

Issue 54: April 2019

Newsletter



Hallow Post Office c.1930 by John Mason

**WORCESTERSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
& LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:-

Lynda Griffiths	Stourport
Bill Lambert	Coventry
Philip and Kathleen Swan	Worcester

and re-joining member:-

Bill Amos	Worcester
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Sadly three members have passed away, Ian Bedford in November, Ernie Kay and Janet Clifford, both in January. Our thought are with their families.

Sue McCurdy

COMMITTEE NEWS

At the Society's Annual General Meeting on 22nd March 2019 we were pleased to welcome Mike Jackson to the committee, following his unopposed nomination to fill the long standing vacancy on the committee. Mike has been a member for a few years and has already given talks and written material for this newsletter.

Last year's committee was re-elected *en-bloc*. The committee details are printed on the rear cover of this newsletter.

John Merrick was re-appointed as Examiner of Accounts. I am particularly grateful to John for the help and advice that he gives to me in my role as Treasurer .

John Beale (Treasurer)

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Content:	Michael McCurdy
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RE-BRANDING?

As reported at the AGM, the committee have decided to defer further discussion of a potential name change until the outcome of considerations at the AIA are known. So no change is proposed for the time being!

JB

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

We have had a successful year with interesting visits and talks with good attendance at all of them.

Our December meeting has been held in the Eld Hall for the past few years because it is an easier place to circulate than the Lecture Theatre. If you would prefer to have all of our meetings there, please let me know. I can see that the access is easier as there is only one step, but it may not be possible for the school to let us have it regularly.

On 6 April 2019 we have the 50th South Wales and West of England Industrial Archaeological Conference at Saltford Community Hall near Bristol. If you have never been it is an interesting experience and you will meet members of other societies from the region. The societies in the region take it in turn to organize a Conference. We last organized one in Kidderminster in 2014 and it will most probably be our turn next year. We have already made plans for a venue and possible subjects for lectures and visits but of course we will need

some support from our members, mainly on the day of the event but some extra help may be needed during the 'run-up'.

We have welcomed some new faces and said farewell to some old members during the year. I am sure that you will never forget Brian Draper who took us on many adventures — mainly in the Severn and Teme Valleys but I also remember the trip to the source of the Thames. Brian was such an optimist about the size of the coach and the width of the lanes it made all the visits so exciting.

We need your support to continue as a Society and would always welcome any ideas for talks, events and visits. We also welcome any articles for the newsletter, what you did at work, any local history or local factories you worked. Have a good Summer and enjoy any visits.

Christine Silvester

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

At the AGM last year there was a discussion about ways of rejuvenating and, possibly, rebranding WIALHS. The committee has continued to discuss this important matter but since Association of Industrial Archaeology, the over-arching national organization, is also discussing these issues we thought it wise to await the outcome of their deliberations to see what kind of steer

they may give so there is no further news about this at the moment.

Our Secretary, Eileen Porteous was appointed just 1 year ago, having stepped in at short notice. I would like to thank Eileen very much for all her hard work during her first year in-post after a very steep learning curve.

On your behalf, I would also like to thank Mike Hayzelden for organizing another excellent Summer program of visits last year. One of the most memorable for me was the visit to the working Mill at Churchill Forge; this is a real piece of living history that I knew nothing about that is only a short drive from Worcester.

I would also thank Christine Silvester for organizing another great winter program including several outstanding lectures. It was particularly skilful programming by Christine that had related topics so well integrated. I particularly enjoyed hearing more about the Worcestershire coal fields and the related ill-fated Leominster canal – hopefully some of these sites will also feature in the 2019 summer program to come.

Next year will be Worcester's turn to organize a regional conference and we are making a bid to stage an Industrial Archaeology Conference at a venue near Worcester in April 2020. This will be decided at the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society regional conference to be held at Saltford, near Bath

on 6th April and the committee will keep members informed of the outcome and any plans as they develop. If we are not successful, the fall-back plan is go for the conference in 2021. This will be our 50th anniversary year and our bid should be unstoppable!

As some of you may know, Mike Hayzelden, our Summer Program coordinator has been unwell. This has delayed the arrangements for the coming summer program but Mike is now convalescing and we all wish him a speedy recovery. He is keen to keep on with the preparations for this Summer's visits so please be patient and more information will follow as soon as possible. Some proposed dates for the diary are on page 26.

Finally, we are about to receive the reports from the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary and on your behalf I would like to thank John Beale and Sue McCurdy and all the members of the committee for their hard work during the year to keep the wheels of our society turning smoothly.

Hugh Field



This is one of the images from the Changing Face of Worcester Project being run out of Tudor House Museum. This local engine is now restored and regularly seen at steam rallies.

www.cfow.org.uk

WINTER PROGRAMME REVIEW 2017-2018

Our first lecture on 14 September 2018 was by Justin Hughes from Worcester Archive and Archaeology Service. The talk was entitled Project Foresters Forest and was about LIDAR and Archaeology in the Forest of Dean. There is such an interesting history of the area that we must have a visit in the future to fully understand the history and archaeology of the site. Driving around today it is difficult to realize that this was a very early industrial area with shipbuilding, ironworks and copper smelting

The second Lecture on 19 October was Dr Terry Daniels, who spoke to us on the subject of 'Made in Oldbury'. This was part one of two lectures and Dr Daniels has already given me the synopsis of both talks. To avoid it being a "spoiler" the full report will be printed in the next newsletter. We all really enjoyed having a really well-prepared talk on industrial archaeology and very much look forward to the second part on 11 October 2019.

Our lecture on 23 November was by Rob Hedge from Worcester Archive and Archaeology service on the subject of Worcestershire in the Ice Age. This cleared up a great deal about the ice age that I had not understood before. If it is very cold it is also very dry and therefore the area would be more like tundra - not necessarily under kilometres of snow and ice. The ice age was not totally frozen all the time and some people were able to survive here. At that time, we were also part of Europe joined by an area we now call Doggerland - when

the ice melted the area was flooded but trawlers still bring up bones and tree stumps regularly.

December 7, our evening to enjoy Mulled Wine Mince pies etc. was Paul Barnett's talk on Port to Port — from Gloucester to Sharpness along the ship canal. It was an amazing feat of Civil Engineering and must have made a great deal of difference to the trade with inland cities to be able to ignore the tidal problems of the Severn. I was a little surprised that the bridges are still manually operated, but it seems to have worked well. Paul is such an enthusiastic speaker and could have continued for much longer. We think that the Eld Hall is a better place for more social events than the lecture theatre — I hope you agree.

On January 18 — Peter Goggs gave us an excellent talk on Worcestershire Coalfields - did you know that there were any and that they continued working until the 1970's. I had imagined that these would have been simple bell pits employing very few people but there were proper pits. Very little evidence remains — there seem to be plantations of trees where the spoil tips were but Highley — in Shropshire a little out of the area will give you a much clearer idea of what it was like in the past. At the entrance of the village is a model pit top winding gear complete with a miner and clock there are also terraces of typical miners' cottages. We talked to a local as we waited for our fish and chips, he told us that a large cart, run by

Whittles, collected the miners at the ends of the street and took them to the pit down Pit Lane. It was interesting that a company who was in horse drawn transport became a coach company - but that is so of so many companies.

On 15 February Martin Hudson gave us a very interesting lecture on the Leominster Canal - this tied in perfectly with Peter Goggs' lecture in January. The main job for the canal was to distribute coal to the various grand houses and towns in the vicinity. Leominster gained a gas works and street lights and coal was halved in price; other towns and villages also gained by this innovation. Although the canal never reached the Severn as it was intended to it helped improve the lives of many. The friends Of the Leominster Canal may be reached on www.leominstercanal.co.uk They have organized a series of walks this Summer.

Christine Silvester

On 22nd March, After the AGM, Charles Brecknell gave a talk with the title: *How to Survive the Great War - the War Service*

of Stuart Menzies 1914 - 1919, Dispatch Rider & Pilot". The subject of this talk was the speaker's great uncle, who served on the Western Front, Salonica, Egypt and England. For many years the speaker had his uncle's photograph album containing about 500 photos, & a recent visit to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford prompted him to try to find out more. The talk covered the methods used to discover details of his war service, as well as showing many contemporary photos of aeroplanes and service life in the Great War.

The speaker, Charles Brecknell, has family connections in Worcestershire. The John Brecknell charity is still active in Kidderminster (his great-great-great-great-grandfather's brother). Joseph Brecknell's tomb dated 1805 can be seen in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, Belbroughton. Charles is a chartered chemical engineer & has designed chemical plant for many parts of the world. He is still active as a consultant in evaporation & crystallisation technology.

Charles Brecknell (edited)

DEVIZES INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE, 27 OCTOBER 2018

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society hold a Conference in Devizes each year and always attract a good audience. They also have an excellent Museum in the town.

The first speaker was Malcolm Holland who gave us an interesting and informative talk on the subject of

'Pattinsons the Swindon Builders'. The company started just after WW2 and ended during 1980's recession — common for many post war builders. The company comprised building and Civil Engineering. John Jack Pattinson was born in 1910 in Blyth, Northumberland into a mining family. He was apprenticed to a building company and married at

Newcastle under Lyme. His son John was born in 1936.

He started work with Spiers Ltd. A company that built prefabricated buildings, having been founded in 1883 as builders and ironmongers. They built ecclesiastical buildings (tin tabernacles) schools, etc. Later, in 1915, they built aircraft sheds. Both brothers died in 1920's.

In the late 1930's John Pattinson came to Swindon as a site engineer with Spiers for the Blunsdon and Severnhampton Shadow Factories. (Lady Lane, Blunsdon was demolished in 1992).

In 1943 he was involved in the construction of the Mulberry Harbours and moved to New Forest. He was Chief Engineer for the 'Phoenix' Caissons built at Lepe, with over 600 workers under him. There is still some Archaeology at Lepe; the Caissons were launched sideways and the construction platform is still visible.

In 1944 his son was born. After the war, from 1945 to 1947 he started in business as *Pattinson and Leon*, buying out his business partner, Leon in 1947. The business was run from a yard in Hunter Grove, Swindon. In 1951 he obtained land for a yard in Bramble Road, Swindon — this had been part of a WWI explosives factory - the houses at the front of the site being used for offices.

In 1952 his son, Clive, joined the company, which continued to grow from strength to strength — building 100 UNITY houses for Swindon Bor-

ough. The cladding panels used in their construction were used by other companies, such as Laing. Other projects included:

- 1953, an extension to the pumping station at Latham.
- 1957, the Bursar's House at Cirencester College
- 1958, work on Colesbourne Court, near Cirencester, to replace the original building for J.H.Elwes and built in Bradstone.
- 1962, built Swindon Bowling Alley at Cheney Manor, Swindon (owned by D. Fairbanks) in 6 months.
- 1963, built Square D. H.Q. at Cheney Manor,
- 1965, built Derby Court at Walcot Estate Swindon—a Prestige project at the time.
- 1966, did some heritage work at Tokenham Manor - major roof repairs.
- 1972, worked on the Carpenters Arms, Swindon.
- Work on two pubs; the Iron Horse at Wroughton and the Goldfinger Tavern at Highworth.
- Other works were at R.A.F Fairford. Mechanical Institute Bath and Blunsdon House Hotel,

In 1960 Dudley Pattinson joined the Company as an apprentice cabinet maker - he ultimately became Contracts Director, but left to set up Model Plane Co.

The company had an office and yard for 15 years from early 60's to mid 70's. They went put of business in 1985 but John continued to work alone for some

time. The company history is interesting as it matches the history of many building companies throughout the Country.

Dorothy Treasure, Building Recorder, spoke on **Vernacular Architecture in Wiltshire** :

The Wiltshire Building record was set up in 1979 by Pat Slocombe. Vernacular buildings differ from 'polite buildings' by architects. They are usually built from local materials.

In the North West of the county (Wiltshire) the vernacular buildings were constructed with oolitic limestone; Cricklade and Corsham. Rubblestone would have looked unfinished and lintels were of wood. A view of Malmesbury in 1648 shows that the town walls have been dressed and most houses of rubblestone would have been rendered. Corsham has examples of rubblestone and rough cast render and hood moulds over windows. Culver House (Culver relates to dovecote) in Malmesbury is an example of a Cotswold type house with 16C mullioned windows and arched stone fireplaces (hollow moulded) and deeply chamfered beams with elaborate stops. The deeper the chamfer the older the beam. This work was done with a side axe.

Central, Eastern and Southern areas of the county have buildings constructed from mixed materials, many in cob and stucco. At Gooselands and Baydon near Swindon, chalk blocks were used with bands of flint. Possibly originally single storey houses, the upper storey was mainly in the roof, which was very deep.

Brick was used much later as infill and long straw thatch was used as the roofing material.

In Hatchett's Chute near Andover, the roofs were originally of combed wheat reed with liggers (ties). Many houses have been on their sites for a very long time. If the plinth is of stone, the house was probably originally timber framed. Cob Houses are much rarer in Wiltshire. Rose Cottage, Avebury, is a Sarsen cottage with a footing for a timber frame later replaced with stone.

The interiors in the region are much simpler than the limestone area. Holly Cottage, Dragon Lane, Manningford Brice is an example of a squatter's cottage. Constructed of wattle and daub and a wall plate from an earlier squatters' cottage now a partition wall. An 1812 map shows many squatters cottages in Dragon Lane.

In the South West of the County, Limestone and Greensand are the main building materials. In The Street, Chilmark the thatched vernacular houses have very small windows. The Forge in Chilmark has chamfered mullioned windows and quadrant window stays — very rare.

In Warminster — Greensand is the main building material. The Weymouth Arms in Ermwell Street, built about 1700, has a stone tiled steep pitched roof.

Heynesbury Mill, about 1800, is built of brick with segmental arched window heads at the front of building. The rear is of much older bricks - it originally had a hipped roof — and the rear has wider mortar joints to overcome the irregular

bricks. The mill is built on a stone plinth.

Before 1500 all vernacular buildings were of timber. Manor Farm barn in Kingston Deverl is of cruck construction and was erected in 1407 — 1408. The record shows that 40 oak trees + 15 more and 4 oak trees were used for the main braces.

Mediaeval houses in Warminster — Many are 'hiding' behind modern brick fronts. Town plots are much more difficult to research. The High Street shops area was called Warminster Market in 14C. After 1550 the original cottages

do not survive as the cottar's homes were very flimsy. Many jettied houses were underbuilt.

The Pheasant in Salt Lane, Salisbury and 3 St. John Street, Salisbury have wider frames over the building. In 15 Long Street Devizes — an altered timber framed building with recessed windows. Builders Pattern Books 18 & 19C were popular with estate owners also Farm-houses and cottages.

This research by Wiltshire Building Recording Group may be of use when looking around the County.

Christine Silvester



Culver House, Malmesbury, by Louisa Puller, 1942

Part of the "Recording the changing face of Britain " project

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

FIRE!

By PAUL JONES LRPS

Below is an article from the Bromsgrove Messenger dated Saturday the 13th of May 1905. Tom Skerrett, (who is referred to in the article as “Mr. T. Skerrett”) was a cab proprietor, and resided at Thornbury House which once stood on the Worcester Road. He was the son of Philip and Selina Skerrett, and had inherited the cab business from his father, who himself had inherited it from his father. Selina –Tom’s mother – kept apartments at Albion House, which was also to be found on the Worcester Road.

James Skerrett (my great, great grandfather) was the husband of Eliza Skerrett, and it was she who met a number of famous people during her time at the Royal Brine Baths – including the author “Rita”. For some time, James kept his cabs behind the Barley Mow Inn in Hanbury Street, as it was then in the hands of his brother – Samuel Skerrett. Samuel later became the proprietor of the King’s Arms in Ombersley.

William Skerrett (my great, great, great grandfather) was the founder of the family cab company in Droitwich, which he established on the north-western corner of St George’s Square in c.1875. It was at this location that the fire occurred in May 1905:

FIRE AT DROITWICH - OVER £600 DAMAGE. MAN DIES IN EXCITEMENT.

A serious fire occurred at Droitwich on Wednesday (10th) night, about 9.30pm. Mr. Harry Bourne, Masseur, St. George’s Square, Droitwich, was returning home when he saw that Mr. F.J. Smith’s cycle workshop, Post Office Lane, was on fire. The building was situated next to a wooden shed and wooden stables belonging to Mr. T. Skerrett, carriage proprietor; and willing hands soon took the animals elsewhere, while char-à-bancs, cabs, and carriages were placed in a long line half the length of Queen Street. In response to the alarm raised by Mr. Bourne, the fire brigade, after a little delay, attended under the command of Captain Harris. Hose was attached to a couple of standpipes, and streams of water were directed onto the burning building, which was composed of corrugated iron and wood. Owing to the inflammable nature of the structure, the brigade was greatly handicapped, and in three-quarters of an hour the place was a mass of bent iron and charred wood. The fire destroyed the carriage shed of Mr. Skerrett, and set fire to a second-floor bedroom at the back of Mr. Bourne’s hairdressers, St George’s Square. The brigade saved this building, the stables of Mr. Skerrett, and the Red Lion Inn – on the other side of the lane – the walls of which got uncomfortably hot. Mr. Bourne had bedding, clothing, chest of drawers and other furniture burnt; and clothing and beds

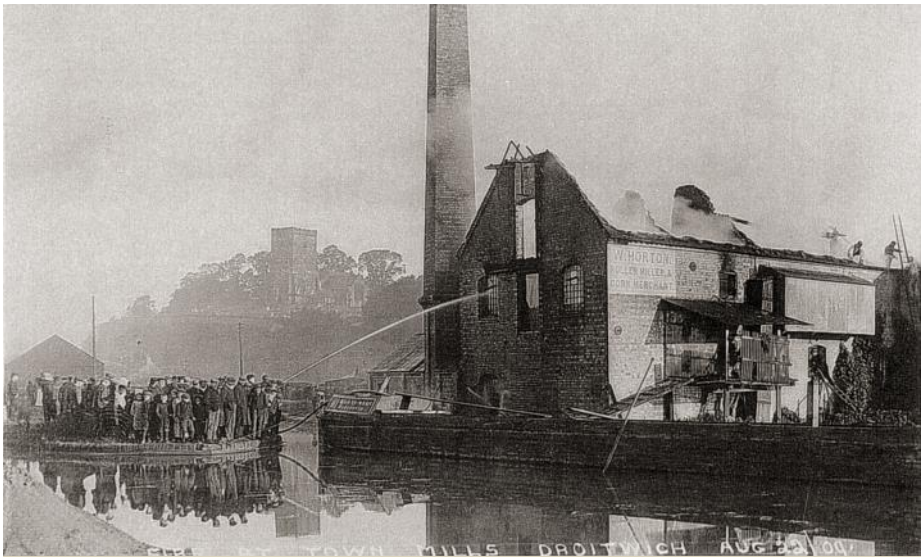
damaged by the water. It is supposed that the sparks went down the chimney to the bedroom. Mr. Smith has lost his workshop and the contents, some twenty-four bicycles, and a motor bicycle, &c. Mr. Smith estimates his loss at between £600 and £700 and the loss is covered by insurance. Mr. Bourne estimates his loss in furniture, bedding and clothing, by the fire and water, at about £30. Damage was done to Mr. Skerrett's conveyances by their hasty removal; Messrs. Bourne and Skerrett are both insured.

A large crowd assembled in St George's Square, and the heat was so great that some spectators entered the Royal Brine Baths grounds and stood on the sloping lawns. Mr. Banks, an elderly man, who lived in a cottage in the grounds, pushed some of the people off the banks, and in the excitement fell down dead. Banks, who was 62 years old, had been attended by Dr. Wilkinson for some time, for a weak heart. Dr. Roden was summoned, but could only pronounce life to be extinct.



SKERRETS CABS FIRE 1905, FROM THE VINES AREA

The next article, which appeared in the Droitwich Guardian on Saturday the 28th of August 1909, records the terrible fire that took place during that month, and also refers to a mysterious disappearance:



1909 MILL FIRE DROITWICH. From Jean Brettell

**FIRE AT THE TOWN MILLS.
BUILDING GUTTED: MACHINERY
AND GRAIN DESTROYED.
GREAT DAMAGE.**

A most serious fire—probably exceeding in the loss entailed [by] any fire that has ever been in the town—occurred in the early hours of Sunday morning last at the Town Flour Mills, the property of Mr. William Horton. At a quarter-past three o'clock, Mr. John Elvins (Winnett's Lane), the watchman of the Salt Union, who was on duty at the works of the Union at Chapel Bridge (near the Mills), saw smoke and flame coming from the top storey of the Mills, and immediately gave the alarm to three of Mr. C. H. Everton's men—Mr. John Bourne, Mr. Thos. Bourne, and Mr. J. Fulloway—who had just returned with a traction motor from a journey. Elvins then immediately ran to Mr. Horton's house, adjoining the Mills, and roused him up. Mr. Horton rushed down, partly dressed, and alarmed some of his men and his neighbour, Mr. C. H. Everton. Meanwhile Thos. Bourne ran to Friar Street and informed Captain George Harris, of the Fire Brigade, whose wife and John Elvins, the watchman, proceeded to the houses of other members of the Brigade and roused them up. Meanwhile the alarm had been given at the Police Station, and the fire bell in St. Andrew's Church was attempted to be got at, but, with the late alterations to the church, this necessitated someone acquainted with the interior to find the rope. After some little delay, Thomas Harding

was the first to handle the rope, and the bell roused light sleepers and called others to the scene who had heard the commotion in the street. Captain Harris first despatched some members of the Brigade with the hose and standpipe, and on arrival at the Mills they found the older part of the building blazing furiously; and, fixing the standpipe to a hydrant in the Hanbury Road, they attacked the flames. Captain Harris had meanwhile lighted the fire of the steam engine, which was dragged to the scene of operations by members of the Brigade and others, and stationed on the south side of the canal, from whence the hose was carried across the canal, and the Brigade were soon at work.

A great crowd was by this time assembled, many of whom, by their partial attire, had evidently left their homes in a hurry. There were many willing helpers, too, who worked hard in moving the contents of the house and office and also sacks of flour from the building. Prominent among the workers in this respect was Mr. C. H. Everton.

It was soon apparent that the older portion of the Mills, containing all the milling machinery and a considerable quantity of grain, was doomed. This part of the building lies between Mr. Horton's house and the new portion of the Mills (where he carries on his large baking business), and the Brigade concentrated all their efforts in the endeavour to save this new portion and the house. Two lengths of hose were attached to the engine, and firemen, mounting the boiler house, played on the flames. Iron doors shut off this new portion of the Mills from the older part, and these were bent and twisted by the great heat. Fortunately there was no wind, and the Brigade were successful in confining the conflagration to the older part of the Mills, which, however, was gutted, the machinery and a quantity of grain being destroyed, and the walls and roof collapsing. The new portion, with the ovens and plant for baking, were saved, and also the house. There was plenty of water, and the Brigade made the best use of it, all danger being practically over by 6 a.m. After the roof fell in the gable end of the mill building was left tottering, and there was a danger of it falling on the house; and Captain Harris directed it to be pushed so that it would fall the other way, this being accomplished by Messrs. G. Bourne, Andrew Barnett, and Alfred Elvins.

Mr. Horton and his men, Mr. C. H. Everton, and many others, removed a large quantity of things from the building to a place of safety, including over one hundred sacks of flour. Police Inspector Lewis and P.C. Potter were early on the scene, and, later, P.C. Garrard, being joined during the morning by P.C.'s Hopkins and Hemming; Inspector and staff rendering great assistance. The engine played on the smouldering ruins during Sunday morning, and during Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday nights a watch was kept, the firemen taking turns at this duty.

The property is insured in the Phoenix Fire Office; and the damage will amount to several thousands of pounds. The destroyed milling

machinery alone cost over £3,000. Much sympathy is expressed with Mr. Horton in his great loss by this unfortunate calamity; it being properly remembered that he never spared himself in helping others when similar misfortunes overtook them. Fortunately, the building containing the baking plant—one of the principal portions of Mr. Horton's business—remained intact, with the exception that there is no motive power for the mixing machine, which process has now to be done by hand labour; and the bread vans were out as usual on Monday.

The fire could be seen from many parts of the town —of course, plainly from Hanbury Terrace, and also from The Holloway, St. Peter's Walk, and parts of Newtown—and towards six or seven o'clock many inhabitants visited the scene, a large number doing so during the day. No reason can be assigned for the outbreak. Mr. Horton was in the mill at 2 a.m., and all was apparently right then.

We regret to have to record that there were persons base enough to take advantage of the calamity to commit thefts, several things being taken from the house.

A sad sequel to the fire, and one that we are very sorry to announce, is the disappearance of the proprietor of the Mills, Mr. Horton, who went away in the early hours of Tuesday morning, leaving his relatives no clue to his whereabouts.



WILLIAM HORTON JUNIOR MILLER

This article was followed-up by the paper with this short piece on the 4th of September 1909:

FIRE AT THE TOWN MILLS – The friends of Mr. William Horton will be glad to hear that his relatives received a letter from him on Sunday morning last.

Unfortunately, the paper does not elaborate on the contents of the letter, nor the reason/s for William Horton's disappearance. At the moment we can only speculate; but perhaps with further research, these are mysteries that could soon be solved.

Paul Jones

ON TRAINS (or driving 40 years into 53 minutes)!

By **MIKE JACKSON**

How long should someone stand alone on a small railway platform on a wet Sunday afternoon pointing a video camera at the track to the south waiting for the next northbound through train?

The camera is on its tripod and because trains pass through this insignificant halt at high speed you cannot wait until you can see or even hear the approaching carriages. Instead you have to trust in the timetable and start your recording in advance of the scheduled passage past your narrow platform ten miles north of Oxford.

So the camera (which already holds many useful shots) is recording and the rain is descending and the wind is rising. I hold my umbrella over my precious, sophisticated instrument, checking my watch and sodden timetable. (There is a phone app which can show you train movements in real time, but I don't have a fancy phone for such smart services.) Assuming the train left Oxford on time, it should be here at Combe any minute now. And so the camera continues to record an empty scene of wet track and I attempt to manoeuvre my umbrella so big drips do not descend from the spikes right in front of



Julian Palfrey of CLPG interviewing Brian Sutcliffe of the Settle-Carlisle Railway for the film at Honeybourne

the lens.

I have never been to this mini-station before. The track here is single, so at least the pinched platform is close to the line itself. I am about a yard from the edge thus can get a great shot of an approaching through service.

Last year I was asked to make a film for the Cotswold Line Promotion Group to mark their forty years of lobbying to protect and improve rail services between Worcester and Oxford. I occasionally travel to Paddington, but I'm no expert. I would be working from scratch.

It was no surprise to discover that most of the key figures in the Group were elderly men. They needed to be interviewed on camera, but I was keen to avoid a succession of grey haired males filling the screen. I decided to interview them on platforms, each person at a separate station explaining their history and the fortunes of that location over time. This gave me a narrative base, on to which I could lay illustration. At the BBC we called this "radio with pictures".

I gathered images of each major station – the architecture, signage, arrivals and departures - always seeking novel vantage points, sometimes with passengers passing through my frame. I made several journeys along the line pointing the camera out of open windows on High Speed Train (HST) doors. I covered the Malverns stretch on 21st June, mid-summer, in the middle of the day when the sun is at its highest point and so generates the minimum amount of shadow.

I was provided with still images by Group members – pictures they had taken in the past, or very old black and white photographs from earlier times. And I used various maps and charts of the route to indicate the geography and shape of what had once been the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway.

I realised that the sides of trains are generally well cleaned and so in good sunlight provide a shiny surface which reflects. By pointing the camera at the body of a train I could gather many varied images of whatever was mirrored from the carriages.

Showing where and how the Worcester line swung away north-west from the Oxford- Birmingham trunk was tricky. An Ordnance Survey sheet indicated that a major road running into Oxford passes over the tracks at a few hundred yards to the south of this rail junction. I parked my car in a lay-by quarter of a mile away and walked to the bridge to discover it had very tall walls, higher than the maximum capacity of my tripod. So I had to manually hold the camera in the required direction and record ten seconds of wobbly footage. Later, I boarded a Worcester-bound train at Oxford and took a window seat that allowed me to point the camera at the south-bound track to my right.

When the train swung to the left on to the Worcester-bound rails I could expose the pair of tracks heading towards Birmingham and demonstrate to viewers that we were heading elsewhere. In

editing I “dropped in” a still image of my bridge view to help make clear the geography and lines of movement.

Other subject matter did not become clear. After ten damp minutes of recording on Combe’s miserable little platform that Sunday afternoon, I gave up. This was in the midst of the troubled summer period when most railways were experiencing many delays or cancellations. I had been naive to expect an intercity to pass this point according to plan. I packed the camera away and carried my kit down the ramp toward my car. Now I heard an approaching train. There was no time to extract my camera to snatch a moving shot. And thank goodness that was the case, because it was an HST that roared through at – what I was later told was – nearly 100 miles an hour. Had I stayed at my location, I am sure its wind draught would have swept me off my feet, camera and all.

Instead of a Brief Encounter with a passing intercity, I had been seconds/inches from a Close Encounter of a very nasty Kind that could have resulted in me and the camera becoming a bloody mess stuck down the side of a rail track.

As I staggered, shaking, to my car I spotted a small sign warning travellers against standing on this platform when trains were passing through. Yes, always read the small print.

No scary bits in the film. Instead, a sense of how determined campaigners can persuade rail executives to re-visit their earlier decisions and apply new standards to a service for all future users.

One day, I hope this might include widening Combe’s alarmingly compact platform.

Mike Jackson

QUARRY BANK MILL

THE LIFE OF THE MILL WORKERS AND CHILD APPRENTICES

By SUE McCURDY

Quarry Bank Mill in Cheshire is said to be one of the best preserved textile mills in the country and the complex as a whole is said to be the most important site of the industrial revolution.

The cotton spinning mill was built in 1784 by Samuel Greg, on land leased from Lord Stanford, who imposed a condition that the woodland character of the area was to be maintained. When

Greg retired in 1832 his son of Robert took over the business and introduced weaving. The water powered Georgian Mill is still capable of producing cotton calico as we saw demonstrated.

Greg built Quarry Bank House, next to the mill as his family home. As the mill increased in size Greg developed some of the estate land, at Styal, short distance from the mill, to provide housing, a



Quarry Bank Mill, Apprentice House Yard

chapel, school and shop for his workers. He also built a house close to the mill for the 90 child apprentices.

The mill and estate land were donated to the National Trust in 1939 by a member of the Greg Family, a full 20 years before the mill ceased commercial production. In 2006 the trust acquired Quarry bank house the home of the Greg family. More recently, following an appeal for £1.4 million, restoration was carried out on a workers cottage, the shop and Greg's glasshouses. Records relating to the family and the workers were digitised.

On a recent visit to the site we enjoyed guided tours of the apprentice house and the workers cottage. Having seen many such mills I was particularly interested in the chance to learn about the

life of the workers.

The Life of an Apprentice

Up to 60 girls and 30 boys, aged between nine and eighteen, lived in the apprentice house a short distance from the mill. Between 1790 and 1847 over 900 children had lived there. Some of them were sent there by families too poor to be able to feed them, but most were from workhouses and, although they worked hard for long hours, their life was considerably better than in the workhouse. Before being accepted they were given a physical examination. To check that they were the right height they had to put the right arm over the head and touch the left shoulder. A child under the age of nine would be unlikely to be able to do this. Today's children are taller and would probably

pass this test at the age of seven or eight. Examining their teeth was another way of assessing the age.

The working day began at 6am, there would be a short break at 7am for breakfast which was eaten beside the machines and consisted of very thick porridge, which could be formed into a ball and eaten from the hand. The working day finished at about 7pm following which the boys tended the vegetables in the garden next to the house, while the girls sewed. During their brief spells of free time they were able to play outside. All this meant that they were much better off than children in mills in nearby Oldham, who were kept indoors 24 hours a day.

On Sunday mornings they attended chapel, followed by lessons in reading and writing. The boys also learned arithmetic and those who did well had the opportunity to become clerks in the office, rather than mill workers. Why more girls than boys you might ask. The reason seems simple, women were paid less for doing the same job and would not be promoted to work in the office, but in the 18th and 19th centuries this was generally accepted, so even the philanthropic Greg would have had no problem with this.

Their diet was good as they had a supply of fresh vegetables from their own garden. Greg was mindful of the health of the children. It is thought that he was the first businessman in the country to pay for medical treatment for his workers. Accounts show that Greg's own family doctor was paid on a fairly regular basis to visit the apprentice house and

the worker's village. There are also some records remaining of the treatment which was prescribed for both children and adults.

In the dormitories the children slept two to a bed. Cleanliness was important, they had clean clothes once a week, clean bedding once a month and clean straw in the mattresses and the walls painted once a year. The floor was also washed regularly to clean up any spills from the chamber pots.

Unlike the beating or withdrawal of food common in many establishments, misdemeanours were punished by standing for a certain length of time holding wooden dumbbells above the head. This had the added advantage that the offender was not left unfit for work the next day. Breakages were to be paid for, but since apprentices did not have a regular wage, working extra hours settled the debt. Some apprentices volunteered to work overtime to send money to their families, or to save for the time when they completed the apprenticeship.

Our guide in the Apprentice House was Celia, a retired BBC producer, who was very well able to pitch her talk to both the adults and the children in the group and brought the whole place to life.

Life in Styal

The village of Styal, about half a mile from the mill, still has a primary school rated good by Ofsted. Most of the houses have been very little altered, and are now subject to conservation area regulations. The shop has closed but there are two chapels still consecrated.

The 1841 census shows 843 people living in 70 properties in Styal. Most of the properties had two rooms upstairs and two down with a cellar, a backyard and an allotment and were often home to extended families.

In the early 1800s accounts from the shop show that villagers were not struggling financially. There was increased demand for items like ribbons, laces, ladies hats and non essential household items. By the 1830s there was a downturn in fortunes and the demand for such items.

We were shown around the recently restored workers cottage by Kelly, a social historian. In 1841 the cottage was home to Peter and Ann Nicklin, at the rent of 2/6d (12 1/2p a week). While average earnings would be about 4s (20p), Peter had an income of 20s (£1) a week. Ann was not employed in the mill, but took on tasks such as washing, mending and childminding, to help the women who were. In 1841 Peter and Ann had lodgers, two single women in the spare bedroom and a couple with their young baby in the cellar. Life in the cellar would not have been as grim as it sounds. With it's own entrance down some steps at the front of the house and windows at the front and back it could have made a fairly comfortable self contained flat. Unlike life in the big cities, where people were obliged to share their cramped accommodation with strangers to try and make ends meet, Peter and Ann's lodgers were probably family or friends.

The Gregs' Philosophy

It was Greg's wife Hannah, who took care of the welfare of the workers. She was an avid supporter of education for child apprentices, long before the "Health and Morals of Apprentices Act" 1802. Unfortunately the law was blatantly ignored by most mill owners. Although the apprentice system was questioned in the 1830s it continued at Quarry Bank for 13 years after Hannah's death in 1834. Her non-conformist faith (she was a Unitarian) was behind her belief in educating the poor so that they could improve their lives. She also believed in mixing with those in other walks of life, being frugal and caring for those less fortunate. To these ends she and her daughters were involved in teaching the young apprentices.

While Greg was a philanthropist who looked after his workers, he was also an astute businessman. It was to his advantage to have healthy workers. Whilst to many industrialists in the large cities the poor were an expendable resource, Greg recognised that healthy people were able to work longer hours.

It is not known whether his workers were aware that their conditions were considerably better than those in the big cities. On a fact-finding visit to Quarry Bank the socialist, Friedrich Engels thought that Greg had control over which newspapers were available in the village shop thus trying to keep his workforce ignorant of the political situation in other industrial communities.

Sue McCurdy

A PEEP IN THE RAVEN, AND A STUDY OF ITS EARLY STAINED GLASS

By PAUL JONES LRPS

On the 10th of September 2013, two small guided tours of the Raven Hotel (*Droitwich*) took place, made up of individuals who had expressed an interest in such a tour. Among those present in the first group were Nick and Claire Lloyd, Derek Barwell, Chris Bowers, and myself.

Prior to being an hotel, the Raven – which has an historic core dating back to the Elizabethan era – was known as St Andrew's Manor House. It is supposed that St. Richard de Wych was born in an earlier manor house on the same site in c.1197, though this was

probably destroyed in the town fire of 1290. Another manor house would then have been built, which would itself have been replaced by the current building in the C16.

It is also thought that royalty and those of high rank would have stayed in the manor house when visiting the town, and could well be where King Charles I lodged for three days in 1645, during the Civil War.

For centuries, the manor house was occupied by eminent families, including the Francis family who possessed it until



The Raven Hotel, Droitwich, c.1910

they left for Naunton Court in c.1850. Richard Francis was a friend of the historian, Peter Prattinton, as both were most interested in anything antiquarian. Prattinton drew the map, which appears on the front of this newsletter, from the original in the possession of Richard Francis.

John Corbett became the owner of St Andrew's Manor House in 1879, which he then had converted into the Raven Family and Commercial Hotel. This was intended to receive guests for the refurbished Royal Brine Baths at St George's Square, as St Andrew's Brine Baths – designed by the Bromsgrove architect John Cotton – were not to be built until 1887. The original Salters' Hall was built in c.1880, and the Worcestershire Hotel did not open its doors until 1891.

Number eight St Andrew's Street, with its Gothic style windows, dates from before 1840, and – if the latest plans come to fruition – will be retained; but the portion which dates largely from 1935 – running from number eight up to the first “bookend” – is marked for demolition. These bookends which flank the historic core, date from 1883 and were also designed by John Cotton of Bromsgrove; happily, the historic core and the bookends are to be retained as a restaurant. John Cotton's restored chimneys, and a fireplace which he designed, are also to be retained; but another portion also constructed in 1883, to the rear of the complex, is marked for demolition.

The wing that runs along St Andrew's Road (once called Corbett Road) dates from c.1885-1903, and its extension

with bay windows and stained glass was added in 1935. This wing is also marked for demolition, along with a modern portion to the rear of the complex. It is planned to replace all of these parts of the complex marked for demolition with apartments, and the developers also wish to open up the site, so that people will be able to access Tower Hill and the High Street via St Andrew's Street.

It was due to the impending development of the site that we had expressed an interest in gaining permission to view and photograph the interior of the hotel, and that permission was kindly granted. According to the Rev. Sterry Cooper – a local historian writing in the 1930s – an upright beam running through the bar at the Raven was found to have a number of holes in it, which were known locally as “Save alls” or “Safe holes”, in several of which Elizabethan silver coins were found. Sadly, no evidence of this was seen during our tour; though we were shown what seemed to be Jacobean oak wainscoting of c.1600, but were then informed that it had all been installed during one of the hotel's past refurbishments, and was moulded from asbestos! Presumably, a mould was made from the genuine article in order to mass-produce these very convincing boards, which are quite safe, as long as they are not disturbed or broken. This room also contains a plaster bat and other ornate designs on the ceiling, as well as plaster fruit on the walls. Pevsner, writing in 1968, states that there was “cast-iron panelling in the bar etc., painted to simulate wood”, though it is probable that these asbestos examples were mistaken for iron, as



The Plaster Bat



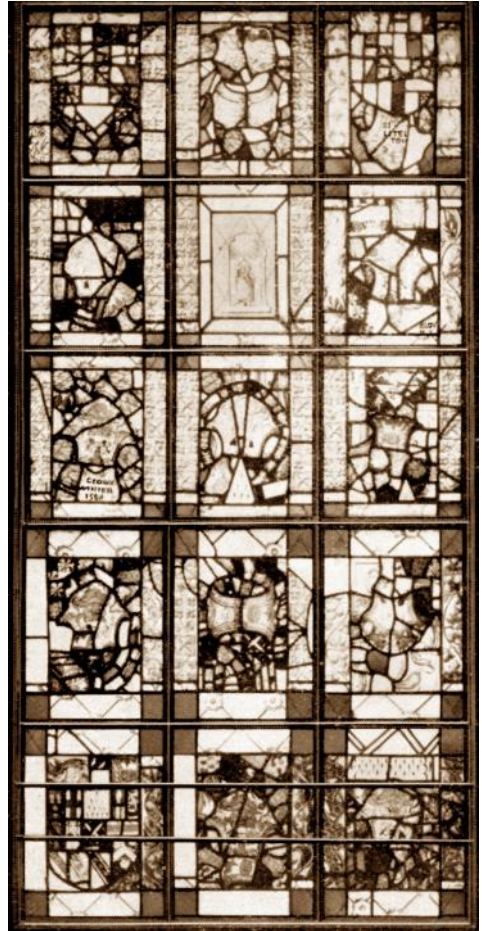
Raven Hotel, Entrance and Staircase, Sept 2013

there is no trace of the iron panelling today.

Once the tour of the ground floor was complete, we ascended the staircase and were shown some very good late 16th to early 17th century stained glass, which a Miss Green of Bromsgrove studied in great depth in the 1930s. She was convinced that it was the same glass that was once to be found in the Exchequer House – a timber framed building constructed in 1581, which once stood on the site now occupied by the old town hall, at the top of Droitwich High Street.

Some sources state that after Nash described the glass of Huddington Church in his *History of Worcestershire* in 1781, it was then stolen by glass thieves and later appeared in the Raven Hotel, but this is not the case. Nash describes the glass in Huddington Church, as Habington gave it when writing in the early 1600s, and then in a footnote he goes on to say: “The windows have been new glazed, and the arms destroyed.” Even Pevsner (1968) states that the glass in the Raven Hotel came from Huddington; though in the 2007 Brooks and Pevsner edition, this has been amended to read that the glass is “no doubt from the old Exchequer House.” It should also be mentioned that some early glass fragments and three mediaeval shields have survived at Huddington Church, including the arms of the Winters; the C16 glass which can be seen in the east window was not installed until 1933 and is probably Cornish or European.

Dr. Prattinton visited the Exchequer



The early glass in the Raven Hotel,
c.1930

House in 1811, and again shortly before its demolition in 1825, and on both occasions he recorded the stained glass of the building in detail, and quite possibly also visited his friend, Richard Francis, at St. Andrew's Manor House – now the Raven Hotel. Of the Exchequer glass Prattinton, when writing in 1825, says: “they are so much injured that I cannot vouch for all of the coats, though I took all the pains that I could.”

The Exchequer windows contained the royal arms and 18 shields of county families, including the Winters of Huddington Court; the Droitwich Borough arms were also present. These shields were in the Exchequer House windows because the old families had shares in the salt industry, and also because most of them held office as bailiffs in the town, George Winter being a bailiff in both 1571 and 1572.

After careful study of Prattinton's notes, and of the glass in the Raven Hotel, Miss Green concluded that "Nearly all of the glass seems to be that described by Dr. Prattinton in the Exchequer House which was destroyed in 1825." Sadly, very little remains of the Winter shield in the Raven Hotel today, though some of the inscription belonging to the shield, bearing the words "George Winter 1580", can still be seen.

Prattinton adds to the confusion over the origin of the glass when he states in his notes on the Exchequer House that "this glass was in Huddington Church". This could have led to the idea that the glass was taken from the church; but

Prattinton could well have been mistaken, as the same arms would naturally be found in the windows of both locations. Another possibility is that Prattinton simply meant that he had seen glass of the same design in Huddington Church, or was aware of such glass from Habington's descriptions of the early 1600s.

It was around 1826 that this early glass is known to have appeared in what is now the Raven Hotel; sadly, the Droitwich arms have not survived, and neither have several of the other shields.

Despite the fact that modern plasterboards have been removed, exposing the original timbers to inquisitive eyes, many of the rooms still appeared much as they did when the hotel was still functioning. As we made our way to the exit via the lounge and bar – which still has its leaflets for tourists on the counter – we observed the second party entering the building, and then discreetly filed out, glancing behind us, at what was quite possibly our last peep in the Raven.

Paul Jones

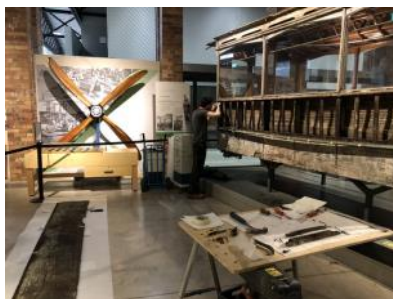
In 2019, Worcester Heritage and Amenity Trust will start the conservation and restoration work needed to secure the long-term future of Worcester's only remaining Tudor embossed ceiling, at the Tudor House Museum. Created in the mid-1500s, it depicts prancing horses, fleur de lys, vines and, of course, Tudor roses.

WHAT



DRAFT SUMMER PROGRAMME 2019

Full details of the 2019 Summer Programme were not available at the time of going to press. However, a few dates and venues have been firmed up, and these are shown below so you can pencil them in your diary! Full details, including costs, and some extra local visits, will be available soon to members as a separate booklet. (*photo : Aerospace Bristol*)



Day and Date	Time of Day	Destination	Transport
Saturday 6 th April	Morning	Leominster Canal Walk from Wooferton	Own transport
Saturdays June 8 th or 22 nd (choice of dates)	Afternoon	Tardebigge lime kilns	Own transport
Monday 17 th June	Morning	Halesowen: including the Leasowes (natural landscape garden) with Julian Hunt	Own transport
Wednesday 24 th July	Afternoon	Garden party in the walled garden, Fort Royal	Own transport
Wednesday 7 th August	Full day	Northampton; Boot & shoe industry; town centre, leather museum, Charles Rennie Mackintosh House (for Bassett-Lowke)	Coach
Tuesday 20 th August	Full Day	Victorian and Arts & Crafts churches and buildings of South Birmingham with Tim Bridges	Coach
Sunday 1 st September	Full Day	Aerospace Bristol (WWI Hangar, Museum and Concorde visit) , Clifton Observatory	Coach

DRAFT WINTER PROGRAMME 2019/20

All meetings are held at RGS Worcester in the Lecture Theatre, 7.30p.m. start. Any queries or further information phone Christine Silvester 01905 354679

DATE	SPEAKER	TITLE	NOTES
SEPTEMBER 13	MIKE JACKSON	GREAT EXHIBITIONS	Mike is now a committee member of WIA&LHS. He will give us an illustrated lecture.
OCTOBER 11	DR TERRY DANIELS	MADE IN OLDBURY Part 2	The second part of the lecture he gave us on 19 October 2018
NOVEMBER 15	RICHARD CHURCHLEY	ENCLOSURES IN THE ENGLISH MIDLANDS	
DECEMBER 13	RICHARD BIFIELD	IRONBRIDGE GORGE - THEN AND NOW	Richard is an expert on all things 'Shropshire'. This meeting will be held in the Eld Hall and we will also have mince pies, mulled wine etc.
JANUARY 17	DAVID MORGAN	DISCOVERING OUR NARROW-GAUGE RAILWAY HERITAGE	David is a lifelong railway enthusiast
FEBRUARY 14	THIS LECTURE HAS NOT YET BEEN CONFIRMED		
MARCH 13	JAMES DINN - WORCESTER CITY ARCHAEOLOGIST	50 BUILDINGS IN WORCESTER	Preceded by the Annual General Meeting. James has recently published a book on the subject of his talk.
APRIL 10	THIS LECTURE HAS NOT YET BEEN CONFIRMED		

OTHER OUTINGS OF INTEREST

The Wooden Spoon children's charity of rugby organises coach trips from Worcester to raise money. They have invited members of the WIALHS to join them on their next trip to Winchester on Saturday 11th May 2019. The trip is for transport only, you will need to organise your day once you get there! It leaves Northwick Manor Primary at 8:30am and departs from Winchester at 5:30pm. The cost will be £17. If you are interested please contact Margaret Sturdy on 07851 016808 for a booking form—she does not take verbal bookings.

Open Gardens, Hanley Swan, is taking place over the May Bank Holiday weekend, from Saturday 4th to Monday 6th May, 12-5pm each day. The £6 ticket is valid for the three days. 17 gardens will be open to visit. www.hanleyswanopengardens.co.uk



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2019/2020

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