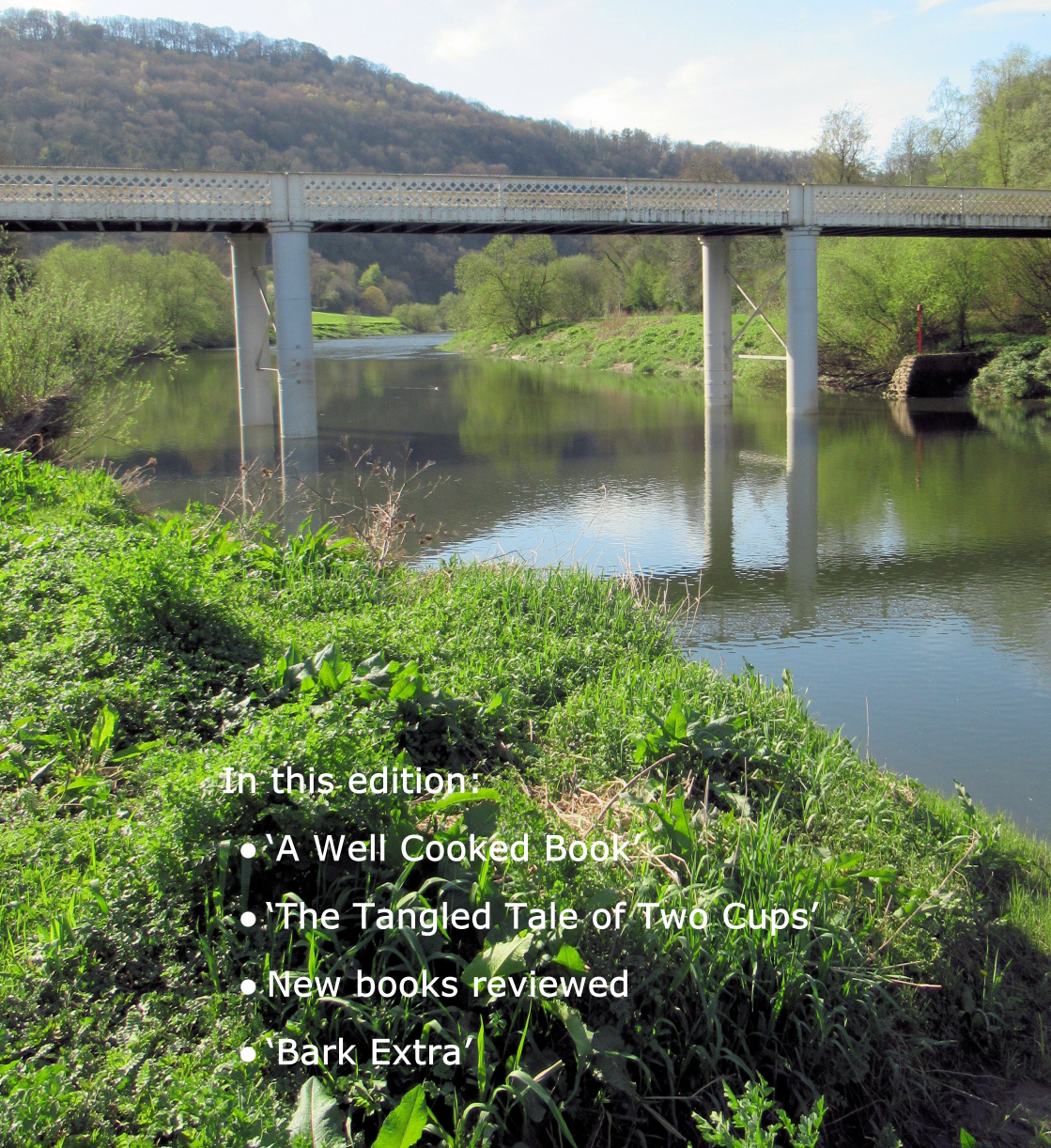


FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

*News
May 2026*



In this edition:

- 'A Well Cooked Book'
- 'The Tangled Tale of Two Cups'
- New books reviewed
- 'Bark Extra'

News

May 2026

Editor:

Keith Walker
51 Lancaster Drive
Lydney
GL15 5SJ
01594 843310
[NewsletterEditor
@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:NewsletterEditor@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

Chair:

Sue Middleton
07973 789214
[Chair
@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:Chair@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

Treasurer:

Jan Bailey
[Treasurer
@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:Treasurer@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

Secretary:

Owen McLaughlin
01594 560516
[Secretary
@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

Website:

forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

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Editors Notes

Introducing the very latest 'Lydney Park Special' New Regard! The edition features authoritative articles on the Bathurst and Wynter families, the History of the Archaeology in the Park, together with special features on 'Tolkien & Lydney Park', 'North Foreland Lodge School' and the social history of the 'Staff of Lydney Park'. As usual, you can get your copy at the members only price of £7.50 at our meetings, via our website, or the order forms in the pull out section in the middle of this edition.

The other two pull out pages include reviews of recently published books that might interest you. One of the books ('Barging Up The Wye') provided the inspiration for the cover photograph. This was taken from the old quay at Brockweir of the bridge over the Wye. The location was historically the highest point reached by a normal tide on the Wye, and a key transshipment point where the cargoes of trows were transferred onto barges to be sent upstream, and where cargoes of principally iron and timber were sent downstream to Bristol and beyond. Trade declined with the coming of the railways.

Thank you to Adrian Burrows who provided the feature article 'A Well Cooked Book'. This tells the story of Elinor Fettiplace's 'Receipt Book', which by a stroke of fortune came to be inherited by renowned biographer Hilary Spurling who wrote her own book about 'Elizabethan Country House Cooking' based on Fettiplace's original book. The story has local connections as you will see.

Thanks also to Martin Fletcher, who was motivated by Cecile Hunt's recent articles on Bark Production to tell his own story as a Forester involved in bark production in the late 1960s, early 1970s.

On the back cover you will find a story about Cinderford Rugby Club's financial woes in the 1920's and how the mining community came together to save the club.

Finally, don't forget about our summer walks. You will find full details of each walk and how to book your place in the news section.

Keith Walker

Short pieces of news, views, and opinions for the Newsletter are always very welcome. Every effort will be made to reproduce articles as presented but the Editor reserves the right to edit as necessary. The Editor will assume that all necessary authorisation for attachments, photographs etc has been obtained and the FODLHS will not be held liable in the case of a subsequent query.

Notes from the Chair

Spring has sprung and the Forest looks glorious in its fresh shades of green, coupled with the beautiful bluebells in some places.

Some exciting events have happened recently, and more are coming soon in the summer months. Dr Jason Griffiths and Dr Roger Deeks have just launched a new book celebrating the complete works of Catherine Drew 'The Forest Poetess'. Her 1841 collection of just eight poems was republished in 1904 and 2002. Recently more of her poems have been discovered during the Forest of Dean Writers

Collection project and these (along with those in her original collection) are now published for the first time. As this book adds to the supply of locally sourced educational materials, the project provided free copies to our local primary schools, and these have been delivered by some dedicated FODLHS members.



Coleford Town Councillor Rob Dix has created an amazing model of Coleford town centre, as it may have looked in 1643, to commemorate the Battle of Coleford. On 20th February 1643 a Royalist Army, raised around Raglan, was en-route to lay siege to Gloucester but diverted to Coleford to destroy a Parliamentary militia regiment consisting of local men who were responsible for protecting communities in the Forest of Dean. This model is currently on display in the Tourist Information Centre in Coleford and we hope it may feature in the celebratory event for our Schools History Competition on Sun 5th July in the Main Place in Coleford. Rob has created this battle board to be used during the re-enactment event being planned by the Sealed Knot Society in Coleford on 8th - 9th Aug (more details online at www.thesealedknot.org.uk/event/coleford).

In the photo above, you can see the clock tower (just below the centre) with troops arriving from the left

up Newland Street and more attacking from the top, down Staunton Road.

On 24th April, the Imjin Memorial was unveiled in the Cyril Hart Arboretum near Speech House. In 1951, a group of Forest of Dean soldiers were engaged in one of the most ferocious battles since World War II. These young men, mostly national servicemen, fought in the Battle of the Imjin River and then spent two years in the cruellest captivity imaginable. Their experiences and those of other combatants in the Korean War, have been forgotten in many places, but in the villages and towns of the Forest of Dean they are remembered.

The Lydney Park Special edition of the New Regard has just been published and is available to buy via our website or by using the order form in this newsletter. Alternatively you can visit Lydney Park Spring Gardens and Roman Ruins and buy copies at the new entrance and approach off Bream Road, GL15 5JW (what3words [///banana.requests.scariest](https://www.what3words.com/banana.requests.scariest)). FODLHS committee members, Monmouth Antiquarians and Dean Archaeology Group will be in the museum on Sundays if you wish to call in and see the treasures there. The gardens are open on Fri, Sat, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays from 3rd April to 7th June 2026. I was interested to learn recently that some of the Forest scenes for the film 'Hamnet' used Lydney Park Estate as a location. Of course, I watched it thinking 'that Forest looks lovely', without realising that it was our Forest – the best in the world!

Sue Middleton



Membership

We are now approaching our last indoor meeting of the year and preparing for our programme of summer walks, and the opportunity to partake in the GLHA summer afternoon with Tidenham Historical Group on 20th June. I hope the warmer weather will now allow us all to enjoy more time outside at these summer events and walks.

New members continue to join us, and each year since Covid, our membership has increased. Joining us since the last newsletter are Colin Morgan, Alison Wade, Clare Whittington, Caroline Abbott, Emma Walker, Vanessa Broadway, Peter Rochford and Alex Hamill, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all. We hope you enjoy your membership and look forward to seeing you at forthcoming events.

When I send out email reminders of our events and other events of interest, some of the messages are returned to me undelivered. So, if you are not receiving them, please check that your inbox is functioning correctly. Also please let me know if you change your postal or email address especially important so I can send out timely reminders for Society and other events. Also please remember to let me know if you change your telephone number.

Ian Gower (membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)



On 17th February last, Nigel Costley and Keith Walker went to see Dave Tuffley at his home to present him with his author's copy of the new FODLHS book 'A-Z of Mining in the Forest of Dean'. Dave produced the original 'FoD Glossary of Mining Terms', which was incorporated into the new volume.

The book is selling very well and is available at selected local outlets. You can purchase it at a preferential price via our website:

<https://forestofdeanhistory.org.uk/publications-for-sale/books/>

Remember to enter the discount code (see above) when ordering from our website.

Forthcoming Meetings

Saturday 16th May 3pm

West Dean Centre, Bream

Dr Nigel Costley presents:

'The 1926 General Strike and the miners' lock-out in the Forest of Dean'

Saturday 19th September 3pm

West Dean Centre, Bream

Jan Bailey discusses:

'Dean Heritage Centre's Collection of Bones in an Archaeological Context'

Summer Walks

Saturday 30 May, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

An invitation to join members of the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association and The Cambrian Archaeological Association in a walk around three churches near Tintern.

If you have ever stood on the Devil's Pulpit to admire Tintern Abbey you may have noticed two further churches further into the Monmouthshire hills. We will walk to these other St Mary's, once Celtic Christian sites re-dedicated to their patron saint by the Cistercians, to serve the lay-tenants working in their granges. We will walk to St Mary's (Llanbedui), Penterry to learn about the history of the church and site with its abandoned medieval village and plague pits. We then head back to Tintern's Chapel Hill to a private garden where you can have a comfort break, your packed lunch and, for a donation to the St Mary's Conservation Fund, an optional cream tea, before moving across to the second St Mary's (Llanandras). Discover the colourful history of this ruined church and site, the ironmasters buried there, and the Lower Wye Valley Building Preservation Trust's plans to consolidate it for safe public access. After enjoying the beautiful aerial views of the river Wye, Tintern Village and abbey we will go down the ancient and pretty cobbled pilgrim path to the most impressive of all, St Mary's, Tintern Abbey.



*St Mary's, Llandras
Photo - Saffron Blaze*

The numbers will be strictly limited so booking is essential. To book (requesting optional cream tea if desired) email secretary@maa.wales

Booking closes on 25th May. Bring your own lunch. Meet in the Tintern Abbey car park (paying) outside the abbey shop. Bring Cadw/EH cards for free entrance to the abbey.

This route takes in difficult and steep ground and a couple of stiles. It is not suitable for pushchairs or anyone with mobility issues.



Funeral cart, Dean Heritage Centre

Sunday June 14th, 10.30 – 12.00

Walk the path of the dead with Kathryn Berry, death academic and FoDLHS committee member and librarian.

In the times before the motorised hearse and a selection of burial grounds and cemeteries, the dead were transported by foot. In the rural Forest of Dean the church of All Saints in Newland served as the 'Cathedral of the Forest', being the centre of ecclesiastical life for many years. In order to bury their relatives in

the consecrated ground of All Saints, the bereaved of Coleford used to walk a specific route - carrying their dead on their shoulders or in biers. This route can still be traced, and we will follow the path of the dead from Coleford to Newland, sharing a journey with hundreds of souls.

Walk lasts approximately 90 mins. Some of the walk is on muddy tracks so may pose a problem to those with limited mobility. Please wear suitable footwear and bring a flask and snacks if you wish.

To book email K.Berry.20@unimail.winchester.ac.uk

Meet at Coleford market place at 10.30.

A Well Cooked Book by *Adrian Burrows*

Elinor Fettiplace's 'Receipt Book' was the Mrs Beeton's Household Management book of the age. Created as a family 'recipe book' in 1604, the book passed down through the family and was inherited by the Spurling family in 1976, recognised as a gem by renowned biographer Hilary Spurling (née Forrest) who then published her research on it in 1986.



Hilary Spurling

Elinor Fettiplace (née Poole) started her life in Pauntley and kept a handwritten leather-bound book while Lady of the manor at Appleton Manor southwest of Oxford. Unusual in being able to read and write at a time when this was not universal in men, let alone women, she captured aspects of many activities, cookery, confectionery, distilling, medicine preparation and dispensing, laundry work, and ink and insecticides manufacture. The date on the cover of her 'Receipt Book' is 1604, but the contents were probably initiated at her home in Sapperton in the 1580's. Entries were added throughout her lifetime, mostly in her own hand, but latterly by a scribe. In 1647 she passed the book on to her niece Anne Horner before it finally ended up in the belongings of Hilary Spurling's husband's great aunt before re-discovery.

So, who was Elinor? Her father was Sir Henry Poole, a lawyer, admitted to Inner Temple in 1562 aged just 21. By 1604 he had acquired lands extending from Hereford to Berkshire and had become a Gloucestershire JP from 1573. He was knighted in 1587 and became High Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1588 and MP in 1593. Elinor had access to high society circles, and mixed with intelligent, able and independent, financially adept women.

Elinor's marriage to Sir Richard Fettiplace in 1589 (aged 19) was a good match. A saying of the time was: "The Tracey's, Lacey's, and Fettiplace's own all the manors, the parks and the chases", reflecting the fact that their estates had spread from the Thames to the midlands and into the west country after settlements awarded by William the Conqueror. Family circles gave Elinor access to society weddings, banquets, and other occasions which provided a rich series of sources for her book. She not only recorded relevant details, but attributions too, giving extra interest to the entries. She must have been capable and effective as cook, confectioner, pharmacist, medic, and housekeeper. All this must have demanded a level of education unusual for a girl at that time.

The family's responsibilities were wide and covered much of the village as well as those employees at the house. During times of hardship (most winters) and for festive occasions meals were prepared for large parties (perhaps 40-80.) Her notebook and its annotations show her abundant skills, including washing fine fabrics (gold and silk threads), softening leather, and making potpourris and scented bags for linen closets. The Fettiplaces' founded a local elementary school and in 1611 endowed a charity for distribution of bread and relief to the poor which was active until the 1920's.

These were plague years and two concoctions to ward off contagion are included: "Imperial Water", herbs and roots in white wine to be taken night and morning (noted as "proved") and one noted in the margin as from King Henry VIII: a brew of marigolds, sorrel, burnet, rue, feverfew, and roots of dragonwort sweetened with sugar candy to be taken "before the marks appear." Another recipe to be taken in "time of infection" was boiled herbs and roots with spices in Malmsey.

She did not copy some of the more barbaric remedies touted at the time, but comments on one remedy: "if not effective it cannot make things worse"



Appleton Manor - Des Blenkinsopp CC BY-SA 2.0

The book also records 56 ways of dressing wounds, 48 remedies for failing eyesight, 24 potions for stomach upsets, 16 cough mixtures, and 11 cures for a bad back. Also mentioned were: a cure for mouth ulcers (Dr Leonard Poe); several from Dr. Thomas Muffet whose daughter Patience was the 'Little Miss Muffet who sat on a tuffet'; Dr Stephens' cordial (a herbal panacea popular for a century or more); and Dr. John Hall's cure for nosebleeds (John Hall was Shakespeare's son-in-law by marriage to Susannah). A comforting approach was demonstrated by nourishing broths applicable equally to bad backs, kidney complaints, and consumption.

Her recipes were set down when medieval feasting was giving way to a more refined cuisine. Not with the dominant haute cuisine of the French chefs introduced by the Stuarts at the end of the century, but a more delicate and extravagant approach with a mix of European, Arabic, and traditional ideas.



Elinor Fettiplace and her sister from their mother and father's memorial in Sapperton Church Philip Halling CC BY-SA 2.0

Hilary Spurling was inspired by the idea of recreating the dishes, and over a period of ten years discovered that rather than tasting strange to modern palates they worked well and could easily be reproduced. Hilary recreated most of the recipes and reorganised their haphazard layout. The calendar approach taken in presenting Elinor's notes makes for a more organised book as published by Hilary in 1986. February records pies to keep food edible over long winter periods. They were easily transportable "fast food". They would not differ much from today's game pies. June records an abundance of fruits for puddings and preserves. Gooseberries feature a lot (sometimes known as Feberries). They were used as a zest for sauces and purées perhaps

getting their name from their common use in stuffing geese, also as "butter gooseberries" in a delicious version of summer pudding. June entries also feature "Apricocke wine" sometimes flavoured with Clary (a relation to garden sage with bluish flowers). December features Christmas of course, but not like our own. Christmas (Mince) Pye really did include meat in Elinor's day, including minced tongue, beef, or mutton. Hilary's experiments with the recipes suggest it can add texture to the modern mix of ingredients without adding meaty flavour. The original recipe does not include much liquid which makes the 'Pye' similar to meat pasties from the Middle East or Empanadas from Argentina.

In contrast to our traditional rich puddings and marzipan lined cakes the Christmas selections were generally of lighter fare. The seventeenth century Christmas banquet would frequently include 32 dishes per "course" (of which there were several.) Biscuits and macaroons would be included alongside a range of dips, jellies, preserves, and creams. A barley cream is noted by Hilary as particularly delicious and a chocolate cream a less cloying version of modern chocolate mousse and lighter than a soufflé set with gelatine.

To conclude, this is a fascinating historical insight gained from a personal document frozen in time for 300 years. Through her book, Hilary Spurling has given it all a modern cook's perspective, which illustrates cultural and social aspects of life as well as simply "what they ate." Elinor Poole of Pauntley recorded details of her multi-skilled role as wife of the Lord of the Manor. Through the modernising treatment we can directly connect with history through a useful and motivating cookery book. We can imagine our distant ancestor enjoying the same delicious experiences as ourselves.

A final link to the Forest of Dean is that Hilary Spurling won the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize for a woman author writing on a historical aspect of English Literature. This was for her 1974 book on Ivy Compton Burnett from 1884 to 1919 "Ivy When Young" which also won the Duff Cooper prize. Rose Mary Crawshay (née Yeats) was married to Richard Thompson Crawshay, the last of the dynasty of Merthyr Tydfil ironmasters who lived at Cyfartha Castle.

Byelaws - Forest of Dean

by Cecile Hunt

Byelaws are local laws relating to a particular location, accompanied by some sanction or penalty for its non-observance. Local laws to deal with local issues. Byelaws generally require something to be done - or not done - in a particular location. The non-observance of a byelaw results in a criminal offence tried in a Magistrates' Court, byelaws must be approved by central government before they can come into force



UK byelaws have been around from at least the 16th century; covering such things as managing community crises like the poor harvests of 1590s. After the Great Fire of London regulations were introduced for rebuilding. In more recent times they are used in regulating public spaces and buildings. The Forest of Dean has byelaws drawn up under the Forestry Act 1967 (a) after consultation with the Verderers of the New Forest and of the Forest of Dean. It is classed as the 'lands of the Commissioners' under the Statutory Instrument 1982 No 648 byelaws are listed that came into operation on 1st June 1982.

Amongst the Forest of Dean byelaws listed no persons shall in or on the lands of the Commissioners: enter any area on or near which there is displayed by the Commissioners a notice prohibiting entry thereon; or enter any building, structure or mine unless there is a notice displayed thereon by the Commissioners permitting or implying access thereto.

No person shall; leave open or obstruct any gate or moveable barrier giving access to any enclosed plantation or other enclosed area; light any fire or stove or leave any lighted match, tobacco, cigar or cigarette; display any notice, placard or bill; dig up, remove, cut or injure any tree, shrub or plant, whether living or not, or remove the seeds therefrom, or dig up or remove any soil, turf, leafmould, moss, peat, gravel, slag, sands or minerals of any kind; disturb or remove archaeological or historical remains; operate a metal detector; set up or place any caravan, tent, booth, stall or erection of any kind; turn out to graze or feed or allow to remain thereon any animal or fowl; permit any animal in his charge to be out of control; permit a dog for which he is responsible to disturb, worry or chase any bird or animal or, on being requested by an officer of the Commissioners, fail to keep the dog on a leash; set up beehives. There are more byelaws listed in the Statutory Instrument 1982 No 682..

It also includes Additional Acts prohibited in the Forest of Dean. No person shall in the Forest of Dean:

- i. turn out in any area of plantations enclosed by the Commissioners to graze or feed or allow to remain therein any animal or fowl;
- ii. without lawful authority, turn out in any area of the Forest (not being an area of plantations enclosed by the Commissioners) to graze or feed or allow to remain therein any animal or fowl except such sheep as the Commissioners suffer to graze therein;
- iii. turn out in any area of the Forest (not being an area of plantations enclosed by the Commissioners) to graze or feed or allow to remain therein any sheep, other than a lamb, which is not clearly marked with the owner's identification marks being identification marks registered with the Deputy Surveyor of the Forest of Dean as the owner's.

Forest of Dean byelaws are in operation in: Alvington, Awre, Blaisdon, Cinderford, Coleford, Drybrook, English Bicknor, Hewelsfield, Littledean, Longhope, Lydbrook, Lydney, Mitcheldean, Newland, Newnham, Ruardean, Ruspidge, St. Briavels, Staunton, Tidenham, West Dean and Woolaston parishes.

Bark Extra! *by Martin Fletcher*

Cecile's excellent articles in previous editions of the newsletter and in New Regard Issue 40 have been of great interest to myself. When I was working as a FC Forester in the Dean in the late 60's and 70's; oak bark production was a regular spring season part of the annual timber harvesting cycle. The bark then being harvested was from trees planted in the first half of the 19th century.

My responsibility was the production of two lorry loads of oak bark per annum, each of about 12 to 15 tonnes. The production process was much the same as described by Cecile in her Part 1 and was indeed a lucrative trade. So much so that the timber fallers in the 1970's, then paid 6d per Hoppus Foot for felling, willingly stopped to increase their earnings from the very good piecework rate per tonne on bark stripping. When the sap was running, trees in the plantation area being thinned were checked frequently to find out which had the sap rising; to then fell and peel off the oak bark. There was only a narrow window of about three weeks to accomplish the bark stripping before bud burst. Another technique was to remove the bark from the first six feet of the tree whilst standing, this was achieved by the tallest member of the felling team using a 12lb felling axe to make zig zag cuts into the bark above head height, the bark was then easily levered off the trunk.

The bark stripping tools used were some of those shown on New Regard Issue 40 Page 35, namely, barking irons and had changed little from the early 19th century designs shown. The process was very much as shown on page 37, with perhaps not quite so many men as the nine individuals working simultaneously on the same tree. The means of bark extraction to roadside in the 1970's was by mechanical transport using a tractor and trailer. There the bark was stacked in stooks like corn sheaves; to dry for three to four weeks, this made it less fragile and more robust as well as lighter to handle before transport to a tannery. Hand loading by the felling gang was necessary.



J & FJ Baker's premises in Colyton, Devon

The Forestry Commission were paid a price per tonne, free on lorry, at the forest roadside. My principal memories of harvesting oak bark are from the Headless Hill area of High Meadow Woods. At that time in the Dean two buyers of oak bark by the lorry load were J & FJ Baker of Colyton in Devon, established in 1862 and still in production as tanners today. They are the last in Europe to use oak bark for tanning. The other firm was J Croggan & Son of Grampond Road in Cornwall; who have now ceased trading.

What evidence do we have of oak bark harvesting in the New Forest, my home with the Forestry Commission for 45 years? When I came in 1981 there was no mention by the experienced timber fallers of having ever been involved in oak bark harvesting. On enquiring recently, the Office of Woods ceased bark harvesting early in the twentieth century.

There were to my knowledge no bark barns like the one near Newland. However, there was a Bark Yard here in Brockenhurst, established in 1870 in the farmyard of a house built in eighteenth century. The premises were referred to as the Bark Masters Yard.

Meetings in Review *with Ian Gower, Nigel Costley & Keith Walker*



On 21st February, John Putley revealed in his talk ‘Get Off My Land’ how farming had evolved from the earliest times and described how a landscape that was naturally wildwood was tamed and altered to grow crops and feed livestock.

We heard how development of farming in the Forest of Dean through the ages was additionally affected by the complexities of being a Royal Forest. The presentation made full use of contemporary maps, illustrations and engravings to illustrate the changes in technology, land allocation and ownership, and

political interventions such as the effect of the corn laws from 1815-1846, and the Enclosures Acts from the 18th and 19th centuries. Starting with the first farmers from the Stone Age keeping cattle, sheep and pigs, and using antler and stone tools to grow cereal crops, we progressed through the Iron Age where cattle were very important, and sheep were kept for milk and their wool. Development of technology meant iron tipped ploughs which enabled cultivation. The Roman period saw the countryside supplying urban markets, whereas Anglo-Saxon times saw a return to self-sufficiency in villages and hamlets.

Progressing through medieval times, we heard how the Domesday Book first recorded farm names, and an illustration of communities being named after crops from the area (e.g. Flaxley); how the Normans created seven Royal Forests in Gloucestershire which included land not only for hunting, but heathland, grassland and wetland; and how St. Briavels became the manufacturing centre for arrows. New systems of land ‘ownership’ were introduced as the manorial system came into being: Demesne land was the portion of a manor or estate retained by a Lord for their own use; Glebe land was historically a plot of land owned by the Church of England; Common land was subject to historic rights, such as grazing, which serfs had access to. Tithe maps – an early official record of land ownership- were discussed. These were surveyed from 1836 to 1839, and many exist today in the Gloucester Archives, and can also be seen via the ‘Know your Place’ website.

Change came in many forms, from new crops being introduced including turnips and clover, through different crop rotation techniques, through to the Golden Age of farming as the Industrial Revolution took hold from the 1840s and mechanisation allowed much greater productivity. However, this revolution had its downsides for farming communities, as by 1870, the number of agricultural labourers had reduced by 100,000, and the advent of the railways and steamships led to a great proportion of the country’s food being imported. By 1914 grain imports accounted for about 90% of the country’s requirements.

After the break, Nigel Costley presented the history and background of the latest excellent addition to FoDLHS publications - the A to Z of Mining in the Forest of Dean. **I.G.**

The March meeting was treated to a double-act of Averil Kear and Cecile Hunt talking about Dyrrham Park, near Bath, and its links to Lydney.

Averil began with the battle of Deorham in the year 577. This saw the West Saxons extend Wessex, pushing the Brittons back to a defensive line along the River Severn and further down the South West. Three Britton kings were slain in the battle. Averil described the armour, shields and weapons used in the bloody conflict and the successful tactics most likely used by the Saxons. Visitors to today’s Dyrrham Park can walk through the battle site.

Cecile explained that Theobald Russel owned the land in 1311 and how the estate has developed over the years. Gilbert Dennis built a new manor house and was allowed to ‘empark’ or enclose some 500 acres to form his estate.



In 1571 Dennis sold the estate to the Wynters for £1,500 bringing the connection with Lydney and the Forest of Dean. George and William Wynter were born in Lydney, probably in the old Manor House on the High Street. The Wynters made their money from privateering and trading but the family also married well and became rich and influential during the Tudor period. The Wynters went on to become significant iron makers, felling much of the Forest of Dean's tall trees to fuel their furnaces.

The Dyrham estate was extended in 1620 to form a deer park. Initially many of the deer died from disease and the herd had to be restocked. On the death of John Wynter in 1689, ownership passed to his sole remaining child, Mary Wynter (1651-91). She married William Blathwayt (1649-1717) but died shortly after and so Dryham Park became the property of the Blathwayts who built the grand house we see today.

In 1960 the National Trust acquired the estate and opened it to the public.

N.C.



On the 18th of April, Vice President Cecile Hunt offered us a virtual tour of St Briavels and environs, incorporating a cornucopia of interesting stories and facts, of which only a few can be featured in this review.

Obviously the imposing castle took centre stage. It was originally built between 1075 and 1129 as a royal administrative centre for the Forest by Milo Fitzwalter. During the 13th century the castle became first a favourite hunting lodge of King John, then an important centre for the manufacture of longbow arrows and crossbow quarrels. Later the castle was used as a court and prison.

By 1948, although in the beneficial ownership of English Heritage, the castle was being used as a Youth Hostel (YHA). Cecile made the point that the current castle likely had a precursor, namely 'Stow Green Castle', believed to have been built as a motte and bailey construction after the Norman Conquest.

The locus was a small manor in 1066 and known until the 1160's as 'Lydney' or 'Little Lydney'. The name St Briavels was in use by 1130 and is thought to be derived from the Celtic saint Bieuc. St Briavels is also an historic hundred, which is still significant in determining whether a person can become a freeminer ('born in the Hundred of St Briavels' etc etc).

St Mary's, the current Anglican church at St Briavels, was a chapel to Lydney Church for much of its history. The church was originally built in the 11th century with notable Norman additions in the 12th century, and with a tower added in 1830. The Congregational Church was established in the 1860s and ultimately had outlying mission stations at Mork and The Common. However, decline was seemingly inevitable, and it was closed by 1972.

Influential families and people provided another strand of interest. Members of the Hathaway family long ago in the 13th century had great authority over the Forest of Dean through the position of Constable of St Briavel's Castle and Warden of the Forest. In more recent times an extraordinary character named Charles Lord Denton was a benefactor to St Briavels in the 19th century, including funding the almshouses in St Briavels that bear his name. Incidentally, Denton's middle name was Lord, and he was apparently not averse to giving the impression he was 'Lord Denton'!

After the tea break, Chair Sue Middleton gave a short talk on 'Hoarthorns Farm - How to turn a farm into a Forest'.

K.W.

The Tangled Tale of Two Cups, Cinderford RFC, and Jim Beard

by Ron Beard, Paul Jotcham and Keith Walker

For a period in the 1920's, Cinderford Rugby Club was going through a periodic trough in their circumstances. The tone at the Annual Meeting in July 1924 was pessimistic. The Secretary reported that results had not been so good as in 1922 -23 due to the lack of enthusiasm for training. The Treasurer said, "it was difficult to be optimistic about the finances, and he feared they would have to practice retrenchment". The club was £110 in debt, and gate receipts were falling. It was costly to pay the expenses of 'outside' players, and the annual financially helpful match with Gloucester did not take place.

During this time, when coal mining dominated the economy in the Forest of Dean, numerous miners engaged in rugby as a recreational activity, frequently representing their respective colliery teams. Aware of the developing perilous financial situation at Cinderford Rugby Club, on February 16th 1926, representatives from the pits at Foxes Bridge, Eastern, Crump Meadow and Lightmoor met with Cinderford club officials to set up an inter-colliery rugby competition. Cinderford RFC arranged for all the competition's games to be played at their ground and local mine owner Arthur Morgan, a devoted Cinderford rugby fan, put up the 40 guinea Dinkey Cup.

All the players in the competition had to be bona fide miners, working at least 14 days prior to games. One thousand tickets were issued for each of the opening round of matches priced at 6d each. The popular full-blooded matches were well attended, and Cinderford RFC's large debt was soon wiped out. If a team could win the competition three times consecutively then the cup was theirs permanently. Lightmoor were dominant, partly due to the inclusion of England player 'Bumps' Carpenter in the team, winning the competition in 1926, '27 and '28, gaining the cup outright. Subsequently interest in the competition waned and the Dinkey Cup's glory days were over. However, the competition had done its job -- it had saved Cinderford Rugby Club!

Now comes the twist! By 1932 Lightmoor Colliery Football Club had given the Dinkey Cup for an annual choral contest to aid the Dilke Hospital. Whitecroft and Ruardean Hill male choral choirs competed for the Cup, with Whitecroft emerging the winners. The 1934 contest saw Ruardean Hill beat Cinderford for the Dinkey Cup. However, at the Dilke Hospital Fete Subscribers Annual Meeting in May 1934, the decision was taken to hold a bazaar in the autumn in future years instead of the annual garden party at which the choral contest took place.

In 1935 Arthur Morgan retired to Eastbourne, thus leaving a question mark over the future of the Dinkey Cup. Step forward Edwin William (Jim) Beard. Jim, a collier, played for Lightmoor in the cup matches and also for Cinderford RFC. It seems he was disconcerted at the uncertainty about the Dinkey Cup after the collapse of the choral competition, and 'rescued' it, presenting it to Cinderford Rugby Football Club.

In later years, three of Jim's grandchildren, Paul Jotcham, Susan Hoole and Sandra Davidson jointly presented another cup (The Jim Beard Cup) to Cinderford RFC, to be annually presented to the most promising young player.



*Edwin (Jim) Beard pictured
with the Dinkey Cup*



Jim Beard's Dinkey Cup medal