

Look Out For.....



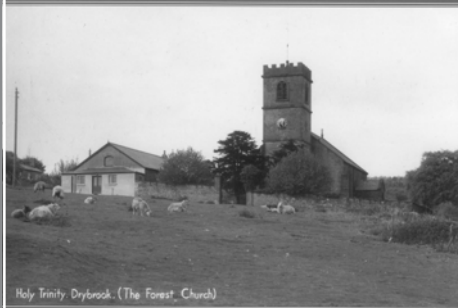
It may be remembered that back in the summer, I was able to help a film crew who were making a film about the Forest of Dean in the 1950s to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the first motorway. The presenter, Richard Wilson (aka Victor Meldrew) is seen driving a classic car of the 1950s vintage around various locations in Britain, including the Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean and I was able to lend them some tourist guide books of the appropriate period that had recently been given to the Society by Harry Daniels. I have now heard from the presenter that

the programme, called ***Britain's Best Drives***, will be shown on BBC 4 early next year so keep an eye on the TV schedules.

I have also seen in the *Citizen* that Paul Barnett, who was awarded the Gladys Scott-Garret Award at the AGM for his talk and walk about the Purton Hulks, will appear on television in the spring. A walk along the river bank at Purton will feature in the next series of the programme ***Coast***, with series presenter Neil Oliver and Dr Mark Horton, who has already backed Paul's petition to make the site a listed ancient monument to help protect it from vandalism. This will be a great boost to Paul's campaign and is something else to watch out for. *Ed*

The NEW REGARD

The journal of the
Forest of Dean Local History Society



Holy Trinity Drybrook (The Forest Church)

Number 23, 2009

£7.00

We are pleased to report that Vol. 23 of the New Regard is now on sale. We were delighted to hear that the Journal received another compliment at the recent Gloucestershire County Regional Meeting, and suggest it could make an ideal Christmas present ... on top of buying your own copy, of course! We are now looking forward to receiving contributions for next year's edition.

It has also been suggested that an existing collection of Forest of Dean chapel photographs could make a worthwhile booklet. Anyone who might be interested in joining a small 'Chapel Chasing' group, or who has a few details about chapels in their neighbourhood, please contact either Ron Beard or myself – at a meeting, or our addresses, phone numbers etc are on the membership card.

Mary Atkins



THE
FOREST OF DEAN
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter
OCTOBER 2008



Lydney Park House - see page 6

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2008

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Editors Notes

This is the last time that I will be penning these notes in my dual capacity as chairman and newsletter editor. It seems no time at all since I was taking over from Averil Kear since when we have had a busy three years during which we have been involved with some very high profile projects, namely the Miners Memorial project and the Geomap. These projects have involved a great deal of hard work from all the members of the committee, whom I must thank for their effort and unfailing support

The Miners Memorial owes its origin to research done by Dave Tuffley, and I think has been one of the most relevant and important projects that the Society has ever done. The Monument at the New Fancy site, which was unveiled by Averil in September 2005, has already become a noted tourist stop, shown on postcards and in tourist promotion literature. It has been warmly welcomed by native born Foresters all over the world, who have ancestral links with the Forest mining tradition and is also a reminder to the many visitors to our beautiful sylvan countryside, that it was not always thus, and that men worked – and died – in horrendous conditions below ground. Our recent visit to the Big Pit at Blaenafon was a timely reminder to us all.

No sooner had the final stage of that project, the publication of impressive leather volumes listing the mining fatalities, been completed, than we became the principal partner in the Geomap project, a unique stone map, showing the geology of the Forest and its relevance to subsequent industrial activity, and which has also been sited at New Fancy.

Under the terms of our constitution, one can only hold the chair for three years so now it is time for me to hand over the responsibility. We all have our own particular strengths – and weakness – so a change of chairman is a very good way of ensuring that the Society remains vibrant and forward looking, and I know that our new chairman, Ron Beard, has ideas for new projects. For the same reason, we are always happy to recruit new members to the committee, other members may well have new ideas to put forward or particular interests that they wish to follow up, so please, come along and share them with us all.

Christine Martyn

Book Review

Primrose Hill, Church and Community



2008 sees the 75th anniversary of the dedication of Holy Trinity Church on Primrose Hill. As part of the year long celebrations to mark the occasion Aileen Powell, a long standing worshipper at Holy Trinity, has written a book entitled "*Primrose Hill, Church and Community*". In this she has drawn on many documents of the past, as well as memories of many of those who have lived "on the Hill" over the years, together with their personal photos. The earliest mention in the book

dates back to the 1600s and takes in how the area evolved as a community.

As it is connected with the history of Holy Trinity, it also goes into detail of how its predecessor, a "tin" chapel was built in the early 1900s and how the life of the church was built up by the hard work and inspiration of the late Arthur Lumbert. When this building became unsafe, the present one was designed and built, ready dedication in 1933. However, the book goes much wider than the church and is an interesting insight into the life the little community through two world wars and how the rapid expansion since then has created the vibrant village that exists today – only a stone's throw from Lydney, but showing a great independence

Priced £8.99, this book can be obtained through Aileen on 01594 843180, it is also available at the Primrose Hill Village Store, Roy's Cards and Gifts, Regents Parade, Lydney or the Forest Bookshop in Coleford.

Robin Warren

Newent, a snapshot in time 2008 – a DVD



Back in 1966 a black and white film was made about the town of Newent. This year Newent Local History Society have cloned the idea and produced a modern version as a DVD entitled "*Newent a snapshot in time 2008*".

It covers some of the history of the churches, the pubs, the canal, the waterworks and many of the older buildings as well as some new developments. Older residents have been interviewed and there are views that are not normally accessible such as St Mary's belfry, the church tower and the roof beams of the Cost Cutter Supermarket. The Onion Fair and the Armistice Parade are included to make this an excellent record of Newent in 2008.

Copies are available from:- D A Pearce, Arron, Ross Road, Newent, Glos GL18 1BE. Price £9 (including postage). Cheques should be made payable to "Newent Local History Society"

COACH OUTING TO BIG PIT BLAENAFON



One wet Saturday morning in early September a coach load of members set off to travel to The Big Pit, the National Coal Museum of Wales. As the coach climbed away from the main road, it entered the heather clad hills of the Brecon Beacons National Park – albeit, much of the heather covered terrain being the remains of man's workings. After parking, the first item of the agenda was lunch, taken in the cafeteria, formerly mine canteen, the highest point of the steeply sloping site!

After lunch, the rain had eased and members were able to wander round the site, investigating the various parts of the old workings and inspecting the impressive exhibitions. In due course, everyone gathered ready for the highlight of the visit – the underground tour. In parties of fifteen, members were divested of anything which might create a spark – and, therefore, an explosion – this included digital cameras, mobile phones, smoking implements and even battery operated watches (all were safely returned afterwards!). They were also fitted with safety helmets and lights. Crowded into the cage, each party was swiftly carried down some 900 feet to the working level. Here the very informative guides showed everyone the working areas and explained how everything was done. There was the fascinating point when everyone switched their lights off and it became evident how completely dark it is down in the mines. One unexpected point visited was the area where the pit ponies spent their working lives, except for one week of the year, when they enjoyed a holiday in the sunshine on the surface.

After the tours there was time for a little more exploration before boarding the coach ready to return to the Forest.

Many thanks to Christine and Cecile for organising the visit and making all the arrangements for a fascinating day.

Robin & Sue Warren.

Heritage Open Days.



Kights engaged in mortal combat at Goodrich Castle

the modern Forest of Dean District Council offices, where sessions on Family History were given. Events were also held at the Dean Heritage Centre and walks at various locations in the Forest.

Various Society members were involved over the weekend. Mary Atkins and Pat Williams, in their alternative roles with the Woolaston History Group put on exhibitions of church and village history at Woolaston and Alvington churches while Averil spent a busy Saturday giving guided walks and talks around Newland Church.



Medieval Musicians performing at Goodrich Castle

The Society Boards were on display at Goodrich Castle, albeit just over the border into Herefordshire. This was very much a fun event with a mediaeval theme, where knights in armour and suitably attired serving wenches manned the displays which varied from mediaeval food to coracle making. It was very well attended, with many displays and activities aimed at children, who certainly seemed to join in the spirit of the occasion.

On a more serious note, the Woodland Trust, the Wye Valley AONB and the RSPB as well our boards were on display in the chapel, where on Sunday Averil gave two talks on the early history of the Forest of Dean.

The weekend also saw the launch of the Overlooking the Wye scheme, a Landscape Partnership scheme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, led by the Wye Valley AONB unit which will run until October, 2011. It embraces nearly 50 smaller linked projects all focusing on helping visitors and locals to understand, enjoy and become involved in the historic environment. No doubt the Society will be further involved in due course and we will keep you all informed.

Christine Martyn

Annual General Meeting

The Society's 60th AGM was held as usual at Coleford Community Centre on Saturday 11th October. Despite the temptation of a lovely sunny afternoon, the Chairman, Christine Martyn, was able to welcome about 40 members and Officers of the Society to the meeting. Among the apologies received were those of our President Dr Cyril Hart and two of our Vice Presidents Ian Standing and Barbara Griffith.

After the 2007 minutes had been approved, the Chairman began her report by commenting that her three years in office seemed to have passed very quickly, but she felt privileged to have been able to oversee a particularly active period. This had included the conclusion of the very important Miner's Memorial project, and she again thanked Dave Tuffley for allowing all his earlier work to be used.

She detailed the main events of the previous twelve months. The Geomap of course had predominated, but despite certain problems along the way the project had come in on time and on budget, and the finished map was most impressive. She gave full credit for this to Liz and Dave Berry who had master-minded the project, David Yeates the sculptor, and Cecile Hunt who handled the finance. The Grand Unveiling at New Fancy on May 3rd had been followed a reception at Speech House.

Another function had been the most enjoyable 60th Anniversary Lunch held in April at Bells Club, and those responsible were thanked for its organisation. In July the Society hosted the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council's Summer meeting at Lydney Park in a 'window' of dry weather. Finally the recent coach outing to the Big Pit at Blaenafon had been another enjoyable social occasion.

The Chairman then thanked the Committee for all their work over the past three years. She gave a brief description of their individual activities which had contributed to the smooth running of the Society. She also thanked the membership for their support, and for being willing workers when called upon, and concluded her report with the usual appeal for new committee members!

The Treasurer Cecile Hunt re-iterated there had been considerable financial activity since last August, due to the various social occasions and the Geomap, our biggest project to date. She also reminded members that membership fees had increased this year. The meeting then proceeded to elect Ron Beard as the new Chairman, while the rest of the committee and next year's Independent Examiner were all re-elected unopposed.

Research & Development



With the Geomap project concluded, except for the publication of the accompanying leaflet, we have no major projects on the go at the moment. This may be an opportune moment to extend our Miners' Memorial project by researching more quarry accidents. Dave Tuffley is the man with experience in this area but he has already put many years of work into mining accidents and it may be appropriate to create a small group of members willing to undertake a limited amount of research using Dave's expertise for guidance.

I have also been looking at our Sites and Monuments database and carrying out some restructuring to make it more efficient before entering more of the outstanding data. John Sheraton has provided information on a large number of sites, so once I have made some progress on the current sites, I shall be looking for volunteers to extend our records.

Work has been progressing on further developing the Society website under the guidance of webmaster, Keith Walker. Other local history websites have been studied to get an understanding of extra features which could be incorporated which include more detail of projects, past and present; a question and answer section and a photo gallery.

Members are invited to submit digital photographs which could be used as the main banner heading for the redesigned website. The best photograph will be chosen to be the first to appear. We plan to change the illustrations at regular intervals so you can send more than one. The photograph will be displayed in the proportions of 5:1 (width to height), so there is an opportunity for you to practise your 'stitching' skills to produce panoramic effects. Your first entries should reach us before Christmas, please e-mail them to Keith Walker or Ron Beard.



Free Offer

The Society no longer needs its A4 flatbed scanner - model HPScanjet 4200C. It is nine years old but is still in working order and is accompanied with the necessary software and drivers for Windows XP and set up instructions. There are no drivers for Windows Vista and none are available so it will only work with XP (third party drivers for Vista may or may not be available via the Internet).

If any member can make use of it please contact Ron Beard.

Ron Beard.

Conservation

The Globe Inn

Averil was approached by the inhabitants of Alvington who were concerned about proposals to convert the Globe Inn into flats. Averil wrote on behalf of the society expressing our opinion that this Grade II listed building has been a focal point of the A48 since before 1805. In 1815 over 80 villagers belonged to societies which met regularly at the inn. It was described in 1907 as having "accommodation for cyclists and stabling".



We are pleased to report that since Averil's intervention, and in response to letters from the inhabitants of Alvington, the planning application has been dropped – another success for our hard-working conservation officer.

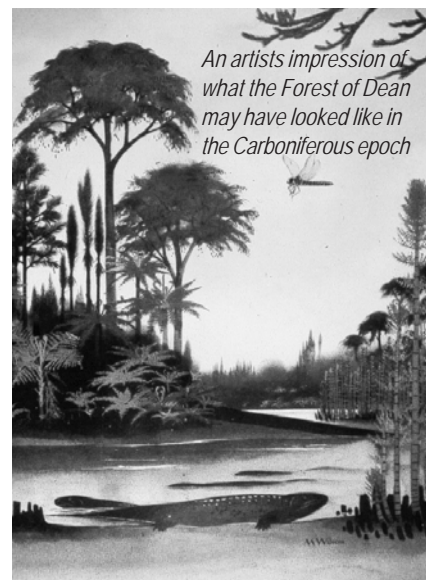
Pludds Pit

The Forestry Commission are reinforcing a track leading towards the site of the Pludds pit. The intention is to completely fill the shaft and cap it. Forestry Commission say that this is because of vandalism which has caused the shaft to slip sideways and the security fence has been broken and thrown down the shaft. The proposal is to demolish the small brick building, fill the shaft, which is brick lined, with small stone hardcore to within a few feet of the surface and cap off with a steel grid. Along with other concerned people FODLHS is supporting the retention of any documentation which are generated by the Forestry Commission during this exercise, including CCTV surveys to be deposited at the Dean Heritage. We also support the placing of a marker/memorial at the site thus enabling future visitors to locate it.

Princess Royal Pithead Baths

Many of you will have read in the papers that the plans by the South West Rural Development Agency to demolish the baths building were overturned recently, effectively saving this iconic building for the time being at least. Averil has been in dialogue with SWRDA since this decision and has suggested that if they tidy up the site and building, stabilise it where necessary and re-roof it they could then market the building as a viable business opportunity. Since suggesting this to SWRDA Averil has received a reply from them stating that they are now considering what to do next !!

Averil Kear



An artists impression of what the Forest of Dean may have looked like in the Carboniferous epoch

Paul Barnet was present to receive the Gladys Scott Garrett Award for his fascinating talk and walk relating to the Purton hulks. He gave a brief speech of thanks, saying he valued this acknowledgement of his work.

Finally an appeal was made for help for the Dean Heritage Museum, details were given of events celebrating the 700 year history of Ross-on-Wye, the Chairman suggested a possible new research project checking quarry fatalities, and members were invited to put forward panoramic representational photos for use on the Society's new website.

The meeting then adjourned for tea, which was followed by a talk on Geology and Geodiversity in the Forest of Dean by Dave Owen.

Mary Atkins

A Visit to the Miners' Memorial



The Forest of Dean Association for the Visually Impaired (better known as "Forge") runs many classes and events for its members. Among these are the occasional walk, where members are escorted round places of interest. During the past summer these walks included one to Lydney Harbour and another took in New Fancy. At the latter, members stood on the Geomap and then proceeded to the Miners' Memorial, where their chairman, Bill Waddell, read them the Braille inscription before they went on to inspect it, either by sight or touch. Robin Warren

Local History Committee Summer Meeting



Members gathered round the remains of the Roman Temple at Lydney Park

On Sunday 6th July, the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council Local History Committee held its summer meeting at Lydney Park by kind invitation of Lord Bledisloe. The meeting was hosted by the Forest Of Dean Local History Society, and approximately 100 Gloucestershire historians enjoyed the afternoon.

Lord Bledisloe got proceedings under way by giving a half hour talk on the history of his family and their association with Lydney Park. His speech was both informative and witty, and included an explanation of how his grandfather had helped to form the Forest of Dean Local History Society some sixty years earlier!

After the talk, the visitors were guided round the Roman Camp by John Belcher and Tony Middleton, or alternatively could explore the Woodland Garden. The small museum attached to the house was also open, attended by Jim Blanch, who was a fund of information about the Roman Temple and the gardens for which a beautifully illustrated guidebook was on sale.

Situated on a steep bluff overlooking the Severn Estuary from the north-west, the Roman Camp was excavated by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the 1920's, who established that the shrine was constructed sometime after AD364 although the site was occupied c.250 by the huts of the workers from the nearby iron-mines. The temple itself is rectangular in outline measuring 80 x 60 feet

with additional heavy, angular buttresses containing a number of niches on their interior sides - presumably for statues - and an entrance via a short flight of steps on the south-east. The *cella* (inner chamber of the temple) measures 32½ x 55 feet overall with its extreme north-west end divided into three separate 7 ft. deep rooms, probably indicating a tripartite god, with each room dedicated to a different aspect of the *triad*. The temple of *Nodens* emulates the format of a normal Romano-Celtic shrine, although in a somewhat monumental style, using a rectangular plan instead of the usual square and providing for three separate shrines instead of the normal single *cella*. The temple was probably provided with a clerestory in the upper part of the *cella* and thus resembled its typical Romano-Celtic counterpart.

There are fine formal gardens around the house, but Lydney is famous for its rhododendrons: a remarkable collection planted over the last 50 years is the backbone to the extensive woodland garden in a sheltered valley behind the house. The landscaping and planting of the Woodland Garden was started in 1954 by Mr Stracey, (the second Viscount Bledisloe's head gardener), with direction from Viscount Bledisloe and his wife Joan. The idea behind the planting was to achieve bold patches of colour at different times during the main rhododendron flowering season from March to June, interspersed with other fine flowering shrubs and plants. Until Lord Bledisloe's death in 1979 the garden was gradually extended to its present size. The present Lord Bledisloe took over the management of the garden in 1980 when he moved to Lydney Park.

After viewing the Roman Camp and Garden the visitors were then enjoyed a fine afternoon tea, provided by the cook and staff of the house. Thanks are due to Christine Martyn, Cecile Hunt, John Belcher and Tony Middleton for organising the visit to Lydney Park.

Keith Walker

Membership

May I remind members that subscriptions for the year 2008/2009 are now due? Those who were present at the 2007 AGM will remember that the meeting agreed to raise the annual subscription for members as from October 2008 in order to cover increases in running costs. These are now £8 for a single member, £12 for a family membership, and £14 for overseas membership.

For those paying by standing order, if this has not been paid for this year, could you contact your bank either by telephone or in person and alter the annual amount deducted? If the standing order has already been paid, could you arrange to alter it for next year, and pay the outstanding amount for this year either by cheque or cash at the next meeting, if you prefer.

We welcome the following new members to the Society:

Mr J and Mrs B Startin, Walford.

Mr C and Mrs M Sullivan, Lydbrook

Mrs N Wynn, The Pludds

Mrs J Carter, Chepstow

Liz Berry, Secretary.