



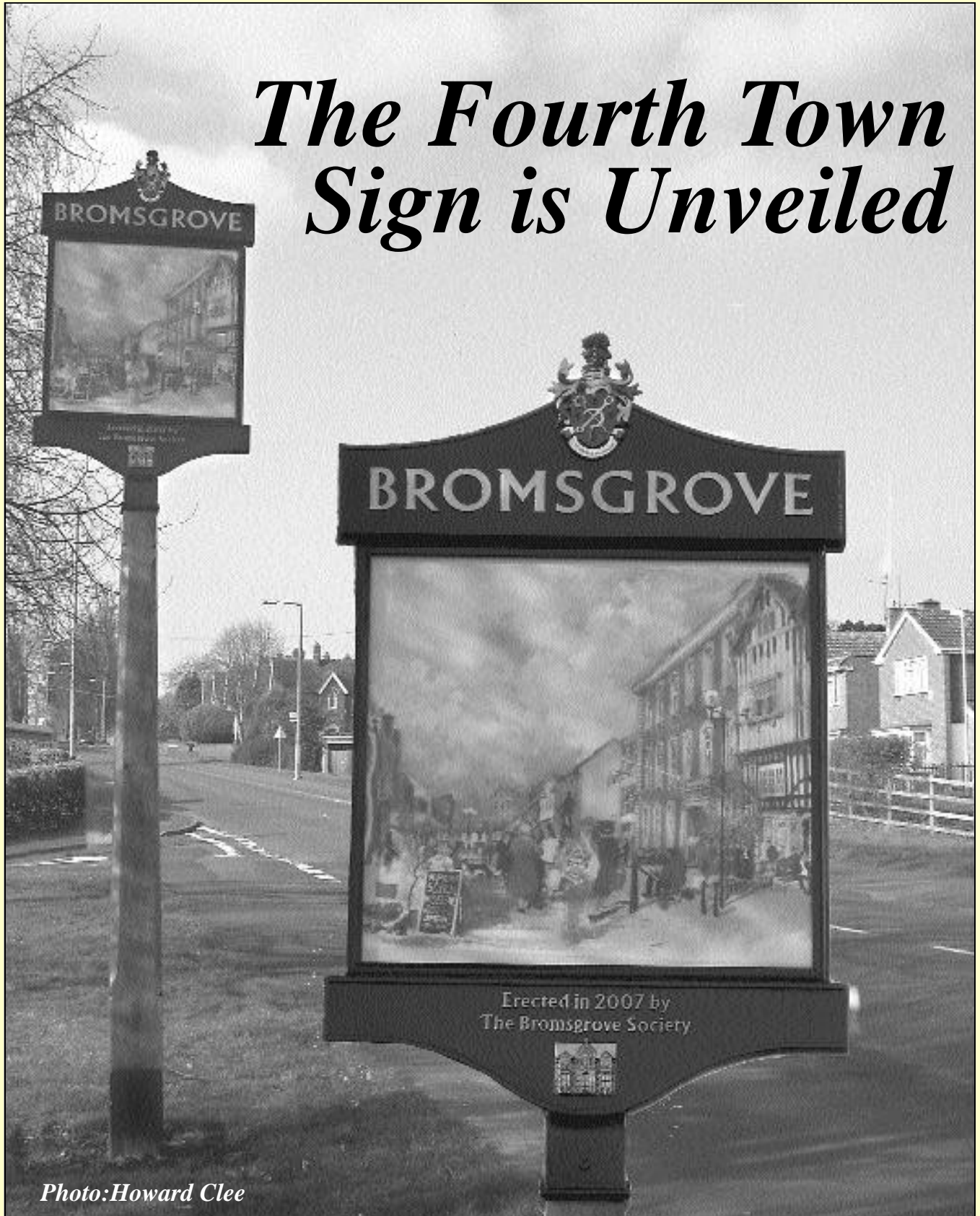
# The Bromsgrove Society **NEWSLETTER**

Volume 28 No. 1

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£1

## *The Fourth Town Sign is Unveiled*



*Photo: Howard Clee*

# *The Bromsgrove Society*

Reg. Charity No. 510542

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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 directly to the editor (Word Processed and in electronic format where possible) by the last day in January, April and July for each respective issue.

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

***[www.bsoc.co.uk](http://www.bsoc.co.uk)***

# *From the Editor*

It does, indeed, seem a long time since the September newsletter loomed and the ways of the Bromsgrove Society were completely new to me. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the society, in particular the warm and friendly Executive Committee, for their encouragement, support and patience towards their secretary and newsletter editor who has so much to learn and is frequently bewildered by names and events which are second nature to them all!

We have much to look forward to in this newsletter, particularly the Bromsgrove Lecture 2008, which promises to be a fascinating talk from the marketing director of the Severn Valley Railway, John Leach. Early booking is advised and full details of both the lecture and ticket sales are on page 12. I also commend the remaining two History Group talks to you; full details of these are on the back cover.

My thanks are extended to all contributors, some of whom have waited patiently since September to see their articles printed as we ran out of space in the last newsletter.

I trust you will all enjoy the newsletter and if you feel able to contribute to any of the future editions your articles are always warmly welcomed by email or post directly to myself.

*Adèle Clee*

# *From the Chairman*

As I am sure you are all aware our President, Graham Reddie, suffered a debilitating stroke in November. I am pleased to tell you that he is making a steady recovery, albeit slowly.

Since my last report I have attended two very interesting Local History Group's talks, on the 'Golden Age of Coaching' by Graham Sutherland and 'Railways of Worcestershire: Past and Present' by John Boynton, and the Society's Seasonal Supper.

The new year began when, together with other members of the Executive Committee, I attended an on-site meeting with Phoenix Masonry at Worcester (in conjunction with members of the Housman and Victorian Societies) to inspect the damaged 'John Adams Memorial Cross' and ascertain its possible repair, refurbishment or replacement. This was followed by a meeting with the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council to discuss ways of achieving this aim. We also met the leader of The District Council to discuss progress on the Town Review and attended a presentation by Bunford & Goode of their proposals for 'Bromsgrove Primary Care Centre'. We also had a one to one meeting with Directors of Urban Practitioners, consultants to the District Council on the Town Review. The month concluded with an unveiling ceremony for the fourth Town Sign, in New Road, and attendance at a public meeting at the council house relating to the regional Spatial Strategy. More meetings are in the pipeline and I will update you on progress on the various projects when there is anything further to report. Lastly I can now confirm that the Bromsgrove Lecture is to be delivered by John Leach, the Marketing Manager for the Severn Valley Railway, entitled Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow.

Our thanks go to Jennie Townshend and John Weston who once again produced an extremely successful 'Rousler' in December and to all of you who contributed articles and helped with distribution.

*Jim Griffith*

# *From the Membership Secretary*

Since the September newsletter the Society has gained 22 new members. They are as follows: Dr. A. Bandalli, Mr. J. Barrett, Mrs. M. Collins, Mr. A. Cooke, Mrs. L. Easdown, Mr. G. Forbes, Mr. & Mrs. A. Key, Mr. & Mrs. M Preece, Mr. & Mrs. C Samways, Mr. & Mrs. P Scott, Mr. B Taylor, Mr. & Mrs. J Tilt, Mrs. K. Trollope, Mr. & Mrs. N. Westrop, Mr. F. Wheeler and Miss. J. Wilson.

We welcome you all to the Bromsgrove Society.

Thank you to our corporate members and all members for your continued support. Also I must thank the team of 15 people who deliver by hand, the newsletters and the Rousler; the Society is grateful to you all.

*Jill Palmer*

## *Address to the Bromsgrove Society AGM*

by Simon Carter, Director, Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings (5th July 2007)

As the new (ish) Director of the Museum (I started at the end of February), I'm only the fourth director in 40 years, which means I've got a lot to live up to with the legacies of my predecessors, considering the first one started with a borrowed piece of land and one building.

As well as being new to the Museum I'm also new to Bromsgrove; and I have to say I'm still finding my way around and trying to remember the street names. I come from Midlands beginnings (but East Midlands) having been born, and grown up, in Leicestershire. Most sides of my family have lived in Wigston Magna for at least 5 generations; a country village that became a town as the gap between it and the conurbation of Leicester spread outwards. Like Bromsgrove it had its main local industry, framework knitting, which started off as a cottage industry and gradually evolved into small workshops and then larger factories, much like nail making did in Bromsgrove. Wigston could be compared with Bromsgrove; both have populations of around 30,000 and in some ways made similar mistakes in town planning in the 1960s and lost some of its early buildings in favour of developing as a modern shopping centre. I think I had an idea about what I wanted to do later in life when, aged around 10, I joined my local civic and historical societies, both founded in the 1980s like this society, and volunteered at the local museum. After university years in Sussex I began working as a curator in London where I've been for the last 13 years, living in Hackney. For a variety of reasons I decided it was time to move out of the capital; house prices were prohibitive, the size of the city can sometimes daunt, terrorism and a wish to get out to a more quiet environment with wider horizons that are not always obscured by buildings and more greenery.

So I have arrived at Avoncroft just in time for our 40th birthday. We are celebrating with a variety of events and we would like to share our Merchant's House birthday cake with the society later on.

The Museum had its beginnings with Avoncroft College founded by George Cadbury Junior in 1925 at Offenham near Evesham, and moved to The Grange at Stoke Heath, the former home of John Corbett who had developed the Salt Mines at Stoke Works.

The college was intended to educate the adult agricultural worker in better working practices, as well as an understanding of the liberal arts and rural social issues and social structures. In 1946 Avoncroft Arts Society was formed, emerging from a series of activities organised by George Gregg, Warden of the College. It was here in the late 1950s and early 1960s that Freddie Charles, a local architect, began giving a series of slide talks about the local vernacular and timber framed buildings including one in Bromsgrove on the Worcester Road, which he had identified as an important mid 15th century house.

As this house had been sub-divided into a series of smaller properties, in April 1960 it was threatened with demolition. He developed and published a scheme for its restoration in which he said: “for a town house this is a remarkably complete example. In Bromsgrove there is nothing to compare with it either in period, typology or completeness.”

Despite his efforts, demolition began in 1962 of the rear stone building to provide a site for a new forecourt building for a garage, but the contractors moved on and began demolition of the main part of the house. Fortunately this demolition was interrupted, and an agreement was reached for a temporary halt to the work, and a new contractor was appointed who helped rescue the damaged timbers and take down the rest of the building in a controlled way. Avoncroft College then hosted a meeting at which Avoncroft Folk Village Association was formed and the college agreed to store the timbers, and provide a piece of land onto which the building could be re-erected. Mr Gunold Greiner carried out most of the restoration work on the timbers between September 1965 and 1967 when the house, for many years known as ‘The Bromsgrove House’ first opened to the public as the initial building for the now-titled Avoncroft Museum of Buildings.

The early years of the Museum saw a rapid expansion with around ten buildings being erected in the first few years. The original emphasis of collecting timber-framed buildings gradually changed as other buildings of local importance were offered and rescued. However as the cost of rescue of buildings increased the rate at which they were acquired slowed down, and a change in emphasis over the same period meant that fewer important buildings were facing destruction. Ongoing changes in appreciation of old buildings, and the efforts of many institutions including Avoncroft and the Bromsgrove Society mean that every effort is now made to save important historical buildings on their original site and to find new uses for them.

Looking back at the Museum’s history, I would have to acknowledge there were mistakes made along the way. The enthusiasm for rescuing buildings meant that some projects embarked upon were never completed and building timbers that had been intended for re-erection were not used. Also the choice of rescues in some instances do not sit happily with the collection of buildings; Plas Cadwgan the partial frame of a hall house from near Wrexham, for example, is a difficult exhibit to interpret and the fibreglass spire from Smethwick is similarly problematic. At a recent concert here the folk singer Vin Garbutt wondered when we were going to get round to excavating the rest of buried Bromsgrove Cathedral! However, it must be remembered that without the efforts of all those people involved in the museum in the past; directors, volunteers, staff, fundraisers and funders, generous benefactors and philanthropic businesses none of the buildings now preserved and displayed on the site would have survived.

The last few years have been a time to consolidate and put our house in order.

Although much was managed, the Museum has more often than not, had a red bank balance rather than a black one. Being an independent museum without the safety net of a local authority or national governmental funding means that the Museum will always rely on what it can earn and what others are willing to give. Recently the Museum has rethought its future vision, and instead of the rescue of buildings being its primary aim, the interpretation of the existing buildings and the learning for all ages that can come from them is now our primary concern. We also need to improve the quality of the display of our existing buildings and make the most out of the rest of the site.

That does not mean that there are no new projects. Over the last 8 months we have been constructing the display area for our Anderson Shelter, adjacent to the 1940s Pre-Fab. This is being done with HBG Construction and is being used as a teaching resource for young men who are dropping out of the academic side of school life, and provides them with training in vocational skills such as bricklaying, excavating groundwork and constructing drainage. It is therefore taking a little longer than the original Andersons took to put up!

Those here tonight who have visited the Museum since Easter will also have noticed the new pathways which have made the site more accessible for those with pushchairs, wheelchair users and generally for those who do not like to get wet and muddy. The windmill, which had to have its sails taken off for repair in 2004, is also now complete, with all four sails on.

Ongoing projects include the Sensory Garden begun following a consultation process with children with disabilities from Chadsgrove School, on how the site might be better adapted to suit their needs.

Last year we received Heritage Lottery Funding for what is termed a Project Planning grant, which paid for research to analyse what we need to do to turn around the trend in falling visitor numbers as well as paying for a condition survey to identify the maintenance and conservation needs of all our buildings. The audience research has helped us to really get to know our visitors and what they need and want from the Museum, and we are now planning a larger Lottery bid to enable us to put these things in place, to help set the Museum on the right course for the next 40 years.

The Audience Development Plan also indicates that we need to strengthen our links with other local institutions, and I certainly intend that Avoncroft Museum will become a partner with, and a venue for, other educational, arts, social, environmental and heritage bodies in the area. We are already active members of Bromsgrove Arts Alive, and are beginning to work more closely with Avoncroft Arts Society and Bromsgrove Photographic Society, but we need to develop more links with Bromsgrove School, the Housman Society, Bromsgrove Music Festival, and especially the Bromsgrove Society.

The Society have helped with many of the Museum's past projects including the funding of many of the corbels which support this spectacular roof, previous repairs to the windmill and signage for the Avoncroft orchard of historic cider apple and perry pear trees. The orchard is the setting for another new project - working in association with Worcestershire Beekeepers Association - it now has bees in it in traditional beehives, kindly sponsored by Legal and General, and we hope this will give us the opportunity to deliver adult and children's educational activities about bees and hopefully be able to sell Avoncroft Orchard Honey and Avoncroft Beeswax in the Museum shop.

There are many future projects which we would like to embark on if we are successful in current Lottery bid; the funding will enable various improvements to the Museum's work and appearance, including new signage and interpretation panels, a family learning officer to develop workshops and activities for all ages so that they can learn from Avoncroft in an informal way on their visits, a gardener, finance for increased marketing, and a curator to catalogue and research the Museum's collections and buildings.

Another project that I particularly would like to see over the next few years would be the furnishing of the Merchant's House to show how people lived in it. There would inevitably be some compromises, as it would not be possible to display original 16th or 17th century furniture and objects in a building that is fully open for people to walk around. However, by using well researched replica furniture, textiles, metalwork and ceramics it would be possible to help visitors to learn in a less didactic way, and would bring the House alive more in the same way as the Toll House and Pre-Fab are easier for visitors to engage with.

This again would be a shift of emphasis from Avoncroft's past, when it was felt that furnishing the building would distract from visitors understanding of the architectural construction of the structure - but we have to respond to a certain extent to what the customer wants - our audiences indicate one of the main reasons they visit a museum like ours is to learn how people use to live.

It is for this reason we are also hoping to develop the existing gardens for the Pre-fab and Toll House and develop a garden for the Merchant's House, to accurately reflect the type of planting schemes appropriate for these periods and to produce interpretational panels to explain the practical and pleasurable use of domestic gardens. This will require research to find the evidence from primary sources so we are able to base these on real garden layouts of Worcestershire or the West Midlands.

The audience development plan also indicates that our visitors need a reason to return on a regular basis - we have a faithful audience who live in the Bromsgrove and Worcester areas, but whereas in the past they may have come to see what new buildings we had erected, now they need other events to make a visit to Avoncroft worthwhile. Therefore over the next few years I plan to hold a series of temporary exhibitions looking at various aspects of life in the West Midlands in the past, whether by examining people's homes, particular trades, agricultural specialisms, crafts, traditions or regional architectural specialisms. This year we will be opening at weekends in December with an exhibition throughout the buildings looking at Christmas and seasonal traditions and customs, which I hope we will be able to build on year on year to encourage visitors to the Museum in our traditional quiet period.

Although I have a few ideas for major projects in the future, I can not go public with those yet, as I have only been here a short space of time, and before any major projects are embarked on we need to make many small changes and improvements to hopefully make the big difference to visitor numbers.

The Museum has been experiencing some trying times, but I have no doubt that we will be here for another 40 years, though I realise there are many big tasks ahead to shape the Museum for the future. I very much welcome help for Avoncroft from any local groups and people and hope that this Society will continue to be one of our key supporters.

# *Bromsgrove Arts Alive*

As Bromsgrove Arts Alive celebrated its first birthday in June it is as well to remember that long before this organisation came into being local people have been keeping the arts alive in Bromsgrove. I think the first hint that Bromsgrove needed an arts centre came in 1888 when the Bromsgrove Messenger reported that there was a need for more facilities for the arts in the town. Unsurprisingly not much happened and as far as one can gather that continued for about 50 years until the early 1940s when Gwyneth Foster from Avoncroft Arts Society, and Ken Morris from the Choral Society, started making noises. The Bromsgrove Festival started in the 1960s under the dynamic directorship of Joe Stones, but although the waves made by the Festival were extremely exciting, those involved were more concerned with keeping the Festival vibrant than creating an arts centre in the town.

In some ways this was surprising because the programmes were ambitious in the extreme and the lack of good venues in which to hold the events could have given impetus to a drive for an arts centre. A quick glance at the programmes in the early years of the Festival makes one realise the extraordinary energy generated by Joe Stones' team. John Ogdon, Adrian Boult, the CBSO playing Messiaen, Campoli, The Dennis Brain Wind Ensemble, Segovia, Paul Tortelier, Louis Kentner, Julian Bream, Ravi Shankar and the Amadcus Quartet were just some of the famous names who came to Bromsgrove.

Fred Davies was the drama lecturer at the College of Further Education at the time and produced a stream of exciting and ambitious plays for the Festival to complement Joe Stones' quality musical programme. He spear-headed a campaign for a proper theatre in the town but it never got off the ground. Things became serious when the old Institute building at the bottom of New Road was threatened in the 1980s and Jennie McGregor-Smith and her many supporters started the long campaign. They formed Bromsgrove Arts Association in 1986 and there were false dawns of several possible arts centres; first in a funny telephone exchange near the Spadesbourne Suite, then the old electricity showroom opposite Parkside School, then in the old Drill Hall, and finally as a new build on the Asda car park. This was when the Labour party held control of the Council and showed real vision in their determination to succeed with the project. But the project ran into trouble when it was discovered that some of the grass area by Asda car park was going to be lost to car parking. Emotions ran high and at the next election the Conservatives were back in power again and dropped the project.

But the Arts Association did not give up and after another feasibility study had been carried out and detailed plans made, the Council relaunched the project in 2004 and made plans for the new arts centre at the end of School Drive. All lamented that it was not a site in the centre of the town but the prospect of an arts centre becoming a reality had finally arrived. It was at this time though that the Council made their biggest mistake in freezing out the involvement of the Arts Association and local people who had so much expertise, energy and goodwill to offer. Consequently when financial considerations led to a reduction in the budget, damaging cuts were made to the architect's plans without any consultation with the people who were going to use the centre. There was also the lost opportunity of involving local people in the project and giving them the chance to raise money for 'extras' for the building.

Members of Bromsgrove Arts Association became disillusioned with the situation and the organisation withered. But the imaginatively named Artrix was built; a director, Andy Woods, was eventually appointed, and after a very difficult first year when the folly of some of the cuts made to the building became glaringly obvious, the centre began to attract good audiences and function properly. In December 2005 Huw Moseley, BDC's Arts Development Officer, called a meeting of interested parties and a new body, Bromsgrove Arts Alive, was formed to provide cohesion between the arts groups in Bromsgrove and support for Artrix.

In no time at all almost all local arts groups joined and the current membership stands at 40 member organisations representing approximately 2,500 individuals.

Organisations like the All and Sundry, Avoncroft Museum, Barnt Green and Bromsgrove Choral Societies, Bromsgrove Concerts, Bromsgrove Festival, Bromsgrove Folk Club, Bromsgrove Operatic Society, English Song at Tardebigge, The Housman Society, The Midland Sinfonia, North High School, Trigger Band and Words probably have the highest profiles, but there are many other groups which do equally good work in creating opportunities for individuals to be creative.

Bromsgrove Arts Alive has had an excellent first year and with a real arts centre to provide a heart to its endeavours no fewer than 15 member organisations have used Artrix for an event. It is a splendid facility for the town and is a focus to enthuse members.

The main achievements of Bromsgrove Arts Alive in its first year have been as follows:

- A leaflet listing member organisations and their contacts has been produced.
- The aims and objectives of the organisation have been set out.
- A constitution has been established.
- A Showcase Day has been held at Artrix at which almost all members either set out their stall, or gave a short performance on the stage, or both.
- A website has been set up and incorporates a Diary detailing members' events.
- The library's desire to hide all local promotional leaflets away out of sight in folders has been strongly opposed. This has eventually resulted in a rack for local leaflets being erected.
- A campaign to get the brown signs to Artrix erected has finally been successful.
- An excellent rapport with Artrix has been established and much input given to the Director over ways in which the building can be improve.

*Jim Page*

### **Amendment:**

In the December 2007 edition of 'The Rousler', a printing error occurred on page 11 in the article about the Chavasse family. The text in lines 32 and 33 should, in fact, have read:

*'In fact later in his life, in 1942, he became Bishop of Rochester'.*

# *A Brief History of Sidemoor*

## **Introduction**

This history of Sidemoor, however limited in development, is not just for those who have lived in this area for most of their lives, but also to appeal to new residents, of any age. In writing this article, I only hope the name `Sidemoor' does not disappear from modern life; it is a strong community and much can be done to further enhance the community and its surroundings.

## **Early Settlement and industrial development**

Sidemoor was originally wild moorland where wild boars roamed at the time of Domesday (1086). This area was, a long time ago, called Scythmore or Sidmore, which originally meant a broad marsh. In the late medieval period, a man was fined for making a pool at Sidemoor and hauled in front of the Court Leet. The laws of the manor in those days were that it was an offence to divert any streams in the said manor.

The locals often celebrated wakes held here and at Catshill. In 1778 John Lacy wrote the following;

“The third Sunday in July a Wake (a rabbleing kind of Wake) at Sythemore (Sidemoor) and also at Catshill about two miles north of the town where Bull baiting, bowling, wrestling, cockfighting and other such disagreeable and cruel sports are used, to the disgrace of humanity, scandal of Christianity and shame of our officers who suffer such shameful things to be done in their Parish”.

In 1675 this area had 100 acres of Common land. The land was then partly cultivated and it grew as a small community of farmers, farm labourer cottages and farmhouses were being built, such as Cherry Orchard farm in the mid-eighteenth century. Cherry Orchard Farm was owned by Richard Collett in the second half of the eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century followed by his son John. Cherry Orchard Farm then became property owned from the early nineteenth century to 1951 by the Sanders family. Also what are now The Willows and Willow Mead were once 18th century farm labourer cottages; now situated on Willow Road they have since become private houses.

In the late 18th century Sidemoor Mill was built and was one of the first mills to have steam engines for spinning yarn, it employed about 80 people. Once the cloth had been weaved, they were sent to the bleaching fields in Sidemoor. This mill continued until 1810 when the owner filed for bankruptcy. It was then taken over in 1822 by Button manufacturer Benjamin Sanders Esq. Who in the 1820s developed



**The former Sidemoor Mill, Button Drive.**

*Photo:Howard Clee*

and patented the cloth covered button with a flexible shank. He further developed the mill in 1829 to house 300 workers, mainly women from the locality.

The old Button Factory, which was recently threatened with demolition, was saved by local people of the town who were once workers at the old factory when I petitioned for it to be saved. Now the old mill has become a house as part of a small housing estate called Button Drive built in 2005.

It was in the early nineteenth century that locals in the area were heavily involved in making nails, and many of the nailers' houses still exist in Sidemoor, especially along Broad Street, with many now modernised homes and some converted into shops. In 1844 when the old Tithe Barn that stood on Holy Lane (Church Street) was demolished, the materials from this building were re-used in building houses in Providence Square in Sidemoor, probably nailers' houses. There were nailer cottages on Willow Gardens, in one of which the Perks family lived in. Bill Perks who lived well in to his 90s until he died in the early 1990s, lived with his parents at 20 Willow Gardens. The cottage had only one living room which was also the kitchen with a small pantry included, and there was only one bedroom. The landing however, served as a small bedroom. There were four nail blocks adjoining the cottage. The parents of Bill brought up six children in this cottage. The back garden was used for growing vegetables and keeping pigs and poultry. Bill's parents kept three pig's and the killing of a pig was an important event, the butcher usually arriving at 4am to do it. A pigs carcass was usually kept hanging just inside the kitchen door. The nailer's cottage usually had window shutters for warmth during winter. These cottages in Willow Gardens were cleared in the early 1960s and new houses built on the site but they kept the original name of Willow Gardens. One of the last nailers in the town in the mid 20th century, when nailing had died out in Bromsgrove, was Albert Crane who came from Sidemoor. As a memorial to all nailers there is a Nailers clock fixed to Boots the Chemists in Bromsgrove High Street, erected in 1992. The idea for the clock was first mentioned in 1987 by the Bromsgrove Society. In the 1970s a nail shop off Broad Street was dismantled and re-erected at Avoncroft Museum of buildings as a working exhibit.

These nailers' homes were mainly built in the mid 19th century. It was around this time that many new houses were being built to improve quality of life for the nailers and, in 1863 George Dipple, who kept a large ironmongers in the High Street, who was involved in the management of the town, threatened the local board with legal proceedings if they did not improve the road to Sidemoor and beyond. He described the road as 'unsafe to pass over with any vehicle' it was narrower than the Act prescribed in many places, owing to recent enclosures'. He also complained about the deep ditches on each side as danger to health, being little better than open sewers.

In Medieval times Crabtree Lane and Church Street was called Holy Lane, and in Crown Close there was a Nuns Walk. The reason for this was probably that the Crown Inn in the High Street was some form of religious house, for when it was demolished in the nineteenth century, ornamental carvings were found and recorded by local architect John Cotton. The carvings were similar to the roof of Gueston Hall which was in Worcester; the roof is now part of the new Gueston Hall at Avoncroft Museum of buildings, erected in 1987.

## More modern times, growing community

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, locals came to pick strawberries at Perryfields, not only for an enjoyable day out, but also to earn money. Local residents out picking strawberries were often joined by people from Birmingham and the Black Country.

Broad Street has had shops along part of it probably since the early 20th century, but has contracted in more recent times. It had its own corner shop, the Pleck, built in 1906 but closed in 2003 and is now commercial premises; this won a Bromsgrove Society award in 2005 for its conversion. Locals celebrated VE Day in 1945 at the Pleck, this was a grassed area beside the corner shop, which survived until about a decade ago, and has now been built on. One memory I have of this was the dark green iron sheet fencing surrounding the Pleck. There was a post office, which closed in 2003 due to the Post Offices shake up. It had a hardware store just below the



New Life Church, Broad Street.  
*Photo:Howard Clee*

school which closed in the mid 1990s when the lady owner whose husband died in about 1984 retired from several years service to the community. It has since been converted back into houses. There was a butchers shop, closed in the 1990s, next to the off licence opposite New Life Church. Broad Street DIY was originally based on Broad Street, until it moved at the turn of the 21st century to the Worcester Road, but still retains its name Broad Street DIY. More and more shops are slowly disappearing in Broad Street, and these are being converted to houses partly due to modern convenience shopping and easy transportation.

The primary school in Broad Street, built in the late nineteenth century, has been moved to a new purpose built site in the town. Also Sidemoor has had its own Church or Chapel since 1838, on the site of the present Church built in 1933, originally called Ebenezer Church, it has been known as the New Life Church since the turn of the 21st century. The first chapel on this site was originally the Primitive Methodist Chapel. The first

society of Primitive Methodists was founded in Sidemoor in 1820, and had their chapel built in August 1838; the trustees for this included Henry Ince (Henry Ince fought for the nailers rights in the mid nineteenth century). In 1863 the old chapel was replaced by a new one, with a Sunday school built at the rear in 1891 housing a kitchen and two classrooms. The Crane family had associations with the chapel and Sunday school from the mid nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. Funds started for the present building in March 1924, and the foundation stone laid on April 18th 1933, with the opening ceremony taking place on November 25th

1933. Today, inside the Church there is a First World War memorial, unveiled on January 30th 1921 by the then Headmaster of Bromsgrove School Mr R.G.Routh. The pipe organ was installed in December 1945.

It was at the chapel that the local Bowling Club was formed in 1920, and this later moved to a purpose built bowling green off Holly Road - land given by Mr William Crane Councillor and President of the club - and the club still uses it today. It is near this bowling green my father Bob Edwardson has had his vegetable garden since 1979. He and his wife Marjorie moved to Bromsgrove in 1972. This piece of ground was the site of an old cottage that fell down years ago, and since I have helped my father cultivate the land, pieces of clay pipes have been dug up over the last twenty odd years, along with pieces of willow pattern plates! When father first cleared the land, he built a wigwam for us two to have lunch in if it rained whilst we were clearing the land!

More modern housing started in the early twentieth century with the first housing estate containing twenty-eight houses to be built in the vicinity. This was along the top end of Broad Street and King Edward Road, built by Braziers of Bromsgrove in 1927. This new era continued for in and around the area in the early 1960s new estates were spreading with the following consequences: Cherry Orchard farm was demolished and Cherry Orchard Drive was built in 1966; Willow Close was built on land once owned by the Sanders sisters in 1963. Until the 1970s on Willow Road there were Prefabs from World War Two, these were replaced by Willow Road Retirement Flats. The fields in between Broad Street and Perryfields Lane were gradually being filled in by the 1970s and 1980s, but still there are fields along Perryfields Lane to provide a pleasant backdrop for these housing estates close by, and for cyclists who have now have an official cycle route across these fields (where strawberries were once picked) from Catshill opened in 2005.

Sidemoor was in the spotlight in local newspapers, when in February 1981 a Bromsgrove bride was smuggled out of the Middle East to Spain and then flown 700 miles to England just in time to wed her Canadian sweetheart. In a daring operation, Lynn Bos, of Sidemoor, was whisked 4000 miles from Abu Dhabi, where she was a nursing sister. All leave for military personnel had been cancelled when hostilities broke out in the Persian Gulf and she found herself trapped only days before the wedding. With help of friends, she was smuggled back with just enough time to make last minute arrangements, before marrying Captain David Lockhart, of Ontario, at Bromsgrove Parish Church. (From the Bromsgrove Messenger).

## **Bibliography:**

*Braziers of Bromsgrove 1996 by A.Richards*

*Bygone Bromsgrove 1996 by The Bromsgrove Society*

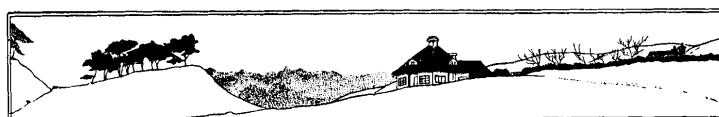
*Bromsgrove Now and Then 1988 by The Bromsgrove Society*

*Bygone Bromsgrove Picture Book 1983 by The Bromsgrove Society*

*Sidemoor Saga 1970 by A.Crane*

*The Story of Bromsgrove 1946 by W.Leadbetter*

*Mark Edwardson*



# *The Bromsgrove Lecture*

## *Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*

**To be given by John Leach**

**Marketing Manager, Severn Valley Railway**

***On Tuesday 8th April 2008 at 7.30p.m.***

**At Bromsgrove Senior School (Routh Hall)**

John Leach was educated at Bushey Grammar School and it was immediately after he left school that his career in railways began. His first position was in the Stores Controller department at Euston station where he spent time working in Collector's Corner and tracking down redundant items for sale in the shop at the station. Continuing his career with British Rail, in 1974 John took on a role in the publicity and press office of the London Midland Region where he arranged publicity and managed the photographic library.

Moving from the railways for a period, between 1978 and 1985 he worked as an account executive for an advertising agency before moving back to his first love in 1985.

For ten years John worked as manager for Pullman Rail, Flying Scotsman Services and Waterman Railways, becoming responsible

for operating charter trains on the national rail network. As part of his work he regularly arranged for the 'Flying Scotsman' to haul to destinations such as Stratford-upon-Avon and York.

In 1995 he moved to his present position as Marketing Manager for Severn Valley Railway, where he promotes the heritage steam railway throughout the region and beyond.

John is married to Suzanne and has three children. They reside in Clows Top near Cleobury Mortimer, in the heart of the Severn Valley region.



**Tickets £5 each**

**Available from: Worcester Road News, Waterstones,  
Foto Factory, Wilsons Pet Centre**

**For Further details please contact the Chairman,  
Mr Jim Griffith (01527)833252**

# *The Bromsgrove Society Executive Committee*

for 2007-2008 comprises all those officers of the Society shown on the inside of the front cover plus the following members:-

<b>Roger Brazier</b>	(Vice President) 7 Rowan Court, Worcester Road Droitwich. WR9 8AH	01905 795161
<b>Mrs Audrey Chapman</b>	58 East Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2NJ	01527 873410
<b>Des Clarke*</b>	19 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove. B60 1NZ	0121 453 3034
<b>Bob Dutton</b>	5 Woods Lane, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill DY5 2GS	01384 891074
<b>Tim Harris*</b>	Church Green Cottage, 44 Church Road, Bromsgrove B61 8QH	01527 872451
<b>Mrs Isobel Jarrett*</b>	28 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove. B60 1PA	0121 453 2100
<b>Mrs Marion Lancaster</b>	5 Carnforth Road, Harwood Park, Bromsgrove, B60 2HS	01527 871874
<b>John Sketchley</b>	16 Brueton Avenue, Bromsgrove B60 2AW	01527 876626
<b>Ron Skidmore</b>	(Vice Chairman of The Bromsgrove Society & Chairman - The Environment Committee), 12 College Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2NE	01527 880196
<b>Miss Pat Tansell</b>	(Chairman - Local History Group) 20 Oakhurst Drive, Bromsgrove. B60 1AR	01527 575590
<b>Tony Turpin</b>	89 Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove. B61 0AL	01527 876659
<b>John Weston*</b>	Breakback House, 20 Sunningdale Road, Bromsgrove. B61 7NN	01527 873483
<b>Ex-Officio Committee Member:</b>	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>Bromsgrove Golf Centre</i>	<i>Miller House Eye Clinic</i>
<i>Bromsgrove Rail Users Group (BRUG)</i>	<i>A. Victor Powell</i>
<i>Clarks Motor Services</i>	<i>R. &amp; 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, Holt and Sellars Solicitors</i>
<i>Thomas Horton &amp; 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*

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Tuesday 4th March

## **William Murdoch and the Intelligent Pig**

(The story of gas in Birmingham & Bromsgrove)

*Glyn Thomas*

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Tuesday 15th April

## **Bletchley Park**

*Mrs. Betty Webb*

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All meetings 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**

### *Advance Notice:*

*The Annual General Meeting of the Bromsgrove Society will take place  
on Thursday 3rd July 2008 at 7.30.p.m in Guesten Hall,  
Avoncroft Museum. All members are welcome to attend.*

## ***Photographic Competition*** ***'A Vista of Bromsgrove District'***

Many of you will have a favourite view of the Bromsgrove District.

Why not submit it and stand a chance of winning prize money

**£100 first prize and £50 second prize.**

There is a wide field, buildings and landscape, giving scope to your artistic eye.  
Winning entries will be announced at the AGM in July and will be on display.

*Entry forms and further information are available from Isobel Jarrett,  
28 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove B60 1PA Tel: 0121 453 2100*

***Closing date: 30th April 2008***