

**FOREST OF DEAN
LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY** *news*
February 2022

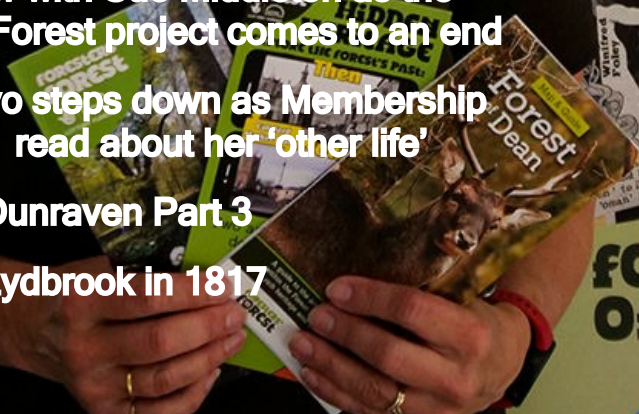


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Inside:

- **An interview with Sue Middleton as the Foresters' Forest project comes to an end**
- **Cheryl Mayo steps down as Membership Secretary - read about her 'other life'**
- **Countess Dunraven Part 3**
- **Murder in Lydbrook in 1817**

FORESTERS' FOREST
with the
LOTTERY FUNDED



February 2022

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Editors Notes

The front cover features Sue Middleton, our dynamic Vice-Chair. Sue is wrapping up her remarkable and hugely successful role as Project Manager of the seven year long Foresters' Forest enterprise. You will probably be aware that a number of members of the History Society have been involved with the Foresters' Forest project, many from the very start. Therefore it seems the right time to have a conversation with Sue about all things Foresters' Forest and her time at the 'helm' of the project. Read all about this in the centre pages.

Inevitably the committee members change from time to time, but it is with some sadness that I note that Cheryl Mayo is stepping down from the committee, leaving her role as Membership Secretary. Cheryl was Secretary from 2012 - 2015, then switched to take on the mantle of Membership Secretary. However, these bald facts hugely understate Cheryl's enormous contribution to our Society during her time on the Committee. To list just some of the work she undertook; she was part of the New Regard publishing team with her husband David Harris. She was deeply involved in the editing and publication of the Society's WW1 book, the recent 'Story of the Forest' children's book, and wrote articles for the New Regard. Since moving to the Forest area Cheryl has also developed her skills as an author, and has become a leading light of the literary scene in the Forest area. You can read all about Cheryl's 'other life' elsewhere in this edition.

Please note that the Society is offering a few outdoor events this year. The first of these is a 'self-drive' visit to Risca Museum (with optional village walk) and takes place on Sunday May 15th. Risca is a small town near Newport in Monmouthshire. Risca Industrial Museum is on the ground floor of the old Risca Collieries Workmans institute, which was built in 1916 for the local miners. The museum displays an extensive collection of artefacts, memorabilia and old photographs covering local coal mining, the iron industry, tram roads, railways, and canals. To guarantee a place on the visit, please see the news section in this edition.

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



Well, that was Christmas and the New Year!

We are now fast approaching the second anniversary of the start of the Pandemic with the prospect of it being part of our lives for some time to come. Although we seem to be adapting to life with Covid, it is still impacting our lives and almost everything we do. The History Society has adopted Zoom for both its committee meetings and some of its monthly members meetings. I think opinion is evenly divided between the two and we will continue to try and fulfil everyone's wishes as far as is possible and practicable. As always, we have had a diverse range of topics for our talks, and this coming years programme promises to be equally eclectic (see the website for full details).

Of course, none of our events happen by accident, an awful lot of time and effort are invested by lots of volunteers, to ensure there is something for everyone. It is only when one becomes involved with a voluntary organisation that the extent of the hard work, commitment and dedication of those volunteers becomes evident. One of the volunteers is Cheryl Mayo, who will be handing on the reins of Membership Secretary at the end of next month. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Cheryl for all her hard work over the years, her diligence has ensured all members receive the Newsletter, updates and much more. As we say thank you to Cheryl, we welcome Ian Gower who has readily agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary. Thank you Ian, for agreeing to undertake this important job.

We have a dedicated team in the Committee but there is always room for other interested and enthusiastic members to become more involved in the running of the Society. We currently need people with computing skills to assist with the website and our digital archive. If you are interested, please let me know.

Everyone involved in the production of *The Story of the Forest* can be justly proud of the book. It has sold well over the Christmas period. It is pleasing to learn that more and more local schools are interested in using it as a resource.

In the last Newsletter I mentioned links with other History societies', and to that end, we are working to arrange a reciprocal visit from Leckhampton History Society in the summer. I also hope we can arrange tours of local towns/villages/localities. If you have any suggestions for visits, or if you have any ideas for speakers for our monthly meetings, do please get in touch.

Social Media is fast becoming 'The' way to communicate (not for everyone of course) and I must confess to being a bit behind in the use of Facebook, but my thanks go to Caroline Prosser-Lodge for keeping the Society's page up to date with interesting articles. If you haven't yet had a look, why not see what you have been missing.

If you are not one of the many people who buy the Society's award-winning publication, *New Regard*, why not give yourself a real treat and send for or pick up a copy? The latest edition is devoted to Lydney's history. As with all *New Regards*, the depth of research and quality of its articles, are second to none.

I am sure that, like me, you are all looking forward to longer days, more sunshine and, perhaps most of all, the end of this pandemic. In the meantime, enjoy your membership and I look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings.

John Lane



MEMBERSHIP

A belated happy new year, and I hope that 2022 brings you all good things despite our continuing battle against Covid. Certainly, the society is off to a good start with these new members joining since the beginning of the new membership year: Christopher Jones, Ron & Pat Hayhurst, Caroline Moor & Pete Harper, John Harrison, Janet Bailey, Kari Long, Marcia Weaver, Dana & Jonathan Chambers. A warm welcome to you all. I am pleased to say that we had a very high membership renewal rate, so thank you very much for your continued support.

This will be my last report here, as I have decided to step down as membership secretary and from the committee once this newsletter has been sent on its way to you. In the seven years I've been in the role, I've much enjoyed my interactions with you all, even chasing up renewals! Your 'thank you's' have also always been highly appreciated. However, with a pending house move now added to other commitments, sadly something had to go. I leave you in very good hands. Ian Gower joined the committee towards the end of last year and has graciously stepped in now to be your new membership secretary.

The email address remains the same of course, and to help avoid the email 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. And talking of addresses, do let the membership secretary know if you change your home address or email please! Thank you for your support over the years and take care all.

Cheryl Mayo

SELF DRIVE EVENT- SUNDAY MAY 15th

Risca Museum and optional village walk

Risca Museum holds one of the best collections of artefacts relating to the industrial heritage of the South Wales Valleys. The parallels to our own Forest should make this guided tour and (optional) local history walk of keen interest to members. A self-drive event. Risca is a little over an hour's drive from the Forest.



The guided museum visit will start at 10.30 am and will take about an hour. The village tour will be 'on the flat', details tbd. Those who don't go on the walk are welcome to continue to browse the museum. There are local pubs and restaurants if you want to stay on for lunch.

The people at Risca can take a maximum of 25 people. Therefore, could you please email me at cheryl.mayo@btinternet.com to book a place. I will send detailed information and maps once I have the bookings.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 12th February - 3pm
West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW
Averil Kear - "North Foreland Lodge"

Saturday 12th March - 3pm
West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW
Paul Barnett - "The Severn & Wye Railway Bridge - Disaster Waiting"

Saturday 16th April - 3pm
West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW
Dr Rob Jones - "William Marshall - Earl of Pembroke"

Ventilation is maintained in the meeting room. Please wear face masks. Hand sanitizers are available. The Society will continue to follow government covid advice and will keep members informed of any changes to meetings should these be required.

CHERYL MAYO'S "OTHER LIFE"

Many of you may not know that our retiring membership secretary, Cheryl Mayo, has another life as a writer. Under her pen name Cheryl Burman, she has published four novels, a collection of short stories, appeared in several anthologies and has a number of awards under her belt for various bits of her writing.



David Harris & Cheryl Mayo

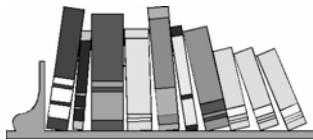
Cheryl began this new phase of her life after moving to the Forest, which is appropriate given our Forest has inspired writers such as Tolkien, Dennis Potter and JK Rowling. In fact it was the 2010 government's proposal to sell off England's public forests which persuaded her to put pen to paper and try for her long-held dream of 'writing a book'. The result of that is the fantasy trilogy *Guardians of the Forest*, popular with ages 9-90 and highly regarded by parents, teachers and kids. A prequel is about to be published.

Her fourth book, *Keepers*, is of an entirely different nature – a women's fiction novel set in her home country of Australia, in 1950. Loosely based on family tales, the novel tells the story of Raine, a young Australian woman who meets a Cockney immigrant on the migrant camp where they are both temporarily living. Readers have left reviews along the lines of 'Once you start to read this book you have to read on until the end,' and 'I already want a sequel'.

Cheryl says she has ideas for the sequel. For the time being, however, she is concentrating on finishing her next novel, set here in the Forest and on the Severn. The idea for this one came from the story of Ellen Hayward, the wise woman of Cinderford tried for witchcraft in 1906.

Cheryl is also the chair of Dean Writers Circle and partners with her husband David Harris and history society member Roger Deeks in bringing both history and creative writing to our local schools through Dean Scribblers.

For more about Cheryl's books and her other writing activities, visit cherylburman.com.



On 6th December last, the Gloucestershire Local History Association presented FoDLHS member, Roger Deeks with the Bryan Gerrard Award for the best article published in a Gloucestershire local history journal in 2020 ('The Persistence of the Brass Band Tradition in the Forest of Dean', published in 'The New Regard Vol 34' (2020).

Roger thanked them and remarked that 'The New Regard is an outstanding journal. Researchers in the Forest of Dean are fortunate to have Ian Standing editing and David Harrison producing the Journal, making submissions very easy and supporting new and old authors.'

The article came about because of Roger's involvement in a Foresters' Forest project looking at the musical heritage of the Dean. Sue Middleton, Society vice-chair is presenting a talk to Gloucestershire Local History Association in the Spring about the project and its outcomes.

Interview with Sue Middleton

Many members will be aware that our Vice Chair, Sue Middleton, has been Programme Manager of the Foresters' Forest project for the amazing period of seven years. Also, many members will have been involved with Foresters' Forest in one way or another. The project will conclude in March, so it seems a good time to talk to Sue about Foresters' Forest, its successes, and challenges.

Ed: I know you are a Forester born and bred, but when did you first become interested in the history of the area?

When I was at school my History teacher dictated notes every lesson and we just wrote them down, so unfortunately that banished any interest in History at a young age! It was much later when I first became interested in the history of the area when I worked at the Wye Valley AONB on a previous Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership scheme called 'Overlooking the Wye'. That was about celebrating the Wye Valley's heritage, which naturally overlaps with the Forest partially. I have learnt so much more about all aspects of the Forest's heritage during Foresters' Forest and loved it – it's been the best job ever!

Ed: Turning to the Foresters' Forest, what were the broad aims of the project, and how many separate projects were included at the beginning.

Foresters' Forest is about using the £2.5m from the National Lottery to raise awareness and participation with the natural, built and cultural heritage of our Forest. The whole process started when large organisations (Forestry England, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Natural England) decided to ask the local community if they were interested in developing a bid to the Heritage Fund. The first two public meetings were attended by about 100 people each time and there were about 85 project ideas put forward initially. Over time that number was honed down to the 38 projects that have been delivered over the past five years by the partnership of 32 organisations, led by Forestry England.

Ed: From my point of view Foresters' Forest has been a great success, but I know some projects fell away along the way. Tell us about some of them and why you think that happened.

One of the projects is called 'A Future for Commoning', and the intention was that this would support the Commoners Association in maintaining and continuing the practice of running free roaming sheep in the Forest, which is part of our heritage. However, that project has mutated a bit and we have been working with an independent grazier, who runs sheep in enclosed areas, so that their grazing is directed in areas that help other species (e.g. butterflies) to thrive. That grazier has a longer term ambition to become a commoner and have free roaming sheep at some point in the future. Inevitably over a long period of time, some project leaders have left for various reasons, but I think we've been very lucky in that their places have been filled by enthusiastic, capable project leaders who have continued the good works.

Ed: Now as we come towards the conclusion of the Forester's Forest project, has it achieved what it set out to do? Give us some idea of how many projects will conclude at the same time as Foresters' Forest and tell us about some of those that will continue.

Yes, the projects have achieved what they set out to do as each project identified which of the 9 heritage outcomes their particular project would address. Every quarter each project leader has provided a report updating their progress against those targets. Naturally Covid lockdowns interrupted project delivery, but the amount of disruption varied from project to project and National Lottery understood that delivery methods had to change sometimes to achieve the overall outcomes.

The majority (26 out of our 38 projects) will continue in some form beyond March 2022, whilst 12 will stop because they have achieved what they set out to do. Some of the latter are the apps (Hidden Heritage of the Dean, Coleford's Hidden Heritage, Cinderford's Hidden Heritage and most recently the Geoheritage of the Dean - all free to download from Apple store or Google Play store) and will continue to provide an excellent way of exploring our Forest and understanding why it is so special.

Many of the Biodiversity projects will continue under Forestry England as they will feed into the commitments under the 'Our Shared Forest' programme. This explains how the Forest will be managed in 5, 10 and even 100 years time. Some of these projects have initiated habitat change to benefit particular species, so we are very grateful to all the dedicated volunteer surveyors who will continue to record

everything they find. This data is sent to Gloucestershire Centre for Environment Records (GCER) to be added to a county database and then returned to Forestry England to facilitate the design of Forest plans.

Ed: Taking a retrospective view, do you think that Foresters' Forest has encouraged local folk to become more involved with the management of the Forest; to enjoy the Forest environs more actively; and engage more positively with Forestry England?

Yes, I think people have learnt about our Forest and taken up the opportunities to be more actively engaged, so I hope that continues. I know that some people have reported 'looking at the Forest in a new way' because they now understand more of the features in the landscape. This is particularly true of the dedicated Buried Heritage volunteers who have been checking the LIDAR data in the Forest and identified many hundreds of charcoal platforms, along with other remains of our industrial heritage. Yes, I think that the more people work with Forestry England, the more they will understand the various constraints, climate change issues, pests and diseases that the professional Foresters have to deal with.

Ed: I know that you love all the Foresters' Forest projects, but is there one particular one that stands out for you?

Yes, I do love all of the projects, but I am particularly attached to the 'Working with Schools' project, because this links in to so many other projects. I think it will be amazing if Foresters' Forest has helped the next generation of young people living here to realise why our Forest is so special and how they can help look after it in future. Lydbrook School and their headteacher, Simon Lusted, were the first school to fully embrace the idea of using the Forest as a giant learning resource, re-writing their whole curriculum so that it focuses on the Forest (whilst still ticking all the right boxes for the National Curriculum). The learning resources that have been created by Foresters' Forest projects will be hosted by the West Gloucestershire Schools Partnership in future, so that all Forest schools can access the free materials.

Ed. Which particular projects has the FODLHS taken an active role in?

There are lots of projects that various members of the FODLHS committee members have been involved in, and then even more that the members of the society have been involved in. I'd like to make particular mention of Mary Sullivan, Simon Moore and Ian Standing who have been on the Foresters' Forest Programme Board all these years. Both Simon and Ian also advise on the Built Heritage project, whilst Mary and Cheryl Mayo worked together to ensure that 'The Story of the Forest' (the children's History book) was such a great success. Then we also have Nicola Wynn being the driving force behind 'Forest Oral Histories' at the Dean Heritage Centre, Geoff Davis creating the Bream Heritage Walk, Roger Deeks and Jason Griffiths producing 'Reading the Forest' and 'Voices from the Forest' and last, but not least, Keith Walker and Averil Kear are vital to the success of Scarr Bandstand. Various FODLHS people have also been involved in the Blue and Green plaques project which has celebrated some of our Forest heroes.

Overall, it has been a magnificent team effort, including FODLHS, Project Leaders, Volunteers, many Forestry England staff and our Foresters' Forest team.

Ed: Finally, Sue, congratulations to you and your team for what you have achieved over the last seven years. What's next for you in your professional life?

I will still be employed by Forestry England as the Project Manager for the redevelopment of the Haldon Forest site which is near Exeter in Devon, but I will still be based here so I don't need to leave my beloved Forest!



Mary Sullivan, author Andy Seed, Sue Middleton and Cheryl Mayo celebrating the launch of 'The Story of the Forest'.

Countess Dunraven - Part 3 by Cecile Hunt



Adare Manor, Ireland

Although living in Clearwell Court Caroline was still at the top of the social hierarchy in Glamorganshire; in February 1864 she made an address and presented a wedding present of jewels to Alexandra, Princess of Wales, on behalf of the Ladies of South Wales. The 1860's brought happiness and sadness to Caroline. In July 1864 her son Windham and his wife Carry welcomed into the world a son named Talbot. Happiness was short lived as Windham, was taken ill on Christmas day 1864, and later died aged 36 years on 24th October 1865. In November 1866 her eldest

son Edwin's wife Augusta died in London. Edwin took Augusta back to Adare for burial whilst Caroline returned to Clearwell with Augusta's four daughters. Caroline described Clearwell as 'the quiet home I always resort to in sorrow'. Augusta, Edwin's eldest daughter, was married whilst at Clearwell on 4 March 1867.

Illness dogged Caroline for the last couple of years of her life. In February 1864 Caroline was taken ill. She continued to have recurring periods of illness, suffering from biliousness and jaundice. In 1867 she planned to travel to Ireland, but her doctor told her she was in no fit state to make the visit. Caroline never saw Adare manor again. She picked up in the Summer of 1867 and travelled by train to look over the new miners' cottages on her Dunraven estate.

Early in 1868 she moved her bedroom downstairs at Clearwell Court, as her diary entries show: Sunday, 9 February: "... *though sorry to leave my old room where I had amused myself training little birds, & which was altogether so very comfortable yet I cd not but see the advantage of having a sitting room on the same floor and that I cd have my needs comfortable without the stairs – I lived by day in the drawing room & slept in the oak parlour & saw the value of this beautiful house...*".

Monday 10 February: "*Was beginning to reconcile myself to the change & felt decidedly better*". By 4th March she was feeling better and consulting with her architect John Middleton about extending her downstairs bedroom. She toured Clearwell in her waggonette looking at new buildings in the village and June 6th saw her in church with her family.

Caroline died a few days after her eightieth birthday, she was laid to rest in the Quin family vault in Ireland.

Caroline's will stated her worth as £90,000 (2020 = £10,989,008). Amongst her instructions she, "...*bequeathed £1000 3% in payment of master and mistress of Clearwell school: interest from £1000 for the aid of Clearwell Cottage Hospital; should her chapel at her mansion at Clearwell be disused, the three memorial windows are to be removed and set up in the church of Newlands, £20 allowed for expenses ...The table presented to her ...by her tenants in Gloucestershire, and a silver bowl and cup won by race-horses to be held as heirlooms with her mansion at Clearwell...*".

Caroline's grandson, Windham Henry, fifth earl of Dunraven described his grandmother in a 1926 publication: "*Caroline Lady Dunraven was in many respects a remarkable woman. ... a clear and vigorous understanding, and what is perhaps the most enviable of all gifts, a warm and intelligent sympathy for those who had once gained her affections for her generous and considerate conduct to her tenants and for her unceasing care of those among her humbler neighbours who were or had been in her employment...*".

Murder in Lydbrook in 1817!

The circumstances were these; Henry Thompson, the local constable, and owner of a coal wharf at Lydbrook had suffered thefts from his wharf, and therefore decided to keep watch over his property during the night of Tuesday 16th May 1817. The story continues in a precis from Farley's Bristol Journal; About four o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, while he was on the lookout, two women (*Anne & Elizabeth Turner, respectively wife and sister of William Turner*) approached Henry Thompson with sacks on their backs. On seeing the name of his neighbour, Mr Hall, of English Bicknor, on the bags, he asked them what they contained; they said it was wheat; on which he took them in charge to his house, and immediately afterwards he went to Eastbach Court, the residence of J. Davies (*presumably a magistrate*) to acquaint him of the circumstances. His son, Mr H Davies, accompanied Thompson to Lydbrook, to question the women in custody.

Soon after they reached his house, four men were seen walking through the hamlet (then about six or seven in the morning), who were known to be the men who committed the robbery. Upon this Mr Thompson went up to one of the men, William Turner, whom he, with the assistance of Mrs Davies, instantly seized. However, Thompson then asked Davies to hold Turner whilst he seized another of the men. This gave William Turner the chance to take hold of a 'pistol or screw gun which he was in the constant habit of carrying about him', and he shot Thompson, who 'instantly fell dead on the spot'. William Turner then gave Davies a violent blow in the stomach, which laid him low for long enough for the criminals to escape.

The Turner brothers made for the banks of the River Wye, where they cut a barge from its moorings and landed themselves on the opposite shore, while Richard Heath and John Whittingham sought refuge in the Forest of Dean. Whittingham (alias Snapper) was captured in a barn at Howlshill (Howle Hill) during the night of Wednesday 17th, whilst Heath (alias Scuffler) was later caught at his dwelling near Westbury on Severn. Both men were taken to Gloucester Gaol to await trial.

Meanwhile the Turner brothers, William and Richard, had made off to Wales, where the Journal tells us that 'Information of this outrage having been conveyed to Pen-turk iron works near Cardiff, a party of men set off for Gildress Wood, near the works, where Jonathon Crockett was employed as a wood collier'. On arriving at Crockett's cabin, the party surrounded it. Their leader entered and found Richard Turner. He was promptly taken into custody and taken to Monmouth Castle. William Turner, who had been staying at the same cottage until the previous evening, then led a pursuing party a merry dance through Wales. He was tracked travelling through Bridgend, Aberavon, Baglan, Morrision, Penclawdd and Loughor, and was last seen at Pembrey in Camarthanshire. He was never captured and brought to trial.

The other men, Richard Turner, Richard Heath, and John Whittingham faced trial at Gloucester Assizes. All three were found guilty and were duly hung at Gloucester Gaol on 25th August 1817. As described in the Oxford University & City Herald of 6th September 1817; 'They took an affectionate leave of each other and were launched into eternity in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators'.



*Lower Lydbrook - the murder scene.
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Meetings in Review *with Cheryl Mayo, Mary & Chris Sullivan*



Roger Deeks & Jason Griffiths

On Saturday 13 November members were treated to an overview by Roger Deeks and Jason Griffiths of two exciting projects under the Foresters' Forest banner.

Voices from the Forest set out to record Foresters' recollections of work, home and life in the latter half of the 20th century, while Reading the Forest celebrated our literary heritage. Locally, the community enthusiastically engaged in several events including the 'A Fortunate Man' exhibition at St Briavels and the showing of the film at Soudley. They have also reached young people with activities such as Youth Rangers poetry walks and involvement of University of Gloucestershire students in various events. Work in schools, linked to

the national curriculum, introduced children to how life was for their Nans and Granchers and given them the chance to chat to family members of past Forest authors. The work has yielded fascinating insights, among other findings, the importance of WW2 which saw a seismic shift in identity and outlook in the Forest with the influx of so many different nationalities; the importance of the relationship between the decline of coal and the emancipation of women, who began to take control of such matters as rank and pay in industries like Rank Xerox which followed coal; how the relationship of Foresters and the land changed over the 20th century.

For Reading the Forest they discovered a voluminous canon of work stretching back 200 years; the importance of landscape to the authors' writing; the number of working class, and women writers; and that the Forest continues to inspire writers, as evidenced by the Forest Authors Festival held recently.

Local artist Tom Cousins' murals in Cinderford and Coleford are a permanent legacy of Reading the Forest. A Forest authors anthology is also underway. Podcasts of the Voices from the Forest interviews are available through the website, and the material is also stored at Dean Heritage Centre. Roger and Jason thanked all who have worked diligently on both projects, and their partners including the University of Gloucestershire, DHC, LHS, and Dean Writers Circle.

For more about Voices from the Forest, go here <https://www.voicesfromtheforest.co.uk/>

For Reading the Forest here <https://www.readingtheforest.co.uk/>

C.M.

Many of us will have visited Lydney Park's spring gardens and walked up to the site of old archaeological remains. But it is no longer obvious that this was a very important Roman-era site. Chris's talk told us about a virtually forgotten local hero, Charles Bragge Bathurst (CBB), who when he inherited Lydney Park in 1804, stopped the casual looting of coins and artefacts and undertook an archaeological investigation of his own that lasted several years.

Chris's talk, on Saturday December 11th, was illustrated with photos of artefacts and unpublished notebooks and pictures from the Lydney Park museum left by this CBB. Back in 1805 there was no tradition of formal archaeology, but CBB methodically explored the Lydney Park site, usually having just one workman digging out an area then having it drawn and copied straight away. This is why we have these beautiful pictures to show what he found.

There were 4 buildings that he thought were a villa, a bathhouse, a temple and a water cistern. There were mosaics that he drew in detail. One had a watery theme, perhaps reflecting the River Severn. Many coins and pieces of pottery and statuary were found, including the famous Lydney dog. Alongside lots of hairpins, brooches and combs suggesting many women gave offerings. There were 5 pieces of writing found. One was the first curse tablet ever found in Britain. These writings also told him that the temple was dedicated to an unknown god, Nodens, who may have been in some way related to old Celtic deities.

In CBB's notebooks he reflected on the meanings of what he found, linking the temple to healing practices, similar to that in Epidaurus in Greece, where dog-licking was one of the cures used. Chris speculated that there may also have been surgical operations and the use of pain relieving medicines at the temple just as at Epidaurus.

Chris went on to mention that a later Charles Bathurst, 1st Viscount and first President of our Society, brought in Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler to undertake a later excavation in the 1920s. Current day professional archaeologists are still visiting the site and keen to learn more about it.

But Chris's key message was to remind us of the importance of CBB two centuries ago as the discoverer, documenter, and saviour of beautiful archaeologically important material in Lydney Park.

M.S.



Mortimer Wheeler



The Forest is fond of local poets, so there was a good audience on Saturday 15th January to hear about a grouping of poets at Dymock on the border with Herefordshire. Our guide was Richard Simkin, currently Chair of the Friends of the Dymock Poets. This group issues an annual Journal with articles on the poets. Their meetings are currently Covid-curtailed. Their website is <https://dymockpoets.org.uk>, and St Mary's Church, Dymock has a display on these poets.

Richard's celebration of the Dymock Poets started with some literal scene-setting. Dymock is a village not greatly changed since the period in question, the years

just before the First World War. One by one, six poets gravitated to rented properties in the 4 miles centred on Dymock. Dymock then had a good train link to London, the centre of poetry publishing. Some of the railway buildings were now to be found at the Dean Forest Railway – you can rely on someone in our audience's knowing things like that. Richard reminded us how physically active, like walking to Tewkesbury, people such as these poets were.

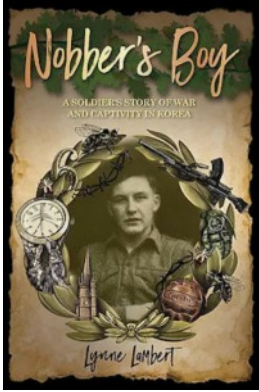
Lascelles Abercrombie was the first to arrive at Dymock in April 1911, to an address secured by his sister from her property-owning husband. Wilfrid Gibson was the second to arrive. Thomas Frost came from America, because he had then attained little recognition at home. Edward Thomas passed through. John Drinkwater was temperamentally different, escaping life as a Birmingham insurance clerk. Rupert Brooke is perhaps now the best-known. Richard showed us pictures of where they had stayed, such as The Gallows, The Old Nail Shop, Oldfields and Little Iddens.

Simultaneously, W H Davies, F W Harvey and Ivor Gurney were working elsewhere in Gloucestershire. Davies was in contact with Dymock, Harvey less so, and musically-trained Gurney kept his own counsel. There was no clear common manifesto or philosophy binding the Dymock six. More, they supported each other in their work and in getting it into print. Abercrombie and Gibson were married, with their wives helping with the practicality of preparing work for the printers. Brooke had a strong friendship with Edward Marsh, a perpetual Private Secretary to Churchill and others, and a man of independent means. This led to work being included in 'The Georgian Poets', under Marsh's benefaction and editing. Harold Monro's 'Poetry Bookshop' opened around the same time, offering a London hub for poets including the Dymock six. The less published of these six printed four copies of 'New Numbers' from Dymock until 'August brought war and scattered us'. Thomas died at Vimy Ridge, Brooke died on his way to Gallipoli, Frost went back to farming, then to literary success in the States, Abercrombie returned to Liverpool, unfit to fight. Gibson and his family were the last to leave, in September 1916.

Volunteers from the audience joined Richard in reading (or reciting from memory – Liz Berry!) from Brooke, Frost and Thomas. Richard had copies for sale of Linda Hart's *Once They Lived in Gloucestershire: A Dymock Poets Anthology*.

C.S.

Book Review by Roger Deeks



For over seventy years there has been a bond between the Forest of Dean and South Korea. It was forged in the Korean War conflict where the Gloucestershire Regiment fought a ferocious battle on the Imjin River to delay a Chinese army who might otherwise have captured Seoul, today the capital of South Korea. A group of a dozen soldiers involved, mostly national servicemen, came from the Forest of Dean and by virtue of their shared background they formed a distinctive 'band of brothers'. A few were in A Company that felt the full impact of the onslaught that began in the 22 April 1951. The rearguard action lasted until 25th April, when what was left of the battalion, with no ammunition or hope of escape, surrendered. The battalion was part of the first United Nations force sent into action after the Second World

War, intended to restore the demarcation between a democratic South Korea and a communist North Korea, separated at the 38th parallel. The United States felt that its ally had done something remarkable, awarding the Regiment the Presidential Unit Citation and the South Koreans had such regard for the Glosters they renamed the hill where the last stage of the battle was fought Gloster Hill and commemorated the battle with the Gloucester Valley Monument.

The military history of the conflict is sparse compared to the World Wars and Vietnam War, although Andrew Gardiner, brother of David Gardiner a veteran of the conflict, set down some of the history from a Forest perspective in *To Bait the Dragon* published in 2001. Lynne Lambert, Andrew's daughter, felt that she had a responsibility to retell the story in *Nobber's Boy*, published in December seventy years after the battle. Lynne was raised close to her Uncle David, a veteran of the battle, so what she came to understand from David and his comrades was much more than a conventional military history. She understood their fears, their beliefs and their comradeship and she could not tell that story within the constraints of a military history and hence we have this compelling narrative in the form of a novel, that is of relevance to everyone interested in Korea, the Battle of the Imjin River, the Cold War or simply understanding how ordinary soldiers coped with the challenges of war and captivity.

In the aftermath of the battle with the battle-hardened Chinese People's Volunteer Army, the captives were marched north to Prisoner of War camps the Yalu river. *Nobber's Boy* is one of the first books to describe the human experience of the psychological and physical torture endured by the captives. The Chinese called the prisoners 'war criminals' and created a 'Lenient Policy' that stated that the POWs were fooled by their own governments, and that if they embraced communism they would receive better treatment. The novel is built on researched evidence and recollections shared with the author and casts a light on forgotten events, including the experience of captured American soldiers, of whom four out of every ten captured by the Chinese are estimated to have died in captivity. The author uses the novel to evoke the dreadful isolation and separation from family in Ruardean, felt by David Gardiner until his repatriation in 1953. Reading this book, you are able to appreciate why the War changed his and others lives forever. History is increasingly presented in different forms and if you find military history overly technical and dispassionate then you might enjoy this book.

Available from *Dean Heritage Centre Shop, Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum and*
<https://www.nobbersboy.com>.