



Merry Christmas



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Longbank Orchard to be restored to its former glory



Robert
Limbrick
brings good
news for
Christmas

A deal has been struck between Forces Support Ltd and two Bewdley businessmen that will see the ancient Longbank Orchard returned to local ownership. The threat of development has been lifted and it is planned to put right many years of neglect and restore the orchard to its former glory. To that end several local businesses have very generously contributed materials and equipment.

The temporary metal fencing will be moved and replaced with a new, wooden post-and-rail fence, given to the project by M&M Timber of Kidderminster, suppliers of quality timber fencing and other wooden products.

Work commenced at the end of November.

The inadequately re-planted hedge will be brought up to standard by Farlow Nurseries of Cleobury Mortimer and Kidderminster, another local family firm.

Machinery to assist in the clearance of the site, ready for replanting, is to be loaned by Hire-it of Kidderminster from their extensive range of equipment available for hire to the public from hand tools to heavy plant.

One of the new owners, who declined to be named, said they were delighted to be able to rescue the Orchard and would like to thank all the local residents who fought so hard for this to happen and for the support of local councillors, The Wyre Forest District Council planning and enforcement team and Mark Garnier MP. We would also like to offer a special thanks to Mr Ray Hall of Raymond Hall Architects Ltd, a former Trustee of Forces Support Ltd, who was instrumental in brokering the deal.

The new owners look forward to the future when the Orchard will flourish again.

Happy New Year



Gladman hasn't gone away

The five-point Protester's Master-plan

Writing articles gives a sense of time travel; I know at the time of writing, we are awaiting the December 13 WFDC Planning Committee meeting which will, I'm sure, throw out the Gladman proposal for the CockShoot off Lakes Road. I know you may be reading this after the event and hopefully looking to the Civic Society and your Town Council for the support and guidance to ensure the developer's subsequent appeal - probably in the late spring or early summer - is properly resisted.

Councillor PHILIP EDMUNDSON reflects on the battle ahead

I know as I write this, finishing off the wine from Sunday lunch and ploughing through emails in late November, we're still working towards ensuring the Planning meeting now in January goes the way we want it to.

So what do I say? What can I offer? Only the opportunity to see beyond this late November Sunday afternoon and look to the slog, the battle that lies ahead if and when WFDC overthrow the Gladman application. All I can offer is the five-point Protester's Master-plan.

If Hitler invaded hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the devil in the House of Commons. Winston Churchill - June 1941- on being alerted to the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

1 We have to work with everyone to make this appeal successful. As a Town Councillor for two and a half years, I learnt swiftly I was in opposition to no one and if I was to get anything done crossing the political divide, working with people whose views are opposed to mine, having difficult conversations

continued on next page/



Somewhere between 750 and a thousand individual objections have been made to Wyre Forest District Council. Most want to protect the countryside and others are concerned about the additional toxic emissions likely from more traffic on the roads into the town centre.





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'No room to wriggle'

regarding compromise and tacit agreement have been commonplace. This is what we are all going to have to do to ensure that we work together against a common enemy. Sometimes this can be uncomfortable and disconcerting; the alternative is a fractured opposition and the potential for failure.

2 The Neighbourhood Plan has to be water tight and this will take more time.

Everyone who has heard me speak publicly and privately knows that my ambition has been for a May 2017 referendum. With the WFDC Local Plan going through a slower timescale, to ensure that we make both Gladman proof, we have to ensure there is absolutely no wriggle room for another predatory proposal. With the Town Clerk and the steering group, we are negotiating and discussing how we can achieve this with officers and District councillors. This will be good for the future, but slower than my ambitions.

3 Inaction is exactly that Almost 1000 people wrote objections to WFDC about the Gladman's proposal by the late October deadline. We need a similar groundswell of public opinion, if not more, for an appeal. An email in October is not going to be enough. Continued and perpetuated action is needed.

4 An appeal is going to cost

A Crowdfunding appeal raised £3500 for the cause. It's likely to cost in excess of £100,00 to launch a suitably-strong appeal. This means donating, supporting and petitioning for financial support. We are going to have to dig deep, find influence and finance from every possible connection we have.

5 It's going to be a tough six months...

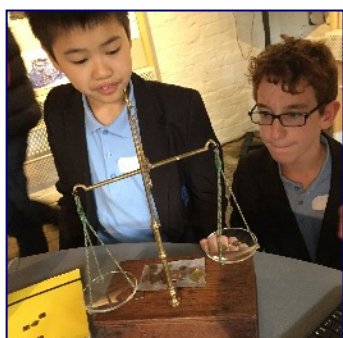
Any appeal of this nature is hard. As we raise money, maintain activity, work with others we would normally avoid, we also have to accept that the Town, over time, will increase in size. We are going to have to guide any future developments the way we want them. This may well be the ultimate sacrifice; having to offer up a part of the greater Bewdley landscape for acceptable development. The Town hasn't really had to make a decision like this in a couple of generations. The time is approaching.

These five points may prove too much to accept as we prepare for Christmas, sherry, mince pies and a well-earned rest from the year's travails. Yet, to paraphrase Churchill, as we look towards 2017, let us brace ourselves to our duties, so bear ourselves to Bewdley, so that in years to come they will say *this will be our finest hour*.

NO TO GLADMAN



Images of the year



Above left, Joshua Sofaer who spent the whole of July at the museum, facilitating visitors' research and right: two of the pupils who learned all about brass weights

Main photo: the river in frost; with the Severn's famous peregrine falcon superimposed; above: the annual balsam bash; and right: the poor pigeon that had to hatch its chicks in the grim precincts of No Road...said to be on the council's list for reparation!



Left: Martin Jennings, sculptor who will create Baldwin (centre) statue and right, the glory we already enjoy in the park.

JOY...and JUBILATION





Bewdley Brass: Heritage and Connections



PHOTO Colin Hill

The Mayor of Bewdley, Cllr Beeson and the Civic Society Chair Richard Perrin and Society Secretary Barbara Longmore with some of the students who took part in the project and were entertained to tea in the Mayor's Parlour.

The Mayor of Bewdley, Cllr John Beeson, hosted a tea-party for a group of students from the Bewdley School and Sixth Form Centre and members of the Bewdley Civic Society. The event was to celebrate the success of this year's Bewdley Civic Society School Heritage Project which culminated in an exhibition of the students' work in Bewdley Museum.

The project – *Bewdley Brass: Heritage and Connections* – took place in the summer when Year-7 students attended a two-day Civic Society Workshop and researched the history of the town's brass industry and the town's importance as a producer of Apothecary Weights.

The exhibition was on show until the end of October in Bewdley Museum.

Before tucking into their tea in the Guildhall Council Chamber, the young people were shown Bewdley's historic silver maces* and other pieces of civic silver, together with the mayoral chain of office. The Mayor also explained to the students that the Borough's first Charter was awarded to Bewdley by King Edward IV in 1472.

He talked about the significance of the colour of his robes: blue robes were traditional for mayors of ports and Bewdley had once been a prosperous, inland port.

During their tea-party, five of the students were presented with Civic Society prizes for the work they had produced for the exhibition.

The Civic Society works with the local school each year to deliver a School Heritage Project in order to encourage in the young people of the town an interest and pride in Bewdley and its history.

*One of only two pairs in England presented by Queen Anne. Hallmarked 1710 and bearing the royal insignia A.R. (Anne Regina.), the solid silver maces are said to be priceless.



PHOTO
Colin Hill

The handbag, an imperious wave and audience purrs with delight!

The style is right. The handbag is right. The imperious wave is right...and so festival favourite Lesley Smith dazzled yet again as she captured the persona of Mrs Thatcher in her prime...as Prime Minister extraordinaire. We're used to Ms Smith's historical recreations - such as Ann Boleyn and Nell Gwynne - where the elaborate costumes help carry the story of people out of the history book. This was different. This was the Mrs T who most of the packed audience in the Baptist Church knew and loved (or maybe hated)...in contemporary clothing. There was no hiding place. A tour de force sponsored by the Civic Society.

Jock Gallagher



Stanley Baldwin

Society president talks about her royal and political connections



Queen Victoria



PHOTO Colin Hill

MUSIC FOR A DESERT ISLAND:
Mozart's Laudate Dominum;
Zadoc, the Priest; Richard
Strauss's Four Last
Songs; and The Girl
from Ipanema;



GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER: Prince Leopold, (1853–84), the youngest son of Victoria, was given the Scottish title of Duke of Albany. He was a haemophiliac and died at the very young age of 30 and four months before the birth of his son he had gone to Cannes to escape the British weather when he slipped and hit his head and sustained a cerebral haemorrhage.



In an experiment, the entertainment at this year's annual dinner came in a cross between Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* and television's *Who Do You Think You Are?* with our president Beatrice Grant in the hot seat. For the very attentive audience, she traced her ancestry from Queen Victoria and Stanley Baldwin...and offered us her four favourite discs (*see top right*). And as interviewer ex-BBC man Jock Gallagher reflected, that's a very powerful pair of ancestors but her lineage also takes in painters Edward Burne-Jones and Edward Poynter and poet/writer Rudyard Kipling...and she has links with James Bond (*see below*). After disentangling the complex relationships, she concentrated on her grandfather Stanley Baldwin and his career first as an industrialist and then as a politician. When he succeeded his father as MP for Bewdley, she said he saw himself as a constituency champion and would probably have been happier as a backbencher. However, he served in a string of key Government roles and stepped in as Prime Minister following the sudden death of Bonar Law. He had a torrid time, losing a General Election after only six months. He recovered to win another two elections to make him the first PM to win three terms. She is a member of the group planning to erect a statue in Load Street.



NAMESAKE: Our president takes her name from Princess Beatrice (1857-1944), Victoria's youngest daughter. As the baby of the family, she was nicknamed ...Baby! She was the sister of our president's great-great-grandfather (above) She was later responsible for editing her mother's diaries.



Is this the face behind Fleming's 007?

Captain HO (Peter) Huntington-Whiteley, Stanley Baldwin's grandson, served in Ian Fleming's 30 Commando Assault Unit in 1944 and his heroics are thought to have given the writer the character of James Bond. He was killed on the frontline. He was just 24.





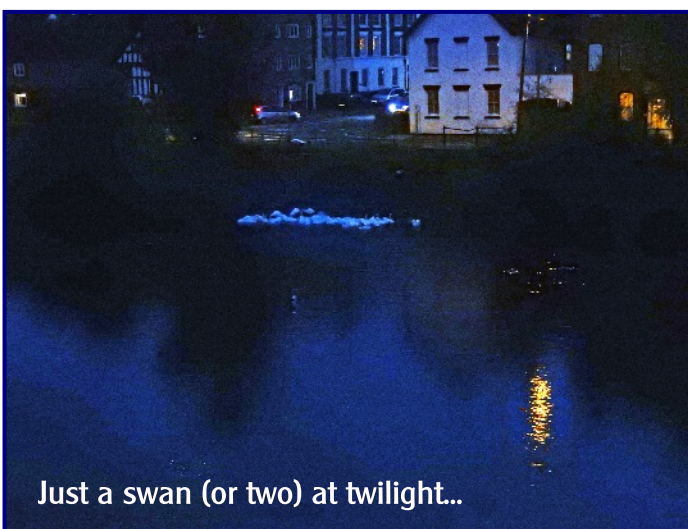
Thomas Edward Griffin: NEVER FORGOTTEN

Following the showing of the *Battle of the Somme* film in St George's Hall and the details we were given of local men who had fought at the Somme, I went to visit the grave of Private Thomas Edward Griffin of Bewdley. Thomas served with the 3rd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and died of his wounds on October 24, 1916. He is buried in the Military Cemetery at Étaples on the coast of Northern France near to Le Touquet (above).

On behalf of Bewdley Civic Society, I placed a British Legion Cross at Thomas's grave: "In Remembrance and never forgotten by the people of Bewdley".

I travelled with a party of Tenbury High School staff and pupils who placed crosses on 3 other graves of soldiers from the Tenbury area who were also buried at Étaples. We visited late in the evening and were the only people there. We were all very moved by the beauty and tranquillity of the cemetery.

Pauline Geddie (Bewdley Civic Society member)



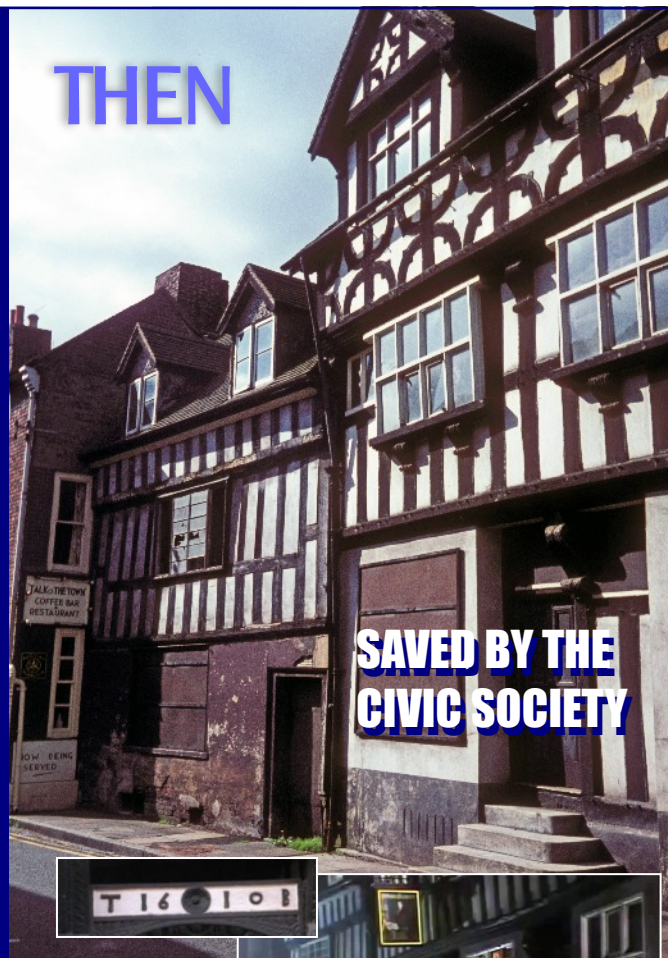
Just a swan (or two) at twilight...



...and a little later in Ribbesford churchyard



NOW



THEN

SAVED BY THE
CIVIC SOCIETY

Now the *Pomodoro* Italian/Mediterranean restaurant, 68 High Street is one of the oldest buildings in Bewdley. It was built in 1610 for the town's first Bailiff Thomas Bouston - the TB on the lintel - and has been known as *The Bailiff's House* ever since despite numerous changes of proprietorial names. It was listed Grade 2 in 1950 but fell into disrepair only six or seven years later. It was saved by the intervention of the Civic Society. See this excerpt from our Committee report:

*In December 1959 the County planning officer reported that he had received from the owner of the Bailiff's House a preliminary notification that he **intended to demolish the building**. For some months your Committee had been attempting to solve the problem of saving this historic building and in January 1960 delegates from our Society met representatives of the County and Borough Councils to discuss the matter. One of the main difficulties has been to find a use for the property to offset the cost of its preservation and restoration but the sympathetic attitude of the County Authority provides grounds for optimism.*

As we know the County did buy it and hence it was saved for us to enjoy today. But it was a close run thing. The photo taken by Freddie Charles in the early 1960s shows it boarded up and looking sadly derelict before the County was able to sell it to a restaurateur. *En passant*, does anyone remember the *Talk of the Town* coffee bar and restaurant (circled in the right hand photo), coincidentally adjacent to the Bailiff's House?

Richard Perrin



Guess where the drunken bollards are? On Severnside South, of course, battered and bumped by diverted traffic while the town centre was closed. Maybe the council is waiting until they've all been skittled over before they restore them to upright?

The Newsletter is edited by JOCK GALLAGHER who invites members' comments and/or contributions (especially photos) on jyg@cix.co.uk



John Ruskin (1819-1900), **RUSKINLAND, A UTOPIAN DREAM**

Our lecture on Ruskinland drew one of our largest audiences for many years to hear Neil Sinden (above left) talk about the famous philosopher's Utopian vision. In 1876, the Guild of St George, founded by John Ruskin, was gifted 20 acres of Wyre Forest by George Baker, a wealthy business man and member of the Guild.

To this land came five pioneer families from Liverpool who cleared the forest and farmed it and planted an orchard. They lived simple idealistic lives and developed the skills needed for surviving by their own endeavours, aiming to be as self sufficient as possible.

The Guild is still active today and owns over 100 acres, including Ruskinland, and runs educational and training projects relating to rural crafts and countryside skills.

Neil, who came to Bewdley in 2015, previously worked for CPRE as Policy Director. He was also, until recently director/trustee of *Civic Voice*. He is currently a consultant for the Guild and the Wyre Community Land Trust and it's clear he has embraced Ruskin's ideals wholeheartedly.

Jenny Frow

One of those rare men who think with their hearts...and so he thought and said not only what he himself had seen and felt but what everyone will think and say in future.

Leo Tolstoy on John Ruskin

Transportation for a Bewdley horse-thief

Several Bewdley inhabitants benefited from government funded free travel to Australia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1797 the gelding of Samuel Skey of Spring Grove was stolen and in due course John Cadman was arrested.

He subsequently appeared at the Worcester Assizes in March 1797 and was found guilty and sentenced to death after a trial lasting an hour or so. As was fairly usual at the time, before the Judge left the city, he was reprieved and sentenced to transportation for life.

Cadman was incarcerated until the 796-ton sailing ship, the *Barwell*, left Portsmouth on 7 November with its cargo of 296 male convicts. The voyage took 192 days during which time nine of John's fellow prisoners died.

However, having survived those privations he worked as a labourer for the government and rose to become Government Coxswain and Superintendent of the Sydney harbour boats. He received a conditional pardon in 1814 and a full pardon in 1821. He was given permission to marry Elizabeth Mortimer another convict in 1830.

When his government service ended, he bought a run-down licensed bar and converted it into the Steam Packet Hotel. He died aged 90 on 12 November 1848...10 months after over fifty years in Australia.

The house he lived in by the harbour was built near the convict's barracks and is now known as Cadman's Cottage and is one of the oldest standing buildings in Sydney. Currently it houses the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service's information centre and shop.

ALAN SCAPLEHORN



Cadman's Cottage in Sydney



Impressions of a Victorian Christmas Market



This sepia print gives the impression of a royal visit to the Society stand. HM's bonnet was unmistakable, as was her consort's double-Albert watch chain but...



...there's no mistaking our esteemed Secretary, Barbara Longmore, and dandy chair, Richard Perrin.

Good news and bad news about Bewdley's ash trees

Following the response made for information about their location, we received a great deal of information about where to find Bewdley's ash trees.

One location of special interest was the recently-planted Stokes Wood - a planting by Birmingham Angling Association on the banks of the Severn, south of the bypass. This was of interest because the ash planted here was immature and the site is sheltered and humid, conditions in which Chalara thrives.

We visited the site throughout the summer and by August were reasonably sure that we had identified signs that the disease was present. A visit from the County Countryside Officer, Wade Muggleton, confirmed our fears.

We sent reports, photos and samples to the Forestry Commission and very recently received a reply from the Forest Research office:

POSITIVE FOR CHALARA.

That of course is the bad news but Wade says he has not seen any signs of Chalara in mature ash yet..... so there is some hope that some native British ash may have a degree of immunity.

Cliff Willmot, Bewdley Town Council Tree Officer

WANTED

Cupboard to store Society's archives

The committee is very grateful to the members who answered the request in the last edition of the Newsletter for a heater and a desk for our Ken Hobson Room (at 18 Load Street). We are now just about fully-equipped but are still in need of a tall (lockable) cupboard which could be used for storing archive materials. If anyone can help, perhaps they would telephone Barbara Longmore on 01299 403939 or email to: bmlongmore@gmail.com



Baldwin Statue Appeal launched at Annual Dinner



The Annual Dinner in November was a great success. It attended by 75 members and guests in St George's Hall. The event coincided with the Society's launch of its Stanley Baldwin Statue Appeal.

After the meal our newly elected president, Beatrice Grant, was interviewed in *Desert Island Disc* format (see Page 6).

Our connection with the Baldwin family has been a strong one over the years. Stanley Baldwin was our founding president in 1944. Other Baldwin presidents have been Stanley Baldwin's daughter (Beatrice's grandmother), Lady Margaret Huntington-Whiteley, Beatrice's, uncle, Sir Hugo Huntington- Whiteley and more recently, the late Countess Baldwin, wife of the current Earl Baldwin. So I was pleased to announce that the Society had agreed to donate £5,000 towards the statue which is to be erected near the Guildhall, in front of the former HSBC Bank premises. The sculptor, Martin Jennings, famous for his statue of John Betjeman in St Pancras Railway Station (see Page 4), is currently working on the project with the view to the Statue's unveiling later in 2017, the 150th anniversary of Baldwin's birth in Bewdley. In the meantime, the need to raise a further £130,000 has been boosted by the news that the Prime Minister, Theresa May, has agreed to become a patron of the appeal and I was able to read out her letter giving reasons why she fully supports the initiative. The Queen too, had sent a message of support and wishes to be kept informed of the plans.

We hope that members will give support and attached to this Newsletter is a letter from our President enclosing the Society's commitment pledge and Gift Aid declaration.

Say No to Gladman (see Page 2)

We have just heard that the controversial Application for 195 houses off the Lakes Road will not now go before WFDC's planning committee this month after Gladman requested that it be put back until the January meeting. Gladman has declined to comment but we can but hope that they are rethinking the whole project in the light of the storm of protest from local residents and organisations.

Longbank Orchard (see front page)

What a great Christmas present for us. It is recalled that the Society played its part in this campaign to restore the hedgerow and orchard including chairing the public meeting at which the developers were present.

Increase in Membership Subs

The AGM agreed increased subs for next year. See the next page for details. Members who pay by SO will need to advise their bank. Increases in 2017 WILL NOT AFFECT current Life Members or those becoming Life Members in instalments; those who have already paid for 2017 and those who joined AFTER October 2016

Town Council accommodation and community hub

The Town Council (TC) is asking residents what they think of a proposal to buy the former Barclays Bank building in Load Street. The TC would use this as their main offices - the current office accommodation is too small - and could also be used as a Community Hub for information and somewhere for local groups to showcase their activities.

You are asked to complete a survey on the website at www.bewdleytowncouncil.org

The CS Committee has not had an opportunity to fully discuss this proposal but I know there is a view amongst members I have spoken to that, while the idea is an excellent one, the choice of building is not the best one.

Better alternatives would, perhaps, be the Old Post Office (where the Kemp Hospice shop is located) or the former HSBC Bank building.

Meanwhile it's not clear whether the TC would surrender its use of the historic Council Chamber.

Finally, on behalf of the Executive Committee, I wish all our members a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year for Bewdley and us all.

Winter programme

Tuesday January 10

Lecture *The Real War Horse* by Robin Hill
7.30pm, St George's Hall

Wednesday February 15

Lecture *Bournville Village 1895-1925* by Dr Michael Harrison
2.30pm St George's Hall,

Tues 14 March 14

Lecture *Worcester Porcelain & the History of the Manufactory during the Early Flight Period 1776-1800* by Paul Crane
7.30pm St George's Hall

Wednesday April 19

Annual General Meeting
7.30 pm St George's Hall



Bewdley Civic Society Subscription Rates 2017

Annual subscriptions for 2017 are due on **January 1** and should be paid by **January 31**
THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO LIFE MEMBERS OR THOSE WHO JOINED IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS.
You may pay by cheque or Standing Order (see instructions below),

Current Subscription Rates:

Single Annual £10 Annual (Family) £15 Junior £2

Single Life £100 which may be paid over 4 years at £25 by Standing Order

Joint Life £150 which may be paid over 4 years at £37.50 by Standing Order

If paying by cheque make it payable to BEWDLEY CIVIC SOCIETY.

Send by post to Mrs Sheelah Bolam, 6 Sandbourne Drive, Bewdley DT12 1BN

PLEASE DETACH AND USE THE PAYMENT SLIP BELOW

Annual Subscription to Bewdley Civic Society

Date/...../ 201.....

I enclose my/our: Annual Subscription for 2017

£.....

Additional Voluntary Donation

£.....

TOTAL enclosed

£.....

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr/other.....

First Name..... Surname.....

Address.....email.....

Post Code.....Telephone.....

Signature.....

GIFT AID DECLARATION

If you are a taxpayer and have not already done so, would you please consider making your subscription a Gift Aid Donation by signing the declaration below: under current legislation this enables the Society to reclaim from the Inland Revenue, 25p for every £1 subscribed (legally a donation) each year. This can, and should be, revoked by you if you cease to be a taxpayer.

I would like the Charity to treat the enclosed donation (this year's subscription of £..... and all future donations (future Subscriptions) until I notify you otherwise, as GIFT AID DONATIONS.

Signed..... Date...../...../ 201....

STANDING ORDER MANDATE – BEWDLEY CIVIC SOCIETY

To: (Name and Address of Your Bank)

Your Account Number..... Your Sort Code----.....

Please Pay to HSBC Bank 15 Load Street Bewdley Worcs. DY12 2AD

Bewdley Civic Society, A/c No 70149195, Sort Code 40-10-13

the sum of £ each Year

Commencing on 31st January 20__(Date of first payment) and continuing on 31st January each year until further notice or 31st January 20___ (Date of last payment)

Name.....(Block letters please)

Address.....