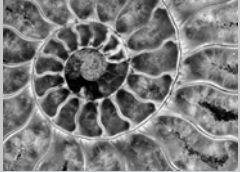


Events at the Dean Heritage Museum continued



Weekend 18th/19th July Victorian Garden Weekend

Learn about Victorian gardens in the Forester's Cottage garden and from a talk by Jane Bradney of Gloucestershire Garden & Landscape Trust on Sunday 19th July at 2 pm.



Weekend 25th/26th July

Rock & Fossil Roadshow. Touring event by Gloucestershire Geology Trust.



Thursday 30th July

Geology of the Forest of Dean talk at 2pm.



Friday 7th August Performance at 7pm

A Child in the Forest by Jenny Wren Productions on the story of Winifred Foley's childhood in the Forest



Sun 23rd August

Victorian School Day



Bank Holiday Weekend 29th to 31st August

Charcoal Burn & traditional rural skills

To learn more about these events and many others, look out for our Events 2009 leaflet, ring us on 01594 822170 or go to www.deanheritagemuseum.com. You can buy a family ticket for all the events during the school holidays for just £20.

Nicola Wynn

the Forest of Dean Local History Society July 2009 news



Dr. Cyril Hart O.B.E.

See Dr. Hart's obituary on Page 3

"PAST & PRESENT", our new project -see pages 6&7

Newsletter

JULY 2009

Editor:

Christine Martyn
Barnage Farm
Alvington
Lydney GL15 6AQ
01594 529358
barnage@supanet.com

Hon. Sec:

Liz Berry
Albany House
New Road
Hangerberry
Lydbrook GL17 9PS
e-mail: daveandliz@jadeberry.freemove.co.uk

Website:

forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Registered Charity
No: 1094700

Designed by John Precious
Printed by M.D. Jenkins Ltd.

Editors Notes

We were all saddened to hear of the death of our President, Dr Cyril Hart on May 9th, although given his advanced age and increasing frailty, it was not entirely unexpected. I am sure I speak for all chairmen in the recent past when I say how much we valued his support and approval for all our activities. His funeral was held privately, by his own request, and Chairman, Ron Beard, represented the Society.

The Forestry Commission have decided to mark his passing and to celebrate his life by holding a working party at the Cyril Hart Arboretum, an occasion which I am sure would have met with his approval. Members of the committee have been invited to attend as a mark of respect to our late President.

I was very pleased to have such a positive response to the Notes and Queries section in the last newsletter, in particular, to John Edwardes request for information about the Women's Timber Corps. He had an immediate response from two former WTC members, one of whom is a member and the other had heard of his request via a member, and he has obtained some valuable information, and more contacts. As a result, he says his research is developing into a serious historical exercise so we can look forward to seeing an article from him in due course. Like most people, I only knew of the Women's Land Army, so I would agree with him that the WTC are the 'forgotten troops' and it is to be hoped that with the help of our members, this has been corrected. This also illustrates that the newsletter is an excellent vehicle for an exchange of information, which might otherwise be lost.

In that respect, I would ask all members to take note of our latest project, details of which can be found in this newsletter. As an addition to the programme there will be a **meeting to view a PowerPoint presentation and to discuss the project on Sat. August 22nd at 3 pm in the Coleford Community Centre**. A whole generation has grown up since the Forest was an industrial region, dependant on mining and heavy industry, and it behoves all of us to record our memories before they are lost forever.

Christine Martyn

Future Events...



ST MICHAELS TOWER, GLOUCESTER ROSS.

From July to December 2009 come and enjoy Art Workshops with a difference. The emphasis is on enjoying yourself and learning a little about the history of Gloucester. Many workshops are free and include a free talk or a tour with a Civic Trust Guide to compliment the theme of the workshop. For details please contact the artist Elaine Fowke, tel 01531 890844 or email Elaine@elainefowke.co.uk

LOCAL HISTORY AFTERNOON OF THE GRCC

On Saturday 3rd October 2009, at Sir Thomas Riches School, Gloucester on the subject "**Housing the Poor: Social Housing for All**". Professor Stephen King of Oxford Brookes University will be speaking on *Provisions for Housing the Poor under the Old Poor Law* and there will be three short presentations by Judith Ellis, Cecile Hunt, and Christine Seal. The Family and Community Historical Research Society will be attending and will be demonstrating their new project on School Log books.



Events at the Dean Heritage Museum

SUMMER EXHIBITION



Starting Sat. 27th June and running for a month, '**Forest Authors**' is an exhibition showing the diversity and talent of local authors including tributes to Winifred Foley and Cyril Hart. Inspired by the Forest bookshop's Festival of Words in Coleford.



ARCHAEOLOGY ROADSHOW, CAN YOU DIG IT?



Weekend 1st/2nd August as part of the Festival of British Archaeology. Dig your archaeological excavation. Design your own Victorian wallpaper. Make a candlestick to take home with you.

HOPEWELL COLLIERY

When the last deep mine in the Forest, Northern United, closed in 1965, heritage was not quite the 'buzz word' that it is today. No-one thought to preserve the centuries of mining history that lay beneath their feet, so they remain, to quote Cyril Hart's evocative prose, 'silent and weird, flooded with gouty chill water.....sepulchres of industry....too dangerous and uninviting to be seen again by man'. There remained just a handful of small mines, which, with limited mechanisation, worked as they had been for centuries, barely viable but worked by dedicated free miners who have a fierce determination to preserve their heritage and, amazing as it may seem, love their work.



One such is free miner Robin Morgan, the owner of Hopewell Colliery, which he has been operating as a tourist attraction for the last 11 years. Robin, now well over retirement age, has been working in Forest mines since the age of 13, at first with his brothers (strictly illegally) in their own pit, and later for Northern United. After its closure, he worked as a structural engineer on motorways and other major infrastructure projects, before, having bought Hopewell, returning to his roots and working his own mine.

He has always shown some small profit from his coal which he sold to the Coal Board, and he maintains that there is still a lot of good coal underground in the Forest, and that it will, in due course, be needed again. To this end he is currently re-opening a drift mine, from which he hopes to produce viable quantities of good coal from the High Delph seam.

The Hopewell Gale covers a wide area, extending from just north of Parkend, to Worrall Hill and the buildings that now contain the Mining Museum and entrance to the visitors mine are just about in the centre. Originally the site of a 19th century foundry before becoming pit head buildings, they were converted by Robin for his tourist venture and now comprise a café, with some excellent pictures and mining memorabilia and storage for the necessary helmets needed for an underground trip. Outside, picnic benches sit on the site of the former screens, while a mock-up of pithead gear is a reminder of the original purpose of the site. It is all in an idyllic woodland setting that must seem incongruous to visitors.

Although financial constraints have forced Robin to limit his tourist venture to school holidays and week ends, so that he can concentrate on his commercial activities, Hopewell is well worth a visit – and the cakes are pretty good, too!

C Martyn

Obituary, Dr Cyril Hart OBE

Cyril Hart was born in Coleford just before the 1st World War. He attended Bell's Grammar School, from where he went on to study botany at London University, and he gained his MA at Bristol University for his thesis on *The Dean Forest Eyre of 1282*. He gained his knowledge and love of Forestry when working for Maj. Ackers, himself an acknowledged authority on forestry, at the Huntley Manor Estate, after which he became a Chartered Land Agent and Surveyor and chairman and director of the Huntley Estates Forest Products.

He was awarded his PhD by Leicester University for research work on the Economics of Forestry and became a lecturer in Forestry at the Royal Agricultural College and consultant and examiner to many institutions and businesses. In 1952 he became a Verderer of the Forest of Dean, a position which quite unusually was contested, and a coach load of members went to the Shire Hall in Gloucester to support his candidacy. He was successful, becoming the youngest person in recent memory to hold that position which he held until his death. He was awarded an OBE in 1981 for services to Forestry and in 1999, the arboretum near Speech House was renamed the Cyril Hart Aboretum in his honour.

He was also author of many books, his *Practical Forestry for Agent and Surveyor*, pub 1967, is still the definitive study for Forestry Students everywhere. His lifelong devotion to the area in which he had grown up resulted in his historical writing on the Forest of Dean, immaculately researched, and essential reference for subsequent historians. First editions of his books are now highly collectable and his *Royal Forest, The Commoners of Dean, The Free Miners of Dean* and *The Verderers and Forest Laws of Dean* were reprinted in 2004/5 by Lightmoor Press. His writings also include *The Industrial History of Dean* pub. 1971, *The History of Coleford* pub. 1983 and to celebrate the millennium he published *Between Severn and Wye in the year 1000*.

For our members, however, his most memorable contribution was as a founder member of the Forest of Dean History Society in 1948, with fellow enthusiasts Messrs Tom Bright, Ian Durham, H A Machen, Rev. R J Mansfield, S.D.Morgan, Dr Hunt and others. Always active within the society, he served on the committee for many years and as secretary for a while. He led excursions in the early days and gave many memorable and instructive lectures, as well as making several contributions to the New Regard. He succeeded Tom Bright as president in 1984, a position he was to hold for 25 years until his death.

His physical frailty in recent years inevitably restricted his active participation in Society events although his faculties remained undimmed. Last year he wrote a short forward for the 60th anniversary number, Vol 23, of the New Regard and kept well abreast of all Society activities. When I visited him just before our Anniversary Lunch in April 2008, he showed a keen appreciation of our on-going project of the time, the Geomap, which met with his whole hearted approval.

It must surely be unique for any society to still have the participation of one of its founders in its 60th year, and the Society must feel privileged to have benefited from his knowledge and advice for so many years. He will be long remembered and much missed, not least by his family, to whom we offer our sincere condolences.

C Martyn

Walks and Talks

It was very encouraging to see so many members at our annual evening meeting in April held in Cinderford, when Paul Barnet gave a interesting account of the history that lay behind each of the hulks that are beached near the harbour at Lydney. We were able to see slides that showed many of the working ships in their heyday as they plied their trade on the dangerous waters of the River Severn and beyond. Now that the longer summer evenings are with us members will be able to see the remains of the hulks at first hand.



Twenty four members met at the main entrance of Gloucester Cathedral on the afternoon of May 16th and were met by two very knowledgeable guides, who showed their parties some of the glories of the cathedral which dates from 1069. The impressive Norman pillars in the nave are surrounded by the the fine lines of the Perpendicular tracery, and of course the great east stained glass window, as well as tombs and

chapels. Not forgetting the very impressive early fan cloisters which were used in the Harry Potter film. Some members enjoyed refreshments in the cafe before going to the evensong service.

Above, tomb of Duke Robert of Normandy

Our next tour of interest will be nearer home, in our neighbouring town of Monmouth, Monnow Street has a wealth of interesting architecture and lots of history just inches below our feet. If you would like to learn more join us for **a 3pm start on Sunday 12 July out side the museum in Priory Street Monmouth, the cost of the tour will be £2-50 each.**

Above, Henry V who was born at Monmouth castle



A coach tour has been arranged for **Saturday, 12th September** to visit the Bishop's Palace in Wells and Wells Cathedral. A booking form is included with this mailing giving full details, and anyone wanting to know more can go to the website www.bishopspalacewells.co.uk

Anne Childs

A 28 page document, including a map,

St Paul's Church Parkend Memorial Inscriptions A Record of the gravestones in the original Churchyard surrounding Parkend Church carried out over two years 2006-2007 with some input in late 2005 by G E Waygood with the valued assistance of his wife, J R Waygood. Edited by I M Bond. Copies are available, price £7.50 (proceeds will go to the continuing work of maintaining the church and churchyard) from Mr Waygood (01594 562297) or from the vicar (01594 562828).



We have also been given detailed records of Great War victims for which thanks to member John Reeves.

It contains records of over 350 men, listed by name and by location, gathered from War memorials and Rolls of Honour, and with copies of certificates from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and entries from Laura Morse's scrapbook CD. It is a very valuable research resource and will eventually be placed in our library.

C Martyn

The Cyril Hart Award

For a number of years, Dr Hart made a "President's Award", usually a book, for service to the society or for a piece of research by a member that caught his eye. It is therefore very appropriate that at the committee meeting, we unanimously agreed to make an award in his name. It will be awarded for the best article in the New Regard, and will be judged by some one outside the Society. More details will be revealed at the AGM in October, and the first award will be made at the AGM in 2010, from articles in Volume 24, 2010.

MEMBERSHIP

We would like to welcome these new members to the Society:

Mr R Shier, Peterborough

Mr G Ford, Cinderford.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Mr Ernst Woelke who has been a member of the Society for the last 17 years, and who has been a longstanding supporter of our talks and events. We would like to express our condolences to his family and friends.

Liz Berry

CONSERVATION

CINDERFORD REGENERATION



During the last few months I have attended several meetings regarding the regeneration of the Cinderford Northern Quarter. Draft plans have been on view in Cinderford and I took part in a very useful workshop session at the Miners Welfare Hall. Three options were illustrated and representatives of the local community and organisations were asked to give opinions concerning each one. I was particularly concerned for the

survival of the old colliery site at Northern United as the last complete set of mining buildings in the Dean. I strongly endorsed option two which stated that the 'character of the Northern United site be retained and regenerated through sympathetic employment use'. Further details of the plans and ongoing progress can be seen on the website www.cinderfordregeneration.org or www.fdean.gov.uk and will be on display at the Belle Vue Centre in Cinderford on 19th June.

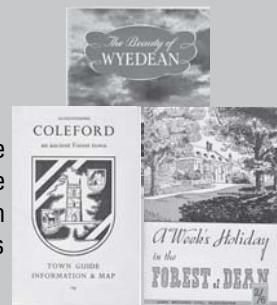
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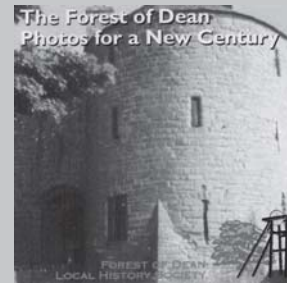
I am sure that you all know that the Society has a small library of books and primary source material which is held at the Gage Library, at the Dean Heritage Museum. Access is free to members on presentation of a membership card at the reception desk, and Nicola Wynn has assured us that she will see that all the voluntary workers are fully aware of this. The library is staffed on Monday and Wednesday afternoons but access can be arranged at other times by phoning the museum on 01594 822170.

Recent additions include:-

All of the guide books to the Forest of Dean dating from the 1940s which were given to the Society by Mr H Daniels. These were lent to the television team who made the programme on the Wye Valley and the Forest in the recent television series 'Britain's Best Drives', fronted by Richard Wilson.



Research & Development



PHOTOS FOR A NEW CENTURY

By the Autumn we need to start taking photographs of subjects taken for the 2000 CD. In the first instance I anticipate that those who took the original photographs will retake their subjects. Unfortunately John Shulston, who took many of the photographs is no longer with us, so these and a few others will need to be re-allocated. It has also been suggested that we extend

the original collection to include a selection (possibly another 100 photographs) of those that were not chosen initially. There may also be some new subjects which people would like to include. So far I have five volunteers and would welcome others.

DATABASE

Work has recommenced on building our historic sites and monuments database. We have well over 100 partially entered records and several where full information has been completed. This is a time consuming task, detailed locational information is needed, and relationships with sources, photographs, organisations and individuals have to be built. As part of this process short descriptive accounts (approx 100 words max) of individuals and organisations associated with the sites and monuments need to be written, also some recent sources need to be added. I should welcome volunteers for any of these tasks.

Eventually we need to make the information in the database available to members. This will best be achieved by putting the database (or selections from it) onto our website. If there are any members with knowledge of PHP and MySQL and can use them to incorporate the database into our website, please make themselves known to me. Any contribution they can make would be highly valued.

MINE CAPPING

Following the meeting with the Coal Authority et al referred to in the last newsletter I have been in contact with Dr Simon Reed of the Coal Authority. He confirmed that the Authority has a positive attitude to our desire to be kept informed of their mine site processing programme and to be involved in surveying and recording details of sites where appropriate. He had no specific information as a colleague had been given the task of consulting with the appropriate bodies, but promised to contact me within the next week or two with news of progress made to date.

Ron Beard

**Join in
our new
project**

PAST & PRESENT

A Modern History of the Forest of Dean

When Northern United closed on Christmas Eve 1965 large scale commercial mining finished in the Forest of Dean. It was the end of an era. But great changes had already taken place in the Forest. This project is intended to be an historical assessment of these changes ranging from social, economic, demographic, cultural and political change to the transformation of the Forest's environment and landscape from the industrial to what it is today.

It will be a considerable undertaking and we need as many of our members as possible to participate in this project to ensure its success. Many older people will recall when the economy of the Forest of Dean was still firmly based on the

extraction industries and have seen it gradually change to the mixed economy that we have today. Younger members may have been directly involved in the changes as they took place. But whatever



New Fancy View as it was

your circumstances we would like to draw on your lifetimes knowledge, experience and personal memories from the past.

What the output of the project will be has yet to be decided but will probably take the form of DVD/CDs, a book or possibly a combination of both.

We would like to welcome you to a special meeting of the Society to take place at **3pm on SATURDAY 22ND AUGUST at the COMMUNITY CENTRE COLEFORD** where you can see a PowerPoint presentation explaining the project. This will be followed by refreshments and then the meeting will end with a general discussion where you can put forward your own views and ideas.

We hope that as many of you as possible will join with the committee in taking the project forward.

John Precious



New Fancy View as it is