

In this edition:

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The children's book is published.
Order forms inside!
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- More Blood on Coal....

August 2021

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Editors Notes

This is the last newsletter before the Annual General Meeting, and a time for reflection about the work of two committee members who will be standing down from their current roles in October.

I write in particular about the long service and staunch support for the Society of Mary Sullivan (retiring Chair), and Cecile Hunt (retiring Treasurer). Cecile has managed our finances for the extraordinary period of over 20 years and also served during that time as Vice-Chair and Chair. Mary also previously served as Treasurer, Secretary and Vice Chair. Adopting for a moment my 'other hat' as a Vice President, I would just like to say 'Thanks' to Cecile and Mary for all their work over the years. It is the Society's good fortune that, AGM elections permitting, both ladies would like to remain with the committee in various other roles.

Both Mary and Cecile have always been very keen that the Society should be doing more to promote the history of the Forest to younger age groups, and I well remember many discussions about how this could be achieved. It is to the Society's great credit that with the help of our friends and supporters at Foresters' Forest, 'The Story of the Forest - A Children's History of the Forest of Dean' has recently been published. Led by Mary Sullivan, Cheryl Mayo and David Harris, many other members of the History Society have also helped in one way or another with the production of this remarkable book.

Needless to say, the book will make an excellent present for your grandchildren. You can find more details about the book and order forms in the middle of the newsletter.

Finally, the apparently inexhaustible supply of wonderful short articles for the middle pages has dried up somewhat. If you have a piece of work that you would like to see featured in a future newsletter, please get in touch - contact details can be found in the left column.

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



This will be my final Chair's piece for the Newsletters as the next one will be after the AGM and I will have passed over the reins to our new Chair. Instead of the usual 3-year term, thanks to Covid I have enjoyed 4 years of leading the team that runs our Society. It has passed swiftly but a lot has happened. I am so pleased that, by adopting the use of Zoom, we managed to run a full programme last year. It's amazing how adaptable we can be if we try!

In 2018 we celebrated the Society's 70th anniversary with a special dinner at the Speech House hosted by our President, Baroness Jan Royall of Blaisdon. Our Vice Presidents all wrote and delivered talks especially for that year. From them we heard about Forest railways, Forest history, the Severn Tunnel and a war-time school at Lydney. I researched all the Founders of the Society, wrote about them in the *New Regard* and talked about them at meetings.

Throughout my years there have been so many walks and talks of local interest – for example about the Bathurst open air pool, Beachley shipyards, and around Bream and local churches for example.

The History Society has been a strong partner in the Foresters Forest (FF) lottery-funded project that has brought major benefits to the Dean. FF has been another source of our talks, such as about surveying ancient trees and local archaeology digs. Recently we heard about the green and blue plaques scheme to commemorate notable Forest people. Some of our oldest heritage has been repaired under the 'Built Heritage' strand of FF project.

FF has also a path into our local schools to build links with potential future local historians. It has long been an ambition of mine to produce material to inspire local children, teaching them about the rich heritage of their area. As I write, we reach the culmination of that idea as we prepare to launch our new children's history book, *The Story of the Forest*, written by Andy Seed with 7 to 11-year olds in mind. By the time you read this, it will be on sale – to grandparents and others!

Although different in nature, the book is another outstanding production with lasting impact by the Society following on from the Miners Memorial and the Geomap. Speaking of which, I am very pleased that we have been able to have the Geomap professionally cleaned and restored to its original, colourful glory to sit alongside the renewed information boards.

Although I shall repeat this at the AGM, I want to take this chance to thank all the people who have sat on my committee and the others who keep the Society not just going but thriving and dynamic. They all do a wonderful job. I believe the talks, walks and outings we offer to members are as good as any local society could manage.

After I have stepped down as Chair I shall continue to facilitate the selling of our publications, both the *New Regard* and now *The Story of the Forest*. But I will have a bit more time to sit back in the audience at meetings and just enjoy the show.

Stay healthy. All best wishes

Mary Sullivan



Membership Report August 2021

I'm hoping that by the time you read this, our promised summer will be here. Also that everyone is staying safe as lockdown restrictions are lifted. Our Society continues to grow, and we welcome Owen and Sigrid McLaughlin and Angus Frazer as new members.

Membership renewals

Last year we waived membership renewals given the uncertainty around Covid. However, it's more or less back to normal now (we hope) and a membership renewal form is included in this newsletter. The subscription remains the same at £12 for one person and £17 for two at the same address. I hope you will continue to be a member of our active society and look forward to receiving your form.

You can also download the renewal form from our website (click on the big button top right that asks people to join), and email it to me, especially if you are paying by BACS. And a reminder please that if paying by BACS, do include your surname and postcode as reference given we have several members with the same surnames.

Email addresses – spam avoidance

In addition to the normal reminder to let me know if you change your email address, I believe some members suddenly stopped receiving emails from me. If you haven't heard in a while, it may be that your provider has decided these emails are spam, or possibly put them in your 'promotions' folder. Please check both, and to help avoid the spam box ensure that membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk is in your list of contacts. Even better, 'whitelist' the address or add it to safe senders.

Gloucestershire Archives continue to offer interesting training opportunities via Zoom. On 11th August 1- 2pm, the subject is "Explore Your Neighbourhood with Know Your Place. On 25th August 1- 2pm you can "Explore the History of Kingsholm".
More details at: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/gloucestershire-archives-events/>

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 11th September - 3pm - West Dean Centre, Bream
Cecile Hunt - "The Berkeley Affair"

Saturday 9th October - 2'30pm - West Dean Centre, Bream
Annual General Meeting
followed by

Di Court - "In the Shadow of the Hills - can the Forest Heritage Survive?"

Saturday 13th November - 3pm - West Dean Centre, Bream
Roger Deeks & Jason Griffiths - "Reading the Forest and Voices of the Forest"



News of the Dean Heritage Centre from Nicola Wynn

Dean Heritage Centre is open 7 days a week during the summer holidays. Our great team of facilitators including Alex, Ken, Amanda and Florrie will be on hand to make sure you have a great time visiting the Dean Heritage Centre this Summer. Our events include:

Sun 1st August – HMS Pinafore aka The Lass that Loved a Sailor. Opera Anywhere presents the comic Gilbert & Sullivan operetta as part of UK tour.

9th -15th August – The Gruffalo’s picnic. Great for children. Facebook photograph competition to win a soft toy. Take a photo of yourself having a picnic at DHC with children’s favourite soft toy.

28th – 30th August – Fire & Wood Festival. A weekend of activities celebrating Forest skills and crafts that’s a great day out for all the family. Our traditional charcoal burn is one of the few still carried out in the country.

Until 5th September – Miners 1921 Lockout exhibition in collaboration with author Ian Wright who wrote the book on the lockout ‘God’s Beautiful Sunshine’. The displays look at conditions in the Forest of Dean Coalfield, the events leading up to the 1921 lockout and their roots in World War One, the national picture and the lockout in the Forest of Dean.

Sun 19th September – Foresters’ Forest celebration at DHC. A celebration of this project with various demonstrations and opportunities to find out about the work all the different projects have carried out.



See our website for more details:

www.deanheritagecentre.com

Tel: 01594 822170

Foresters Forest Plaque Scheme is Completed



Following Helen Chick’s interesting talk about the Foresters’ Forest Blue & Green Plaque Scheme in March, it is good to see that the final blue plaque (dedicated to the Mushets) was recently unveiled at Whitecliff furnace.

Photo shows former Chair Simon Moore, current Chair Mary Sullivan, Vice President Dr Ian Standing, and Foresters’ Forest Project Manager (& Vice -Chair) Sue Middleton.

More Blood On Coal

Edward Protheroe's Slavery

Wealth Funded Forest Industries

by Steven Carter

Coal mining shaped Forest history. The miners' hardships and heroism are rightly celebrated. But new findings about the wealth of Edward Protheroe (1774-1856), 'the father of the Forest coalfield', reveal a hidden history of slavery money used in the Forest's early industrial development. Forest pits were usually small-scale until the early nineteenth century brought wealthy capitalists like Protheroe into the Forest. Only affluent outsiders could afford to sink deeper pits reaching lower seams. They erected steam engines to de-water their workings and raise the coal. By 1832 Protheroe, the largest outsider by far, claimed one tenth of all Forest coal. Free Miners and other Foresters resisted this dispossession, most famously with their 1831 Forest riots.

Local historians know Protheroe's Forest enterprises, but his deep links to slavery are only now being exposed. Ian Wright recently described Protheroe as investing 'his proceeds from slavery into an extensive industrial empire of collieries and iron works in the Forest of Dean.'

The Protheroe Money Trail

Following the Protheroe family money trail leads back to Bristol and the infamous Triangular Trade to West Africa. Its horrific Middle Passage transported millions to lives of enslavement on West Indies sugar plantations. My search found the ships, voyages, and individual names of trafficked people - like Eugenia and her daughter Adele -, whose enslaved lives helped finance Protheroe's Forest empire.

Slave Ship Voyages

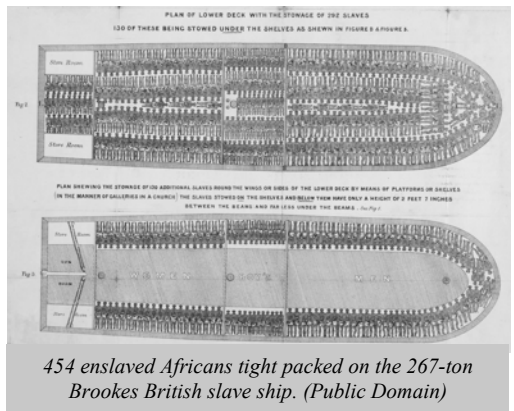
Protheroe's great wealth ultimately stems from Great-Uncle Philip. Consider Captain Philip Protheroe (d.1763), during his sixth voyage, on the quarter-deck of the 90-ton Ann slave ship in November 1737. On the Middle Passage the slave ship stench carries for a mile. Below deck West African men lie chained, packed tight, and stifling. Women and children crowd the deck. Captain and 25 crew watch mostly from behind the fortified barricade. Nearly 400 people must endure this two-month journey. Sickness, disease, and suicide mean only 341 will reach Barbados. Captain Prothero disregards this human suffering, perhaps contemplating organising his own slave voyages, like the Ann's owner, William Gordon. After shipping two thousand human 'cargo' to Jamaica, Barbados and Virginia, Captain Protheroe accumulates enough wealth, understanding and commercial contacts to set up Protheroe & Co. His own Tryall vessel will carry another 2000 enslaved Africans across the Atlantic.

West Indies Sugar Plantations

In 1763 nephew Philip (1747-1803), Edward's father, inherited the Captain Protheroe's Bristol house and ample maintenance. He 'began trade with a considerable capital' and the Captain's valuable connections. Captain Protheroe's sugar merchant friend, Mark Davis, provides Philip's apprenticeship and then his partnership. Boosted into Bristol's merchant elite, Philip became the fourth largest sugar importer. He defended, sustained and profited from the brutal forced labour of enslaved people on sugar plantations.

Direct trade with the West Indies delivered more reliable profits than slave voyages. Philip's considerable fleet (7 in 1793) illustrates his success. In 1794 Ireland, Protheroe & Co. formed the Bristol City Bank, financing Bristol and West India interests.

In 1803, Philip bequeathed estates in the West Indies, and landed property in Gloucestershire and Wales. Edward received £20,000 of Philip's £112,000. Since Edward's brother, Sir Henry, had collieries in Monmouthshire aiming to supply Bristol, Philip may have envisaged creating a local maritime empire!





*Cutting the Sugar Cane, Antigua.
Courtesy British Library.*



Forest Industrial Empire

Bristol's West India merchants enjoyed considerable civic status. Edward Protheroe became a Councillor, Sheriff, Mayor and MP. His 1812 election campaign was aggressively pro-slavery. He continued defending West India interests. He regarded himself as 'faithfully and zealously' representing Bristol, 'with integrity of principle', 'guided by my conscience' and 'a good Patriot and a good Christian', promoting measures 'beneficial to the Public.' Edward Protheroe transferred his wealth from slavery into untainted enterprises. From about 1810, he invested heavily in Forest tramroads. By 1841 Protheroe owned ten collieries and

held shares in twenty others, besides his extensive interests in iron mining. The imposing Hill House on the sharp bend out of Newnham became his Forest residence, when away from Bristol and London.

Unaware of Protheroe's slavery interests, many Foresters applauded him for providing 500 jobs, spreading 'comfort amongst hundreds of families by his spirited and liberal enterprise', and for building Cinderford's school. Poetess Catherine Drew asked Foresters to 'serve him, boys, cheerful, his interest defend' and 'crown him the king of the Forest'. Slave wealth empowered Protheroe to exert immense influence. His political legacy in the Dean perhaps matches his industrial impact.

High tramroad charges increased colliery unprofitability, unemployment, and distress – likely contributing to the 1831 riot. The subsequent Dean Forest Commission examined the Free Miners' conflict with wealthy capitalists. In 1832 Protheroe told the Commissioners his Forest coal properties cost him £200,000; even more to develop the collieries and railways; and Crown licences for his steam engines ought to imply approval. He complained strongly of injustice 'if his rights were not duly recognised'.

Protheroe's Bristol and parliamentary activities furnished connections with several Commissioners. Remarkably, Chairman Robert Gordon's own slavery wealth stretched back to Captain Protheroe's boss, William Gordon! The Commission's reports helped transform traditional Forest rights and customs into new property-based laws, benefiting industrialists like Protheroe.

Every Shilling

Bristolians knew the Protheroe wealth came substantially from slavery. Opposition supporters criticised Edward's son for his anti-slavery campaign in the 1830 election, because 'to the West Indies ALONE he owes his every shilling!!!' His father [Edward] and grandfather [Philip] amassed ALL their wealth as West Indian Merchants, and consequently his money is the produce of Slave labour. Enslaved Eugenia gained her freedom in 1838, but without the economic resources to change life for herself or her daughter Adele.

Edward Protheroe, however, received £17,386 compensation for his loss of 642 enslaved people on plantations in Jamaica, St Vincent and Trinidad. Edward, two brothers, and his cousin, claimed compensation for 2269 enslaved lives. Dynastic ambitions for Protheroe's Forest Empire collapsed when Edward's only son died childless. Consequently, his significance for Forest history was possibly understated.

More Blood on the Coal

Profits from Captain Protheroe's human 'cargo', nearly 4000 enslaved people, flowed into nephew Philip's wealth and career. This nephew traded in slave-produced goods, financed slave plantations, and provided substantial capital for his son's inheritance. Edward developed and invested this in Forest tramways, ironworks, and collieries. Forest historians attest Edward Protheroe's important contribution to the Dean's early industrial development.

Almost unknown is this arterial channel of money flowing from slavery into Forest industries. Besides hard-working, hard-pressed Forest colliers, enslaved Africans provided another layer of blood on the coal.



*Edward Protheroe, extract from
print; Two candidates for the city of
B----l general election Oct, 1812.
Courtesy The British Museum.
(CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)*

Countess Dunraven *by Cecile Hunt*

Her death was announced across the country. Caroline, Countess Dowager of Dunraven and Mount Earl died at Clearwell Court, Clearwell, Gloucestershire at 11 o'clock on the night of Thursday 26th May 1870, in her 80th year.

Caroline appears to have lived a very happy life and showed great kindness to all who had contact with her. Caroline was well known in the Forest of Dean when alive and remembered many years after her death. Born into the landed gentry, she was generous to those of lesser means all her life. As the sole heiress of her father's estates, including Clearwell manor, she was much richer than her husband Windham Henry Quin. He assumed Caroline's maiden name, by Royal license, five years after they were married in 1810.



In later life Caroline became the Dowager Countess of Dunraven. Not only did she leave her mark on Clearwell (her Gloucestershire estate) but also in Bridgend (Wales), where Dunraven Castle was the family home for many centuries. On Thursday 13th February 2020 a blue plaque was unveiled by Lady Dunraven and her daughter Lady Ana Johnson celebrating the countess's contribution to Bridgend, when in 1857 it received its first piped drinking water thanks to the philanthropy of Caroline Wyndham. The plaque is erected on the Randall Memorial Drinking Fountain which Caroline paid for three years after the installation of the pipeline. The Drinking Fountain was built in 1860 in memory of John Randall, her estate manager of 33 years, and is grade II listed.

To begin at the beginning. Caroline was born at Clearwell Court on 24th May 1790, at 6 o'clock in the morning. Her mother, Anna Maria Charlotte, nee Ashby was married to Thomas Wyndham of Dunraven Castle. The family did not live at Clearwell Court, their home was Dunraven Castle, Glamorgan. Why were the family at Clearwell at the time of Caroline's birth? Because it was her mother's, (Anna Maria Charlotte), home. Clearwell Court was the residence of Caroline's grandfather Charles Edwin Wyndham, and step-grandmother, Charlotte Edwin (nee Jones) of Fonmon Castle, Glamorgan. This Charlotte was not only Caroline's father's stepmother but also her mother's mother! Charlotte's first marriage was to Thomas Ashby together they had a daughter Anna Maria Charlotte, making Thomas Ashby Caroline's maternal grandfather. Caroline was close to Charlotte and kept in touch with her until Charlotte's death.

Once Caroline got married, she made her home in Ireland with her husband and three children in Adare, Co Limerick. There they built a new manor house on the site of the original property. Adare Manor is now a luxury hotel – see <https://roaringwaterjournal.com> for pictures. After Caroline's paternal grandfather (Charles Wyndham Edwin) died, Clearwell Court descended to her father Thomas Wyndham, and on his death, it descended to Caroline. The court was tenanted for a period of time after Charles' death but then it remained empty until 1853 when it was rumoured that the Countess (Caroline) looked to adopt it as her residence in her later years. More on that next time.

Next time: more on the Dowager Countess and Clearwell Court/Castle.



SNIPPETS

Thanks to Averil Kear for this ‘snippet’ from the Gloucester Journal of 22nd July 1735. No doubt the event described was part of the long time struggle of Foresters against ‘impounding’.

“ Whereas a notorious and villainous gang of Persons have several times of late assembled themselves together in a riotous manner, and committed divers disorders by breaking open the Pounds at the Castle of St. Briavels and Park End Lodge, and discharged from thence several cattle. And upon Saturday night, the 5th instant, the same gang came to the Lodge of Mr. R Worgan, entered his garden, beat down his beans, cut up his cabbages and apple-trees, broke his windows, and part of the Pound wall; then adjourned to the Speech House lodge, which is in the possession of George James, commonly called Captain Whithorne. Upon their coming they immediately fell to work on the Pound, but being desired by the Captain, who rose to the window, to disperse themselves, they returned him for an answer a brace of slugs in at the window. The Captain upon that ply’d them warmly with small shot, who sent him in return a great quantity of slugs and balls, so that almost a continual fire lasted for near half an hour, when their ammunition being spent, they had something else to pick besides stones out of the pound-wall.

On the morrow one of the gang was taken, and on Monday committed by Thomas Pyrke, Esq; to Gloucester Castle; but his company being apprised of it, seven of them disguised themselves in a dreadful manner, and arm’d with four guns and three swords, came several miles over the Forest, but finding their comrade gone too long before, returned back to pull off their ragged petticoats and clean their too much like Devils faces. But it is hoped the gentlemen of the county will lend an assisting hand to put a stop to these resolute desperate fellows.”

(N.B. They are supposed to be what are called Fanside-Men, and come from in or about Clowerwall)



*Gloucester Castle and Gaol
By William Andrew (1848-1908) Public Domain*



Following on from the article about the Cinderford Inebriates Retreat at Abbotswood House, Margaret Yeates has written to provide a little more information about the period when Abbotswood was home to the ‘Sisters of Hope’: *“I was interested in the article in May’s newsletter about the retreat at Abbotswood House. As a Catholic child in the 1950’s I often went on May and Corpus Christi processions there, as at that time it was a convent. I am not sure what order of nuns were there, but I think it may have been an elderly peoples’ home. I remember processing past the little cemetery there, and I believe when the nuns left that all the graves were exhumed and reburied in Yew Tree Cemetery in the catholic area. Maybe some other members may remember this?”*

The Victoria County History provides further information: *“In 1939 the Sisters of Hope, who belonged to the Sisters of the Holy Family, purchased Abbotswood in Ruspidge for a convent and a nursing home. The nuns apparently gave up their nursing work in 1956 and the convent had closed by 1959.”*

Meetings in Review *with Geoff Davis, Chris Sullivan & Cheryl Mayo*

For the May meeting, Geoff Davis and Paul Stephens-Wood led a party of 30 members around part of the Bream Heritage Walk. Starting at the Youth Shelter in Whitecroft the walkers headed along the railway line towards Parkend. At the railway crossing Geoff revealed a Whitecroft football shirt complete with badge depicting among other things an Olympic torch. This illustrated the origin of a nickname for Whitecroft sports teams and male voice choir - "The Greeks". A poem written by local poet F.W. Harvey explores 'the curious thing about the



Greeks', and coincidentally Harvey's Forester's Forest blue plaque was unveiled at Yorkley Village Hall that very afternoon.

The walkers crossed the river Lyd and ascended Park Hill Enclosure where Geoff explained the route of the proposed Lydney to Parkend multi-use trail. At the remnants of a ditch and bank enclosure boundary Paul told the story of Warren James who would have known these woodlands so well.

Forest Lodges are also relevant to the Warren James story. Geoff pointed out Parkhill Lodge and an inconspicuous tablet in the back wall facing the footpath. The initials of Philip Baylis (Deputy Surveyor) who tried to dissuade Warren James from civil disorder appear on the inscription.

At Princess Royal colliery Paul summarised the coal extraction from there, then Geoff donned his DIY miners cap (crumpled newspaper stuffed into a cap) to recite the amusing and mostly true story of "the pocket watch".

At Saunders Green, near the site of the Princess Royal Company brickworks, Geoff produced a PRC brick from his backpack which he had brought back to its birthplace. Some members said they had seen similar bricks.

From a great viewpoint across the valley to Whitecroft, Paul then told us about the Pin Factory and what is planned to replace it. Geoff then revealed the entrance to Park Hill Level – originally an iron ore level that headed off through the coal deposits towards the Crease Limestone under Bream. It was driven more than 4,000 feet in a vain search for viable deposits of ore. Geologist F M Trotter (1942) concluded that the ore failed at around 120ft O.D. which is the altitude of the entrance to the level.

Thanks are due to Pam Singer who ensured that everyone reached the finish at their own pace.

G.D.

Saturday 19th June 2021 was a dull but rain-free day. The maximum 30 of us gathered near Ellwood School for a walk led by the double-act of Di and Ian Standing. One doing the organising and marshalling and some of the commentary, and the other giving more specific explanations of geology, industry and place-names. Ian explained that 'Ellwood' implied an Alder wood within clearings, with small settlements of squatters' houses mainly from the 1800s. The Tump by the 1878 School was the first of many spoil-heaps from small-scale coal-mining. There, we were on a plateau, with small streams getting larger on their way down towards Parkend. These cut through the geology and gave miners horizontal access to lower seams: Ian mentioned the Bounds family of living memory. To reach our Little Drybrook target, we passed through cathedral-like stands of fine big conifers, went through Clements End, where Di commented on 1869 Bible Christian Chapel, and indeed crossed a dry brook. In many locations, Ian pointed out wide-spreading Oaks from the plantings after the Napoleonic Wars.

Di had prevailed upon the welcoming Mark and his two colleagues at the Foresters Folly free-mine to let us gather round their pit-head and coal screens. Mark explained the target of their mine, only opened some 16 months ago, into old workings last used around 1916-7. Mark explained the roof support methods needed with the poor ground of this Whittington seam. The team demonstrated their mechanised rotary coal sieve, or trommel, on its first day of use. Very Forest – ingenious, home-engineered using recycled components, economic and demonstrably effective. This stop proved a vivid practical demonstration of how free-mining is done and why it still matters.



The 'trommel' at Foresters Folly mine

No-one being minded to take a sack of coal on the rest of the walk, we continued to Little Drybrook. There, Di had to restrain some of us from investigating the plant nursery at a house formerly used to provide cider and food to miners. We moved on past Ellwood Lodge, once the home of the Crown Second Deputy Surveyor and the Standing's home until last year. This explained their detailed knowledge of the locality and indeed of people at their gates. Having descended a long way, there inevitably came a haul through conifers up to the plateau and our cars, after general thanks to our two expert guides. *C.S.*

On 11th July, members of LHS learned much about the long and fascinating history of Leckhampton village on this guided tour by Leckhampton local history society member Paul McGowan. We took the tour in three parts, starting with the site of the old village. Passing by the former pound (now an electrical sub station), we came to the remains of a moat, now mostly dry, which once surrounded a compound likely containing a substantial residence. The moat, which was the subject of a BGAS archaeological excavation in 1933, is a scheduled monument. Across a field, we came to the delightful Moat Cottage, the oldest thatched residence in Leckhampton dating from the 16th c.

Leckhampton kept itself quite separate from Cheltenham until the late 19th c, at which point the attractions of the big town for employment and transport led to new development, bringing the village closer to its big neighbour. However, it was lovely to see several medieval buildings remaining among the Victorian terraces and more modern homes.

We returned to the church for homemade cake and tea in the garden of Church Cottages before a tour of the large and beautifully maintained churchyard and the church. Being close to Cheltenham, the churchyard has a good many graves and memorials of interest. Three VCs and Edward Wilson, who died with Scott in the Antarctic, are interned or commemorated there, as well as John Barnett 'The Father of English Opera'. The church itself dates from the 12th c though it is mostly 14th c with Victorian, highly complementary, additions.



Members enjoy tea and cake at Leckhampton

Our thanks to Paul McGowan who led the tour, to Eric Miller whose knowledge of the area is profound, and to Sue Marlow, the Chair of Leckhampton history society for her warm welcome. And of course, the providers of the cake and tea. *C.M.*

Greenbottom Waterworks *by Keith Walker*

If you happen to be walking near Flaxley and Edge Hills, you may chance across a group of stone buildings that look almost industrial in their look. You would be right in thinking that as the buildings were originally purposed as Greenbottom Water Works (SO 6715), which were built in 1877 to provide a pioneering water supply for Cinderford and environs.



Waterworks near Green Bottom by Clint Mann - geograph.org.uk/p/3902997

Cinderford grew very rapidly during the 1800's and with many local mines being driven deeper and pumped free of water, many householders found that their wells were beginning to run dry as the water table sank. The other factor was there was no public sewage system, so inevitably the population was at serious risk from cholera and other diseases. After a failed attempt to engineer and install a water supply by the East Dean Local Board, the 'Rural Sanitary Authority of the Westbury on Severn Union' was established in 1872. After a report from the Medical Officer of Health, it was decided to appoint Gotto & Beesley of London to produce a report detailing a suitable water supply and sewage scheme for Cinderford. Eventually after much debate, it was finally decided to construct a waterworks at Greenbottom to make use of the large volumes of water issuing forth from Beech Iron Ore Pit. By October 1876, the Rural Sanitary Authority was able to raise a loan of £8400 to enable the Greenbottom works to be built. The water would be supplied to Cinderford, Ruspidge, Ruardean Hill, Drybrook and Harrow Hill.



OS Map 25 inch Gloucester XXX1.8 1881. Maps reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.

circular, 61 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep, with an original capacity of 185,000 gallons of water. The rising main from the pumping station was of 6 inches in diameter, and the distribution mains pipes varied in diameter from 3 to 5 inches.

With various modifications to machinery and reservoirs, the Greenbottom scheme continued to supply water into the local network until it was finally superseded in 1976 when the behemoth Mitcheldean Water Treatment Works was opened. The circular reservoir was demolished in 1981, and, after years of uncertainty, the buildings at Greenbottom now have a new life as 'Pumping Station Holiday' apartments.

Work commenced in April 1877, with contracts being let to James Watt & Co for pumping engines, Laurie & Co for the supply of pipes, and Phillips & Co for the construction of the pumping station and service reservoir. The 20 horsepower, horizontal, high pressure pumps were capable of raising 8000 gallons an hour to the service reservoir which was located 1300 yards away and some 406 feet higher than the pumping station. The reservoir was



OS Map 25 inch Gloucester XXX1.12 Published 1878