NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the **Broseley Local History Society**

INCORPORATING THE WILKINSON SOCIETY

Nov – 2021 Issue: 51

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Broseley Local History Society are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm at the Broseley Social Club, High Street, unless otherwise announced.

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PLEASE NOTE: To avoid any inconvenience, either check the website or contact the event organiser to confirm prior to attending, to check that the event is still going ahead.

Nov.3 – *Joseph Anstice & his Circle*, **Diana Clarke***

2022

Jan.5 – *The Shropshire Bank Fraud of 1855*, Jim Cooper

Feb.2 – *The Work of an Archivist*, Sarah Roberts

March 2 – *The Wives and Daughters of the Lunar* Society, Kate Croft.

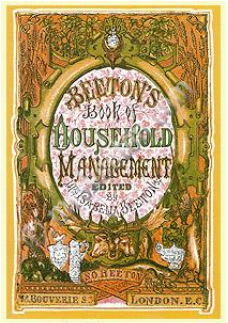
Neil Clarke 6th. August 2021

Other Events

THE FRIENDS OF IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUMS Illustrated Talk: "Mrs Beeton, The Victorian Delia Smith" by Amanda Phillipson
On 16 December 2021 at 2.30pm in the Boardroom at the Museum Offices, Coalbrookdale; Members Free, Non-Members £1. Note: there are now car-parking charges



Isabella Beeton 1836 – 1865



Household Management

Janet Doody 16th. October 2021

What's On Elsewhere?

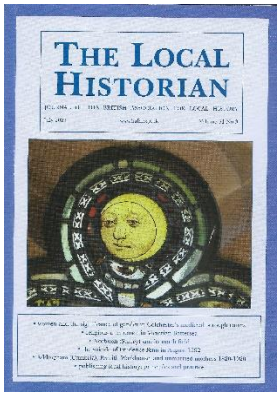
The BALH website continues to provide some excellent "10 minute talks"; mini-illustrated talks on a variety of subjects, a recent very interesting one and pertinent to today, was 'How vaccinations began'. Other additions are the articles from their 'blog' especially on the Welsh language. National War Graves Commission Headstones of the First world War.
Local History News – available on the BALH website, profiles the BALH Award recipients for 2021 together with the research and publication awards and Society Newsletter Award (Send & Ripley History Society). Forward notice the BALH Local History Day in 2022 will be held on 11th. June, full details will be released later.
The Local Historian - has a number of academic articles in its recent issue, including Penrith Workhouse; the development of 19th century Norbiton and a very useful introduction to publishing local history from books to articles for society newsletters. Amongst the book reviews is "A House Through Time" a companion volume to the great (I think) TV series by David Olusogo & Melanie Backe-Hanse and includes many source references and help in researching house histories; and an update to the standard "English Local History: an Introduction" by Kate Tiller. Nearer to home is "When Kidderminster Was Lengths Ahead – swimming, baths and the "state of trade" in Kidderminster" by Michael Loftus. A Staffordshire Volume (No.12) of the Victoria County Histories of Tamworth & Drayton Bassett has also been published.

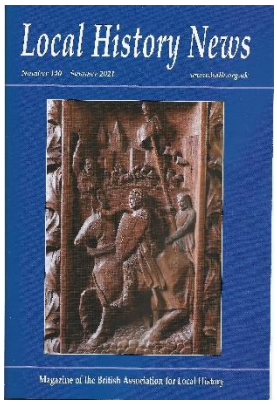
LOCAL HISTORY PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2022 COMPETITION:



Theme: "What does Local History Mean to You?" £150 cash prize for each category winners plus runner up prizes. Submission's 1st. January – 31 March 2022

For further information see the British Local History Website under "Resources."





A Couple of Interesting Front Covers

Janet Doody 23rd. October 2021

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Patrick and Janet Houghton

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions to the Society now resuming and can be paid either in cash or by cheque as before.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND EVENTS

The Annual Wilkinson Lecture: *'Wilkinson and the Darbys,'* by Neil Clarke

After 18 months of lockdown due to the Covid pandemic, we resumed our monthly programme of talks on September 1st with the Annual Wilkinson Lecture.

The Annual Wilkinson Lecture was introduced following the renaming of our society in 1997, and its purpose was to maintain the link with John Wilkinson by way of an annual lecture which covered either the life and work of the great ironmaster, or one of his contemporaries, or the period in which he lived. Every March for the past 20 years, we have invited historians from near and far to deliver this lecture, and this pattern has been followed every March, except of course for this year. Because of the pandemic, we had to postpone the one we planned this year until next March. But, although later than usual, we have with this talk at least maintained the annual tradition!

John Wilkinson and Abraham Darby III were two of the area's most prominent ironmasters of the second half of the eighteenth century. Although of a different generation, they came together to promote what would become the iconic symbol of the Industrial Revolution - the world's first Iron Bridge. In addition to their involvement with the Iron Bridge in the 1770s, they had already cooperated on a number of previous occasions and were to do so again later. But that said, relations between Wilkinson and the Coalbrookdale Company had got off to a bad start in 1759, some two years after Wilkinson had first arrived in this area.

An edited version of the talk, covering the major examples of the cooperation between the two ironmasters, appears in this year's Journal.

Neil Clarke 13th. October 2021

A short report on the October talk.

Provided by Neil Clarke 13th. October 2021

***'Red Church Update'* by Graham Hollox**



Following on from the initial talk in January 2020, this is an update on the progress made on the project during the last 19 months. Although much hampered by the pandemic, some groundwork has taken place on the site. The big achievement has been the production of a beautiful 12-page booklet telling the story of eight of the families whose members were buried in the churchyard – the Amphletts, Booths, Lloyds, Cochranes,

Brodies, Stephans, Yates and Phillips – together with photographs of their graves or memorials. Copies of the booklet, '*Tales from the Red Church',* are available from Graham Hollox @ £3. We look forward to further updates as progress continues to be made.

Graham Hollox 6th. October 2021

Articles

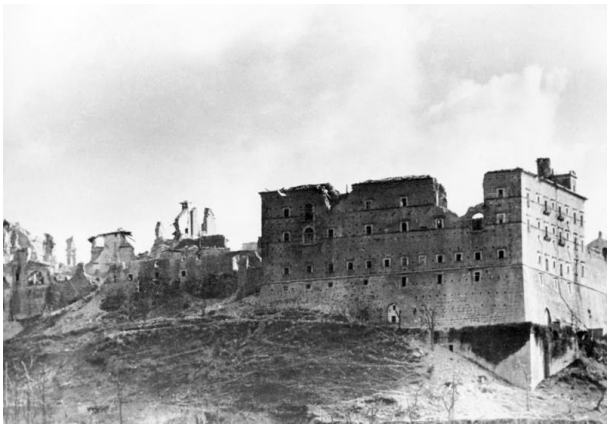
OLD BAPTIST CHAPEL – 1ST WEDDING AT THE CHAPEL
On April 29, 1911:



The local newspaper reported that:
A very pretty wedding took place at the Old Baptist Chapel on Wednesday, the contracting parties being Mr SIDNEY GILPIN, eldest son of the Rev. James Gilpin, (Pastor of this Chapel) and Miss ELEANOR MAUD ATKINS, 4th daughter of the late Mr James Atkins of High Street, Bridgnorth. The building was crowded with well-wishers.
During the ceremony, which was performed by the Rev. Gilpin, "The voice that breathed o'er Eden" was sung. The bride looked exceedingly pretty in a blue dress with hat to match and was given away by Mr J W. White of Bank House, Ironbridge. The bridesmaids were Miss Maisie Lloyd of Bridgnorth, niece of the bride) and Miss Mollie Rich of Coalbrookdale, (niece of the bridegroom). Mr W. H. Gilpin, (brother of the bridegroom) was best man and Master Frank Lloyd was groomsboy.
This is the first wedding in the church since it was built 170 years ago, and in consequence of this fact, the members presented the couple with a handsome bible. The Rev. James Gilpin took up his duties on Boxing Day 1909, and his son Sydney replaced Mr Richard Tonkiss as organist. He was living (1901) on Tontine Hill where he ran a family stationary business, on his appointment as Pastor the family moved to 24 Mill Lane, Broseley. Under Pastor Gilpin the Chapel began 'step by step to moving towards the modern world,' the first insurance policy against fire and accident was applied for and on 3 April 1911 the chapel was licensed for wedding, enabling him to conduct the marriage of his son. However, by January 1912 at chapel meeting Pastor Gilpin was told to terminate his ministry at the end of the month and at a following meeting a proposal was accepted to 'erase the Gilpin family members from the church rolls and not allow them to attend church services'!
On 28 June 1913 James Gilpin, a Parson together with his wife Eliza and son Walter left for Canada; his son Sydney followed him on 5 June 1914 and Sydney's wife and infant followed on 3 September 1915.

Janet Doody 9th. October 2021

Broseley member Margaret Phillips sent in this interesting essay, written by her son Geraint whilst he was at school (c1997). It is about the memories of Broseley resident Jack Hall of the 2nd World War and for which Geraint won the Quinn History prize.
JACK HALL'S ACCOUNT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR
Jack joined up in the army in July 1939 just before the start of the war. He enlisted in the Royal Artillery. New recruits were put through a rigorous training program, and Jack became a gunner on 25 pounders. When war broke out Jack was still training at Harrogate, he was training for another three weeks. Following training Jack was posted with his regiment to France and stationed west of the Ardennes Forest, following the German break through and the defeat of the French Army he retreated to Dunkirk. After a couple of days on the beach he was picked up by an old paddle boat and taken to Southampton. Here he received his Dunkirk medal from the French Government, following which he was posted to Newcastle where he re-joined his regiment.
The regiment was sent to Lowestoft to defend the coast against an invasion that never came. In 1940 Jack was sent out to North Africa where he joined the 8th Army, he served in the desert for about 4 years and fought in the Battle of Alamein. He also took part in the Sicily landings and the invasion of Italy where he fought for the rest of the war., taking part in the Battle of Mount Casino.



Monte Casino Abbey after Allied Bombing Feb. 1944.



Monte Casino Abbey rebuilt as it is today

After peace was declared in 1945, he was involved in transporting troops back to England from Italy in trucks after they had been demobilised. When it was his turn to be demobilised, he was put on a plane to fly back to England. Unfortunately, the plane has a problem halfway through the journey and had to return to Italy. After this experience he returned by truck, after a month of waiting, arriving home on 1 January 1946 to great street parties and celebrations. By the end of the war, he had been awarded 7 medals, the Dunkirk Medal, 8th Army Star, the Italian Star, the Defence Medal and 3 Victory medals.

Jack showed a reluctance to talk about the battles and horrors of war. Boredom seemed to be a major part of the war, sitting around waiting for the enemy to attack, and when they did attack, frenzied fighting for a couple of hours, then days and days of waiting again, endlessly bored. Another hardship was the constant shortage of rations, the staple diet was bully beef, one tin would be shared between 2 people. They had the same rations in the desert, but instead they called it "desert chicken". As well as a shortage of rations the troops had to cope with the hostile weather conditions, sandstorms, and the burning sun. The soldiers used to resort to humour and jokes to help them survive. They were constantly making up nicknames for things and making fun of the new recruits, saying that they came out for a holiday not to fight a war.

During active service you were constantly in danger of being killed or wounded whether you lived or died was a matter of luck, death was just something that happened. If you did fear death, you were useless, just a stuttering wreck and you probably also went mad. During the course of the war Jack was only injured twice, the first time he was hit by shrapnel in the ankle when he was fighting in France, and the second time was when he suffered a perforated eardrum after the battle of El Alamein. He was sent to the outskirts of the Battle of the Nile for 2 weeks to recover this injury.

Amongst his most prominent memories of the war is what he saw at Dunkirk. When he arrived on the beach there were lots of men in the sea being dragged into small boats by tow ropes; other men were asleep or sheltering in the sand dunes. Men were either huddled together in little groups or in lines waiting for the next boats to arrive. During the three days he spent on the beach it was under constant fire, whilst they were evacuating Dunkirk everybody had to destroy their equipment and could not take anything back with them. British equipment was picked up by the Germans and was used against the British in the desert campaign. There were men in Jack's regiment who fought against the Germans who were using British Jeeps captured in France.

Another of Jack's memories is of a loader on the gun nearest to Jack's gun who, at the Battle of Alamein had been firing his gun non-stop for 4 hours when, instead of loading his gun normally he accidently caught the edge of the shell inside the barrel, this caused the shell to explode, completely killing all the crew and nearly injuring Jack's crew. In that battle there was the biggest artillery barrage ever. The guns were firing non-stop for 24 hours and by the end of the battle most of the gun crews were unconscious on the floor due to fatigue.

Probably Jack's worst memory is of the Sicily landings, where he lived in a hole on the beach for 3 weeks whilst being shelled constantly by the Italians. The British died like flies until they managed to recover the position and eventually drive the Italians back. At Monte Casino Jack's crew was one of the many that was shelling the monastery, eventually, after weeks of fighting the monastery was completely destroyed and the Italians beaten. Monte Casino was the most important in a long line Italian defences that stretched across Italy. This made it a very important victory for the British Army in Italy and paved the way to the conquering of the country.

It is hard to believe that such a quiet man fought for so long in such horrible war; his hope that no one else will have to do the same ever again and that all his friends who died did not die in vain. Jack says that no one should have to suffer what he and many other millions of people did, he hopes that it will be lesson to many others in time to come.

by Geraint Phillips

Jack Elwyn Hall was born on 20 August 1918 and died on 1st May 2002 and in 1953 he married Olive Jones

Article kindly provided by Margaret Philips
Submitted by Janet Doody 9th. October 2021

MAILBOX

There have been no Mailbox submissions this quarter.

DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS

Thank you to those members who have indicated they would be happy to have electronic copies of the Newsletter. If there are any other members who would prefer it this way please contact the membership secretary, Janet Robinson, email: janetc46.jr.jr@gmail.com

Those of you would prefer to have it in its printed form can continue to look forward to receiving it through the post. Many thanks

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