



# THE JOYS OF SPRING 2022

# NEWSLETTER



## Bewdley's canopy fit for the Queen

As Natural England designates the Wyre Forest the county's largest National Nature Reserve (see page 2), Bewdley's contribution to the Queen's Green Canopy becomes ever more significant.

The County Council has already planted 3,000 trees to create a ten-acre woodland at Blackstone; the Wyre Forest Community Land Trust has planted 2,500 trees; schools and local community groups are also signing up to the QGC initiative and a study by WFDC Tree Officer Alvan Kingston rates Bewdley the best in the district, with a tree canopy already well above the national average (see right).

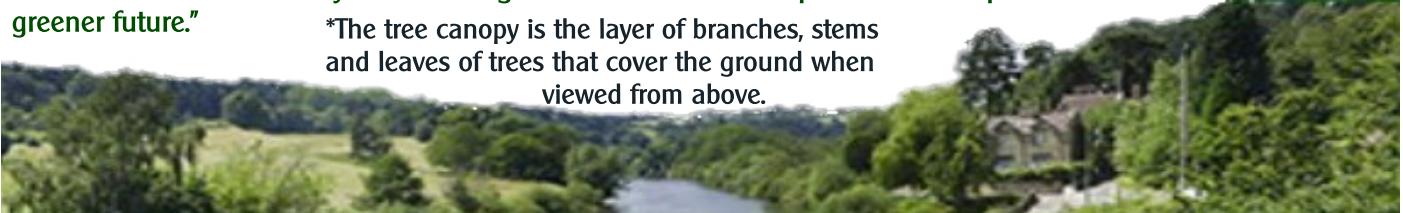
 Mr Kingston's assessment highlights the importance of \*tree canopy cover. He lists the community benefits from trees: it improves water quality, reduces storm-water runoff, lowers summer temperatures, reduces energy use in buildings, removes air pollution, improves human health, provides wildlife habitat and has aesthetic benefits. He says: "Understanding the tree canopy is an important step in urban forest planning. The tree canopy assessment can be used by a broad range of stakeholders to help communities plan a greener future."



\*Bewdley has the highest canopy cover percentage of the three towns within the District with 26.3% Kidderminster has 23.6% and Stourport 18.3%. (*the national average for towns is 20%*).



\*The tree canopy is the layer of branches, stems and leaves of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above.



**INSIDE P2 WOODLAND WILDLIFE P3 TIDYING UP HISTORY P4/5 LECTURE REVIEWS  
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P12 FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK**

# Wyre Forest: now country's largest natural woodland

'EQUIVALENT TO 1700 FOOTBALL PITCHES'



THE FOREST'S BUTTERFLIES



THE WHITE ADMIRAL



THE WOOD WHITE

The Wyre Forest is now officially the country's largest woodland nature reserve. Natural England says the status - officially a National Nature Reserve (NNR) - will give the forest greater protection.

'NNR's are rare, precious areas which protect some of our country's most important places for wildlife and geology.'

The Wyre Forest, which dates back to at least the year 900, has been extended by almost 900 hectares and now encompasses more than 1,455 hectares. This is equivalent to 1700 football pitches.

It features a diverse array of habitats from forest to open grassland meadows, old orchards and areas of scrub, to steep-sided valleys created by geological faults. It is home to a vast array of wildlife including protected mammals, reptiles and birds. Its butterfly and moth populations are significant, with 58% of the UK's butterfly species recorded here.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper describes the expansion as another important step toward Nature recovery in England. 'These reserves protect some of the finest examples of our natural environment and by expanding them we not only protect more wildlife but also help different species cope as the effects of climate change take hold.'

He adds: 'This is now England's largest native forest nature reserve, presenting a fine example of the kinds of

woodlands we should strive to create more of into the future, not only catching carbon, but providing a variety of additional benefits. With Birmingham nearby, improved health and well-being for people will be one of those.'



Forestry England



Worcestershire  
Wildlife Trust

Wyre Forest is a mosaic of woodlands, ravines, grasslands and scrub and it is exactly this kind of varied habitat that we must create more of if we are to improve the prospects for some of our most beautiful and interesting wild species, including butterflies such as the *White Admiral* and the *Wood White*. The area is owned by a number of landowners, including Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. It's managed by Natural England and Forestry England.

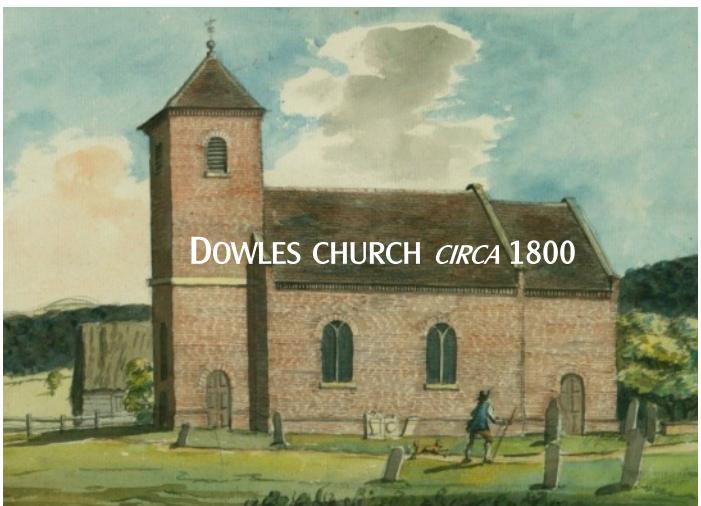
## The wonders of wildlife

Colin Raven, Director, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, said: The Wyre Forest is home to amazing and rare wildlife. As well as the wonders of wildflowers, fungi, reptiles and mammals, there are a number of bird species that are very sensitive to disturbance so having more protected land should help to give them a real boost.

Nature's recovery isn't just about protected areas; we need more nature everywhere if we are to halt its decline. This expansion is a great start in helping to reach our target of 30% of land managed for the benefit of nature by 2030 and we hope that it will inspire residents throughout the Wyre Forest and beyond to think about how they can also provide space for nature.



# Tidying up history



The Dowles Church was built in 1789 (altered in 1882) and demolished in 1956, although the churchyard remains in the care of the St Anne's parish.

**T**he Society has made a donation to help tidy up the recently-neglected Dowles Graveyard in support of new member, Louise Fenton, who has already begun the work.

The site has been unattended in recent years and the Church, given the difficulties it has balancing its day-to-day budget, took the view that in the absence of any public-sector funding, it would be best left to go wild.

On behalf of the Society, I did complain to the PCC about the situation a few years ago but had to accept there was no money available to keep it in the way we would like it.

In the meantime, the site is becoming inundated with saplings which are difficult to remove. It's my belief that the graveyard is valued by quite a number of people and it would be well worthwhile carrying out a one-off exercise to clear the saplings and carry out a general tidying up. without it being urbanised. I'm very pleased that the PCC are contributing towards the cost of this exercise

The hamlet of Dowles has existed since early medieval times and the Manor of Dowles had an important place in the very early history of the area. It was a hive of industry over the years; the Dowles Brook and its tributaries supported eight mills, there were fireclay workings, a brick works, chemical manufactory and finally, the Bewdley Gas Works (*executive member Alan Scaplehorn produced a short history of the company in 1995*).

As early as the 16th century, the parish supplied charitable funds or goods to the poor. The neglect of this churchyard since the demolition, in 1956, of the last church to exist there has led to some vandalism of the older tombs but some remain intact.

Important Bewdley characters were buried there, including Samuel Skey (1808-48), William Nicholls Marcy [LEFT] (1810-94) and Janion Steele Elliott (1871-1942), a former Lord of the Manor of Dowles and a distinguished ornithologist.

The undergrowth and saplings make it difficult to explore the churchyard now, but William Nicholls Marcy's gravestone was still in good condition last summer, and it is to be hoped that others can be uncovered by this project.



Early 19<sup>th</sup> century headstone for the Powell family



This august portrait of William Nicholls Marcy hangs in the Guildhall.



RICHARD PERRIN

## LECTURE I THE MILLS OF WYRE FOREST BY DR TOM ELLIOTT

# 'The ideal landscape'

This, the first lecture of the year, attracted a pleasingly large audience and we were rewarded with a vivid description of the workings of the various mills on the Dowles Brook and its tributaries.

The ideal landscape of the area enabled its streams to provide waterpower at eight certain and two possible locations along their valleys.

Milling took place for 600 years from the late 13th century when Coopers Mill (formerly Coventry Mill and now demolished) was thought to be a mill-site owned by Roger Mortimer, first Baron Wigmore.

Coopers Mill was still milling oats in 1894 but had ceased by 1900. The mill building was finally demolished in 1967 but the refurbished cottage remains under Cadbury ownership and is leased to Birmingham Education Committee as an outdoor education centre.

The mills were not all devoted to grinding grain, though, and at the Cleobury Mortimer end of the brook, Furnace Mill served a blast furnace (built in the 1570s - probably on the site of an earlier mill which fell into disrepair in the 14th century).

This in turn provided steel for one of the forges at Cleobury Mortimer. It is likely that it went out of use in the first quarter of the 17th century and found another use – most likely corn milling. It was certainly a corn mill in the 19th century, continuing until at least 1926. By 1928 the mill had been converted into a house. After severe flood damage in 2007, the house was considerably enlarged.

## Hedge-laying in the Wyre Forest

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of the importance of hedges to the natural environment. Hedges have marked field boundaries since the enclosure of land in medieval times.

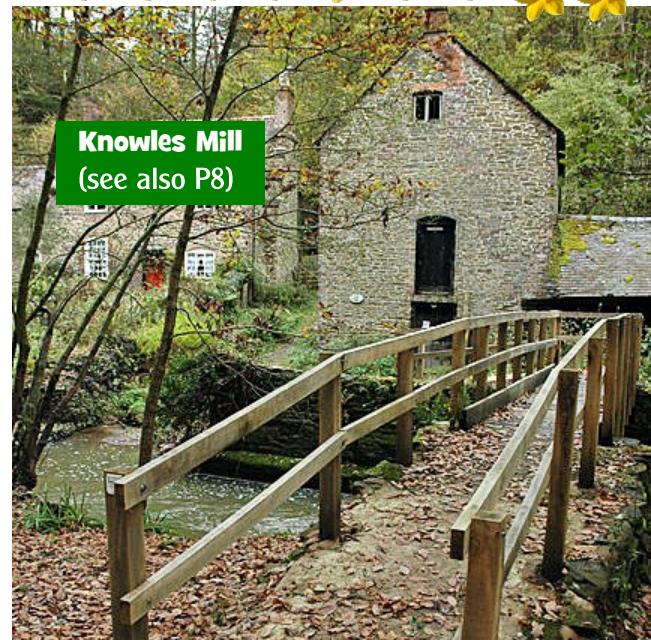
When a large number of people worked on the land a key task was maintaining these hedges. However modern farming techniques have resulted in far fewer working on the land and thousands of miles of hedges being removed.

For example, The Council for the Protection of Rural England estimates that for the years 1990-93 2,200 miles of hedges were lost each year in England and Wales.

However there is now a realisation that not only do hedges provide a stock-proof barrier they also provide an important sanctuary for birds, small animals and other wildlife. They also provide a permeable barrier, important in flood-prone areas.

They do need to be maintained properly: if they are just mechanically flayed the top becomes a knitted mess and the bottom gaps out. This means they are not stock-proof and don't provide habitat for birds etc.

To lay a hedge, the first task is to cut into a small tree – such as a hawthorn or blackthorn – a few inches off the



The only other remaining mill building is Knowles Mill (above), which was in use in 1578 and it is recorded as being left by Thomas Southall to his son Richard. The mill is said to have ceased working in the severe winter of 1891.

As with Cooper's Mill, the property was eventually purchased by the Cadbury family and transferred to the National Trust in 1938. After repairs were completed in 2010, interpretation panels were placed outside and within the mill and it is now open to view at all reasonable times.

**Barbara Longmore**



ground, being careful not to cut completely through.

When you bend the tree over (laying), the cut becomes a living hinge (*pleaching*). This generates re-growth and the laid tree (a *pleacher*) also generates re-growth, giving a thick healthy hedge which is stock-proof and a great habitat for wildlife.

To finish the hedge laying wooden stakes are hammered into the ground at regular intervals and thinner lengths of wood are woven into the pleachers to act as binders.

Hedge laying provides a stock-proof barrier, is good for the environment and is a lot more attractive than wire stock fencing.

**Tony Leach**



## Society's local ScoutAid

The Society's donation of £500 has allowed the local Scouts to complete the refurbishment of their hut in Spencer Avenue. They had been working on the project for more than eighteen months. Now the fifty-and-more Scouts, Cubs and Beavers of the Bewdley Scout Group meet in the hut three times a week.

In thanking the Society, the group's treasurer, Simon Willetts, said they had a long waiting list of young people waiting to join. "However this will depend on us being able to find more adult leaders."

Society chairman Richard Perrin said: "We are very pleased to support this very worthwhile cause, which offers so much to Bewdley's young people."



PHOTO COLIN HILL

Society executive members Sue Perrin and Barbara Longmore hand over the £500 cheque to the Scouts

### LECTURE 2 MADRESFIELD: FAME AND SCANDAL JOHN CHESTER

## 'A story for our times'

John Chester deserves our thanks for a wonderfully diverting lecture on the life and legacy of William Lygon, the 7th Earl Beauchamp, and the exotic world of Madresfield, Malvern's stately home.

Carried easily from the particular to the general and back again, we were given a fascinating insight into the remarkable world of Edwardian England and its post-war shadow, in so many ways a defining period of our history, but one which is still masked and hidden by the terrible catastrophe of WW1.

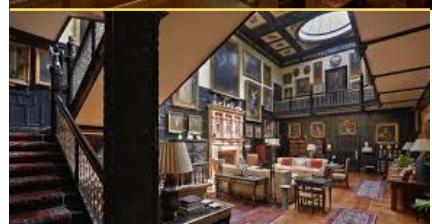
Fate and time made William the almost romantic embodiment of at least six exceptionalisms; Caste, Wealth, Taste, Exotic Sexual Mores, Family, and Anglo-Catholicism. Of these, it is the claustrophobic, intense, and magical romance of family, so beautifully evoked in *Brideshead Revisited* (right), the fruit of Evelyn Waugh's slightly ambiguous intimacy with the Lygon family, which destines the book for immortality, so that it might have to be remade, like *Pride and Prejudice*, for every succeeding generation.



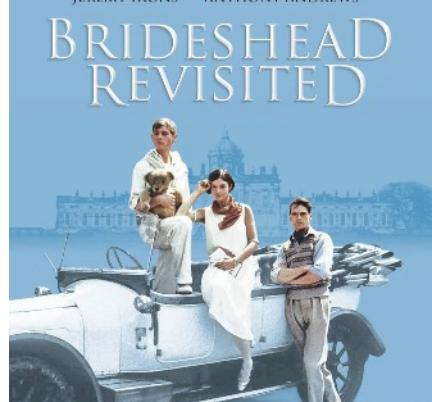
WILLIAM LYGON AS  
MAYOR OF WORCESTER

Certainly, though, the truth of William Lygon's life is at least as colourful as fiction. He was a man of great charm and erudition, greatly loved by his many children but one is left to wonder at the strange influences which made him Mayor of Worcester at 23 and Governor of New South Wales at 27, which gifted him a string of sinecures and political offices, which protected him by exile from the consequences of reckless and at that time criminal, sexual excesses, and which, having quietly allowed him back to the UK, found no difficulty in exacting harsh penalties for the same proclivities in the less fortunate, or, later on, in persecuting the visionary genius Alan Turing, to untimely death. A story definitely for our times. The Civic Society organised a visit to Madresfield Court in 2016: it may be time to go back again.

### Life as colourful as fiction



JEREMY IRONS ANTHONY ANDREWS



### LECTURES 3/4

*In Search of Ancient Trackways* by Rosemary Winnal MBE  
*Local Churches* by Tim Bridges SEE BACK PAGE



Bill Goodall

REVIEWS IN SUMMER ISSUE

## A slice of Beaucastle history



**PICTURE FROM A BYGONE ERA** From left to right: George Layton (chauffeur and general factotum), Mrs Layton (housekeeper), Emily Perry (maid), Young Jacques (under-gardener, Jacques (head gardener) and the young Denise Bronwen Kerr (now Miles) and Julie, the cocker spaniel.

### DENISE MILES RECALLS

### HAPPY MEMORIES AND LOVELY PEOPLE

**M**y Grandparents, Mr and Mrs Herbert Butcher\* lived at Beaucastle approximately 1930-1950s. The picture shows some of their staff near the end of their time at Beaucastle.

They had a lot of staff over the years. I remember Tolley, the game keeper and I believe his son worked with him. They lived in the house just above the Beaucastle gates.

There was Phillips who looked after the horses but I remember best those in the picture: (from left to right): Layton, chauffeur and general factotum, Mrs Layton, his wife the housekeeper They lived in, above the stables I think. When Beaucastle was sold, they retired and went to live in Church House in High Street.

Emily Perry, the maid, also lived in and later came to live with us at Far Forest until she went to a retirement home.

Jacques, the Head Gardener and his son had a house.. opposite the Running Horse

The little girl is me.. Denise Bronwen Kerr .. my mother was Herbert Butcher's daughter Doreen Butcher, born 1913. I must have been about five when the picture was taken; I was born in 1945 at Beaucastle. My father was in the RAF, so Mum went home to have me. The cocker spaniel was my Mum's dog Julie. The photograph from a bygone era brings back happy memories of such lovely people.



### RUSKIN'S VENETIAN INFLUENCE

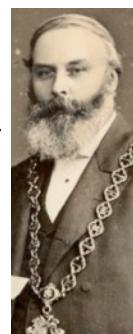
**O**NE OF WORCESTERSHIRE'S MOST INTRIGUING COUNTRY HOUSES, THE FAIRYTALE BEAUCastle NEAR BEWDLEY, WHOSE VENETIAN GOTHIC DESIGN WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE ARTIST, WRITER AND SOCIAL-THINKER JOHN RUSKIN (inset)

That was part of the estate agent's exceptional sales brochure when the house was last on the market in 2012. *With its quirky roofscape, romantic tower and spires, elaborate stone, iron and brickwork and fine carved oak panelling, Beaucastle is the ultimate Arts-and-Crafts creation and a house full of constant surprises.*

Beaucastle was built between 1875 and 1877 by Birmingham industrialist Alderman George Baker (right), who had succeeded Joseph Chamberlain as Mayor of the city and who later became the Mayor of Bewdley.

Baker was a member of Ruskin's Guild of St George, founded with the aim of reversing the moral and social decline of industrialised Britain and with these lofty principles in mind, he bought 381 acres of the Wyre Forest and set about developing his estate to a plan devised by Ruskin.

He also gave Ruskin twenty acres of forest to establish a Guild community and in 1889, five families moved there from Liverpool. They created smallholdings and today, their descendants are still committed to implementing Ruskin's ideas in the modern world.



### Uncle Eric the war hero



\*Denise's uncle Herbert William Eric Butcher (b1907) served as an officer in the Royal Army Service Corps during the Second World War. He won a military MBE in 1944 and later received the Italy Star for his service in the Italian Campaign. The RASC role was crucial in keeping the front-line troop supplied.



Next day delivery



On constabulary duty

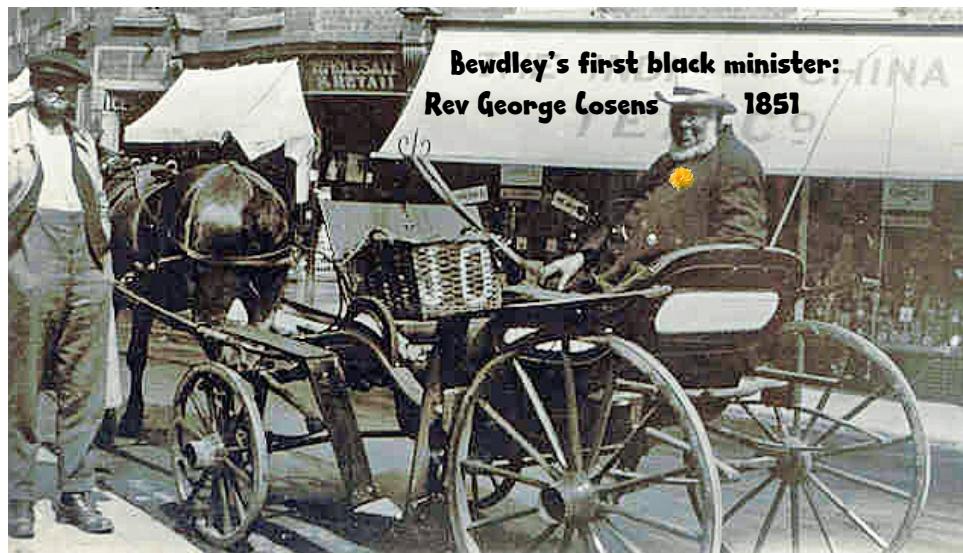
## Glimpses of a black-and-white past



Note the watch fob and the mixed headgear...skullcap, flatcap, boater and beret...and horse-drawn school bus!



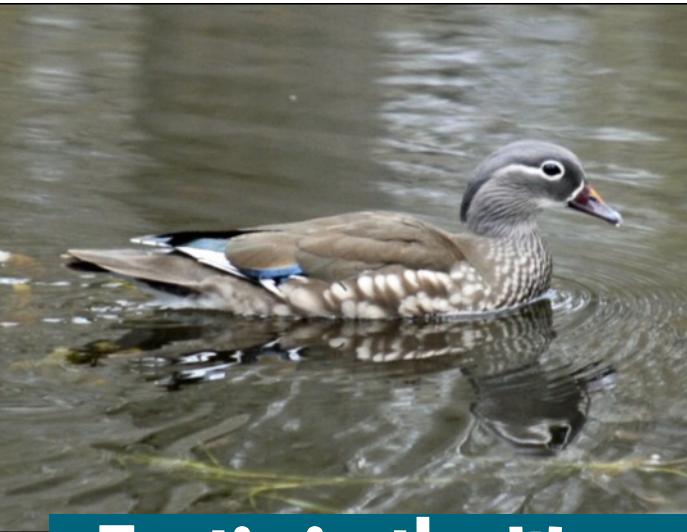
THE FLOWER SELLER



THE PIPE-SMOKING PRIME MINISTER PONDERS



'THE MOST BEAUTIFUL IN THE WORLD'



**A**long Dowles Brook and in our forest ponds I have been lucky enough to spot one of the Wyre Forest's more exotic looking waterbirds. The little gem of our forest is the Mandarin Duck, a native of China and Japan. The male has such a colourful plumage it appears surreal and although the female is in muted shades of grey, she looks equally beautiful in her understated way.

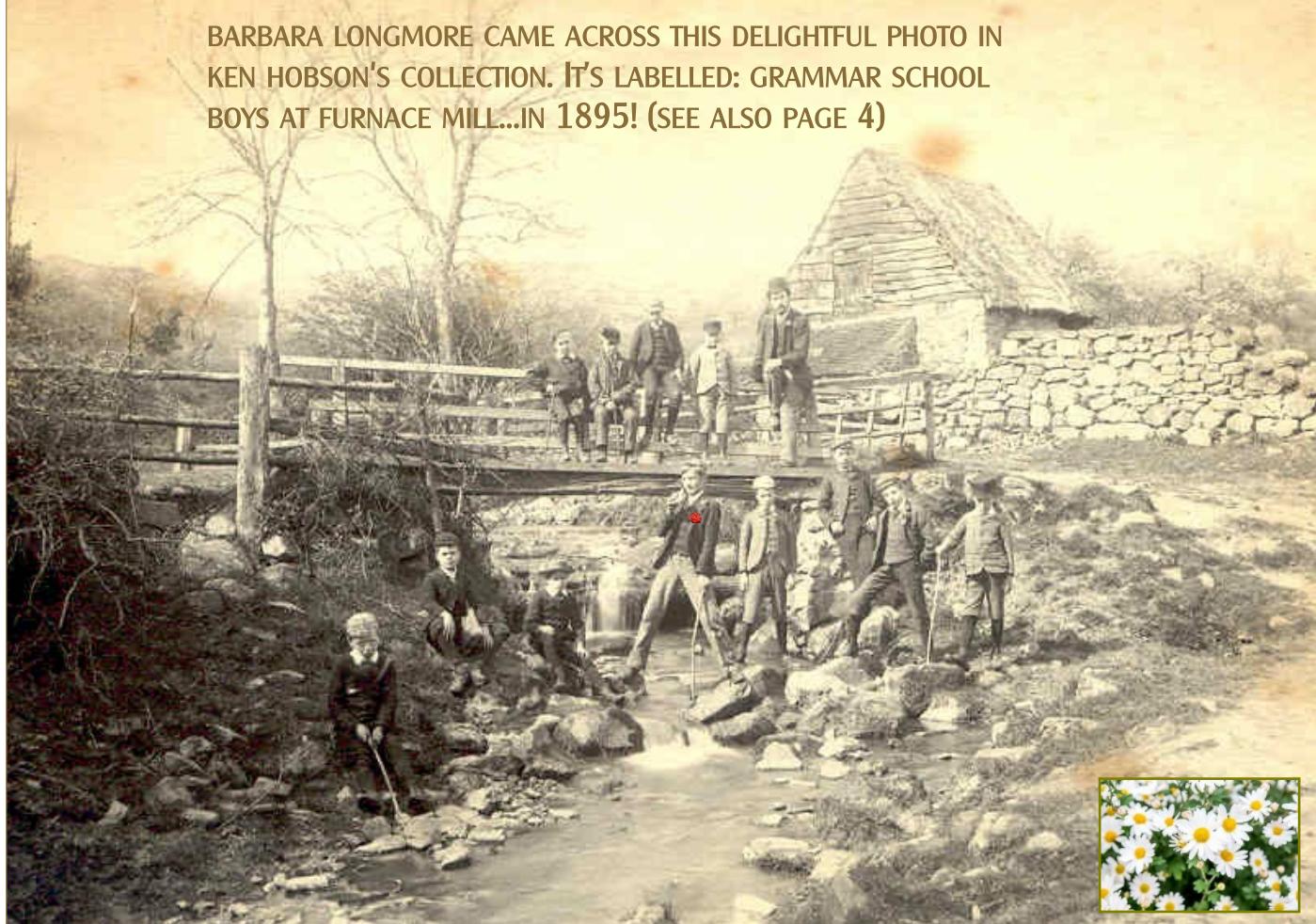
They like to perch in trees and the female prefers to lay her eggs in a hole or crevasse in a tree trunk. This means that their little ducklings have to jump a distance to the ground or water when they hatch, and what cute

## Exotic in the Wyre

ducklings they are! The mandarin duck is known as the most beautiful in the world, and appears in many Chinese works of art. They are famous for being monogamous and in China they are often used as a symbol of love and fidelity and a sign of happy and stable marriage. So for a taste of the exotic, go for a walk along Dowles Brook and by our forest ponds and you may be lucky enough to spot these beauties.

EDDIE BURTON

BARBARA LONGMORE CAME ACROSS THIS DELIGHTFUL PHOTO IN KEN HOBSON'S COLLECTION. IT'S LABELLED: GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS AT FURNACE MILL...IN 1895! (SEE ALSO PAGE 4)



**OBITUARY**

FORMER TOWN MAYOR, ANNE MACE, has died after a short illness. She was 84.

She had served for ten years on Bewdley Town Council as the Independent Health Concern group's representative for Wribbenhall. She was also a Wyre Forest District Councillor for four years. Anne grew up in the south of England and had a distinguished 32-years-long career in the NHS. She rose from ward sister to matron and then went on to be chief nursing officer and director of quality assurance. She was a magistrate and after her retirement and move to Bewdley, she worked with the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Royal British Legion Women's Section, the Women's Institute and the Wyre Forest Action Group for Older People. She took a strong interest in voluntary work and helping others; she helped set up the TOGETHER GROUP to combat isolation or loneliness through regular events and lunches for older people in the community. Her close friend and colleague, Councillor Liz Davies, said: "Anne loved living in Bewdley and really made it her home. She has touched many lives and will be truly missed by all who knew her."

**ANNE MACE MAYOR OF BEWDLEY 2007-08**

# 'She touched many lives'


**FROM THE SOCIETY ARCHIVE**
**ANNUAL REPORT 1951**

MR GERALD NABARRO MP,  
(LATER SIR GERALD) WAS MADE  
A VICE PRESIDENT.



The main event of the year was the Festival of Britain week. Mr CL Mackaness, Vice Chairman, arranged an interesting exhibition of objects relating to Bewdley in the Town Hall. These included the Corporation Charters and the late Earl Baldwin's collection plus items from Bewdley's industries.

The exhibition was fortunate in having the loan of local watercolours by the late C V Mackenzie, A.R.B.S.A. (*at least one of his paintings is in the Museum collection. See right*)

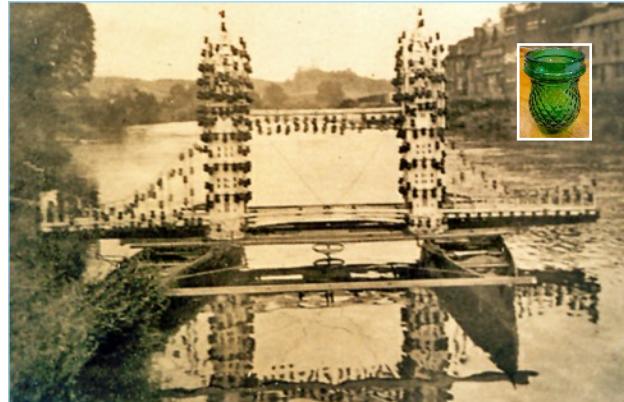
It was reported that "several thousands of persons came to see the exhibition."

During the year the River Board carried out extensive clearance of willow trees from the town down to Ribbesford and it was hoped that some benefits may be expected in flood times. (*Nowadays we concentrate on Balsam of course*).

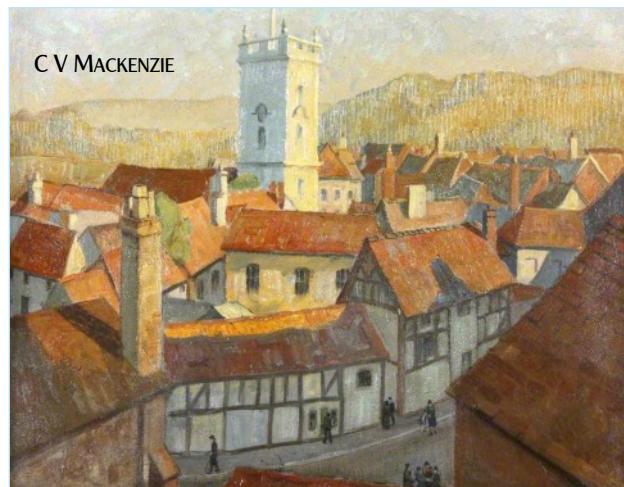
Messrs Mackaness and G M Bark attended a conference in Leamington held by the Georgian Group. The meeting resolved to urge government to list historic buildings.

Finally there were reports for the first time that the future of the Toll House (below) was in doubt. Apparently, the foundations were ruinous making the building unsafe and the County Council were not prepared to take any action.

The matter to be considered at the next AGM.



BEWDLEY CELEBRATES THE FESTIVAL ON THE RIVER USING NIGHT-LIGHT LANTERNS (see insert)



Despite Civic Society protests, the historic Toll House was demolished in 1960. It would have cost £2,850 to repair. It had been built in 1798 and served as the toll-collection point for 36 years (until 1824). It was left to the Civic Society to record the site of the Toll House in 2003. A section of pavement was replaced and marked with a metal plaque, unveiled by Lord Sandys, then the society president.

RP





THE ORIGINAL PHOTO OF THE BAND IS BADLY DAMAGED AND THIS IS A DOCTORED VERSION



## Who were Bewdley's Scarlet Pages?

Strutting their stuff in immaculate order under the banner of the George Hotel is an astonishing number of the town's finest: but when was this and why was the jazz band called the SCARLET PAGES?

There may be a clue in that the Broadway hit of 1929 billed - unlikely - as SCARLET PAGES a *crime drama with songs*. So not quite a *musical* but whatever it was, it was turned into a Hollywood movie the next year. Featured were the stars of the day...glamorous Elsie Ferguson, heartthrob Grant Withers and femme fatale actress Marian Nixon. The billboard (right) didn't illuminate much about the songs or the music!

So did something strike a chord in the bar of The George? How much imbibing did it take to persuade more than fifty regulars [and some young family members] to forsake the attractions of the lounge bar to regularly parade with a local jazz band...in the open air and dressed in a very smart faux-military uniform. How much arm-twisting did it take?

The proprietors at the time were John [one-time mayor of Bewdley] and Helena Cooper. They bought the hotel when the redoubtable Sarah Woodward finally retired in 1908 sixteen years after her husband Orlando died. Clearly the Coopers shared her determination to keep The George as an important place in the social life of the town...with many dances and entertainment events held there or in the adjacent St George's Hall.

The banner proclaims not either of the proprietors but one E Jones Esq as the band president. Who was he? Another *Scarlet Pages* mystery.

Any further information would be welcome via the editor

Elsie Ferguson Grant Withers Marian Nixon

### POSTSCRIPT

An element of the mystery may have been solved by none other than our chairman, Richard Perrin. He thinks the bandleader is his mother, Maude (*see inset to main photo above*).

He can't be certain because of the photo quality but your humble editor is inclined to agree that the uniformed leader is Maude. Richard says his mother was living in the George at the time with her aunt and uncle, John and Helena Cooper!

"She enjoyed jazz and I'm not at all surprised she was ready to lead the band." But Richard was unable to shed any light on the *Scarlet Pages* although he did furnish us with the photograph (left) of The George's beautiful post horses.

JOCK GALLAGHER



The George Posting Horses 1912: George John Howard is third from the left

## CHERRY FAIR 2022: JULY 23/24



YOUR CHANCE TO BUY FROM A SELECTION OF OLD AND NEW VARIETIES OF CHERRY TREES - DWARF AND MEDIUM-SIZED - AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY.

To coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Museum, the Society will again partner the museum in a more extensive Cherry Fair (which Brian Stephens re-launched in 2011).

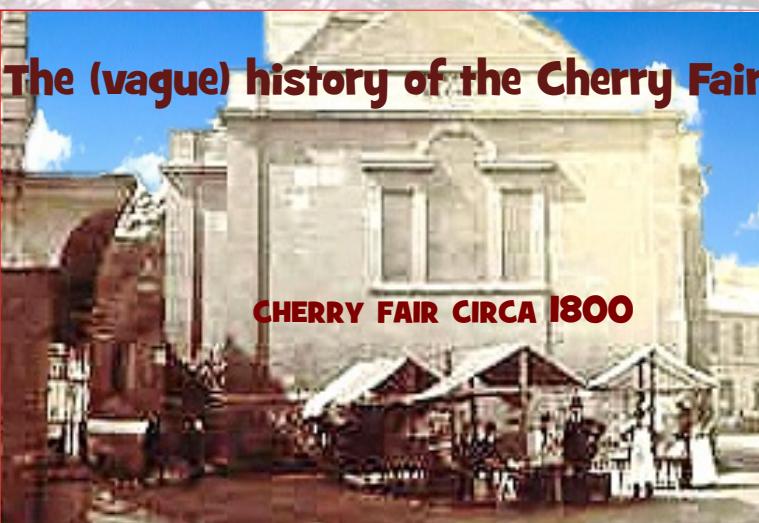
We plan to develop a stand close to St Anne's, the original site of the Cherry Fair.

The Museum will again augment the fair with its traditional crafts fair, a performance by the Wyre Forest Big Band and other events to be announced.

In addition to the tree-sales, the Society will display a variety of cherries (some locally grown) and they will be available for people to taste.

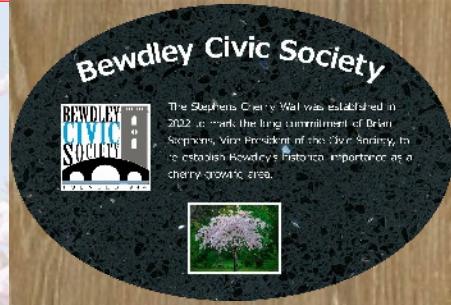
Over the week-end, local shops will be invited to display all things cherry - wines, liqueurs, beers, books (including Checkov's *THE CHERRY ORCHARD!*), chocolates, and cakes. The Society also hopes to develop a draw offering trees and a wide variety of cherry-based products. *There will be more details in the Summer Newsletter.*

A NEW FEATURE WILL BE A CHERRY WALK DESIGNED BY JOHN ILES.



A fair was set up in Bewdley with the Charter of King Edward IV, 1472, for St Anne's Day - July 26. There is no mention of cherries in the Charter but the date is the nearest to the ancient fair days to the cherry season, so this day seems to have become *a Cherry Fair*, when or how we do not know.

AT THE SOCIETY'S SUGGESTION, SAINSBURY'S WILL PLANT FOUR CHERRY TREES ON THE CORNER OF THEIR TOWN-CENTRE SITE.



*The Stephens Cherry Wall was established in 2022 to mark the long commitment of Brian Stephens, Vice-President of the Civic Society, to re-establish Bewdley's historical importance as a cherry-growing area*

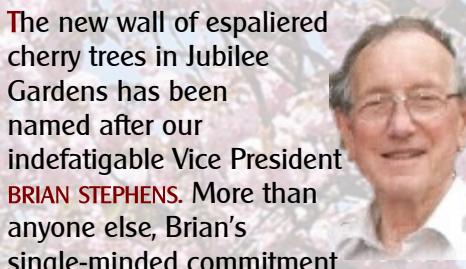
## TRIBUTE TO BRIAN

The new wall of espaliered cherry trees in Jubilee

Gardens has been named after our indefatigable Vice President

**BRIAN STEPHENS.** More than anyone else, Brian's single-minded commitment

- as the handsome plaque above acknowledges - has helped re-establish cherry-growing in Bewdley. He has written extensively on cherry varieties and was singularly key to reviving the Cherry Fair in 2011.



MEANWHILE: The cherry tree planted by the Civic Society in 2013 continues to flourish.

C H E R R Y R I P E



With the Society's commitment to tree-growing, it was natural that we joined the Town Council and the Museum to plant a special tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, appropriately in Jubilee Gardens. The tree is the very beautiful *anurnocytisus adamii* (right).

## Back on the road to normal?

I hope all our members are keeping well and looking forward to a year ahead free of lockdowns. Accompanying this Newsletter are the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 and it's good to see that we managed to achieve quite a lot in spite of the difficulties imposed by COVID-19.

Also attached is the Programme Card for 2022/23 which, hopefully, gets activities back to pre-pandemic levels. Coming up soon is the AGM, which I hope you will be able to attend and let us know if you have anything you would like the Executive Committee to focus their minds upon.

### Cherry Fair

Of particular note is the **Cherry Fair** taking place over the weekend of July 23/24. Unfortunately, our champion for this event, Brian Stephens, is unwell at present and Sharon Harvey has kindly agreed to head up a small sub-committee to organise this. Plans, which I think are very exciting, are currently being formulated and our Editor has detailed some of these in this Newsletter. In the meantime, we all felt very sorry for the Bewdley residents who were so badly affected by the recent flooding when the Severn, once again, overtopped the temporary defences on Beale's Corner and Stourport Road. Bewdley therefore became national and international news again for this reason and, while it puts us on the map, we would prefer not to be known for such tragic circumstances.

The good news is that the £6.2m funding allocated for robust permanent flood barriers in Wribbenhall has been confirmed and the plans will shortly be exhibited for all to see.

Another piece of good news is the commencement of work, after a long delay, to construct the new Sainsbury's convenience store with residential accommodation above on the old fire station site. We look forward to this fructifying and remain confident that it will be more pleasing to the eye than its predecessor building, especially when the four cherry trees they promise to plant (see previous page) come in to blossom.



LOCAL CHURCHES by Tim Bridges. 7.30pm Tuesday April, 12 at Bewdley Baptist Church (*Please note change of venue for this event*). Tim is Conservation Adviser at the Victorian Society, a former Church Buildings Officer in Hereford Diocese and an expert on Churches in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

### 50 YEARS OF THE MUSEUM

The museum celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 2 with events including a New Bronze Age exhibition.



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