

# FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

*news*  
November 2023

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November 2023

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## Editors Notes

If you have renewed your membership, or have joined recently, you should find your membership card enclosed with this newsletter. The card has been produced this year by our New Regard Editor, Nigel Costley, and has a fresh new look, (as does the new edition of the New Regard).

I guess we all take for granted how such items as the membership card ultimately arrive through our letter boxes. The process starts with our Meetings Secretary, Cecile Hunt, who curates the annual programme of events, with input from your Committee, so that membership cards are available in time for inclusion with the November mail shot. The newsletters and membership cards are then mailed to you by our Membership Secretary, Ian Gower. Quite a mini process altogether. Clearly there is no space for a synopsis of the talks and walks on the membership card, which is why you will find a four page 'pull-out' in the middle of this edition, giving more details of each event.

Also, in the middle pages of this edition is an order form for the 'hot off the press' issue 38 of the New Regard. This edition is extremely good value as you get 96 pages worth of local history for your discounted member's price!

Finally, at least concerning order forms, 'The Story of Forest' book has proved such a success that a reprint has proved necessary, and it is once again available for ordering at discounted members only prices. The book makes an excellent gift for grandchildren! See the other order form in the middle pages for more details.

Our Chair, John Lane, mentions the notoriously changeable weather (opposite). Apparently the sequence of dry and wet spells we have experienced this year should give us spectacular autumn colours in our wonderful Forest. Check the back cover for some suggested walks, some with local history connections, some simply focused on the treescape of the local area.

Averil Kear has kindly provided our feature article this time, and she explores the history of the Lydney Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, a companion piece to the article she has just had published in New Regard 38, (Lydney Primitive Methodists). Our regular columnist Cecile Hunt writes about Forest Recreation Grounds.

Enjoy!

*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.*

# Views From The Chair



As I write this piece (mid October) it is drizzling outside but still 21 degrees. If the weather forecast is to be believed, we will experience the first frosts of the season at the weekend! I know of nowhere else in the world that experiences such variable weather within such a short timescale.

We Brits love talking about the weather, don't we? It is often the first topic of conversation when meeting someone in the street, the supermarket or socially. It seems this is not a modern occurrence however, the English poet and critic, Samuel Johnson wrote: "*When two Englishmen meet, their first talk is of the weather*" and that was in 1758!

That was my (un)subtle way of linking the weather with history!

Unfortunately, I was unable to make the Annual General Meeting due to a conflict of commitments, but I understood all went smoothly (my thanks to Sue Middleton for 'holding the fort') with the Committee being re-elected en-bloc and an entertaining presentation from John Putley.

Our highly valued Meetings Secretary, Cecile Hunt, was made a Vice President in recognition of her many (over 20) years involvement with the Society. The majority of those years have been spent occupying key roles on the Committee, including Treasurer (twice), Chairman and, now, Meetings Secretary.

I was delighted that this year's edition of the New Regard was available for sale at the AGM. We, the Committee, are all justifiably proud of the quality of our publication. Even more so following its redesign and fresh new look. Our sincere thanks go to Nigel Costley for his design and editorial skills.

We have the customary diverse range of presentations and summer visits to look forward to in 2024. You will find a full listing in the 2024 Calendar 'pull out and keep' section in the middle of the newsletter. The full listing will also be available on the website, whilst the membership card provides you with a summary listing.

One of the (many) aspects of local history that fascinates me is the origins of place names (the subject of September's talk at Bream). Sadly, I was away on holiday for this one but I often sit and scroll through an electronic version of the 'Place Names of Gloucestershire'

Unsurprisingly perhaps, many places derive their name from a prominent individual who lived there. There are a few examples below, and you will find more in the review of September's meeting elsewhere in this newsletter.

**Bigswear.** In 1322 it was known as Bikiswere, which is likely to have derived from Bicca and Big who were probably early owners of the weir.

Just up the road, **Hewelsfield** has variously been called Hiwoldestone, Hueldesfeld and Hnaldrefeld, all of which suggest the personal name Hygeweald "the field of Hewald"

Similarly, place names can be taken from some geographical or topographical detail such as

**Lydney** Over the years known as Lidanege, Lindenee and Ledenei. The first part of the name taken from the river 'Leden' and the last part indicates an island – thus, the island in the Leden, or Lydden, subsequently morphed to Lydney.

I look forward to our Winter meetings and hope you can join us at the West Dean Centre, Bream.

John Lane

## MEMBERSHIP



The membership year 2023/24 is now in full swing and the membership has continued to grow steadily. Thank you to all those who have already renewed their subscriptions to the Society. Membership cards for those who have already renewed accompany this newsletter, and for others a renewal form is included. Please pay by

BACS if you can, and then email or post me a membership renewal form as well, so I can ensure that all your contact details are up to date.

If you believe you have renewed your membership but have not received a membership card, please email me at [membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk) or call 01594 543042 so I can amend my records and send you a card.

As well as renewals I am pleased to welcome the following new members to our Society: Clive Dunning, Nick and Sue Hill, Penny Collick, Sarah Matthews, Margaret Fuller, Malcolm and Deborah Bevan, Jane Bennewith and Ian Phillipson. We hope you enjoy your membership and look forward to seeing you at forthcoming meetings and events.

*Ian Gower*

## ANOTHER AWARD FOR CHRIS SULLIVAN!



At the recent Gloucestershire Local History Association Members Forum, Chris Sullivan, our Treasurer, was presented with a book token as runner up for the Bryan Gerrard Award 2022.

Chris received his award for his article "Charles Bathurst saves Lydney Dog and finds God" which was published in New Regard issue 36.

Chris is shown with his award, standing between Sam Eedle (the Award winner), and Dr Steven Blake, Chair of GLHA.

Congratulations to Chris!

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November - 3pm**  
**West Dean Centre, Bream**

**"The Industrial Heritage  
of the Forest of Dean"**  
**with Dr Ray Wilson**

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December - 3pm**  
**West Dean Centre, Bream**

**"Oh Mr Office of Woods -  
Make Us A Road"**  
**with Keith Walker**



The 2023 Annual General Meeting of the FODLHS was held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October at West Dean Centre, Bream. Vice-Chair Sue Middleton read the Chairman's report on behalf of John Lane, who was not able to be at the meeting. A summarised version is presented here.

*'I am continually learning about history, due largely to the excellent talks we receive here and the walks & visits the Society makes.'*

*Interspersed with the walks and talks we had some exciting events as April's meeting saw our President, Baroness Royall present Ian Standing with a President's Award for his outstanding service to our Society for over 40 years.*

*During the year members of the Committee attended the Chepstow Society History Festival, and, together with some of our members, the Gloucestershire Local History Association Day in Blockley. Look out for details of a similar day taking place in June next year in Coleford.*

*The History Society also ran a History Competition for local primary schools. The overall winner was a pupil from Coalway Junior with her model of the Monument in Bixslade. She won £25 for herself and £100 for her school. The funding for the competition comes from Dr John Jurica's legacy from the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society through the Gloucestershire Local History Association. He provided £1000, which will fund the competition for 5 years.*

*I would like to thank all the members of the committee for the work they have undertaken this year as well as Teresa Powell and others for organising our tea breaks and others who have helped in any other way. It would also be remiss not to mention the work that Caroline Prosser undertakes for us in maintaining and updating our Facebook page.*

*The Committee, as with most committees, is a constantly evolving body. I would like to give you early warning that several committee positions will become vacant next year. I would welcome expressions of interest from anyone who would like to know more about the work of the Committee.*

*The committee is assisted by the experience and knowledge of our Vice Presidents. It is with great pleasure that I can announce that Cecile Hunt has been offered (and accepted) the role of a Vice President of the History Society.*

*I am delighted that we can bring you the latest edition of the New Regard today. Our new Editor, Nigel Costley, has brought a fresh look to the publication which still maintains its excellently researched articles on a wide and varied range of history related topics.'*

The winner of the Cyril Hart Prize of £50 plus certificate, for the best written and researched article in the New Regard, Vol 37, was awarded to Chris Sullivan for his piece entitled 'Origin and Use of Dean Miners' Customs'. The Scott Garrett Prize of £50 and certificate for the best presentation at meetings was awarded to Averil Kear for her talk on Lydney & Dilke Hospitals.

The following officers of the Society were elected or re-elected:

Chair: John Lane	Vice Chair: Sue Middleton	Secretary: Owen McLaughlin
Treasurer: Chris Sullivan	Membership: Ian Gower	Conservation: Simon Moore
Meetings: Cecile Hunt	Publications + GLHA	Newsletter Editor: Keith Walker
Enquiries: Averil Kear	Representative: Mary Sullivan	New Regard Editor: Nigel Costley
Member: Sue Newton		

The Treasurer, Chris Sullivan, presented the Annual Accounts for 2022-2023. The total income for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 was £11209, whilst total expenditure was £7728, leaving net receipts for the year at £3981. Sales of all publications (both direct and via the eshop) produced £4223 income. Expenditure in sales of publications was £2886, leaving net receipts for the year at £1337. The monetary assets of the Society at 31<sup>st</sup> July were declared to be; Main Account, £12417; Deposit Account, £21092; Paypal balance, £13; Cash, £50, giving total liquidity of £33572.

# Lydney Wesleyan Methodist Chapel by Averil Kear



Both John and Charles Wesley visited the Forest of Dean in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and appear to have established a church at Coleford. Two of the earliest churches were at Mitcheldean and Lydney. Of Lydney, John Horlick writes in his journal: *In 1803 the Methodist ministers in the Cardiff circuit first preached at Lidney, they continued preaching three or four years, but owing to a misunderstanding between them and the people the preaching was given up. In 1815 the late Miss Pearce, who felt deeply concerned for the spiritual welfare of her neighbours, had*

*a room opened in Lidney for the purpose of religious worship and the Wesleyan ministers in the Monmouth circuit were invited to preach, the preaching has been continued ever since but it is said the cause is in a declining state.*

Records show that two houses were registered for worship in 1816 and in 1850 the Wesleyans built a chapel in the later Swan Road at Newerne which had average congregations of 100 in 1851 The Gloucester Journal reports in October 1850 that Benjamin Greening of Chepstow now in his 95<sup>th</sup> year occupied the pulpit of the Wesleyan Preaching room at Lydney. It went on to say that *'Mr. Greening is in the full possession of all his faculties and is able to read the smallest print without the aid of glasses.'*

The Sunday School was well supported with annual anniversaries always well attended as in 1875 when it was noted that Rev J.W. Durham preached his last sermon before moving to another circuit. The religious census in 1882 noted that there was accommodation for 150 people in the church and that year a total of 150 people had attended during all the daily services.

In 1891 it was decided to try and raise £300 to enlarge the church for the Sunday school and other purposes. They managed to collect £200 and new structures were put in place consisting of two rooms, 20 ft x 15 ft and 20 ft x 8 ft the largest being used as a classroom. The end of the chapel was taken out and an alcove built in, and a new rostrum provided. In 1892 the new chapel was dedicated by the minister, Rev. T.N. Ritson, at a service followed by a tea for over 100 people.

The Literary Society soon made good use of the new classroom holding their 8<sup>th</sup> meeting there just after the renovations were completed, and in 1896 the local newspaper reported that the Chapel at the Harvest thanksgiving *'was profusely adorned, the decorations being subsequently sold for the Cottage Hospital Fund'*. In 1902 the chapel was forced to close for nearly four weeks when an epidemic of scarlet fever and diphtheria hit Lydney.

Each year funds collected at the church were added to the Trust fund but also apportioned to charities such as the Home Missions in 1908 and the local hospital in 1909. In 1925 a large congregation gathered for the unveiling of a memorial to the members of the church and school who fell in the war. Their names were stamped on a bronze plate surrounded by an oak frame and a suitable niche was found for it on the west wall.



*Location of Lydney Wesleyan Methodist Chapel as shown on 1880 25 inch OS map (Glos XLVII.6). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland*

## Lydney Wesleyan Methodist Chapel

In the same year the Wesleyans held a 'concert and promenade supper' with the object of raising funds for the provision of prizes for the Sunday School. Over 200 people attended and a large sum was raised.

In 1927 the Lydney Wesleyans arranged a concert in the town hall in aid of the Wesleyan National Children's Home and Orphanage. Twenty-two boys and girls from the orphanage sang and recited to an 'appreciative audience'. The annual fete in 1931 was held at the home of Mrs Watts at Rosemont House in Lydney. The weather was good, attractions on offer included ping-pong, clock golf, bowls, a scent competition and a sewing stall. Dr. Carson declared the fete open and hoped it would be successful as soon the church was likely to be put to considerable expenditure.

Deterioration was proved in 1932 when the 'hot water heating apparatus exploded'. Apparently, an iron boiler support in the adjacent schoolroom underneath the church was completely broken through. The explosion damaged chairs and the piano and broke a window causing the Sunday school classes to be held in the church until the damage was repaired. Similar damage occurred in 1936 when some woodwork on the wall of the church caught fire. The fire was caused by a kettle overheating on a gas ring in an ante room. Fortunately, Rev. J. Wesley Griffin and his wife were in the church at the time and were able to extinguish the flames.

Members remained loyal to the church through several generations and there was great sadness when Louisa Lamb of Rodley Manor died in 1938. She had been a lifelong member and had taken a keen interest in collections for foreign missions. Yet another accident occurred in 1949 when freak weather conditions caused a down draught to the anthracite stove affecting the children with toxic fumes. One girl was taken off to hospital but later released and a Sunday school official stated that the stove was new, and he was sure that nothing like it would ever happen again.

Wesleyans continued to worship in the chapel in Swan Road until 1956 when it closed and Methodist worship in Lydney became centred on Springfield Methodist church. By 1959 the church was being used by members of the Elim Pentecostal church<sup>3</sup> and the following notice appeared in the London Gazette on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1959 'A Building certified for worship named ASSEMBLIES OF GOD PENTECOSTAL CHURCH, Swan Road, Lydney, in the registration district of Forest of Dean, in the county of Gloucester, was on 18th February 1959 registered for solemnising marriages therein pursuant to section 41 of the Marriage Act, 1949'.

The chapel is now home to Lydney Christian Fellowship which was established to 'actively evangelise the district by any and all means that are in harmony with scripture, to have both freedom and flexibility in worship, and to recognise and exercise all spiritual gifts as directed by the Holy Spirit'.

PLACE OF PUBLIC RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.											
[N.B.—A similar Return will be obtained from the Census of the Church of England, and also from the Measures of every other Religious Denomination throughout Great Britain.]											
I.	II.			III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	
Name or Title of Place of Worship	Where Situate, specifying the Parish, District, County			Religion	When Provided	Whether a Separate and Entire Building	Whether and whether as a Place of Public Worship (Except for a Sunday School)	Seats available for Public Worship	Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Services on Sunday, March 26, 1951	REMARKS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	Denomination			(4) (5)	(6) (7)	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Wesleyan Methodist Chapel	Lydney	Worcestershire	Gloucestershire	Methodist	1850	Yes	150	General Congregation Sunday School	70	110	
							Free Space or Standing Room	Average Number of Admittants weekly (See Instructions VIII.)			
								General Congregation Sunday School	100	110	

I certify the foregoing to be a true and correct Return to the best of my belief. Witness my hand this 21<sup>st</sup> day of March 1951.

X. (Signature) ..... J. Webb

(Official Character) General Secretary of the above-named Place of Worship.

(Address by Post) 21 Webb St. Lydney, Gloucestershire

*The Religious Census of 1851 (left) for the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at Newerne 'A separate building, erected September 1850, used exclusively as a place of worship. It had 150 sittings, all free, and standing room for 40. The estimated congregation on March 30 was 70 to afternoon service, and 110 in the evening, in contrast to the average congregation, which was 100 worshippers to morning services, and 20 Sunday Scholars.'*

# Forest Recreation Grounds *by Cecile Hunt*

How much notice do you take of your local recreation ground or Rec? How long has it been there, why is it there, who was involved in getting it started, et al.

On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1930 the Citizen newspaper declared 'Playing Fields for Dean Forest Villages'. It was apparently the 'First plan of its kind'. The Forest of Dean's Deputy Surveyor, DW Young had, 'taken the lead in the question of providing playing fields; it was 'believed to be the first comprehensive scheme of its kind to be undertaken anywhere in England'. A meeting, where representatives from 'all parts of the Forest attended', was held at West Dean Council Chambers, Coleford. Representatives came from: Berry Hill, Red Triangle, Broadwell, Brierley, Bream, Buchanan Recreation Ground, Coleford, Drybrook, Lydbrook, Parkend, Pillowell, Ruardean, Ruardean Hill, Ruspidge, Yorkley.

Not included in the list of representatives was anyone from Viney Hill. We need to go back to June 1922 when a Management Committee had been established; Chairman, Mr E Holford and Hon Secretary, Mr A Cooper. A scheme for providing Viney Hill with a recreation ground had been proposed to the Office of Woods Forest of Dean officers: LS Osmaston (Deputy Surveyor) and Foster Brown (Deputy Gaveller), it was looked on favourably and a grant of £200 from Miners' Welfare Fund was hoped for. The Viney Hill Recreation Ground was to be a local memorial of the Great War. By August 25<sup>th</sup> 1922 LS Osmaston had agreed to a six-acre piece of Forest, immediately opposite Viney Hill School to be the Rec. 'It adjoins the main road... is an ideal site for recreation purposes.' It was an ambitious plan - the plot was to provide: 'a cricket pitch, lawn tennis courts and a football ground plus an area reserved for swings for children'.

By September 1922 the Deputy Gaveller and Deputy Surveyor had still not signed the document handing over the six-acres of Forest '...required for the general outdoor sporting and other social needs of the district'. Money was needed for clearance of the oak plantation and fencing. To start the fund a fete was held in Viney Hill Vicarage meadow. By March 8<sup>th</sup> 1924 the Miners' Welfare Fund had agreed a grant of £150. The site was signed over to the Viney Hill Recreation committee; it was cleared of 200 oaks by Crown woodmen.

A Citizen report on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1931 'Playing Fields for Dean Forest - Progress with Scheme' says, 'spades were not yet at work in connection with the various schemes which had been considered'. A Miners' Welfare Committee architect had visited the Forest and inspected five of the proposed sites. He would be re-visiting in early February to inspect five more sites including: Viney Hill, Moseley Green, Soudley and Drybrook. By the end of 1931 Viney Hill's recreation ground scheme proposed in 1922 had been taken on by the National Playing Fields Association (founded 1925). The Gloucester Journal of August 13<sup>th</sup> 1938 reported the opening of the new children's recreation ground at Viney Hill by Rev CR Williams. In his speech he said, '*I look forward to the time when we shall have some tennis courts for the young people... when older residents will be able to enjoy a comfortable game of bowls and - I hope I shan't shock anybody - a comfortable glass of beer*'.

The children's play area has long since disappeared at Viney Hill Rec. There are still no tennis courts or bowls greens but there is a football pitch (see photo below), and a glass of beer can be enjoyed at Viney St Swithins Sports and Social Club.





# DHC News Update *with Nicola Wynn*



## Collections care update

Following an AIM funding grant for collections care, and with the advice of a professional conservator, we have spent the summer cleaning, tidying & treating objects around the cottage and in the Agricultural shed. This will prevent further deterioration of the objects as well as looking much better for our visitors. The final task will be putting up more interpretation. Volunteers played a large role in helping, they really are stars. We would like to continue this work next spring & summer & anyone who fancies joining our volunteer team to help care for objects will be welcome.

Please contact the Collections Officer Nicola Wynn via email: [nicola@deanheritagecentre.com](mailto:nicola@deanheritagecentre.com)

## Pyrke collection

An exciting collection of items from a descendant of the Pyrke family has kindly been donated. The Pyrkes were an important and influential family who lived at Littledean Hall in the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are three 17<sup>th</sup> century portraits, a mysterious portrait of a clergyman, silverware, photographs, documents and letters. We are currently cataloguing, researching and looking into the conservation of the paintings. Huge thanks to local historian Roger Deeks for helping us on many fronts. We intend to have a preview weekend in January 2024 to give our visitors the opportunity to see the collection and find out about the Pyrkes and Dean Hall.

## Exhibition: Changing Fashion Medieval to Modern Times until end of Dec

Display by Lisa Jayne Smith of historical costumes handsewn onto small models, made after years of extensive research that tell the story of the Change in Fashion from 1066-1980's. *"Come with me on a journey of accurate Costume change throughout the eras of Saxon, Medieval, Renaissance, Tudor, Elizabethan, Jacobean, Carolean, Restoration, Stuart, Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian, 1910's, 1920's, 1930's, 1940's, 1950's, 1960's, 1970's up to the 1980's. I hope you enjoy looking at them as much as I have in making and creating them."*

## Christmas Events

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec: Christmas Bazaar** the perfect opportunity for gift hunting for presents created by local crafters and businesses, we will also have Christmas crafts in the craft hut, an elf on the shelf scavenger hunt, festive food at The Heritage Coffee Shop and yuletide music

- **16th 18th & 22nd of December: Christmas craft** activities for children
- **9th,10th,17th & 19th of December: visit Father Christmas** in our Forest cottage
- **17th of December: Breakfast with Father Christmas**

See website for further details and bookings [www.deanheritagecentre.com](http://www.deanheritagecentre.com)

## From the Gloucester Journal of 8<sup>th</sup> July 1799 Hot news from the Forest!

Whereas John Drew and James Trigg, late of Littledean, stand charged on Oath of having, on the 8<sup>th</sup> Day of March last, feloniously set fire to the fences of a certain Inclosure in His Majesty's Forest of Dean called Birch Wood Inclosure, and thereby burnt and destroyed about six acres of the said Inclosure, full of young Oak and Beech Plants; and whereas the said James Trigg has absconded and cannot yet be taken; a Reward of TEN POUNDS is hereby offered to any person who will apprehend the said James Trigg, and safely lodge him in any one of his Majesty's Goals in the Kingdom, so that he may be prosecuted for the said Offence at the next Assizes to be held at Gloucester.

The money will be immediately paid on a Certificate being sent to R. Wordsworth, Esq. Solicitor to the Office of Woods, Staples Inn, London, of the said James Trigg being safely lodged in one of his Majesty's Goals.



# Meetings in Review *with Sue Middleton, Keith Walker & Mary Sullivan*

Les Middleton provided a guided walk around Staunton on Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> July, taking in two wells, the Buckstone and the Suckstone. It is a particularly interesting walk from a Geological point of view and Dr Cherry Lewis provided the expert knowledge to explain the quartz conglomerate origins of the two major rock features. She also explained why 'Near Harkening Rock' is so called, because if you gather at that rock, the sound in the landscape below travels up to you and therefore poachers could be located from there (hopefully years ago, not now). Cherry also explained how important David Musket was in understanding the Geology of our Forest (and there is an excellent article telling this story in New Regard Number 30).

There are some great views along the walk, in different directions: from Staunton Meend looking out towards Newland, beyond the Buckstone towards the Sugar Loaf, approaching the Suck Stone looking towards Monmouth and then from the top of Harkening Rock. Staunton Meend currently 'hosts' a Reptile transept, as part of the Foresters' Forest project being run by David Dewsbury. Cherry bravely lifted the onduline sheet of the transept, hoping to see adders, grass snakes or slowworms, but only discovered a rather placid species – 'plasticus serpents' (right)!



This route and 10 others can be found on the 'Geoheritage of the Dean' app (a Foresters' Forest legacy project) which can be downloaded for free from either Apple iStore or Google Play store. **S.M.**



*Intrepid members enjoying the Staunton walk!*

The new season of indoor meetings kicked off on 2<sup>nd</sup> September with guest speaker Dr Simon Draper. Simon is currently Assistant Editor of the Oxfordshire Victoria County History, having previously worked for the VCH in Gloucestershire, and for the University of the West of England. Simon's education focused on landscape archaeology, and his primary research interests include the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. No surprise then that we heard an interesting and informative talk on 'Placenames in the Gloucestershire Landscape'.

A multiplicity of facts and place name derivations were presented but a few stood out for this reviewer:

Despite conquering the country, the Normans restrained themselves in not imposing French as the 'lingua franca' when they took power, although French remained the language of the King's court. Thus, place names survived change after the Norman invasion and most place names derive from 'old English', namely the Anglo-Saxon period. Locally, the core Forest remained unpopulated whilst Severnside land was assarted for farming and housing, thus most Anglo-Saxon place names can be found nearer the River. These include Lydney ('the Sailors island'), Blakeney, Awre, Alvington and Aylburton. In the case of the latter two, the 'ton' indicates a farm, whilst the preceding letters make up the name of the farmer.



*Dr Simon Draper*

The area around Newent in northwest Gloucestershire has a cluster place names of Celtic origin. This is because the land was previously part of the Welsh Kingdom of Ergyng (450-700 AD). Some example place names are (or were) 'Larclesduna' (later Yartleton, later still May Hill), meaning 'hill of the people of Ergyng. Dymock apparently means 'fort of the pigs!'. Surprisingly the Kingdom of Ergyng extended as far as Yorkley, derived from 'Larcles', with 'ley' indicating 'wood or clearing', so 'wood or clearing belonging to the people of Ergyng'.

Place names deriving from latin indicate Roman activity in the local area, for example 'The Chesters' (derived from 'ceaster'), indicates a Roman settlement, in this case a villa complex near Woolaston. Not far from 'The Chesters', 'Stroat', is apparently a 'Welshified' corruption of the latin word 'stract' meaning 'street'.

Finally, Simon Draper was able to solve a place name conundrum which has long puzzled your reviewer. The place name 'Lydbrook' apparently means 'the loud babbling brook', from a completely different derivational origin than 'Lydney', despite a common shared 'Lyd'. **K.W.**



*John Putley - seemingly about to operate!*

The Annual General Meeting (held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October) was followed by a welcome tea and cake/biscuits break – thank you Teresa and Joyce – then by an entertaining talk by John Putley on barber-surgeons.

John, dressed in medieval garb, explained how the beliefs up to about 1600 were that people were composed of 4 humours - blood (sanguine), yellow bile (choleric), black bile (melancholic), and phlegm (phlegmatic).

These four bodily substances in harmony with each other meant an individual was healthy, but any humour out of balance constituted illness.

He went on to explain the importance placed on analysing urine by sight, smell and taste, the various medicinal uses of plants and some of the more bizarre "cures" attempted.

If you had ear-ache poke in a bit of bacon fat or pour in some warm urine. Either may have dissolved some earwax.

A broken nose – insert little rods for a week to straighten it. But if it's too bad, cut the whole nose off and build a new one but only rich people could have a nose made of silver that lasted and looked good. Tooth ache was caused by a tooth worm. You could hold a lit candle to the tooth for 15 minutes to kill it. Or insert a red-hot wire through a metal contraption. The pain probably went away because you had killed the nerve leaving the tooth to rot!

For headaches the ultimate operation was trepanning, that is drilling holes in the skull, removing a small piece of bone and giving the brain a wash and brush up. A surprising number of people survived this to tell the tale!

The Crusades made a difference as Western medics met and learnt from Arab doctors. This helped to better treat some of the very common arrow wounds. But many became infected, and people died. No wonder when you remember that a soldier usually stuck his arrows in the dirt in front of him before firing them.

A fascinating talk all demonstrated by artefacts of the period in John Putley's inimitable style. He concluded by suggesting we should value the NHS despite its recent failings. **M.S.**

# Downloadable Heritage & Arboreal Walks

## FODLHS Mine Trail Walk leaflets

Apart from free-mining, mining ceased in the Forest over fifty years ago. But the evidence of mining remains, largely hidden by grass and bracken. Follow a Mine Trail walk and see if you can make out the contours of pits and adits of many of the old coal and iron mines,

- Mine Trail Walks No 1 – Speculation Trail
- Mine Trail Walks No 2 – New Fancy
- Mine Trail Walks No 3 – Cannop Ponds

*Available to purchase at a reasonable price from*

<https://www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk/publications-for-sale/walk-leaflets/>

## Foresters' Forest Hidden Heritage Apps

The Hidden Heritage apps are an exciting way to explore the Forest using your mobile phone or tablet. Watch the images move between the past and the present.

**Cinderford's Hidden Heritage** app takes you on a trail of 12 miles around the town and surrounding area, highlighting 24 points of interest. You can choose to do as much of the trail as you like.

**Coleford's Hidden Heritage** app follows a 7 mile route around Coleford, including Scarr Bandstand, Darkhill Iron Works and Titanic Steel Works.

**Hidden Heritage of the Dean** follows a 9 mile route following Forestry England's Family Cycle Trail

*Download the apps for free from Apple iStore or Google Play Store*

## Bream Heritage Walk

The Bream Heritage Walk is a 6.5 mile heritage trail around the villages of Bream and Whitecroft and the hamlets of Saunders Green and Brockhollands. It can be walked in one go in 3-4 hours or in less time in shorter sections. The walk highlights some of the "Hidden Heritage" of the area. It uses public footpaths, pavements, quiet roads and Forestry England tracks.

*Download the walk here:*

<https://bhwalk.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MAP-Bream-heritage-walk-V3-1.pdf>

## Forest of Dean & Wye Valley 'Leaf Peepers' Walks

Tree expert Paul Rutter is known to the History Society for the walk he led in July 2022 (Ancient & Notable Trees). He has now produced three shorter downloadable walks in conjunction with Forest of Dean & Wye Valley Tourism, designed so you can enjoy the spectacular arboreal autumn colours of our local landscape (apparently now called 'Tree Peeping'!).

**Speculation to Mireystock Bridge;** a gentle walk of two miles in the heart of the Forest of Dean.

**Nagshead Nature Reserve;** a looping walk of 1.5 miles in length

**Welsh Bicknor;** a walk of 3 miles through varied landscape beginning by walking up Coppett Hill

*You can download these walks at:*

[www.visitdeanweye.co.uk/inspiration/seasons/autumn-leaf-peeping/leaf-peeping-walks](http://www.visitdeanweye.co.uk/inspiration/seasons/autumn-leaf-peeping/leaf-peeping-walks)

