



FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

news
November 2017

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Community Nursing in the Forest of Dean

F.W. Harvey and the Devil's Chapel

November 2017

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Editors Notes

In the middle of this edition you will find a pull-out supplement which gives a full listing of the 2018 programme of events. In recent years the programme listings on the web site have included a short synopsis of each event, and so Cheryl Mayo and I have taken the opportunity to include these synopses in the listings in the pull-out, thus hopefully giving you a much better idea of the scope of the planned talks etc.

At the recent Annual General Meeting Mary Sullivan was elected as our new Chair. Although Mary has been a committee member for a number of years now, this edition provides an opportune time to get Mary to tell us a little more about her background and her hopes and plans for the Society during the next three years. Read more on the opposite page!

The last edition carried a tribute to Freda Margrett, a longstanding member and former secretary, who died earlier this year. Freda published a number of books during her retirement, and had plans to publish a book about her long and distinguished career in nursing. Sadly, although she completed the book and it was at the printers at the time of her death, the book was never published. The Society is currently in possession of a copy, and with permission from her nephew, we are able to publish extracts from the book. The first part featured in this edition is entitled "Community Nursing in the Forest".

I would also like to thank Paul Stephens-Wood for sending in his article "F.W. Harvey and the Devils Chapel". Paul is a new member, and I am delighted to welcome him as a contributor to the newsletter. We also took the opportunity to ask Paul what his view is of the Society as a recently joined member. You can read his comments in the News section.

Finally, many of you know of Jon Hoyle and his outstanding efforts as an archaeologist working for Gloucestershire County Council. Over many years Jon has focused on the 'lost archaeology' of the Forest of Dean. For example he was closely involved in the Lidar survey that was carried out over the Forest in 2006, and which is still helping to reveal so much of this 'lost' archaeology. Jon has recently produced a really important document relating to the Forest which you can read about on the back cover. Jon will be exploring the context of the document and more at one of our meetings in 2018. Read the listings for full details!

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.

Q&A with Mary Sullivan - our new Chair

Mary, members reading this will be aware that you have been a committee member for a number of years now. But can you let us know a little more about your background?

After a career spanning 8 years of teaching and 25 years in the civil service, much of it in Whitehall, I have always been fascinated by the stories of everyday people. It is so interesting to see how wider historical events affect real lives.

Born in rural Hampshire, I found settling into Gloucestershire, and particularly the Forest of Dean, very comfortable. To live in such a beautiful part of the country is an everyday pleasure.

How did you come to join the History Society?

To learn more about our adopted home, we joined the FODLHS and quickly became involved in the very active committee. This has been challenging at times but always interesting. Over the years I have been general secretary, treasurer and vice chairman. I have also been involved on the Gloucestershire Local History Association committee for several years now, getting to know more about other societies in Gloucestershire, their members and their towns and villages.

Which elements of the Forest's long history interest you the most?

The Forest of Dean has interesting history from the Iron Age onwards. The natural resources in the area have attracted people over and over – iron, wood for building and burning, animals for hunting, coal, acorns and beech nuts for pigs, all within easy reach of river transport. In the past the area was quite remote and developed its own dialect etc. But recent years have reduced that isolation with the coming of railways, roads and the Severn bridges. Things have changed a lot over the past century and I find that as interesting as the more distant past.

You are now starting your term as History Society Chair. What will you be focusing on, and what do you hope to achieve during the next three years?

The forthcoming year - the 70th anniversary for our society, offers the opportunity to reflect on the successes of the past, such as the Miners Memorial and the Geomap. But I hope also to encourage more people, particularly younger people, to become involved for the future. We have a very full programme lined up for 2018, within input from our President, Baroness Royall, talks planned from four of our Vice Presidents, and even an address by the Lord-Lieutenant of the County. So there are plenty of interesting events to get involved with. Watch this space!

I also want to focus on the 20th century over the next year or so, to encourage our members to help to preserve the memories and artefacts from that time. We are looking for two lots of input from members:

1) Please let me (Chair) know if you are willing to be involved in researching 1948 in your area, and if you prefer to work alone or with others who live nearby. We want to collate all sorts of information and pictures about the Forest at that time for a big display. There will be sign-up sheets at forthcoming meetings.

2) Any photos or information about the making of memorial halls or playing fields in the 1920's or 1930's. These will be the basis for our Gloucestershire Local History Association History Day display on April 28th next year.





Membership

This newsletter contains your membership card, if you have renewed. If you haven't received a card and believe you have renewed, please ring me on 01594 510533 or email membership@forestofdeanhhistory.org.uk. Note that members can still renew up to the end of the year (at the November and December indoor meetings, or by downloading the form from our website), after which your membership will be deemed to have lapsed. Please also bear in mind the new membership fees of **£12 for one and £17 for two** at the same address, and if you have a standing order, please change it! As we have a very full and exciting programme next year to celebrate the Society's 70th anniversary, now would not be a good time to let that happen!

New members keep arriving, and we are pleased to offer a warm welcome to: George Storrow, Mrs C Ieli, Jean Evans, Stanley Boshier, Linda Stephens-Wood, Ron Valentine and Shirley Powell, and Richard Holyhead. We hope you all enjoy the benefits of being a member of our growing Society.

At the end of the 2017 membership year, we had some 330 individual members, which is something to be proud of. Our members are also spread across the UK and even internationally, most with family links here either past or present.

Cheryl Mayo

Paul Stephens-Wood joined the Society in January this year. We asked him if he would be happy to write a note about his experience to date of being a member. Here is what he has to say:

"I came to live in the Forest two years ago. As you can't walk anywhere without coming across a tram road, an overgrown slag heap, a leat or an old quarry, I wanted to know more. So, I joined the FoDLHS in January.

My membership has exceeded expectations. The society does a very good job of bringing local history to the people of the Forest and beyond. The winter talks have been excellent with knowledgeable speakers giving interesting interpretations. I even felt the excitement of standing at the top of Newland Church tower after hearing about the conservation work there. And, there is a mass of material on the society's website about all aspects of the history and heritage of the Forest.

But, I have come to appreciate that presenting the Forest's history is only a part of the society's work. It's also actively engaged in researching and writing it. Reading the newsletter shows how much!"

PSW

Members can order in print issues of the New Regard from the online 'eshop', simply select the 'New Regard' tab at store.forestofdeanhhistory.org.uk

Members can obtain a discount, by using the voucher code when prompted.

Note that the voucher code will change to 'Bullo' on 1st November 2017.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday November 11th - 3pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Dr. Nick Herbert - "Carved Headstones of the Vale & Severnside Churches"

Nick Herbert, former County Editor of the Victoria History of Gloucestershire from 1970 until 2003, makes a welcome return.

Saturday December 9th - 3pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Mary Dutson - "A Victorian Christmas"

Mary Dutson, Chair of the Trustees of Dean Heritage Centre, adopts one of her alternative characters to entertain us with a light hearted talk about "A Victorian Christmas". Be prepared to play charades!

Annual General Meeting Report

The 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the West Dean Centre at Bream on 7th October. Over 50 members attended.

Retiring Chair Simon Moore reported that it was another very successful year for the Society, with national recognition and awards for members, a healthy and growing membership, and success with the heritage Lottery Fund bid for the 'Foresters Forest' project, which the Society takes an active part in. He added that the Society has had another year of interesting and well attended talks, walks and meetings. Simon then expressed his appreciation for those who have served on the management committee and for those who work hard producing The New Regard each year. Simon finished his report by reminding members that his 3 year tenure as the Chair of the Society had come to an end and said that he was very grateful for the opportunities this had afforded him.

Cecile Hunt gave her Treasurer's Report. She stated that although generally the Society was in a sound financial position, for a third year, membership fees had not covered the costs of running the Society: this year the shortfall was £578, which was being addressed by the subscription increase now taking effect. The shortfall was also reduced by revenue from teas and from the raffles, but these revenues continued to fall despite good attendance at the meetings. She reported that The New Regard more than covered its costs, but only because of the extensive amount of volunteer time freely given. She pointed out that the Gift Aid contribution was for a single year, whereas the previous year's figure was for two. The amount received was dependent on members' declarations on joining. She reminded the meeting that it was members' responsibility to tell the Membership Secretary if they stopped paying tax. She reported that the World War 1 book was now intended to be self-financing, and grant aid was not now being sought to cover the costs of production, although a grant from the Co-operative Society had been obtained to fund additional copies which would be given free of charge to local schools.

The summarised 2017 accounts, as presented to the AGM, are shown below:

General Fund		Publications Fund		Reserve Fund	
Receipts	£5026.23	Receipts	£2748.16	Receipts	£ 88.30
Payments	£5880.89	Payments	£1576.53	Payments	£ 0.00
Net Receipts	- £854.66	Net Receipts	£1171.63	Net Receipts	£ 88.30
Y/E Balance	£2270.72	Y/E Balance	£5470.07	Y/E Balance	£10688.25

The Gladys Scott-Garrett Award for the season's best indoor talk was awarded to John Putley, for his talk on pilgrims, "As sure as God's in Gloucestershire". The Cyril Hart Award for the best article in New Regard No. 31 was presented to Mary Atkins for her article on Clanna House.

Vice-President Keith Walker took the Chair from Simon Moore for the election of Officers. One nomination had been received for the next Chair, Mary Sullivan, the current Vice-Chair. She was proposed by Liz Berry and seconded by Pat Williams, and elected. Roger Deeks was proposed for Vice-Chair by Nigel Cross, seconded by Simon Moore, and elected. The remaining Committee members were re-elected enbloc. Valerie Mitchell was re-appointed as Independent Examiner of the Society's accounts.

Incoming Chair Mary Sullivan thanked Simon Moore for handing over a Society in great shape thanks to his efforts. She encouraged members to get involved in helping the practical running of meetings, and noted that this would be Sue Gordon-Smith's last year as Publications Officer. In 2018 the Society would be celebrating its 70th anniversary. This would be reflected in the 2018 Programme. The Anniversary Dinner will be hosted by President Baroness Royall, with Lord-Lieutenant Dame Janet Trotter as speaker. Mary then encouraged members to look for material – photos, memories, press cuttings – of 70 years ago for a display next year. She also asked for material for the April 2018 GLHA day on Memorial Halls and Playing Fields of the 1920's and 1930's.

COMMUNITY NURSING IN THE FOREST



Freda Margrett with the Morris Minor she used in her work, which was supplied by the Area Health Authority.

Freda Margrett starting her working life as a children's nurse. Her uncle then extended an invitation to Freda and her sister to go and stay with him in Canada. Three years later she returned to the UK to work at Butlins in North Wales. It was whilst working there that the suggestion was made to her that she should consider nursing as a career. In 1954 Freda applied to Charing Cross Hospital. Having passed the entrance exam and interview, a long period of training started. In 1957 Freda passed her final exams and became a State Registered Nurse (SRN). In 1958 a change of focus beckoned and Freda started midwifery training at Cheltenham Maternity Hospital. She followed this up with further training in Gloucester to become a Queens Nursing Sister, before being sent to Lydney to live and work as a Community Nurse Midwife. In order to work as a Community Nurse it was a requirement that one had a driving license. So having finally passed her test, Freda was allocated her own area between Aylburton and Chepstow and went to live in the Nurses House at Netherend.

We now pick up her story through extracts from her unpublished book, "A Nurses Journey".

The equipment we carried in our cars were two nursing cases, one for general work and the other for midwifery. They were each made of steel with a lock, and covered in a sort of gabardine material. There were no disposables then so our instruments, which we would have to sterilise ourselves, were individually placed in little linen bags. Of course there was the Gas and Air Machine too. Nitrous oxide was used to relieve pain which was mixed with oxygen as on its own would be too dangerous. The patient could hold the mask over her nose and mouth and so control the amount herself.

My first birth in Lydney was known as a BBA (Born Before Arrival). It was a second baby and a rapid labour, and obviously she did not contact me in time. Her perineum was torn rather badly so I needed to seek Medical Aide. Fortunately there was a public telephone just outside the house so was able to quickly get in touch with the GP and he soon arrived. She had quite a heavy loss and was rather shocked but soon recovered. Not a very good introduction for me, but good experience!

Then, after six months, I was told of a vacancy in the Cinderford area, and because it would be near to my elderly mother I applied for it. So, it was how I came to move to a different area. It was at first to act as a relief nurse to the two Cinderford nurses and also the Drybrook one. Again my accommodation was in a Council house and on a Council Estate in Mitcheldean but this time an upstairs flat! It was a comfortable flat with a solid fuel Rayburn stove which was not so easy to cope with as my hours were so erratic. Worse still the garage was on the next block above which meant a long walk to carry equipment, especially difficult at night.

We would have one day off each week with an occasional weekend, and were on call like the GP's for twenty four hours. Life was at a much slower pace then. No motorways or supermarkets and very few cars on the road, so that one could drive anywhere in Cinderford without changing gear! I could park the car anywhere to visit patients for there were no yellow lines either. People would not rush to get home or any other place for there was not so many distractions such as computers, telephones etc. and not everyone had a television. Elderly or handicapped people may have a visit from the Nurse for treatment, the Health Visitor for advice and even the GP and Vicar of the parish. There would also be the services of a Home Help for household chores at a nominal fee. As well as Midwifery our duties would entail carrying out medical treatment on others prescribed by their GP's and of course the elderly who might require a bath.

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2018

Pull out supplement for you to keep



Please note that the programme could be liable to alteration at short notice due to events beyond the control of the committee.

Please visit our website (forestofdeanhistory.org.uk) for the latest news of events.

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2018

Sat 13th January - 3 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Steve Blake, Chair Gloucestershire Local History Association

“Medieval Churches of West Gloucestershire”

This talk will explore Gloucestershire's wealth of medieval churches west of the River Severn. Although it will cover all periods from Anglo-Saxon to the early 16th century it will focus in particular on surviving work from the late 11th and 12th century, and in particular the so-called Dymock School of Sculpture. In so doing it will draw parallels with contemporary church building in neighbouring Herefordshire and beyond. As well as considering the fabric of the churches, the talk will also consider a range of decorative work, fixtures and fittings, including baptismal fonts, wall-paintings and stained glass.

Sat 10th February - 3 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Ian Pope, Vice President FoD LHS

“1948 A Year of Change for Forest Railways”

After 1923, there were four large railway companies in Great Britain, each dominating its own geographic area: the Great Western Railway, the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, the London and North Eastern Railway, and the Southern Railway. Nationalisation was subsequently carried out under the Transport Act 1947. British Railways came into existence as the business name of the Railway Executive of the British Transport Commission on 1 January 1948 when it took over the assets of the Big Four. Ian Pope will describe how nationalisation subsequently affected the rail services locally in the Forest of Dean.

Sat 10th March - 3 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Averil Kear, Vice President FoD LHS

“The School at Lydney Park 1939 - 1947”

North Foreland Lodge was an independent boarding school for girls originally established in Kent. As a result of the Second World War, the school had to evacuate its premises and it then had several temporary homes, including the home of Lord and Lady Bledisloe at Lydney Park where we follow the story of life during the war years through diaries of the girls who lived there. After the War, in 1947, the school bought as a permanent home Sherfield Manor in Hampshire, which it continued to occupy it for more than fifty years.

Fri 23rd March 7.30 pm – Coleford Baptist Hall, Newland Street, Coleford, GL16 8AN

Andrew Taylor

“Writing a Historical Novel”

Many of my books are historical novels, and some of them draw on the Forest of Dean. For me, researching the raw material of a historical setting is only the first stage. Creating a plausible illusion of period authenticity is a much harder job. It requires analysis, selection and interpretation, using different tools from those of academic historians.

How far should novelists try to replicate historical dialogue? How should we portray issues like race, morality and gender which our ancestors saw very differently from us? How do we avoid the curse of hindsight and see the world through the eyes of people living in another time?

Sat 7th April - 3 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Stuart Wilson

“The Lost City of Trellech”

Trellech was once the largest settlement in Mediaeval Wales. Join professional archaeologist Stuart Wilson as he explains how he has rediscovered the extent of this lost community, and how it was linked through trade with the Forest of Dean. Stuart will explain how he purchased a field in Trellech, on which over 10 years of archaeology has now been carried out, revealing an important mediaeval manor house, round tower and well!

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2018

Sat 28th April - times to be advised - Churchdown Community Centre, Parton Rd, GL3 2JH
GLHA Local History Day

“Gloucestershire between the Wars 1918-1939”

Full details of the event will be available online at: <http://www.gloshistory.org.uk/history-day.php>

Sat 19th May, 2 pm - from St Marys Church

Simon Moore

“Churches of the Dean” (self-drive tour)

This is an afternoon tour of some of our church buildings, starting with Lydney St Mary, a large medieval church from the 13th Century. Where we will look at the development of our churches and how their use has changed over time. We will then drive around a selection of other churches in the area to look at how the Anglican Church has had to change and adapt with time, fashion and social movements to survive. The tour will return to Lydney for tea.

Fri 22nd June, 7.30 pm - Soudley Village Hall, Lower Road, Soudley, GL14 2TZ

“A Fortunate Man”: screening of the film shot in Soudley & Blakeney

The film, based on the book, was made in 1972 and is a drama/documentary featuring a professional actor in the lead, and local people in various roles, including some ‘as themselves’. Many scenes were filmed at the chapel in Blakeney, some at the school in Soudley, and some by Soudley ponds.

Saturday 23rd-Sunday 24th June, St Briavels

A Fortunate Man Revisited: 50 years on: exhibition, tour and talks

(In conjunction with 'Reading the Forest')

It is over fifty years since the publication of John Berger's important book “A Fortunate Man” about a St Briavels GP, with photographs of people and places by Jean Mohr. The exhibition will be open all weekend. On Saturday 23rd June, there will be a walk around St Briavels, looking back to the 1970s; talks and discussion about the book, Dr Eskell, other historically important Forest doctors, and the impact on General Practice; and a screening of the 1972 drama-documentary film of the book. The full programme will be published in the May newsletter and on our website.

Sat 30th June - The Speech House Hotel

70th Anniversary Dinner

Hosted by President Jan Royall with Guest Speaker, Dame Janet Trotter

(Booking required - see newsletters / website for more details)

Thurs 19th July 7.30 pm to 10.30 pm - Clearwell Caves, GL16 8JR

Diana Standing and the Caving Club

A history of underground Dean - film, tour.

Diana Standing, aided by members of the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club, will present an historical view of "Underground Dean". This will cover a little Geology to show rock formations and some of the creatures who lived at that time, leading onto the formation of caves and their eventual exploration and recording and of course the history of the RFDCC. The natural resources of minerals and building stones will be covered, going on an underground tour of some of the many mines, quarries and tunnels unseen beneath our feet. This will be a visual presentation using material old and new.

Sat 11th Aug - Coach Tour

Cecile Hunt and Averil Kear

Forest People and Places

(Booking required - see newsletters / website for more details)

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2018

Sat 8th Sept 3 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Keith Walker, Vice President FoD LHS

“The First Severn Tunnel”

In 1810 an intrepid contractor attempted to tunnel under the River Severn, just outside Newnham, to extend a recently built tramway through the tunnel and beyond. This illustrated talk will tell the story of why the tunnel was built, and the subsequent dramatic repercussions.

Some audience participation is anticipated!

Wed 19th Sept 7.30 pm - Blakeney Village Hall

Jon Hoyle

“Archaeology in the Forest of Dean - Recent research and future directions”

In recent years a considerable amount of research has investigated the archaeology of the Forest of Dean and in 2017 Gloucestershire County Council's Forest of Dean Archaeological Survey culminated in an archaeological research framework for Forest of Dean district which summarised what is currently known about the Forest's archaeology from the Palaeolithic to the Post-medieval periods, and identified areas which need more research. This talk will focus on the Forest's medieval and earlier archaeology highlighting major new discoveries and exploring what still needs to be done to shed more light on these periods.

Sat 6th October 2.30 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Annual General Meeting

followed by

Mary Sullivan

“Founders of the Forest of Dean Local History Society”

This being the 70th anniversary year since the society was founded, we try to understand why, just 3 years after WWII, people thought it worthwhile to found a local history society. We look back at the lives and careers of the founding members. We will also look at the involvement of the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) in the setting up of the society. And we will get a glimpse of the early years of the society and what activities they were involved in.

Sat 10th November 3 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

Ian Standing, Vice President FoD LHS

“Words from the past: the Forest observed 1200AD to 2012AD”

In this age of mass electronic communication it is easy to forget that images of Dean do not reach back very far. Early photographs, paintings and engravings are few. Beyond them, the only clues are the chance survival of words written by people who were here at various times. The illustrated talk will draw on sources that include monarchs, forest officials, industrialists, residents and visitors.

Sat 8th December 3 pm - West Dean Centre, Bream, GL15 6JW

A Social Event

“Christmas 1948 - Rationing and paper chains”

The war may have been over, but the Christmas of the Society's first year was still not quite up today's expectations. Diana Standing and Cheryl Mayo will be calling on members for their ideas, perhaps memories even, and their help to put together a ration-based Christmas, paper chains and all! Let Cheryl know (membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk) if you would like to get involved, or simply have some ideas.

However after some months I was invited to take over the Nurses Flat in Cinderford. The Flat was situated in Station Street over the Health Authority Clinic. There were no Health Centres then, so the Clinic was used mainly by the Nurse/Midwives and Health Visitors, not only to interview patients but for antenatal and Child Health Clinics. Of course the GP's had their own surgeries next to their house. There were only three GP's then for Cinderford, with a part time GP from Ruardean who had a little surgery there.

The flat and clinic was one half of a semi-detached stone built house. There was a porch at the entrance with a large blackboard and chalk where we could record our whereabouts should we be urgently needed. Underneath the stairs to the flat was a large walk in cupboard with shelves to accommodate medications, and equipment given by firms who were very generous in those days. It would also store the National Health products such as National Dried Milk, Orange Juice and Cod Liver Oil to be used at Child Welfare Clinics.

If we had problems during a patient's labour we would seek the help of their GP who would most probably send her to the local hospital and we could accompany her, when he could perhaps use forceps. In those days the GP's would attend the hospital for their own patients because there was no resident doctor. They would only go to the General Maternity Hospital in Gloucester if a Consultant was needed. We could also send for what was known as 'The Flying Squad'. This was a specialised ambulance which was specially equipped, even for a blood transfusion. A doctor and nurse would be included for there were no paramedics then.

At the Clinic we would hold ante-natal sessions where we would examine the patients and assess their progress. Of course the initial visit would be at their home to assess if it would be suitable for a home delivery. We would also hold Mothercraft and Relaxation classes, and the Health Visitor would follow up with talks on the preparation, labour, ante-natal and post-natal care. She would also tell them how she was involved, visiting them at home after the Midwife had completed her care, throughout childhood offering help and advice. She would also explain about the Child Health Clinics which could be there or at the many village halls. There the child could be given medical checks by a Local Health Authority Doctor and development checks and immunisations by the Health Visitor. They could also buy the Welfare foods which would be considerably cheaper than in the shops.

After a couple of years, I was informed that a new Health Clinic and Nurses flat was to be built in Dockham Road. The Clinic was completed first and consisted of a room for Health Visitors, one for their clerk, one for the District Nurses. There would be a large room for various clinics and part of the building to accommodate a surgery for a NHS Dentist with a waiting room. At the main entrance would be a reception office with a receptionist employed daily who would take messages and could supply NHS baby foods.

The GP's were becoming reluctant now to being called out at the local hospital at nights for of course there was no resident Doctor, and it appears there were meetings to discuss the possibility of closing the Maternity unit and sending mothers with problems to Gloucester. Of course if a home confinement was normal we did not contact the GP until the morning. So, with that proposal and the disturbed nights, I decided it was time to move on, and apply to do the Health Visitors Course. My colleagues held a little farewell 'do' for me at the health centre and clubbed together to buy me a present. Little did we know that I would be back again!



The old NHS Clinic and Nurses Flat in Station Street, Cinderford, where Freda Margrett lived and worked.

History In Nature (Part 3) by Cecile Hunt

Hedges come into existence in three main ways and are good areas for historical research;

1. Assarted hedges - where an area of woodland is cleared of trees and turned in to a field for cultivation.
2. Planted hedges - deliberately planted trees and shrubs.
3. Fencerows - Hedges that have grown without deliberate cultivation where there is protection from a fence, ditch or bank.

Straight hedges tend to be more recent than curving ones. Hedges from eighteenth century onwards, especially enclosure hedges, were often straight; earlier fields were cleared and enclosed in a more piecemeal fashion; boundary hedges would often jag to and fro to include large boulders or trees in the hedge in order to make the clearance of the land easier. If you find a wild service tree in a hedge it is a clear indication that the hedge is indeed a relic of ancient woodland. Other indicators of an assarted hedge are woodland plants such as primrose, bluebells and wood anemones. Hazel is rarely used in a planted hedge, which could be another indicator.

1500 - 1750 was the heyday of hedgerow trees. Surveys were taken specifying numbers of trees, species and whether timber or pollard. Commonest trees pollarded were oak, ash and elm. In the 200,000 miles of 'parliamentary' enclosure hedges of the 18th & 19th centuries there are few or no hedgerow trees; these hedges were planted using mainly hawthorn (or quickthorn).

The First edition 6 inch & 25 inch ordnance survey maps between 1845 & 1888 attempted to record every non-woodland tree. The survey depicts 23 million trees, just under one per acre of farmland.

Agricultural prosperity in 1750 - 1870, meant old and ancient hedge row trees were being destroyed. A Parliamentary enquiry in 1791 stated "*Grubbing up of Hedge Rows is becoming general ... growth of timber in them is thereby destroyed.. the great price given for corn since the bounty took place for exporting of corn and beer... gives every farmer encouragement to grub hedge rows up and convert them into corn land*". The late eighteenth century saw a decline in pollarding; except for willows along water courses. From 1810 to 1860 the price of oak was unusually high; hedge trees became a valuable source of income. From 1870 to 1951, an age of agricultural adversity meant less money spent on maintaining or destroying hedges; this neglect did give saplings the opportunity to grow into trees.

World War One highlighted the lack of timber management in previous decades which created a timber shortage that nearly, together with food shortages, caused the country to lose the war; to try and rectify this the Forestry Commission was formed in 1919.



Surviving hedgerow trees, pictured near Awre church

Pause for thought - woodland, trees and hedges do not cease to exist through being felled or cleared; they do not get exhausted like a seam of coal, they are self renewing, no more destroyed by cutting down than a meadow is by cutting a crop of hay. When a wood, tree, hedge disappears the question should be 'why did it not grow again?' not 'why was it cut down'.

Looking at nature, and researching it, like you would any other area of history, can give you a vast amount of information about what went on in the past centuries where you live.

F.W. Harvey and the Devil's Chapel *by Paul Stephens-Wood*

The Bream Heritage Walk, a new Forester's Forest Project led by Geoff Davis, is mapping out the footpaths and tracks around Bream Village. It covers an eight mile circuit, taking note of the abundant heritage of this part of the Forest. Each feature on the walk is being researched. There are rich indications of how people, through the centuries, used their environment and the natural features around them.

The walk goes through the scowles, an extensive area of pits and holes to the south of Bream. Some scowles have deep quarry-like characteristics; others are shallow hollows. They are ancient geological features that from Roman times onwards (and perhaps before) were mined for the iron ore they contained.

But the scowles were not just an industrial site. The Devil's Chapel, on the fringe of the Lydney Park Estate is a picturesque rock formation. A large fissured rock once called 'His Satanic Majesty's Pulpit' leads to the first of his 'seven chambers' connecting one to another among the mossy crags. The unusual geology resonated with people in many ways. F. W. Harvey, often known as Will Harvey, whose poetry became nationally popular during and after World War 1 wrote a poem about them. Part of the poem traced the savagery inherent in the place's name:

*And of that dark and blood soaked earth
Daggers and armour came to birth:
Yea, many a sword which cut a throat
In far Imperial Rome... Where boat
Could sail, the ore of Dean was taken
And put to use. If but kind bracken
Had covered all from sight, what evil
Born in that Chapel of the devil
Had ne'er been done!*



The association with evil, and the weapons forged from the Devil's Chapel was just one aspect of a multi-layered view of this extraordinary area. A few weeks before the declaration of war in 1939, Will Harvey organised a concert in The Devil's Chapel for peace. As the Lydney Observer commented: 'They sang and talked of Peace. And there was Peace. It was that wonderful peace which falls only when music and Nature come into perfect communion'. The paper reported that 2,000 people went to hear Elgar's 'Land of Hope and Glory', and C.H.H. Parry's stirring 'Jerusalem' delivered by the irresistible singing of the Whitecroft and District Male Voice Choir. Harvey felt pessimistic for the future saying 'It is possible we shall not have the pleasure of holding another service of song for a long time to come for black clouds hang overhead. Let us hope that our worst fears are not realised, and, whilst we have the opportunity, let us lift our voices in fervent effort, so that this night shall remain in our memories as a memorial to peace, as a gesture of our will to peace.' His words gave form to what many at the time saw as inevitable, and his worst fears were indeed realised.

It was not the first time that the Devil's Chapel had been used for performances of music and poetry. Since 1934 there had been annual events organised by Will Harvey and held during the summer. Each had attracted large crowds 'that encircled an improvised platform while the waning sun sent rays of light dancing among the branches'. Not only were local people attracted to the event, but some distinguished names of the period were there too. The composer Mr Rutland Boughton and the Irish novelist, Mr Marsden attended: as did Viscount Bledisloe and Lady Snowden from Lydney Park.

The war ended Harvey's Devil's Chapel concerts, but the tradition of using the scowles for public events continued for a short time after the war. There is a photograph on the Sungreen website of Grace Knowles conducting the Bream Girls Choir in the 1950's. There are hundreds of people standing among the trees listening, as the pre-war audience had done, to music in a remarkable natural amphitheatre.

Meetings in Review *with John Powell*



Monuments to Lydney's rich industrial heritage are hard to find. They belong to another age and a remarkable past. But they are easily overlooked. History Society members had a taste of what was on offer and hidden away in the beautiful valley of the Lyd when, for their August excursion on Saturday 12th, they visited the Norchard Steam Centre, headquarters of the Dean Forest Railway.

This turned into a fascinating day out, superbly guided by Cecile Hunt, the society's treasurer and former chairman, who lives and breathes Forest history. With a train to catch, Cecile galloped along, telling the Norchard story from the early days of iron-making to tinplate production, coal-mining and, ultimately, the production of electricity. Central to it all was the little river Lyd. Bolstered by a series of dams, this boisterous waterway once packed a punch way beyond its weight with all manner of products coming from works at the Upper Forge, New Mills (the Norchard), Middle Forge and Lower Forge, the latter being the last in production as the town's mighty tinplate works.

An extra delight was the strawberry and cream tea that followed. The Society had booked a carriage for members, and there was excellent service as the engine chuffed its way to Parkend and then to Lydney Junction. Along the way there were explanations of some of the important industrial sites hidden among the trees as well as a brief but informative history of the Severn and Wye Railway.

Back at Norchard, some members opted to do the journey for a second time while a smaller group rambled through the undergrowth to Upper Forge. All in all a grand day out! Those who live locally and have yet to make a journey on the Dean Forest Railway, should do so. The trip is augmented by an excellent cafe, a fascinating museum and a grand shop.

Many folk have a view on freemasonry and not all opinion is complimentary. A fraternity of back-scratchers is the usual bar-room banter. However, their more recent openness, including a fascinating television documentary, has shone a bright and revealing light on the movement, those involved, and what they are up to. Masonry is deep-rooted in the Forest where four lodges thrive: The Royal Forest of Dean, The Vale of Castiard, The Vassar-Smith and Edenwall. Between them they boast an impressive membership. And, low and behold, they have nothing to hide!

John Gillo, a Provincial Grand Master, but first and foremost a down-to-earth Forester, (we'll forgive him for living in Dursley!) said it as he saw it as he gave members of the society an intriguing insight into what goes on. Like his father, the frank-speaking Mr Albert Gillo, (the well known chief executive of the former West Dean Rural District Council), John quickly stamped all over the myths and mischief associate with the masonic movement. He quickly put things into context as he skipped through the 150 year-long history of the Royal Forest Lodge and its early difficulties, not in attracting members, but getting them to turn up for meetings! The nitty-gritty came with the information that masonic lodges throughout the length and breadth of Britain raise many, many thousands of pounds for charitable causes, doing so freely and very frequently without publicity.

The meeting was held on the 9th September in the Royal Forest Lodge at Newnham and following Mr Gillo's address there were plenty of questions from inquisitive society members. These continued over tea as members were invited to view many of the fascinating photographs and regalia on display.

This was an excellent, informative and revealing event for which we should thank the Royal Forest Lodge and, in particular, Mr Gillo.



John Gillo

So what tribe did occupy the Forest of Dean when the Romans came calling? Establishing a foothold along Severnside, did they meet with a friendly bunch of wold-painted locals in the Dobunni who were willing to trade, or the more independent and war-like Silures? The evidence — mainly established through the discovery of coins (the Dobunni used money while the Silures bartered) — pointed to the Dobunni, but the facts were blurred and the jury was still out.



Society members exploring the roman temple site at Lydney Park in 2008

It was one of many talking points thrown up in a lively, fascinating and hugely informative talk given by Dr Mark Lewis to society members on 20th September at Blakeney Village Hall. This was a first class presentation and, judging by the applause from an audience of over 50, it will be a hard act for others to follow!

Local geography was at the heart of Dr Lewis's splendidly illustrated presentation and the presence of the great Severn estuary and the valley of the Wye had a huge influence on the movement of people and goods. Dr Lewis, curator at nearby Caerleon's National Roman Legion Museum, touched on many aspects of the occupation and told members they were no more than 100 metres or so from Roman remains alongside the A48 and in the heart of Blakeney. Indeed, at most crossroads the Romans established outposts. Locally, the remains at Lydney Park were hugely significant. Using photographs from an earlier excavation there, he explained the importance of the site, one he rated as of national and international heritage value. The large settlement at Woolaston was also important and could have been a trading port from which iron ore, excavated in the Forest, was shipped to other locations in the estuary. Samples had been found in the remains of a boat dug out of the riverside mud in Newport.

For those of a certain vintage Lydney Town Hall holds special memories. It has been the perfect backdrop for many events: the Coronation tea party for all the kids in the town, celebratory dinners to mark significant occasions in the history of local clubs and societies, brass band concerts, superb choral and local dramatic society performances, and, of course, Saturday night dances. Smile if you can remember The Beatles performing there on August 31, 1962 (that was a Friday night!) Built on land given for the purpose by the Bathurst family, the hall's foundation stone was laid by Charles Bathurst in December 1888. Construction was completed the following September. It was a time of great progress and optimism in the Forest but little did those who guided the success of the building in its early days realise that the Great War was just around the corner. It meant a new role for the Town Hall: It was to be transformed into a hospital.

The story of the hall and those who ran it as a Voluntary Aid Detachment hospital was revealed to society members by guest speaker Geoff North. Speaking at the meeting held on October 7th at the West Dean Centre, Bream, he first explained how he became interested in the subject and then told in gripping detail how the VAD hospital movement grew in Gloucestershire. Nationwide, he revealed an extraordinary story of how towns and villages pitched in and gave up their halls, schools and big houses as hospitals and convalescent homes, offering treatment to injured service personal sent home from the Front.

Lydney became the sixth detachment in the county. In addition to the little town's cottage hospital, the Town Hall came into service on October 28, 1914. There were 45 beds. More buildings were brought into use. The newly constructed Craft School, in Bream Road (now the Church of England School) provided a further 40 beds, while the Bathurst family played their part to the full by handing over Red Hill House where a further 36 beds were occupied. In total 3,048 men received treatment. Elsewhere in the Forest Ghyll House at St Briavels also took in casualties.

Mr North said people from all sections of society were among those who volunteered to run the establishments and among them several from Lydney were recognised with awards. Members enjoyed a first class talk which was well illustrated and offered a new angle on the Home Front in wartime.



Archaeological Research Framework for the Forest of Dean

By Jon Hoyle

Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service has recently completed an archaeological Research Framework for Forest of Dean district in west Gloucestershire.

The Research Framework was funded by Historic England and is the culmination of Stage 4 of the Forest of Dean Archaeological Survey. It takes account of the enormous amount of new archaeological information about the Forest of Dean which has come to light in recent years, not only from that survey, but also from other large-scale research projects (such as the Severn Estuary Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment and four National Mapping Programme projects), smaller-scale development-led archaeological projects and other research, and also discussion with a number of specialists who were consulted during the Research Framework's preparation.

The Research Framework broadly follows the model set out in *Frameworks for our Past* (Olivier 1996), and consists of a Resource Assessment which summarises the current state of knowledge and describes the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental resource in the Forest of Dean. This is followed by a Research Agenda which identifies gaps in that knowledge and what research is needed to address these, and sets out research priorities (which may be flexible over time) for the district and identifies suitable methodologies for future research.

Forest of Dean district is within the area covered by the Regional Research Agenda of the South West Archaeological Research Framework (Webster 2008) which includes a wide range of overarching Research Aims covering methodological approaches, and addressing period- or theme-based issues for the region. The Forest of Dean Research Agenda does not replace the South West Archaeological Research Framework but operates within it by adopting the same thematic approach and highlighting those themes and research aims which are of particular relevance to the Forest of Dean. It also takes account of other research agendas relevant to the Forest of Dean particularly the National Association of Historical Mining Organisations research agenda for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries (Newman 2016), and the Historical Metallurgy Society's archaeometallurgical research agenda (Bayley *et al* 2008).

The Forest of Dean Research Framework is available as a pdf document from <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/16569/forest-of-dean-gloucestershire-research-framework-2017.pdf>

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