

CIVIC VOICE
talking civic sense

**CIVIC DAY
JUNE 17**



**Son et Lumiere
September 9/10**

Wednesday
April 19
Annual General
Meeting
7.30 pm
St George's Hall



***BEWDLEY
PREVAILS**
see Page 2

INSIDE

WE CARE ABOUT WHERE WE LIVE

Shaping our future

Government promises on strengthening the Green Belt and the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan are welcome counters to fears about the town being over developed in a striking echo of a 1945 survey which contained the nightmare scenario of *Bewdley as the Blackpool of the Black Country* see Page 0)

Society Chairman Richard Perrin has welcomed the Government and local authority assurances about protecting the town's natural heritage but says there is no room for complacency and that the Civic Society still has a major role to play in ensuring there is no slippage. "With so much pressure arising from the need for more and more housing, we need to be ever vigilant." In his article on Page 2, Deputy Mayor Cllr Philip Edmundson says: "We have to ensure there is no capacity for another predatory proposal."

Meanwhile Gladman has submitted four further documents to their planning application. These people are serious. One document on *Air Quality Management* runs to sixty pages, two on *Ecology and Biodiversity* are forty pages and fifty-five pages and the fourth, on *Flood Risk*, is forty pages.

With all the professional language of *modelling, re-modelling* and *scenarios* it's difficult for a mere journalist to be sure but they seem to suggest that the problems of air pollution on Welch Gate might be resolved by reversing the traffic priorities and creating a mini-roundabout at the junction with Load Street and Dog Lane. This, they claim, would allow greater speeds on the approach to the island, with potential benefit to Welch Gate.

Welch Gate is, of course, the second most polluted area in Wyre Forest (behind only the Horsefair in Kidderminster). It has been part of Worcestershire Regulatory Services' Air Quality Action Plan – aimed at tackling such issues – for more than a decade. Multiple options have been considered but without any positive conclusion.

For those who want to read the documents in full go to the links section of <http://bewdley-says-no-to-gladman.btck.co.uk>

It's comforting to know that the *Love Bewdley* experts will be studying and responding to these new submissions over the next few weeks.

**Have your say in
developing the
*Neighbourhood Plan
in May referendum**

**Remembering
our past**



**See
Page 6**



BEWDLEY PREVAILS

REPORT-BACK No 4 by Philip Edmundson



Tea-fuelled debate about the town's

In May 2014, after being elected to Bewdley Town Council, I led a task-and-finish group that created the Better Bewdley Committee. As I look back, dear me, the reticence of some colleagues was significant: perhaps a whippersnapper - a newly-elected modernising councillor - was not entirely relished. So I asked them to join the group. They did.

We argued, drank tea, debated, discussed, deliberated, compromised...and then we created the Better Bewdley Committee. It was in action by October 2014.

It was the first of its kind in Bewdley and rare in other towns and parishes - a committee designed to explore the needs of the town with members of the public alongside councillors as committee members.

I chaired this committee for fifteen months and steered the initial discussions around the Neighbourhood Plan. The previous council had discussed and dismissed the notion; foolhardy in one respect, yet understandable...unless you have a group of people committed to explore and develop the idea of the plan and to take this to the public, expecting to hear things you do and do not want to hear, argue, cajole, debate and embrace, then I would not recommend the process of exploring a Neighbourhood Plan. You have to want to hear counterpoints to your own; never easy, yet frequently beneficial.

As the Neighbourhood Plan grew pace, we created a separate steering group, feeding back into what became the Community Development Committee - still operating on the same principles and terms of reference to Better Bewdley - but becoming a powerhouse for the Neighbourhood Plan. I have been proud to chair this committee from inception and will continue to do so until completion.

Almost three years have passed and the Town Council has conducted its largest ever public consultation, with over 500 residents' views contributed via questionnaire and well over 130 people making comment face to face last March, in St George's Hall. Twelve months on, we are about to do the same thing again; this time not on the notions of a plan but with draft objectives and policies.

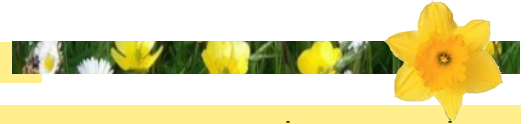
Preserving our past and securing our future now lie in an intelligent, interlinked, innovative and intuitive plan. The Steering Group ratified this draft plan in February and was presented to the people of Bewdley at a session in Wribbenhall Parish Rooms in mid-March. That was the beginning of a consultation process with objectives and policies available online and via the Town Clerk. The process will run until Sunday April 30.

In my previous article in Newsletter, I asked what you thought. This time, you need to tell us whether we are right or wrong. We will take this on to the next stages. Once agreed, the draft plan goes to the public (delivered to every household in Bewdley) then to governmental adjudication and then to referendum. Once voted on and hopefully passed, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes live. I would hope that we could realistically look at the referendum taking place in early autumn.

I have said before that everyone knows that my ambition has been for a May 2017 referendum. With the WFDC Local Plan going through a slower timescale and to ensure that we make both Gladman-proof, we have to ensure there is no capacity for another predatory proposal. Getting the objectives in place, ensuring continuity and consistency, making sure that the wording is right, so that it is clear-cut and concise as well as not open to possible misconception in the future is essential and the more input and feedback the better for us all.

I think you know that I am a man on a mission; the Neighbourhood Plan means a great deal to this town and to me personally. Neighbourhood planning is being used by local councils across England not only to shape and influence development in their area but also to suitably and appropriately increase affordable housing, help communities become more resilient and support economic development, in addition to strengthening local democracy as the process leading to more people standing for election. This can only be for the better for Bewdley.

I often fight the term of NIMBY-ism with the Neighbourhood Plan. I think this is an easy catch-all term for the ill-informed to suggest that this town is not open to development. I do not think anything can be further from the truth. Consider the new Medical Centre and consider the current travails of the old Medical Centre. As far as I can see, the issues have come with getting it right and not with having it at all. This is not NIMBY-ism, this is common sense from a proactive community; a community that many of us are dedicated to serve. As always, encouraging disagreement with the aim of getting it right is vital. If we are to have a Neighbourhood Plan that is fit for purpose, active and progressive and meet community needs for the next fifteen years, you need to let us know what we have got right and what we could do better. I look forward to hearing your views, congratulatory or condemnatory during the consultation. *We'll drink tea, talk and listen and work this out for a better Bewdley...as I hope we started twelve months ago and how I started out almost three years ago.*



Exhibition inspired by Kenneth Hobson



The project team comprising representatives from The Bewdley Historical Research Group, The Friends of Bewdley Museum, Bewdley Civic Society and Bewdley Museum are continuing to archive the museum's vast collection of photos.

The project has been initiated and inspired by the recently-bequeathed addition to the museum's collection by the late Kenneth Hobson's own large collection of photos, postcards and slides. One of the key aims of the project is to explore and develop improved public awareness and access to the collection and to enable it to seek out and grow with fresh material. The team will be seeking external funding and local sponsorship to help develop the archive to include suitable hard storage for the original photos and the setting up and management of a digital archive with improved public access.

To help raise awareness of the collection, the project team have organised an exhibition *The Changing Face of Load Street* in the museum in the Wyre Forest Gallery until May 7. It features a selection of the shop premises in Load Street to show a recent image alongside some of the historic images relating to the same premises as well some brief history notes and details of the occupancy drawn from census records and trade directories up to the late 1940's.

The exhibition has been extended to the shop windows in Load Street with an individually designed window poster advertising the exhibition but with an image relevant to each shop. We thank Bewdley Town Council for their support by helping to fund the printing cost of the posters.

The project team are hoping to add to the Load Street Shops Study with a view to featuring the remaining shop premises and also by filling in some of the gaps in our information on the occupancy since the late 1940's when most of the trade directory information ceases.

Any helpful knowledge that visitors to the exhibition and your readers can give on this will be much appreciated.

Graham Luxford

The baker, confectioner, newsagent - and more - who also offered a lending library service

Of the photographs on the next page, that of 29, Load Street (now *The Cutting Room*, hairdressers) merits special mention. In Bewdley's *Past in Pictures* by Kenneth Hobson and Charles & Angela Purcell, this is captioned: Clarice Mapp (*presumably the proprietor's daughter*) on the steps of A. E. Mapp, baker and confectioner as well as a newsagent, stationer and fancy goods dealer.

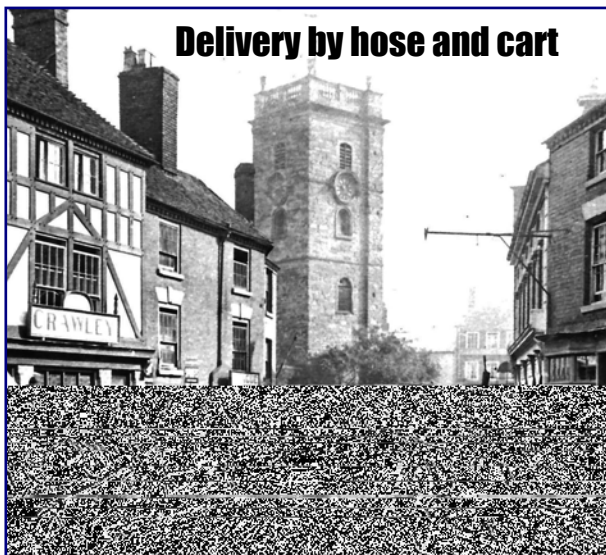
He also offered a lending library service.

The building is early 19th century.

In the 1940s, providing the same sort of service, it was owned by M & E Bayliss and called *The Sisters' Shop*.

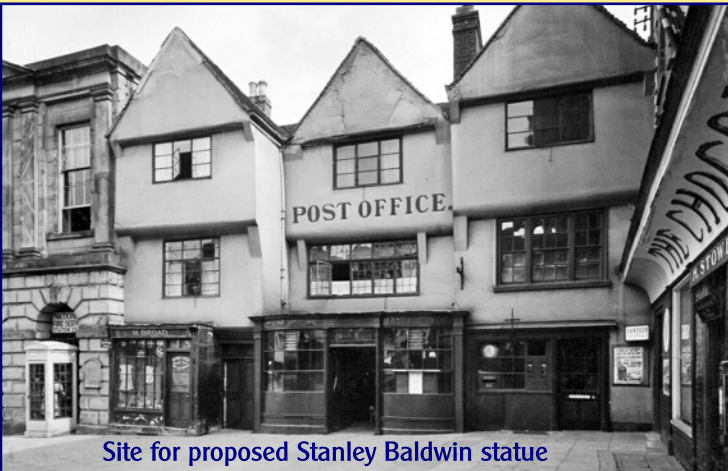
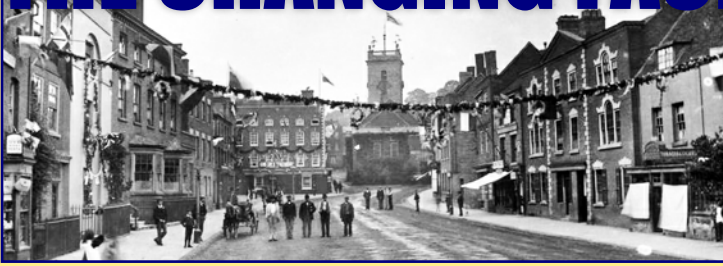
Before becoming *The Cutting Room*, many will remember it as Madeley's Newsagent.

PS Mr Mapp appears to have missed a trick. He didn't stock candlesticks!





THE CHANGING FACE OF LOAD STREET

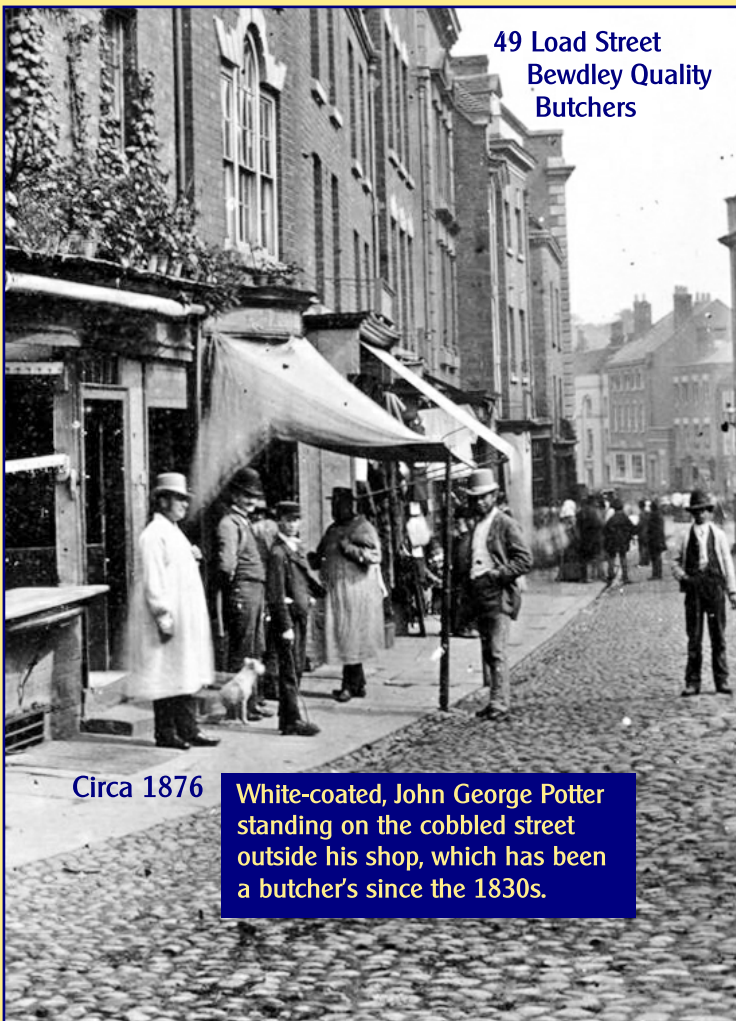
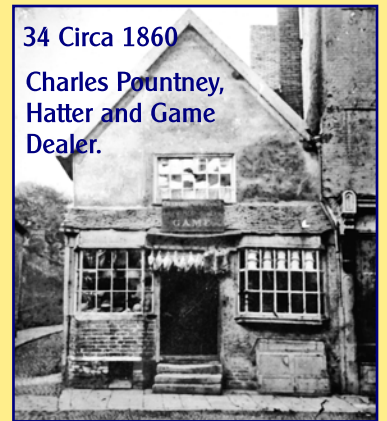


Site for proposed Stanley Baldwin statue

PHOTO right
This house (on the corner of Park Lane) was owned by Charles Pountney. It was replaced by another building that was in turn demolished for road-widening at this junction in the late 1960s.

34 Circa 1860

Charles Pountney, Hatter and Game Dealer.



49 Load Street
Bewdley Quality Butchers

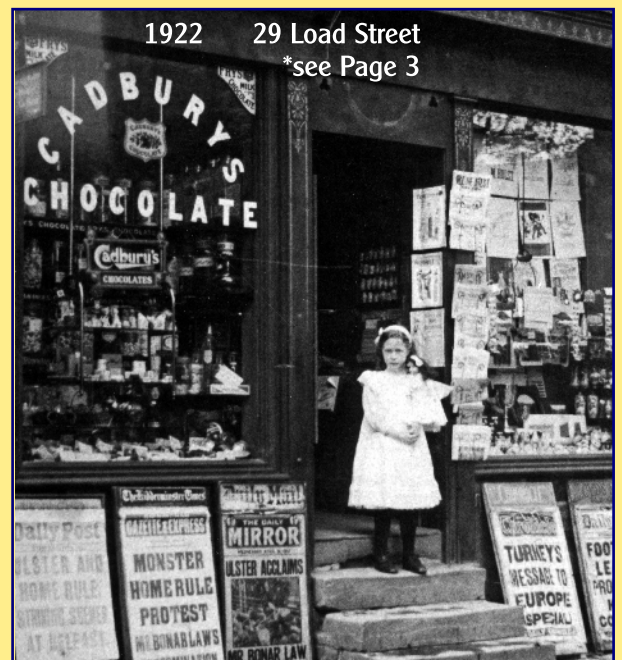
Circa 1876

White-coated, John George Potter standing on the cobbled street outside his shop, which has been a butcher's since the 1830s.



42

Since demolished to allow for road-widening



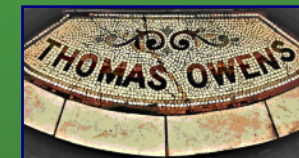
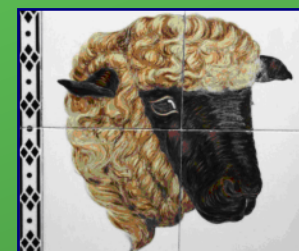
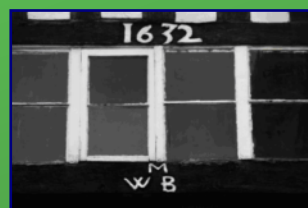
1922

29 Load Street
*see Page 3



But some things never change

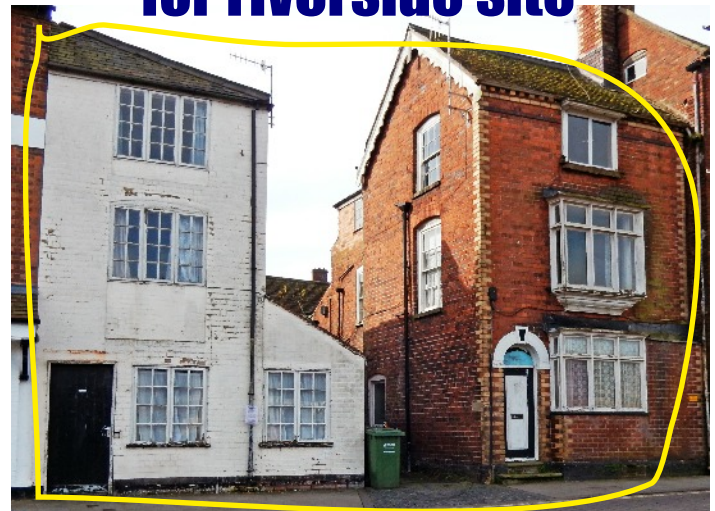
...such as these signs and symbols on buildings along Load Street. They were photographed by NOAH YOUNG for the Load Street Trail organised by The Friends of Bewdley Museum. The Society joined Piccolo's sponsoring the event. The competition to identify the signs closes on May 7.



Expert help needed

The Society is considering a Lottery Fund appeal for community projects within the town's Conservation Area. But as Secretary Barbara Longmore says: "We need someone with experience and expertise to complete the often- complex applications which need to fit the funder's criteria precisely." Anyone who may be able to help should contact Barbara on bmlongmore@gmail.com

New restaurant and guesthouse planned for riverside site

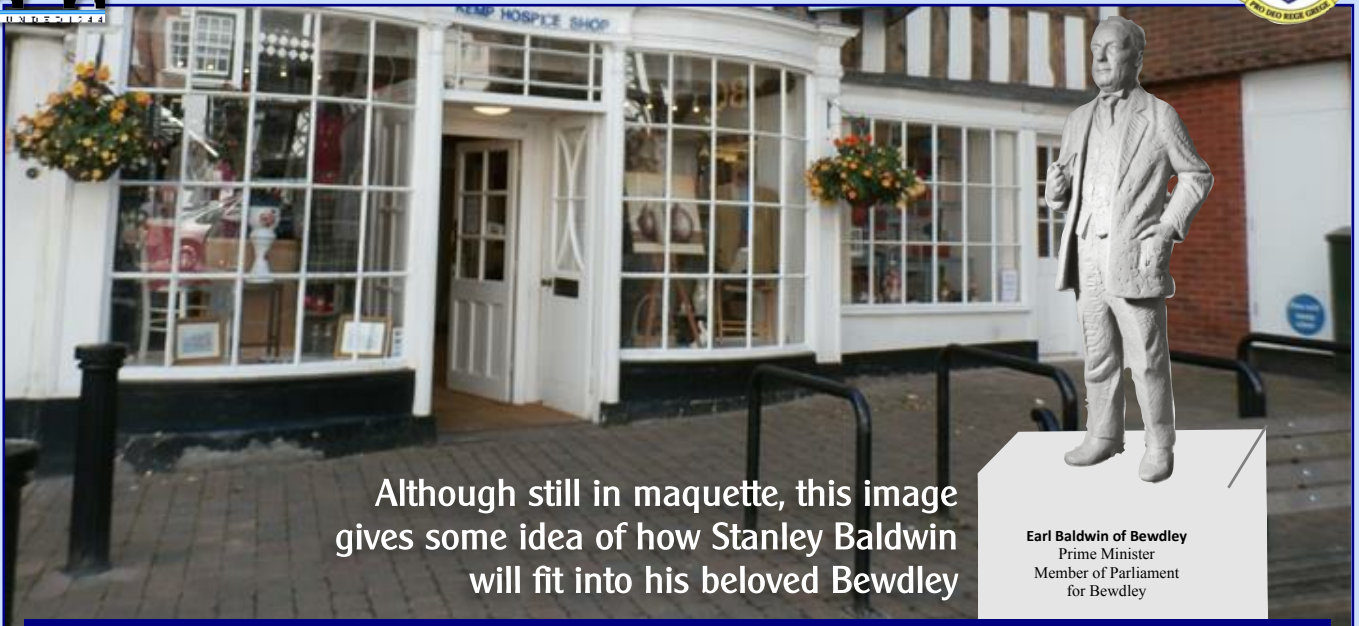


These Severnside South properties look set to have a major facelift to become the latest to the town's growing list of eateries. The new owner has lodged plans to convert the block into an eight-bedroomed guest house and restaurant. The Conservation Officer has been consulted and the general feeling seems to be relief that there will no longer be a blot on the riverside frontage. The plans suggest that the buildings will be brought together with a double-fronted glass entrance (by the green waste bin). The right hand window offers spectacular upstream and downstream river views.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As is evident from this Spring Newsletter, the wealth of experience within the Society is tremendous. And the Editor is very grateful for written contributions - especially when accompanied by photographs. So please don't be shy. Why not get writing now. Send contribution to jyg@cix.co.uk

Joek Gallagher



Although still in maquette, this image gives some idea of how Stanley Baldwin will fit into his beloved Bewdley

Earl Baldwin of Bewdley
Prime Minister
Member of Parliament
for Bewdley

In the HOUSE OF LORDS:
Beatrice and the Baldwin bust



At HAGLEY HALL:
Admiring the art



Barbara Longmore, John Chester, Martin Jennings (sculptor)
Vice-president Paul Crane and Sue Perrin

Following the Society's own Stanley Baldwin statue Appeal Fund launch at our annual dinner, a national appeal was launched in the House of Lords in January and the regional appeal was launched at a dinner held at Hagley Hall last month.

Both events were well-supported, with 180 guests sitting down to dinner at Hagley Hall and total donations towards the £150,000 cost of the statue have already reached more than £70,000. A further £10,000 has been promised, donations are still coming in and several other fund-raising events are planned for the coming year.

The House of Lords reception was attended by parliamentarians from both Houses and Earl Baldwin of Bewdley was the principal speaker. Among many well-known faces were a great-grandson of Stanley Baldwin, Lord Russell of Liverpool, and local MP, Mark Garnier. Our President (Mrs Beatrice Grant), Chair (Richard Perrin) and Hon Secretary (Barbara Longmore), who are also on the Appeal Committee, represented the Society.

Over canapés, guests were surprised to learn about the range of items linked to Stanley Baldwin, including a splendid bronze bust which had been loaned by the House of Commons.

At Hagley Hall, the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Lt Col Patrick Holcroft, introduced the after-dinner speakers including our President and Lord Digby Jones of Birmingham. Beatrice shared some touching and amusing family memories of her great-grandfather. Digby focused on Stanley Baldwin's achievements as a politician and Prime Minister and the admirable aspects of his personality and style which enabled him to accomplish what he did.

Viscount and Viscountess Cobham were thanked for the use of their home for the evening, which was sponsored by Andrew Grant and mfg Solicitors. Bewdley Floral Art Club provided the splendid table arrangements.

The sculptor, Martin Jennings, brought the second maquette (in resin) to both events to give people an impression of the finished statue. The final process has begun and it is hoped the unveiling ceremony will take place at the end of this year. The appeal committee will invite Prime Minister Theresa May, a patron of the appeal, to conduct the unveiling.

Barbara Longmore



Lecture *Bournville Village 1895-1925* by Dr Michael Harrison REPORT by BILL DEWAR

Marrying town and country

The February Lecture focused on the development of Bournville Village and drew in a substantial audience. It detailed the vision of George Cadbury [1839-1922] as he sought to restore the fortunes of the famous chocolate firm by moving the factory out of the polluted centre of Birmingham.

This in turn enabled the subsequent and related development of the new Garden Village at Bournville as a reaction to the squalor and monotony that prevailed in existing 19th century working-class housing in places like Birmingham [as exemplified by the "back-to-backs," the subject of a previous lecture].

Cadbury's initial specific motive was "to provide healthy dwellings for people with plenty of air and space to ameliorate the condition of the working classes."

He was clearly influenced by the ideas of John Ruskin [also the subject of a previous lecture] and the ideal of the "pre-industrial village". His liberal Quaker beliefs played their part in his encouragement of a healthy way of life and vigorous promotion of adequate educational provision in this developing community.

Equally he made it clear that consumption of such things as alcohol, white bread and pork were not consistent with a healthy way of life and it was also not acceptable to neglect one's garden!

Drawing on his knowledge of architecture and architectural history, Dr Harrison gave us fascinating insights into the pattern of development of this garden village over the years. Amongst other things, he considered its changing and increasingly varied population which reflected the desire to encourage a social mix, the increasing range of buildings [including shops, churches, schools] and varied architectural styles embracing both large/small, detached/semi-detached and rented/purchased properties.

Michael Harrison is the deputy head of the School of Theoretical and Historical Studies at the University of Central England



George Cadbury
1839-1922



In a significant show of appreciation, the Cadbury employees paid for the building of the Bournville Rest House which was built to celebrate the silver wedding of George and Elizabeth (inset) in 1914

One particularly interesting and telling point was that the main architects of the village also lived there themselves. The imaginative approaches taken to fit baths in the more modest houses also provoked response from the audience.

Though focused on the early part of the 20th century, the lecture stressed the longer term on-going influences of Cadbury's initiative at Bournville both in relation to the subsequent and continuing development of "garden suburbs" [e.g. Hampstead] villages and cities [e.g. Letchworth] later in the 20th century and current plans for development of new garden villages/cities in the 21st century to address current housing shortages.

Cadbury's encouragement of open spaces, the notion of quality rather than just quantity of housing and his championing of low-density over high-density still continue to have a relevance today where housing issues both local and national continue to dominate the headlines. BILL DEWAR

**CIVIC
voice**
talking civic sense

CIVIC DAY IS A NATIONAL CELEBRATION OF CIVIC PRIDE,
A DAY WHEN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY SAY:

WE CARE ABOUT WHERE WE LIVE

**CIVIC DAY
JUNE 17**

Get your plans
into
info@civicvoice.org.uk now.

In 2009 the Yorkshire Association of Civic Societies launched an annual event that encouraged civic societies to celebrate where they live. In 2011, Civic Voice organised the first ever national Civic Day and it has been a great success ever since. It is a unique opportunity to stimulate new interest and generate a renewed sense of civic pride for communities across the country.

It has been announced that Civic Day 2017 will be held on Saturday June 17.



The changing face of the Festival

This year is the 30th season Bewdley Festival and after 29 years it was decided that a new logo should replace the one that has served Festival so well. The original logo was designed by local artist Margaret Layton in 1988.

Several local designers were invited to submit ideas for a new logo and Becky Newbold, *Director of Communication and Community* at Bewdley School hosted the selection panel. Four submissions were given numbers so that no one knew whose designs they were. They were of a very high quality but after scrutinising and evaluating, one design stood out and was chosen as the new logo for Bewdley Festival.

It was designed by Kat Carlyle, who is based at Snuff Mill in Bewdley, producing designs for websites, print and more recently Digital Marketing. Kat attended the Bewdley School and was taught by Becky Newbold, her art teacher who was a huge influence and inspirational in helping her choose a career in graphic design. Kat went on to gain a BA in Creative Digital Media from the University of Worcester. She has been a member of the Bewdley Rowing Club for 9 years and club captain from 2014-16.

Kat said: "When the opportunity for designing the new logo for Bewdley Festival came along, I wanted to be involved. I love Bewdley and to be part of anything to do with the town is a great pleasure. After extensive research I put together 11 different designs all varying in one shape or another."

We hope this new logo designed by someone who is Bewdley through and through will last for another 29 seasons of Bewdley Festival!

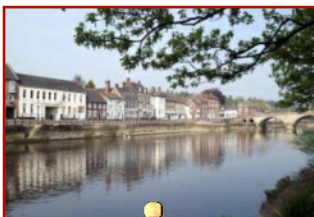
Chris Griffin



Kat Carlyle



Margaret Layton



The threads of history

Three threads of the story celebrate the major influences that shaped the history of our town: the Wyre **FOREST** provided the raw materials and craft products which fuelled businesses during Bewdley's early years, the **RIVER** Severn was the highway down which Bewdley's finished products were transported to Bristol and thence overseas and **ROYAL** charters provided patronage from which Bewdley flourished since the fifteenth century.

The project will be staged as a *Son et Lumier* on the banks of the River Severn at Bewdley Rowing Club. Two performances will be staged, on **Saturday and Sunday September 9/10**, starting at 8pm on both nights. There is no entrance fee.

These dates coincide with the nation-wide *Heritage Open Days* programme and we hope that other organisations in the town (Museum, Civic Society) will join us by arranging additional activities to form a Bewdley Heritage festival, attracting many visitors to the town. Discussions in this regard have been held with the Events Committee of Bewdley Town Council, who are supportive of the project.

The entire weekend will give us the opportunity to celebrate our culture and heritage, bringing people together to invigorate a strong and proud community spirit. The project is managed by Bewdley Choral Society, an organisation which has successfully staged concerts in the town since its original formation in 1971.

The creative team behind the project are Jim Ineson and Stephen Conway, who have staged the highly successful Bewdley Passion programmes in 2013, 2015 and 2016. The Civic Society has contributed to the cost of the event.

Rowing Club area Saturday/Sunday September 9/10





1945 essays reveal...

'Bewdley as I would like it'

In October 1945, the Civic Society held an essay competition with the aim of providing some guidance from the population of Bewdley, for those responsible for the future development of the town.

Prizes were provided by *The Kidderminster Times*. It was hoped that they would indicate a progressive scheme of development which would not rob the town of its characteristics.

The adjudicators were Christopher Hussey of *Country Life*, B.C. Hammond (Worcestershire County Council Surveyor and Bridgemaster) and William Clough-Ellis, the (the famous architect: right).

Mr. Hussey found favour with the suggestion that a bus terminus with shelters should be provided in the Wribbenhall area, and that only "through buses" should be allowed to cross the river, but on no account should shelters be built on existing stopping places. A general tidying up of the riverside is desirable but there is a danger of "over doing it".

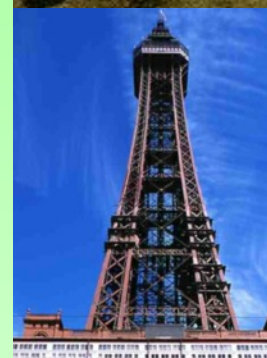
Suggested tree-planting schemes on Severn Side North and South, along with Load Street should not be encouraged as they would hide the beauty of the town.

A majority of the entrants rightly stress that Bewdley should rely on its beauty and make the most of it for attracting tourists and visitors. Suggestions that Bewdley could become the Blackpool of the Black Country went too far. Bewdley would lose all its unique character.

On the matter of housing, Mr. Hussey commented that those erected are in the places and of the kind that are required and that their character fits in with the aspirations and character of Bewdley.

The need for light industry was requested by several people and one good suggestion was for a fruit-canning factory. Several entrants would like to see small factories involving a high degree of craftsmanship suitable for a town like Bewdley.

Other suggestions were: renewal of the avenue to Ribbesford by planting trees eventually to replace the old existing trees, encouragement of flower displays in gardens and window boxes, more and better accommodation for visitors. Making up of the Welch Gate - Wyre Hill path for light traffic (see front page).



WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WOULD BE PREFERRED IN FUTURE?

Houses in a terrace?	12	129
Semi-detached houses?	249	11
Bungalows for aged people?	212	6
Flats for business people?	80	41
Scullery, living room & sitting room?	234	18
A working kitchen and a living room?	77	64
A working kitchen and dining recess in living room?	39	81
Cook by Gas?	87	65
Cook by electricity?	215	31
Cook by coal?	84	53
Heating by boiler behind living room fire?	247	18
Upstairs lavatory?	244	22
Downstairs lavatory?	100	65
Outside lavatory?	148	49
Upstairs bathroom?	300	13

Does anyone know the winners?

This fascinating piece of social history was provided by executive member Rob Limbrick. Although the competition was sponsored by the Civic Society, he didn't know the names of the winners. He says: "There is no indication of who won the competition but I suppose further research might reveal that. There is clearly nothing new in any of the strategic plans local authorities initiate these days!"

DOES ANYONE KNOW THE ANSWER? The editor will welcome the information and especially so if there happens to be an accompanying photograph. Email jyg@cix.co.uk Interestingly another fact to emerge was that the majority of people wanted built-in furniture in any new housing.

The last piece in the car-park jigsaw?

The final piece of the new surgery jigsaw will shortly be put in place with the demolition of the old surgery and library buildings (*as urged right by my colleague Pauline Lowe*) and the construction of a new car park to replace the parking spaces lost in Dog Lane.

Recently, there have been some changes to the detail of this original contract. Last year planning permission was granted for a revision to the siting of this new car park, by sliding it towards the town centre and onto the old library site.

This left, at the other end, a larger site ripe for redevelopment, a combination of the old surgery and the fire station land (The result of a land-swap between the county and district councils).

The Society see considerable advantages in this amendment. This larger combined-site would unlock many more development opportunities and benefits for the town. We hope this might spark and fund some much-needed improvements to the existing Load Street car park and with it, an improved pedestrian link from the town centre to the new medical centre, which is particularly dreadful at the moment.

We will be watching events and pressing for a comprehensive look at this area.

'Happy in principle'

While the Society remained happy with the principle of this car park shift, we were very critical of the actual design and its lack of detail and consideration for a site in the Conservation Area.

We made suggestions for a number of improvements, particularly to retain the attractive landscaped garden beside the library and the copper beech: the original plan was to insensitively, tarmac the lot!

The plans were modified and were an improvement on the original but the tarmac still ate considerably into the existing garden area.

WFDC had offered this garden to the Town Council and this was going ahead until it was realised how little of the garden was in fact to remain! The Town Council were emphatic that, if they were to maintain the garden, then they wanted it to remain wholly intact.

We understand WFDC have thankfully further reorganised the layout to accommodate this and we are now awaiting some new, properly detailed plans for final approval. So good news.

Demolition should begin shortly and hopefully be completed before the tourist season gets fully underway.

Martin Guard

From Medical Centre to unhealthy rat-run



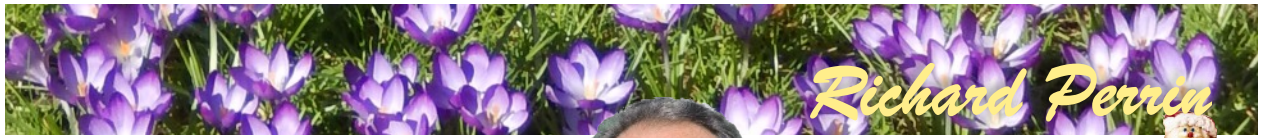
While taking a stroll in our beautiful Georgian town, I'm not sure that this is what residents and visitors expect. It has to be said that some of this appalling mess has been cleared up since these 'photos were taken last week. It would seem that at times it can be effective when residents have a (totally justifiable) moan.

Probably and more importantly in terms of public health than the degeneration of the old Health Centre and Library, are the additional features; which on a good day you might spot. Not only are there rats in the derelict buildings, but they are invading the homes and gardens of those of us who have to live with this day after day! Thanks to resident pressure, Brian Edmunds – the Senior Technical Officer at Worcester Regulatory Services - is on the case. Additionally, workers have found evidence of "a different type of rat activity" – ie beer cans, food waste and signs of drug use. All this with the summer and our busiest time for tourists approaching.

The demolition of the buildings should have started just after Christmas and the work finished by the end of February.

There is no way that the replacement car parking spaces will be available when Bewdley Town needs them most. However, this is of little consequence to residents. I understand that "the rat man cometh" but I would still recommend that – unless you find rats cute – you take great care when strolling in the area.

Pauline Lowe



Town groups working in partnership



I feel sure you will agree this Newsletter, put together expertly once again by our Editor, Jock Gallagher, shows that there is much going on in Bewdley at the present time. And in the main it's all good news.

By the time you read this the second round of consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan will be in full swing and, with the prospect of a town referendum on the final draft likely to take place in the Autumn, it's all very exciting.

Also taking place currently is the *Changing Face of Load Street Exhibition* in Bewdley Museum (see page 3). Our Committee member, Graham Luxford together with others from the Society, the Historical Research Group and the Friends of Bewdley Museum worked very hard to put this excellent exposition together.

The Civic Society also helped with the printing costs.

What an excellent example it is of different groups working in partnership. As Graham explains the Exhibition was inspired by our late and much loved President, Kenneth Hobson, and I was pleased to formally open it. Drawing on Joan Hobson's tribute to Kenneth, I hope that I did justice to him.

Accompanying this Newsletter is the Annual Report (which looks back on what we achieved last year) and our Programme which looks forward of course. We are all delighted that talks and outings have been so well attended in recent times and I hope you will find the forthcoming programme just as attractive.

We start with our AGM on April 19 which is an opportunity for the members to have their say and enjoy light refreshments in a social atmosphere after the meeting.

The Spring Outing follows on May 24 when we shall travel upstream to Shrewsbury (photo on right) for a guided tour of one of England's finest market towns. A separate sheet is enclosed which provides full details.

I look forward to seeing you all over the coming months.

Spring programme

Wednesday April 19

Annual General Meeting (with light refreshments)

7.30 pm St George's Hall

Sunday/Monday April 30/May 1

Spring Fair (with Society Guided Tours)

call 01299 405823 for details

Wednesday May 24

Day Outing to Shrewsbury (Guided tour)

see separate sheet for details



'Bewdley in the Swinging Sixties!'

Don't be misled. This talk by our chairman, is not about The Beatles or any other pop group raising the town's tiled roofs. Some of the local talent of the day - *The Crawling Kingsnakes* (featuring Robert Plant and Nigel Knowles, then a sixteen-year-old drummer) and *Shades Five* (leader Stan Webb, later of *Chicken Shack* fame) - do feature but there's much more besides.

As you would expect of the Society, the talk is much more about the bricks and mortar of the town centre in the 1960s. It's vividly illustrated by a fascinating selection of old photographs of the time (see left) which may raise a query about whether or not those can really be described as "the good old days."

The talk will be in St George's Hall at 2 30pm on Wednesday April 12.

Were these the good old days?

