



# SUMMER 2020 Newsletter



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page 2/3/4 Bewdley & Covid-19 • Page 5 Forest Lockdown • Page 6 Cyclists v walkers • Page 7 Balsam-bashing 2020 • Page 8 History in a snapshot • Page 9 Flowers of the forest • Page 10 1910 River drama • Page 11 OBITUARY • Page 12 FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER IS IN BLUE AS A TRIBUTE TO THE NHS STAFF WHO ARE WORKING SO HARD TO KEEP US SAFE

## How the town rallied in the face of the crisis

The Civic Society has set up an archive to collect the stories and photos that illustrate how our local community rallied together in the face of the coronavirus crisis.

There are many instances in this special edition of the NEWSLETTER but further contributions - from individuals or groups - are invited.

We will try to distil the examples of mutuality, generosity and social cohesion and try to assess how all that can be taken forward after the virus is finally defeated and can re-set the way we live.

Each item will be carefully documented and curated in the Kenneth Hobson Room in Load Street. Contact the Secretary, Barbara Longmore, on [bmlongmore@gmail.com](mailto:bmlongmore@gmail.com) for further details of the project.

Society chairman Richard Perrin said: "This is an interesting and potentially very valuable project. It will reinforce the incredible sense



*St Anne's looks over us reassuringly, lit up during these challenging times, extending the notion of hope that soon we will be out of the worst of it all.*

*Phil Lea*

of community highlighted by the pandemic. As can be seen on the following pages, everyone across the town...neighbours, traders, key workers teachers, councillors... have rallied to ensure that no one needed to face the crisis alone. I hope people will be ready to share their experiences."



It will still be quite some time before everything is back to normal, but we can all play a part in making sure that it comes sooner rather than later. Continue to follow the guidelines as strictly as you can. Stay alert and keep you and your loved ones safe.

# NHS

### DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

AS THE CURRENT CRISIS HAS SHOWN, IT'S NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO DELIVER THE NEWSLETTER AND OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS BUT WE CAN KEEP IN TOUCH BY EMAIL.

## AGM POSTPONED

The Civic Society's Annual General Meeting due to be held on April 28 was postponed because of the coronavirus lock-down. The officers and members of the Executive remain in place and are meeting via Zoom. The proposed outing to the Sandwell Museum and events to mark National Civic Day have also been postponed.

**SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW...**

BEWDLEY AND COVID-19: SEE ALSO PAGES 2/3/4



# SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW...

BEWDLEY has risen to the challenge of lockdown. The symbolic rainbow came in all sizes, shapes...and well, colours! The art was as wonderfully varied as were the eccentric sounds of joyous clapping, pots and pans being banged, tambourines shaken, whistles blown, klaxons shrieked ...and voices sang in uneasy harmony - SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW vying with YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE - across the span of the Severn on each of the ten Thursday evening CLAP FOR THE HEROES.

Two local lighting experts went one further and dramatically lit up Bewdley Bridge in NHS blue (*see below*). [It has been so successful that the Civic Society will renew its plea for the bridge to be lit up as a permanent feature.]

All this was our way of saying thank you to the NHS and all the other frontline and key workers. This was Bewdley asserting its unique character and determination in fighting the pandemic; the community was at one. *We know there is hope for an eventual return to normality....somewhere over that rainbow.*

In the meantime, we have by and large followed the expert advice first to stay at home and more recently, to stay alert.

It has changed all our lifestyles and it hasn't been easy. We longed to be out and about seeing our wider families and friends but most of us have resisted temptation and adapted to social-distancing and all the new jargon of the pandemic.

We have escaped the worst ravages and the brutal statistics but almost everyone seems to know someone who knows someone who has been hit by Covid-19.

And we've seen our own health-care experts at their best. The Medical Centre and the two local chemists provided the essential safety-net of continuing service. Apparently closed, the Medical Centre was very definitely available for essential aid...issuing prescriptions, dressing wounds, taking blood tests and all the minutiae of a busy local practice. Murrays and Healthpoint serviced long queues and still found time to deliver much-needed medicines around the town.

Also quickly recognised as essential workers, our dustmen - always heroes - carried on regardless and their collection service never missed a beat. The museum staff switched to maintaining Jubilee Gardens while the gardeners

*/continued on next page*



Rainbows appeared everywhere and Ellie Hooper, whose crochet-work festooned the riverside railings, was commissioned to make hundreds which then appeared all round town. The multi-colour doorway is to the Bambino playgroup on Beales Corner.



Face-masks, now more than ever important in the fight against the virus, have shown both structural ingenuity and a fine sense of style.



JYG



## Social distancing: a table for one on Severnside North



JYG

Inspired, no doubt by Captain - now Colonel - Tom, several locals sought to complete their own sporting goals... including one brave soul who completed a marathon in his back garden in Far Forest.

**'We can not only help  
ourselves but those**

**#DontLetItEscalate**

**around us'**



With couples and families spending more time with each other, combined with health and financial worries, PCC John Campion is encouraging people to take steps to lower stress and prevent it escalating.

"Despite the restrictions, there are many ways we can not only help ourselves but those around us. This includes being considerate of how we are handling the situation. If you do feel like you're getting stressed or irritated, consider going for a walk or take yourself to another room and call a friend. I will continue to work with partners to make sure that our communities are well supported at a time when it is even more important."

## £400,000 keeps SVR afloat...for now



A cash boost of more than £400,000 in response to a public appeal for its fight-back fund, has secured the short-term future of the Severn Valley Railway but managers remain worried about how lockdown - and a visitor-free summer - will bite later on. In the meantime, SVR appeals to youths and some families using the track as a walkway. Although there are no regular services, unscheduled maintenance makes the line dangerous. SVR hopes to re-open in August.

**HOPLEY**  
FARM AND GIFT SHOP

**Vhujon**

**The Courtyard**

**McColl's**

**Pomodoro**

## BEWDLEY UNITED

**Bewdley  
Farm Shop**

**Merchants**

**Ashley's Bakery**

**Bewdley Blooms**

**TESCO**

**BEWDLEY QUALITY BUTCHER**



**The little PACK HORSE**  
BEWDLEY

**SEVERN**  
fine Indian cuisine  
fully licensed

**The co-operative food**

**CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**/went to tend the cemeteries and the crematorium.

The Bewdley Farm Shop was quick off the mark in setting up regular deliveries of fruit and veg, eggs and fresh fish. The not-long-opened butcher dealt with long queues and they, too, began home deliveries as the vans from the supermarkets criss-crossed the town in ever-growing numbers.

After having to close its doors, Bewdley Blooms followed other traders by continuing their flowers-at-home service.

Newspaper deliveries from Martin McColls were more efficient than ever with no school to worry about.

Local restaurants who had to close quickly became take-aways with the Vhujon leading the way (on the first night of the lockdown) followed by The Courtyard, the Merchant's Fish & Chips, the Pomodoro, the Little Pack Horse and the Severn Indian.

Ever-mindful of the heroic efforts of NHS staff, some of the local shops offered them special discounts and the Co-op petrol station raised funds for food packages,

It was soon clear that everyone was pulling in the same direction.

**continued on next page**

## Bewdley Town Council Together Group

The group for people who would like some company, home-cooked food and entertainment. Meets twice per month at Wribbenhall Parish Room. Call Cllr Liz Davies on 403053



Town and District Councils and Committee meetings are held via ZOOM and are available on the councils' websites

**The Bewdley COV-19 Group...was quickly set up to provide the latest guidance and also to provide support for those who are self-isolating. *We should not panic - we should however take the concerns raised by other countries seriously and take all the advice and guidance necessary to protect those who are in the high risk groups.* 1,500 members**



# The caring council COVID-19: Continued from page 3

Proving how quickly local authorities can respond to crises, WFDC was providing financial help to residents and grants to businesses, within days of the pandemic being declared with cheques being issued first and questions asked later. "The council's help was a great life-saver. Their response certainly cushioned the shock," said one local businesswoman.

The council also kept waste and recycling services going. "We are also working hard to ensure the services you need and value continue during the crisis," said a spokesperson. "Our offices and buildings may be closed but our staff remain working. As well as those you see out in the community on the frontline, others are working remotely to deliver services online, over the phone or by email.

"Our parks and nature reserves remain open for daily exercise and we have suspended all car-parking charges on council car parks so NHS staff, carers and key workers can go about their daily duties with ease."



Bewdley Brewery showed a lot of bottle by quickly paying tribute with their own NHS beer.



The Bewdley engineering and industrial adhesives company BondLoc were quick to convert some of their machines to produce much-needed hand-sanitiser.



The Co-op petrol station raised funds to provide food packages for staff at Kidderminster Hospital



## Familiar sight: motor bikes on the riverside



The sunshine brought out motor bikers who dallied on Severnside South, with scant regard for social distancing, before enjoying countless noisy circuits of the town.

## Cherry trees for sale: £20

Owing to the cancellation of the Civic Society CHERRY FAIR in July, the trees intended for the event are now available for sale at £20 each. They are MORELLO, a self-fertile cooking cherry suitable for a north-facing wall; and MERTON GLORY, a yellow-flushed-with-pink fruit that ripens in the second week of July [needs suitable nearby pollinator]. The tree is resistant to disease. Contact Brian Stephens on 402524 or [brianm.stephens@btinternet.com](mailto:brianm.stephens@btinternet.com)

## The downside of good weather



Wildfire at Tanners Hill, Wyre Forest

photo: @HWFireTenbury



# Was forest lockdown really necessary?

EVERYONE accepts that regular exercise is good for physical and mental well-being. Since the start of the lockdown daily outdoor exercise has been allowed. It has been made clear that one can drive a short distance to a convenient place to exercise. What is more natural for the people in Bewdley and nearby but to go to car parks such as Dry Mill Lane and Coppice Gate and walk in the Wyre Forest.

The shutting of these car parks penalised parents with young families. Getting children to the forest from Bewdley without driving is difficult. One of the features of the forest was to see families enjoying going along the disused railway line. This was stopped.

I am unsure where this blanket ban on driving to forests has come from. I have seen nothing in the media. At the start of the lockdown there was evidence of people going from towns and cities and descending on major beauty spots such as the Lake District and the West Country and quite rightly that was banned. Has this been the cause of a nationwide ban on driving to our forests?

I did contact Natural England who manage the Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve accessed by the two car parks mentioned. Let us be clear, these decisions have been taken at a national level and not by local NE staff. The national policy is:

"Our NNR facilities such as car parks and visitor-centres remain closed and we strongly advise people not to travel to NNRs. Local residents may still use NNRs as long as they



follow the new guidance.

"Management work on NNRs is currently limited until further notice to essential tasks such as public safety animal welfare and water-level."

Despite searching the internet, I have not been able to find the specific guidance to organizations such as Natural England, Forestry England which bans local people driving a short distance to a nearby forest.

Forestry England also shut a number of their car parks such as the ones at the Discovery Centre and Hawkbatch. They have also put up notices (see inset right). It is a stark black and white with a very blunt message. The final sentence is: "The forests will still be here when this is over." Perhaps they should have added: "and when you are gone."

Was such an unfriendly notice really needed? It probably just wound people up.

On more positive note, the forest is looking great as Spring moves into Summer. The photograph above shows an orchard in the Wyre Forest with the fruit trees coming into bloom. Thankfully some of the car parks have recently been re-opened and we can all enjoy them again. **Tony Leach**

## Forestry England Why are you here?

The latest government advice makes it clear - do not visit the nation's forests by vehicle.

Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives.

The forests will still be here when this is over.

forestryengland.uk

## WHAT READERS SAY ABOUT THE SPRING ISSUE

## 'A very important Society'

The report and the Newsletter are very well written and very informative and I have enjoyed reading all the articles and studying the pictures of times gone by. It seems like a very important Society of which to be a member and I am impressed with the Society's involvement with town planning and the protection of historic buildings and the surrounding countryside. I was particularly struck by the 2011 photo of the fire in Welch Gate which loomed alarmingly close to many vulnerable structures and my house, which I bought outright after selling my property in Moseley last year. Now in my fourth year of residency I feel very fortunate to

*Excellent if I may say!*

**Maynard Burton**  
Chairman and Partner  
mfg Solicitors LLP

*I just wanted you to know that the new newsletter is an excellent read. Thank you* **Chris Griffin**  
*Have spent a very enjoyable time in the sunshine reading the Newsletter. Great Editor!* **Ann McDowell**

live here and to have met and made friends with such good people. Life for us all has become somewhat altered by the bacterial environs we currently inhabit and my work as an art psychotherapist at the hospital has been particularly challenging and rewarding. The young people come

from across Britain and many are a long way from home so we keep the children occupied in our onsite school and therapy. I contribute in new ways and have become the go-to person to beat at a game of pool!

Anna, my partner who is a fine silversmith and lecturer has had many challenges over recent months as many of her students are Chinese. Now all back in China, she continues to teach them over the internet (unreal as some came from Wuhan!)

My other interests in photography have halted but I am thinking about a project contributing to the Bewdley photographic archive. **Phil Lea**



## William Dewar ponders the uneasy alliance between cyclists and walkers

# Now's the time to find solutions

We have all come to appreciate how fortunate we are at this difficult time to live in Bewdley with its easy access to picturesque open spaces and wooded pathways for exercise and with our local shops (see page two) that continued to provide us with essential foodstuffs and medicines throughout the crisis.

Of course, the town's greatest assets and attractions are its riverside setting and its convenient access to the Wyre Forest. The network of pathways have come into their own and have been extensively used by both pedestrians and cyclists as people have taken their daily exercise.

The problem is that pedestrians and cyclist sharing the same, often-narrow pathways, presents potential dangers. These have significantly increased during the lockdown and are not going to go away as it's anticipated that [with active encouragement and apparent subsidy from the government] both activities will continue at high if not higher levels.

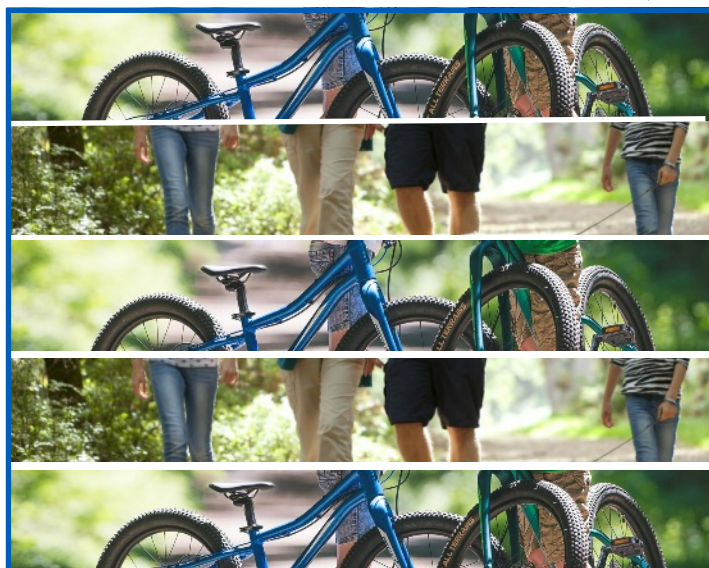
Mutual consideration is essential where narrow often uneven, rutted pathways are being shared and of course speeds vary considerably! From personal experience and comments I have heard, such consideration has sometimes been lacking, social-distancing rules rendered impossible or ignored and dangerous collisions only narrowly avoided.

In addition, intensive use by cyclists of un-surfaced, earth-based narrow paths, such as those alongside the river, tends to lead to rutting and wear-and-tear. In some cases, disintegration creates additional hazards to walkers as well as cyclists.

Such damage is, of course intensified after heavy rain. Sometimes new unplanned, unsightly diversionary routes have developed as cyclists and walkers try to avoid/by-pass hazards that have appeared on the established pathways with consequent negative impact on the natural surroundings.

Given that the Government intends to allocate more resources for the development of increased safe-space for walkers and cyclists, now would seem to be the time to give serious thought to what should be planned for Bewdley.

We must not miss out on this opportunity to address the current problem of joint usage of often narrow, unsuitable pathways and be of benefit to and ensure in future the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, visitors and residents.



This is an issue that must be tackled locally not just nationally. Speeding cyclists and leisurely, often elderly, walkers attempting to occupy the same narrow spaces is a recipe for disaster even if both show maximum consideration.

I would stress that in many ways I welcome the increased encouragement of walking and cycling because of their potential to improve health and reduce pollution.

To fully derive the benefits and remove the increasing dangers, it is vital to establish a clearer distinction between designated pedestrian footpaths, bridleways and those designated for cycle routes.

We need to ensure Bewdley can tap into any available additional resources promised to encourage greater levels of walking and cycling post-virus.

## Get the ball rolling

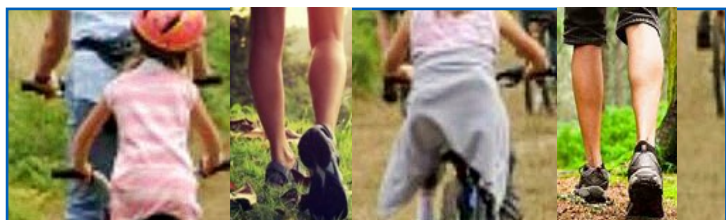
To get the ball rolling, I suggest (a) the entire Severnside North-to-Dowles Bridge riverside path [both surfaced and un-surfaced stretches] should once again be clearly sign-posted as a pedestrian footpath and conspicuous *no-cycling* notices restored. [Such notices have mysteriously disappeared over the last few years]. The related gate en-route should be kept appropriately maintained to reinforce the no-cycling message.

And (b) recommended cycle routes in and out of Bewdley need to be more clearly signposted, particularly those linking with existing cycle routes in the Wyre Forest and if the Dowles Railway bridge is to be reopened as part of a designated cycle route [as has been suggested] this would create an integrated cycle route linking Northwood Lane with Dowles Road, Dry Mill Lane and the existing cycle route into the forest beyond. This would allow cyclists clear and easy access not only to Bewdley but also the Wyre Forest.

These routes should of course have clearer speed-limits to improve safety for cyclists coming in or out of the town.

Given that much of Bewdley and its Wyre Forest surroundings have been recognised as High Value in recent assessments or are recognised nature reserves or sites of scientific interest, it is vital we respect them and do our best to preserve, not to damage or jeopardise them.

/CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





**Balsam bashing 2020**by **STEVE BENT****The exploding invasive weed**

HIMALAYAN BALSAM has distinctive pink helmet-shaped flowers which give off a scent. Leaves grow in groups of three from its straight stem. The stem is hollow and bright green. It has shallow roots and can be easily pulled from the ground. It matures July to September producing seed pods which 'explode', shooting seeds up to seven metres!

**Why Is It A Problem?** Balsam grows vigorously in tall, dense stands. It prevents other plants from developing, blocking light and attracting pollinators from other plants. It dies back in the autumn leaving riverbanks bare, with no plant cover or root systems. This makes the riverbank prone to erosion and can cause damage to streams and rivers.

**How You Can Help?** Two ways: Firstly, join volunteers organised by the Civic Society, supported by the Unlocking the Severn project. We are pulling up these plants along the riverbank and brooks near the town to prevent further spread.

*Why not help by pulling up the occasional plant as you walk by?* They're non-toxic, have no thorns and come up easily. Plants can be left where they were pulled up and quickly biodegrade, but please do not attempt to reach plants on steep sided riverbank or close to the water's edge.

Secondly, *why not join volunteers at this year's annual 'Balsam Bash'?* This will take place (Covid19 restrictions permitting) over FOUR days: Saturday July 25, Sunday 26, Tuesday 28, and Wednesday 29 10am-1pm. Meet at the benches below the bridge on Severnside South. Stout footwear and gloves needed. For further information contact Steve Bent on [Stevenclivebent1@aol.com](mailto:Stevenclivebent1@aol.com) Rachel Davies on [info@unlockingthesevern.org.uk](mailto:info@unlockingthesevern.org.uk)



/CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

**The aim is to stimulate debate**

As such I would also put forward these additional thoughts for further consideration :

- The need to also clearly designate with appropriate signs other non-surfaced narrow pathways in Bewdley particularly those adjacent to the river north and south of the town as being pedestrian footpaths and not for cyclists. These are also extensively used by visitors and residential pedestrians and need to be kept safe
- The need for identified pedestrian footpaths and bridleways in the Wyre Forest to be more clearly sign-posted and designated as such on maps with the clear message that "off road " cycling on these is not allowed
- The fact that a number of designated "off road" cycle forest routes could also be identified that link with established surfaced cycle routes in the Wyre forest to provide the off road experience some cyclists desire whilst ensuring the safety of and preserving the tranquil forest experience desired by walkers .

I appreciate that not everyone will necessarily agree with some or all of the above or some might feel these to be over ambitious aspirations.

However, if they at least stimulate debate, which in turn results in prompt specific and beneficial local proposals/actions to encourage safe walking and cycling, this should enable Bewdley to benefit from resources that appear to be promised nationally. Perhaps something positive and long-lasting might result from this dreadful virus, after all.



JYG

One day the pavement needed repairs...the next day things went crazy. Workmen came, used cement with all the finesse of an amateur using polyfiller and disappeared ...leaving their work to be marvelled at by all!





## Happy 50th birthday..in 1905 style!

These were some of the town's leading figures in 1905. RICHARD BROWN (who sent the photo) is related to three of them. Hardly surprising as it was taken at his great-grandfather's 50th birthday in the garden of Tannery House. Are any of the others in your family tree?



### Partying in the Brown style

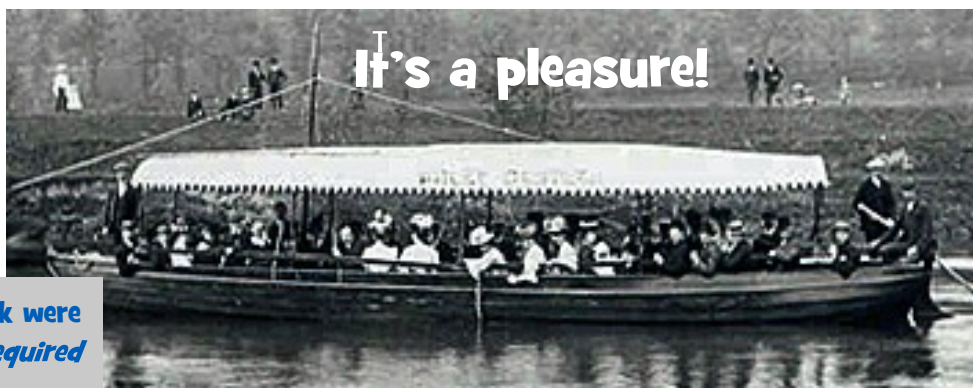
ACCORDING TO MY FATHER'S NOTES, THOSE PRESENT WERE: Back row (l to r) Tom Hollins, Butcher 25 Load Street (CWB's third son, Frederick later bought and ran this business but died from injuries suffered at Gallipoli November 1915 (when the shop was taken over by TF Timmis); Bob Harcombe, outfitters Load Street unmarried; Dick Southan. (born 1850); son of Henry Southan, a lantern-leaf-maker...according to the 1861 Census, of Coals Quay. He ran the pleasure boats (\*see below) including the ARLEY QUEEN; James Oakes, carpenter, joiner and undertaker 49 High Street; married Fanny Bishop father of Harry Oakes FRCO and Reginald James Oakes, whose business premises were later bought by William Brown; Ted Bishop of THE TALBOT, High Street: his wife was the proprietress; father of Fred Bishop. Mrs Bishop was formerly Mrs Payne and had three daughters by her first marriage; Mr. Ashley superintendent of the Convalescent Home, in the Park run by the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows. His son Stanley died aged 96 in 1987; his daughter Gladys married Arthur Southan, accountant (Stourport Road). He was brother of Mrs Birt [sic] Pleve.

### Middle Row (l to r)

Peter Frank Mountford painter and decorator of Severnside South; brother of Fergus, Fred and Harry (and four Sisters); married Susan, daughter of Joseph Oakes of Wyre Hill. George James Humpherson of the family of horn-workers and tobacconists; father of Bessie, Victor, Ella, Irene, Alec and one more sister; he was an athlete once described as *the fleetest of foot in Worcestershire*. George Smith father-in-law of George Humpherson (no 2 preceding), who lived in (and possibly owned) one of a row of small houses [now demolished] next to the Black Boy in Wribbenhall. William Griffiths postman and part-time Invoice clerk at The Tannery. Lived in Spencer Avenue, Wribbenhall but earlier in the Park, top of Park Alley (NOT Grubbers Alley). Tom Gardner coal merchant and haulier of 28 Severn Side South; borough alderman. His people were Watermen and Tom used to meet the Tar Boat, coming from Worcester, just below Blackstone and pilot it up to Bewdley Gasworks; father of Amy, Beatrice, Emmie, Elsie and Tom. Sprackett Harcombe outfitters. Load Street (next to THE GEORGE). He never married. Ernest P. Shepherd, solicitors clerk at Hemmingways, 18 Load Street; he was related to Mrs Bishop at THE TALBOT. His family and hers may have come from Neen Savage.

### The Brown trio (l to r)

Cyril Charles Brown (b1882 eldest son of CWB) and manager of The Tannery after his father's death; borough councillor in 1920s; Charles William Brown JP (1855-1906) tannery manager & borough auditor. He weighed over 20 stone; strong supporter of the Friendly Society Movement; William John Brown (1844-1940) second son of CWB; carpenter, builder and undertaker (succeeding James Oakes); served in the Worcester Yeomanry, 7th Worcesters in the Great War and later with the Royal Flying Corps until 1920; he was Town Marshal in the 1930s. Married Alice Frost of Kidderminster. No issue. RB



\*The pleasure boats to Arley and back were daily at 3.15pm...and as often as required







110 YEARS AGO IN BEWDLEY

# Bolting horse drags three trap passengers into fast-flowing river

Anyone who thinks today's red-tops can be brutally sensational should read the grim report of a drowning in the Severn near Bewdley Bridge in the SHUTTLE for June 18, 1910.

It was, in truth, a terrible incident in which a horse bolted, threw the driver and dragged the governess trap carrying his wife, six-year-old son and mother-in-law into the swollen river at Severnside North.

The older woman drowned but three by-standers leapt into the river and saved the younger woman and her son..

The SHUTTLE reports the incident in graphic detail. It describes a "terrible fatality" when a horse (pulling a governess cart) bolted down Load Street, swerved to the left and galloped down the narrow road, which leads to Severnside North North, jumped over the quay wall, cleared two or three moored boats, and got into the open river, dragging the vehicle and occupants into fast-flowing stream. The car turned over and the two ladies and boy were thrown into the stream, which, at the time, was in a condition of half flood."

The poor soul who lost control of the horse and was thrown out of the trap was Alfred Monk (a butcher from Kidderminster).



AINSWORTH



POTTER



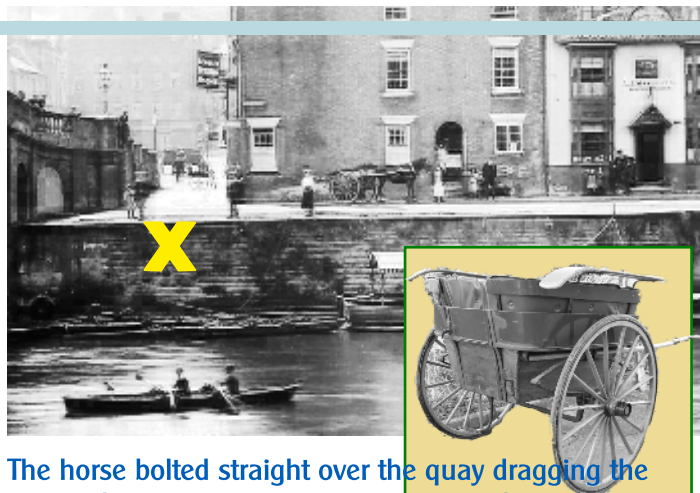
BISHOP

With his wife, six-year old son Gordon and his mother-in-law Mrs. Jane Hill, he was returning home,,,"When passing St Anne's Church, the horse became restive, and Mr Monk strove to quiet the animal, but failed, for it began to kick and dashed down Load Street at an alarming pace.

As he tried to stop the horse, the reins broke and he was flung out onto the road as the horse and cart careered all the way into the river (see photo right) said by the SHUTTLE to be in half-flood.

The ladies and boy were carried down the river by the swiftly flowing current. They had passed the bridge, when a boatman, Fred Ainsworth, set off to their rescue in a double rigger.

About 50 yards, below the bridge, opposite the Bank building, he overtook them, there being, at the time, about six yards of water between them. He



The horse bolted straight over the quay dragging the cart and its remaining passengers into the river.

## REWARDS FOR THE HEROES



The Bewdley heroes were feted two months later at a presentation of Life-Saving Certificates by the Mayor (Councillor Green) and Stanley Baldwin, the MP. At the ceremony in The Angel, certificates were awarded to Fred Ainsworth, Thomas Postings and Bill Bishop. Also attending - amongst others - were Stanley Hemingway, local solicitor (who became Town Clerk in 1912), his son Kenneth (who was killed in action in 1918), young Gordon Monk and Alderman Maunder, who had proposed the trio for the awards. He had previously given each rescuer a guinea (about £150 today)

succeeded in getting the ladies into the boat. It was a desperate effort, for both of them were quite helpless. He brought them to the side of the river. Two young men named Postings and Bishop, jumped into the stream and succeeded in rescuing the boy. He was none the worse for the immersion.

The two ladies were unconscious and it was at once seen that they had been terribly injured; especially Mrs. Hill. By means of artificial respiration she was brought to a semi conscious state and she breathed a few moments and then expired.

Mrs. Monk was less seriously injured; her wrist was broken and 3 ribs fractured and she was badly cut on the head. Mr. Monk escaped his fall from the trap practically uninjured. For a moment or two he felt stunned but as soon as he recovered, he got into a boat in the hope of assisting in rescuing the ladies and boy, but, being inexperienced with oars, he was unable to render any assistance.





## OBITUARY

## TERRY VAUGHAN: Popular volunteer in the museum



In succession to his late wife, Brenda, Terry was Secretary of the Friends of Bewdley Museum for several years, until a stroke made it difficult for him to write quickly. He continued as an active and popular volunteer for several decades, chatting to visitors about the exhibits and local history and routinely undertaking any minor practical job he saw without fanfare or officiousness.

Particularly knowledgeable about the brass foundry, its history and the brass-making process, Terry was narrator in a video regularly played there until the foundry was recently refurbished.

In January 2006, he was presented with the prestigious VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD as Champion for Worcestershire.

Terry was also one of the first members of Bewdley Historical Research Group in 1981. Unsure of how long interest would last, the Group began by tackling something achievable within its first year - namely, discovering exactly where in Bewdley's High Street the individual houses were located, by using the Manor Court Books.

Much Bewdley property was originally owned by the Crown. Whenever a tenant died his heir had to go to Court to be sworn in to the deceased's property and the transactions were handwritten into these Books in chronological order. The Books usually indicated on which side of the street the houses lay and often named the residents on either side of them.

Interest in this project grew to include learning about the occupants. Group membership expanded and gradually more views of Bewdley's history came into focus. As a result, town tours 'took off', and Terry was one of four original volunteer guides - and, again, he continued doing so for many years.

I have a timetable for summer 1984 showing that he was scheduled for duty on alternate Sunday afternoons that year. In 1991, with two other Group members, he contributed to a chapter INNS AND INNKEEPERS in *Bewdley in Its Golden Age*.

In 2012 Terry went to live in Herne's Nest House, where he told a delighted member of staff all about that House's history. He was still deeply interested in local history and current affairs when I last saw him earlier this year.

My abiding memories of him are his cheeky grin and his sense of humour. Once, on becoming rather wet in an unexpected shower while on the way to a FoBM meeting, he remarked philosophically: "Well, fortunately my skin's waterproof."

**Sue Brown**

## A moment of tranquility



All tranquil on the riverside...as it should be...in this early-morning photo by MARGARET BOLAM.



Civic Society member JANET PEARCE took this shot from her Sabrina Drive garden. It got so busy with group picnics she described it as *Birmingham-by-the-river*.



A study in black and white.

PHOTO JYG





## *Unprecedented circumstances:*

## **Executive stays in place**

I hope all our members are well and have been coping with the lockdown restrictions. Although delayed by the unprecedented circumstances we were able to distribute the 2019 Annual Report and the Spring Newsletter and I am grateful to our team of deliverers. I hope you received these: please let me know if you didn't.

Sadly, all our events to date for the 2020/21 Programme have been cancelled or postponed and I cannot see those taking place in the near future either. This includes our AGM. Thanks to Zoom however the Executive Committee has been meeting very successfully on a virtual basis.

You will recall that Boris put us into strict lockdown on March 23 just a week after our last lecture of the 2019/20 season. By then though things were already looking bleak, but we did have some 24 brave members turn up to Andrew Lound's show LUNATICK ASTRONOMY, THE BIRMINGHAM LUNAR SOCIETY. Delivered in his usual inimitable style (this was his third visit to the Society), he entertained us very well.

On a sad note you will find in this issue an obituary to Society stalwart, Terry Vaughan who was an active member of the Executive Committee for 32 years from 1976. I remember on one of the Society's outings to a stately home it was necessary to see an interior feature by climbing a ladder. Terry was up for this but, as he neared the top, the ladder, with Terry clinging to it, fell backwards. We feared the worst but lady luck was with us and apart from some bruising he was uninjured. He was a wonderful servant of Bewdley's history and well-being.

In response to WFDC's current survey about whether or not a Public Spaces Protection Order covering the town centre should be renewed, the Civic Society has unequivocally said it should. In a formal reply, we said we want Bewdley to be *welcoming to visitors and comfortable for residents*.

Because people feel intimidated by anyone behaving in a drunken manner, we urged the continuation of the Order to include allowing an authorised officer to judge when the behaviour of drinkers in the town becomes unacceptable. The officer would then be able to stop the drinking and to confiscate the alcohol.

We also suggested the area covered should be extended to Pewterer's Alley and the sports field behind Wyre Hill School.

## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK**



## **A well-deserved award**

Finally, it's wonderful to report that the St. George's Hall Volunteers have been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK. As many will know, the volunteers run the community café and the cinema as well as assisting with music and drama events. All this has a hugely positive impact on the lives of local people. When asked, on behalf of the Society, to write a letter in support of the award, I had no hesitation in saying that it would be thoroughly deserved and that, in my personal opinion, the Hall refurbishment and its volunteers was the best thing that had happened to Bewdley since the By-Pass. [We send our hearty congratulations to Jenny Paddock and her team.](#)

## **Renewing Ribbesford House**



[Dramatically swathed in scaffolding and protective tarpaulins, Ribbesford House is in the early stages of the transformation promised by its new owners Russell and Samuel Leeds](#)