



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2012

Commentator and Editor – KENNETH HOBSON

Taken from a hillside off Dowles Road



THEN AND NOW No. 7 :-



THE M.A.S.U. GUEST HOUSE

BEWDLEY, WORCS.

The Manor House Gardenc.1930



Now 2012

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE- as seen on Stourport Road at Christmas



One could be wreathed all around with them

THE BRIDGE TOLL HOUSE

I lived in the Toll House for about five years. Incidentally, locally, it was known as the Round House. Though small, it was compact and very warm having thick stone walls and windows front, side and back, thus getting sun all day long in good weather. The kitchen had hooks on the ceiling for bacon.

As my mother ran it as a sweet shop, it was always full of life, particularly as all the local people knew her, as well as the many visitors from the Black Country and Birmingham, who came year after year for their annual holidays, to say nothing of the fishermen who came to Bewdley frequently for a day's peace. Apart from the trade, it was a little social centre for the hundreds of people who came by excursion train on the Bank Holidays. My recollections are of queues half way over the bridge waiting for the Picture House to open; Butt Town Meadow, now

a caravan site, full of campers in the summer making merry after hay making; and the noise and music of the fair in Dog Lane Meadow, carried across the water. There was no continuous roar of traffic; and with the wind in the right direction, one occasionally heard Arley Church bell ringing on a Sunday. Groups of Rowing Club boys, housed in the nearby arches, came in and consumed gallons of cocoa after a winter's evening training run over Trimpley Hill Farm and back, along the riverside. Frequently on Sundays the bright young members of various Midland Motor Clubs, on a treasure hunt, would come dashing in to give a pass word and pick up an envelope containing the next clue. Telford's bridge and Toll House were always on their itinerary. When the river was in flood one could lie in bed and listen to the water rushing through the bridge. An occasional thump would mean another tree trunk hitting against the buttresses. The water would come into the kitchen and cellar which were at garden level and we would stay up through the night to see how far it was creeping up the lower stairs, and when it started to recede, sweeping like mad to get rid of the mud before it settled. The worst floods always seemed to be at full moon and it was fascinating to stand on the bridge and watch the water swirling past.

Occasionally, in the night, one heard an otter barking. In blossom time the two old apple trees in the small garden looked very pretty against the yellow stone walls. Another sound, I recollect, on windy nights, was the squeaking of the branches of the big beech trees nearby, as they rubbed against each other. I remember sitting by the widow looking at the river flowing peacefully by, while listening to Neville Chamberlain saying that war had been declared and we wondered what changes would come.

Although not living there during the war years I made frequent visits and recall helping to count the sweet coupons and helping to cope with people who always thought that there was something "under the counter". I also remember, every night, the sound of heavily laden ammunition trains chugging up the line to Ditton Priors. Then there was the Sunday when the church bells rang as a wartime alert – German parachutists were supposed to have dropped in the area. There was furious activity outside the House by the police and Home Guard, checking everybody's identity before being allowed to pass over the bridge. I believe the parachutists turned out to be a haycock caught up in a whirlwind.

These are a few random recollections of living in the Toll House. I think most people who can remember it, will agree that it was deplorable that what was a warm living feature of life in Bewdley was allowed to be destroyed and become just a bare empty patch at the end of the bridge.

F.K.PETTYT 1992



CINE FILM

Do you have tucked away old cine film showing Bewdley scenes, or Bewdley people ? If so Ken Hobson would like to speak to you about the possibility of having it copied on to disc (free of charge). We would be able to look at it together, so that you could see what you have; as the Society has projectors capable of coping with all types of film. The disc would be yours. Please ring Ken on 01299 402700.

BEWDLEY TENNIS CLUB

One of the largest Tennis Clubs in Worcestershire, with 154 adult members and 146 juniors. It is that latter figure which is so important. Because it's from amongst the younger members that the Club will thrive in the future.

The popularity could be from the fact that there are seven Courts –all floodlit, enabling enthusiasts to play at almost all hours and without having to wait for a free Court . Of the seven there are four tarmac Courts – playable in all weathers and three clay Courts – kind to muscles and joints. It's American clay – drains well and doesn't stain clothing !

The members are very active. There is one eighty year old, who still plays regularly. Many are in their seventies and there is a junior who is only five. Although, at one time one had to pass a playing test before one could join, nowadays all standards are welcome.

The Club was formed many years ago - in 1924. On land in Stourport Road given to them by Mr. Charles Clarke; who, for years lived in the bungalow next door. Before then, any keen tennis players merely had the use of private Courts in the grounds of Netherton House(now part of the High School playing fields) or at Hernes Nest House, Park Lane, or, a pretty grotty one behind the George Hotel.



Alderman H.N.Frost, the first President making the first serve at the opening of the Club in 1924. He remained President until 1958. The Club is run by a Committee consisting of nine women and seven men. Club membership is from all around the area and for quite a reasonable subscription of £152 per annum an adult member can, in theory, play every day; with his balls provided free of charge. The Club house includes a bar, which, as well as providing sustenance, makes a focal point for members. There is a tennis coach at the Club and when an advertisement was placed for a replacement coach some 12 months ago there were a dozen applicants, giving an indication of the Club's notoriety and popularity.

A new initiative has been undertaken - to encourage new lady members, which has been quite successful. Those with children at the nearby school can drop them off and then come and play.

Once the hard Court had been laid it was known thereafter as the "Frost Proof Court"



All that is now left of Netherton. Two gate posts by Leisure Centre



At the opening in 1924



June 1974. The Club's fiftieth anniversary. Our Chairman says that a prize will be given for any paid up BCS member who can provide the most number of names from those shown above. Excluding his own.



The Tennis Club House to-day



**The clay courts down by the river
There are an amazing total of 7 courts making the Club one of the largest in the County.**

GREENACRES LANE – IS IT OR IS IT NOT A PUBLIC FOOTPATH (OFFICIALLY)

In November 2010, after considering all the evidence, Worcestershire County Council made an Order declaring the Lane to be a public footpath. However, Mr and Mrs Lewis Thomas of Portlock House, at the bottom of the Lane, objected. This resulted in it being necessary to hold a Public Enquiry, which took place in the Corn Exchange, Kidderminster, in February, lasting for almost the whole of 3 working days.

An Inspector considered all the written evidence and heard witnesses giving verbal evidence both for and against the case and listened to them being cross examined. An application for costs to be paid to the Objectors was a matter the Inspector was also asked to decide.

A decision is expected shortly.

STOP PRESS The appeal against the order declaring it to be a public footpath has been dismissed.

WHERE IS IT?



NO RAILINGS ON THE RIVERSIDE





Swimming in the fifties. Health & Safety would frown on this to-day. We are grateful to John Pointon for these photos. John's father, who took them, owned the Garden Cinema in the 1940'/50s.

THE RABBIT FARM, GREY GREEN LANE

As shown in the next pictures there has been a building in Grey Green Lane for some years, which it was said, when it was first erected, was to be used as an automated rabbit farm. We think it unlikely that its original purported use was ever brought about and instead, this year, application was made for the building to be converted into a quite large dwelling.

Despite there being a large number of objectors, many of whom appeared at each Planning Meeting, the property being in the Green Belt and fronting a roadway along which vehicles can only travel in single file, Wyre Forest District Council Planning Committee have, with enthusiasm, (there being a unanimous vote) granted permission for the development.



CEMENT RENDERING OUTSIDE No's 1,2 &3 High Street



Last year the owner affixed exterior rendering to these listed buildings . He did so without first obtaining Listed Building Consent. The Planning Authority therefore made him apply for retrospective permission. This application was considered by Wyre Forst District Council Planning Committee and refused. The owner then appealed to the Planning Inspectorate. In February that Appeal was dismissed. This month, April, the owner has, at last, started to remove the cement rendering.

FENCING OUTSIDE 14 KIDDERMINSTER ROAD

Readers will recall that the owner of 14 Kidderminster Road, Wribbenhall had erected railings and a gate on the pavement immediately outside her property, causing an obstruction. On the 20th February she was served with a notice by the County Council requiring her to remove these within a month, otherwise they would do so and charge her with the cost. By the 23rd of March the ironwork was removed and appearances are back to how they have been for the last 70 years.

ADVANTAGES OF HAVING THE MEDICAL CENTRE IN A FIELD IN WRIBBENHALL

1. A WHOPPING TARMAC CAR PARK WOULD SAVE THE GRASS CUTTING WHICH HAS TO TAKE PLACE NOW AND COULD MEAN THAT VISITORS TO ALL SAINTS CHURCH COULD PARK MORE SAFELY USING A NEWLY MADE ROAD.

2. THE MEDICAL CENTRE PATIENTS COULD BE KEPT FITTER AND IN TRIM BY NIPPING OVER BEWDLEY BRIDGE AND WALKING THE HALF MILE UPHILL TO THE NEW CENTRE.

3. THE BUILDERS WHO HAVE JUST FINISHED THE ROADSIDE WALL (AND WHICH TOOK COUNCILLOR YARRANTON 3 YEARS TO ACHIEVE) COULD BE FOUND EMPLOYMENT IN KNOCKING IT DOWN.

4. MUCH HANDIER FOR KENDAL AND MYSELF WHEN WE NEED TREATMENT.

5. PLENTY OF ROOM TO BUILD ALL OVER THE FIELD SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY TO EXPAND THE MEDICAL CENTRE TO COPE WITH THE INCREASING NUMBERS OF ELDERLY.

6. TRAFFIC LIGHTS OR A ROUNDABOUT AT THE NEW CROSS ROADS CREATED BY THE ROAD IN TO THE SURGERY & QUEENSWAY WOULD ASSIST DRIVERS LEAVING QUEENSWAY & AVOID QUEUES OF CARS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.

7. THE MOTOR INDUSTRY WOULD BENEFIT, AS MORE CARS THAN EVER BEFORE WOULD BE USED TO GET TO THE SURGERY.

8. ROWS OF SHINY PARKED CARS WOULD LOOK FAR MORE INTERESTING THAN DULL GREENERY.

9. FREE PARKING. FREE PARKING. The motorist's dream. They will drive many a mile for such heaven. Might be worth coming over even if they are really not too ill.

10. IT'S COMFORTING TO KNOW THAT THERE IS ONE ORGANISATION IN THESE HARD TIMES WHO HAVE SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO CONTEMPLATE BUYING LAND AND DESIGNING AND BUILDING A CAR PARK , MEDICAL CENTRE & PHARMACY.

11. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ALL SAINTS CHURCH HAVE BEEN ANXIOUS TO EXTEND THEIR GRAVEYARD, THE PRESENT ONE BEING FAIRLY FULL;AND THAT ON ENQUIRING FROM THE PLANNING AUTHORITY WHETHER THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, WERE TOLD THAT IT COULDN'T BE DONE BECAUSE OF CORDLE MARSH'S LIABILITY TO FLOOD. SHOULD THAT SAME AUTHORITY DECIDE TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE NEW SURGERY IN CORDLE MARSH, THEN PERHAPS A CONDITION COULD BE INCLUDED THAT ROOM BE FOUND FOR AN EXTENDED GRAVEYARD, PERHAPS ON THE HIGHER LAND TOWARDS THE MAYPOLE PIECE. THEN THE PLANNERS COULD NOT BE ACCUSED OF ALLOWING URBAN SPRAWL ALL OVER THE FIELD.

12. PATIENTS, SITTING IN THE WAITING ROOM OF THE NEW SURGERY WOULD BE ABLE TO GAZE THROUGH THE WINDOW, CATCH SIGHT OF THE GRAVEYARD - BEYOND THE PARKED CARS - AND REFLECT THAT NOT ALL TREATMENTS ARE SUCCESSFUL. BUT THEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE ENCOURAGED BY THE THOUGHT THAT THEIR FINAL REMAINS NEED NOT LEAVE WRIBBENHALL.

These are not necessarily the views of the Civic Society Executive Committee members

KEEP THE SOCIETY RIGHT UP TO DATE -TECHNICALLY

The Secretary, Peter Archer, e-mail –peter.archer@talktalk.net- would very much like to hear from you with **Your e-mail address, please.**

Recent Talks

Simon Topman MBE gave us a very funny and interesting talk about the History of Whistles. His company, The Acme Whistle Co is world famous having been founded in 1870 . Simon demonstrated various whistles including ones that imitated bird calls and animal sounds as well as the football referees Thunderer. His factory made the original whistles for the Titanic and also for the blockbuster movie of that name. He is doubtless the foremost authority on this subject in the world. It was only a shame that we didn't have a larger audience for this popular speaker but no doubt this was because he had, by coincidence, been engaged by Bewdley Festival last October.

RP

Heather Flack. We were very pleased to welcome back Heather, Bewdley's popular local historian. Her talk attracted a large audience and we were all treated to a very well-researched account of the 'River Severn Crossings' which existed historically on the Severn between Arley and Gloucester. From the extensive use of old maps, Heather was able to pinpoint early locations of fords, ferries and bridges, which often directed major routes between towns and cities and were in regular use long before the major bridge crossings of today were built. She clearly demonstrated how the physical characteristics of the river and its bed could play a major role in determining the growth and development of towns such as Bewdley. Most of the fords and rapids upstream of Stourport, which have not been affected by the weirs constructed in the 19th C, can still be seen and Heather's excellent photos added to the enjoyment of the evening.

BML



YOUR CIVIC SOCIETY NEEDS

YOU

TREASURER URGENTLY NEEDED!!! TELEPHONE: 01299 405823

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

Honorary Treasurer

After 15 years of keeping our books in a meticulous fashion, Peter Bolam has retired from this post. We are indebted to him for his valuable advice and guidance and give him our grateful thanks. Our attempts to replace him have thus far failed but Peter has kindly agreed to act as our bookkeeper pending the appointment of his successor. We therefore are therefore appealing to our members for someone to volunteer to carry out this task.

Vice Chairman

Alan Scaplehorn has also retired from this post. Alan is very much involved in other Bewdley community activities not least his Chairmanship of the Historical Research Group but we are delighted that he will continue as an Executive Committee member. At the recent AGM Mr Chris Griffin was elected as Vice Chairman.

Betty Yates

The brutal murder of Betty was mentioned in the Society's Annual Report and a memorial service has now been held at St Anne's. The Church was packed.

Barbara Carrington

We were sorry to learn that Barbara had passed away; Bewdley born and bred (her father, Jim Hinton was the proprietor of the old West End Garage) she was an active member of the Society who, like Betty, was a regular on our Summer Outings. Barbara had also been one of our Newsletter deliverers and will be missed.

Proposed move of the Health Centre

Your editor, Kenneth Hobson, has much to say about this proposal elsewhere in this edition and was the subject of much discussion at the AGM. Kenneth had already raised a Petition urging the Doctors to stay in the town centre. It is perfectly clear that the general opinion of our members and the public at large is strongly against such a move and that ways should be found to build a new centre near to its present location especially now that we have been informed that the Library is to move from its present site. The Society is taking a lead on this issue and a Sub Committee is actively involved in seeking to bring about the desired result by lobbying the relevant authorities.

Greenacres Lane

Kenneth Hobson has commented upon the Public Enquiry held to determine the objection to the granting of the Public Footpath. What he doesn't advise is the tremendous amount of time he put in on behalf of the Society 16 years ago in obtaining written statements from nearly 200 members of the public stating they had walked this route over certain periods.

We have just heard that the objection has been dismissed and, although it's taken a long time to come to fruition, we have got there eventually. Well done Ken.

Summer Outings

Hugh Morgan has arranged two excellent outings to Blenheim Palace on 8th May and Wightwick Manor on 25th June. These events are always most enjoyable and I do urge you, if you haven't done already, to contact Hugh on 01299 405188 and book your places.

Civic Voice (CV)

Once again our membership of CV will bring the opportunity for our members to take advantage of a free day pass giving access to any National Trust property, subject to a small number of restrictions. This pass is transferable to friends or family. The facility of a free English Heritage pass will also be continued, although this pass is not transferable. The arrangements to obtain the passes will be finalized by CV and the two bodies over the next few weeks but are expected to be similar to those for 2011. Further details will be circulated when they become available.

Richard Perrin

Dates for your diary

6th/7th May 2012

Spring Fair

Society Guided Tours of the town.

8th May 2012

Day Outing, Blenheim Palace

23rd June 2012

National Civic Day

Society will be holding a Cherry Fair in Load Street

25th June 2012

Day Outing, Wightwick Manor

19th September 2012

Bewdley Movies by Kenneth Hobson

7.30pm Baptist Church

High Street, Bewdley

6th /7th October 2012 (note change of date from Official Programme card)

Harvest Fair

Society Guided Tours of the town.

6th October 2012

Bewdley Festival Launch

19th October 2012

Lecture 'Making the Bewdley By-Pass' by Roy Lilley

2.30pm Baptist Church

High Street, Bewdley

16th November 2012

Annual Dinner

Wharton Park Golf Club

Film of BBC's 1980's *Down your Way in Bewdley*

with Kenneth Hobson

(To book contact Sue Perrin 01299 405823)

24th November 2012

Christmas Lights Festival

Society will have a stall in Load Street outside Deli

14th January 2013

Lecture 'History of Bewdley Rowing Club' by Robert Bayliss

7.30pm Baptist Church

High Street, Bewdley

20th February 2013

Lecture 'World War 2 as recorded by the BBC' by Michael Dickins

7.30pm Baptist Church

High Street, Bewdley

12th March 2013

Lecture 'The History of Abberley Hall and Clock Tower by Jo Roche

7.30pm Baptist Church

High Street, Bewdley

10th April 2013

Annual General Meeting

7.30pm Baptist Church

High Street, Bewdley