

Two key documents will give local residents more say in the planning of the town's future.

Wyre Forest District Council's draft Local Plan has been completed and has now gone for Government consideration. It should be concluded by the year end.

In a separate and longer-term exercise, the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan includes a series of design codes for future building that will *raise an appreciation for Bewdley's existing townscape character...to help protect the town's identity as it grows*. Again there will be full public consultation.

Meanwhile, the Local Plan will help the district council meet housing targets up to 2036 and potential Bewdley sites include the Stourport Road Triangle (100 homes), Catchem's End (75), south of Habberley Road (35) and the Fire Station (15).

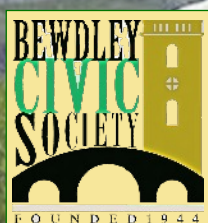
Also in the mix is another on-going important exercise, that of **Localism** which offers ownership of key assets to the town council. These include the

Will plans protect Bewdley's future?

Guildhall, Bewdley Museum, Jubilee Gardens, open space at Riverside North, all nature reserves within the area...and Load Street toilets

To meet the running costs, the Town Council will be encouraged to levy precepts but it's emphasised that nothing *will be imposed top down* although there is a caveat: *"It must be recognised that services could be reduced or stopped if an alternative model of delivery cannot be implemented."*

Civic Society chairman Richard Perrin said: "This is a pivotal year for Bewdley and as Civic Voice reflects, I hope our planning system will see *more collaboration and less confrontation* (see page 12).



SPRING 2020 NewsLetter



Page 2: Saving the planet • Page 3: The future of the Old Workhouse Page 4: The 2020 lectures • Page 5: Preserving the landscape • Pages 6/7/8 Bewdley's fire-fighters Pages 9/10: The Pattinton Collection • Page 11 Ex libris • Page 12 From the Chairman's Desk

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The bollards are coming back!

Two years since the NEWSLETTER first reported several of them missing, a full complement of fourteen of the distinctive bollards will make their re-appearance on Severnside...soonish! County Councillor Becky Vale and the Town Council have agreed to re-fit the bollards.. Additional good news is that the Town Council underlines that the riverside is a no parking zone and that new signage is in the process of being fitted. Watch this space!

SAVING THE PLANET 1



COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

A group of Bewdley volunteers has a mission of eliminating single-use plastic in the town. PLASTIC FREE BEWDLEY was set up last year and is working with local businesses, community groups and schools to help them reduce their single-use plastic.

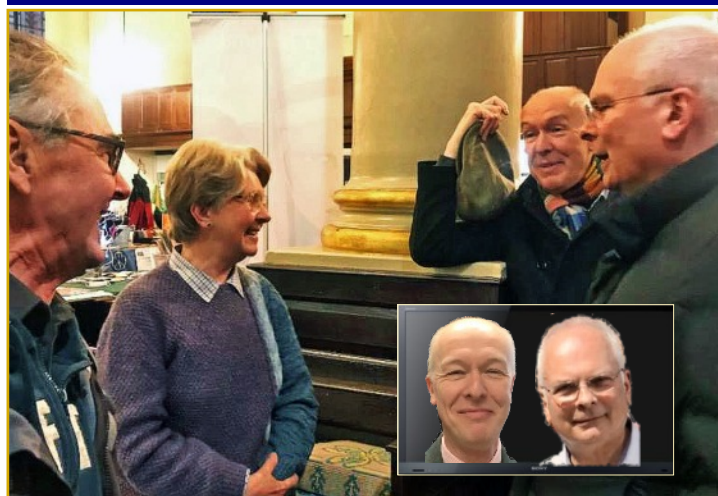
We use single-use plastic for just about everything, from brushing our teeth and showering, to buying and storing our food. It's durable and lightweight but these properties allow it to persist in the environment for hundreds to thousands of years, impacting on our health, environment and marine life.

Leader of PLASTIC FREE BEWDLEY, Cllr Simon Collingridge, explains: "This is a great opportunity for Bewdley to come together as a community to make a big difference to the amount of single-use plastic we all use as a town. We've all seen it pollute our local environment and get into our river which ultimately makes its way to the sea. This exciting initiative is wholeheartedly supported by the Town Council and is run by enthusiastic volunteers."

PLASTIC FREE BEWDLEY

is organising a public launch day on **Saturday May 9** (10am-4pm) in partnership with the Greener Living Fair at St George's Hall. Events throughout the day will raise awareness and provide hints and tips on reducing our dependency on single-use plastic. See www.plasticfreebewdley.co.uk/launch

Bewdley's antiques road show



Richard Perrin and Heather Flack meet two familiar faces from the BBC's ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW Fergus Gambon (son of actor Sir Michael) and Geoffrey Munn. They were in town visiting the man behind the camera, Society Vice-President Paul Crane.

SAVING THE PLANET 2



At this year's Cherry Fair - which originates in medieval times - the Civic Society will be encouraging local people to help revive the local cherry trade by planting new trees that will also help save the planet!

As in previous years, the Society will have a stand in the space at the entrance to the museum with society Vice President Brian Stephens again on hand to offer his expert advice about planting and tending cherry trees. A limited number of trees will be on sale and orders will be taken for later in the growing season.

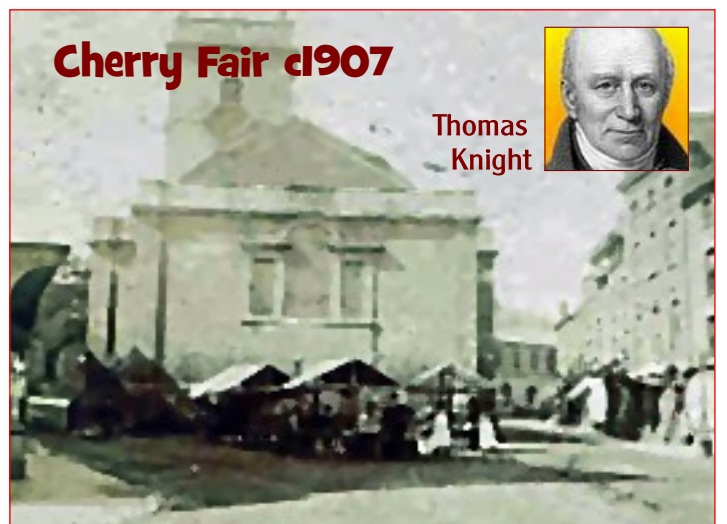
As recently as sixty years ago, Bewdley was the centre for a flourishing cherry trade and with a tradition of an annual Cherry Fair since at least 1817.

Local interest continued with the pioneering research of horticulturist, Thomas Knight (inset below: 1759-1836), who's father was the Rector of Bewdley. Several kinds of cherry, which he raised, are still growing in local orchards.

On July 26, 1907, when 200 carts came into the town and their owners started selling and buying cherries, the police intervened and charged some of the carters with obstruction. However, the cases were dismissed after reference to a Markets Charter of James I dated 1601 which permitted "the right of custom some eighty or ninety years old of selling cherries near the church."

Cherry Fair 1907

Thomas Knight



How Bewdley housed its poor in the 18th century

Wine and cakes for the sick...and free funerals

by Rob Limbrick

As many of you will know if you walk along High Street from St. Anne's towards The Pack Horse, you will come to no 64 on the right. This was originally Bewdley's Workhouse.

The Mayor and Burgesses of the town decided to erect this building in November 1736 for the maintaining of the poor.

They donated £206 6s towards the cost of the building erected on the rented site, at what is now 64 High Street.

When it was opened in 1737, a governor and matron were appointed at a salary of 15s 4d per month.

By the 1770s, it held up to 80 paupers. The overseers' accounts record the payment of a doctor to visit the sick in the workhouse and to provide extra food for them.

In the 1790s, such items included: *Wine for the Sick 10d./Ale and Cakes for the Sick at times 4-2d/and Cakes and Wigs [spiced buns] for the Sick 3d.*

Those who died in the workhouse had their funeral expenses paid, including the purchase of a coffin and the payment of coffin-bearers.

Kidderminster Poor Law Union was formed in 1836, overseen by 21 Guardians. Bewdley had two. A new Union workhouse - designed to accommodate 400 - was completed in 1838 in Sutton Road, Kidderminster, and the Bewdley building ceased to operate as a workhouse.

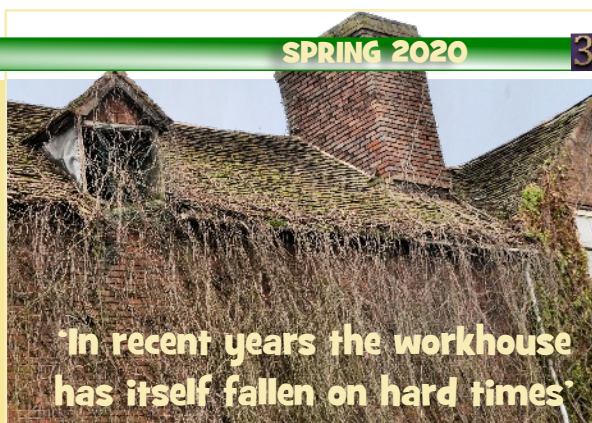
In the 1841 census, John Cawood, Curate of Bewdley and Ribbesford, was shown as living at 64 High Street.

In recent years, the workhouse has itself fallen on hard times...as seen in these photographs.

However a local builder has recently purchased the workhouse and plans to conserve the building and give it a practical use for the future.

DETAILS OF GRADE II listing

In his ESSAYS TOWARDS A HISTORY OF BEWDLEY, LS Snell writes: "The building was a Workhouse, then a house and then horn works, now house and garages. Erected in 1737, it has had mid-nineteenth century and some late twentieth century alterations. It is brick with tile roof, has a house to front, long range extending to rear with garages in south-east front, stack at junction. Two storeys on cellars, with attic lit by three gabled dormers; ground floor: central entrance approached by two stone steps, moulded wooden architrave (pediment removed), Rear range: two storeys with attic by two gabled dormers; two windows to first floor, seven garages under flat lintels to ground floor; north-west front has on first floor ten windows: wooden cross-windows under rubbed brick heads."



'In recent years the workhouse has itself fallen on hard times'



'A local builder plans to conserve the building'

SOCIETY LECTURES 2020

I Bewdley, the Yorkists and the Marcher towns 1450-85

Local prosperity despite the wars

Graham Whitehead gave a well researched talk to a large audience. He began by explaining the growth of the English population and prosperity arising from the trade in fine wool and worsted cloth which continued during the WARS OF THE ROSES in the late fifteenth century.

After outlining the ancestry of the Lancastrian and Yorkist families, he explained the contest for power between Lancastrian King Henry VI, his followers, and the Yorkists headed by Edward IV.

Several local families and personalities played a prominent role in these developments. This contest involved several local battles, such as Ludford Bridge at Ludlow in 1459 and Mortimer's Cross in 1461, and finally Tewkesbury in May 1471.

Edward IV reformed local government and encouraged trade and enterprise. He granted Charters to Bewdley (*see below*) and other towns like Ludlow, Bridgnorth, and Leominster, enabling him to raise money without subsidies from Parliament.

Towns thrived, making them royal centres of government and commerce. The feudal system was breaking down as the Crown took more control. The government of Wales was reformed. The Court of Wales and the Marches was set up in 1476, meeting at Ludlow and Bewdley.

BRIAN STEPHENS



Edward IV gave Bewdley its first Royal Charter in 1472 after he had inherited the town from his father the Duke of York (below)



The King's personal badge - the fetterlock - is also featured on our coat of arms



The original Edward IV charter was, amazingly, found intact in a wooden box lying in the old Shambles (now the museum yard) by Alderman Florence Pritchard (*right in Ian Grimshaw's portrait to mark her 100th birthday in 1988*). The importance of the charter is that it gave Bewdley independence in raising the income to manage and police itself...in return for vowing loyalty to the King.



2 Conservation at its Best

Restoring the glory beneath the facade



Nick Joyce (above right) is well known in the Wyre Forest area having been the District Council's Conservation Officer when he stepped in to cover a colleague's extended illness. He has operated his own architectural practice specialising in historic building conservation projects for twenty years, based in Worcester.

The title of the talk was apposite given the images of building restorations which he showed us. Naturally he bemoaned the lost opportunities in the past and indeed the destruction of historic buildings particularly in post-war Worcester where the blueprint for the future, like in so many places, was designed around vehicle traffic.

He then uplifted us with several examples of excellent restoration and conservation in which he had had a hand. He explained that not all building conservation projects are without controversy.

Nick and the well-attended audience discussed a shop in Droitwich which on the face of it appeared to have little historical/architectural value. Underneath the 1970s façade however was a perfect example of a Tudor half-timbered property. The decision was taken to restore it to its original design but not without replacing many of the old timbers thus reducing the originality of the building.

Richard Perrin

SITS VAC

For the past two years, the Civic Society stand at various public events has been more than ably managed by Executive members Sharon Harvey and Ann Howarth. But both are standing down and we now urgently need to find a replacement. The stand, through which we sell branded merchandise and actively recruit new members, is a prime element of our marketing. Interested? Contact Richard Perrin on richardperrin@aol.com for a full briefing on responsibilities.

LETTERS and other items - especially photographs - are always welcome. Please send to the Editor jyg@cix.co.uk



Preserving the rural landscape

This is the significant area of ancient woodland and a Local Wildlife site leading down to Snuff Mill Dingle, an important water course for this area of the Wyre Forest



Bewdley has many charming features such as a rich and varied Architecture and the River Severn and these strengths are greatly enhanced by its setting. The town nestles in a very attractive elevated landscape including many wooded hills.

In order to give this landscape a more rigorous analysis Bewdley Town Council as part of its developing Neighbourhood Plan commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment.

This report was prepared by Playdell Smithyman Limited for the Town Council. The report was prepared in August 2019. The same company produced a similar report on the Lakes estate when Gladman were pushing for a major development. The report is 55 pages in length so this is a very brief summary.

The basic idea is to identify land in and around Bewdley that is not Green Belt but is seen by the community as important green spaces.

The report looked at 17 parcels of land and assessed each parcel against 5 criteria: Natural Beauty, Historical, Tranquility, Recreational Value and Wildlife Value.

For each criteria, a land parcel was graded: High Value = 4; Medium Value = 3; Low Value = 2; and Very low Value = 1. With five criteria, the maximum value a land parcel can attain is 20.

The assessments were based on Published Development Guidelines (Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment).

In order for a land parcel to be designated a Local Green Space it needed to score a High rating on at least two criteria.

All of the 17 land parcels scored above average in terms of landscape character value and seven scored so highly that they can be designated as Local Green Spaces. These were:

- Snuff Mill Dingle 19.5
- River Severn to Winterdyne 19.5
- Lakes Road and Dry Mill Lane 19
- South of Bewdley Centre 19
- Grove Farm 18.5
- River Severn and Dowles Road 18
- The Lakes 17

You will notice that the area around the Lakes estate, for example, scores very highly This type of detailed landscape analysis will help to provide a further degree of protection for the local community against hostile development on all the land parcels around Bewdley.

If anyone requires further information please contact me at

tony.leach2@btinternet.com

TONY LEACH

OBITUARY: CHARLES PURCELL

One of the town's most respected historians



In the FRIENDS OF BEWDLEY MUSEUM Newsletter of October 2018 I reported that in the same week we gained a statue of Stanley Baldwin, our most celebrated historical figure, we sadly lost, through retirement after more than fifty years of dedicated voluntary work, the services of one of the town's most accomplished and respected historians.

Charles Purcell, whose name is synonymous with local history information and enquiry, had attended his final Wednesday morning public session in the museum's Local History Room.

From then until his recent death, Charles could still be found in the newly-located and often very cold Local History Room in the Brass Foundry, assisting Lizzie Hill, who was taking over the lead role in the Research Group.

'For others to enjoy'

That was not all. The vast amount of historical documentation, information and artifacts that Charles had assembled in his home over the years needed, he insisted, to be made available for others to enjoy and have access to.

So, over numerous sessions, Charles, Lizzie and other members of the Research Group have carefully gone through recording, digitising and archiving much of that information so it is available for future enquiries.

Besides establishing the Local History Room, Charles played an active role both in the creation and development of the museum, was a founder member of the Friends of Bewdley Museum and formed and led the Historical Research Group.

So Charles, for the vast collection of information on Bewdley's history, its people and its buildings that you assembled, researched, catalogued and presented and for inspiring so many others to join in that quest.. we thank you.

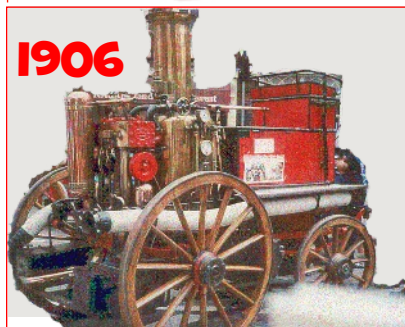
GRAHAM LUXFORD



1709

BEWDLEY FIRE BRIGADE 1709-2020

The men and the machines that kept the town safe



1906



1895



1946



1946



1960

Like our roads, organised fire-fighting is thought to have been established by the Romans during their AD43 invasion. But it took the Great Fire of London in 1666 for communities across the country to recognise the need to regularise small brigades as a defence against fire.

After the 1708 *Parish Pump Act* required every parish to maintain fire-fighting equipment, Bewdley was in the forefront and acquired two Newsham appliances in 1709. They were stored in the local church - as was the norm - because it was the central point of the town. The fire-fighters were all volunteers.

When a new engine - still with a water tank that had to be filled from buckets - was bought in 1728, the upkeep was the responsibility of one man, who astonishingly, had to meet the cost from his own pocket!

180 years later, in 1906, Bewdley Fire Brigade - still made up of volunteers - had acquired a horse-drawn appliance that could accommodate the crew and equipment.

In 1938, the Auxiliary Fire Service - which included the wartime fire wardens - established a fire-station in the building that's now the museum.

In 1960, it moved into a shiny new Dog Lane station where it remained for sixty years until it closed last month.

In February 2020, the end of an era was heralded by the sirens that marked the final drill. The watch commander, Rod Maiden said. "It's a sad day. We've had sons follow fathers into the service."

SEE next page



1939

BEWDLEY FIRE BRIGADE 1709 - 2020 Part 2

END OF AN ERA



Bewdley's dedicated fire-fighters hung up their helmets for the final time last month when the town's Dog Lane fire station closed after more than sixty years...and ended a local brigade history stretching back to 1709. Barbara Longmore has been digging into the archives and her reminiscences with the late June Hivens, whose husband Vic, was a retained fireman between 1950-60.

Camaraderie and team spirit

One of the main impressions I got from June was the tremendous camaraderie between the Bewdley fire-fighters.

This was probably much to do with the fact that they had often been at school together, lived close to each other or worked together – several, I know, were very close friends. This helped to maintain the good-humoured team spirit and trust, together with the ability to work together efficiently, which is so necessary at this level of volunteer firemen.

They all had full-time jobs but as they were retained, they had to be local to Bewdley or the surrounding area. They had to be ready and willing to respond immediately to the call, whatever they were doing at the time.

Inevitably, this meant that the numbers making up the crew would vary depending on where the men were working.

This was, of course, before the mobile 'phone and to my knowledge, there were two **Continued on next page/**



The bell in the church tower that alerted the volunteers.

Chocolate Factory 1968



Fires, floods and accidents

Spring Grove 2006



Floods 2000



Welch Gate 2011



BEWDLEY FIRE BRIGADE 1709 - 2020 Part 3

When duty calls, the baby is left behind!

/Continued from previous page

ways to contact them. Cyril Gardner, the coal merchant and haulage contractor, employed several of the crew in the Fifties and he had a bell on the family house at 28 Severn Side South (when he moved to the new house on Gardner's Meadow, a bell was fixed on the outside wall). There was also the small bell in the tower of St Anne's so the clanging of bells was the first notice that Cyril and his had that they were needed. The second was the sounding of a siren from the fire station.

Of course, if any of the men were outside Bewdley, they would not be available to turn out.

The chief fire officer was Harry Williams, the local undertaker and there were certainly situations he couldn't leave even if he was working in Bewdley!

June told me about one call out, just after she had given birth to her first child: her husband was driving her into Bewdley, over the bridge, to take her home after a short outing with the baby when the siren sounded. He immediately put his foot down, pulled in rapidly at the Fire Station and left her and the new baby there in the car – duty to the fire service was very important!

Fortunately, a friend had been sitting in the window of the George Hotel at the time the siren sounded, saw Vic's car race up to the fire station and guessed the rest. He was there to drive June home in a very short time.

In the 1950s there were frequent chimney fires during the winter and with many buildings in Bewdley having three and four storeys, fighting them could be very difficult. June remembered watching her husband in action one night at the building on the corner of Park Lane and Load Street. She waited nervously as three of them climbed the ladder at the same time and stood on the roof to attend to the burning chimney with no safety harnesses for protection!

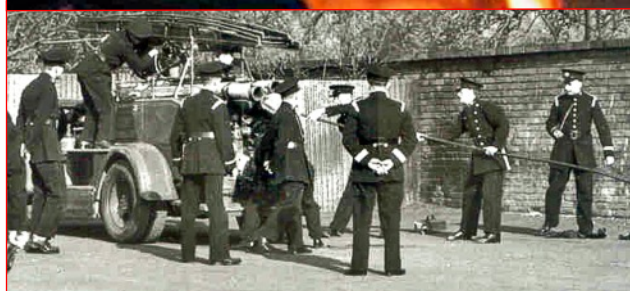
In the summer, the main problems were grass fires along the track of the steam engines. One evening they were called out and the officer in charge was anxious about the low speed at which they were travelling and said to the young driver: "Go faster – we're going to a fire, we're not on the blossom tour!"

There was always an element of competition between the firemen to get to the Fire Station first after the siren. They were a bit put out on one occasion when one man not normally a fast mover, was there when the others arrived. How? "Oh, I was outside the Royal, talking to Harry Goodwin." From then on this explanation for prompt arrival was adopted as a pet phrase between them, and also 'immortalised' a popular local resident.

Barbara Longmore



On-call training nights were held at the station every Tuesday



...THE END



Civic Society Vice President **PAUL CRANE** reviews a new book - **CORRESPONDENCE OF PETER PRATTINTON OF BEWDLEY, ANTIQUARY 1807-1840** - by Isobel Robertson (published by the Worcestershire Historical Society). It details the life of Dr Peter Prattinton, who lived in Redthorne House, now Paul's residence in High Street



'A young man engaging with the local community'

Those of us in Bewdley are no strangers to the erstwhile Dr Prattinton who lived in Redthorne House, the home built by his father, William Prattinton, in 1775 on the banks of the river Severn, where he and his second wife Elizabeth (nee Wilder) had settled.

Peter Prattinton was born in 1771 and although the second son of his merchant father, he was the only son of his mother. She was an heiress in her own right and possessed of considerable means..

Peter is described in letters by Samuel Lowder, his father's friend (a fellow Bristol merchant) as *an engaging little boy* and a *favourite among his aunts and uncles*. His education, of which we know relatively little, seems to have been taken care of by a Rev Jeremiah Roberts, who ran an establishment in Worcester, though he also mentions school-day kindnesses from Alderman Thomas Carden of Worcester.

From Worcester, Peter went up to Oxford in 1789, the year of his father's death, graduated in 1793 with a BA followed by MA in 1796. He then gained his Bachelor Medicine in 1797 but did not go on to become a practising doctor, though he maintained links with the Infirmary at Worcester, being a subscriber and attendee of its grand annual dinners.

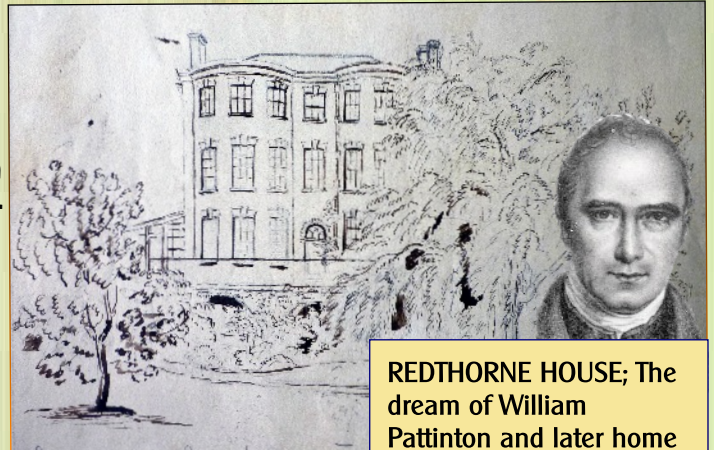
His mother Elizabeth, survived her husband by ten years, dying in 1799. Peter was 28 and inherited considerable funds. He was able to secure Redthorne House, built by his father in 1775, as well as land at Lower Arley, Burnthorne and Doverdale, by buying his half-brother Adam out of the entail for a single generation and thus was set up for life, whatever was going to occupy his years.

The early years of the new century show a young man engaging with the local community in Bewdley, where he was listed as a subscriber to the local Charity Schools, By 1803, he was on the committee and became chairman two years later and went on to serve for thirty years.

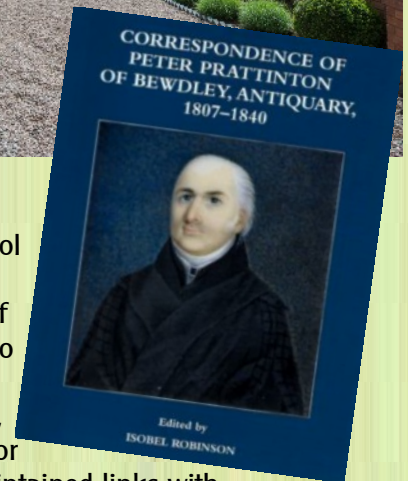
In 1808, he was Treasurer of Bewdley Almshouses and in 1818, he was one of the initiators of the Bewdley Savings Bank, whose stated purpose was *to afford a secure investment to industrious and lower classes of society for such sums as they can save from their weekly wages*.

Those who are interested to see a drafting of the Bank's first rules may view the document at the Hive in Worcester where they see the handwriting of the doctor himself, thus at the forefront of helping those less fortunate than himself.

Prattinton was also very interested and involved in the Bewdley Book Society, from 1799 until his death in July 1840. This society, which had its roots earlier in the eighteenth century was in the years going forward from 1816 under the auspices of Samuel Danks, who ran a book-selling establishment in Load Street and was able to advertise *a choice assortment of goods of the best quality*. His services included printing, bookbinding, retailing and acting as intermediary for the London book-sellers. He also set up a library and there were regular meetings of a Reading Society at the George Inn. /continued on next page



REDTHORNE HOUSE; The dream of William Prattinton and later home to his son Peter.



'Dr Prattinton and the vast richness of history'

/Continued from previous page When reading through some of the letters shown in the book, one gets a sense of the doctor's character coming through the page. He writes in 1817, in a manner full of despair, that his father left him tenant to *a large house in Bewdley, difficult to keep up and much against his inclination.*

At other times he rejoices in living in his '*commodious and elegant home.*' One sees in the doctor, a man who moves from one joyful period to, sadly, a period of depression. There are many ups and downs in his mood, which are covered in the book.

Certain disagreements occurred from within the town, particularly with Rev John Cawood about the rent of his pew at St Anne's and this disagreement seems

to have moved his loyalties to the St Leonard's at Ribbesford, where he now rests in peace.

The doctor was on the whole on very friendly terms with the community and numbered many friends from the town and the locality, these are all mentioned in Isobel's book and readers will recognise many familiar names from the early part of the nineteenth century. We then come to the area with which we all recognise Dr Prattinton, that of county history, antiquarianism and local topography, for this is one of the most important parts of the vast richness of history that is held within the vaults of the Society of Antiquaries in London and contained within his collections that are held on deposit there.

It would appear that sometime during the first decade of the nineteenth century Dr Prattinton took up the interest of our county's history with great vigour. He had certainly by 1809 become familiar and friendly with William Hamper, the Birmingham Antiquary, who described him as *a very entertaining, accomplished little man - he calls himself at present only a suckling Antiquary but he will be very soon out of arms and run about with activity and strength.* How right Dr Hamper was to be, for who could have foreseen the expeditions across the county to describe, research and with the help of his man servant and companion John Instan, sketch Worcestershire in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Dr Prattinton used Dr Nash's published collections for Worcestershire as a guide to augment, if he could, but the real inspiration and energy for his work must be firmly placed with re-treading the much earlier footsteps of Sir Thomas Habington of Hindlip, 1560-1647 (photo), the first Antiquary of Worcestershire.

Habington had been under sentence of death twice during his tumultuous life: first in being associated with his brother Edward in the 1586 Babington Plot to place Mary Queen of Scots on the throne of England; secondly for hiding the priests Father Henry Garnet, Edward Oldcorne, Ralph Ashley and Nicholas Owen in the wainscoting of his country house Hindlip Hall. Habington was reprieved twice and the second time on condition that he never set foot out of the County of Worcestershire, he thus became its first historian.

Dr Prattinton and John Instan, were both present at the time of the destruction and demolition of Hindlip Hall in 1810. It is due to them that we have the most wonderful record of this fine and important sixteenth century house.

It seems that anything on the point of demolition, usually to be replaced with a modern home in the latest fashionable design, was sketched by them, to record its last visual appearance for posterity. This occurred with my own family house of Oakhampton, sketched by them in September 1827, several weeks before it was pulled down to make way for a new Regency house.

There are many fascinating aspects in the recently published book to interest the reader of visits conducted by the Dr during the active period of his Antiquarian life, letters to noted friends and recording of buildings now lost forever or simply the descriptions of his fellow neighbours living in Bewdley at the time. The book is a dream come true for those of us that are interested in our town and its environs and we should salute Isobel Robinson for her interest in Dr Prattinton and our very special town of Bewdley. **Paul Crane**



The Babington Plotters 1586



Thomas Carden

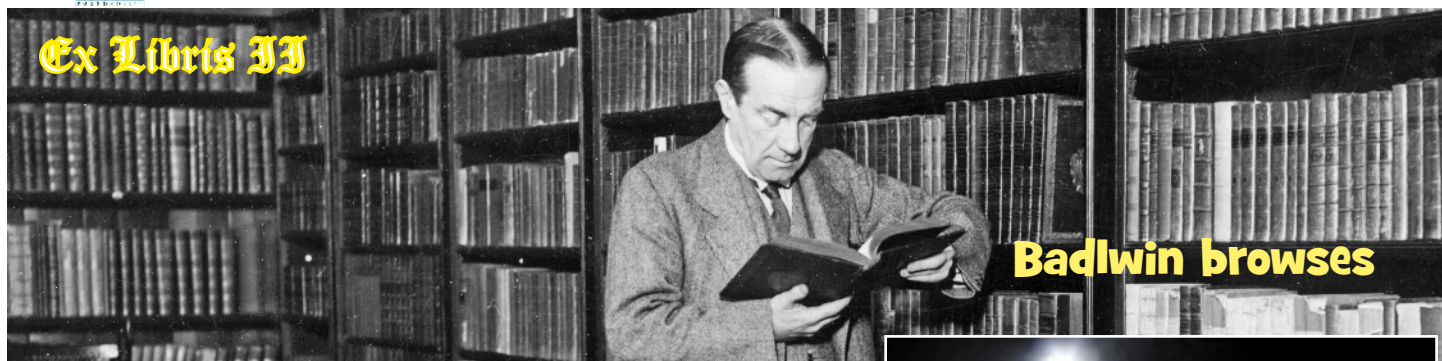


John Instan

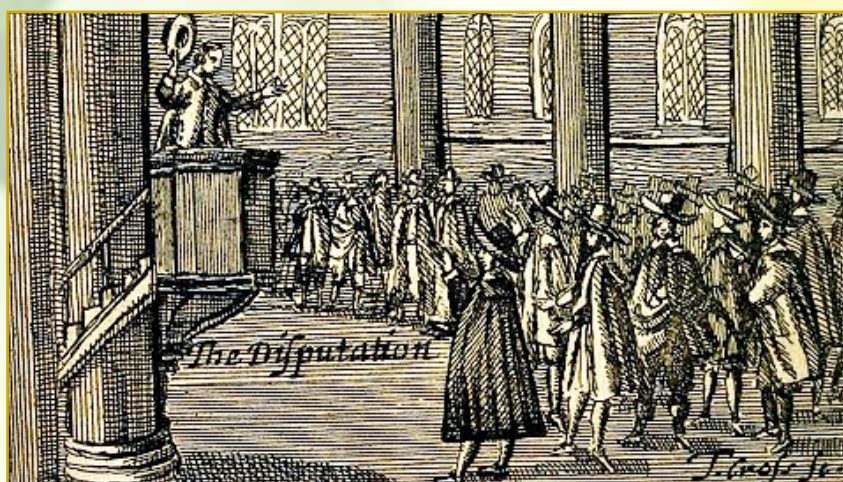


Thomas Habington

Ex Libris II



Badlwin browses



Dear Editor

A quick word on the *Ex Libris* page in the *Winter Newsletter*. That remarkable cleric, John Tombes who disputed with Richard Baxter from nine-to-five in St Anne's Chapel (above) on New Year's Day, the date at the time shown as 1649 (not 1849 as in the *NEWSLETTER*: see *Editor's note right*). In fact, the legal year end at that time was 25 March (Lady Day) so that the year number changed on that date each year, not January 1. The year end was changed to 1 January in 1752 when the calendar was changed losing 11 days.

A near contemporary book (*Plain Scripture Proof on Infants Church-membership...*) published by Richard Baxter in 1656 has all the arguments used in the debate and a series of letters at the end. The first letter is dated 2 Sept 1649, then one dated 3 Jan 1649 and on to 24 Jan 1649. By our reckoning, the January dates would all be 1650.

Incidentally, it was this morning (5 Jan) the Baptist Chapel in Bewdley celebrated its 370th Anniversary—its founding being a direct result of all the arguments.

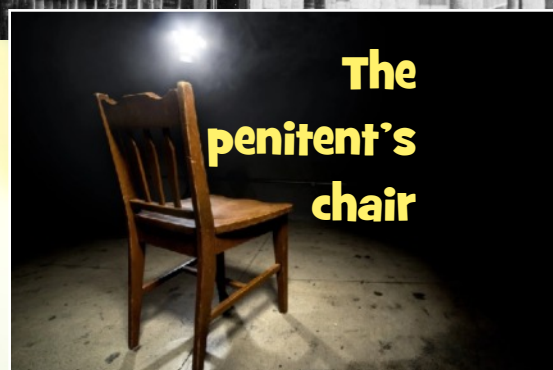
I'm also delighted to have had the opportunity to look round the Ken Hobson room with Barbara Longmore and was able to drop in all the Bewdley By-Pass Committee meeting minutes, from my father's collection. [SEE NEXT ISSUE]

CEDRIC QUAYLE

EXTRACT From Isaac Taylor's *WORDS AND PLACES*
William Camden, right, (1551-1623) gives this derivation: "Bewdley," says he, "takes its name from its most pleasant situation - *Delicium rerum Bellus Locus undique loret Fronde coronatus Virianje tempera sylvae* - Which Bishop Edmund Gibson translates thus:

Fair-seated Bewdley, a delightful town,

Which Wyre's tall oaks with shady branches crown."



The penitent's chair

Mea culpa: I missed the misprint in our *Winter* article about John Tombes. Apologies. I am always keen to make corrections and especially when so skilfully penned as by Cedric Quayle.

The Editor



In amongst the somewhat faded tomes of our library, there's a glossily-modern paperback of *Bewdley Miscellany* (compiled and published by the Historical Research Group in 2015). It's a positive treasure-trove of facts and sometimes grim fascination.

It includes, for example, this photo of Severnside North pre-1886. Alongside, it carries a report from *Berrow's Worcester Journal* of May 11, 1878 quoting the county engineer: "I have prepared preliminary plans and estimates for the construction of a new quay...with foundations going down four-feet six-inches...finished with blue-brick kerbing and laid with blue bricks."

He then asserts that the estimated cost of the completed works was £830 [about £70,000 at today's prices].

Alas it was eight years before the project was completed and we don't know what was the final cost!



SPRING 2020



Richard Perrin



The relentless river

Just when we thought that our properties in Bewdley were safe from flooding, it was a shock when disaster struck twice in quick succession.

On the first occasion, the Environment Agency was caught out by heavy rainfall in Shropshire rather than Wales, on which their models appear to be based. This meant that the defences on Severnside South and Beale's Corner were not deployed, resulting in flooding to houses in those areas.

On the second occasion, the Beale's Corner defences were topped by the second wave of high water, causing substantial hardship.

It is a fact that the height of these defences was lowered a few years ago to some degree below the level of the 2000 flood of 5.56 metres above summer level. I assume there was a good reason for this, but it does seem odd to me that this decision was made. Did they think that flood heights would never again attain, or get close to, the 2000 level? If so they were sadly mistaken. We have hope however that, as happened when Tony Blair came to see the floods in 2000 and sanctioned our West bank defences, Boris Johnson's remark of *let's get Bewdley done* during his recent visit will have the same beneficial effect.

It's at this time of year that nature starts to wake up. Spring is advancing its way across the countryside, loosening winter's grip with tiny shoots of green, a haze of leaves on a distant wood, a

breath of warm wind in the night. Campaign for the Protection of Rural England



From the Chairman's desk

It's very sad to report the passing of two former Society Executive Committee members, namely Charles Purcell and Brian Polhill. An obituary to Charles is on page 5 where Graham Luxford explains very well what an enormous contribution Charles made to Bewdley Museum and bringing the history of Bewdley to the attention of our town residents. Brian served on the Executive Committee for many years and we always valued his wise counsel. We send our condolences to Charles' and Brian's families.

THE ANNUAL REPORT

Accompanying this newsletter is the Annual Report for 2019. It's good to see that we remain an active society and pleasing that our talks and outings are so well attended. I hope you will find the forthcoming programme of interest and hope you will be able to attend some of the future events. Next up is the AGM on April 28, when light refreshments will be provided. The Spring Outing follows on Wednesday May 20, when we will be visiting Sandwell Museum *A separate sheet is enclosed which provides full details.*

**CIVIC
VOICE**
talking civic sense

FROM the annual report of
Civic Voice Chair Joan Humble

We need to change the way things are done so that we have an accessible, balanced and collaborative planning system.
One that is more focused on people-planning and less party-politics-led planning.
A system that is more accessible and less adversarial.
One that is more balanced and less bureaucratic.
One that has more collaboration and less confrontation.
One that has more democracy and less division.
If we work together as a movement, we can ensure power is passed down from Whitehall to the local community hall

Floods 2020

The worst in twenty years



Floods past

From 1947 onwards: from
the Ken Hobson Collection

