


# FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

*news*  
**January 2013**



**CONSERVATION OFFICER  
SIMON MOORE RECEIVES  
SENTENCES\* AT SPEECH HOUSE  
COURT!!**

**\*(As prescribed in the Eyre of 1634)  
LEARN MORE ON THE BACK COVER!**

THE FOREST OF  
DEAN LOCAL  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## News

**JANUARY 2013**

### Editor:

Keith Walker  
51 Lancaster Drive  
Lydney  
GL15 5SJ  
01594 843310  
[Keith.walker3@which.net](mailto:Keith.walker3@which.net)

### Chair:

Cecile Hunt  
01594 842164  
[cecilehunt@btinternet.com](mailto:cecilehunt@btinternet.com)

### Vice-Chair & Treasurer

Mary Sullivan  
01594 860197  
[Sullivan469@btinternet.com](mailto:Sullivan469@btinternet.com)

### Secretary

Cheryl Mayo  
01594 516960  
[cheryl.mayo@btinternet.com](mailto:cheryl.mayo@btinternet.com)

### Website:

[forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](http://forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

Registered Charity  
No: 1094700

Printed by  
Hanley Court Printers

## Editors Notes

Thanks are due to member Gill Claydon, who has once again re-worked the New Regard Index to include the latest issue (number 27). You can download the updated index from our web site ([www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](http://www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)).

Those of you who enjoy views of the Severn Estuary from Lydney Harbour might be interested in the redevelopment of the Oldbury Nuclear site. After a period of uncertainty, the company which is developing the site, Horizon, has been purchased by a Japanese company, Hitachi. Horizon is proposing to build two or three Advanced Boiling Water Reactors (ABWR) on the Oldbury Site. The original proposals for the site indicated that 700 feet high cooling towers would be part of the design. Clearly such a design would have an overwhelming impact on the historic landscape of the estuary. Fortunately Horizon has responded to public hostility to such cooling towers, and is now proposing 'circular hybrid cooling towers', which are stated to be no taller than the existing reactor buildings at Oldbury. Building work will not start at Oldbury for a number of years, but if you want to keep fully informed about the redevelopment, ask to receive the Oldbury Community Updates by email; [oldburyenquiries@horizonnuclearpower.com](mailto:oldburyenquiries@horizonnuclearpower.com) Alternatively, visit the Horizon web site; <http://www.horizonnuclearpower.com>

Amberley Publications are currently looking for new or experienced authors to contribute to their Through Time series of local history books. They have suggested the following potential local titles: Cinderford Through Time, Coleford Through Time, Lydney Through Time, Forest of Dean Through Time. The Through Time concept is a ninety-six page, then-and-now picture book, containing around ninety old photographs or postcards, each paired with a new photograph in full colour, to show how the same scene, or a related one, has changed over time. Each pair of photographs has a short descriptive caption. If you are interested in producing this type of book, please contact Tom Furby at Amberley Publishing (email: [t.furby@amberley-books.com](mailto:t.furby@amberley-books.com) or telephone: 01453 847817).

*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.*

## News From The Chair

Since my last report your committee has been working very hard on the next potential project which was spawned by an idea I had to encourage young people to take an active interest in the history that surrounds them here in the Forest of Dean. Just before I became your chairman in 2011, Mary Sullivan and I discussed an idea I had of the society producing packs for parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends to buy that were activity & education based packs to encourage family's to go out and look for the unique history here in the forest.

This project is currently in its infancy but is beginning to gather momentum. A sub-committee group has been formed to head the project and is in the process of contacting possible supporters; these are needed to show, to the grant providers, that the project is a viable idea. All the associations, groups and societies so far contacted have shown enthusiastic support. The next step will be to complete the grant application forms.

At the last indoor meeting I announced that I am hoping to get a group together to do some research on WWI. Many groups, professional and amateur, around the country are looking to produce commemorative material on the commencement of WWI in 2014, and I am hoping that this society will be able to contribute to this by at least getting enough material to put an article in the New Regard or even producing a small publication using the combined results of all the research done, either on an individual basis, or by a group within the society.

Hopefully research can be done on the more obscure areas in which the Forest of Dean was involved in the war, as well as the less obscure. Just to give you some ideas - research is needed on the WWI hospital in Lydney (Lydney town hall); evacuees (evacuation did not just happen in WWII but occurred in WWI as well); drill halls; the Home Front et al.. A good place to start would be researching the local newspapers held at Cinderford Library.

If you are interested in contributing, or joining the research group, please contact either myself, Mary Sullivan or Cheryl Mayo – all our contact details are on the membership card. Please let us know if you are thinking of doing some research so we don't double up on things.

You will receive the new membership card with this newsletter and as you will see we have an exciting calendar of events lined up for you. If you are coming to any of the events please bring a friend along, they are always welcome!

In 2013 keep an eye on your newsletters for extra events. Possible events we are hoping to put on are: research and advice workshops; behind the scenes tours; open evening(s) (bring along your research and get help with it if you are stuck, show others and perhaps swop ideas and hints & tips); a group visit to Gloucestershire Archives.

Why not put the results of your research forward to your editorial team for consideration for the New Regard, with the possibility of winning the Cyril Hart award and £50? And why not put your research together and make a presentation to the society?

Wishing you all a healthy and happy New Year and – keep on researching!

*Cecile Hunt*



## Keith Webb - An Appreciation



*Former Chairman of the Society, Keith Webb, passed away in October. By kind permission of Reverend Patricia Allen and June Webb, extracts from the eulogy which was read at Keith's cremation service are reproduced below, in appreciation of our former Chairman.*

Keith was born in Bristol on 9th January 1934, however the family moved to Middlesex, when Keith was just 10 months old. After finishing his early education at Harrow High School, he went into the RAF as a regular from 1952 – 1955 serving in the Suez Canal Zone, Egypt and Cyprus.

Keith had met June Mullord at a Youth Club in 1950, and they remained good friends, despite his time away in the RAF. When he was demobbed, Keith spent two years as a policeman on Foot Patrol in the West End of London: then he applied to be a Mounted Police Officer and was accepted in 1959. In that same year, on 2nd May, he and June were married at St Dunstan's in Cranford Park.

In 1961 their first son, Stuart was born, followed two years later by Peter. In the 1960s family holidays were taken in a tent, then in a caravan, at the Forestry Commission camp site at Christchurch in the Forest.

It was while they were living in South London that he, with June's help and support, founded and built the Diamond Centre for Disabled Riders, in Carshalton, Surrey. This was in the very earliest days of the Riding for the Disabled movement: when everyone said 'It can't be done!' he did it, despite opposition from people who thought they knew better. His dogged determination created the largest and most active Riding for the Disabled Centre in the world!

At present they take over 300 children and adults for therapeutic riding, on 20+ horses and ponies. He and June were awarded the Martini International Award for 'Services to the equestrian world' in 1974. He worked on establishing the centre from its beginnings in 1968 to 1995, when the Centre became a charity in its own right, and he became its first President.

He served in the Metropolitan Police until 1982, having been awarded the British Empire Medal – 'for his contribution to the prestige of the Metropolitan Police' in the New Year Honours List of 1975. He also received the Police Good Conduct and Long Service Medal in 1977. Ill health forced him to take early retirement, and he and June moved to Gorsty Knoll with their dogs and ponies. The house was appropriately named Marefold – 'a sheltered spot where a mare would feel safe to foal'.

He very soon got interested in Local History, and particularly in the Mushets, and the Darkhill Ironworks, which lie near their house. He joined the Local History Society and soon was on the committee, becoming their Chairman from 1990- 1993, and again from 1994- 1997.

In June 1990, he became a Justice of the Peace serving on the Coleford and Gloucester Courts. Then after serving on the Archaeological Advisory Group he was invited to be an Enclosure Commissioner in September 1998: he was very proud of both of these positions.

Keith had a very full and satisfying life. The world is certainly a poorer place without him.



## Questionnaire Results

### From Mary Sullivan

At the AGM I gave a resume of the findings from the returned questionnaires that were sent out with the September newsletter. For the benefit of other members here are the main findings. 42 papers were sent in representing about 60 members, approximately 83% of whom are aged over 60. There was a complete spread from members who had lived in the Forest all their lives to relative newcomers. This is a response rate of 20% of total membership, a good response which gives a fair summary of how members generally feel about the society.



95% are happy with the level of annual subscriptions. About 60% attend indoor meetings regularly and gave an average vote on interest level of 2 out of 5. Although a few members find it hard to attend on Saturday afternoon, the general view was that this is still the best time for meetings. Things that matter to people about venues are easy access and easy parking and being able to hear speakers whilst sitting in relative comfort.

Nearly half of respondents like to go on the walks and even more like to go on the coach trips. Of these, a large majority would like to go further afield. Many suggestions were given and in response we shall be organising 2 coach trips next year, one local to FOD and one further away. The newsletter and the website received good marks. From the nearly half who read the New Regard every year, marks for quality and interest were mostly 1 or 2. About a third of respondents do undertake their own research. Nearly everybody knows the Society has a collection of books and material at Dean Heritage Centre but it is hardly ever used. The Committee is considering moving the collection to a new venue where we could hold workshops or library times.

Twice as many respondents thought that the society should be for all people interested in local history including the wider county or country as thought that the society should **only** study, consider and promote the local history of the FOD.

Suggestions for improvements included -

- ▶ More talks in evenings
- ▶ Need to involve young people
- ▶ More on conservation
- ▶ More history less archaeology
- ▶ More guided walks (But a few wanted less walks...)
- ▶ More coach trips
- ▶ Hold quiz night with teams of 4
- ▶ Bring and tell events
- ▶ Meet up with other Glos local history societies
- ▶ Historic pub lunches.

If you have any other ideas please contact a member of the committee.

## Focus On .... 'Parishes' (continued)

By Cecile Hunt, Chairman

In 1831, an act was passed "to enable Churchwardens and Overseers to enclose land belonging to the Crown for the Benefit of poor Persons residing in the Parish in which such Crown Land is situated". This law gave churchwardens and overseers of the poor of a parish the authority to apply in writing to the Treasury to inclose (sic) any forest or waste land that belonged to the Crown, as long as it did not exceed fifty acres and was in or near to the parish applying. The land was to provide employment of the poor.



Parkend Church

As the centre of the Forest of Dean was extra-parochial, or Crown land, the above act would probably have been used by the parishes listed in the previous article, surrounding the these extra-parochial lands, to extend their land holdings.

Although union of parishes was brought about, throughout the country, by the passing of the New Poor Law Act in 1835 which was to bring into line the administering of the relief to the poor, mainly by Union Workhouses which very quickly appeared across the country. In the Forest of Dean the mixture of parochial and extra-parochial ground brought about an act called the Dean Forest (Poor) Act being passed in 1842; it was "An Act to provide for the Relief of the Poor in the Forest of Dean and other Extra-parochial Places in and near the Hundred of St. Briavels in the County of Gloucestershire [9th July, 1842]". The act was passed to enable better administration of the many people who had set up homes, or encroachments, on the extra-parochial ground within the forest, these inhabitants, because of where they lived, were not entitled to any poor relief. By the passing of the act they could then apply for poor relief; the down side to this was they also came within the rules of being admitted to the union workhouse of their area.

Extra-parochial places scattered around the forest not covered by the new East and West Dean Townships were annexed to parishes; Mailscot near New Weir in the St Briavels Hundred was annexed to the parish of English Bicknor whilst Walmore and Northwoods Green were annexed to Westbury on Severn parish. The Hudnalls, Bearse, Fence and Mawkins Hazells were four more extra-parochial places in the Saint Briavels Hundred, they were divided between Hewelsfield and St Briavels parishes.

Today it is forgotten how divided up the forest was and although we talk about the 'statutory forest' the area it covered has long been forgotten. The forest today still has traces of administration going back to the hunting grounds of the royals in the Vererders and their court. Although the act to provide relief for the poor of the district got rid of the extra-parochial grounds, or hunting grounds, of the Forest of Dean, unlike many other royal hunting grounds, (Rockingham Forest for one) around the country, it is still discernable as a forest with its vert and venison.

Information and extracts in this article was taken from "The Laws of The Dean Forest" by James G Wood; published 1878.

**FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
The members, and the society, are invited to complete this questionnaire and return it to the Secretary, Mrs. J. G. Wood, 10, The Old Rectory, Dean, Gloucestershire, GL20 9JL. Tel: 01292 411111. Email: [info@fdlhc.org.uk](mailto:info@fdlhc.org.uk)

Questionnaire to members, June 2012

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Age: under 60 / over 60 \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in the Forest of Dean? \_\_\_\_\_ years

How long have you been a member of the society? \_\_\_\_\_ years

If a couple, are you both members? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think the annual subscription of £10 adults, £5 couples are low/just right/high? \_\_\_\_\_

**Indoor meetings**

Do you attend regularly? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is excellent, 5 is very poor: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the average interest of the talks \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the quality of the speakers \_\_\_\_\_

Suggest other topics you would like to hear about: \_\_\_\_\_

How important to you is the venue? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain what factors matter to you: \_\_\_\_\_

**Visits and outings**

How often are you able to go on walks? \_\_\_\_\_

How often are you able to go on coach trips? \_\_\_\_\_

If you like to go further afield to places of historical interest in the wider county/country? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

Any particular places you would like us to visit: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE BUCKSTONE *by David J Harrison MA*

Staunton, between Monmouth and Coleford, derives its ancient name from Stoney Settlement, a highly appropriate designation for a village with no less than six notable Stones. Namely: The Frog's Mouth; The Long Stone; The Broad Stone; The Suck Stone; The Near Harkening Rock, and the object of my fascinated interest – The Buck Stone.

We know very little about the early history of The Buck Stone, but believe that it is a strange creation of the glacial period. Formed by nature, it is almost flat on top with four sides, the longest of which is 17 feet. It narrows at its base to about 2 feet, rather like an inverted pyramid. The texture is of old red sandstone conglomerate of quartz pebbles, a stratum of which runs through the district, sometimes exceedingly hard in most of its veins, but very perishable in others, hence its singular shape.

Charles Heath in 1804 claimed that the original name may well have been The Bwlch Stone, indicating a passage between two hills. Legend however claims that some of the once numerous deer of the Forest sheltered in its ample shade. Others claim that, from a distance, and at a certain angle, the stone itself resembles the shape of a deer.

Although no written evidence exists, The Buck Stone has strong claims as a significant Druidical rock whose function may well have been judicial and religious. The Druids were pagan priests of the Celts. Stonehenge was already 1000 years old, the Druids did not worship there, they preferred shaded forest groves such as that above Staunton. The Celt's practised human sacrifice, barbaric rights and blood stained altars were common place with animals and humans burned alive as sacrifices to the gods. Long before man conceived gods in his own likeness he worshipped still pools and curiously shaped rocks. Few are more singular and curious than The Buck Stone. Today, close to the restored Buck Stone is a Long Barrow, approximately 50 yards in length, where reputedly an Archdruid has long been in repose.

The spoken word and the oral tradition were central to the lives of the mysterious and close-knit Celtic communities. The following Druidical legend of the Buck Stone may not be true! On the other hand?

*A young bard sought solace and tranquillity as he rested a while against the Buck Stone and contemplated the panorama. A silent procession of Druids approached the spot and the bard's quiet meditation was disturbed. They explained that in a dream they had been bidden to meet at the rock where an important sacrifice would be waiting. Both he and the Druids knew that the dream had to be fulfilled, so the bard submitted himself to the sacrificial altar. The sun rose to its height, shadows were cast over the stone and the moment came for the plunge of the ceremonial blade to end the life of the young bard. But at that very moment with the Archdruid's knife aloft, a magnificent stag burst into the clearing and fell panting beside the altar. With joy the Druids knew that here was the real sacrifice, and that the bard's life would be spared. He had proven his heroism and worth by showing his willingness to offer his life for the sake of his people.*

By the eighteenth century the Movement of the Picturesque and Romantic had gathered pace. The Buck Stone attracted many visitors from afar. However, Stone Town, as Staunton was sometimes called by the inhabitants of the Dean, was known to attract undesirables. Sometime before the great calamity which befell the Stone in June, 1885, a party of workmen from Redbrook in the Wye valley vowed to overturn the prominent landmark. They ar-



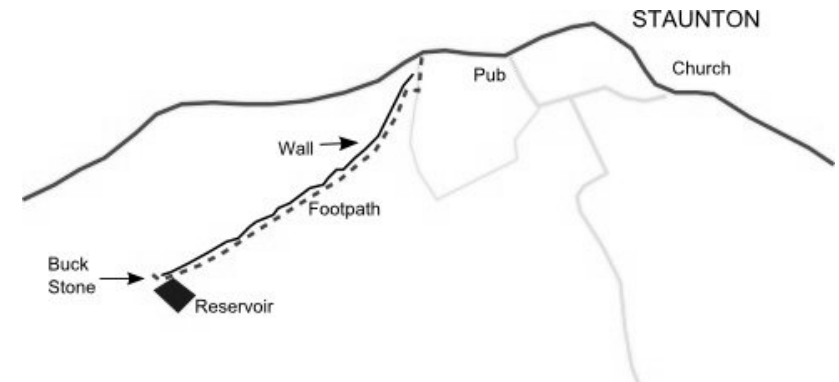
rived with wicked intentions, carrying about their persons "crows and other levers". But the idle men did not succeed in their mean-hearted mission and after much exertion, disappointed they turned for home. Staunton's Buck Stone met its fate on 10th June, 1885, when a troupe of strolling players wantonly set about it with a will. Afterwards, they denied the use of a lever, though marks could be clearly seen. Five actors belonging to the London Star Co. and their landlord from the Agincourt Inn, Monmouth, wished to see The Buck Stone rock to and fro. Though not an easy feat, Mons H. Zero, the proprietor of the troupe and Mr.J.Goddard, pianist, clambered to the top of the Stone. The others, Mr H.W.Willoughby, Mr.Beck, Mr.T.McNatty and the publican, Mr.Philpotts, commenced pushing to see if the Stone, as alleged, really would rock. Suddenly, the large mass of conglomerate, [estimated at 40 tons] turned half-around and the next moment, toppled over, down the hill. The two men on top just having time to save themselves from being crushed. Now dethroned at more than ten yards from its original position, the Buck Stone looked miserable. The actors had "inadvertently" thrown down the stone, making the few rocking stones of Britain less in number. The police took their names, of course, but the consensus view emerged that it was an accident not by design.

The Beacon printed extra newspapers with its report on the calamity but it still sold out. The actors wrote in, explaining and claiming that they wished for friends and not enemies. Local people were outraged and indignant. But it was the Mayor of Monmouth who was quickest off the mark in writing to Sir James Campbell, who represented the Crown Authorities. With a view to strong local feeling, The Commissioners of Woods and Forests, at the cost of £500, lifted and replaced the largest surviving section of the Buck Stone. The men who did the damage did nothing.

Today, it is still a much visited place and the Buck Stone although no longer capable of rocking, still casts its alluring spell over all who look upon it.

### How to find the Buckstone

From the White Horse pub in Staunton, carry on along the pavement in the direction of Monmouth and then left on a 'No Through Road'. After a stile turn right up steps to follow a climbing path to the Buckstone, keeping the wall on the right hand side.

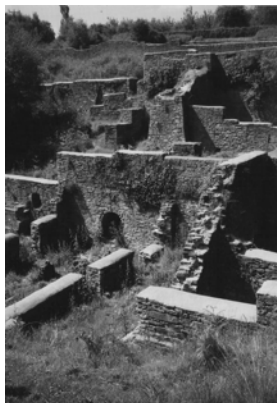




## Meetings In Review - by David J Harrison MA

On Saturday, 13th October, 2012, at the West Dean Centre, Bream, 48 members attended one of the slickest AGM.s on record and, after taking tea, spent 45 happy minutes listening to Forest Verderer, Ian Standing, talking about "The Mushets and the Forest of Dean".

David Mushet, [1772-1847], born in Scotland, lies today in All Saints churchyard, Staunton, because in death he wanted to belong to the Forest. He made a great contribution to the iron and steel industry. His greatest contribution, however, was to father Robert Forester Mushet, [1811-91], and to encourage him in the study of ferrous metallurgy. His son went on to make the Bessemer steel making process viable commercially and also discovered self-hardening tool steels.



Ian produced some spectacular slides of underground workings throughout the area and local Mushet connections in Coleford, down to slag lumps adorning garden walls. He was positively entertaining about R.F.M.'s eating habits which involved his poor wife in weighing every ounce to be consumed. Best of all, Ian drew our attention to the Mushet eyebrows which have passed from generation to generation, as exhibited by the attractive Colleen Mushet, [4th generation granddaughter] from Seattle, when she visited the Dean in 2010.

Words were trotted out: Manganese Minerals, Alloys, Titanium, Tungsten Steel. But the Mushet story lived when the facts of the early 19th. century approach from Thomas Halford, who was having difficulty with the quality and quantity of iron being produced at his furnaces at White-cliff, came to light. Experiment followed experiment and the patents multiplied. The remains of the Darkhill Foundry are now preserved as a site of international importance.

R.F.M. improved Henry Bessemer's steel making process and produced better and cheaper steel. The speaker, making good use of the microphone, explained about the brittle quality of iron and the malleability of steel. Mushet was, in fact, the first to make excellent durable rails of steel, facilitating the safe expansion of not only the U.K.s railway network, but that of the world.



### FROM CANUTE TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Thanks in part to the work of our new publicity officer, Joyce, no less than 57 members and friends appeared in the Village Hall at Drybrook on Saturday, 10th November, 2012. "From Canute to Queen Elizabeth II" was Pete Ralph's title for a splendid slide show which gave a thin overview of why the Forest of Dean is distinctive and unique.

Ancient Standing Stones, Iron Ore Deposits, The Devil's Pulpit, A Royal Hunting Forest, young miners with nellys protruding from

their mouths [a forked stick with clay bowl holding a candle], The King Charles II Lodge - Speech House, [1676], Verderers - their duties and responsibilities, Latimer Lodge, [1573], Sheep, [the best traffic calmers of the Forest], Toll Houses - all closed in the 1880s, Freeminers who supported King Edward I at Berwick-on-Tweed and much, much more.

Thanks in part to the work of our new publicity officer, Joyce, no less than 57 members and friends appeared in the Village Hall at Drybrook on Saturday, 10th November, 2012. "From Canute to Queen Elizabeth II" was Pete Ralph's title for a splendid slide show which gave a thin overview of why the Forest of Dean is distinctive and unique.

Ancient Standing Stones, Iron Ore Deposits, The Devil's Pulpit, A Royal Hunting Forest, young miners with nellys protruding from their mouths [a forked stick with clay bowl holding a candle], The King Charles II Lodge - Speech House, [1676], Verderers - their duties and responsibilities, Latimer Lodge, [1573], Sheep, [the best traffic calmers of the Forest], Toll Houses - all closed in the 1880s, Freeminers who supported King Edward I at Berwick-on -



### TRAMROADS OF THE FOREST

Ian Pope's reputation as an "ace on local history" preceded him to Bream on Saturday, 8th. December, 2012, where no less than 86 members and friends turned out and enjoyed his presentation "Tramroads of the Forest".

Ian and his lovely wife, Clare, arrived early, narrowly missing the Line Dancers, having driven all the way from far off Oxfordshire. His knowledge is truly encyclopaedic,

he held no notes in his hand, this was real local history live! He modestly claimed to present few historical slides in 90 minutes, this was not true as the pictures were numerous and covered every possible dimension of tramroads /railways/tramways, [all inter-changable terms]. Ian also sadly claimed, "I'm trying to give up giving Talks". We hope not, as this would be a tragedy.

After recommending Harry Parr's volumes, the speaker journeyed from the late 18th. century development of the coalfields to the problems of moving coal by water, pack-animals, wagons. From out of their gales, the free-miners showed enterprise - early wooden wagonways, stone blocks, flanges, ledges cut into hillsides. The Crown objected to early tramroads in 1799, but through Acts of Parliament and much use of private land, lines were successfully laid down.

All component parts were available in the Dean. Cobbles were fixed between the rails to facilitate the horses, L - section rails were made, plates were laid, stone blocks and wooden sleepers were put down. The number of holes in blocks - 1 or 3 or side drilled holes is a separate study in its own right. The original lines of 3' 6" / 3' 8" spread out with wear and tear, and after 1852 ran alongside I. K. Brunel's wide gauge of 7'. We viewed Bullo Pill, Box Meadow and the 1,000 yards of Hay Hill Tunnel with no ventilation shafts which caused problems for foot plate crews. Lots of little collieries with many trucks needed passing places on lines which fed Soudley Iron works and Spion Kop Quarry. Redbrook's magnificent masonry - The Incline, came before our eager eyes, plus that splendid gap behind that famous shop, Raymonds of Coleford - yes, it was a tramline. This short appreciation cannot do justice to Ian's gripping Talk, you really had to be there to hear it

Tramroads in the Forest still have an element of mystery attached to them as historians are mystified by embankments, tunnels and strange railway lines apparently leading nowhere - maybe intended for the Ghost Train?

## Plaques & Monuments - Pan Tod



Perched at the highest point in the Forest of Dean, 951ft above sea level on Ruardean Hill, at the Pan Tod Beacon site, is one of the three Forest of Dean memorials to its miners.

The area of Pan Tod has for centuries been a beacon site and was one of the official Bruno Peek (Diamond Jubilee) beacon sites in the UK.

A topograph sitting on top of the crouched figure of a miner was unveiled at Pan Tod on Saturday May 31st 2008. It is the joint creation of designer Bernard Kear and sculptress Christine Baxter.

The project, which began in the millennium, took eight years for the Ruardean Hill Residents' Association to complete. Funding was provided by the National Lottery fund, both for the topograph and for seats in the surrounding community area.

The memorial was created in memory of five Ruardean Hill miners who lost their lives in the mines: namely Henry Edwards, James Roberts, George Parsons, John Roberts and Leslie Jones.

The memorial and the surrounding area are maintained voluntarily by community members and 'Friends of Pan Tod'. The topograph itself provides help in interpreting the tremendous views which are afforded from the site of the miner's statue.



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS *from Liz Berry*

Thank you to members who have paid their subscriptions for 2012/13. As I can send their new membership cards out with this January newsletter, it saves your Society the postage of sending the new card out separately at a later date. For those who have still not altered their standing order to the new amount (£10 for one, £15 for two or more), you will owe us the difference for this next year!

We welcome the following new members:

Mr Ben Berry, Coleford  
Mrs Ruth Fletcher, Soudley  
Mrs Chris Penny, Ruardean  
Ms S Powell & Mr S Tomalin, Ruardean Woodside  
Mr M Ward, Cinderford  
Mr P Ralph, Cinderford  
Ms Lynn Trowbridge, Orinda, USA

We were sorry to hear of the deaths of the following members: Mr Derek Shorthouse who has been a member and loyal supporter of the Society for over 12 years and Mrs Grace Henderson who used to live in Broadwell, and was a member for over 15 years, although she lived in Scotland for the last 70 years. Our sympathies go out to their families.

## "The Forest of Dean Eyre of 1634" *from Joyce Moss*



*The dignitaries at the book launch included (left to right) Nicolas Herbert (editor of the new book), Major Berkeley (BGAS President) and Ian Standing (Vice President of FODLHS)*  
Photo courtesy of Geoff North

The 25th October saw the launch of "The Forest of Dean Eyre of 1634" by Nicholas Herbert, onetime editor of the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire, and published by the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in the Gloucestershire Record Series (Vol. 26).

The launch took place in the Verderer's Court Room in Speech House in the presence of Major Berkeley, the Society's President and with officers of the Forest of Dean Local History Society present.

A copy of the book was presented to Conservation Officer Simon Moore who was representing the History Society at the event.

The handsome volume sees the Eyre transcribed, with related documents. A Forest Eyre was a periodic visitation by Crown officials to punish offences against Forest law and to regulate local officials. By 1634, the Eyre was largely disused but Charles I was short of money, having dissolved a troublesome Parliament in 1629. He then had to raise extra Parliamentary revenue by any means, to keep the Crown going. This was often done by the revival of out of date dues which fed into his unpopularity. Eventually these led, with other factors, to the outbreak of Civil War in 1642. It is significant that one of the first grievances tackled by the Long Parliament in 1640 was the extension of Forest Law to new boundaries.

In July 1634, in Gloucester Castle, the Dean Eyre inflicted high fines on those infringing the King's rights to timber, iron, coal, fish and deer within his lands in the Forest, as a way of making more money. Worse, the boundaries of the Forest were pushed back to include other parishes in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, to take in more tax.

The Eyre casts considerable light on the administration, industry and people of the Forest and on the increasing pressure from courtiers and landowners to enclose demesne land as well as from early ironmasters to establish forges and furnaces, all at a price paid to the King.

The importance of the Eyre is that it illustrates a piece of Dean History which is very much a part of our national history, concerning conflict between king and parliament. The publication of the Eyre adds yet another transcribed document to those already helping historians, when they undertake their task. Without these, the work of research would be very much harder than it already is.

The Forest of Dean Eyre of 1634 edited by Nicholas Herbert

ISBN 978 0 900197 78 02 Price £30

Available online <http://www.bgas.org.uk/publications/rs/rs26.html>