



# summer 2018 newsletter

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The tranquil  
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the splendidly-  
renovated  
Redthorne House,  
a new view of the  
exquisite Catholic  
Church in the High  
Street, sun-  
drenched trees  
and the *Jubilation*  
sculpture

## The eternal beauty of a Bewdley summer



**A gem restored**



**A gem revealed**

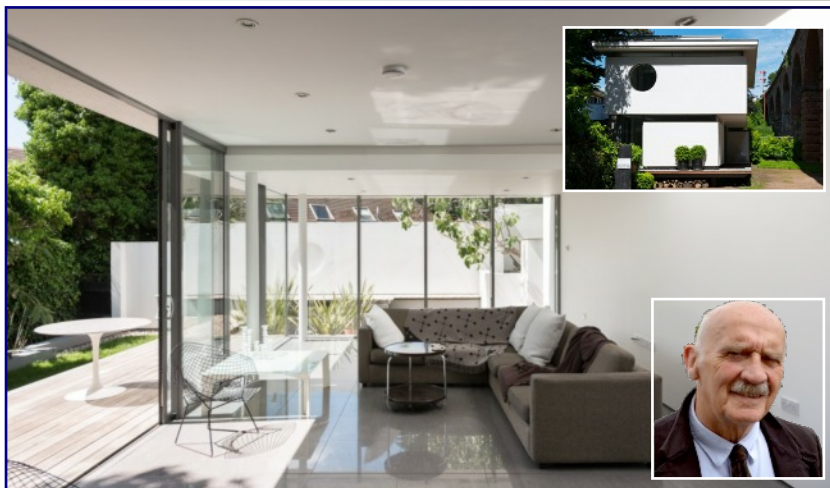


**Sun-drenched**



**Jubilant sunshine**



**Obituary: Robert Swan, architect 1938-2017**

Sandbourne House in Bewdley was designed by modernist architect Robert Swan for himself and his family in 2006. It's in a quiet plot at the end of a track beside SVR's Victorian viaduct (*see inset*) and on land once part of the Gertrude Jekyll-designed landscaped gardens.

Robert, a member of the Civic Society executive since 2010, died on the last day of 2017.

Although he left school at 17 (to work as an architectural trainee at West Bromwich Engineers & Surveyors Office), he attended years of an intensive evening course at the Birmingham School of Architecture where he got his RIBA qualifications.

He was chief architect at Tarmac Wolverhampton until 1978, when he established his own practice.

One of his early designs was the cliff-hanging Kilmore Flats in Torquay. He was called to the site one day during early construction because the builders noticed the cliff edge was weak. He proved their point when he fell - together with the cliff edge - to the rocks 40-feet below, luckily landing on his feet then pitching forward into the sea!

He followed his modernist principles in Sandbourne House (inside as well as outside) and the free-standing boundary wall is sculptural in the style of Ben Nicholson, thereby making a strong statement to look out onto.

A keen sportsman, his grandfather played for West Bromwich Albion, Robert opted to play rugby and became first-XV captain at Dudley-Kingswinford RFC in the early 70s and club president for three years in the early 90s. He later designed the club's imposing Paul Keeton Stand. He was also a keen member of the Scouts and won the Queen's Scout Award.

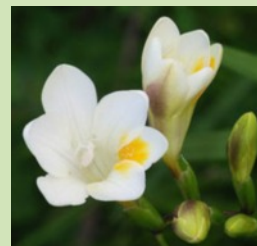
Robert is survived by his wife Liz and his children Kim, Alexandra and Edward.

A luncheon 'Celebration of the Life of Bob Swan' was held at the Diglis House Hotel, Worcester where clients and friends joined his family. The atmosphere was like an orchestra of happy people gladly sharing with each other the final memories.. Robert was diagnosed with mantle cell lymphoma in 2013 but continued working.

A fundraiser for the early detection of cancer has been opened in Robert's name. Go to [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com) and search *Robert Swan*.

*Flower of the season*

The most  
deliciously  
scented  
of all the  
freesia  
species

*Freesia alba*

The freesia, a herbaceous member of the Iris family, is regarded as one of the most fragrant plants in the world.

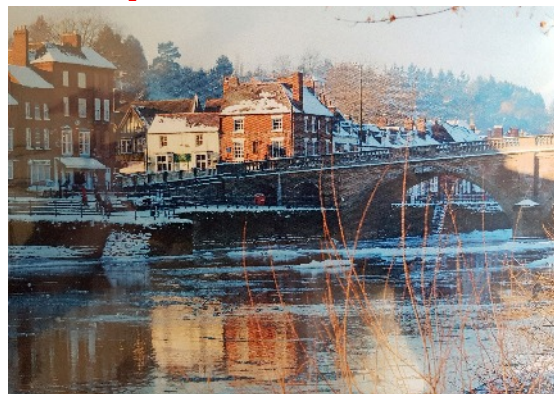
Freesias are grown for ornamental, as well as practical purposes and can be found in a wide variety of colours, as well as varying fragrances - some stronger than others.

The freesia is a beautiful bulb flower that comes in many beautiful colours. Freesias have been bred and crossbred many times and by many different cultures. This has resulted in the development of a wide array of variations, all of which boast characteristics all their own.

The Freesia alba and Freesia leichtinii species became popular after making their debut in the late 1800s, and they are still regarded as the most deliciously-scented of all Freesia species.

The flower was named by a Dr. Freese of Kiel, Germany, who died in 1876.

**The Newsletter is edited by Jock Gallagher; articles, letters, comments and photographs are always welcome. Please email [jyg@cix.co.uk](mailto:jyg@cix.co.uk) The Winter edition will be published in mid-December**

**Society's new Christmas Card****See Page 8**

# ROLLING ON THE RIVER

The recent death of Ollie Johnson (see page 11) reminded me that his uncle Charles Brown (aka CCJB) used to write articles (see right) for the *Newsletter* in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He was the manager of the tannery in Severnside South in the 1920s and died about ten years ago.

CCJB remembered the tail-end of the river trade and was one of the last to do so. When we conduct our guided walks we always explain how the boats managed to pass the bridge travelling upstream and point out the wooden roller fixed on the bridge by the small arch on the town side of the river. This was commissioned by the Civic Society to

replace the original which had been vandalised in the 1970s. It was designed by the late Ray

Yates and Peter Archer (our VP and Hon Treasurer) organised its manufacture.

There had been another (vertical) roller at the same place but we have no photographic evidence of this.

The marks the ropes caused by cutting into the cast iron bar protecting the stonework almost cut through at one point. These marks on the bar, (put there by Telford when he built the bridge: we have the original plans), must have occurred before the rollers were installed. These rollers were no doubt a good idea.

Not only did they protect the bar but also the boatmen's ropes from fraying! When the flood defences were installed in 2002 layers of concrete were removed by the base of the bridge and, unintentionally, the bottom fixing point of the vertical roller was exposed. Maybe this was a cue for the Society to reinstate the second roller?

RICHARD PERRIN



The article by CCJB appeared in the Autumn 2001 *Newsletter*

## The skills of the horse-man

*I know exactly how boats were passed under the bridge. It was quite simple and took four or five minutes. At the downstream end of the horse-arch were two fixed rollers: one vertical on the right and one across the right curve at an angle of about 40 degrees. The vertical roller was about five feet long and six inches in diameter. It was a solid cylinder of wood strengthened by bands of strip iron.*

*This roller was very heavy and revolved horizontally on very rough iron spindles, formed by driving iron bars into the stonework and bending the ends at ninety degrees to fit into iron tubes driven into the two ends of the roller.*

*The upper roller was similarly constructed but was shorter, about three feet six inches long and turned on similar spindles. They were designed to protect both the stonework of the arch and the tow rope.*

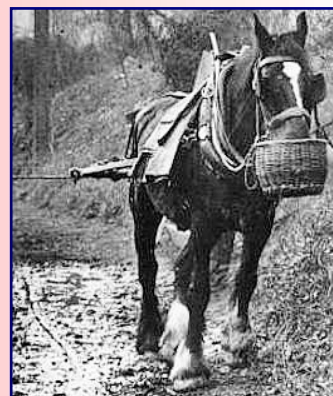
*The horse-man led the horse through the arch until the barge was close under the arch. Already the tow rope was resting on the roller which, having no bearings, made a horrible rumbling, bumping noise.*

### Cowboy-style!

*The horse-man then took a second rope - which hung on the horse like a cowboy's lariat - secured one end to the harness and then threw it into the river. The boatman retrieved it with his boat-hook and fastened this end to the short stumpy mast.*

*The first rope was then coiled and carried on horse or boat and the horse moved forward pulling the boat through the arch - the boatman steering with the tiller. The second horse arch on the Wribbenhall side, was never used as such, it was used as a closed store for tools and materials.*

CCJB



• At a steady walking speed, a horse can move approximately fifty times as much weight in a boat as it could with a cart on old fashioned roads (100 times its own body weight). The load moves with minimal friction whilst the strength of the animal is linked directly to the load with little wasted energy. It was also this old-fashioned horse-power that kept trade going profitably for a century and a half thereafter. •

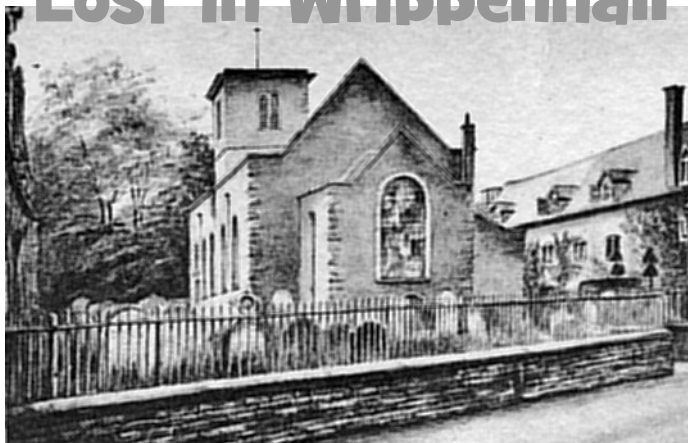
## Barges and Bargemen by Dr Barry Tinder: published in 2006

The carriage of goods in river barges was for centuries one of the principal forms of commercial transport in Britain. This book focuses on the River Severn between Bewdley and Stourport and the medieval weir near Welshpool that marks the uppermost limit of boating, a stretch where the river remained 'in a state of nature'. Dr Trinder traces the fascinating history of river trade from 1660, through its heyday during the Industrial Revolution, when Manchester textiles, Coalbrookdale iron castings, Birmingham hardware, and Hanley and Burslem pottery were all transported via the Severn, to its gentle decline in the late 19th century. He creates an absorbing picture of the colourful lives of barge owners and watermen. It is complemented by superb illustrations.





## Lost in Wribbenhall



In Wribbenhall, there is a peaceful "Garden of Rest", hiding between Westbourne Street and Ricketts Place. A church stood on this site from 1720 until about 1880, when it was replaced by All Saints' Church along Kidderminster Road.

This is a drawing of the church which is probably from its later years, as it shows numerous gravestones. Burials began in 1841 and there were 366, the last one being in 1874.

After World War Two, the area was cleared, any gravestones being removed to the edges. Was this when the cross was erected or was that done in about 1880?

Today there is a lych gate giving access to the garden from Westbourne Street, opposite the old Wribbenhall School. The drawing has no lych gate and I understand both lych gates were erected in 1949.

The Westbourne Street one has an inscription on the step; could this have been the original threshold for the church? I'd love to know if anyone has any further information. Heather Flack [hm.flack@btinternet.com](mailto:hm.flack@btinternet.com)

## ...and founded in 1878

All Saints' Church was built in 1878 on land given by Walter Chamberlain Hemming of Spring Grove, now the West Midlands Safari Park. With it, he gave the surrounding land, which had been used, as a burial ground for the people of Wribbenhall since 1866. It replaced the old Christ Church, which dated from 1701. The people of Wribbenhall needed a new church because Christ Church was built on land which had been bought in 1728 by the then Lord Foley and in 1750, after a row with the parishioners about who should hold the keys he had one door padlocked and another walled up. He claimed it was private property and he could do as he liked.

The matter was referred to the Attorney General and he ruled in favour of the parishioners. The church continued to be used but it, and the surrounding grounds, were not consecrated until 1841. With the building of the new church it was pulled down and the font moved to its new home.

## MAY VISIT MAPPA MUNDI Hereford



## A day to remember

After an enjoyable journey through the wonderful Worcestershire and Herefordshire countryside our troop arrived at Hereford Cathedral which dates back to Saxon times. After soft drinks and snacks at the café, everyone was free to explore the four lovely NGS gardens and interior of this magnificent structure.

*Seeing the Mappa Mundi up close was such a real treat.*

The most significant revision of the Magna Carta was issued by Henry III in 1217.

Hereford Cathedral is fortunate to possess one of these 1217 charters. Only four of which survive today. In the Chained Library, all the books are chained by their front covers to the shelves so that their fore-edges, rather than their spines, face outward. This allowed the books to be drawn out for reading and research but they couldn't be taken away. An effective Middle Ages security system?

Walking around the massive structure took about an hour to look at everything within.

In the afternoon, we separated into two groups for our guided walk and talk around the city to take in its history. A lovely stroll over the Wye Bridge spanning the river and seeing the height that the river gets to when in flood was amazing.

We returned via the Victoria footbridge and were shown a monument to Lord Nelson erected in 1809 on the site of the bailey and moat of Hereford Castle, which was being dismantled at this time. The city has a colourful history...it was controlled by the Romans, the Welsh, the Saxons, the Danes and the Normans and supported the Royalist cause through the civil wars. Its effect on the Cathedral and its bishops has been considerable.

The drive back to Bewdley was restful and the weather was on our side throughout the day.

Everyone seems to have enjoyed the visit.

**JASON WILLIAMS**





## GLADMAN JUST WON'T TAKE NO FOR ANSWER



Despite the very clear objections of residents, the town and district councils and a very firm rejection by the government inspector, Gladman are still refusing to take NO for an answer to their bid to build houses. They launched a further appeal to the High Court last month (May 17).

BSNTG Chair, Rod Stanczynsyn, has been in consultation with High Court representatives and has been told that it could take the High Court up to three months to process, with a judge's ruling, on whether to proceed with the challenge, expected before the end of August.

The High Court process is by nature both complex and lengthy, to ensure fair play and maintain justice. Although, it is our contention that such a challenge is totally unnecessary following the Planning Inspector's clear-cut appeal report and decision.

As ever, the BSNTG team will monitor and report findings as and when there is any further news.



Bewdley's near-namesake in the South of France is the picturesque village (pop 4000) on the coast between Nice and Monaco. Society executive member Dr Jenny Frow stayed there while attending an international tennis tournament and shared the view of the beautiful beach (above)

She writes: *I recently found myself staying in our "alter ego" and thought people might be interested. While we have SVR and the Safari Park as well as the town itself, Beaulieu sur Mer boasts a beach (above), the famous Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild (below) and Rose Villa, once the home of film star David Niven (inset below) and still resplendent in pink! There's a bus every ten or fifteen minutes to Monaco...and it only costs two euros!*



Bewdley  
Festival  
October 12-20

**Tickets for all shows are  
available online at  
and from the TIC and from  
the Festival Office in St  
George's Hall.**

### Society sponsors civilisation!

The Society is again sponsoring a keynote event at this year's October Festival. Making a return visit to Bewdley, Professor Alice Roberts presents *Tamed: three species that changed our world*. Professor Roberts, (right) a biological anthropologist, author and broadcaster delves into archaeology, history and genetics to reveal the amazing stories of three species that became our allies. For hundreds of thousands of years, our ancestors depended on wild plants and animals for survival. They were hunter-gatherers, consummate foraging experts, taking the world as they found it. Then a revolution occurred, Our ancestors' interaction with other species changed. They began to tame them. The human population boomed; civilisation began.

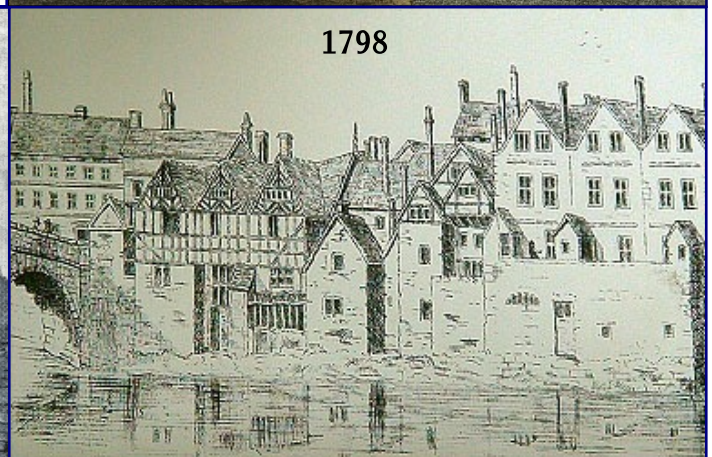
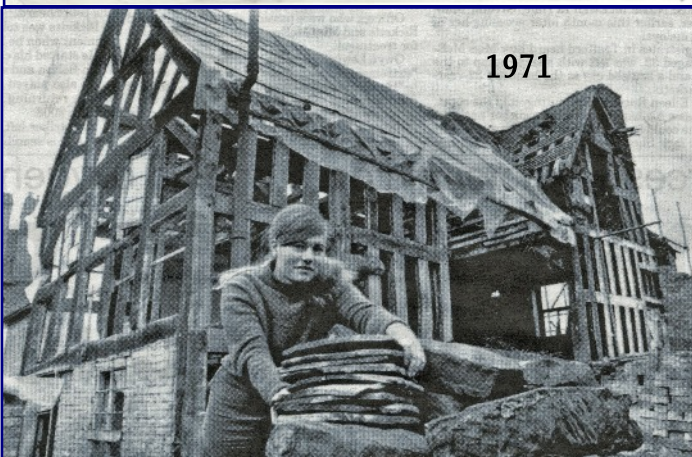
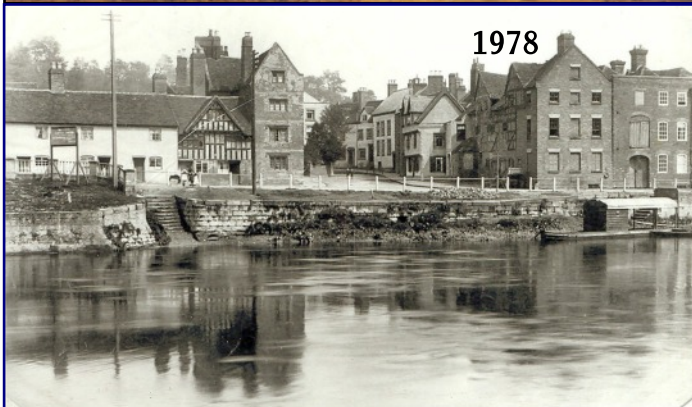


**Mercure Hotel 8pm Wednesday October 17 tickets £20**



# Glimpses of the past

Photos from the Kenneth Hobson Collection



1971: A labour of love. Gill Holland, who died last month (*see Page 11*), begins the painstaking, back-breaking work of restoring historic Bridge View. She and her husband bought the historic house for £300...but it had been derelict for more than five years and was facing demolition. The estimated cost of repairs was, then, a massive £6000. The town watched in wonder as - over three decades - they brought it slowly back to life.





**CIVIC VOICE**  
talking civic sense

The Big Conservation Conversation: update

# Bewdley's voice is being heard nationally

Following the article in our *Spring Newsletter*, the Civic Voice Conservation Audit Pilot, completed by a Society sub-group has been taken to National level.

Barbara Longmore, Society Secretary, was invited to make a presentation in April to the Civic Voice Regional Forum, which brings together representatives from Civic Societies throughout the country. Her presentation showed the Audit results for Bewdley and illustrated the problem areas in our conservation area.

Information from this was then fed into the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Civic Societies at Westminster in May, where it was referred to in presentations from the floor.

The chair of the APPG, Craig Mackinlay MP (right), said: "I applaud groups such as Bewdley Civic Society for participating in the pilot to make this civic idea come to life."

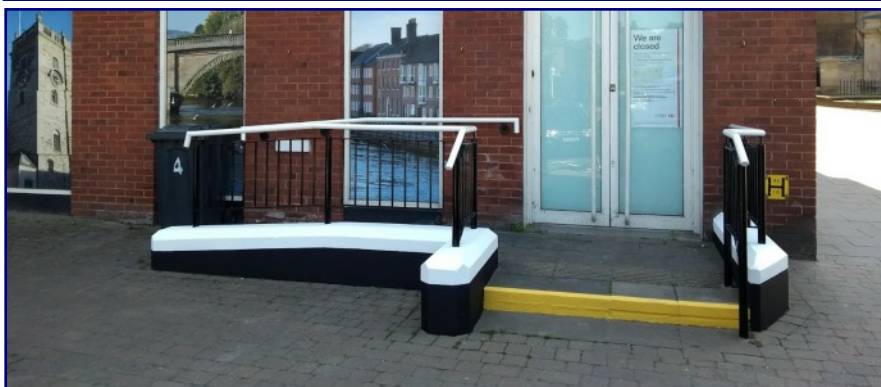


In her presentation, Joan Humble, Civic Voice Chair, used the front page of the Newsletter, headlined *Health check on our town's fabric* and displayed the photographs of the problems identified. She congratulated the Civic Society for its detailed analysis.

Our group now has the task of working to effect improvements and will be meeting to discuss how we might achieve this. The next meeting of the APPG for Civic Societies at Westminster will take place in July and will ask the question: *Can Communities Shape the Future of our Conservation Areas?*

The Civic Voice report *What is the Future for our Conservation Areas?* (May, 2018) is available on the Civic Voice website and can be located using the following url:

[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/70a99b\\_70f244d02fd0441bb9f8bc2f1943d021.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/70a99b_70f244d02fd0441bb9f8bc2f1943d021.pdf)



After a plea from the Civic Society (via the Town Clerk), the slope outside the old HSBC bank has been smartened up in anticipation of the erection of the Stanley Baldwin statue later in the year.



The wild-flower meadow in Jubilee Gardens



## NOTES FROM THE AGM

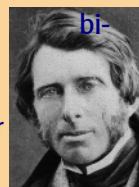
The Committee members for 2018-19 are

PRESIDENT Mrs Beatrice Grant  
CHAIR Richard Perrin  
VICE CHAIR Chris Griffin  
TREASURER Peter Archer  
SECRETARY Barbara Longmore  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Steve Bent  
Bill Dewar Dr Jenny Frow Jock  
Gallagher Martin Guard Sharon  
Harvey Ann Howarth Rob Limbrick  
Graham Luxford Sue Perrin Dr Alan  
Scapelhorn Brian Stephens Peter  
Waldron Ian Williams

**Baldwin Trail:** Stourport Civic Society chair and a representative from Wilden Church have agreed to work with us to develop a comprehensive *Baldwin Trail*. Initial meetings have taken place.

**Tidy up:** Town Council arranged the re-painting of the flower tubs behind St Anne's Church as part of a tidy-up and the benches from the planned statue site are currently being restored by Mark Woodward.

Next year marks the centenary of John Ruskin and will see the culmination of a two-year project at Ruskinland in the Wyre Forest. The project will explore how Ruskin's idea of a utopian community in the forest is informing the revitalisation of the ancient woodland.



Editor's footnote:

I was somewhat taken aback - pleasantly - when member John Iles proposed a vote of thanks to the editor for what he described as the "excellent" qualities of the *Newsletter*. I then had further cause to blush when those present also offered a spontaneous round of applause. It's nice to be appreciated. Thank you



**The Chess master**

Congratulations to Society Member Hugh Morgan who has won the St Anne's Chess Club championship for the third year in a row.





**BALSAM BASH 2018**

by Steve Bent

## A threat to the riverbank

**H**imalayan Balsam is a very successful invasive plant spreading particularly along river courses throughout the country. It out-competes most native plants, reducing bio-diversity and because it's an annual, leaves the river bank bare in winter and prone to subsidence.

It's a significant problem. A biological deterrent is being introduced but it's very early days. Volunteer group efforts to pull up or cut down plants to keep it in check are really the only practical local answer at the moment.

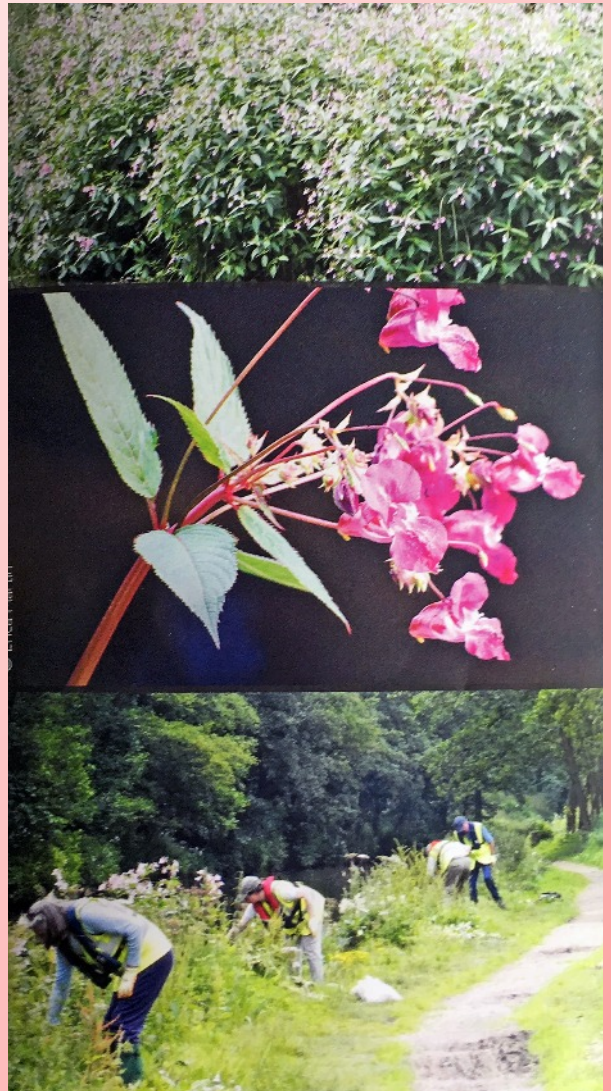
The Civic Society has been organising a campaign for several years now and its become a successful annual event.

This year it will take place between 10am and 1pm on Saturday July 28, Monday July 30, Tuesday July 31, Wednesday August 1, Thursday August 2 and Friday August 3. Meet at the benches on Severnside South down from Bewdley Bridge.

Himalayan Balsam is an innocuous plant. It's non-toxic, there are no thorns or stinging parts and because it is shallow rooted, even large plants come up easily.

No special equipment is required beyond sturdy footwear and gloves although some people find wielding a stick to be therapeutic.

If you do want to lend a hand, do come along on any of the above dates even if you can only spare an hour or so. It can be quite a social event. For further information contact me at [stevenclivebent1@aol.com](mailto:stevenclivebent1@aol.com) **SEE PAGE 12**



## The Society's first Christmas card

**T**his beautifully-atmospheric picture of the bridge in winter is featured on the



Society's first Christmas card (now on sale from executive member Sharon Harvey).

The photographer is her niece, Clare, who took the photograph during a visit to Bewdley. Currently a keen amateur, Clare (29) the mother-of-two, hopes to become a professional. Proceeds of the sales - at £4.95 per pack of ten cards with envelopes - go to the Society (registered charity no. 700898)



**Bewdley Bridge over the River Severn PHOTO by Clare McHugh**

Cards available from [s.harvey1885@btinternet.com](mailto:s.harvey1885@btinternet.com)



## Bewdley's political past

## Part I

**A tale of Tories, Whigs, Royalists, Liberals...the landed gentry, a war hero, a West End playwright, businessmen, dilettantes...even the odd rogue or two**

**B**ewdley was established by charter as a Royal Borough in 1604 and became a single-member parliamentary constituency at the first election in 1605. From then until 1950 when the seat disappeared, the town experienced more than forty MPs during those 345 years.

I use the word *experienced* because in the early days, there was no representative democracy as we know it. There was no universal franchise. For that first election, there were just thirteen electors ...the bailiff and burgesses (members of the town corporation), who didn't even have to be resident in Bewdley.

The same applied to candidates, of course, allowing us to enjoy the representation of a young viscount who became the 7th Duke of Manchester and many others who had addresses far from Worcestershire. One was a Freeman...of Portsmouth and the playwright wasn't to be prised out of his Drury Lane home.

The seat was often handed down through families or bartered among the so-called nobility with scant regard for what the citizens might want or need. As a result, names that recur and resound down the centuries are Herbert (for a total of 26 years), Foley (10), Lyttleton (a record 67), Winnington (61) and in latter years, Baldwin.

*Stanley succeeded his father, Alfred (right), who had succeeded his cousin, Enoch (see next page. Between them they held the seat for fifty years!*



### POCKET POLITICS

Because of the anomalous situation, any of the constituencies were largely rotten boroughs (bluntly referring to the rotten way in which the voice of the people was ignored) or pocket seats (meaning the sponsors of would-be MPs had the tiny electorate of councillors - in their pocket!).

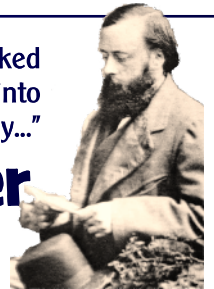
Most of the time, there weren't elections and when there was, there was often skulduggery. On one occasion in Bewdley, a group of voters were effectively imprisoned in a local tavern and plied

**continued on next page**

A new series in which the Editor will profile some of the more colourful MPs who represented Bewdley between 1605 and 1950, when the constituency was abolished and the town became part of the Kidderminster division until it morphed into the Wyre Forest seat in 1983.

"Taking a lance, he dashed out...knocked the drivers off their carts and rode into the middle of the enemy..."

## The dashing lancer who won the VC



**O**ne of the most colourful of our MPs - and certainly the bravest - was Augustus Anson, who happened to be the son of the Postmaster General who also happened to be the first Earl of Lichfield. (*That's the way of things in those days when there were no troublesome electors to worry about*).

He was the town's thirty-sixth MP and sat as a Liberal from 1869-74. He had an impeccable military career and was just 22 and a captain in the 9th Light Dragoons when he won his VC in 1857 during the Indian Mutiny.

His citation shows his "conspicuous" bravery in vivid detail: "The Dragoons had charged through the town and were re-forming when the enemy attempted to close the entrance by drawing their carts across it, so as to shut in the cavalry and form a cover from which to fire upon them.

*"Captain Anson, taking a lance, dashed out of the gateway, and knocked the drivers off their carts and rode into the middle of the enemy, who fired a volley at him, one ball passing through his coat."*

"Six weeks later, at Lucknow, at the assault of the Secundra Bagh, he entered with the storming party; his horse was killed and he was wounded. He has shown the greatest gallantry on every occasion, and has slain many enemies in fight."

It was signed by the commander-in-chief Major-General Sir James Hope Grant.

On his return to England, he married the daughter of the first Bishop of St Alban and later achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1859, he was elected MP for Lichfield (the family seat) as a Liberal, holding the seat until 1868.

For reasons that are not clear, he then switched to Bewdley when there was a by-election in 1869. He lost but somehow the election was overturned on petition and he took the seat and remained in parliament until 1874.

This despite the collapse, in 1870, of a company he ran in partnership with a fellow Dragoons officer, William Palliser, the MP for Taunton.

Soon after leaving parliament and moving to France, he died in Cannes...at the age of 42. There is a memorial plaque to him in Lichfield Cathedral.



BEWDLEY'S POLITICAL PAST continued from Page 9

## The advent of party labels

continued from previous page/ with beer to keep them away from the voting booth and good old-fashioned fisticuffs were not unusual. (*watch for more reports in the Autumn Newsletter*). In the 17th century, the House of Commons upheld a charge of bribery against our local MP and promptly un-seated him.

Although Sir Henry Herbert styled himself a *Royalist* in the 1640 election, parliamentary candidates didn't fight under party labels for nearly fifty more years.

Ironically, the first locally was his son, also Henry Herbert. In 1689, he resisted familial influence and stood for the Whigs, who wanted to limit the royal authority and increase parliamentary power!

Thereafter, the seat changed hands between the Whigs and Tories through until 1859 when the Whigs morphed into Liberals. The swapping continued until 1885 when the Conservatives won and held the seat until it was abolished in 1950.

Despite the success of the suffragettes in 1918, there does not appear to have been a woman candidate, certainly not a female MP.

Despite the creation of the Independent Labour Party in 1893 and the Labour Party in 1906, only two Labour candidates fought in Bewdley.

A Mr H Mills fought under the ILP banner in 1921, giving Stanley Baldwin his first contested election for more than twenty years. He won ten per cent of the vote. There was no Liberal.

The other Labour candidate - in 1929 - was Sardius Hancock. He had previously stood as a Liberal in 1922 and 1923. He also took about ten per cent of the vote. He was the author of *The Cruise of the Golden Fleece*.



### MP's merry-go-round

A classic example of the merry-go-round of candidates was Sir Edmund Lechmore (left, as featured in *Vanity Fair*). He was distinguished: senior partner in Worcester Old Bank, an hereditary knight of the shires, High Sheriff of Worcestershire and pioneer of the Red Cross. But he first became an MP in 1866...for Tewksbury. He lost in 1868 and again in 1874. In 1876 he switched successfully to West Worcestershire but when that seat disappeared, he finally arrived in Bewdley in 1885. However as soon as the opportunity arose in 1892, he switched to Evesham, after seven years loyal service to the town.

### Park-keeper extraordinary

While none matched the triumphs of Stanley Baldwin, three-times Prime Minister, other local MPs also held high office. One was a full-time courtier in the service of King James and gloried in the title of Keeper of the Deer in Twickenham Park. When he came here, he promptly became the Keeper of Bewdley Park!

Master of the Revels may sound like a joke but within the theatrical world, the holder of that title - held tenaciously by our Sir Henry Herbert - it was hugely influential and as was common at the time, a seat of corruption. One Master was reputed to make ten times his official salary in bribes to grant licences for performances.

The job, once effectively Shakespeare's boss, was subsumed into the Lord Chamberlain's office.

## Stanley's uncle: the first Baldwin MP

Enoch Baldwin (1822-1905), the first of the family that was to hold the seat for fifty years, was Bewdley's MP for five years between 1880 and 1885, when he was an early victim of boundary changes. The seat originally based on the borough was abolished and became a wider county division.

He sat as a Liberal but lost the re-organised seat to a Conservative.

Like his father - also Enoch - before him, he was an iron-founder and he joined the family firm of Baldwin Son & Co established in Stourport in 1839 by his uncle George Pearce Baldwin.

### Senior partner

He became a senior partner and helped in the take-over of the Wilden Ironworks, which became the basis of the Baldwin family fortune.

The works had previously been owned by the Foley family which provided Bewdley with several MPs. It was no surprise therefore when Enoch followed them into Parliament.

He was 58 but clearly never had the patronage that would take him to high office. He lost the seat after a single five-year term.

### The House votes for war



Karl Anton Hickel's painting of Pitt the Younger addressing the House of Commons on the outbreak of war with France in 1793. Bewdley's MP at the time was the Hon George Lyttleton.

The more recent shape of the constituency is remarkable. From 1885 to 1918 it included not just the municipal borough but also Worcester, Hundred House, Tenbury and part of Malvern and Stourport. Between 1918 and 1950, it included Bewdley, Malvern, Stourport, Martley, Rock, Tenbury and Upton-on-Severn, the rural district which consisted of the parishes of Redmarley D'Abitot and Staunton and in the Rural District of Tewkesbury, the parishes of Chaceley and Pendock.



Obituary Gill Holland 1943-2018

## 'An indomitable spirit'

It seemed quite logical for someone born in the Worcestershire riverside town of Evesham to move a short distance and settle in Bewdley. Gill did this with a diversion to Cardiff to read Classics at the University and to meet and marry Terry.

They bought No 3 Beale's Corner, listed, and in need of further loving restoration. There, with their Morris Minor, *The Ethnic But*, parked on the cobblestones outside, they seemed nearer to the spirit of Bewdley's past than its present.

Visitors to the town no longer rapped on the door to demand: *'Two Teas'* but their elderly neighbours still lamented that *"you could no longer throw unwanted furniture into the river"*.

No 3 was the first house in Wribbenhall to flood with water rising through the drains. Gill was to work tirelessly on Flood Prevention and Alleviation Schemes, at local and national level.

She worked on the administration side of Kidderminster College and then in Bewdley Library where she was noted for the healthy tomato plants on the window sills.

She was always keen on self-sufficiency (later a member of Transition Bewdley) and had an allotment in, what was then, the Rectory Garden. She could sometimes be met walking her goat along the lanes where it could browse the hedgerows. Less usually it would be seen on the back seat of a red A40 car, its head over the back of the front passenger seat.

The next project was the purchase and restoration of Bridge View, the house at the far end of the row of three adjacent cottages. The house had been brick clad and had a cellar full of water. Gill helped remove the cladding to reveal the 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house beneath.

However, her chief pride was that she, with the advice of a local builder, retiled the roof. One of the sights of Bewdley was to see Gill on the roof of Bridge View. The birth of twin daughters, Beth and Lucy and then a son, William, changed her priorities but there are many local frogs who started as jam-jar classroom tadpoles who owe their life and freedom to Gill.

Terry found that being the head of a large happy family was not as he had envisaged and Gill and the children settled in Bridge View.

She studied at Pershore Horticultural College and like her mother (who, widowed young, stitched loose-covers to help with finance), she worked in a wholesale nursery and a farm shop and also behind the counter of the local newsagents.

Her interest in local affairs never faded and she regularly attended Town Council meetings. She was a member of Bewdley Development Trust and the Riverside North Park Committee.

After the sale of Bridge View, she moved into No 5 Beale's Corner – the centre cottage in the row which, largely due to her, presents such an attractive river frontage.

It was here that she was struck down with agonising and crippling arthritis. Eventually, she was able to walk with two sticks as far as Tesco but otherwise she was house-bound. Her interest in and commitment to Bewdley never wavered and due to her computer skills she played as full a part as before in local affairs.

Hers was an indomitable spirit.

Joan Hobson



Obituary Ollie Johnson 1943-2018

## The fighting spirit of the carpet-maker

Olliver 'Ollie' Johnson was a longstanding member of the Civic Society and very well known in Kidderminster and in Bewdley, where he lived for many years. The packed Baxter Church in Kidderminster for his memorial service was testament to the fondness in which he was held.



I represented the Society at the service and hoped to learn about his business life in the carpet industry.

While we were told much about his social life and his strong attachment to

Kidderminster Rugby Club, information on the business front was scant so, with Melvyn Thompson's permission, I have culled the following information from his book *Mills & Tall Chimneys of Kidderminster* which continues to be on sale at the Museum of Carpet.

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Johnson family acquired The Chlidema Carpet Company Ltd from Henry Fawcett and Henry Winnall based in Green Street. These two had patented a unique method of making up bordered squares of carpet. The name was derived from the Greek word *chlido*, meaning luxurious.

In 1968, the company purchased the buildings and equipment of the failed Empire Carpets in Foley Park and transferred their existing operation from Green Street. But they too ran into financial difficulties and in 1979 ceased trading.

However, Ollie and his brother, Adrian, continued weaving carpets in the Foley Park building through a company they owned called Gateway Carpets Ltd until they sold out to Traditional Weavers Ltd in 1995. Parts of the Chlidema Mill in Green Street and the Empire building in Foley Park are still extant.

RP







# Richard Perrin

## SUMMER 2018

from the

### Chairman's Desk



#### STOP PRESS

## Stanley Baldwin statue: September unveiling announced



I'm delighted to advise (at last) that we have a date for the unveiling: **Thursday, September 27**. More news on this later but please make a note of this important date in your diaries.

### On-site meeting will assess risks to bridge

Our ongoing discussions with County Councillor Becky Vale recently revealed that no dialogue had yet taken place between Historic England and Worcestershire County Council officials despite the bridge having been placed on HE's At Risk Register (see Society's *Winter 2017 Newsletter*).



A good-news note from Steve Bent, our riverbank expert: "I'm pleased to report that some progress has been made on the two areas of growth on the right bank below Gardner's Meadow car park. The Environment Agency has secured funding for an eradication programme in our area with the focus is on Japanese Knot-weed and Giant Hogweed. Alas Himalayan Balsam is too extensive and would break the budget. I will keep you informed of developments."

### Newsletter

I hope you enjoy this latest issue. As ever, Jock has produced another colourful edition and I know he's particularly pleased that there have been more contributions from members than usual. Please keep them coming.

With Councillor Vale's encouragement, I have contacted an official at HE which will lead to an on-site meeting when the problems identified by the Society and HE can be documented. This will be a precursor to ongoing negotiations with WCC in an attempt to get some action. *This exercise should not be confused with the works that are needed to repair the damage caused by vehicles in recent months. These are quite separate, and we understand that relevant repair work is planned once new stone has been sourced and manufactured.*

### Next outing

Following the most successful trip to Hereford and the Mappa Mundi our next outing is to Bill Cash's wonderful mediaeval moated manor house at Upton Cressett near Bridgnorth. An application form is attached to this newsletter. I do hope we can fill the coach again

### WISDOM IN WOOD



## New residents association?

Plans for a new residents association to cover the town's Conservation Area will be discussed at a meeting in St George's Hall on Saturday July 21 at 10 30am. Anyone interested should email [jyg@cix.co.uk](mailto:jyg@cix.co.uk) for details.

Now in its eighth year since it was revived, the Society's Cherry Fair will be held over the weekend of July 21 and 22. Run in conjunction with the Museum, it will again have a 40s theme with vintage cars, stalls and events organised by Museum staff. As usual, a selection of different varieties of cherry will be available for tasting and comparing. The intention is to encourage interest and awareness of the many sorts of tastes. Modern, commercially viable methods of growing and increased interest, mean old varieties may be rescued. There will be young, container-grown trees suitable for gardens. We will also be selling videos and other items showing the work of the Society. Museum staff will also be selling fresh cherries. Please bring your friends and neighbours and together renew an enthusiasm for cherries . **BRIAN STEPHENS**

## Cherry Fair Saturday July 21





**OUTING TO UPTON CRESSETT HALL**  
**WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 26 2018**



We shall visit this most interesting Grade 1 Elizabethan brick manor house with a spectacular 15th century Great Hall. It is the home of William and Lady Laura Cash who will kindly give us a guided tour. First of all we will stop off in Bridgnorth and have some free time to explore and have lunch. You are invited to either bring your own lunch or visit one of the many cafes and eating places. We intend to arrive at Upton Cressett at 2pm for the guided tour to start at 2.30pm. Tea and cakes will follow the tour and we aim to be back in Bewdley for approximately 5pm.

The coach will leave Load Street (outside Cheap and Cheerful) at 10.25am and will then also pick up at Blackstone Picnic Park at 10.30am for those wishing to park their car there.

The cost of the trip will be £22.50 per person which includes the cost (£12.50) of the guided tour and the refreshments.

If you would like to join this Outing please return the form below by 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018

.....

**OUTING TO UPTON CRESSETT September 26 2018 Cost £22.50 per person**

I/we would like to attend the above outing

Name(s).....

Telephone.....

Mobile.....

Please complete and return this slip together with your cheque by September 15 2018 to:

Sue Perrin  
59 Park Lane  
Bewdley  
DY12 2HA

Tel. 405823  
Sueperrin11@gmail.com