

# FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

*news*  
November 2016

## Dedication at New Fancy!

### Also inside:

- "A Tragic Shipwreck and a Missing Verse"
- "Why County, Shire, Hundreds et al?"

## Memorial Stone Dedication at New Fancy



Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September was a rainy, gloomy day, but that did not prevent a good crowd gathering at New Fancy to attend the dedication ceremony of the Memorial Stone at the top of the main shaft of the former colliery.

Chair Simon Moore opened proceedings by thanking everyone who had helped during the project. Keith Walker made a short speech outlining the history of the mine. Society President Baroness Jan Royall then paid tribute to the men who worked in the Forest coalfield, then carried out the dedication by reading out the names of the 15 men who are known to have died at work at the New Fancy pit.

The remarkable photograph below right shows freeminer Rich Daniel (right) speaking to George Hogg (middle). George, now aged 90, worked at New Fancy as a blacksmith before the colliery closed in 1944.

Completing the photo (left rear) is the Deputy Gaveller Dan Howell who was instrumental in allowing the History Society to place the memorial at New Fancy



Parkend Band provided the musical accompaniment at the dedication ceremony. Their attendance was apt, as they were formed from the New Fancy Colliery band. The ceremony was preceded by the singing of hymns. Afterwards the band played the recently rediscovered 'Parkend March', which was warmly received by the crowd.





## News

November 2016

**Editor:**

Keith Walker  
51 Lancaster Drive  
Lydney  
GL15 5SJ  
01594 843310  
[NewsletterEditor@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:NewsletterEditor@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

**Chair:**

Simon Moore  
01594 840521  
[Chair@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:Chair@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

**Treasurer:**

Cecile Hunt  
01594 842164  
[Treasurer@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:Treasurer@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

**Secretary:**

Chris Sullivan  
01594 860197  
[Secretary@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

**Website:**

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

Registered Charity  
No: 1094700

Printed by  
Hanley Court Printers

## Editors Notes

You may have seen the recent publicity concerning the progress being made in restoring the Scarr Bandstand. Since the project was included in the Foresters' Forest project, some money has been made available to enable vegetation clearing and restoration of the bandstand walls to take place. Further work will ensue if more money is made available during the delivery phase of the Foresters' Forest project. Congratulations to Bill Gayler and the Steering Committee for their work so far! Averil Kear and I are researching the history of the Scarr Bandstand, and we have made some good progress, including sourcing some fine photographs of the bandstand in its more recent location. However we have not located any photographs of the original bandstand, which was located much nearer the B4228, close to the entrance to the caravan park. If you have any photographs of the original bandstand, or indeed any personal stories about your memories of either the new or old bandstands, then Averil & I would be delighted to hear from you.

John Powell, our hard working Publicity Officer, is also seeking help from you. He is researching the demise of the sailing ship 'Prince Victor' which foundered on the eighth of April in 1887, close to St Tecla's Island in the Severn Estuary. John is seeking a poem which is known to have been written by Mr Whittington of Hewelsfield after the disaster. Read the full story in the centre pages and see if you know where John can find the elusive poem.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Committee of the Society who recently invited me to become a Vice President. I was (as they say) both 'gob-smacked' and delighted in equal measure, and pleased to accept their kind offer. I must also say thanks to Ian Pope who (to my embarrassment!) said some nice things about me at the recent AGM.

*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 Simon Moore



It was great to see plenty of people at this year's AGM and I hope you enjoyed Ian Pope's excellent talk on the Crawshay Family and their collieries. Congratulations to this year's winners of the Cyril Hart and Gladys Scott-Garett awards, Keith Walker and Dan Howells, and I would especially like to congratulate Keith on being made a Vice President of the society in recognition of 25 years serving on the Committee and for the countless other projects he takes on, on your behalf.

I am delighted to say that we had an enthusiastic response to our appeal for people to help sort and catalogue a collection of Ordinance Survey maps that we have acquired, and Cecile has purchased and collected a map cabinet to hang them in, so over to you Averil to organise the volunteers and get them into a useful order and condition....the maps I mean not the volunteers!

I have recently been helping the congregation of St John's Coleford rescue various old documents from the Church now that it is closed, amongst which are a couple of boxes of old parish magazines, an invaluable resource for anybody wanting to look at social history and the changing lives of the people of Coleford. Volunteers to help sort and catalogue these would be greatly appreciated please contact me or Averil who I'm sure will help get you started. Eventually these will go to the Gloucester Archives. The congregation of St John's is pulling together as many memories, photographs and other information about the life of the Church for an exhibition and book, which we will be helping to co-ordinate, if anybody has any information, would like to help with the project or would like to recount their memories as part of an oral history, let me know and I can put you in contact with the team. As you will have seen in the press the Church at Coleford is now officially closed and the Diocese will have a period to try and find a new use, or somebody to take it on. It was sad to see the poor condition that this lovely building has fallen into, it has a great sense of space and height and a really light interior; but it is vast and whilst it is possible to think of lots of uses it could be put to, none of them would be likely to generate enough income to justify the cost of restoration or ongoing maintenance, without a lot of public funding....which is sadly no longer available! Any takers?

The HLF project 'Foresters Forest' has reached a critical stage, with the completion of the development stage work and the submission of an application for the delivery phase money. This project is now starting to show real results in terms of building groups and contacts throughout the Forest of people who have a passion for its heritage; I hope that it can grow further and produce tangible benefits. We wish the team luck with this process.

Since our last newsletter we have dedicated the stone at New Fancy, with an appropriate amount of pomp and ceremony, even if it was rather wet! Thank you to all of you who turned out and supported the event.

Finally I would like to remind you all that we are still looking for new committee members and are particularly looking for somebody with an interest in IT to help run the website, and somebody to help with the publication sales....go on you know you want to!



## MEMBERSHIP

The Society offers a warm welcome to the following new members: Richard Edge, Nigel Costley, David Lane, Mike Thomas, Darren Vidler, David Wright and Caroline Harmer. We hope you very much enjoy the benefits the Society brings. We now have over 330 members, which is very healthy.

Many thanks to those members who renewed in a timely fashion. Our membership year commences 1st October, and post the AGM on October 8th, 60% of members had renewed.

**Membership cards are being posted with this newsletter.** If you believe you have paid and have not received a card, please contact me on 01594 510 533 or email [membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](mailto:membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk) so we can sort it out.

**A significant number of renewals are outstanding at the time of writing, so please remind yourself to renew if you haven't done so.** You can pay via BACS - go to our website [forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](http://forestofdeanhistory.org.uk) and look under membership for the details; or you can send a cheque made payable to the Forest of Dean Local History Society to me at Oakdean, High St, Blakeney, GL15 4DY.

If you pay between now and January, you will receive your card with the January 2017 newsletter. Do please note however, that members who have not renewed by the time of the January newsletter will not receive one, or a membership card!

*Cheryl Mayo, Membership Secretary*

Members can order in print issues of the New Regard from the online 'eshop', simply select the 'New Regard' tab at **[store.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](http://store.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)**

*Members can obtain a discount, by using the voucher code when prompted.*

*Note that the voucher code will change to 'Alvington' on 1st November 2016.*

## *Gloucestershire History goes digital*

Between 1987 and 2011, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council's Local History Committee produced an annual local history publication, *Gloucestershire History*. All 26 issues (there were two in 1990), comprising a total of 120 articles on aspects of the County's past, have now been scanned and may be downloaded as PDFs from the Gloucestershire Local History Association's website at [www.gloshistory.org.uk/reprints/](http://www.gloshistory.org.uk/reprints/).

The articles cover a remarkable range of topics, from Anglo-Saxon to 20th century (with an emphasis on the 17th to 19th centuries), including some on aspects of the history of West Gloucestershire and the Forest of Dean. These include articles on Newnham, Minsterworth and Maisemore, local families such as the Porters and Arnolds, and the English Civil War in the Forest.

GLHA is grateful to Dr Ray Wilson, who maintains the GLHA website, for proposing the project and undertaking it on the Association's behalf.

*Steve Blake, Chairman, GLHA*

## Report on the AGM Held On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Following the usual formalities, Chair Simon Moore went on to present his review of the year to the meeting. He reported that the membership has grown to well over 300 members, largely through the sterling work of Publicity Officer, John Powell. Simon then reviewed the indoor and outdoor meetings, and gave special praise for the annual coach trip, organised and led as ever by Cecile Hunt and Averil Kear.

Simon went on to report that he and Mary Sullivan (Vice Chair) continue to be actively involved in the Foresters Forest project. He affirmed that the Society had erected a stone at the site of shaft no 2 at New Fancy. Also during the last year the Society has managed to persuade English Heritage to list a set of cast iron road markers. The website has recently been moved to a new host, and Simon thanked David Harris for his support with the website. Thanks were also given for the work of all the Committee Members, but in particular Chris Sullivan for stepping into the role of Secretary. Simon also acknowledged the hard work of Virginia Morgan who has stepped down as our Indoor Meeting Secretary, and David Harris, who although continuing as the New Regard Designer, is leaving the committee. Simon then welcomed Jo O'Hanlon who has joined the Committee this year. Simon then issued a plea to the meeting for more members to join the Committee. The meeting was then informed that Keith Walker has served on the committee of the society for 25 years, and to mark the occasion, the Committee has invited Keith to become one of the Vice Presidents. Finally Simon expressed his thanks to the membership for their continuing support of the society.

Treasurer Cecile Hunt then gave her report based on the independently examined annual accounts, which had been circulated to the members by email before the meeting. She stated that the accounts were largely in robust health, although as last year, the General Fund showed an excess of expenditure over income of £231.74. This account related to supporting members activities, and the increasing costs involved had lead the Committee to determine that an increase in Membership fees is now necessary. Continuing profitable sales of the New Regard have led to a satisfactory balance in the Publications Fund, and the Society continues to hold a reasonable amount in the Reserve Fund to allow the Society to pursue grant funding.

The members at the AGM then considered the question of the membership fees and voted to increase the fees by £2 annually for both single and joint memberships from 1st October 2017.

Vice Chair Ian Pope then presided over the Society annual awards. The Gladys Scott Garrett award for the best presentation at a meeting in 2015/ 2016 was presented to Dan Howell for his talk "The Role of the Deputy Gaveller 1838 – 2015. The Cyril Hart award for the best article in New Regard number 30 was presented to Keith Walker for his essay "Oh Mr Office of Woods – Make Us A Road".

The election of Trustees then took place with all existing Trustees being re-elected into their existing positions on the Committee. Chris Sullivan was newly elected as Secretary. Two positions were not filled during the elections, namely Indoor Meeting Secretary, and Web Editor.

Valerie Mitchell was reappointed as the Independent Examiner for the Society Accounts.

## A Tragic Shipwreck & A Missing Verse by John Powell

THE Society's publicity officer, John Powell, hopes there is a member out there who can put him on the trail on a poem written many years ago telling the tragic story of the loss in the Severn of the fully-rigged sailing ship **Prince Victor**. He has uncovered a wealth of new information about the dramatic events of Good Friday, April 8, 1887, and would like the poem to complete his research.

LOCATION: Severn estuary, Beachley, a cable's length (720 feet) off St Tecla's Island.

Date and time: Dawn, Good Friday, April 8, 1887.

The voyage was almost over. Just eight nautical miles and Capt Hans Cornelinsen could completely relax and enjoy some free time with his family who had joined him for the transatlantic passage from New York to Sharpness. The vessel and her crew of 16 had been frustratingly held up further down the channel at Kingroad, off the entrance to the River Avon, as they awaited bigger tides to take them over the treacherous Severn sandbanks. Now, after a delay of five days, local pilot Henry Smart gave the OK. He had to be sure as the cargo of 1,000 barrels of petroleum had increased the draft to 21ft 5ins aft and 21ft forward. Now off Beachley, all seemed well. The pilot was doing exactly as he had done hundreds of times before and there was the added security and assurance offered by three Newport tugs, two on lines ahead to port and starboard and a third, the **Victoria**, lashed to the port side. But disaster struck quickly.

Inquest reports tell how an increasingly boisterous wind hampered attempts to bring round the ship's head close to the Beachley shore at Lyde rock. And there was another unseen danger. Lurking beneath the surface, the shifting sands of Whirlsend had not only narrowed the deep water channel but risen in height by four or five feet. Chaos followed. The **Prince Victor** took the sands and lurched broadside, taking the **Victoria** with her. Below decks Capt Cornelinsen's wife Nathalie had no chance to escape. Neither did their son, Olaf, aged eight. Amazingly no-one else was lost.

Locally, there was an outpouring of support for the captain and his crew. They were cared for by Woolaston families and the little church was packed by villagers for the funerals of the two victims.

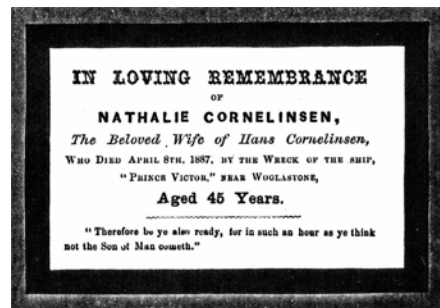
But there's much more to this story. Says John: "There was caring and compassion but also blame and even fights. And, of course, money was to be made and lost. I have remembrance cards made at the time to help with fundraising for the victims, but I also know of the poem which is said to have been written by a Mr Whittington, of Hewelsfield. I have 10 lines.

*...for in the cabin were the captain's wife  
Along with her fair-haired boy,  
They had just rose from a night of repose  
Not dreaming or thinking of ill'  
When with terrible rush like avalanche crush  
The cabin with water soon filled,  
Then the brave ship rolled and the brave ship whirled  
And the hearts of the crew stood still,  
She floundered and foundered and came to grief  
Near to the Old Grange Pill...*

If anyone can help I would be delighted to hear from them.

Email [severnsidel@btinternet.com](mailto:severnsidel@btinternet.com) or telephone 01594 516916."

*\*Remembrance cards like those shown below were produced and sold locally to raise money for the victims of the Severn disaster.*



## Local History - Filling in the Cultural Context

by David Adams

I am not a "real" historian but a writer whose main interest is in the culture of the past. In researching our literary, artistic and musical heritage, from folklore to philology and psalmistry to popular protest, I find so much of local cultural product has been forgotten and relegated to obscurity.

That is why a group of similarly-minded locals formed Yorkley Arts & Entertainment, a not-for-profit community publishing cooperative, which celebrates its fifth birthday this year.

Inevitably we concentrate on the written word, but we have, for example, commissioned original illustrations for our publications, organised performance poetry and musical events and are currently planning an exhibition.

Yorkley A&E was launched in August 2011 with a celebration of the centenary of Yorkley Institute and the subsequent publication of *Remembered and Forgotten*, a booklet of the many of the contributions to that evening. These included Averil Kear's informative talk on the origins of the Institute, by way of poems from Chris Nancollas, Maggie Clutterbuck and pub landlord Gary Brown, to my own psychogeographical musings on Lost Yorkley, with offerings from Baroness Jan Royall and Steve Cooper.

Since then we have published a collection from today's poets, a challenging critique of the search for our local heritage and a provocative "bottom-up" history of Yorkley.

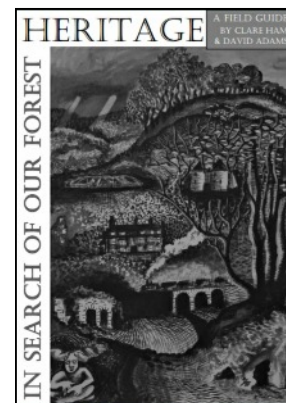
We have reprinted the verse of Richard Morse, originally published in 1840, along with a revelatory biography and critical commentary on his surprising contribution to our understanding of life in early nineteenth-century Dean.

Another biography, of William Wickenden, the farmer's boy who won a place to Cambridge, became a curate and ended up both chronicling the seedy side of life in Victorian London and inventing in a series of best-sellers an adventurer who fought and loved his life in all sorts of exotic lands, was hailed by a literature professor as a valuable discovery of a "a notable minor Victorian with especial roots in the Forest" and "certainly worth disinterring".

A brief life of Will Harvey was another focussed look at how a poet's output offers clues to his life as the effects of World War 1 left a "nightmare trail" in this remarkable man's psyche.

Our next publication is a look at the village of Pillowell in the twentieth century, a village with now no businesses and no new homes but which during the last century saw social and cultural life revolving round the mines, the chapel, the school, the shops and the band.

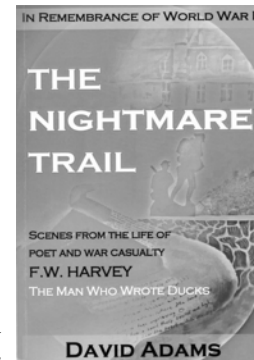
And in preparation we offer some hidden histories, a definitive selection of poetry from Maggie Clutterbuck, an unusual double-biography of two writer-friends that embodies the musical and social world of the 1920s-50s, a critical look at the poetry of Catherine Drew and an overdue survey of dialect verse.



We are convinced that the rich cultural heritage of the Forest of Dean is inseparable from the more familiar industrial heritage. Without Yorkley A&E the fascinating and illuminating works of Richard Morse, William Wickenden and Will Harvey (all of whose work we are unique in treating with as much respect as we do their amazing lives) might be consigned to the footnotes of history.

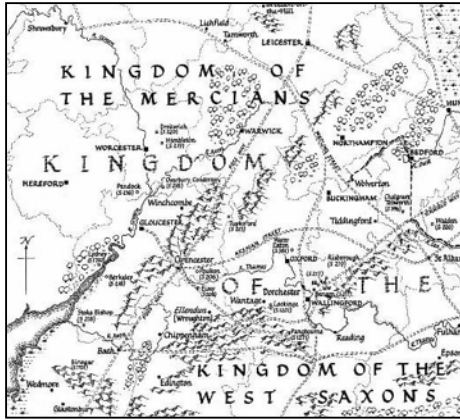
We are always looking for more original well-written material – and LHS members can provide it, so send us any ideas for books -

[yorkley.ae@googlemail.com](mailto:yorkley.ae@googlemail.com)





## Why County, Shire, Hundreds et al? by Cecile Hunt



Before 1066 there was recorded a tract of woodland and waste land reserved for royal hunting. This area acquired the name of 'Forest of Dean' from around 1080. Over the centuries it has become one of the principal Crown forests in England; it has seen many changes but is still Crown Land. For local governmental purposes it is managed by a district council, part of a two tier system where the county council is the top of the tier. But how did the local governmental structure evolve? When did it start and how, over several centuries, did restructuring take place? And continues to take place in the 21st century!

When the Roman Empire stretched northwards, swallowing up ancient Britain, its administration was applied to, or imposed on to, the Iron Age tribes inhabiting the island. Before the Roman invasion ancient Britain was divided up into self governing tribal areas. The area now known as the Forest of Dean appears to have been part of the tribe call 'Silures', who were a powerful and warlike tribe; they operated an iron industry in the Forest for over 200 years.

From 43 to 410 AD the Romans advanced across ancient Britain. During this period Britain's first towns appeared; used as administration centres. Government of Britain was by governors' whose primary role was military but with other tasks including building roads and maintaining diplomatic relations with local client kings from the native tribes who chose to align themselves with the Roman Empire. The Romans withdrew from Britain; the country was then invaded by the Saxons who found a country comprising of thirty-five tribes, plus a number of kingdoms each with its own monarch. By the 5th century the kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Kent, Sussex, and Wessex existed; Essex appeared in the 6th century. Kingdoms had sub-kingdoms such as; Hwicca (Severn valley), Middle Angles (south-east), Magonsæte (Hereford) plus many other throughout the country.

By the 8th century the Saxons had divided the country into convenient areas - for the collection of taxes and administering justice. These areas were called 'shires'. Each shire was governed by an Ealdorman, later in the Anglo Saxon period shires were governed by a royal official called a 'shire reeve' or sheriff. In H P R Finberg's publication 'Gloucestershire Studies' he describes a shire; *'The word shire means something which has been shorn off, or separated. It is a very ancient word. It occurs at the end of the seventh century, in the laws of Ine, where it signifies the territory administered by an ealdorman' '... any district carved out of a larger territory, whether for ecclesiastical or civil purposes, might be called a shire. Essex, Sussex, Middlesex and Surrey, being originally the lands of whole peoples are not called shires; but the district pertaining to Gloucester is a shire, because it has been shorn off from the great territory of the Mercians.'*

Today the word 'shire' is still used. In Britain the word 'county' tended to replace 'shire' from the time of the Norman Conquest, although 'shire' remains part of many county names.

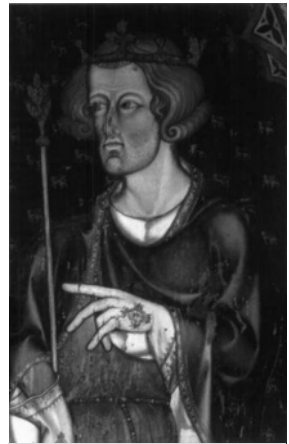
In the next issue there will be further explanations of the governmental divisions of the country.

## Dr Foster! - as explained by Averil Kear

**Doctor Foster went to Gloucester**

**In a shower of rain,  
He stepped in a puddle,  
Right up to his middle,  
And never went there again.**

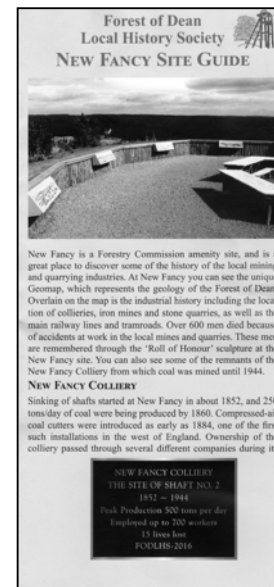
The origins of this poem probably relate to a visit to Gloucester by King Edward 1 (1239-1307) who was thought to have fallen from his horse whilst in the city and been so humiliated that he refused to visit Gloucester ever again. He was a very tall man, over 6ft, and because of this was given the name 'Longshanks'. He was also recognised as a clever and learned man and hence earned the title Dr Foster (the origins of the Foster are lost in time!). Since that time the poem was used to warn children that they should not jump into what may appear to be a shallow puddle as it could be a whole lot deeper.



King Edward I

*Edward I built many castles in Wales as part of his strategy to conquer the Welsh who were led by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd - Edward succeeded with his conquest making Llywelyn the last Prince of an independent Wales (c.1223 -1282).*

## New & Revised Web Pages



The recent installation of the memorial stone at New Fancy provided the impetus to introduce a more coherent approach in providing a history of the Forest mining industry, both through digital online presentation via our web site, and through better interpretation of the physical resources the Society has installed at the site of the former New Fancy Colliery.

Consequently a new page featuring New Fancy has been introduced to our website ([forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](http://forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)). The new illustrated page provides a brief history of New Fancy colliery. It also includes a downloadable memoir by Harry Roberts describing what it was like to work underground at New Fancy in 1928. There is also a section describing how New Fancy came to be converted to an amenity site after it closed as a working mine. To aid prospective visitors to the New Fancy site, a new downloadable guide has also been included in the web page. The guide includes a map of the New Fancy site, identifying all the major features, and includes a brief history of the colliery, and the subsequent changes to make it an amenity site after the colliery closed.

The web pages featuring the Geomap and the Miners Memorial have been improved by introducing more photographs and revised text. The Geomap downloadable leaflets are still available via the revised Geomap page.

## Meetings In Review by John Powell & Keith Walker

The **annual charabanc outing** to places of interest in and about the Forest of Dean took place on **Saturday, August 20th**. Organisers Averil Kear and Cecile Hunt teased their 'captive' tourists by taking them to places of enormous interest, with the theme for the day being 'Aspects of Wood'.

The tour began in a downpour at Lydney Harbour and outside the now dilapidated Pine End Works where once 500 men and women worked producing, in a period spanning over half a century, all manner of items from parts for World War Two aeroplanes to wooden blocks for flooring. The rain was defeated by the temptation of a warming coffee at Alvington's former Swan Inn and society members chalked up a first by becoming the establishment's first official customers. And very nice too!

An expeditionary force set out by foot and headed north by way of a narrow tree-lined lane to the rear of the old watering hole to 'discover' Cone Valley and learn something of its extensive mills, mostly used in paper production. Back to the chariot where the running commentary continued en-route to Newland and the next stop, the Cathedral of the Forest. Even those who had been before were fascinated by All Saints' connection to the woods.

Lunch at Parkend's Whitmead Park was excellent and the journey continued in a relentless downpour. The avenue of limes, the King Charles 11 oak, commemorative oaks at Speech House, and a tree nursery alongside Cinderford's St White's Road, were all viewed and proved enlightening for most.

Back along Severn's shore the use of timber for shipbuilding became clear with a stop at Broadoak, and then it was on to Bullo Pill. At least the next and final stop was in the dry as Awre's lovely little church, St Andrew's, welcomed the wet and weary army. Something of the huge quantities of timber required in the Severn's putcher fisheries was revealed here before the excellent skills of Michael, a top class driver, were put to test in the narrow and crowded lanes leading back to the A48. He passed with flying colours, as did Averil and Cecile. What, we wonder, will they have in store for next year? *J.P.*



There's an air of mystery surrounding the lives and times of those who earned their crust transporting goods round and about Britain by way of the intricate Victorian network of canals. It was a unique way of life and one to which members of the society were delighted to receive an insight at their first autumn meeting held at Bream's West Dean Centre on **Saturday, September 3rd**.

Not one but three guest speakers, all in costumes, explored **the role of canal women, their lives, children and crafts**. Jill Ruiz and her colleagues, dedicated supporters of Gloucester's National Waterways Museum, delighted an appreciative audience with an in-depth examination of the way things were for those who carved a precarious livelihood aboard the thousands of narrowboats travelling the length and breadth of the country.

The vessels were all about their cargo and how much could be carried. Living space, therefore, was at a premium and every inch counted. It meant, more often than not, a family of four had to squeeze into a living space no more than 10ft long by 7ft wide. It was tough. Ingenuity was the order of the day. Table space folded into the walls; daytime bunks became nighttime beds and water was stored in buckets on what little deck space was available. But they coped splendidly.

Notoriously nicknamed 'water gypsies', (a description they detested), the womenfolk were inventive and smart and the speakers explained and displayed some of the many and various articles of clothing and daily homeware cleverly 'manufactured'. They included items of quality lace, rag rugs and beautifully painted and colourful jugs. It was, however, a relentlessly tough life for the women who had not only to be housewives but crew, assisting in loading and unloading the boat and working the locks.

This was a thoroughly entertaining and informative talk and a grand way for the members to kick-off their autumn and winter programme.

What has now become known as the 'Twenty Minute Slot' followed the break for tea and featured an insight into the life and work of Philip Baylis, a former deputy surveyor of the Forest, and something of an enigma. Keith Walker's illustrated talk revealed much information new to the majority of those glued to their seats for what was a fascinating exploration of the Dean in a confrontational period. *J.P.*

Sinking your teeth into a perry pear can be an unhappy experience. As tough as old boots, they are, at best, sour and foul tasting. But pressed and fermented it's an entirely different matter...it's champagne!

There is no greater expert on the subject of 'Pomona' than Hartpur's Jim Chapman. The guiding force behind the successful National Perry Pear Collection, it was a privilege for society members to hear his excellent, humorous and knowledgeable talk, **'The History and Mystery of Perry Pears'**, given at the Assembly Rooms, St Briavels on **Friday evening, September 16th**.

Mr Chapman spoke of the wide variety of perry pears grown locally and said the tradition was that they grew best and most prolifically within sight of May Hill. He traced their route to Britain from the Far East and explained their appeal and production over many centuries.

At the peak of production casks were frequently shipped from Severnside to London. There were other spin-offs as the perry pear and cider industries were closely linked with glass bottle production, notably at Newnham, May Hill, Gloucester and Bristol. Many varieties had strong local links, the most well known being the Blakeney Red. There were dozens of others and more were coming to light. That evening, he said, he had been told of another, the Blakeney Green. Mr Chapman's St Briavels talk was worthy of a bigger audience and perhaps he could return once he has verified the authenticity of the 'Green' which is said to still be growing in the village of its name. *J.P.*



On **Saturday 8th October**, Vice President Ian Pope made a welcome return to the Forest from Witney to present an illustrated talk on **"The Crawshays and their Coal Mines"**.

Ian explained that much of the information he would be presenting came from two sets of minute books which told much of the story of the collieries operated by Henry Crawshay and Co. The minute books were copies held by a solicitor. When they came up for auction some years ago at Bristol they were spotted by former FODLHS member David Bick, who purchased them, and later presented them to Gloucestershire Archives. The minute books not only revealed the day to day operations of the collieries, but also gave an insight into some of the wheeling and dealing carried out within the local coal trade.

The Crawshay family became dominant in the mining and industrial industries of the Dean in the 19th and early 20th century. Having an already established interest in the industries of South Wales, the Crawshays then sought to extend their interests into the Forest of Dean as in 1832 William Crawshay (1788-1867), the great Welsh ironmaster, collaborated with Moses Teague and acquired an interest in Cinderford Ironworks. The Ironworks prospered and William, joined by his son Henry (1812-1879) in the 1840s, soon owned and leased a number of iron mines, such as Shakemantle, Buckshaft and St. Annal's. By the 1890s the Cinderford Ironworks was one of the last operating furnaces in Gloucestershire and in 1894 the Cinderford Ironworks closed.

The Crawshay family took a leading role in the coal mining industry because the Cinderford furnaces demanded a large and regular supply of coal. The Crawshays owned and worked a large number of collieries in the Forest, including Speech House Collieries, Lightmoor (c.1840-1940), Trafalgar (c.1860-1925), Foxes Bridge (closed 1930), Eastern United (1909-1959) and Northern United (1933-1965). In 1947 the coal industry was nationalised. The mines belonging to H Crawshay & Co Ltd were taken over and the shareholders duly compensated.

The machinations of various members of the Morgan family were also explained. It seems that working in the offices of the Crawshay company as 'Trade Manager' was no impediment to Fred Morgan as he was also owner of local coal factors, Dean Forest Coal Company. The inevitable conflict of interest in Fred's position led to much friction between him and the Crawshays!

As usual Ian Pope fully engaged and entertained a rapt audience, and he was kept busy answering numerous questions at the end of his splendid talk. *K.W.*