

# FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

news  
January 2012

THE FOREST OF  
DEAN LOCAL  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## News

**JANUARY 2012**

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## Editors Notes

As this newsletter goes 'to press', the Independent Panel on Forestry has produced an interim report, which can be accessed via the internet: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/reports/>

The report includes the following 'headlines':

- The Panel believe there is a role for a national public forest estate.
- The Panel want to see more woodlands created and more woodlands managed.
- Future forestry policy should reflect economic and ecological timescale of woodlands.
- Further work exploring how more woodlands in England can deliver more for society, the environment and the economy.

The critical issues of ownership and management of the public forest estate remain to be completely resolved by the Panel, and we look forward to the publication of the Panel's final report in April 2012.

Elsewhere in this edition, Liz Berry (our hardworking Membership Secretary) issues an urgent request to those members who pay membership fees via standing order to check that they are paying the new revised membership fees, which were increased from October 2011!

Finally a reminder of our first three meetings for 2012, all held at West Dean Centre, Bream:

Saturday 14th January 2012 at 3pm;  
Cecile Hunt speaking on 'The Crawshays'.

Saturday 11th February 2012 at 3pm;  
Ian Wright speaking on 'The Warren James Riots'.

Saturday 10th March 2012 at 3pm;  
Canon John Evans speaks on 'The Chartist Land Company'.

*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.*

## Another One Bites The Dust?

Read about the future  
of The Pine End Works inside



## Mining Glossary



Committee member Dave Tuffley is currently creating a mining glossary for all mining terms used in the Forest of Dean iron ore and coal fields.

Dave is anxious that anyone with knowledge of mining terms, particularly local terms should get in touch with him.

Dave can be contacted by ;  
email: dave.tuffley@safranmbd.com  
Phone: 01594 824343

## Hidden History! - Lydbrook Viaduct

Lydbrook railway viaduct was opened to traffic on 26th August 1874. The viaduct was carried 90 ft above the valley floor by piers constructed of very large stone blocks.



After the closure of the railway line, the viaduct was dismantled between August 1965 and March 1966. You might have thought that the huge stone blocks that formed the piers of the viaduct would have been put to some good use. However if you take a walk along the line of the railway cutting that led to the viaduct (SO 594170) you will find that the stone blocks were dumped in the cutting, and are simply gathering moss!

Thanks to Ron Beard for the photograph and information.

## Membership News

Thank you to those members who have paid their subs for 2011/2012. For those who have yet to pay, can I remind you that the revised amounts are £10 for one person and £15 for more than one member at the same address. For those on standing orders, please could you amend them for next year, and pay the difference for this year? For those who have not altered their standing order for the last two increases in membership, we will be refunding their £6, and we hope they will rejoin at the new subscription amount!

We welcome these new members to the Society:

Mr J Vaughan, Lydney

Mrs G Lockyer and Mr J Hall, Huntley

Mr D Carter, Cornwall

Mr D and Mrs J Schafer, Whitchurch

Mrs M and Miss J Kelly and Mr A Matthews, Churcham

Mr and Mrs J Marshall, Abergavenny

*Liz Berry*

## Pine End Works

Pine End Works occupies a 14 acre site in Harbour Road, a couple of miles away from Lydney, next to the Severn Estuary. It was commissioned and constructed by the Government in 1940, and it was built to produce technical aircraft and marine plywood for wartime requirements. During the war it was used to produce wooden aircraft panels for the Mosquito fighter-bomber and the Horsa assault gliders used in the D Day landings. It was known as a "shadow factory", meaning it was built in secrecy so as to keep manufacturing goods vital to the war effort, when factories in other, more vulnerable locations had been destroyed by bombing. To preserve secrecy it was known as "Factories Direction Ltd", and it continued to be called this long after the war ended. In its last years it became part of the Brooke-Bond Group of Companies, operating under the name "Lydney Products". In the 1980's three inch thick rubber and grit surfaced plywood made at Pine End was used in a refurbishment of Tower Bridge. It also supplied plywood to the Admiralty, the MoD, British Rail, vehicle manufacturers and boat builders. Something known as "Hydroboard" was produced at Pine End as well. It was a "chemically impregnated densified and compressed plywood" used in nuclear shielding in power stations. The factory closed around 2001.

Plans to develop the site, after the refurbishment of the docks in 2005, failed after lottery funding was turned down.

The factory site achieved fame in 2007 when it was used as a backdrop for the film 'Outlaw' starring Sean Bean but since then the 240,000 sq ft of industrial buildings have lain empty.

In November 2011 the whole site was put up for sale in the hope that a prospective buyer would be able to enhance the docks by providing employment and recreation. The manager of the site is Paul Hobbs of GVA a property management company and he stated to the Forester on November 24th 2011 that "*it is time to sell it on to somebody who can breathe new life into the area*".

*Avekil Kear*



## Plaques & Monuments



In this edition we celebrate a brave man, who not only has plaques dedicated to him, but has a recreation ground in Coleford named after him.

Angus Buchanan was born in Coleford in 1894. He went to St John's Boys School Coleford and Monmouth Grammar School. He won a scholarship to Jesus College, Oxford.

Angus was commissioned Temporary 2nd Lieutenant, South Wales Borderers on 27th November 1914, and was later promoted to Temporary Captain. He fought at Cape Helles, Gallipoli and was awarded the Military Cross on 7th January 1916.

He was posted to Mesopotamia, where he was awarded his Victoria Cross for action at Falaayah Lines on 5th April 1916. He was wounded in this incident and then on 13th February 1917 he was severely wounded to the head, and as a result lost his sight. Angus Buchanan was decorated with the Victoria Cross by King George V in Bristol on 8th November 1917.

He returned to Jesus College after the war and read law. After graduating in 1921, he worked in a solicitor's office in Oxford before returning to Coleford to work until his death in 1944.

Funds were raised in Coleford to mark his bravery, which he asked to be used to give children somewhere to play. He is buried in Coleford Cemetery, next to the recreation field named in his honour.



### The Citation - 26th September 1916

***"For most conspicuous bravery. During an attack an Officer was lying out in the open severely wounded about 150 yards from cover. Two men went to his assistance and one of them was hit at once. Captain Buchanan, on seeing this, immediately went out and with the help of the other man, carried the wounded man to cover under heavy machine gun fire. He then returned and brought in the wounded man, again under heavy fire."***

## Prestigious Award Goes To Story About Cinderford Memorial



*Eric Nicholls (top left) about to receive the award*

The Bryan Jerrard award has been presented to Eric Nicholls and Roger Deeks for their article about the Memorial Gates at St Stephen's Church, Cinderford, which unusually commemorate a single individual killed early in the First World War.

The Bryan Jerrard award is presented annually by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council for the best article on any aspect of local history published anywhere in Gloucestershire.

In most instances, War Memorials, Memorial Halls and even church bells commemorate a number of men from a particular village or town, but an exception exists in Cinderford: the wrought iron entrance gates to St Stephen's Church in Bellevue Road commemorate the death of one soldier, Private Reginald Packer, who was killed in action during the First World War on 20 December, 1914.

Private Packer was born in Cinderford and was the first member of the congregation at St Stephen's Church to be killed in the Great War. It was suggested that a permanent memorial be erected in his memory and a subscription of £26 3s 9d was raised. As it was felt that the memorial should be practical and useful, and since the church was in need of new gates, it was decided that the memorial would take the form of a pair of wrought iron gates which were dedicated to Packer at a service held on 14 November, 1915.

However, the full story about Reginald Packer led the researchers to question the reliability of what was written in newspapers about this flawed character who made the ultimate sacrifice for his country. The full mystery and how it unravelled can be found in the 2011 edition of *The New Regard*.

Eric Nicholls collected the award during the Gloucestershire Local History Afternoon, held at Sir Thomas Rich's school in Gloucester. He said: 'It was an honour to receive the award when there was so many other well written local history articles submitted. I believe it was a first for *The New Regard*, although we have had runners-up before. I would still be interested in knowing where the gates were made, so if readers have any information, please contact me.'

His collaborator, Roger Deeks, who was also a finalist in 2010, added: 'The idea for the article came from Eric's expert knowledge about memorials in the Forest of Dean. He had extensively researched the circumstances of Reginald Packer's death using his experience from having visited the Western Front many times and researching military records.'



## Photo Feature - Verderers Election 29th November 2011



A large crowd of over 300 people filled the nave of Gloucester Cathedral on 29th November to attend a County Court held to elect a Verderer for the Forest of Dean.

Many members of the History Society attended the Court, which was held under the aegis of the Sheriff of the County of Gloucester, Maurice Beresford Heywood.

There were two very good candidates for the vacant Verderer's position, Rob Guest - the recently retired Deputy Surveyor of the Forest of Dean, and our own Vice President, Ian Standing.

It is believed that this was the first time that the cathedral has been used for a Verderers Election, so those present were able to enjoy a little slice of history being made.

After the Sheriff had read the Queens writ, the candidates were invited to identify themselves to the electorate, and they were then given five minutes to address the crowd.

The photo (right) shows our Vice President Ian Standing making his speech to the electorate.



*After the vote (by show of hands) the tellers gather to check the count.*



*The Under Sheriff (Nicholas Tanner) delivers the results of the vote to the Sheriff.*



*The candidates nervously await the result of the election.*



*Ian Standing is declared the winner of the election by 182 votes to 130 votes.*

## Meetings In Review by *David J. Harrison M.A.*

### Gloucestershire Landscapes

Mr. Alan Pilbeam gave a remarkable talk on "Gloucestershire Landscapes" on Saturday, 15th. October, 2011, at the West Dean Centre, Bream. This followed the usual Annual General Meeting, important but of necessity tediously formal and unexciting.

Although Alan's recurring, self-deprecating phrase was "you'll have to take my word for this", there was in fact no need as the 44 listeners were truly listening and keenly watching the slides.

With our free Forest of Dean mugs in our hands, we observed the ever changing landscape. To begin with geomorphology ruled okay! "High energy v. Low resistance = Change." Fields of the Cotswolds filled with limestone pebbles brought from Birmingham by nature. The systematic erosion of the Avon and Severn in the Ice Age. Flat topped hills and terraces with graded stones and the terrific work of frost and massive discharges of water gave way to the significance of fault lines.

Our own local quartz conglomerate of the Dean came next with great views from Coppet Hill. Botanists were in their element as species rare and lovely were shown. Scattered boulders, dolomites, Suck Stone, Buck Stone and others paled before the other great creator of change - Man. Monks, Verderers, Landowners and Government have all played their part, an analysis of footpaths alone is revealing. We saw fields where the 10th. century ridge and furrow ploughing had been swallowed by pasture for the upkeep of sheep, that great British staple of the Middle Ages - wool.

Gloucestershire has about 200 deserted villages which no longer exist. Yet, their remains do exist for the skilled interpreter of maps and deeds and farm records. Where once 200 people may have been employed on arable farms, now only 3 shepherds could watch over their flocks on the same acreage. Finally, Trafalgar Colliery came into view with today's two stone pillars marking the site of the mine shafts. Squatters settlements and footpaths explained the pattern of present day housing which Alan made us see through the very hard life of the Forest miners.

### The Industrial Heritage of the Forest of Dean

"The Industrial Heritage of the Forest of Dean" is, of course, a massive subject but on Saturday, 12th November, 2011, Ray Wilson dealt with it magnificently.

Fifty members turned out at the West Dean Centre, Bream, and they were not disappointed with the 95 slides which gave a panoramic overview of the industrial past and present. Ray is the long-serving secretary of the Gloucester Society of Industrial Archaeology and knows a lot. Lime Kilns, Slag Blocks, Brick Making, Paper Mills, Canals, Docks, Tramroads, Railways, Pit Head Baths, Toll Roads and Gates, with Tollhouses with windows on both sides, Tunnels, Inclines, Viaducts, Spoil Tips, Scowles, Furnaces, Ironworks, Quarries were just some of our local heritage which Ray brought to our attention. Smiles of recognition spread amongst the appreciative audience.

Now and again certain aspects received extra attention. The Severnside Press in Newnham dating from letter-press printing days with its cases of upper and lower case boxes of type,

minding the Ps and Qs. The tragic circumstances of the Severn Railway Bridge of 1879 which came to grief in 1960 with five killed. The Sharpness Docks aerial view showed its complexity and the loading of grain and timber. The Gloucester-Sharpness Canal with its wonderful swing-bridge and remaining central column. Telford's Road Bridge [old A40] with its 8 inches, then 10 inches of sag. The geology of the Dean which explained for me the Coal, Stone and Iron of the New Fancy memorial. The claims of the Free Miners and their ramshackle workings in an age before Health and Safety consciousness and the warning notice which said it all:

*VANDALS WILL NOT BE PROSECUTED*

*NEXT OF KIN WILL BE INFORMED*

Somehow Ray managed to pull back much that had been reclaimed by nature and brought yesterday's Forest alive again.

### Newnham - On - Severn

Barbara Griffith and Nigel Haig gave a joint presentation, a bit like The Two Ronnies, to sixty-six members on Saturday, 3rd. December, 2011, at Bream. The meeting was distinguished by "our" freshly elected Verderer, Ian Standing, who was warmly applauded. But we had gathered to learn about the past of Newnham on Severn - "the place with the daffodils".

Although somewhat uneven in articulation, the joy of the historical sights showed Newnham in its true light. Today, a peaceful, attractive village well known for the Severn Bore and its surf boarders, was once a Quayside with extensive boat building, up to 600 tons, with a trade in cider, glass, oak and bark. One of the picturesque features of Newnham is the grassy bank running almost the length of the High Street and known as the Chains. The exceptionally wide thoroughfare has two parallel roads and once a Market Hall, Stocks and Pillory. It is all very close to the river and rises to a defensive hill and marks an important crossing place on the Severn. St. Peter's Church is a landmark, the present building of 1881 follows a restored one of 1875 which was sadly burnt out.

By the 12th century, river traffic was significant with businesses springing up connected with the water. Lampreys and salmon were in abundance, the ferry plied people, animals and carriages. The pictures of trows with their flat bottoms were lovely and a sandy beached "Newnham-on-Sea" a heaven for children. A wonderful picture of joined-up lily pad like concrete pieces for spanning the Severn as a sort of low tide crossing place had not reckoned with the Severn Bore which destroyed it. Tithe Maps and databases showed Newnham's busyness - tanneries, glass works, beer houses, drapers, bakers, painters, grocers, chemists, P.O., Police and Railway stations, the Telephone Exchange with six numbers.

The beautiful copper slag blocks which had come to the village as ballast from Redbrook and South Wales were and are much in evidence. The castle, probably Norman, now a grass tump, had once hosted many Kings who doubtless came for the hunting in the Forest. King Henry II embarked from here for Ireland in 1171. The Civil War provoked colourful scenes with three local garrisons succumbing in just two days.

The Temperance Hotel was one of the outward signs of the terrific rise in Nonconformity with several large capacity chapels, and now not one. The Butchers Shop stuffed with enormous carcasses and jammed with hanging meat drew gasps of appreciation.

Altogether, the afternoon was well spent wandering down Memory Lane.



## Research Tips - Censuses

From an historians point of view censuses are a prime source of data from which a vast amount of information can be gleaned; not just for family history purposes.

The most used censuses are those from 1841 to 1901. Censuses of England and Wales were carried out from 1801 to 1831 but these were just concerned with numbers: populace, houses, type of occupations; no names are recorded. Censuses for 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 were done either in the March or April of the relevant year, always a Sunday, as this is the day of the week that families are generally at home. Taken on the night of 6/7 June 1841 this was the first census to record the names of people. Children up to the age of 14 are recorded by exact age, but adult ages are given in 5 yearly bandings; someone say 37 will be recorded as 35. Also recorded are occupations, but no relationships to head of the household are given, nor the County born in, only a Y or N as to 'Whether Born in Same County'; if born in Scotland, Ireland or abroad the initial S, I or F (for foreign parts) will appear. The later censuses provide much more information, for example: names, ages, relationships, occupations and county of birth.

Censuses can be used for research into house, local and social history. Compare enumerators' schedules from consecutive decades for a particular district in conjunction with maps for a better understanding of the area you are researching. For example comparing the England and Wales, Enumerator's Schedule of 1841 for the parish of Awre (part of); and an 1851 Description of Enumeration District for the same part of the parish, it is noticeable how the format of the forms has changed. By analysing enumerators' descriptions a picture can emerge of how the built environment throughout the country has changed over time. Names of old parishes, and to which hundred they belonged, can be found these can then be used to find other data sources. The return sheets themselves will give a wonderful picture of the social structure of the area being researched; Blakeney was a hive of activity in 1891: labourers, colliers, dress-makers, footman, laundress', carpenters, railway inspector & workers, an inspector of nuisances, shoemaker, baker, comedian, miller, hotel and inn keepers, et al.

Get more out of censuses by reading them from different viewpoints; the above is just a taster. Always refer to original documents for accurate information, make a note of the reference of any source, and where and when found. Because guaranteed, it will always be, that source from which those scribbled notes were made that will be the source you would like to refer to again – and cannot remember, how, what or where.

*Cecele Hunt, Chairman*

ROAD STREET, No. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES (No. of Houses in the Street)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON- DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
High Street		Charles Lamb	Son		6	School	Gloucestershire, Lydney
		John Lamb	Son		11M		
Feathers Hotel		Samuel B. Bernard	Head	Married	32	Hotel Keeper	
		John F. do	Son		24	do	
		John Lamb	Son		27	No off	Gloucestershire, Lydney
		Richard L. Lamb	Son		26	unemployed	Gloucestershire, Lydney
		Mary A. Lamb	Daughter		30	Housekeeper	Gloucestershire, Lydney
		Mary A. Lamb	Daughter		20	Barmaid	Lydney
		Charles A. Lamb	Son		27	Book	Lydney
		Edith A. Lamb	Daughter		21	Book	Lydney
		Edith A. Lamb	Daughter		22	Book	Lydney
		Charles A. Lamb	Son		25	Book	Lydney
		Charles A. Lamb	Son		25	Book	Lydney

*1881 Census of Lydney showing the entry for the Feathers Hotel*

## Photos For A New Century



In the Millennium year, the History Society took part in the Gloucestershire 2000 Photographic Archive project. The society decided to photograph 'sites and monuments' which had some historic interest so that a record would exist of their nature and condition in the year 2000, and subsequently produced the 'Photos for a New Century CD'.

The photographers were all volunteers and were given a free hand regarding the subjects that they took subject to the above general principle. From the 250 photographs originally taken a final 100 were chosen.

Now 10 years on the project is being revisited. The CD pages of the original 100 sites have all been modified to include new photographs taken over the last year or so. The next phase will be the addition of pages for each of the forty or fifty sites whose photographs were taken for the '2000' project but not included on the

original CD. Every one of these has been re-photographed so that any changes over the last ten years can be seen.

The original CD included just one photograph for each site, however in the update some extra views have been included for selected sites, either because the sites have become obscured or to give a more detailed picture.

I am hoping that everything will be completed for a launch of the updated 'Photos for a New Century CD' sometime in the Spring.

The photos show Mushet's coal level at Dark Hill in 2000 (top left) and 2010 (bottom right). The effects of Coal Authority improvements are clear to see.

*Ron Beard*

