



The Bromsgrove Society
NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 No. 2

June 2007

£1



Henry Sandon

Who entertained an audience of 350 at The Bromsgrove Lecture

The Bromsgrove Society

Reg. Charity No. 510542

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Subscriptions are due on June 1st of each year and should be sent to:

Membership Secretary:

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| Individual Membership | £9 |
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| Pensioners & Students | £7 |
| Pensioners Family Membership | £9 |
| Corporate Members | £25 Minimum |

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The Newsletter appears three times a year in March, June and September The Editor welcomes letters and short articles on topics related to the Society's aims and interests. Please submit copy (typed if possible) by the last day in January, April and July for each respective issue. Suitable photographs to illustrate articles are a great help, and will be carefully returned to the owner after use.

This newsletter and past editions can also be read on the Internet at:

www.bsoc.co.uk

From the Chairman

Anne Maguire, who has been our editor for the past 6 years, has resigned from the position. Anne's efforts to produce the Newsletter on behalf of the Society, on time and whilst carrying out full-time employment are much appreciated by the membership. Anne also acted as minute secretary at executive meetings for a period when there was no secretary available. We offer Anne our best wishes for the future with grateful thanks for all her work on our behalf. The new Newsletter editor is Mrs. Adèle Clee who will be responsible for the September edition and we welcome her to the position and also on to the Executive Committee, hence this edition of the newsletter has been put together by myself with help from the President and John Weston

Dorothy Myatt stepped into the breach last year as Secretary of the Society but due to her many other commitments could only help us for one year. That year has now come to an end and we are therefore in urgent need of someone to take her place. I would be very grateful if anyone who might be interested in taking over as secretary could contact me as soon as possible. We thank Dorothy most sincerely for her efficient work which was of great help.

In this Newsletter we include an interesting article by Mary White about the young musician's competition. This is a feature of the Bromsgrove Festival which has been masterminded so ably by Mary for many years. There is also a welcome article about Bromsgrove Museum as Karen Spry hands over to her successor. Andrew Harris has sent in a response to Graham Reddie's recent article about global warming and makes some interesting points. We also include a report about The Bromsgrove Lecture given by Henry Sandon. This was a great success with over 350 people attending.

Jim Griffith.



From the Membership Secretary

We welcome new members:- Mr. S. Carter, Mr. & Mrs. T. Durrant, Miss. D. Emmerson, Mr. P. Frost, Mr. & Mrs. Holdsworth, Mr. & Mrs. M. Horton, Miss. M. Hunt, Mr. P. Meredith, Mr. S. Reizlein, Mr. P. Richards, Mr. & Mrs. M. Simpson and Mr. & Mrs. K. Stanton.

The Society thanks all corporate members and members for your continued support – your membership is valued and needed to further the work and influence of the Society.

A reminder that subscriptions are due on June 1st. It was agreed at the A.G.M., in July 2006, that there should be an increase of £2 this year. The new rates are inside the front cover of this newsletter.

Jill Palmer.

The Fair is Back

After an absence of two years there will be a fair on the Recreation Ground on Fair Day, which this year is on Saturday June 23rd. Once again the Court Leet procession led by the Bailiff will make its way from Housman Hall in Kidderminster Road at 10.30 a.m. and proceed via Worcester Road and High Street to the Housman statue by Lloyds TSB Bank.

There at 11 a.m. the Bailiff, Christopher Firminger will proclaim the Ancient Charter and conduct the assize of bread, ale and leather. At 12.15 p.m. he will open the pleasure fair on the recreation ground.

The High Street will, all day, be the scene of the Elizabethan Street Market where enthusiastic competition for the cup for the best stall is expected.

John Weston

A Birthday and a Bird-Bath

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary (on 2nd June 2007) of Sir Edward Elgar's birth it is interesting to reflect on his many visits to Bromsgrove.

In the Newsletter of March 2002 both David McBrien and I wrote about these visits and especially when he came to stay with his sister, Pollie Grafton, at Perryfield House in Crabtree Lane. I mentioned the superb bird-bath with the figure of Pan made by The Bromsgrove Guild which was prominent in the garden.

The house was demolished about 1960 and the whereabouts of the bird-bath were a mystery. Now the mystery has been solved thanks to the sharp eyes of local historian Neville Billington. He spotted something interesting being moved from one local garden to another and alerted me. The bird-bath is still in Bromsgrove, less than a mile from Crabtree Lane and is still in good condition thanks to its Bromsgrove Guild pedigree. Its owner has allowed me to photograph this lovely piece of garden statuary which was surely admired by England's favourite composer.

John Weston



Bird-bath with the figure of Pan, made by Bromsgrove Guild which until c. 1960 was in the garden of Perryfield House, Crabtree Lane, Bromsgrove.

The Bromsgrove Festival

International Young Musicians platform

The Festival had commenced in 1960 but by 1980 its future was very uncertain. There had been no Festival in 1978 due to financial pressure. Late 1980 was to be a turning point with a determination to attract sponsors and “Friends”. Dr Donald Hunt became the Music Advisor and suggested a competition for young musicians in the Festival.

The competition was to be for young musicians aged 17 to 25, resident or studying in the area of West Midlands Arts. This was to define a rather larger and definite area than Midlands, but had nothing to do with obtaining finance from the Arts. The Festival, as now, has to be responsible for the funding although particular dedicated sponsorship is sought.

It needed someone to actually run the competition - to vet that the standard was acceptable and then organise the entrants into a suitable time schedule. Joyce Messenger and Peter Ward were invited to take on this task and continued for many years. This was, and has continued to be, an honorary task.

The competition developed to become national and then international. The standard was always good but for some years has been outstanding. This year we have had local publicity, but for years it was difficult to get publicity as I was asked “any local entrants?” I would respond saying, “Is it not interesting to Bromsgrove to know that outstanding young musicians are being attracted to the town”.

I could give a long account of winners and their progress over the years, but suffice it to say that Guy Johnston proved the standard to all by becoming the BBC Young Musician of the Year 2000, having been Bromsgrove’s second prize winner in 1999.

This year the first prize winner was Sasha Grynyuk, born in Kiev in 1983. His early training was in the Ukraine and he had his concerto debut at age 11. Having performed worldwide he is currently a post graduate student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Future engagements are arranged for Europe and the Far East, and performances in the Barbican, Bridgewater Hall and Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Need one say more about the standard except that the second prize winner, Fanny Clamagirand, was born in Paris in 1984, has performed in public since age 9, won many prizes and plays a 1700 Matteo Goffriller violin. The third prize winner, Mikhail Nemstov an outstanding cellist, is at present in this country for further study being sponsored by the Russian Ministry of Culture.

The competition takes place over 4 days - the first round on Thursday and Friday, the second on Saturday, and the semi-final on Sunday morning with the final concert on Sunday evening. Kind hosts and hostesses in the District offer competitors accommodation free of charge, if it is required. They look after and transport them to the Guesten Hall which is an ideal venue for the competition.

In spite of so much of the early organisation being free, the competition is an expensive part of the Festival. We attract distinguished adjudicators who need accommodation and payment; we hire the venue and a good Steinway D piano, which requires repeated tuning; and we support the prize money.

Competitors are willing to bear the cost of travel knowing that only three can obtain a prize as they find the experience and challenge of performing before experienced judges helpful. For Bromsgrove and its Festival it brings something different and in planning the rest of the programme we try to include some emphasis on young musicians.

Mary White

Global Warming - a Sceptic's View

Graham Reddie raised some points about global warming in the last issue, and after I wrote to him putting a different point of view, he suggested that I might put my thoughts on paper.

First of all, let me emphasise that I am not questioning the fact that there has been a rise in average global temperatures over the last 20 years or so, and that at present this rise seems to be continuing. I would also not argue with the fact that carbon dioxide and other gases have a 'greenhouse effect', although it does seem to me surprising that, as CO₂ only constitutes a tiny 0.035% of the atmosphere it has the significant effects ascribed to it. There is also no doubt that, due to burning fossil fuels, CO₂ is increasing.

However, my first argument with global warming enthusiasts is that the current change is put down solely to greenhouse gases, with no thought at all that other factors could be at work. But the climate has always changed - in the last million years alone, a mere tick in the 4.5bn year history of the planet, we have had four major glaciations with periods in between when the climate has actually been warmer than it is now. The reasons for these cycles are poorly understood - it is known that several different factors, including both earth-based ones and astronomical ones, can affect the climate, but exactly how they work and how they interact together is not well understood. All that is certain is that human-induced greenhouse gas emissions could not have been a factor until very recently. So why is it assumed that human activity is the sole cause of the current warming? And surely to claim, as the more out-spoken greens do, that if only we can cut emissions we can somehow stabilise the climate, is nonsense.

My second argument is that warming is portrayed as uniformly bad, and a long list of catastrophic consequences are regularly trotted out by the news media. I believe these supposed disasters lie more in a natural human fear of change, than in the fact that the present climate is somehow 'ideal', and that anything different would be bad. For example it is often said that heat waves in Europe will cause the deaths of thousands of people, as the one in 2005 was supposed to have done in France. But it is never mentioned that warmer winters will also benefit millions of people throughout Europe, and surely it is not fanciful to suggest that this may save just as many lives as might be lost in heat waves? Another claim is that the 'balance of nature' will be disrupted, and that there will be wholesale loss of species. Of course a change in climate will cause the distribution of species to change, but why is that bad? Life has always adapted as the environment has changed, and a warmer planet will probably be able, overall, to accommodate more life than it does at present. Why does it matter if Arctic species retreat north, and more Mediterranean plants are found in northern Europe?

Of course it may still be said that we should adopt the precautionary principal, and cut down on emissions 'just in case'. But my third point is that government policies, or lack of them, are doing nothing to reduce the overall amount of energy being used, which climbs remorselessly every year. We are told we must 'save energy' (actually, we have been told that ever since the first oil shock over 30 years ago). But 'saving energy', while being great for the individual consumer as it allows him to get more

from his income, does nothing to reduce overall energy use. Any money saved, for example, on household heating is simply spent on something else, and all goods and services ultimately use energy. I am sure that many of us have improved the efficiency of our house insulation, we have bought some energy saving light bulbs, and perhaps even drive a smaller car, but I doubt whether the average person could show that he is using less energy overall. It is no use saving a hundred pounds on domestic heating if we spend it on a weekend in Barcelona, or buying a more economical car if you then buy a second one for your partner, or buying low energy light bulbs if you leave them on for longer (as I do) for security reasons. But that is what happens.

So I believe that total energy use in the economy is related, not to the efficiency of individual appliances, but to the overall size of the economy. It therefore follows that the only way to reduce energy consumption is to shrink national economies, but that is not on the agenda of any finance minister that I know. Apart from anything else, it would spark such severe political and social consequences that governments would never risk it. So all we get is talk about switching off standby lights, which in reality is no policy at all.

All this assumes that electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels. But if only we could find a way of creating electricity in a way that does not cause greenhouse gas emissions, then surely that would satisfy everyone? Indeed it would, and such a technology exists. It does not lie with 'renewables' - the idea of covering all the Scottish Highlands with wind turbines, damming all our estuaries, and covering our roofs with photovoltaic cells (what use would they be on a winter's night?) is ridiculous, and will not happen. But nuclear power is well proven - it has supplied industrialised countries with a significant proportion of their electricity for 50 years economically, reliably, and with an outstanding safety record. Yet greens have made nuclear a dirty word, raising all sorts of fanciful objections, none of which, including that of waste disposal, stands up to scientific examination. France generates 80% of her electricity from nuclear - why can't we? Yet all our political parties are halfhearted at best (the Lib-Dems are anti) about nuclear power, which is the only policy that would really make a difference.

Andrew D. Harris

Graham Reddie comments that Mr. Harris makes some good points but misses two vital ones. First, that climate change from whatever causes is greatly increasing the melting of the polar ice-caps - as spectacular TV photos have shown - and this is causing the sea-levels around our coasts to rise. Storm surges may defeat our coastal defences, a matter of concern in Lincolnshire and London.

Secondly, if we do very little or nothing for two or three decades and then realise we should have acted 25 years ago it may be too late to reverse or stop climate and geographical change. I prefer that we act now to be on the safe side, "just in case" as Andrew Harris says.

If we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and then find that climate change etc does NOT follow the scientist's predictions and is less threatening, think of all the "weekends in Barcelona" we could have on the money saved on fuel bills, and know that we have left rather more fossil fuels for our grandchildren to use.

The Bromsgrove Lecture 2007

This year's Annual Lecture which took place on the 17th April, was given by Henry Sandon - Lecturer, Broadcaster and Ceramic Expert. It was entitled "The Life of a Potaholic". The popularity of the speaker was indicated by the attendance of over 350 people, resulting in the venue having to be switched from Bromsgrove School Lower School to Routh Hall at the main School.

The Society President, Graham Reddie MBE, welcomed Henry Sandon and his wife to Bromsgrove and also expressed his thanks to the Governors and Headmaster of Bromsgrove School for once again providing the venue for the Annual Lecture. He suggested that the Speaker really did not require any introduction as he thought that everyone present would be well aware of Henry's expertise in ceramics particularly Royal Worcester Porcelain. He went on to say that on initially learning of the lecture subject - "The Life of a Potaholic" he had visions of the escapades of a potholer visiting, say, the Cheddar Gorge or Derbyshire caverns! Upon hearing that Henry Sandon was to be the orator and that his definition of a Potaholic was "Someone who has an addiction to pottery" he was looking forward to a more enlightening evening, together with the story of Henry's life to date !

Henry Sandon was born a "cockney" in the east end of London in the mid 1920's and came from a musical and mystic family. His childhood days were spent in early silent British films where he appeared invariably with his father's dogs (as indicated by his slides), the first being "Bob", so named because he was acquired by his father for the sum of 'five bob' (25p) in Whitechapel Street Market. This animal could do one hundred tricks, but only with Henry's father giving verbal commands. Consequently, when "talkies" came along another dog was purchased which could be taught a trick one night and perform it perfectly the following day in front of the cameras. Their last and greatest film together was "The Thief of Baghdad", made in 1939 at the beginning of the Second World War.

Henry was evacuated to High Wycombe to finish his schooling and his previous film work enabled him to participate in productions given by his school. The added benefit of this was that rehearsals enabled him to skip school prep! In the latter stage of the war he served in the South East Command Concert Party which was like "It ain't Arf Hot Mum" (the TV comedy programme). Henry was appointed the resident Baritone.

Upon demobilisation Henry returned to "Civvy Street" and a musical training, after which he joined the choir of Worcester Cathedral under the command of David Willcocks, and took up the post of Music Master at Worcester Royal Grammar School. He also conducted the Worcester Police Male Voice Choir in his spare time.

He met his wife, Barbara at Worcester Royal Porcelain, and after their marriage they set up home in the shadow of Worcester Cathedral. It was there that, when Barbara went into hospital to have their first child, in order to settle his nerves Henry began excavations in his garden and discovered buried Romans and their pots! Thus his interest in ceramics was initiated. He became a pupil of Geoffrey Whiting, the great English potter who had founded the Avoncroft Pottery and who was then developing pottery at his house in Hampton Lovett. Geoffrey used a seal of "K" for Avoncroft and G.W. on his work items, his specialty being teapots and the wonderful altar jugs, some of which are still displayed in local churches. Henry subsequently applied for

the post of Curator of the Royal Worcester and Dyson Perrins Museums and in 1966 was duly appointed.

His first task was to oversee the moving of the great collection from the old museums into the converted Victorian St. Peter's School where Barbara had been taught as a girl and she was thrilled to join him in this task. He discovered and was fascinated by the history of the original factory founded by Dr. John Wall in 1751 which was situated alongside the River Severn near the old Palace, and was an ancient building known as Warmstry House. At some time this had been in the ownership of Lord Windsor who also owned Hewell Grange. Lord Windsor was a keen supporter of the Bromsgrove School of Art and the Bromsgrove Guild. He was thought to have been responsible for aiding in the commissioning of the order to manufacture the gates of Buckingham Palace.

The factory obtained the Royal Warrant in 1789 following a visit from King George III. It was in the ownership of Flight & Barr who then merged with the rival factory of Chamberlain to become Dent's Glove factory. In the 1950's the great factory was demolished to allow for the building of the Worcester Technical College and prior to and during its construction Henry was allowed to conduct a series of archeological digs over a period of fourteen years. In addition to giving information as to original production methods, this led to discoveries such as the unique Wigornia creamboat, the first piece made at Worcester and the fascinating mug made for Lord Sandys of Ombersley Court.

Henry also found what is probably the most important dessert service made by Flight and Barr, and owned by the Earl of Plymouth. It was discovered below some wet sacking in the cellars of their house near Ludlow, and consisted of a double dessert service consisting of four great fruit coolers painted with scenes of Worcester on one side and the full coat of arms on the other. In addition there were five sets of twelve dessert plates each superbly painted with different subjects, twelve plates painted with scenes of Hewell Grange, twelve flower studies, twelve shell studies, twelve scenes of the Grand Tour of the Classical World of Italy and Constantinople and twelve plates painted with incredible portraits of Turkish and Eastern characters. These harlequin services would have been "mixed and matched" on the table, as is still done today in royal circles' table settings. Henry informed his audience that, if dinner conversation dried up under such circumstances, then the question would be put by one "what have you got on your plate this evening"

After establishing the Dyson Perrins Museum, Henry turned his thoughts to investigating the history of former workers employed at the factory. One of these was Harry Davis who joined the workforce at the age of fourteen and was still painting at the factory in his 80's. He it was who, in 1933, did the paintwork on the "Bradman" vase which commemorated the three double centuries scored by Don Bradman when playing against Worcestershire at New Road. Henry corresponded with Sir Donald Bradman regarding the vase and in 2006, when in Adelaide, was at last able to view the piece on display in the Adelaide State Library, where there is a special exhibition commemorating the achievements of Sir Donald. Henry's friendship with Harry Davis was such that in his will he left Henry his first apprentice plate and this has pride of place in Henry's own private collection.

It was whilst Curator of the Museum that Henry met Arthur Negus and they subsequently became great friends. This led to TV work and appearances in such programmes as "Collectors World and "Going for a Song". It was in the latter,

Henry's first show, that he was asked by Max Robertson, the Question Master, to identify a rare salt glazed bell-shaped figurine. Thankfully it was an object that he immediately recognised and had handled many times. It belonged to the great collection at Rous Lench Court at Inkberrow, and he comfortably informed the viewers of every known detail of its history. His friendship with Arthur Negus then produced the series "Arthur Negus Enjoys", where Henry and Arthur visited a Great House and talked about its glories and contents.

They were about to visit Hanbury Hall for filming and to include a piece about "The Archers of Hanbury" when, sadly, Arthur Negus died. He had just managed, despite his illness, to do the first two series of "The Antiques Roadshow-" with the help of Angela Rippon and Hugh Sculley. This programme is now in its thirtieth year, still going strong, and Henry and his son, John, are amongst the principal valuers. He recalled that the best piece of pottery he identified on the programme was a slipware drinking pot in the form of an owl, circa 1680, which arrived on a Northampton episode. It was very late and, after asking the owner to sit down, he told her it had a value in the order of £20,000. After an intake of breath she went very white, and then informed him that she had brought the pot in on the bus in a shopping bag. She took it back home in a taxi! It subsequently sold at auction for £22,000 and was purchased by the Potteries Museum in Stoke where it is currently on display. The original owner used the money to adopt five orphan children!

It was at a Rochdale "Road Show", that Henry experienced a shock of a very different kind. A member of the public, after queuing for some time, opened his shoebox and produced a very valuable Minton pot. He stated it had been in his possession for only some three to four weeks and was evasive as to its previous ownership. At this point Henry was called away by a staff member and taken into an adjoining room, only to be introduced to what appeared to be a Detective Chief Inspector from the Police Serious Crime Squad. He was instructed to keep the fellow talking and to ask him specific questions as to how he came to be in possession of the piece. They suspected it had been stolen some weeks previously. Henry returned to the table where the Minton pot had been replaced in the shoebox. After putting the requested questions, and getting dubious replies, a uniformed constable appeared from behind him and proceeded to attempt to arrest the man who jumped to his feet, knocking the shoebox to the floor. Henry heard the contents shatter, an awful, shocking moment. The man also broke free and ran off whilst the policeman proceeded to pick up the shoebox ... and shook it! It was only then, as Henry looked angrily at him, that he took off his helmet and revealed that he was no other than Noel Edmunds. Henry realised that he had been hoaxed into a "Gotcha Oscar" Whilst he had been away from the table the precious piece of Minton had been removed from its shoebox and replaced by a valueless piece of glassware!

When Michael Aspel appeared on another "Road Show" with his "Big Red Book", Henry described it as one of his most frightening experiences, involving the bringing on stage of dozens of people he had not seen for many years and hoping he could remember them. Diane Louise Jordon showed his old home in Worcester and introduced the Cathedral Choir who sang. An archeologist friend showed the Roman skull found in excavations in the back garden in Worcester. Edward Heath, Angela Rippon together with Hugh Sculley and the Roadshow team appeared. Gilly Goolden was there, together with some members of the Worcester Police Choir, who sang "A Policeman's Lot is Not a Happy One" by Gilbert and Sullivan. The last person to

appear was Arthur Negus's daughter and the "Big Red Book" was presented. Henry brought this book to the lecture together with the aforementioned Apprentice Plate and Gotcha Oscar.

Having concluded his lecture, Henry carried out valuations on a select number of items brought along by members, including some small paintings which he valued at £2,000 each. He was rewarded with spontaneous applause from a very appreciative audience and a most informative evening concluded with the Society's Chairman, Jim Griffith giving a vote of thanks in which he quoted the words of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, spoken more than a century ago "Old China is below nobody's taste, since it has been the Duke of Argyll's, whose understanding has never been doubted either by his friends or enemies". He continued by saying that the audience had been educated, enlightened and entertained by another master of this subject. When Henry made the momentous decision to leave his native London and come to Worcester to sing in the Cathedral Choir and teach music at Worcester Royal Grammar School, it was London's loss. It had been a pleasure and privilege to hear Henry speak so eloquently on such a variety of topics. The Chairman then invited the audience to show their appreciation, in the usual way, for a most entertaining evening.

John Sketchley

Urgently Needed - New Hon. Secretary

There must be someone out there who would like to take this on and help The Bromsgrove Society.

The secretary who has been doing the work on a temporary basis is only sorry she cannot continue, due to other commitments too numerous to mention.

She recommends it to a successor as being interesting, informative and enjoyable. In addition to minuting the meetings, queries come in from all over this country and occasionally from abroad. Members of the Executive Committee come to the rescue when guidance is necessary to deal with these and, indeed, when queries of any description arise.

Don't miss out on an opportunity to take on this unique secretarial post. Contact can be made with the Chairman,
Mr. J. Griffith, Tel. (01527) 833252.

Bromsgrove Museum

A change of Curatorial Officers in Uncertain Times

For the past three years Karen Spry has been the face of Bromsgrove Museum as its Curatorial Officer. Now change is afoot with Karen leaving her role at Bromsgrove to work more widely with the museums of Worcestershire. She is ably replaced by Mariyam Ali, who will be working in a full-time role and relishing the challenge. Here, for the Bromsgrove Society's Newsletter, they look back over the museum's achievements in the recent years whilst also looking forward to the future.

Karen says: "It has not been easy to leave Bromsgrove. For all the many challenges I have encountered here, my time has been very enjoyable and hugely satisfying. When I first began my role as Curatorial Officer, it was my first "proper" museum job. Although a newcomer to Worcestershire, hailing from Hull and the North East, I was eager to sink my teeth into the role and make it my own.

"Three years on I look back proudly at what I have achieved. After a prolonged period with little curatorial input, there was much to do in the way of implementing professional standards to try to re-build the public's faith in the museum. The strategies and systems that I have put in place can now be taken up and taken forward by my successor and have greatly improved the central operations of the museum.

"Making simple improvements to the existing displays and creating a ground-floor temporary exhibition space has opened up the potential of the museum and its collections. Perhaps some of the most satisfying initiatives have been those that enabled the museum to reach beyond the confines of the building itself.

"Taking exhibitions and collections to other town venues and organisations has created new links, whilst enabling new audiences to access the museum's services. The two recently developed loans boxes, for example, have been used in schools to support teaching and with elderly groups for reminiscence therapy.



A temporary exhibition of healthcare in Bromsgrove before the NHS

“I have had great fun holding events such as the Civil War and charity coffee days but one thing that I will always remember when looking back is The Bromsgrove’s War Project. From collecting the memories of local people to the resulting touring exhibition it may have been simple in concept and execution but I see it as a defining moment for both me and the museum.

“Of course none of this would have been possible without the invaluable support of volunteers and the many very kind and helpful individuals with whom it has been a very great pleasure to work.

“Now as I move on to new challenges I can see that Bromsgrove has been a big part of my life and I am sorry to leave so many friends behind me. Fortunately my new role, as Museums Development Officer for Worcestershire, will allow me to stay involved with Bromsgrove and lend my support to Mariyam”.

Mariyam says: “Despite the uncertainty surrounding the museum I am excited to be taking over the role. Its recent success, with a rise in visitor numbers and the popularity of its loans boxes show that there is a need for the museum in the community and I hope I can continue to provide a service to the people of Bromsgrove.

“I am delighted to be hosting the temporary exhibition on health provision in the town before the NHS, as well as looking forward to meeting and working with the local public, societies and organisations of Bromsgrove and finding out more about the area and its history – and making friends in the process!!”

The photograph on page 10 shows Karen Spry and Mariyam Ali beside the main showcase in the last special exhibition mounted by Karen at Bromsgrove Museum before she handed over the reins to Mariyam in April. The special exhibition consists primarily of the showcase seen in the photograph and a complementary display which will remain through the summer. Mariyam is responsible for the museum during a six months placement as part of her MA degree programme.

The showcase in the photograph contains a varied display of objects from days when diagnosis and treatment were often rudimentary, to say the least. One example is a portable Edwardian defibrillator. Two copper electrodes and a large coil of copper wire are recognisable in the wooden box. Mysteriously, a roller, not dissimilar in appearance to an ink roller printers used to use, completes the ensemble! One can only wonder what role (no pun intended) this item played in resuscitating the patient... More alarming is an electric shock machine “for nervous diseases”. A small handle seems to be the means to crank the contraption. One cannot help but be curious regarding the voltage and amperage the apparatus delivered and what sort of research, if any, went into long-term safety aspects. Nearby is a glass ‘bleeding cup’ operated by squeezing a rubber ball. This type of device was used for extracting



blood in days when it was believed many illnesses were caused by too much blood swirling around the body.

Looking further down the showcase one sees a set of 1929 accounts for Bromsgrove Cottage Hospital while – poignantly - there is a painting by a WWI soldier while convalescing in Barnsley Hall. It was the sort of thing that must have provided valuable, if brief, pastoral distraction for soldiers in the hospital suffering from appalling battlefield experiences. In the lower part of this showcase several other items are displayed, delicately labelled “*Assorted medical equipment from Barnsley Hall*”. Similar interesting themes continue in a second showcase including the recipe for a mysterious potion to be used “*to cure the greese*”(?) “*Take a quart of milk, as much meal as will make it of a proper thickness. Boil it well then add two ounces of raw alum. Finally 2 pennyworth of linseed oil and 2 pennyworth of turpentine. PROVED*”

The last word was presumably appended to reassure sceptics. The Collins English Dictionary says alum was used in medicine “as a styptic and astringent”.

Bibliography

The Story of Bromsgrove Cottage Hospital 1876 to 1948. J.T. Banks & C.E. Heydon. Written as the hospital was being prepared for handover to the new National Health Service. Reprinted 1991

The Building of Barnsley Hall Lunatic Asylum Jean Walker, Rousler Magazine Number 15 December 2000

Crisis Management –The 1832 Cholera Outbreak in Bromsgrove. Quintin Watt, Rousler Magazine Number 4 December 1989

**The Chairman has pleasure in inviting Members and Friends to a Supper on Friday, 7th December 2007
7.30 p.m. for 8.00p.m. The Executive Suite, Bromsgrove School, Old Station Road. Further details in the September Newsletter.**

The Annual General Meeting of The Bromsgrove Society will take place on Thursday 5th July at 7.30 pm in Guesten Hall, Avoncroft Museum.

The Bromsgrove Society Executive Committee

for 2006-2007 comprises all those officers of the Society shown on the inside of the front cover plus the following members:-

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Cyril Baker | 551, Birmingham Road, Marlbrook Bromsgrove. B61 0HY | 0121 445 3633 |
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| Mrs Audrey Chapman | 58 East Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2NJ | 01527 873410 |
| Des Clarke* | 19 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove. B60 1NZ | 0121 453 3034 |
| Richard Guest | 36 Church Road, Bromsgrove. B61 8QH | 01527 831580 |
| Tim Harris* | Church Green Cottage, 44 Church Road, Bromsgrove B61 8QH | 01527 872451 |
| Mrs Isobel Jarrett* | 28 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove. B60 1PA | 0121 453 2100 |
| Mrs Marion Lancaster | 5 Carnforth Road, Harwood Park, Bromsgrove, B60 2HS | 01527 871874 |
| John Sketchley | 16, Brueton Avenue, Bromsgrove B60 2AW | 01527 876626 |
| Ron Skidmore | (Vice Chairman of The Bromsgrove Society & Chairman - The Environment Committee), 12, College Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2NE | 01527 880196 |
| Miss Pat Tansell | (Chairman - Local History Group) 20 Oakhurst Drive, Bromsgrove. B60 1AR | 01527 575590 |
| Tony Turpin | 89 Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove. B61 0AL | 01527 876659 |
| John Weston* | Breakback House, 20 Sunningdale Road, Bromsgrove. B61 7NN | 01527 873483 |
| Ex-Officio Committee Member: | The Bailiff of the Court Leet | |

**Past Chairmen of The Society*

Corporate Members

Our current schedule of corporate members is set out below

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>All Saints Garage Ltd.</i> | <i>Millfields First School</i> |
| <i>Baylis and Co.(Bromsgrove) Ltd.</i> | <i>Miller House Eye Clinic</i> |
| <i>Bromsgrove Golf Centre</i> | <i>A.Victor Powell</i> |
| <i>Clarks Motor Services</i> | <i>R. & S. Antiques</i> |
| <i>Cupitt,Jeweller</i> | <i>Rashwood Care Home</i> |
| <i>Clent Hills Veterinary Group</i> | <i>The Red Lion (Bromsgrove)</i> |
| <i>Designed Systems Interiors</i> | <i>Regal Garage (Bromsgrove) Ltd.</i> |
| <i>Forrester Associates</i> | <i>Rotary Club of Bromsgrove</i> |
| <i>Harris Super Coaches (Bromsgrove) Ltd.</i> | <i>Scotts, Solicitors</i> |
| <i>Thomas Horton & Sons</i> | <i>Townsend Textiles</i> |
| <i>Jukes Insurance Brokers</i> | <i>Weaver PLC</i> |
| <i>The Ladybird Inn</i> | <i>Webbs of Wychbold</i> |
| <i>Lloyds TSB.Bank</i> | <i>Wilson's Pet Centres Ltd.</i> |
| <i>mfg solicitors</i> | <i>X.L.Displays</i> |

The Bromsgrove Society Local History Group

18th September

St. John's Church - its history and architecture

(This meeting will take place in the Church)

Simon Henderson

16th October

The Other Side of the Wire

Wolff Wahle

20th November

The Lyttletons of Hagley

Julian Hunt

4th December

The Golden Age of Coaching

Graham Sutherland

All meetings except the one on 18th September will be held at the Methodist Centre, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove and commence at 7.45 p.m.

Admission: Members £1.50 - Non-members £2.00.

All are welcome to attend