



**We celebrate the 200th anniversary of  
Robert Mushet's birth with his great,  
great, great, great grand-daughter!**

**More details inside!!**

THE FOREST OF  
DEAN LOCAL  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## *News*

**OCTOBER  
2010**

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## **Editors Notes**

This has been a season of some sadness with the recent deaths of History Society members Edna Healey and Geoff Waygood. There are tributes to both later in this newsletter. The Forest has also lost Melville Watts, Senior Verderer, and of course huge supporter of Lydney Hospital. We plan to include articles in subsequent editions of the Newsletter, detailing some of the lesser known aspects of Melville's support for the history of the Forest.

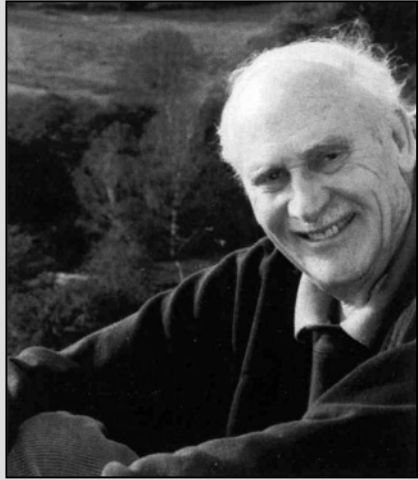
We also have to record the passing of Ken Martyn, aged 80, who died peacefully at his home, Barnage Farm, on July 19. Ken lived in the Lydney area all his life, and was a well known and respected member of the farming community. Understandably following Ken's death, his wife, Christine, has stepped down from the Committee of the History Society. Christine was a long standing member of the Committee, and was a previous Chairman of the Society. She had other roles on the Committee, including being the editor of this newsletter. I want to pay tribute at this point to Christine for her hard work, in cooperation with John Precious, in developing the newsletter and producing many editions of it over the last few years.

Apart from Christine Martyn and John Precious, other long standing members of the Committee have stepped down. Anne Childs was Indoor Meetings Secretary of the Society for thirteen years, and consistently produced meetings programmes that were full of interest. Finally we have to express our thanks to Mary Atkins and Pat Williams, who for the last five years have edited and produced the 'New Regard'. The New Regard has flourished in their hands and we wish the new editor every success in maintaining the very high standards set by Mary and Pat.

So as you can see, the Committee has lost five very active and dynamic members who will be missed very much. The Society continues to function through the efforts of the remaining Committee members, but help is very much needed in the shape of new members of the Committee who can help to share the load and help in the development of the Society in the future. Please consider whether you could make a contribution by joining our very friendly and welcoming Committee!

*Keith Walker*

## Geoff Waygood - An Appreciation



Geoff was born in Wales of English parents. His father, a sergeant in the South Wales Police Force was a Somerset man from Wellington – one of many Waygoods – at one time there were 9 Waygoods in the Taunton Vale Rugby team !

Geoff's father emigrated to Canada and when the 1<sup>st</sup> World War broke out he joined the Canadian Army. He was demobbed in England, married and settled in Wales. Geoff was the middle child born in 1925 with two sisters Betty born 1922 and Jean born 1929. From an early age Geoff loved being out doors, he was a very keen boy scout and loved camping. When he left school he spent a short time working with a cabinet maker but yearned for out doors and joined the Forestry Commission as a trainee.

This meant getting up very early in the morning and climbing a mountain to arrive at St. Gwyno Forest by 7 am. Having completed his trial year he passed the entrance exam for Parkend Forester Training School in 1942. After the school was closed due to WW2 Geoff spent his second year in Scotland at Benmore Forestry Training School. His call up was deferred until his training was completed and then he joined the South Wales Borderers, was commissioned in India and served in Egypt and N. Africa. On demob, the Forestry Commission sent him on a three month refresher course on the Dartington Hall Estate in Totnes and there he met Jan who was working there as the Welfare and Personnel Officer on the Estate. They married in 1949 when Geoff had his posting to Chepstow Forest and it was here that Jane and Jeremy were born.

Geoff had always felt he would like a spell as an instructor and was pleased in 1959 to be sent back to Parkend but this time as an instructor. In 1961 he moved the family to Church Drive. The years in the School were happy ones and Geoff was a good friend and mentor to many students. At the end of five years he moved back to the Forest and after a spell in charge of Speech House beat he became Chief Forester of Harvesting and Marketing until his retirement in 1985.

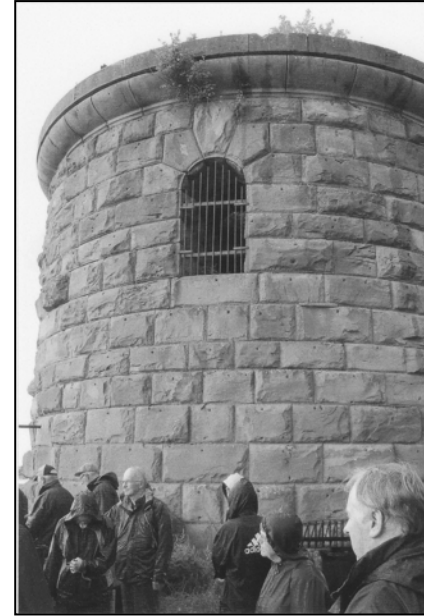
He loved the Forest and was passionate about trees and good at passing on his knowledge. He had many interests – he amassed a magnificent stamp collection and postcard collection, he worked as a volunteer at the Dean Heritage Museum for over 10 years and became a keen local historian being a member of the Forest of Dean Local History Society and contributing many articles to their journal 'The New Regard'. He was also an accomplished wood worker and furniture maker.

Above all he loved Welsh rugby and woe betide anything that stopped him watching the internationals.

A wonderful husband, caring father and a devoted grandfather to the four grandchildren, he will leave a great gap but also an inspiring example of a full and happy life.

Geoff Waygood 1925 -2010

## Severn & Wye Bridges Outing



Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> August was the day of the History Society Bridges coach trip – an event appropriate for the anniversary of the tragic accident which led to the demolition of the Severn Railway Bridge. Many of the lower Wye bridges were on the itinerary and stops were made at Redbrook, Brockweir and Chepstow to examine the structures more closely.

Lunch was taken at the Old Ferry Inn at Beachley with fantastic views of the first Severn Bridge.

Crossing the Severn to Purton some of us walked a mile along the towpath of the Gloucester – Berkeley canal to view the very impressive remains of the Severn Railway Bridge and swing bridge across the canal.

It was a most interesting and enlightening outing thanks to the comprehensive preparation and research of Averil and Cecile.

*Ron Beard*

## Did You Know ??? - Prosecution Club

There was a meeting of the Prosecution Club held at the Bell Inn, Ruardean in 1878. The rules and regulations of this organisation aim to help members of the club who brought cases of burglary, theft, arson, or wilful damage to the Assizes or Quarter Sessions. This was not a short term organisation as the date of formation was given as 30th October 1839.

Among the list of seventy-five members are addresses as far afield as Newcastle-upon-Tyne, though most of the names have a real Forest sound.

Amongst these was Richard Thomas & Co; of Lydbrook Tin-Plate Works.

Rewards were offered for information leading to conviction in a wide range of offences, from highway robbery to killing poultry.

Further information on the activities of this Club would be interesting.



*Averil Kear*



## The Jack Bell Collection

Following the death of former member Harry Daniels, the Society has been given some of Harry's history associated artefacts. Amongst them was an index of the Jack Bell Collection, which is housed at Lydney Library.

We have now put the index on our website, but members who don't have internet access can request a copy of the index from our General Secretary.

Jack was well known to Robin Warren, one of our members, and he has kindly provided a potential biography of Jack, which is reproduced below.

"The following is written on a plaque in St .Mary's Church

"1897 -1987"

"In memory of R.A.Jack Bell who devoted his life to the Glory of God as chorister, churchwarden, historian and benefactor of this Church."

Jack married Winifred Gardiner, whose father was involved with the chandlery at the Harbour - they were married for 60 years. There were no children.

I understand that he worked in the office of the colliery at Norchard - ultimately, of course for the N.C.B. Towards the end of the 1914-1918 war he served in the RFC or RAF.

He was a keen sportsman in his early days - I remember one day talking to him and saying my father remembered playing hockey at Lydney just after the first War, whereupon Jack dived under one of his cupboards and produced all the fixture lists of the local Hockey Club, saying "who did he play for ?" - to which I didn't know the answer!

Apart from writing the guide book to St .Mary's, Jack also wrote a history of Lydney and District Hospital to mark its centenary in 1982. He often spoke to me of writing a history of Lydney Harbour, to which end he borrowed some slides from me, these were taken soon after I moved here, showing some of the last deliveries of timber by barge to the plywood factory.

When Jack died, he left the residue of his estate, after certain legacies, to St .Mary's, which are retained under Trust. It took the late Ben James a long time going through all Jack's papers and books, sorting out the case full which are in Lydney Library and many of the rest are in Gloucestershire Archives."



*St. Mary's Church, Lydney, where Jack Bell was a churchwarden*

## David Mushet's Great, Great, Great, Great Granddaughter Visits the Forest



Pictured on the front cover, and also left with her husband Mike, is Colleen Mushet, who is the fourth generation granddaughter of Robert Mushet.

She is shown at the Forest House Hotel adjacent to the plaque which was placed there by the History Society.

She works for the Boeing Aircraft Company in Seattle, and lives on an island off the West Coast. She was very much involved in the design of the 787 'Dreamliner' that is about to go into passenger service with world airlines. She is now working on the design of the stretched version of the aircraft.

She is working with complex light composite materials, the equal of any of the new materials that Robert Mushet was responsible for. She has said that if Robert was standing behind her, looking over her shoulder, he might have no knowledge of the material she was working with but she felt he would soon understand the complexities of her work and she would take inspiration from him.

She was in the UK to visit many of the sites connected with the Mushets, including staying at the Forest House Hotel which was the home of both David and Robert Mushet when it was known as Tump House. Colleen and Keith Webb are working on a book about all the Mushet family, in the United States as well as here.

2011 is the two hundredth anniversary of Robert's birth. In celebration of this, Keith Webb has in conjunction with the Forestry Commission republished the Darkhill Walk that was originally produced by him for the History Society. The new version of the walk booklet is available from many outlets in the Forest area, or can be downloaded via the internet:

<https://sites.google.com/site/keithlloydwebb/forest-of-dean-articles-1/darkhill-iron-works>)

*Photo and information courtesy of Keith Webb*

## The History Society at the BBC History Fair

The Society was invited to participate in a BBC “hands-on history event” in Gloucester in August. Building on its “Norman season”, the BBC planned a day of varied historical activities for all the family in different venues around the city. This included talks and short films, period dancing outside the cathedral and ‘make your own historical hat’ (for children) inside.

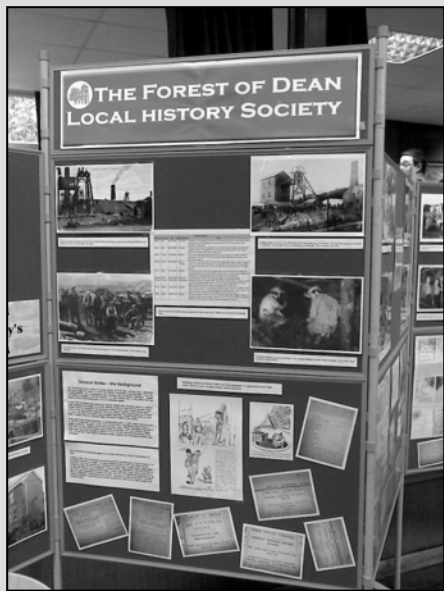


We set up a stall and presentation inside the Cloisters which told visitors something of the history of the Forest of Dean and about our Society and its activities. The Cloisters were bustling with activity as alongside us were stalls by other groups such as the FW Harvey Soc., Friends of Gloucester Cathedral, FOD Family History Soc., BBC History magazine and many others.

Luckily the sun shone and the day made a pleasant outing for a large numbers of visitors of all ages. We were busy all day answering queries from visitors about our Forest heritage. Thanks to all who participated in preparing for the day or manning the stall.

*Mary Sullivan*

## GRCC Local History Day



Every year the Society attends the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council Local History Day. Societies attending the meeting are invited to bring along their notice boards celebrating a particular theme. This years theme was ‘A Fair Days Work for a Fair Days Pay’. Our Chairman Ron Beard and Christine Martyn worked very hard to produce a very interesting set of boards reflecting the theme, and the photograph (left) shows just one of the boards.

All the attending societies who have produced displays are judged in competition, and this year the FODLHS was pipped at the post by Fairford History Society who won the competition.

## AGM REPORT

A little over 10% of members attended this year’s AGM, which was the first meeting in the new Coleford venue, the Main Place.

The Chairman reported on the successful and full year’s programme of indoor meetings and outings just completed which included our 5<sup>th</sup> history fair, at Bells Hotel. Next year’s programme looks even fuller.



*Bream Community Centre, a new venue for forthcoming meetings*

The Scott Garrett award, for best talk was presented to Keith Walker [in absentia]. And the first Cyril Hart award, for best New Regard article, was presented to Roger Deeks for his article on the chemical works at Cannop. This new prize was further enhanced by the presentation being made by Cyril Hart’s daughter, Judith Fern.

The Treasurer explained that, though the society still has a healthy bank balance, subscriptions are no longer covering basic running costs. The proposal to increase the subscriptions from 2011 to £10 for one person, £15 for two living at the same address was carried unanimously.

In part to save money in these difficult times, the Chairman announced that some future meetings would be held at different venues, in Bream and Drybrook. These halls would offer comfortable and suitable surroundings for meetings at a smaller cost. Sadly, a number of long term committee members have retired this year and the Chairman requested volunteers who might feel able to join the committee and help with organising events in some way to come forward.

Next year’s theme for the Gloucestershire-wide history event in October 2011 would be communities in World War II. The society hopes to field an excellent display about forest communities and anyone who can help with this should approach a committee member with photos, memories or stories to include.

A forthcoming event is a meeting with a number of small, local village societies to discuss mutual help and co-operation. Perhaps work on a World War II presentation will feature there too.

*Mary Sullivan, General Secretary*



## Obituary - Lady Edna Healey



When Mary Sullivan and I visited Lady Edna Healey at her home at Alfriston, East Sussex, last September, we found her in great form. We were warmly welcomed, given tea and spent a lovely afternoon reminiscing about her childhood in the Forest. It came as something of a shock, therefore, to read in the paper of her death from a heart attack in July. Edna May Edmunds was born in Coleford on June 14th, 1918, the fourth of five children of a crane driver. A highly intelligent schoolgirl, she passed the scholarship to Bells Grammar School, from where, in 1936 she gained place at St Hugh's College, Oxford, becoming the first pupil from Bell's to go to Oxford University. She delighted in recounting the story that the local Vicar tried to persuade her mother that she would not be suitable for such an esteemed establishment, which made her whole family more determined that she should go.

It was at Oxford that she met Dennis Healey, a leading light in the University Labour Club. Theirs was to be a long courtship, as the war intervened and she became a teacher until they were able to marry in 1945. His subsequent political career is well documented, and Edna took a relatively back seat even when chatelaine of No 11, Downing Street, devoting her attention to supporting her famously irascible husband and bringing up their son and two daughters. She has subsequently been described as 'the perfect political wife'.

It was not until her family had grown up that she was able to use her formidable intelligence to pursue her career as a writer and biographer, her first book in 1978 being a biography of Angela Burdett-Coutts, the notable Victorian philanthropist, which received great acclaim. She was, not surprisingly, drawn to other wives of eminent men, and her biographies include Emma Darwin and Jenny Marx. She also wrote *The Queen's House, A History of Buckingham Palace* and her last book, *Part of the Pattern*, in 2006, was a memoir of her childhood in the Forest and her years as a political wife in Westminster, and is to be recommended to anyone with an interest in the history of the Forest.

She also made film documentaries and was in demand as a lecturer and public speaker as members who recall her memorable talk to the Society at the Coleford Baptist Chapel on the occasion of our 50th anniversary will testify. Although by now in her eighties, she spoke for over an hour, with clarity and humour and without notes, an occasion never to be forgotten. She came to open our first History Fair in Lydney Town Hall in 2000, and has always kept in touch, taking a particular interest in our Past and Present project, the history of the Forest in the last 50 years since the deep mines closed. She was also Patron of the Friends of the Cathedral of the Forest, Newland Church, and, typically Edna, was very much an active patron, organising a music concert in the Church to raise funds. She never lost her love of her birthplace, the Forest, and visited regularly, although with more difficulty after she gave up driving at the age of 90.

Lady Edna Healey was a daughter of whom the Forest of Dean can be justly proud. She will be sadly missed, of course by her husband of 64 years and her family, but also by any of us who were privileged to have enjoyed her company if only for a cup of tea and an afternoon's chat.

*Christine Martyn*

## The 'BGAS' Library

The History Society is a 'corporate member' of the Bristol and Archaeological Society. The Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (BGAS) has been in existence since 1876 and has over 500 members. The Society exists to encourage and promote the historical and archaeological study of the Bristol and Gloucestershire area, and to produce regular academic publications. These include the Society's Transactions, published annually since 1876, and the Gloucestershire Record Series. The Society also organises an extensive programme of lectures, events and field meetings each year.



In 1998 the Society's library was moved to the Archive Room at the University of Gloucestershire's Francis Close Hall Campus. As well as being open to BGAS Library members, it is also available for use by staff, students and the public on a reference only basis at the discretion of the University Archive and Special Collections Staff. More details of the BGAS library can be viewed via the internet (<http://www.bgas.org.uk/library.php>).

Prospective users of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Library should in advance either telephone (01242 714851) or email to the Secretary ([john@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk](mailto:john@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk)) for details of how to get access.

The History Society hold some copies of the BGAS record series (Transactions) in its own library. Members of the History Society can access the FODLHS library at the Dean Heritage Centre free of charge on presentation of their membership cards at the admittance desk. The Library is open on Monday and Wednesday afternoon, but members can gain admission at any time if they phone the Museum in advance. More details of the FODLHS library can also be viewed via the internet

(<http://79.170.40.163/forestofdeanhhistory.org.uk/LHSSocietyLibrary.htm>).

## Membership

May I remind members that the subscription for the year 2010/2011 is now due. Subs are £8 for one and £12 for members at the same address. Overseas membership is £14 to cover costs of postage.

Please could those members who have paid by standing order check that the correct amount is being processed by their bank?

We would like to welcome the following members to the Society:

Mr S Moore, Lydney

Mr P Shields, Chepstow

Dr J Oakley, Ross-on-Wye

Mr D Laban, Coleford

Mr P Voyce and Mrs S Walker, Wednesbury

## Outdoor, Indoor, July, September, November

The day chosen for our self-drive outing to Goodrich Castle couldn't have been better with warm sun and blue skies. Around thirty members came to learn about the geology of the Castle. Dr John Payne was the geology expert on hand who answered member's questions during the afternoon. My sincere apologies are due to everyone who attended the outing, for the very confusing start to our tour. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Sue and Robin Warren and our treasurer Cecile Hunt for coming to the rescue and saving the day. I hope that the problems that we encountered did not spoil the visit.

It was heartening to see so many members at our September Meeting, the first for some years. Anthony Boden gave an enthralling account of the life of the Gloucestershire poet F W Harvey, who was always known to his family as Will and to friends by the nickname of "The Little Man" which was given to him at school. A music lover, all round sports man, lawyer by profession, and poet, who spent the latter part of his life in the Forest of Dean.

Steve Blake was the speaker following the AGM. He gave a fascinating account of the life of John Bellamy who was born in 1808 and whose family had very strong connections with the parish of Westbury on Severn. John started his travelling life as an entertainer, playing instruments and singing, with his friend in public places including Coleford market place. However John Bellamy's claim to fame was not as an entertainer, but as a very skilled model maker of large famous and well-known buildings. The most famous of the models was of Windsor Castle, and he had the honour of being invited to the castle and having his model inspected by Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and members of the royal family. John had two large wooden caravan type coaches made for his travelling exhibition, by a wagon maker near Westbury on Severn. He, and later his wife, travelled all over England, Scotland and Wales, showing his collection to the fee paying public. At first the Caravans were horse drawn, but for a five year period the exhibition was transported all over the country by rail until the cost of doing so became far more expensive and horse power was reverted to again.

I would like to remind you about the November Meeting, which will take a different form than normal. The venue will be the Wesleyan Chapel in Belle Vue Road, Cinderford, when our very knowledgeable Vice President, Ian Pope, will be giving a longer than normal talk entitled the 'History of Cinderford'. This talk will be open to the public, so why not bring friends along. Tea and homemade cakes will be on sale during the tea break. It is sure to be a very interesting afternoon on 6th November.

I'm pleased to report that next years Programme has been confirmed and I hope that you all will find some topics that will interest you. This will be the last programme that I will be arranging, as I shall be standing down from committee after thirteen years service and during this time have arranged fifteen programmes. In the main I have found this task to be both interesting, enjoyable and it has been a privilege to be able to do so. Thank-you!

*Anne Childs, Indoor Meetings Secretary*

## SPECIAL OFFERS FOR CHRISTMAS!



### Complete Your Collection of New Regards!



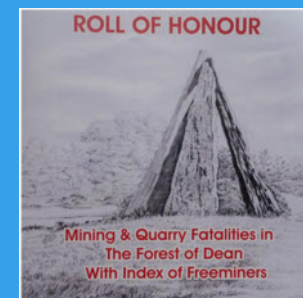
We can now offer past issues of the New Regard issues 19,20,21,22 and 23 for sale at the **special price of £3.50**.

You can find out about the contents of these issues at our website:

<http://www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk/LHSnrprevious.html>

Another special offer is our Miner's Memorial CD. Members can buy copies for the **reduced price of £10**.

As well as the record of mining casualties, these CDs include details, including some superb pictures, of nearly all the former mine sites, many of which are now nearly obliterated by the woodland. So the CD is an excellent record of our industrial history which could otherwise be lost forever and would make a very acceptable present.



We would like to remind you that there are still a few of our specially commissioned mugs available. There are two designs, one showing our Roll of Honour Memorial at New Fancy and the other showing Trafalgar Arch.

The back of each mug has the name of the Society together with our logo. Caldwell Creations who designed and made the mugs have assured us that they are dishwasher friendly and make a really good cup of tea or coffee. They are now available at the **special price of £2.50 each**.

You can buy the issues of the New Regard, mugs and CDs at our meetings or buy the New Regards and CDs online at our website [www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk](http://www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)