

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

news
July 2014

Was this really an iron mine??

To find out, join Cecile Hunt & Averil Kear
on the coach outing on Saturday 16th August to
'Discover the History of Forest Iron'

Booking forms enclosed!

THE FOREST OF
DEAN LOCAL
HISTORY
SOCIETY

News

JULY 2014

Editor:

Keith Walker
51 Lancaster Drive
Lydney
GL15 5SJ
01594 843310
NewsletterEditor@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Chair:

Cecile Hunt
01594 842164
Chair@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Vice-Chair & Treasurer

Mary Sullivan
01594 860197
Treasurer@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Secretary

Cheryl Mayo
01594 516960
Secretary@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Website:

forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Registered Charity
No: 1094700

Printed by
Hanley Court Printers

Editors Notes

You will see elsewhere in this edition that the new website is very close to going 'live'. This simply would not be happening without the hard work and commitment of David Harris. David is also part of the production team of the New Regard, and is one of those unsung heroes who work behind the scenes to help the Society function - so my personal thanks to David for his help and guidance on the production of the new web site.

Cecile's 'News from the Chair' article features the World War 1 Exhibition 'Home Front Dean' which is now on at the Dean Heritage Centre. There are further details about the exhibition on the back cover. Normal DHC prices apply to entry to the exhibition. However Dean Heritage Centre is currently advertising reduced entry fees (2 for the price of 1) on Amazon Local.

Go to <http://local.amazon.co.uk/Gloucester> and search for: 'Entry to the Dean Heritage Centre for Two or More People' to gain access to the reduced entry rates.

We will be featuring some of the research information featured in the 'Home Front Dean' exhibition on our notice boards which are 'on tour' this summer, again see Cecile's piece for the locations where you can see them.

Did you know that Gloucestershire Archives run a series of courses that can help you in learning how to research etc. Several members of the WW1 research group have already benefited from attending courses at the Archives, and we can recommend them. You can find out more details about forthcoming courses at the Archives via the following web link:
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/events

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 with Cecile Hunt

Welcome to the summer edition of the society's newsletter.

The next couple of months have suddenly filled with events! Firstly though, I would like to look back to the well attended walk on a spring day in May around Cinderford, led by Ron Beard. We visited some of the places in Ron's article in New Regard 28, 'Cinderford Through the Ages', it brought the article to life and showed us the forgotten side of Cinderford.

Due to lack of bookings the June coach trip to Witley Court and Worcester had to be cancelled. However the August coach trip is on the 16th; see the enclosed booking form for full details. Please join us to learn about how important the Forest of Dean was to the country's iron production since the 1100's!

As you know Keith and I have been heading up a society project looking at the impact World War One had on the Forest - big thank you to the volunteers who have already done loads of research and produced material for use in an exhibition at the Dean Heritage Centre, Soudley. Keith and I have spent many hours working closely with the Centre in regard to the exhibition. It is now open in Gallery 41, and runs from 27 June to Sunday 14th September - please do go and see it; make everybody's time and effort worthwhile - it would be nice to have some feedback from members as to their thoughts on the content of the exhibition. The Centre applied for, and got, a grant which enabled the research supplied by members to be professionally produced onto interpretation panels. I have also done a recording, which has been illustrated and edited by Keith, it runs on a loop and tells, briefly, the story of my Grand-father who returned from the war severely injured. On the 2 & 3 of August there is a WW1 events weekend at the Centre; Keith and I will be manning a stand in Gallery 41 - please do come and see us. There is still time to join our volunteer research group to add to the material already gleaned ready for a book, get in touch with me if you are interested in joining us.

Looking forward - Society stands will be at;
Lydney Hospital Fete, Saturday July 19th
Parkend Carnival, 25th August (Bank Holiday Monday)
Westbury Carnival, Sunday 31st August
Lydney Heritage Week, September 13/14th
Forest of Dean Family History Day - Whitemead Park, Saturday 27th September
GLHA History Day at Pate's Grammar School, Cheltenham, Saturday 11th October

If you are not on the society's notification email list you will not have received an email from Cheryl asking for volunteers to help man the society stands at the above events - if you would like to help out please let one of the committee know. To keep the society alive, and take some of the strain off your committee members, I would love to see more members becoming involved in, and helping with, the various events and projects of the society - if you have ever thought of helping, even if only for an hour, please step forward - it is a wonderful experience, I guarantee you will add to your knowledge of history along the way!

Cecile



New Web Site

Shortly after you get this edition of the newsletter, our new web site should go 'live'. The 'url' for the web site remains the same as the old one:

forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

For the technically minded amongst you, the website was developed as a content management system, using Silver-stripe. Use is also being made of the Google calendar function to inter work with Silver-stripe. In addition, our New Regard producer, David Harris, has introduced a much needed 'eshop' to the web site (using 'Prestashop'). Visitors to the site will now be able to order and pay for our publications on-line. The changes mean that future development and maintenance of the web site will be much easier to manage.. We hope to be able to shortly appoint a new 'Web Editor' who will take responsibility for the ongoing development of the web site.

The committee will now also be using new email accounts with the forestofdeanhistory.org.uk suffix, for example chair@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk



Visit to Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum Wed 19 November, 2 pm

For over 300 years, soldiers from Gloucestershire and Bristol have been present at critical turning points in British history: in the Americas, in Europe and in Asia. The Museum re-opened in the spring following a huge refurbishment and offers visitors the chance to, amongst other experiences, walk through a First World War trench, watch the war news from Korea and see how people lived in the county in the Second World War.

We have organised a guided tour for Wednesday 19 November, starting at 2pm. The tour takes about 40 minutes, depending on how many questions people ask! Then you are free to browse for as long as you wish.

This is an informal event, and you will need to make your own way there, although if you need a lift we may be able to organize that. The costs are the entry fee of £4.75 (concession £3.75) plus £1 for the tour. If we have more than 10, there is a £1 discount off the entry prices.

Full details about the Museum and how to get there can be found at <http://glostorg.org.uk>.

So that we can ensure there are enough guides for the tour, please let Cheryl Mayo know if you plan to join us. Tel: 01594 516 960 or email secretary@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk



Free Miners & Hundreds by Cecile Hunt

A unique privilege for the last 700 years, and since 1838 a statutory right, in the Forest of Dean is the right to be a Free Miner. To become a Free Miner you must have a Free Miner father, work for a year and a day in an iron mine, coal mine or stone quarry of another Free Miner and to have been born in the Hundred of St Briavels. Hundreds today have, in the majority, been forgotten about except in the Forest of Dean where the name is still kept alive by being tied in with the Free Mining that is still carried out here in the Forest of Dean.

Since around 1086 the majority of the country was divided into administrative districts of Hundreds; today we have parishes and counties and other governmental divisions. Hundreds lasted until the Local Government Act of 1894; this Act set up District Councils which took over the Hundred Courts. Other names for a 'Hundred' were 'Wapentake' (Danelaw counties such as Derbyshire and Leicestershire), 'Lath' (Kent), 'Rape' (Sussex), 'Leet' (East Anglia), 'Ward' (Cumberland, Durham and Northumberland) and 'Liberty' (Isle of Wight).

Before the Norman Conquest the governmental divisions of the country were known by the Anglo Saxon name of 'Shire'; this name is still remembered in county names such as Gloucestershire although some counties have dropped the suffix as in Somerset or Dorset. After the conquest a Shire became a County; these were divided into administrative divisions called Hundreds. The reason for calling the divisions a 'Hundred' has become obscure, it could have been that it contained ten tithings. Tithings were a group of ten householders who stood security for each other; a tithing was once a land division known as a tenth of a hundred. Hundreds were still being created in the 17th century.

When first set up in the 10th century, once a month, each Hundred held a 'Hundred Court'; acting on behalf of the king it met in the open at a prominent position in the Hundred (this might be a boundary stone, tree or cross-roads) to consider criminal offences, minor ecclesiastical matters and private pleas. The court could also levy taxes.

Hundreds in the Forest of Dean were; St Briavels Hundred, Westbury Hundred, Bledisloe Hundred, Duchy of Lancaster Hundred and the Botloe Hundred. To the foresters the most important one was the St Briavels Hundred, it was named in 1270. The centre of the Hundred together with some 'detached' areas in the surrounding parishes, amounting to around 20,000 acres, was crown land and extra-parochial. St Briavels court met at St Briavels castle, on a regular, to start with, three weekly basis but over the centuries met more and more irregularly; it met on a Monday, except for during the Commonwealth period when it changed to a Tuesday. The last session of the court may have been in 1921; the court by this time had changed its remit and format quite considerably compared to when first set up.

Across the country Hundreds have been swallowed up by modern changes to names and divisions but here in the Forest of Dean the area lying within the St Briavels Hundred is still, in the twenty-first century, the demarcation for the ancient right of becoming a Free Miner.



Membership

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Mr Martin Permain, Boughspring
Mr J S Johnston, Ruardean Woodside
Mr Stan & Miss Wendy Boshier, Buckshaft
Mr Paul Evans, Cliffords Mesne
Mrs Caroline Jones. Lydbrook.

Liz Berry, Membership Secretary

A **Roman Coin Hoard** has been found in the Forest of Dean and has been offered to the Dean Heritage Centre through the Portable Antiquities Scheme as it was declared treasure. The Centre and the Friends of DHC are running a campaign to raise £1600 to purchase the coins. It is hoped that a combination of applying for funding and raising money locally will raise enough money to retain the coins for the Forest of Dean. The hoard contains 500 bronze and copper coins from the 4th century and were found in Yorkley. DHC would like to place the coins on permanent display in the existing display on Dean in Roman times. The Heritage Centre would greatly appreciate contributions towards the cost of purchase. Names of those donating will be put into a draw and the winner will receive a free year's subscription to the Friends of the Museum. Any donations welcome. Those wishing to donate please contact Friends of the Dean Heritage Centre by e-mail at friendsdeanheritagecentre@gmail.com or by posting a cheque payable to 'The Friends of the Dean Heritage Museum Trust' to The Friends Treasurer, Dean Heritage Centre, Camp Mill, Soudley, GL14 2UB.



Ian Standing

The New Regard – an appeal!

The current New Regard is well on its way to completion with a fascinating range of articles from personal memories of growing up in Lydbrook to scholarly research on Forest meends, that is, something to suit everyone.

But the stream of articles for future editions is running low. So, if you have been working away on a piece for some time, or

even for a little time, and you would like to see it published please let our editor Ian Standing know. We have no strong opinions on the nature of the article as long as it is relevant to the Forest of Dean and its history. A strongly researched paper on a little known topic or a straightforward personal story of life and times in the Forest is equally interesting to our readers. If you do not feel comfortable writing the article itself but believe you have a good story to tell, we would be very happy to help you out. We will also take legible hand-written copy if that's what you have.

We welcome articles from non-members but priority will always be given to members.

If you have something in mind, please contact Ian at:

NewRegardEditor@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk or telephone 01594 562122.

Severn Side Fishing Huts

A number of fishing methods have traditionally been used in the Severn Estuary, including putt and putcher weirs, drift and trammel nets, stop boats, long nets, lave nets, seine nets and elver netting, as well as eel and fish spearing.

Within the past 200 years fishing in the lower Severn was on such a scale that it could be considered as a minor industry in its own right. The fisheries were considered to be valuable and would often be sold by auction, as the advert from an 1802 edition of the Gloucester Citizen shows (above). Samuel Rudder described in 1770 how £4000 worth of Severn Salmon was sent annually to London, the price at the time being fourpence a pound. In the last century annual catches of salmon reached a peak of 36000. Around 1914 there were records of 150 lave net fishermen who could earn up to £150 per week, a very large sum of the money at the time. In his book 'Severn Tide', Brian Waters describes how "When mining was a seasonal occupation, with a long slack period of little or no work during the summer months, many miners took up lave-net fishing. They were permitted to hold a license for the curtailed season from May until the middle of August for as little as a pound. During these two and a half months they often made more money than they earned in the rest of the year."



The fishing trade on the Severn has suffered a long slow decline, with pollution, over fishing, and more recently the availability of cheap farmed salmon all playing a part in the reduction in fishing and fish numbers in the river. In spite of this a number of stalwarts, (including history society member John Powell), continue to use historic methods of fishing on the Severn.

However apart from the occasional glimpse of remaining putcher ranks in the Severn, there is little remaining visual evidence of the fishing industry, apart that is from the remaining unique fishing huts which are dotted along the banks of the Severn. The Newnham salmon hut is a small red brick building on the bank of the Severn between Newnham and Broadoak. In fact, it is one of the last ten such huts that remain of the many that used to be situated along the river from Beachley to Gloucester. Many were temporary structures that have completely disappeared, while others have been extended and converted into houses, like one at Framilodes. Newnham hut has remained in its original form and is now a listed building. They were built when salmon fishing was an important and lucrative industry and were intended to store the nets, putchers and other fishing gear during the period when it was out of season to fish for salmon. At one time the season was from

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
FISHERY IN THE RIVER SEVERN.
TO BE LET BY AUCTION,
By Mr. PHILLPOTTS, Sen.
at the Red Lion Inn, at Arlingham, in the County of Gloucester, on Thursday, the 4th Day of March, 1802, at Four o'Clock in the Afternoon;—The long NETT FISHERY in the River Severn, within the Manor and Parish of Arlingham, an Extent of seven Miles and an Half: and also the PUTT FISHERY, for 68 Putts, in several Places in the said River, and within the said Manor and Parish.
For Particulars, apply to Mr. William B-dnum, at Arlingham, or Messrs. Whitcombe, Griffith, and Phillpotts, Gloucester.

February to August, but as the number of salmon in the river has declined the season has been restricted to preserve the stocks and is now from the beginning of June until the end of August. Huts close to the river were prone to flooding, so the nets and putchers would be stored upstairs. Outlets for the flood water were covered with a grill to prevent rats coming in and destroying the nets. Some, like the hut at Newnham, had a fireplace where a driftwood fire could keep the fishermen warm or be used to make a hot meal or drink, when they were waiting for the right state of the tide.. Now used as a museum, the hut contains information boards, describing the various methods of catching salmon in the Severn.

The method of catching salmon in large nets, either from a stop boat, or by a drift net attached to the shore and cast out to a fisherman standing in the river, died out in the late 20th century as stocks declined. Another method was using putchers, wicker baskets on wooden frames in the river, situated so that the fish would swim into them on the outgoing tide. This is a very ancient method, described in monastic rolls from Tintern Abbey, and within living memory was a familiar sight along the Severn shore from Beachley to Gloucester. At present, just five putchers are licensed but in recent years the catches have dropped so low that they are not a viable proposition, and only two or three are still in use. Similarly with the lave nets, which involves standing, often waist deep in the river, holding a large V shaped net with which to scoop up a salmon that is rash enough to come within reach, a precarious and dangerous method of fishing, and a skill that is now only known to a few. At the moment there are 25 lave net men registered with the Environment Agency. They are allowed to take no more than 5 fish per year, but this last year catches have been well below that number, so it is hardly surprising that only a dozen or so men have fished.

The Environment Agency are in continued discussion with the fisherman to find ways to preserve the fish stocks, but so far with little success so it seems likely that all forms of salmon fishing in the Severn will die out in the foreseeable future, and the only reminder of the industry will be the remaining fish huts on the banks of the Severn.



The photograph to the left shows an abandoned fishing hut near Awre. The photograph above shows the fishing hut at Newnham

Thanks to John Powell and Averil Kear for the information contained in this article

Meetings In Review



On **Sunday 25th May** some 25 members met at the Linear Park to join Ron Beard in his '**Walk Around Cinderford**'. Ron started by explaining what could be seen at the entrance to the Linear Park at Cinderford Bridge. The presence of cinders in the Cinderford / Soudley brook which crosses under the road at Cinderford Bridge gave the explanation of how Cinderford came to be named, although it became very apparent later that the centre of Cinderford has shifted since. Ron ex-

plained that he played cricket close to the brook in a place that has since been crowded by ponds, trees and scrub growth. The site of the 100 feet deep Cinderford Water pit was pointed out in the garden of an adjacent house. Also the row of workers houses sited literally on the bridge were pointed out as having been originally built by Edward Protheroe, one time owner of 30 coal and 10 iron mines, many which were in the Cinderford area.

Moving on along Valley Road, the party stopped at the junction with Office Road, where Ron explained that the mobile home (caravan) site was originally the site of Cinderford Iron Works, now known locally as the 'Furnaces'. The original row of workers cottages was pointed out, then the walk continued down Office Road along the route of the old tramroad which ran originally from Bullo via Lightmoor to Shakemantle. Ron said that his father could just recollect horse drawn trams running on the tramroad. Ron revealed that the relict brick work noticed by some of the walkers in the hedge along Office Road was in fact the unloved archaeological remains of the iron works charging pier.

The end of Office Road marked the point where the site of Forest Vale Iron Works had been developed as private housing. Reaching Station Street the last remains of the station metal fencing was noted, as was the poor state of the former railway tavern. At the end of Station Street Ron pointed out the site of the former Bilson Mine, which had four shafts to a depth of 390 feet. As progress was made down Valley Road, the site of Aaron Gould's former house was pointed out, with the surviving circular wall marking the site.

Passing Engelhards, eventually Lower High Street was reached, where Haywood Tip, the spoil heap for Haywood mine was viewed, with the party noticing the modern house on top of the tip. Apparently deep piling had to take place before the house was built! Moving on to the Triangle, Ron explained how demolition of older buildings had made the space for the modern market and meeting place, with the 'Lighthouse' (or is it a miner's lamp) dominating the scene. Moving along Woodside Street, Ron explained that the triangle of roads of Woodside Street, Abbey Street and Flaxley Street were the first real attempt at a planned development in the middle of the 19th century, which cemented the centre of Cinderford around the triangle area.

Proceeding down Church Road, the walk concluded via St John's churchyard, past the fine grade II listed church built by Edward Blore in 1844, then on past the old school built by Edward Protheroe in 1840.

Anthony Poulton-Smith gave April's talk on **Saturday 12th April** on '**Gloucestershire Place-names**'. He is the author of over 40 popular books on this subject and has covered all the English counties. He wrote them because he thinks that previous books on place-names have been too academic.

He explained that most English place-names are derived from Anglo-Saxon because, unlike the Celts, they had a written language. The Romans gave us very few of our present names and often adopted obscure Celtic ones like Londinium, merely adding an ending. Even Chester derives from Anglo-Saxon roots, as its Roman name was Deva after the River Dee. The other great contribution to our place-names was made by the Vikings, who conquered much of North and Eastern England in Anglo-Saxon times. Here they often replaced English names with their own. The Normans did not contribute a great deal but they sometimes added a French name to an English or Welsh word.

The highlight of the meeting was provided by John Powell, one of our members. He showed a series of 125 photographs, taken between 1870 and 1879, of the building of the Severn Railway



Bridge, linking Lydney and Sharpness. These were commissioned by George Keeling, the chief engineer. The photographs had been made into a continuous slide show, accompanied by music played on the piano by John's son, following the discovery in a Bristol second hand shop, of "The Severn Bridge Galop" by T.C. Turner and dedicated to Lady Fitzhardinge of Berkeley Castle to mark the opening of the bridge in 1879. The combination was very entertaining and a great record of a bridge no longer with us. It was also a lesson in Victorian photography and bridge construction.

Joyce Moss - Publicity Officer

Using 'Old' Maps in Local History Research

'Old' maps are immensely valuable for local and family history, allowing most features in the landscape to be shown. The more detailed 25 inch to the mile (or 1:2,500) maps allow specific features to be seen more clearly in urban areas. However, most topographic features on the 25 inch to the mile maps are in fact also shown on the six-inch to the mile maps.

The Ordnance Survey six-inch to the mile (or 1:10,560) County Series is the most detailed topographic mapping that covers all of England and Wales from the 1840's to the 1950's. It was revised for the whole country twice between 1842-1893 and between 1891-1914, and then updated regularly for urban or rapidly changing areas from 1914 to the 1940's.

There are many web sites offering paid for access to larger scale maps but there are two particular sites that offer free access to larger scale historic maps which are most useful to local historians:



<http://visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/>

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/records/>



Plagues & Monuments

The William Jones Almshouses at Newland



William Jones was born in Newland and went on to have a highly successful business career in London and Germany. He was a member of the Company of Merchant Adventurers and was based for most of his career in the port of Stade, 40km north of Hamburg on the River Elbe. Jones traded in wool and linen. In 1600 he became a member of the Haberdashers Company whilst still remaining a Merchant Adventurer. By 1613 Jones had moved to Hamburg, where he took lodgings. He died in Hamburg in 1615, and the Lord Mayor of Hamburg recorded his death in the city in a letter to a friend, referring to Jones's burial in the cathedral. He is recorded under the name of Wilhelm Jonas as 'der reichste Kaufmann der Factorei' (the richest merchant among the traders of the city).

William Jones' will was drawn up in Hamburg in December 1614. Nine thousand pounds was allocated to found a school and almshouses in Monmouth and also to endow a lectureship (finance a preacher), in addition to almshouses in Newland. Further money was left for the poor of Hamburg and Stade.

The almshouses were built in Newland in 1617 through William Jones' bequest. They comprise a long single storey building on the south side of Newland churchyard. By 1973 anyone who had lived for at least two years in the civil parishes of Newland, Coleford, West Dean and Lydbrook was entitled to apply to live in the almshouses when vacancies occurred.

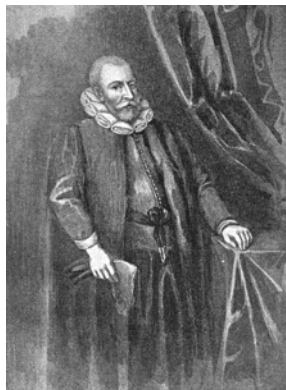
Until recently the William Jones Charity had almshouses in Monmouth and Newland. The Haberdashers Company decided to concentrate its almshouse activities in Monmouth,



*William Jones' almshouses
in Newland*

near to all facilities, and to close the Newland almshouses. Bristol Charities, which runs almshouses and facilities for older people in Bristol was appointed to lead the redevelopment of the Monmouth almshouses and was appointed as manager of both almshouses with effect from January 2007. The Haberdashers Company has now transferred trusteeship of the William Jones's Almshouse Charity to Bristol Charities. The residents of both Monmouth and Newland were relocated to alternative accommodation while work to redevelop the site at Monmouth took place. Former residents were offered accommodation in the new development (Cwrt William Jones) which was completed in May 2013. The almshouses in Newland were then sold privately.

*Information derived from 'Monmouth School - The First 400 Years' by
Stephen Edwards and Keith Moseley*



William Jones

The Dean Heritage Centre

Home Front Dean

Friday 27th June - Sunday 14th September 2014

The *Home Front Dean* exhibition tells the story of how local people coped with the demands and stresses of the Great War while in living and working in the Forest of Dean. The exhibition explores a wide range of topics, from coal mining, to the role of women and the impact of war on family life. It was created in partnership with the Forest of Dean Local History Society.

If you are interested in researching the history and heritage of the Forest of Dean, please contact the Gage Library for an appointment: on 01594 822170 or gage.library@deanheritagecentre.com. To learn more about the FoDLHS, please visit: www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

deanheritagecentre.com