

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

news
August 2020

THE OSTR

MEMBERSHIP
BENEFITS EXTENDED
TO SEPTEMBER 2021

See inside for details

August 2020

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Editors Notes

Welcome to the second edition of this newsletter produced during the Covid19 life intercession. As I write this, it is almost time for those of us who are 'shielding' to emerge from our cocoons of safety and try and re-establish some form of normal life. We are still looking for contributions from you, our members, to help build a record of the extraordinary times we are experiencing. Please take a look at the News section for more details.

We have a mini-theme of 'Names' running through this edition. Cecile Hunt continues her series of 'What's In A Name', this time focusing on street name suffixes. In the middle pages, Averil Kear explores the history of the oddly named 'Ostrich Inn' at Newland.

Now an admission. I did sneak out from under my 'Covid shield' whilst the 'thought police' were not looking, and wandered down to Newland to take the cover photo of the Ostrich Inn. By a piece of serendipity landlady Kathryn Horton popped outside for a breather whilst she was preparing her hostelry for reopening in mid August. She briefly explained to me all the work that is involved in providing a socially distanced environment for her customers. I guess that local businesses are going to need as much custom as we can safely give during the next year or so.

Please read carefully what our Chair and Membership Secretary have to say about the extension of membership benefits until September 2021. Hopefully you will be minded to support the Society in the way suggested by Mary and Cheryl. If so, you will find a pull out form in the middle of this edition.

As another little bonus for you, the other pull out form provides the opportunity for you to buy 3 selected issues of the New Regard for just £10 (plus £3.25 p&p). This is a time limited offer, so please don't hesitate if you are interested!

Finally the answer to the 'Where Are We' piece featured in the last edition is Danby Lodge. There will be more posers for you to enjoy in future editions!

Keith Walker

Short pieces of news, views, and opinions for the Newsletter are always very welcome. Every effort will be made to reproduce articles as presented but the Editor reserves the right to edit as necessary. The Editor will assume that all necessary authorisation for attachments, photographs etc has been obtained and the FODLHS will not be held liable in the case of a subsequent query.

Views from the Chair



Hello to all members. This year must be the most challenging in the 72 years that the Society has been in existence. Most importantly, I hope you have all stayed well during the pandemic, particularly those who have been shielding. Obviously, we had no option but to cancel all events until the situation improves somewhat. But your committee has continued to meet online to ascertain what and when we can offer to members again. Even now, with lock down partially lifted, it is still not possible to put on any indoor meetings as social distancing guidance for Community Halls does not allow sufficient people into a hall. In the meanwhile, instead of an indoor event in September, we hope Averil Kear will lead a walk around Oldcroft on 12th September, possibly with a repeat on 13th September if there is demand. We cannot announce the details yet until it is clear what the guidance is at that time. But Cheryl will circulate details nearer the time.

I still hope we might be able to reconvene for our AGM and talk on 'Lumberjills' on 10th October. But, if not, we are planning for an AGM with a difference. If a face to face meeting proves not to be possible we will circulate papers by email. But whatever the form of the AGM, since we have only been able to enjoy part of a year's programme in 2019-2020 and may not be able to put on all events from October 2020, we plan to merge the years into one extended programme. We will keep sending membership benefits such as newsletters to all existing members until September 2021. So that members feel they have had value for money we will not be asking for subscriptions in October, though new members will pay. Even though enforced closure has reduced some of our running costs, this will cost your Society more than £2000 so we would be very grateful for any voluntary subscriptions or other donations (which will attract Gift Aid) to keep the show on the road. The membership section gives full details of what you need to do.

The forthcoming New Regard, volume 35, due out in October, will be increased to 80 pages from 64, full of varied and interesting articles. The cover price will be increasing to £9 but we will retain the price to members of only £6. Do be sure to get yourself a copy once it is published. It will be available at the membership price at our e-shop, or by post through the form with the next Newsletter. Plenty to read until we can get back to more normal times.

We also hope to send out to members regular informative emails about interesting historical Forest topics.

Preparations are continuing for some special events next year. The GLHA day on the theme of 'The History of Education in Gloucestershire' has been provisionally rebooked for 17th April 2021. Planning for our new Local History Festival is ongoing. There will be events throughout the week from 16th May to the final grand event on the Speech House field on Sunday 23rd May 2021. Our new Children's History of the Forest is progressing well. We still hope to launch this publication in 2021, probably at the Festival.

Local history is still alive and well in the Forest of Dean, though perhaps we now feel we are living through a bit too much of it! I look forward to seeing you all again before too long.

All best wishes

Mary Sullivan



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS EXTENDED TO SEPTEMBER 2021

I hope everyone is doing well during this extraordinary time, keeping busy and healthy. The Covid crisis has impacted us all in many and different ways. For your Society, it has sadly meant that we have been unable to offer you a full programme of events this year. Nor do we know at this stage when we can begin to fully do so.

Your committee has therefore decided to automatically extend your membership to the end of September 2021 with no payment of a membership fee.

This means you need do nothing to renew.

However, as you can imagine, this carries a significant cost to the Society. Therefore, if you wish to make a donation of any amount in lieu of your membership fee, the Society would be very grateful. Please see the form in the centre of this newsletter for details how to do this. The form also contains a Gift Aid declaration, as such a donation can be declared for Gift Aid, further assisting the Society.

Some members have Standing Orders for membership renewal. For those members, if you wish for a refund, please email treasurer@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk or write to:

Treasurer, FoD LHS, 45 Allaston Rd, Lydney, GL15 5SS

with your bank details and Cecile will refund you. However, if you wish to maintain the payment as a donation, many thanks.

And of course, if you change your address or email at any time, please don't forget to let me know at membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk or if you have any questions about the above call me on 01594 510 533 (my number is on your membership card).

Cheryl Mayo - Membership Secretary

FODLHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

*The following events are planned to take place, subject to Government restrictions.
Members will be advised further by email prior to the events.*

Sat 12th / Sun 13th September - A Walk Around Oldcroft - led by Averil Kear

Saturday 10th October

Annual General Meeting

followed by Sarah Franklin talking about

'Lumberjills, PoWs and us -The Forest of Dean During the Second World War'



News from Dean Heritage Centre

As we emerge from lock down, it is very good to be able to report that the Dean Heritage Centre will be reopening from August 13th onwards, from Thursday to Sunday each week. The celebrated annual charcoal burn will also take place during the bank holiday weekend at the end of August.

How Has COVID19 Affected Your Life?

We are still trying to gather personal experiences of life during the lock down. Everyone will have a story to tell which will sound so strange to generations to come. We want to capture these stories now in our digital archive, and, at some point in the future, curate them into a cohesive body of work to tell of the personal effects of the passing of the Covid19 virus through the Forest of Dean. Please join in by emailing your own personal description of daily life lived under the cloud of Covid19 to covid19@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk. Stay well!

In need of intellectual stimulation whilst there are no History Society meetings to go to? The websites listed below give access to a selection of history focused courses and talks.

Although the National Archives building is closed, the Archives are presenting an exciting online programme of talks and webinars which are free for everyone and delivered by their experts and specialists.

Browse all the What's Online talks and Top Level Tips webinars below and register for as many as you like.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/visit-us/whats-on/events/>

If you are looking for audio only stimulation, you can find a wide range of history focused podcasts from the BBC at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/category/history>

The BBC History Magazine also offer a range of interesting podcasts at:

<https://www.historyextra.com/article-type/podcast/>

If you want to more seriously study a subject for free, the OPEN CULTURE web site has a list of free History courses available online from the world's leading universities. You can download these audio & video courses straight to your computer or mp3 player from here:

http://www.openculture.com/history_free_courses

Finally, nearer to the Forest, the Cheltenham Literature Festival has morphed into a digital event in October of this year. The Festival will present 100 live-streamed events with a socially-distanced live audience (government guidance permitting) in Cheltenham Town Hall and the Everyman Theatre. The events will be streamed via the Cheltenham Festivals website through a digital hub. Visitors to the hub can navigate the virtual Festival site, browsing in the bookshop and exploring activities for book-lovers of all ages. More information can be found here: <https://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/news/>



An Ostrich in Newland? - Surely Not! *by Averil Kear*



Situated in the village of Newland, directly opposite All Saints Church, is the remarkable old hostelry known as the Ostrich. The interior of the pub has been little altered over the years and it retains many attractive original features. On entering a flagstone passage runs from the front door to the rear. On the left is the main bar, which would originally have been two small rooms. There is a large old stone fireplace complete with huge stone lintel. The bar counter was installed in the 1950s although the shelves behind the bar are apparently more recent. More striking features include the dado panelling with attached bench seating. Also, two curved high-backed settles and shutters on the windows authentically complete the character of the place. Situated on the right of the passage is a dining room in place of two further small rooms which would originally have stood there.

So, what can be learnt about the history of the building and some of the people who lived in it?

In 1672 an old house on the site, described as the dwelling house where Bridget Scott lived next to the road from Newland cross to Clearwell, was granted by Hannah, daughter and heir of the late William Bromwich of Scatterford Farm, and her husband Thomas Pilkington, a London merchant, to the trustees of the charity of Edward Bell (founded in the late 16th century to support a grammar school and almshouse at Newland). It was to be held by the trustees for the benefit of the 4 poor men and 4 poor women in the almshouse (this was on the north side of the churchyard and is not to be confused with the William Jones charity's almshouses on the south side of the churchyard). The gift was evidently intended by William Bromwich in his lifetime, as the deed states that it was made in performance of his wishes.

In 1694 William Probyn, of Newland House, who had rebuilt the house for the trustees at a cost of £20, was granted a lease of it for 31 years. Later a building described as a thatched hovel or bake house adjoining the house fell into ruin, and in 1709 Edmund Probyn, who had succeeded to his father William's lease, agreed to spend another £20 on rebuilding this as a two-storey structure with a tiled roof; in consideration of this the Bell trustees granted him a 60-year lease to run from the expiry of the original one.

The Probyns were the leading gentry family living in Newland village in the 18th century, at Newland House at the south-west corner of the churchyard. Edmund was knighted in 1726 when he became a judge and he became Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1740. His descendants acquired considerable estates in other parts of west Gloucestershire. When the house opened as an inn sometime later - I haven't found it mentioned as such before 1816 — the family's crest, an ostrich's head, was adopted as the sign. The Probyns remained lessees (though of course having under tenants in occupation), and in 1816 the lease of the Ostrich was renewed to Philip Ducarel who had bought Newland House from the Probyns in 1813. It was renewed to Ducarel in 1849, and in 1857 held by his sister and successor Jane Bevan, who sublet it to Henry Salmon, a brewer of Coleford.

Philip Ducarel had an interesting life. He was from a French Huguenot family, his father served with the East India Company, hence Philip's birth-place of Calcutta. He was brought

over to England as a child and grew up in Devon. Later as an adult he moved to Newland where he was a landowner, businessman and magistrate. There is a window dedicated to him in Newland Church. In 1836 he published his epic poem set in the Forest of Dean during the Wars of the Roses. You can read more about Philip Ducarel via the 'Reading the Forest' website (<http://www.readingtheforest.co.uk/pjducarel.html>)

From information gleaned from census and other records, the following list features at least some of the landlords of the Ostrich over the years.

1841 David Hatton	1901 Thomas Baldwin
1851 Diana Hatton of Bloomfield, Somerset	1902 Temporary transfer of license to Robert Pring
1856 J. Wen	1903 George Preest of Bream
1861 Henry Freeman (Butcher & Innkeeper) of Upton St Leonards	1911 James Billingham of Westbury on Severn
1871 John M Voyce of Gloucester	1915 Frank Smith
1881 Emma Monk (widow) of Bosbury, Herefordshire	1921 Temporary transfer of license to Alexander Beattie
1885 Sophia Monk	1921 Frank Smith
1891 John J Fids of Prestbury, Gloucester	1939 James Morgan
1901 Walter W Pugh from Lincoln	2000 Richard Dewe
	2000 Kathryn Horton

Kathryn Horton, the current publican, was named landlady of the year in the Good Pub Guide of 2015. The Covid19 pandemic forced the closure of the inn in March, and at the time of writing, the Ostrich was due to open again for business in mid-August.

Sources: Glos. P.O., D 34/9/25, 30, 62, 69 (which makes the identification of the Ostrich as the house of the 1672 gift), 70; D 637/11/1/E I, which also has some later 19th cent, leases; for the Probyn crest see Fairbairn's Crests i, p. 392; ii, plate 108 (no. 2).

Gloucestershire Pubs: (<http://www.gloucestershirepubs.co.uk>)



What's in a Name? - Street Name Suffixes *by Cecile Hunt*

Continuing on the theme 'Street Names', what about the suffixes on the nameplates? Pre 19th century street names were in the main generic and descriptive. It then became commonplace for streets to be named after either renowned or prominent people from British history.

What about the suffix to a road name e.g. 'street', 'alleyway', 'cul-de-sac', 'road', 'avenue', 'lane' et al? Something we read and see regularly but what are their meanings? Why are these highways and by-ways, that get us from A to B, labelled with various suffixes? In the Forest, as all over the world, there are many different street nameplate suffixes including the ubiquitous 'Road'. Did you know that in the City of London (The Square Mile), up until boundary changes in 1994, there were 'Streets', 'Squares' and 'Alleys' but no 'roads'? Why? It would appear that 'Road' did not come into common usage for thoroughfares until the late 16th Century.

OED definition of 'road': *A wide way leading from one place to another, especially one with a specially prepared surface which vehicles can use.* Could be description of all thoroughfares! 'Street', however, is described as: *A public road in a city, town or village with houses and buildings on one or both sides*. This description describes many public roads in the Forests towns and villages. but they have, in the main, as their suffix 'Road' and not 'Street', I wonder why? Honing in on two of the Forest's towns demonstrates the myriad of suffixes to be analysed and understood.

In Cinderford, an 19th century town, amongst the 117 'closes', 'lanes', 'courts' etc. (some roads with no-suffix at all) are 8 'Streets', 59 'Roads' and 5 'Lanes': (Lamb, Marshall's, Mountjoy's, Mousell, and Peacock). **OED definition of 'Lane':** *A narrow road, especially in a rural area, or, 'An urban street'.*

Lydney, a much older town than Cinderford, has 9 'Streets' three of these, High Street, Hill Street and Newerne Street run through middle of Lydney one after the other. High Street is located in the original village of Lydney (in existence by the 9th century), Hill Street is the 'filler' road between High Street first built on circa 1876 and then Newerne Street (Newerne meaning 'the new house') commemorates Newerne village founded around 1066 which had about 27 houses in 1818.¹ Of the 132 roads in Lydney 9 are 'Streets', 34 'Roads' and 6 Lanes. The rest of Lydney's 132 roads have suffixes such as: 'Drive', 'Walk', 'Close', 'Way', 'Place', 'Drive', 'Crescent' (usually relates to alignment of road), 'Gate', 'Court', 'Gardens', 'Meadow', 'Fields', 'View', 'Avenue' (**OED: Avenue:** *A broad road in town or city, typically having trees at regular intervals along its sides*), 'Mews' (**OED: Mews.** *A row or street of houses or flats that have been converted from stables or built to look like former stable*).

Lydney's 'Old Town Mews' are built next door to the site of John Wintour's Iron works /furnace – was it the site of Whitecross Manor stables? Some road names have no suffix e.g.; 'Templeway' or 'Rushyleaze'. Suffixes such as 'Heights', 'Gardens', and 'Meadow' are fairly self-explanatory in where they are located or what was there before any dwellings were built, 'The Folders' (farm yard connotations?).

Looking at suffixes of a street nameplates unfolds even more history of a road. I do hope this and the previous article has given you inspiration to research road names where you live.

¹ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/glos/vol5/pp46-84>



First Steps ~ Improving the Forest's Built Heritage *by Simon Moore (Conservation Officer)*

One of the projects originally planned for the Foresters Forest landscape partnership project was to identify built heritage at risk and improve its chances of surviving for future generations. It has taken a number of years to get going, but this project is now underway and starting to show results. Way back at the beginning of the Foresters Forest project a short list of important standing remains, that were in need of repairs or improvement or better understanding, was drawn up and evaluated; from which a limited number of sites were chosen, as a cross section to represent our heritage assets, and to receive some attention. Funds are limited and the project was only ever intended to set standards for and raise the awareness of the plight of our historic remains and show what could be done. The hope being that local interest would help to continue the work and encourage people to take an interest in and help to conserve the above-ground archaeology. The sites selected include a lime kiln at Blakeney, a section of the Oakwood tramway at Bream, the Mill Hill drift mine entrance at Bream, the iron works at Darkhills and its sister site the Titanic steel works, the pack horse bridge at Soudley, the stone lined water course at the blue rock trail, Lower Ruspidge and the chimney base and tunnel at the Trafalgar Colliery. It was intended that each would have clearance of vegetation, essential repairs and some small scale conservation works carried out.



Darkhills Ironworks photographed before the conservation work started

Getting to the point of actual physical work on site has taken a long period; when bat and wildlife surveys have to be undertaken, structural assessments made, clearance of the sites so that detailed specifications can be drawn up, tendering etc. Finally shortly before the Covid-19 lock down the contracts were placed and works started.

So far the lime kiln at Blakeney has been completed, clearance of vegetation, removal of tree roots, stone repairs and a 'soft capping' of grass; the Darkhills site has been cleared of vegetation, with ivy and small trees removed from the stone work, before stone repairs and conservation works were undertaken. The Titanic site has had a replacement shoring erected, vegetation clearance and stone repairs to the enclosure walls and the main standing structures. At Trafalgar the chimney base has been cleared, to expose the draught tunnel and the stone work reinstated. Progress is now being made on the other sites. The work has been carefully and sensitively carried out by the contractors and illustrates what good conservation work looks like. I would urge you, when safe to do so, to seek out these small gems and to actively take an interest in what little we have left to show for our rich past.

With thanks to the Foresters Forest team, programme board members, Martin Beale for project managing the works and Jake Etherton the contractor.

A Riverside Chapel to Tame Navvies' Sunday Sins

By John Powell

There is a sense of irony in the widely expressed view that, although it took over a century, navvies eventually dug themselves out of work. There is no doubt that the thousands of strip-and-at-it men, who used muscle power to dig canals, build railway embankments, make dams and tunnel like moles were in a class of their own. And that, it seems, was just as they wanted it!

Theirs was to 'enjoy' a scurrilous reputation. Itinerant, they belonged nowhere in particular, and were as likely to sleep rough under a hedgerow as in a rudely constructed cabin.

These, then, were the men who powered the industrial revolution. Wherever they went they were despised and largely hated. They enjoyed reputations as hell-raising roughnecks terrorising isolated villages with bouts of heavy drinking and often in trouble with the police as their work took them face to face with settled communities in towns and cities.

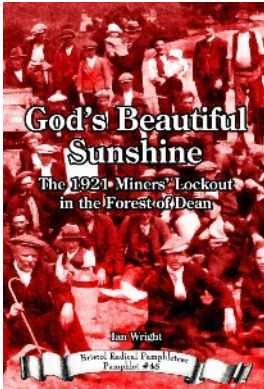
Beginning in the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century, there was much work for the navvies operating throughout south Wales and the Forest of Dean. The arrival and rapid expansion of the steam engine signalled the construction of mile upon mile of embankments, not only to facilitate laying the Cardiff to Gloucester line but miles of lesser routes. To add to the tasks there was the unenviable job of constructing a huge wall to keep back the Severn's unpredictable and notorious tides, plus digging harbours and canals at Sharpness and Lydney and, later, the Severn rail bridge.



This former warehouse enjoyed a short spell as a chapel before giving way to the South Wales railway linking Gloucester to Cardiff.

The limekiln on the right is still a feature and easily viewed.

Book Review by *Averil Kear*



GOD'S BEAUTIFUL SUNSHINE by Ian Wright

In the 1920's coal was the only industry whose exports declined in both value and volume. Unemployment in the mines fluctuated between 300,000 and 400,000. As coal prices tumbled at the start of 1921, losses amounted to 5s. a ton, or £5 million a month between January and March. Anxious to divest itself of responsibility, Lloyd George's Government announced it would hand the coal industry back to the owners when the present agreement expired on March 31st, 1921.

Faced with this situation when they regained control, the owners reacted in a way that seemed selfish, mean-spirited, and grasping.

They might have reorganized the industry. But they were incapable of agreeing on a reorganization plan. The only economy the owners understood was lower wages.

Coal mining was, of course, labour intensive: 75 per cent of the cost of coal was labour cost. So they posted notices at every pithead in the country announcing drastic wage cuts. These cuts - as much as 49 per cent in regions like South Wales, where profits had been hardest hit by the collapse of export markets - were not the only blow.

Worse, perhaps, the new agreement the owners offered would have destroyed the existing system of national agreements and returned to the hated old system of district rates. This meant that miners who worked at inferior pits, like those in the Forest of Dean, would earn much less than those working on richer seams in Yorkshire or Nottinghamshire.

The vexed question of national wage agreements was thus at the centre of the coal crisis in 1921. The miners refused to abandon the sanctity of national agreements; the owners argued that pits in the less profitable regions could not afford existing wage rates. The average wage of the mineworkers in Great Britain in the first quarter of 1921 was at its inter war peak of 89s. 8d. per week, and the owners said that when they resumed control this would have to be cut sharply.

Refusing to accept this cut in wages, a million British miners, including many war veterans, were locked out of their pits. The consequences for the 6,000 Forest of Dean miners, their families and the whole community, was brutal. However, the miners fought a determined battle for an alternative which included public ownership of the mines with decent pay and conditions.

In *God's Beautiful Sunshine*, Ian Wright tells the story of the miners' extraordinary resilience in their struggle for a better life. Ian's well researched book details the hardship endured by the miners during the lock-out and explores the background of the trade union movement in the Forest. Many men involved in the fight will be well known in the mining history of the Forest of Dean.

Published by Bristol Radical History Group, the book is available through the website www.brh.org.uk

Also available at :-

- The Gift Shop, **Taurus Crafts**, The Old Park Park, Forest of Dean, Lydney GL15 6BU
- **Dean Heritage Centre**, Camp Mill, Soudley, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, GL14 2UB