PAMELA HURLE - MALVERN WOMEN OF NOTE.

The cultural, social and economic achievements of some very interesting Malvern Women.

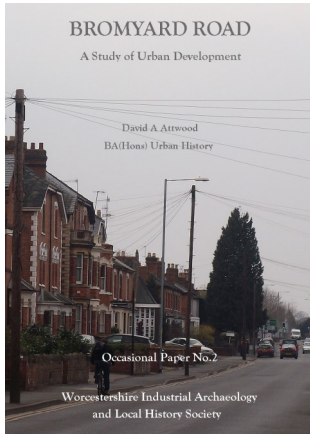
13 MAR 2015 - WENDY COOK - SURVEY OF THE WORCESTER PORCELAIN SITE.

Wendy is the ex-curator of the Museum of Royal Worcester.

17 APR 2015 - COL. STAMFORD CARTWRIGHT – WORCESTERSHIRE YEOMANRY WW1.

This will be the first of our WWI TALKS. Stamford is the curator of the yeomanry archive and has a wealth of fascinating stories.

Second Occasional Paper



Written by our Secretary, David Attwood, the subject is the history and development of a piece of land known as Blake-field situated in Bromyard Road, St John's in Worcester, from the 15th century to the end of the 19th. It charts the ownership from the Prior, and Dean and Chapter, of Worcester Cathedral until the land was enfranchised in 1860, its sale, various tenants, and the subsequent development of

housing in the last quarter of the 19th century.

This part of Worcester's development and history uses documents from the Cathedral Library and Worcestershire Archives, examining the builders, solicitors, and owners, supplemented with illustrations from the Worcester City Planning Applications which have been digitally photographed and made available for research.

WIALHS members received a monochrome copy free of charge, with option to upgrade to a version with all-colour illustrations for £5. The latter will be sold outside the society for £10 per copy.

Membership Matters

Overall membership remains fairly consistent. We would welcome some younger members.

It is with great sadness that we learned of the deaths of Faith Hughes, Kathleen Whitehouse and Ann Shirvington.

At the AGM we had 191 members including 6 members who had not yet renewed their subscription. Approximately 2/3 now pay by standing order which is a great help.

Of the 144 addresses on file 92 receive everything by post, 41 receive everything by email and 11 receive the newsletter only by

post. Occasional papers are sent as hard copy to all members. I would like to thank those members who have offered to deliver items for us, saving large amounts in postage.

There have been no changes to subscription rates which are £10 per year for an individual, or £18 for two people at the same address. Guest day membership remains at £1 for Winter Lectures but is now £2 for Summer Programme events.

Sue McCurdy, John Beale

Max Sinclair - Freeman of Droitwich

Adapted from the report in the Droitwich Advertiser, 5th November 2013:

Max Sinclair (*now a patron of WIALHS*), whose 50-year campaign helped re-open Droitwich Spa's canal network, was made an honorary freeman of the town. He was officially given the honour at a special meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council on 4th November 2013. The high accolade marks the major role he played in the restoration of Droitwich canals.

Max, who founded Droitwich Canals Trust, first began campaigning in 1959. Together with partner organisations, his work mobilised thousands of volunteers and raised millions of pounds worth of funding to restore the waterway, culminating in the reopening of the full navigation in 2011.

The Droitwich Canals formed part of a navigable 27-mile ring passing through Worcester and Droitwich and were used throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century to facilitate the salt trade, before becoming abandoned in the 1930s.

Mr Sinclair was given the Honorary Freedom of Droitwich Spa at a service at Droitwich Community Hall in Heritage Way. The proposal was first made by the former mayor, Councillor Anne Taft, and had the full backing of all members of the town council. Councillor Taft said: "Max has been a real inspiration to all and for those of us who love

Droitwich he has been a man of vision, as well as having an overwhelming lifetime commitment to the scheme to restore the Droitwich Canals, which is why he is so special."

Max said: "I am very proud to get this honour. I like to think it has been deserved because of the hard work of all the volunteers that have helped over the years. The fact I'm being recognised in this way means the im-

portance of their work is also being recognised. It was a long and hard battle at times but it is now great to see the canals as they are today. They are a fantastic amenity for Droitwich and it is brilliant to see they are being supported by so many people."

WIALHS congratulates Max on this honour. (Ed.)



WIALHS Host 2014 Regional AIA Conference in Kidderminster

This Conference, hosted by our Society, was held at Baxter College in Kidderminster. Roger Tapping, our recent past President, is to be congratulated in organising such a successful occasion, attracting visitors from all over our part of the region and beyond.

Four excellent speakers were engaged covering diverse subjects. I did not take notes so there will only be brief descriptions, but I have included links if you wish further information.

The first, Melvyn Thompson was very local, being the historian of Kidderminster Carpet Museum, the author of *Woven in Kidderminster* among other books. Melvyn gave us an overview of the growth of carpet weaving and its importance to the town. (1)

Our second speaker, Chris Taft, Head of Collections at the British Postal Museum & Archive gave an exemplary talk entitled 'The Post Office in the First World War', explaining how every effort was made so that the troops could receive their letters and parcels as quickly as possible, 12 million per week! Staff were transferred from the GPO to help and setup the great enterprise, which at the time, built the largest wooden building in the world to house and sort all the letters and parcels on the way to the troops, which arrived at the Front within two days. (2)

After Lunch David Postle took the stage and delivered his talk 'The Kidderminster Railway Museum'. Explaining how several collectors of railway ephemera, their collections be-



David Postle

coming too large to house, came together to found the Museum in 1990, and the trials and tribulations of setting it up to become the successful Museum we see today. (3)

Lastly Dr Ian West tackled 'The Introduction of Technology to the Country House', covering various subjects as Lighting, Heating, Cooking, Sanitation, Laundry etc. among others, and explain how county houses were adapted and improved to take advantage of the new technologies as they emerged. (4)

Between breaks and over lunch there were a large selection of books and society stands to browse over, to chat and exchange information behind the stage. Due to a problem later imposed and out of the control of the organisers, the way to



Sales Stands

Lunch was via up and down stairs instead of a level walk, but was taken in good heart by the attendees to the Conference who queued to enjoy the meal provided.

Tea and biscuits were served by Society Members after the afternoon session of talks before people dispersed to attend the visits that had been arranged to the Museum of Carpet, the Railway Museum and to Drakelow Tunnels, constructed during World War 2 as a shadow factory.

All in all a very interesting, successful and enjoyable day, with not too many talks that give you brain overload and memory becomes a blur.

David Attwood



WIALHS Stand

Next year's conference is hosted by the IA section of the Devonshire Association in Tiverton on April 18th 2015. More later!

References:

<http://museumofcarpet.org/>

<http://postalheritage.wordpress.com/category/first-world-war/>

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

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/research/centre-for-historical-archaeology/research-1/country-house-technology>

Summer 2013/4 Programme Reports

These articles complete the series that was incomplete in the previous edition

HARTLEBURY MUSEUM STORES

David Nash & Garston Philips—May 2013

This is a new venture for the Museum Service, the opening of their storage facility in a local trading estate. It incorporates both the former Worcester Museum stores and the County Museum stores, though both organisations are working under one banner now. The stores and personnel are, however, still separate, which was made clear on our journey of discovery in this Aladdin's Cave.



Inside the Museum Stores in Hartlebury

Our guides were David Nash and Garston Philips of the Worcester Museum and our tour was primarily of the Worcester collection, about which they appeared to be the font of all knowledge. There were demarcation lines (visible only to them) as to which parts were County and which were City, nevertheless there is so much stuff there we could easily have spent another few hours just on the items belonging to Worcester City. From old street signs, old switchboards from the Guildhall to post war domestic furniture, kitchen and garden equipment, it was like an afternoon rummaging through a multitude of peoples attics and sheds, though there is a secure inner store room holding the bones, pots and sherds from the City's archaeological excavations.

Text and Photo: Mike Hayzelden

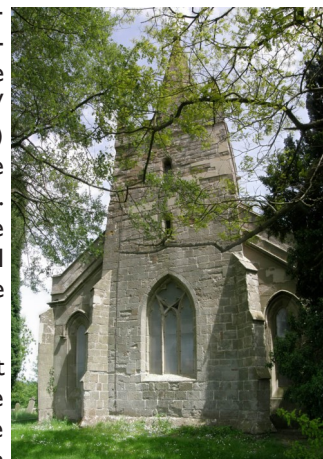
ELMLEY LOVETT AND HAMPTON LOVETT CHURCHES

Mike Wall—June 2013

This was our Mike Wall guided trip of the year to two interesting local churches, with plenty of monuments to delight Mike. Elmley Lovett is within sight, across a field, of our previous meeting at the Museum stores on Hartlebury Trading

Estate. The field is the archaeology interesting feature as it is the site of the former village, a DMV (deserted medieval village) and the reason for the existence of the church. This is probably why the church into disrepair until its restoration in the C19th.

The second church at Hampton Lovett is a little gem, close by the rail line to Kidderminster. Again there is little in the way of a village close by, however it has been under the patronage of the Packingtons of Westwood



Elmley Lovett Church



Hampton Lovett Church

House, for generations.

A splendidly generous tea was provided in the adjacent parish rooms by some of the ladies of the parish, with contributions going towards the church.

Text and Photos: Mike Hayzelden

ABBEY-CWM-HIR

June 2013

Wales usually provides us with damp weather, however, for the time we were here it remained dry, if changeable. Changeable was also, possibly our attitudes to the house and the efforts of the owner's Paul & Victoria Humberston. Parts were interesting, fascinating and sometimes almost unbelievable. The reception and refreshment room was certainly a tour-de-force of memorabilia of the mid-war years.

We were ushered around this Victorian Gothic Revival

Summer Programme Reports (contd.)



Abbey Cwm Hir

house in two groups with the host and a guide. The rooms, all 52 of them seem to have been so thoroughly decorated and adorned that the whole house feels like a stage set – even the Minton tiles in the entrance have been overpainted (in their original colours) to appear brand new! It is an eclectic mix of decorative styles not everyone's taste. The attic rooms were more restrained, but the walk-in pantry and scullery were a bizarre mix of the everyday – we presumed that this was their working pantry – and antique kitchen memorabilia. All the fittings and furniture are the collection of the owners, the house being bare when bought in 1997; even the impressive cast iron range in the kitchen, opposite the working Aga is a restoration piece.

The gardens are excellent and the siting of the house is very impressive, with its unusual Victorian church alongside. The name derives from the original abbey. This is sited lower down the slope, close to the river, but little remains but a few rubble walls in a damp field.

Text and Photo: Mike Hayzelden

MILDENHAM MILL

July 2013

This was to be the first of two visits this, however because of

a clash of dates and holiday by the owner, the second August visit has been postponed (*it was to be this summer but that has not proved possible, Ed.*). A continuation of this balmy summer



Mildenhall Mill

saw us enjoying a very warm sunny day for our picnic around the mill.

We are grateful to the owners, Rob and Valerie Baylis for allowing us to wander around their extensive and pleasant waterside garden, which is cut by the mill leats, bywash and bounds the river Salwarpe. Grateful, we are too, for the provision of kettles, urn, milk and some light refreshments, as well as to those of you who provided cakes and helped in serving them. The owners are local and some of our members recalled school days and work days.

The mill itself must be the biggest garden shed in the county; spread over three floors and being listed, there is little alternative use than as a store, as it has to be maintained, sound and watertight. Enough room was available to view all the working apparatus, though no longer in operation – the mill wheels now need more renovation – since Max Sinclair's restoration in the 1960's. The mill had lain unused since 1947, but Max plus colleagues from Bill Gwilliam's industrial archaeology classes restored it to working order and thus it became the last working water-powered flour mill in Worcestershire.

Winter Programme 2013-4 Reports

FILMING HOP PICKING AT BISHOPS FROME

Mike Jackson - 13 September 2013

Mike Jackson is a friend of our Patron, Henry Sandon and was a Producer of the 'Antiques Roadshow'.

The film was made over a period and clarifies how the hops are picked and processed and exactly how the hop picking machine works. To describe it as a machine hardly does it justice as it seems to fill a few barns.

The hops are picked in whole bines at least 12ft long and taken by tractor to the farm where the machine is ready for them. Each bine is hooked to a conveyor that takes it to the top of the building, it is then stripped of leaves and hop cones, which are separated. The hop cones are then dried to enable them to be stored. The old method of drying was in a hop kiln with a furnace below that needed stoking 24 hours a day. The hops were then packed in hop pockets that weighed 2cwt and taken to various hop warehouses in Worcester.

The hops are now processed and pelleted and packed in 25kg boxes, but still stored on hop warehouses like the one in Bromyard Road at The Ice Works.

There are very few hop farms locally now, partly because we drink less beer and partly because the strains of hops now grown have greater strength than older types.

Christine Silvester

DROITWICH CANAL RESTORATION

Roger Tapping - 4 October 2013

Roger has been involved in the Canal restoration from early times and is still working as a volunteer. The canal was built to take salt from Droitwich to the River Severn and the boats used were Wych Barges that are wider than the narrow boats that are used on the Worcester to Birmingham Canal.

We have had several presentations about the canal but this one was special as it was a record of the progression of the work.

It is quite humbling when one sees the early photographs, with a totally overgrown canal and volunteers working in the mud clearing, firstly all the vegetation from the canal, then the tons of old rubbish dumped in it and finally digging out tons of mud and most amazingly with all the volunteers looking happy, with hopes that the canal would one day be complete.

The most difficult problems were when the canal went under the motorway and the A449 at Hawford - Heritage Lottery Funding made this possible. Another problem was in Droitwich in Hanbury Road where the canal and the River Salwarpe run alongside - this was eventually overcome and the canal is now completely navigable.

There is now a 27 mile loop from the River Severn at Haw-

ford to Droitwich on to Stoke Works then continue down the Worcester - Birmingham canal to Diglis. A good walk is to take the bus to Droitwich and to walk down the canal to the River Severn.

If you haven't already visited the canal, please do, there is plenty of wildlife and good level walking and even the odd pub for lunch.

Christine Silvester

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NAILER'S COTTAGE 1840'S - 2013

Mark Clifford - 8 November 2013

Mark is the project officer for the development of the cottage at Avoncroft Museum of Buildings. The cottage was situated on Birmingham Road Bromsgrove and could possibly have been missed as a nailer's cottage if one had discounted the workshop at the front and investigated.

On casual observation the house was a very ordinary 19c building, we had thought that the Bromsgrove nailmakers were all very poor, but we discovered that within a few years of being built the house was extended and doubled in size.

The same family had lived in the house since it was built, and Mark had been able to speak to the last member of the family, who understood that the extension to the front of the house had been built by her father. This was proved incorrect as it had been a nailer's shop, but her father had most probably converted it into a bedroom for the mother who had a weak heart. The house also had a large plot where they could easily grow their own fruit and vegetables and keep chickens and pigs.

The building was dismantled and each brick, tile etc. was numbered for rebuilding at Avoncroft (much more expensive than a bulldozer). There was discussion as to which period the house would be restored to and it was decided to display the house in 1950's when the family had electricity, indoor lavatory and bathroom and TV, etc. but still showing the history of the building.

Make sure that you look for the house on your next visit to Avoncroft.

Christine Silvester

MEMBERS EVENING - MINCE PIES AND MULLED WINE

6 December 2013

Our December meeting is for films our members may have taken during our summer visits or holiday. The main film we saw was one Pete Wheatley had made during our River Thames Cruise on 28 July.

We were all interested in seeing ourselves on film, the traffic on the river and the beautiful houses on the riverbank - many of which must have been flooded this last winter. We

Winter Programme Reports (Contd.)

were also delighted to see how much the river is used for all kinds of activities, swimming, canoeing, rowing as well as the usual beautiful boats both on the river and moored at the various jetties. I remember swimming in the River Severn years ago, but we are positively discouraged now although the water is probably much cleaner. Peter had filmed Metal Box factory at Perry Wood before it closed, this has now been further edited and we will see it at our December meeting this year. Henry Sandon brought a film made by the Antique Roadshow Team that showed that even professionals don't always get it right! I think we enjoyed the mince pies and mulled wine.

Christine Silvester

A NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD INDUSTRY: The Industrial Archaeology of the Worcester Pottery Industry

Dr Malcolm Nixon - 10 January 2014

Many members will be familiar with both the products of the Worcester pottery industry and, through Malcolm's earlier talks, with the way in which hand craft processes shaped an industrial way of life unchanged for over two centuries. This talk introduced members to a fresh interpretation of the trade through both recent archival research (mainly in the Museum of Royal Worcester) and earlier evidence gleaned through excavations at both Warmstry House and Grainger's China Works.

The starting point for the evening was the way in which the understanding of the pottery industry changed from one very much biased towards how pots were made – to one preoccupied with what was produced. Early visitors to the Warmstry House factory, such as Michael Faraday the scientist in 1819, were given a guide tour of what they perceived as the new 'pandemonium' and then took home the illustrated guide book, complete with curiously naïve illustrations of each stage in the manufacture of a pot, without ever showing the finished article. Subsequent interest became more focussed on the wares themselves, a situation reinforced by the availability of company pattern books and even the definitive identification of wares made at both Worcester and upstream at Caughley, the outcome of Henry Sandon's first season of excavation at Warmstry House. The limitations (however well meant) of such an approach by collectors, meant that very little is known about the way in which pots were made at the Kidderminster cream ware factory – a late 18th century rival to Wedgwood's Etruria – let alone the St. John's pipe works or the Bellevue Pottery, Mucklow Hill.

The talk then re-examined more familiar territory, the way in which the working practices of Worcester and North Staffordshire mirrored each other, including the reliance on hand craft skills practised within domestic scale, courtyard planned premises – often dirty and cramped. But peppering this familiarity were fresh insights into how these manufacturing concerns were organised – including the payment of wages by Robert Chamberlain at his pub, the Chequers Inn,

adjacent to his factory and the castigation by Arnold Bennett of paintresses as "loud tongued and aggressive" took on a new meaning when applied to Walter Chamberlain's wife – who had been such a person and whose demeanour cast long shadows over Chamberlain family gatherings for years in the 1840's! Familiarity of working practice allowed freedom of movement for workers to migrate between Stoke and Worcester and the role of family and community ties within a trade were explained; but what was less familiar were the possibilities of transferring between gloving and potting, as exemplified by the case of Elizabeth Hope whose "65 years of continuous service" in 1880 to the Severn Street company looked less convincing when the Census returns clearly gave her as a gloveress in the 1850's. Such questions are just beginning to be posed and await much more detailed research to tease out the strands of that aspect of industrial life in Worcester.

Once the talk moved into the sphere of what the various Worcester potteries looked like, there were frequent references to the archaeological work he and Henry Sandon carried in 1975/6 and more up to date, the work of archaeologists recording the Grainger China Works prior to its demolition to make way for the new Asda store in Lowesmoor. The evolution of the Warmstry House site, from grand 18th century house with terraced gardens stretching down to the river, through ramshackle factory (built on the cheap as most of the money was spent buying the highly successful Lumb porcelain recipe from its Bristol owners) to a heavily subsidising factory built over a former garden wall and gazebo which meant that the kiln built to fire encaustic tiles was doomed to failure from the start, was offered as a timely reminder that archaeology often provides uncomfortable truths as to what really happened in the past! The Grainger kilns – excavated but awaiting the provision of funds by the developer for the report to be written and published – brought this story up to the present and allowed a glimpse into the rare foray by Worcester potters into the realm of innovative kiln technology. In 1900 the former Grainger site (it had been acquired by the main factory in 1889) experimented with the then recently patented 'Climax' kiln for enamel firing, and took it with them when the factory was sold off in 1902 to prevent a competitor from using it!

Finally Malcolm explored the demise of both kilns (surprisingly easily demolished in both centres) and of waste material. In the Potteries the waste was dumped in 'shraff' tips – lacking such dumps in Worcester the various potteries either sold it for land drainage (Claines) or road building (Porter's Mill) – the latter an idea copied from the Rockingham pottery in Rotherham! But – the final image of the evening was of an elderly lady sitting outside her home in St. Andrew's parish, Worcester, a lady who might have been a pottery worker or gloveress and someone who reminds us that the real story of the pottery industry is 'her' story – the workers who always spoke of "working at the porcelain" and whose story is in truth only now being told in all of its complexity.

Malcolm Nixon

Winter Programme Reports (Contd.)

THE WORLD WAR ONE WORK OF LADY DE FREECE

David Nash - 7 February 2014

David works for Worcester Museums and is Curator of the Commandery. Lady de Freece was Vesta Tilley.

Vesta Tilley was the stage name of a very famous Worcester Music Hall singer who was possibly the only one who was cross dresser - usually very smart gent's suits or even military uniforms - all specially tailored as she was very small. Prior to this time there were regulations that prevented any act that was slightly risqué but her brilliant and talented act set a new trend.

Vesta was born as Matilda Powles, she was born into a family of 13 children. Her father was 'on the stage' as Harry Bell the tramp musician and became the manager of a Gloucester Theatre and took Vesta with him - her career took off from there and eventually she became one of the highest paid artistes in Britain, already.

Before WWI Started she was one of the most famous stars and during the war she continued to do concerts for charity for the troops and to raise money for the war effort.

When we consider just how famous she was in her lifetime it is probably because there are not movie films of her that she is now well known now. She was born in the Blockhouse and there is one block of flats named Vesta Tilley Court as a solitary memorial to her, unlike Elgar who has his name all over town!

Christine Silvester

WORCESTER MUSEUMS (after AGM)

Garston Phillips - 7 March 2014

Garston was such an excellent speaker that members are still praising his talk. Garston has been at the Museum in Foregate Street for all of his working life and has clearly enjoyed every minute.

The original collections were natural history that were collected by the great and good. Eventually they decided to set them up in a museum (either because their wives were tired of them filling the house or so that they could compare with the collections of their friends). The first museums were not open to the public and surprisingly moved around the City. The first Museum was in Angel Place, the second in Foregate Street and eventually to the purpose built museum and art gallery in Foregate Street.

The photographs were outstanding and we saw the museum as it was 100 years ago with very full galleries and brimming cases - rather reminiscent of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. It isn't just nostalgia I am sure that many of us love these crammed museums.

Garston's knowledge of the collections was truly encyclopaedic not only the natural history collections but also the art collections and other artefacts. If you showed him an article from the museum he would be able to tell you where

it came from what it was and who donated it.

Many of the members said that Garston should write a book and I can't agree more - the talk was great!

Christine Silvester

THE STORY OF LONDON UNDERGROUND RAILWAY, PART 1

John Mason - 25 April 2014

London Underground consists of two completely different systems of construction and for this reason it is best looked upon as two separate railways, 'hence London Underground Parts one and two.

London Underground is the world's first underground railway and evolved out of necessity when the Victorian era of 'Railway Mania' had resulted in all the newly formed railway companies seeking to terminate in the capital.

The influx of railways heading into London caused great concern among the city fathers who, along with the City of Westminster, were determined to not allow railways to encroach upon the valuable city real estate. This resulted in all companies such as GWR, LSWR, LNWR and GE being forced to terminate on the outer fringes of the territory of both cities. Between 1855 and 1870 the cities of both London and Westminster became completely encircled by no less than ten termini.

Passengers from Bristol to London could now reach Paddington by train but had to continue to the city by road transport or walk another four miles, likewise for arrivals at Kings Cross, Euston and Waterloo; which like London Bridge (the first of the London termini), was on the south side of the river. Great difficulties also arose for passengers wishing to connect with train services from another terminus across the city. It could take longer to get from Kings Cross to Waterloo than from Waterloo to Southampton.

The mad hustle and bustle of daily life in the crowded city streets was now compounded by the addition of thousands of people trying to get from one terminus to another for onward journeys. Obviously an interconnecting rail link with the main stations was needed but as this was not acceptable to the London and Westminster authorities, some strange mad-cap ideas were put forward. One scheme suggested by the famous architect Joseph Paxton was for a 'Grand Promenade' with a railway running on elevated balconies above the covered walkways of the main thoroughfares in the city but this along with many other ideas was rejected.

It was a London solicitor named Charles Pearson who came up with the idea of tunnelling under the main east west route from Farringdon to Paddington and placing a railway directly under the road surface while leaving regular spaces for ventilation in the process. He was ably supported by John Fowler who had previous railway experience with some of the main railway companies (including the Victoria bridge on S.V.R.); and it was this scheme that would develop

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into the world's first underground railway and be known as the Grand Metropolitan Railway.

The railway would be built from Paddington Station to Farringdon in the City of London a distance of about four miles, much of the way directly beneath Marylebone Road, Euston Road and Holborn in an East West direction. Public subscription would be raised and 40% of the share capital and all rolling stock would be supplied by the GWR with I.K. Brunel overseeing much of the civil engineering process.

The construction of a railway to run underground and be powered by the only means available at the time steam: would present its own problems of ventilation and this became a prime consideration throughout the construction. As the GWR had the controlling influence during construction, the railway was laid to Brunel's broad gauge format and platform spacing, etc., would reflect this in station design with Baker Street station becoming the headquarters for the company.

After work had started and the principle of an underground system established, the idea was copied by a Scot named James Staats Forbes who was given permission to build a similar railway to run West to East about two miles to the South of the Grand Metropolitan starting at Kensington and running as far as Westminster with a view to continuing eastwards to the City of London and this railway would be called The District Railway and would run on standard gauge track.

It was during this era of massive disruption of the London streets that the problem of the 'Great London Stink' arose where over many years the overloaded and sometimes non-existent ex Roman sewers of London deposited their effluent into the river Thames and by 1850 in the summer months it became unbearable and at one point the government were forced to adjourn from Westminster due to the stink. Joseph Bazalgette the eminent engineer was appointed to solve the problem once and for all and he was responsible for constructing the famous Victorian sewer system and pumping stations that are still giving good service today.

As part of the project Joseph Bazalgette was required to remodel the River Thames and in so doing created the famous Embankment running along the north side of the Thames from Westminster to Blackfriars in the City. With new embankments on either side, the Thames was considerably narrowed in London making for more real estate and also deepening the river and making it faster flowing. The embankment from Westminster to Blackfriars also incorporated a tunnel for the District Railway to continue its expansion eastwards to the City.

The District Railway being held up at Westminster while waiting for the embankment to be constructed, found financial problems had caught up with James Staats Forbes and he was obliged to hand the business over to an American Tycoon named Charles Tyson Yerkes who already had railway interests in many cities of America.

In a similar way the Grand Metropolitan had also run into

financial problems and they were resolved when a young railway entrepreneur from Manchester who already had control of the Great Central Railway, the South Eastern railway in Kent and the East London Railway bought a controlling interest and his name was Edward Watkin. Having acquired control of these overlapping companies Watkin's dream was now to be able to run trains from Manchester through London to Dover then by under channel tunnel to Paris. Work started on the tunnelling using a system previously developed by Marc Brunel (father of I.K. Brunel when constructing the walkway tunnel under the Thames from New Cross to Wapping).

This ambitious project vital to Edward Watkin's dream was started between Dover and Folkestone with another similar excavation running from the Calais end towards England. The whole project developed into a political football, resulting in the government forcing the abandonment of the project on political grounds as the fear of any French invasion in the future could be made easy by mass rail transport.

With the completion of both the Grand Metropolitan and the District railways each servicing a number of mainline terminals, they still did not connect to form a convenient circular route to enable full contact between all termini. This impasse was due to the constant verbal war that existed between Edward Watkin and his counterpart at the District Railway Charles Tyson Yerkes, and it was only by direct government intervention that the two were eventually forced to co-operate and the lines were joined to form a continuous circular route. The District on standard gauge and the Grand Metropolitan on dual gauge and this would ultimately become the famous Circle Line familiar with millions of passengers today.

The next move of Edward Watkin was to double the tracks between Kings Cross and the south of the river to allow for more freight traffic and this was immediately followed by requests from LNWR and GE to utilise the short route (for a fee) and Watkin was only too pleased to take their money. At this point the GWR who had been the main supporter of the Grand Metropolitan from the very beginning, showed their opposition to others using the facility by pulling out all their finances and rolling stock.

This did not cause any problems for Edward Watkin now (Sir Edward Watkin) however as the other companies were only too pleased to step in with finance and replacement stock and at this point the removal of broad gauge tidied up the whole system.

Having lost his dream of an under-channel link, Watkin now had another dream: to build a tower in London taller than the recently finished Eiffel Tower in Paris and named after himself. This would be on land he owned adjacent to his Great Central and Metropolitan lines in North London.

After a competition in which Eiffel would not take part, a winner was selected and work proceeded until the structure reached about fifty feet high whereupon Watkins died. After his death; public interest was lost in the project and after some years the structure was demolished and the site uti-

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lised for the Great Exhibition and ultimately Wembley Stadium. Today we have not towering monument to Edward Watkin as a London landmark but a massive illuminated steel arch heralding the position of the new Wembley Stadium.

The expansion of the Grand Metropolitan to link up with the Great Central Railway took the tracks well out into Middlesex and on to Buckinghamshire and by purchasing large areas of land adjacent to the railway, the company set up an estate company to sell off the land for high quality housing development. This company was registered as Grand Metropolitan Estates and would prove to be a very wise move with the desire for Londoners to be able to live in an extremely pleasant environment and still get to the office in central London by fast train. The Grand Metropolitan now had a captive customer base, a very healthy diverse business portfolio (not entirely reliant on train fares) and in so doing coined the phrase 'Metroland' later to be honoured in verse by John Betjeman.

During the late 19th Century deep tunnel underground systems were developing as the new electric traction was introduced and many new companies were formed in London with private subscription and as a rule went quickly into financial meltdown such was the capital investment needed in building deep underground.

The saviour of many of these companies would be Charles Tyson Yerkes who had by now introduced electric traction from America to the District Railway and this forced the Grand Metropolitan to follow suit for the central London routes at first to be followed over the years by extension to the outer reaches of the network as far as Rickmansworth. Steam traction remained however on the extension to Aylesbury until the 1960s, (Aylesbury was reached in 1892).

The influx of so many new loss making underground railways in London undermined the fare structure of the whole public transport system and the government was obliged to use legislation to control the situation. By decree, the government formed 'The Underground Group' under the directorship of Albert Stanley later to become Lord Ashfield and he appointed Frank Pick as managing director. All existing and future underground companies would now become absorbed into the Underground Group with the exception of the Grand Metropolitan who (on account of their very profitable estate side were financially sound enough to stand alone) and the Waterloo and City direct link line owned by the LSWR. The Underground Group under Frank Pick would have a standardised livery, rolling stock and corporate image and it was at this time that famous red and white painted trains became a feature of London underground and the world renowned underground 'Target' logo established for station signs, one that has been copied all over the world from other railway companies to coffee bars and strip clubs!

In the years between the two world wars the problem of competition within transportation in London became acute and ultimately led to the government once again stepping in to resolve the issue, which by now had affected the above ground services such as trams and buses as well as the underground.

In 1933 -London Passenger Transport Board (L.P.T.B.) was formed still under the direct control of Lord Ashfield and Frank Pick and would incorporate (kicking and struggling) the Grand Metropolitan into the organisation and above ground all trams, buses and trolley buses would now come under direct control of L.P.T.B. London Transport as it would be known now had a standard livery for all trains trams and buses with famous target logo adopted for trolley bus and bus stops.

Probably the most fundamental culture change to undertake the London Underground was during the hostilities of the two world wars when the deep tunnel systems came into their own as air raid shelters for large numbers of the London inhabitants. The shelter programme was further developed toward the end of WW2 and into the Cold War period when the deep tunnel facilities were expanded to create potential 'Atom Bomb' shelters for key Government Departments and public the alike.

The world famous London underground route map developed by Harry Beck in the 'Underground Group' days was regularly improved and is still with us today and the Art Deco architecture of Charles Holden are still accepted as brilliant and outstanding station designs along with his masterpiece 55 Broadway, the headquarters of London Transport until it was dissolved with the appointment of Ken Livingstone as mayor of London, (not to be confused with the Lord Mayor of The City of London)

Under the new Mayor all public transport within the confines of Greater London come within the remit of 'Transport for London' and today include taxis and even bicycle hire. And much to the chagrin of many motorists, 'Congestion Charges'.

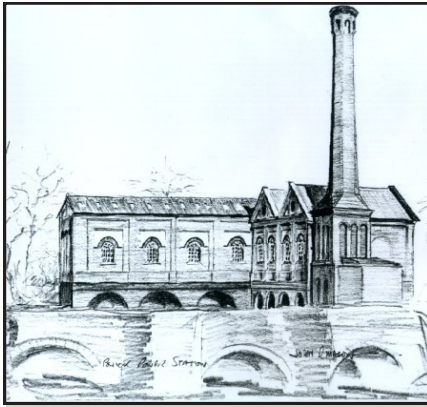
With the opening of two new deep tube lines in The Victoria line and The Jubilee line and The Docklands Light Railway since WW2 the development of London Underground still has difficulty coping with the ever increasing demand for mass transportation within the city. We are today seeing the massive construction work of the new 'Cross Rail' development project planned to bring standard railway trains under London to connect with a few major junctions in the system. This can only be for the good of the greater London commuter but the overriding fact is that our system was the world's first and a vast amount of it is virtually unchanged for 175 years apart from regular essential maintenance.

If we were starting today I am sure we would have done many things differently and all other countries who have copied our wonderful railway have the advantage of being able to learn from our mistakes. What a wonderful asset hindsight is.

John Mason

Baker Street
with Dual
Gauge





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New Members

We wish to welcome the following new members who have joined us recently:

Mike Jackson, Carl Jukes, John Keen,
John & Barbara Thompson, Len & Vivien Williamson,
Robert Bemand and Martin Horwood.

New Website

This is to remind everyone that the current website is now www.wialhs.org.uk so please use this one from now on. Our old website is no longer functioning.

Please let me know what you think of the design and feel free to suggest changes or enhancements?

John Beale

Programme Details!

The 2014 Summer Programme has been issued separately in advance of this newsletter. It is also to be found at www.wialhs.org.uk. Please remember to book early for events that require it.

Issue Number 45?

You will notice that Issue Numbers have re-appeared! This is at popular request, and applied retrospectively to the last 5 editions, makes this number 45—a milestone in itself!

John Beale.