

Goodbye to Gladman?

See Page 12



SPRING 2018 newsletter



FIFTY years after it was first designated, the Civic Society conducted an audit of the local Conservation Area and highlights a series of issues that they say require urgent attention

Health check on town's fabric

Working to a national template as part of the *Big Conservation Conversation*, the Society's Town Centre Group raises alarm bells about the historic fabric of Bewdley.

Historic England has already highlighted several buildings in High Street and the bridge is on their at-risk list but the group (see Page 11) has conducted a more detailed scrutiny and its findings do not make for comfortable reading.

There is clearly no attempt at Town Centre management

There appears to be no oversight of nor signing-off of repairs

Neglect has led to serious decay on some buildings and shop fronts

Heavy traffic threatens continuing damage and causes air pollution

Many pavements are repaired with all the artistry of the vandal and some are in a dangerous and unsightly state

Late-night drinking (especially in the street) creates an unpleasant feeling of foreboding

Graffiti, litter from the fast-food outlets and evidence of human urination and dog poo with pavements scarred by chewing-gum

/Continued on Page 2



'Repaired with all the artistry of the vandal'



Un-repaired by anyone



Baldwin bestrides Bewdley

See Page 5

Midnight should be witching hour for local drinkers

The Town Council has agreed to play a more active role in the granting of licence applications following residents' concerns about loud music and late-night drinking.

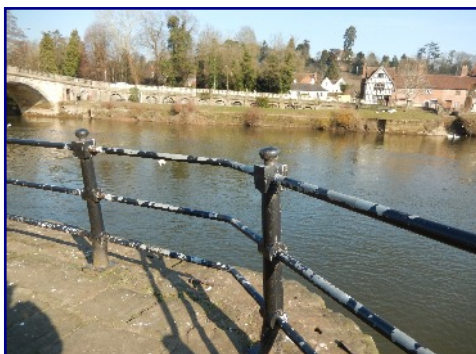
One recent application was scaled back to midnight which the Council believes is late enough in a town like Bewdley.

The most recent application has also been scaled back to midnight from the original 3am to the relief of town centre residents. The Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee, Councillor Calne Edginton-White said "We recognise how important the night-time economy is to Bewdley but at the same time there are a lot of residential properties in the town centre. We must strike a balance and we believe that midnight is late enough in Bewdley."

Ribbesford House



History under the hammer - Page 3



'The most-perfect Georgian town in Worcestershire'

Pevsner but that was sixty years ago: see Page 10

/Continued from Page 1

Satellite dishes, air vents

There are reports of rats in deserted building and the narrow, unkempt alleyways on both sides of Load Street add to the general seediness

Overall, our local audit found that the danger of loss of historic character was *very serious* (rated 5 by *Civic Voice* scoring); there were concerns about **neglect and decay** (5) ie general maintenance of buildings, graffiti, vandalism, anti-social behaviour; about the **public realm** (5) ie car-parking, poor quality of pavements, streetclutter, loss of historic paving, cobbles and kerbs; and about **landscape & green spaces** (4) loss of trees

CIVIC VOICE

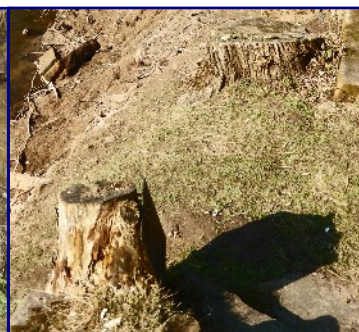
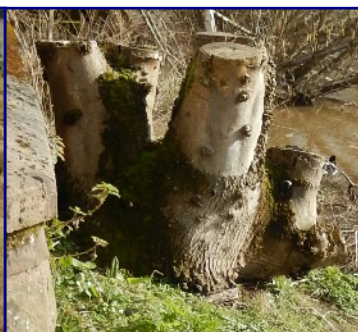
See Page 11



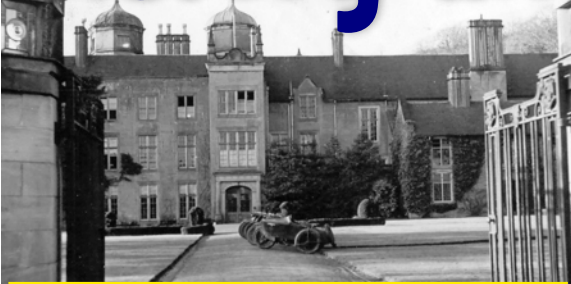
Who signed off these 'repairs'?



CHAINSAW MASSACRE on the riverbank...within the Conservation Area



History under the hammer



Home In The Woods Drawing by Mark Hilsden

'Pleasant for the somer, but not healthful for the winter'

The name Ribbesford seems to date back to the early 11th century when there were two manor houses in the area but by 1086, the Domesday Book lists only one. It belonged to the Crown until Simon de Ribbesford (who took his name from the manor) was granted possession.

The house then went through multiple noble families - including the Mortimers, Beauchamps and the Actons - but was again Crown property until Charles I presented it in 1627 to the first Lord Herbert and his two brothers, George and the politician Sir Henry.

Lord Herbert - a one-time soldier, diplomat, duellist, philosopher and poet - was often in money difficulties and he and George, an unworldly poet, were persuaded by Sir Henry to sell him their shares for £3,000.

He bought it against his agent's advice: *It is pleasant for the somer, but not healthful for the winter. So great a part of it (the estate) was coppice that it could not strengthen a lord with any multitude of tenants.*

Sir Henry had not only become the MP for Bewdley but he was given the splendid office of Master of the Revels (to both Charles I and II). Rather than being a sort of court jester as the title now suggests, the Master was the string-puller...responsible for overseeing all royal festivities - *the revels* - but he later supervised stage censorship (as Lord Chamberlain). He also had an annual salary of £500 and held the office until the start of the English Civil War in 1642, when stage plays were prohibited!

He was briefly the High Sheriff of Worcestershire (1648-49) and a long-serving Justice of the Peace. He was/continued on Page 4

**AUCTION: Tuesday
April 17 6pm Crown &
Sandys Ombersley
per Andrew Grant**

Ribbesford House will see the opening of a new chapter in its 900 years history when it goes for auction next month. Historic England include the Grade II* listed building) on its *Heritage at Risk* register.

It reported: "The building is largely unoccupied and has been neglected for many years with significant areas open to the elements. Urgent works are required in order to prevent further deterioration.

In their auction details, Andrew Grant acknowledges: the house is in need of complete renovation but also describes it as "an exciting opportunity" to buy "a fascinating, atmospheric ...country house dating back to the mid-16th century with later alterations and latterly converted into apartments and a cottage...the property covers almost 20,000 square feet and needs to be seen to be fully appreciated."

The house was bought in 1947 by Wing Commander Alfred Howell (later a county councillor and chair of the Civic Society) and has remained in the family since then.



The De Gaulle Years

ABOVE: General De Gaulle established his Free French Army School for Cadets - *pour La Liberation de la France* - at Ribbesford House in May 1942.

BELOW: The young Frenchmen were then seen around the town and countryside.



Flagship of hope



"The Ecole Militaire des Cadets has been a full and noble French success and I would like you to know how much I have found myself comforted in my task, every time I have had the honour to inspect the school. The pure ardour, the complete discipline, the beautiful dress of our Cadets are the best food of our hope. As the leader of the Free French, nothing comforts me so much as the contact of this youth, flagship of hope added to the glory of France. In its grief, the worst days of its history, they have consoled France."

General De Gaulle

What a day! There was lots of rain, hail and wind but that did not deter the 43 members and guests who attended the Town Hall tour.

This event was a follow up to the excellent lecture given by Anthony Peers at Bewdley Festival which the Society had sponsored.

We all fought through the weather and travelled with a fantastic coach driver to the venue where a guided behind-the-scenes tour awaited.

There were a few further hurdles to overcome, firstly the road works surrounding the Town Hall, but our driver managed to deposit us within yards (old money) of the building.

The next challenge was to find our way in to the building!! Not so easy despite the tickets stating, "The Stage Door" as the meeting point. Builders declined access, some confused staff tried to help, and 43 wet people wondered where to go. Then the front doors opened and in we went.

What a magnificent sight.

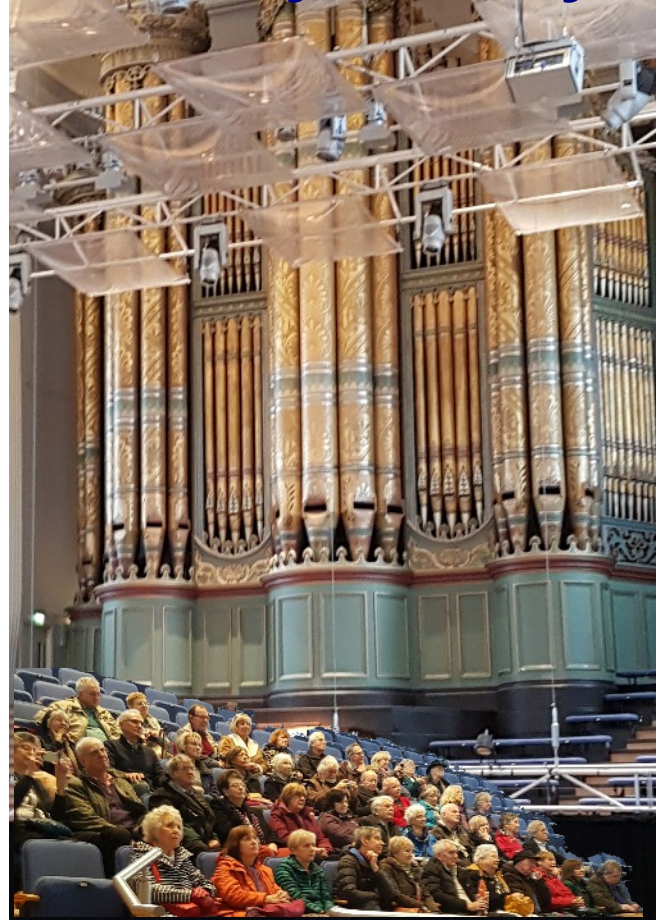
We received a great welcome from the tour guides who gave a very informative insight into the history of the building including the fairly recent £35million refurbishment.

Some of our group (right) even got to play (only a few notes) on the massive organ under the guidance of a young, but very talented, scholar at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Numerous stars have appeared at the venue and it continues to attract skilled performers, old and young. Well worth a visit for the future if you have not been.

Watch out for the next organised tour! SHARON HARVEY

VISIT TO BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL January 27 What a magnificent sight



Continued from Page 3

Leaving his mark on Ribbesford

/debarred from sitting in parliament because he took the Royalist side and was regarded as "a delinquent" by the Parliamentarians and Ribbesford was compounded.

However he was reinstated after the Restoration in 1660 and held the seat until his death in 1673.

He left his mark on the manor house in the form of a tablet on the south wall, carved with the Herbert coat-of-arms with three lions rampant.



Sir Henry was succeeded by his son who became Lord Herbert of Cherbury in 1694. His son, also Henry, hanged himself in one of the towers in 1738, after which the estate passed to his cousin



Birmingham Artist Will A Green is thought to have completed this pencil sketch in 1948...after making the journey from the city on his bicycle

Charles Morley and then to his grandson Henry, who adopted the family name of Herbert.

When he died in 1781, the house was inherited by his sister. She died a year later and the estate was left to her brother, the Marquess of Winchester. He sold it in 1787 to Francis Ingram and - with blood-lines being constantly extended - it

remained with that family until the early twentieth century.

Perhaps the longest name belonged to Arthur Foley Winnington-Ingram, who was born there in 1858. He became the Bishop of London in 1901 and served for 38 years! He was infamous for his gung-ho attitude to the First World War.

The Foley part of the name came from Thomas Foley, who had succeeded Herbert as MP for Bewdley.

Ribbesford was sold again in 1904 to James Lees-Milne. When he died four years later, it passed to his eldest son Alec, who lived there until his death in 1931. One of the family was another James Lees-Milne, the architectural historian, who worked for the National Trust from 1936 to 1973.

In the 1950s, the House was converted into private apartments.

A Prime Minister and his pipe



In city and county

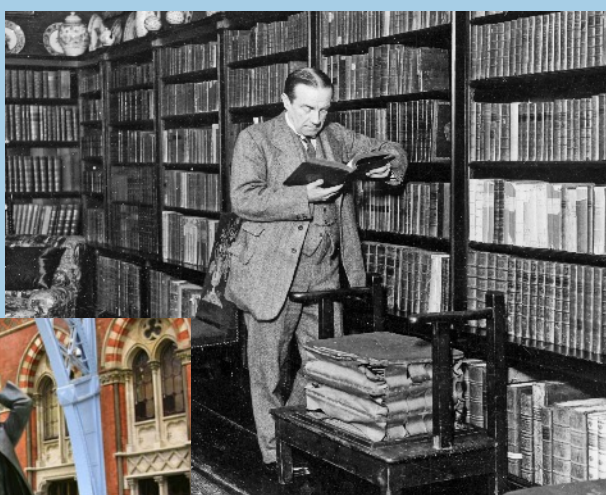


A Prime Minister at home



***The work of a Prime Minister is
the loneliest job in the world***

Stanley Baldwin



A Prime Minister and his statues

While we await the unveiling of his statue in Bewdley (later in the Spring), it's perhaps worth remembering that Stanley Baldwin was given the honour of unveiling the memorial (right) to suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst in 1930.

That was two years after he had faced down intense opposition from Churchill to ensure women were given the vote on the same terms as men!

The Baldwin statue has been sculpted in bronze by Martin Jennings (inset), whose wonderful evocation of John Betjeman - holding onto his hat - is the centrepiece of the concourse at St. Pancras Station in London.

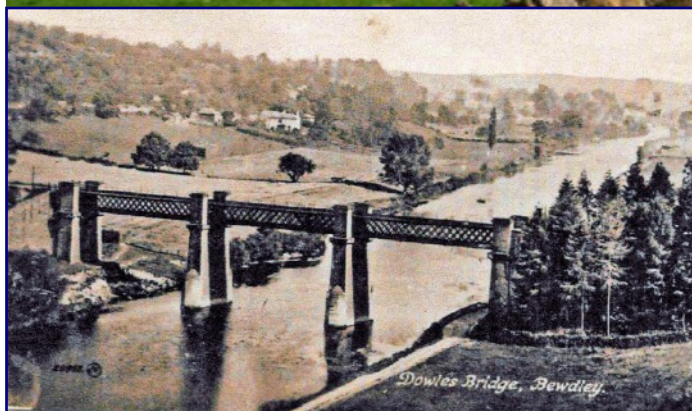
It's hoped that the statue, which will be outside the Old Post Office in Load Street will be a tourist attraction.



**A Prime Minister and two
of his "Bewdley people"**

Glimpses of the past

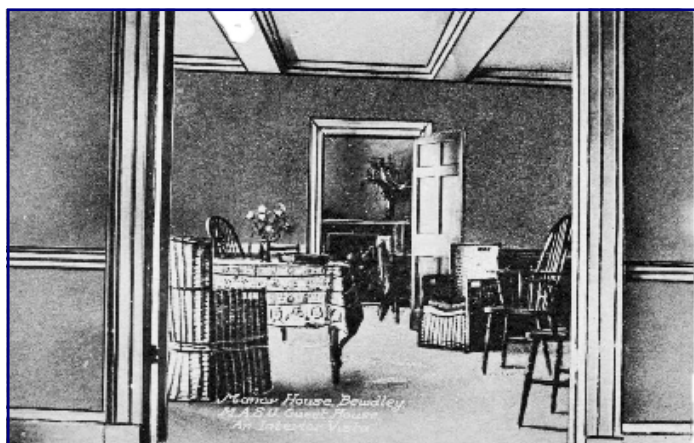
Photos from the Kenneth Hobson Collection



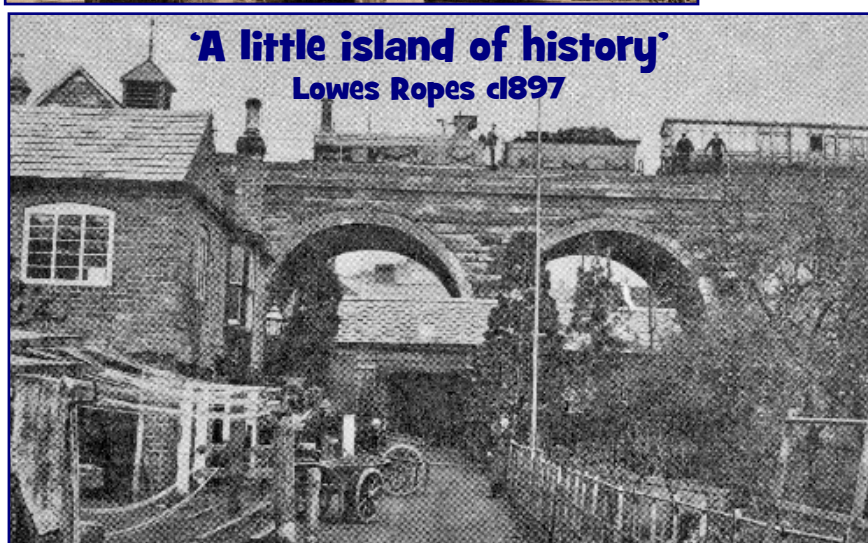
ABOVE: Just north of the town, the Dowles Bridge carried the Tenbury and Bewdley Railway, where it branched off Severn Valley Railway and ran through the Wyre Forest to Tenbury Wells and BELOW as it was being dismantled. All that remains now are the imposing brick and stone pillars.



Relics of grimmer days - the stocks and whipping post close to Rock parish church



ABOVE: The interior of The Manor House, which dates back to 1607, when it was a guest house in 1937 and BELOW the House's charming gardens

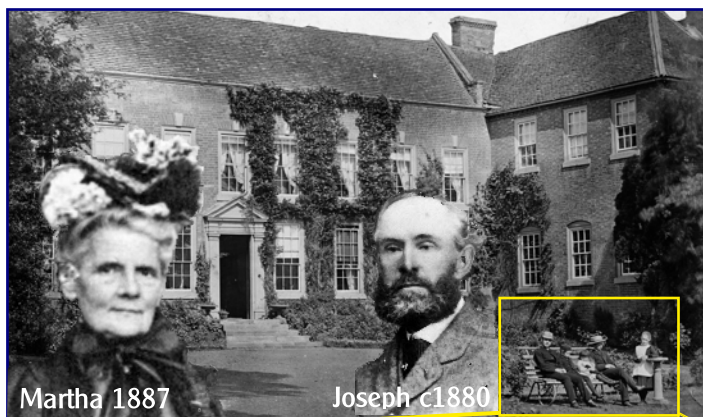


At its peak, Lowes ropeworks in Westbourne Street employed 30 people but with the advent of man-made fibres and mechanisation in 1871, trade dried up and in latter years there were just two operators: Peggy Liggitt and George Mills, who worked there for 47 years. He also lived on the premises and worked all the processes in the making and finishing of twine. Acknowledging that the factory was left behind by the Industrial Revolution, he described it as "a little of the island of history."



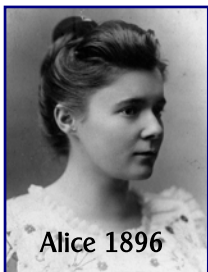
Epic (return) journey for the Tangyes

- THE BEWDLEY YEARS -



Martha 1887

Joseph c1880



Alice 1896



Alice on right 1883

Joseph Tangey, one of the great nineteenth century entrepreneurial engineers who helped forge modern Birmingham, found peaceful refuge in Bewdley from the heat of the industrial revolution.

He brought his new wife Martha (known in the family as Pattie) to the splendid Tickenhill Palace, which he bought from the Crown, in 1872. Their daughter Alice was born a year later and they stayed there until 1887, when Joseph built a bright new modern home: Herne's Nest.

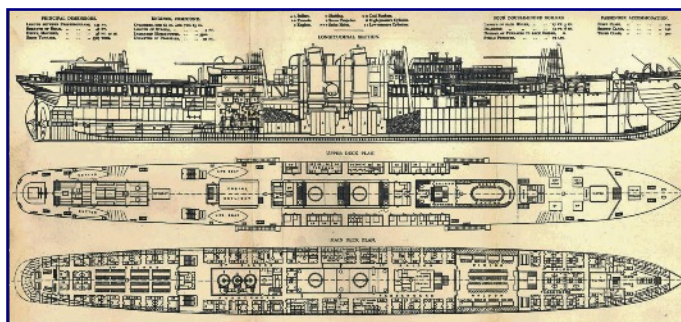
He shrewdly decided to keep Tickenhill in the family. Soon after his death in 1902, it was leased to The Palace School and then bought back by Alice and her husband Fred in 1920 and they lived there for nearly forty years.

Joseph Tangey's success was well-earned. As one of five brothers brought up in a small Cornish village where his father ran the local shop, his formal education was limited but through his maternal grandfather, he acquired a variety of gritty engineering skills from blacksmith to lathe operator.

When he moved with three of his brothers to Birmingham in 1852, he was more than able to acquit himself in the family workshop they eventually set up in the city's St Paul's Square.

Working on the contract to provide the hydraulic system needed to launch Brunel's *Great Eastern* in 1858, he put in between 12 to 15 hours a day for a month.

His brother James said: *We launched the Great Eastern and the Great Eastern launched us!* The success of the jacks proved a great advertisement for Tangyes and orders from shipwrights soon began to pour in. With all the clamour that surrounded the business, it's little wonder he found Bewdley such a refuge.

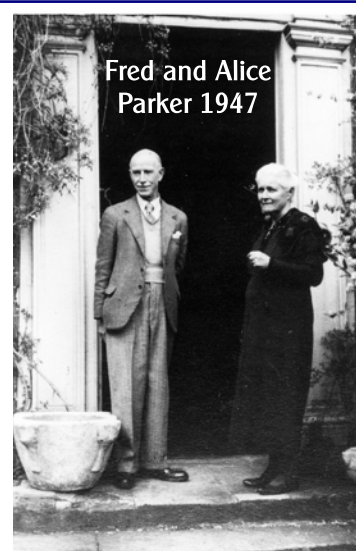


Civic Society member JIM PARKER found this amazing exploded-drawing of SS Orient (below in full rig) among the papers of his great-grandfather Joseph Tangey. In 1880, he and his wife Martha, made an epic journey - of 37 days 22 hours - to explore and possibly settle in Australia...only to feel homesick. They caught an early ship back because they were disappointed with the rawness and roughness of the New World and realised *there was no more beautiful place on earth than Bewdley!*

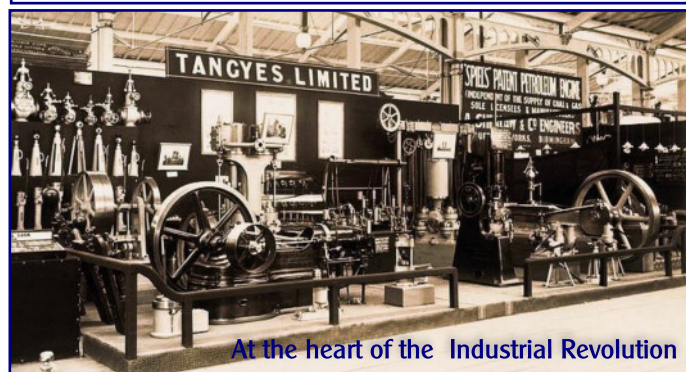
SS Orient 1879-1909



Alice and her husband Fred Parker bought Tickenhill (from her father's estate) in 1920 and moved there in 1924. They started a museum to tell the story of the people of Worcestershire covering many periods and themes including costumes and social history. In 1960, the entire collection was donated to the county museum at Hartlebury Castle.



Fred and Alice Parker 1947



At the heart of the Industrial Revolution



Stanley Baldwin in characteristic pose with Edward Elgar and in caricature as The Worcestershire Lad in *Punch* magazine.

Obituary

Snuff Mill Walk is permanent memorial for Brian

One of our long-standing members, Brian Jeffries, of Snuff Mill Walk, died recently. A memorial service was held at Kidderminster's Baxter Church and it was attended by a large gathering of family, friends and colleagues including representation from the Civic Society.

Brian was an active member of the Baxter Church congregation with a strong social conscience. An architect by profession he practised widely over the Midlands but chose to settle in Bewdley. Snuff Mill Walk, which he designed and developed, will serve as a permanent memorial.

Brian made a substantial contribution to the committee and the work of the Civic Society during the 1970s at the time the Society was campaigning for a by-pass.

He was first to perceive the true nature of the damage the heavy traffic through the town was causing to buildings. The Georgian facades were falling away from the medieval timbers of the original structures. With so many of the properties listed, this was an irrefutable argument in a demand for a by-pass.

He also drew the Society's attention to the unused space above the commercial premises in Load Street, and the potential for conversion to living accommodation. Most properties now have flats above the shops.

Brian's quiet, discrete, but significant contribution to the life of the town is much appreciated. The Civic Society passes its condolences to his wife and family.

BRIAN STEPHENS

Norman is a five-star poet on Amazon

Society member, retired architect and university lecturer, Dr Norman Berisford is proving as popular as a poet as he has been as an exhibited artist. His book of poetry has had rave reviews on Amazon with one reviewer frustrated that Norman hasn't written more! Other reviewers say:

Simply charming and witty.

A unique, witty and sentimental collection of charming poems by an amusing writer.

Excellent.

Quirky little read. If you like poetry, you will like this!

The star review, however, is surely this from Matt McAvoy: Poetry can be a wonderful expression of art, if

written well – if not, it can be infuriating. Like classical music, when beautifully crafted, it is hard not to love. This emotional collection by Norman Berisford is at times a sublime love ballad, at others a celebration of all things "life" – from the leaves on the ground to the sun, from grieving for a loved one, to God's nature and Creation itself.

The odes and poems in this anthology vary in style from prose to verse, from blinking to sweeping and I believe there is a piece here for all readers' taste, save perhaps the most hard and cynical of hearts.

Although the poems are not directly connected (except, perhaps in theme and context), their arrangement within the book suggests a desire to draw the reader into an odyssey from the opening line, a touching journey, heartbreaking at times, with only one beginning and one inevitable outcome, stopping along the way to share in the author's unquestioning love affair with the English countryside;

Norman's passion for his beloved home country is almost hymn-like at times.

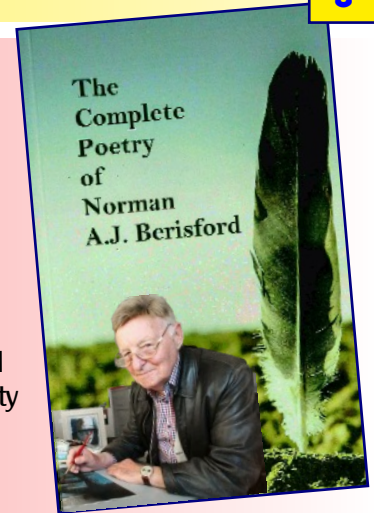
Reading this poetry was an absolute pleasure. There are 40 pieces here to choose from and picking a favourite is hard, particularly as poetry often comes down to a matter of taste; I do like the short, jolly verses of The Musician and Wonder Why? and the brief, sad tribute in Requiem.

In my opinion the clever prose is most visible in Valhalla.

You may disagree with my choices but of one thing I'm certain, you will find many works here you will like.

The book is available online from

https://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=norman+berisford



Winter lecture



Birmingham Goes to War

More than ninety people attended an excellent talk by Andrew Lound and his visual and audio presentation skills brought home the stark reality of wartime in Birmingham, both in terms of every day life and how important a contribution the people of Birmingham made to the war effort.

The talk attracted several non-members who came for nostalgic reasons either personal or family, and the audience then took part in an interesting Q&A session.

One story in particular from an audience member was fascinating. He told how when an unexploded bomb was defused, a note was found in it saying *Made in Czechoslovakia: we are with you*. Such events were not publicised as we did not want to alert the Germans. The forced-labour making these bombs were risking their lives producing such dud bombs.

Andrew has previously spoken to us about The Titanic, and hopefully we shall hear from him again in the future.

Jenny Frow



Castle Bromwich Aeroplane Factory was the largest aircraft-production plant in wartime Britain and the main manufacturing source of the two most-successful British aircraft, the Supermarine Spitfire (above) and the Avro Lancaster. In 1936, the government formed their plan on a notion that the Birmingham skills and production techniques used in the car industry could be transferred to large-scale aircraft production. The BSA factory produced rifles and bayonets (top photo) and the old Avery weighing-machine company produced heavy guns in the famous Soho factory that was established by James Watt.

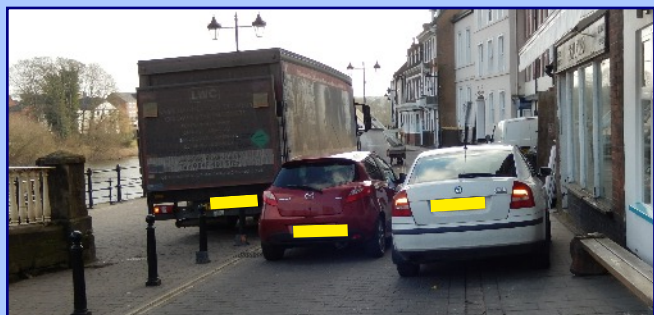
The spirit of Spring on the Severn



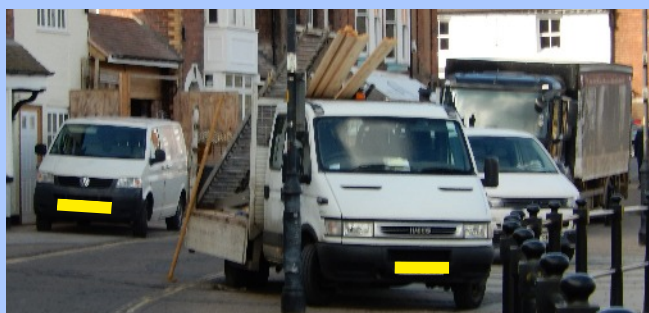
PHOTO: BCS Newsletter

Bewdley Civic Society was formed over 70 years ago "to conserve the architectural heritage of this charming Severn Valley town in Worcestershire and to encourage appropriate and sustainable development"

Who cares about double yellow lines?



Just another Friday on the double-yellow lines on Severnside South. On the other hand, it means there's no room for motorbikes.



MIDNIGHT IS THE WITCHING HOUR: 2

Will anything change when The Courtyard steak restaurant opens soon? The owners have applied for permission to put tables and chairs outside in the space opposite their premises. The restaurant had initially applied for a late-night music and alcohol licence until 3am but that was voluntarily scaled back to midnight as a result of protests by local residents. The Town Council and the Civic Society. The District Council's Licensing Sub-Committee said they accepted the new limited timing *to protect the amenity of the residents within the vicinity and to prevent public nuisance.*

BACKGROUND TO CIVIC VOICE AUDIT (from Page 1)

The way we were

Scholar of the history of art and especially architecture

NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

described Bewdley in 1968 as the most perfect small town in Worcestershire. What would he say if he was surveying the town today?

PAULINE LOWE pens an invitation



Nikolaus Pevsner
1902-83

Dear Mr Pevsner

We know it has been more than 50 years since your visit to Bewdley; during the research for your excellent series of books – *The Buildings of England*. We do so hope you remember our town. You generously described it as “the most perfect small Georgian town in Worcestershire”. The influential architect Gordon Cullen (1919–94) was equally impressed and felt that “the town should be looked at and cared for”.

We are putting together a few documents to highlight the current appearance of the town and would very much value your opinion.

We hope you will not find this an imposition, but if you have a spare moment – we do understand you might have regular harp practice – we should like to invite you back to Bewdley. Perhaps Mr Cullen could join us too.

We are much saddened by the undeniable fact that Bewdley must now be described as ‘not cared for, tired, sad and heavily polluted!’

We wonder what you might feel about Bewdley in 2018?

Your very sincerely

Pauline Lowe

For those with an interest in the past, Nikolaus Pevsner's *The Buildings of England – Worcestershire* is available as a Penguin: 1968 ISBN 0 14 071035



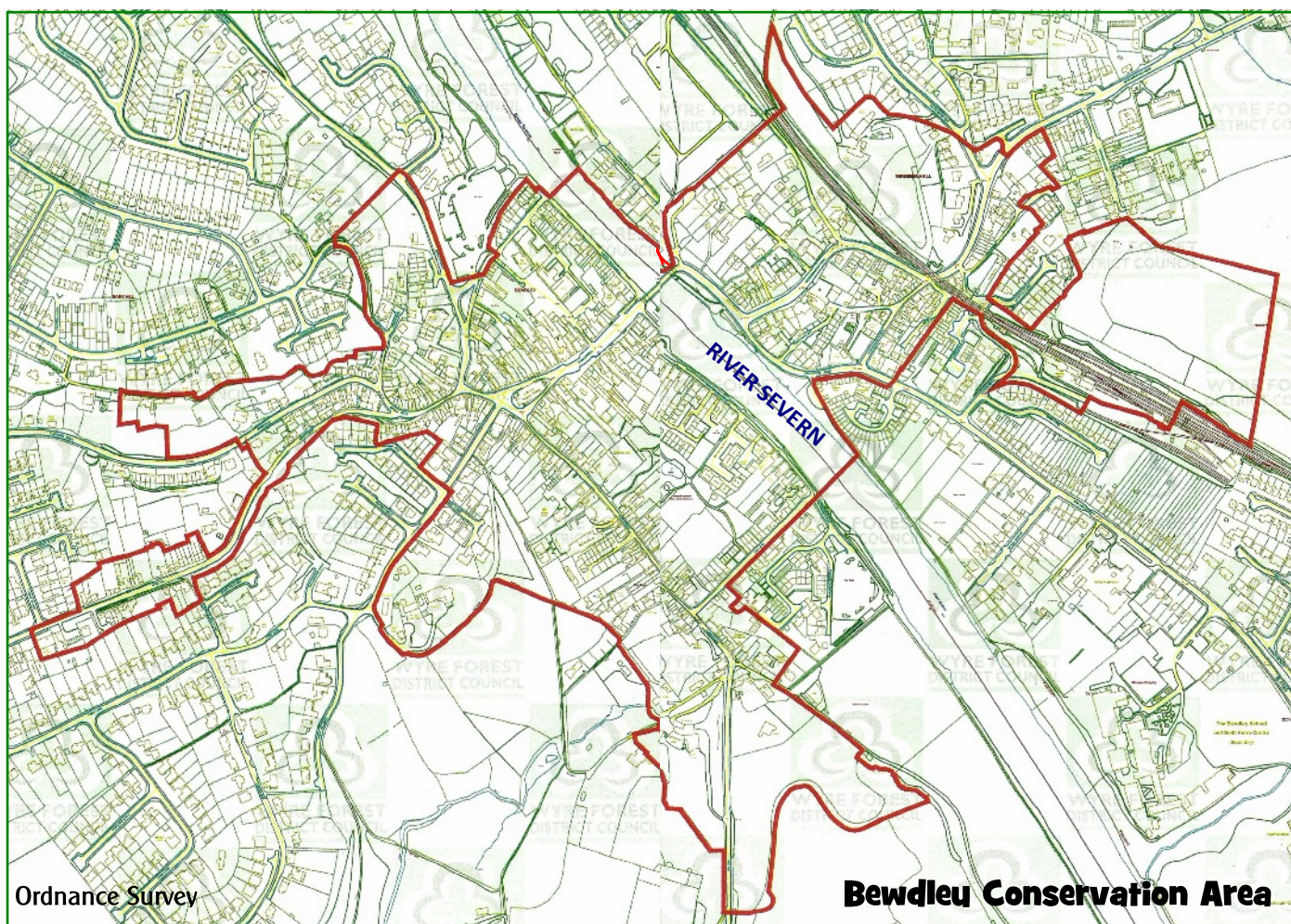
WE CARE ABOUT WHERE WE LIVE ?

Current examples of Bewdley's highly-untalented graffiti artists! Their work seems to have defied all attempts to clean up. Now what?

Photo **PAULINE LOWE**

The Newsletter is edited by **Jock Gallagher**; articles, letters, comments and photographs are always welcome. Please email jyg@cix.co.uk

The Summer edition will be in mid-June. The deadline for items will be May 25



Bewdley and the Big Conservation Conversation

We are now in the 50th year of having protected Conservation Areas in the UK, which came about following the Civic Amenities Act, 1967 and Civic Voice (the national organisation for Civic Societies of which BCS is a member) has been focusing its attention on the condition of our conservation areas under the banner of its 'Big Conservation Conversation'.

There are now 512 conservation areas at risk in England, facing common problems such as unsuitable replacement windows, doors and extensions, poorly maintained streets and neglected green spaces. But is this number accurate? Civic societies, community groups and conservation officers have been in touch with Civic Voice querying this number saying that they believe the number to be higher.

Local authorities have apparently been reluctant to highlight conservation areas "At Risk", for reasons, including:

- ♦ It would reflect badly on the Council, in appearing as if it had failed in its duties to protect and enhance the area
- ♦ With a lack of resources such as the loss of conservation officers, the local authority has no way to turn around a deteriorating conservation area.

Fortunately, Bewdley Conservation Area is not on the 'heritage at risk' register but its only grade 1 listed structure – its Thomas Telford Bridge – was placed 'at risk' at the end of 2017. Wyre Forest District Council has also retained its Conservation Officer although the number of Enforcement Officers the authority now employs has been cut to one. This means that both officers have a weighty work-load across the district.

Because of this national concern, a sub-group of your Committee has been piloting the Civic Voice *Conservation Area Audit* to highlight any issues which, if neglected, could threaten the integrity of our much-loved conservation area. The results from all the pilots conducted by Civic Societies will enable Civic Voice to refine their audit and report back to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Civic Societies later in the year, with the aim of developing an audit which community groups can work with to support local authorities and convince them of actions required to protect their conservation areas.

Barbara Longmore

Our Conservation Area was first designated in 1968, reviewed in 1978 and again in 2015. It covers 42 hectares and includes buildings mainly from the 17th and 19th centuries. The Civic Society members who carried out the local audit of the town's assets are Barbara Longmore, Pauline Lowe, Graham Luxford, Jason Williams and Jock Gallagher. Their findings will now be fed into the national picture.



SPRING 2018

Richard Perrin

**From the
Chairman's Desk**

GOODBYE TO GLADMAN?

I know most of you will have heard the great news that Gladman Developments' appeal against WFDC's refusal of their planning application for 195 houses off Lakes Road, has been dismissed by the Government Inspector.

However, before we crack open the champagne we should perhaps wait and see if an Appeal is lodged against the decision.

Gladman has six weeks from the date of the Inspector's decision to do this. In the meantime, we hope that the Inspector's serious concerns in respect of the very significant and adverse effects for the rural landscape will deter them from taking this action.

The Inspector goes on to say that the development would cause very serious material harm to the character and appearance of the area, and specifically to this valued landscape.

The Civic Society, when objecting to the proposals, majored in on this very aspect and it will be a continuing factor when considering future development proposals which are bound to ensue.

Looking back this has been an excellent example of cooperation between the District and Town Councils and many parts of the Bewdley community. We congratulate in particular, the tireless organisers of the 'Say No To Gladman' Campaign.

ANNUAL REPORT - ATTACHED

Accompanying this newsletter is the Annual Report for 2017 and I hope you get the time to read it because it shows (hopefully) what a lot has happened and I would like to think much has been achieved especially in raising £130,000 for the Stanley Baldwin Statue Appeal.

We are delighted that our talks and outings have been well attended and I hope you will find the forthcoming programme just as attractive.

Next up is our AGM on April 18 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 23 when we shall travel to Hereford to view the Mappa Mundi in the Cathedral followed by a guided tour of the City's historic buildings. A separate sheet is enclosed which provides full details.

I look forward to seeing you all over the coming months



CC BY 2.5. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1062352>

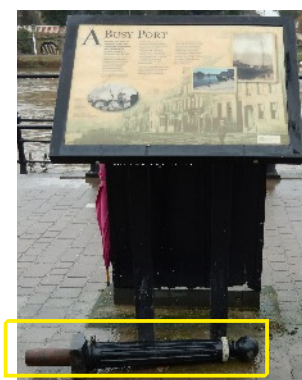
War Memorials workshops

Civic Voice is calling for volunteers from around England to attend a meeting or workshop to discuss how best to find and survey every war memorial. Workshops will be announced throughout the year in different locations, so keep a look out for a workshop in this area! If you can't attend a workshop, you can still get involved through CV's War Memorials Condition Survey Toolkit. This is an easy step by step guide which trains volunteers how to carry out condition surveys on war memorials.

For information email info@civicvoice.org.uk.

Where have all the bollards gone?

Seven out of fourteen bollards - meant to protect the civic space and bandstand on Severnside South - have disappeared. As they were locked down only someone with a key can have unbolted them. Someone must know where they are. One lies forlornly by the picture rostrum *right) but how many have been lobbed into the river?



BCS AGM

7 30pm

Wednesday April 18

**St George's Hall
Refreshments**