



The Bromsgrove Society **NEWSLETTER**

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The Sanders Horse Trough

The Bromsgrove Society

Reg. Charity No. 510542

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Individual Membership	£9
Family Membership	£12
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 direct to the editor (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 Editor

As you may have already realised, your newsletter has a new editor and I felt it might be appropriate in my first editorial piece to introduce myself to you a little. I was honoured to be approached by Jim Griffith some months ago and asked if I would be interested in editing the Bromsgrove Society's newsletter. Jim was led to me via one of my roles at Bromsgrove School, where I have worked for nine years; and where I have edited the annual Bromsgrovian magazine for the past two. The school has many connections with the Society and I feel privileged to be offered this important position within it.

I began my career after completing a degree in Information and Library Studies; specialising in children's literature and services to children I then began working in school libraries. Bromsgrove School was my second place of work. My role gradually evolved as is often the case at our school and during the last few years I have also taught ICT and completed my training as a teacher. This month I leave the school library behind completely in order to take on the role of Head of Academic ICT. I combine the very busy world of working at Bromsgrove School with looking after a husband and my seven year old son at our home in Redditch. When I have any time to spare I enjoy web page design as a hobby, cooking, walking and lots of crafts including cross stitch and card making. So that is all about me, but now to the more important business of the newsletter!

I hope this newsletter meets the high standards set by previous editors and as ever all articles and letters are very gratefully received; please send them directly to me by email or post by the 31st January for inclusion in the March 2008 edition.

Adèle Clee

From the Membership Secretary

Welcome to new members who have joined the society recently; they are: Mr. & Mrs. B. Bain, Mrs. A. Clee, Miss. B. Colson, Mrs. L. Durbin, Ms. J. Edginton, Mr. R. Gould, Mrs. J. Jeyaratnam, Mr. I. Johnson, Mrs. M. Johnson, Mrs. A. McKay, Mr. A. Moseley, Mr. & Mrs. C. Rogers, Mrs. C. Spencer, Mrs. G. Spokes, Mrs. L. Thompson.

We also have a new corporate member; Bromsgrove Rail Users Group (BRUG).

Thank you to all members for your continued support.

There are a number of subscriptions outstanding; I would be grateful to receive your cheques so I can update the membership records.

Jill Palmer

Philip Drabble OBE, 1914-2007

As we go to press it is with sadness we report the passing of Phil Drabble, naturalist, writer and broadcaster. Phil was an old boy of Bromsgrove School and sometime presenter of 'One Man and His Dog' who delivered the Bromsgrove Lecture in 1993.

Network Rail and Worcestershire County Council's Proposals for Bromsgrove Train Station.

In the middle of 2006 following a local meeting held at The Ladybird Inn, Aston Fields the Bromsgrove Rail Users Group (BRUG) was formed and Michael Ponsonby a Barrister living in Bromsgrove was elected its first chairman. The group now meets on the first Wednesday of each month at The Council House, Burcot Lane and has four Bromsgrove District Council Members attending together with some thirteen to sixteen others, including the Society President and myself. In addition, Julie Kirkbride M.P. is in close contact with the Group and The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Transport regarding funding for the project.

Earlier this year. Network Rail and the County Council, which body is the County's Transportation Authority, commissioned a feasibility study with a brief to consider a report on the merits of (1) Either extending the two existing platforms at the Train Station to accommodate the through present Virgin service which does not stop currently because of this shortcoming or (2) Building a completely new Train Station further to the south of the existing one with access to all platforms for the physically impaired and to incorporate car parking for 300 additional cars, toilets and a cafe and ticket vending using Smartcard technology. BRUG. has also pressed for "a heritage" facility to be included in view of the historical site and the fact that the initial idea, subsequently resulting in the formation of The Institution of Mechanical Engineers was conceived at the former "McConnell's" house, demolished in the early 1980s. It is felt that this event, together with "Big Bertha's" conquering of the Lickey Incline in later years, should be acknowledged in some visual form for current rail users' information.

Although the final recommendations are not programmed for publication and viewing by the public until September of this year, it has already been announced that the preference will be for a new station to be built at a cost of between 10 and 12 million pounds, and it is hoped that work on this will commence in January of next year to be completed by the following September.

In addition it has also been announced that Central Trains will cease to operate as from November of this year and the new West Midlands rail franchise will then be run by GoVia, under the "London Midland" logo to reflect the new franchise's geographical position. Their headquarters will be in Birmingham. Virgin Trains has also lost their franchise and the Department for Transport has awarded the new Cross-Country route to Arriva Trains Ltd.

So Bromsgrove's growth has been recognised and the first steps to improve its transportation problems in the twenty first century are in hand.

John Sketchley.



A Future For Bromsgrove

For years people have complained through the local press about the lack of town centre shops. In 2003 the District Council started a redevelopment plan and called a meeting of representatives from the town including several from this Society, who offered their comments and suggestions for the future. Alas, there has been little noticeable sign of progress until the 'District Council Vision' was unveiled in June this year, which they call "a road map for the Council's work between now and 2010" (note the date).

What is lacking is a long-term Vision of what our elected representatives want to see Bromsgrove become. There are those who hanker after a return to a Market Town, but Bromsgrove has not been a "market town" for some three decades. Others seem not to know what it should become but are aghast that the town centre is rotting away so fast.

But unless we have a vision, and go for it, the town will become a mere dormitory, where most people drive elsewhere to work and to shop, and for entertainment.

The Government is encouraging us to use the car much less in order to reduce CO₂ emissions affecting climate change, hence the need for less reliance on out-of-town shopping, and going to work. But also important is the need for pride in our town and for a community spirit, coupled with a knowledge that we are moving forward purposefully, not slipping backwards.

The good news this year is the proposed new railway station and improved rail service, the most important events for us all since the High Street pedestrianisation in 1984, and a wonderful opportunity for Bromsgrove of which we must take full advantage.

The Bromsgrove Society is good at looking backwards through its Local History Group and older members' reminiscences and is aware of present day matters through regular monitoring of planning applications. But the Society should look forward too and I offer the following suggestions for our discussion and help to Council members and staff.

Analysis: Only a long-term plan for 20-25 years ahead (not 3 years) has any hope of successful completion in stages to ensure satisfactory development. The principal problems are first finding a suitable vision, arranging the finance, and creating the will to see it through.

Advantage West Midlands (AWM), set up by the Government in 1999, promotes employment throughout the Region, at which they have been most successful. Bromsgrove sits astride the Advantage West Midlands "high-technology corridor" which runs between Birmingham and Malvern along the A38 trunk road. AWM's endeavours in our District have been concentrated on our Birmingham boundary at Longbridge ex-Rover works, and at what once was Garrington's works, now developed for a housing site beside the railway.

This "high technology corridor" runs through Bromsgrove from North to South and includes our town centre. The town has much to offer because we are within easy reach of the motorways, the west coast main railway and Birmingham airport. Trains between Bromsgrove and New Street station stopping only at University take 22 minutes, the quickest mode of travel. The journey could be quicker once the new station is built and quicker still after electrification. Network Rail are planning a sub-regional station where major services between the north and the south-west could

stop, conveniently sited between Birmingham and Cheltenham, extending the possibility of direct services to Bristol, Devon and Cornwall. North of Birmingham New Street the world is our oyster.

To rejuvenate the High Street shopkeepers must be offered opportunities they cannot resist. To persuade them, I believe that new customers must be found to patronise the new shops.

Nowadays the High Street has a growing number of empty or charity shops whose upstairs are also vacant, and a growing number of cafés some linked to food shops. Entrepreneurs offer what people need such as snacks/cooked food for lunch and tea, and ‘raw’ food to take home. Otherwise the choice available to shoppers is very limited hence those who can, drive elsewhere for essentials.

I believe that a necessary first step would be for the Council to encourage residential use of the upper floors to the High Street shops, to bring vitality back into the centre after the shoppers and shopkeepers have gone home in the evenings and at weekends.

The town centre contains a number of sites suitable for redevelopment, the principal ones being backland located between Mill Lane and Church Street which has lain unused



New offices and converted offices in Exeter town centre

(except for a few owners’ cars and a regular fish van) for over 30 years; the island site currently occupied by the Market Hall and car parking; the car park beside the Queen’s Head P.H.; and various sites around the Stourbridge Road/Birmingham Road junction. Other usable sites could be assembled around Station Street and in due course the library site in Windsor Street may become available if/when the library moves elsewhere. Thus there are many opportunities

A vision. I have polished my crystal ball to seek a vision which builds upon the advantages and the opportunities the current situation can provide.

I believe that the District Council should promote Bromsgrove as a major prestige office area, part of the “high technology corridor”. Bromsgrove is uniquely placed to provide attractive sites for companies wishing to set up major offices in a country town location rather than in Birmingham city centre, with lower land acquisition costs, quick and easy access to the city centre and to the countryside, and a less stressful environment.

Developers should be assured that on the opening of the first prestige office block in the town centre the Council will commence a to/fro bus service linking the bus station with the new rail station, along New Road. The Council might consider creating a special lunch-time bus service now, between the considerable office developments at Aston Fields and the High Street, to pave the way. The bus service linking bus and rail stations should be coupled with an advertising campaign assisted by AWM to trumpet the advantages of de-centralisation into Bromsgrove with all the advantages the town has to offer, so close to Birmingham.

Ideally the District councillors need to be convinced and (if possible) be unanimously

behind their vision in order to withstand the numerous pressures for change whilst retaining the imperatives of prosperity, conservation, and character. No mean task, but others have done it for example in Exeter, another centre with excellent communications.

Bromsgrove has grown over the centuries as a linear town north/south along the canal, railway, trunk road and motorway routes, but there are no direct east/west routes across the town centre. Looking far ahead, development for offices could extend along New Road to take advantage of the proposed bus service between railway station and bus station/town centre. This would depend upon the fortunes of the Youth Club, the medical practice and future home owners in New Road etc. but would be a help to the numerous elderly yet mobile occupants of the blocks of flats along New Road.

Of course there may be alternative “visions” such as locating a Super-Casino with hotels in the town centre, or expansion of our education or leisure facilities, but I am not convinced that these could bring lasting benefit to the town and its population, whereas very well-designed offices full of people glad to use the eating places, shops and range of services at hand would bring prosperity and vitality back into the High Street area.

This proposal I venture to suggest would enable Bromsgrove to become again a thriving, vibrant town in the West Midlands, with an assured future, to add to its existing stature as a centre of excellence in the arts and in education.

Graham Reddie.

The Sanders Horse Trough

On Saturday 23rd June, the day of Bromsgrove’s Elizabethan Street Market, The Sanders Horse Trough was re-dedicated at its ‘new’ (but in reality, ‘original’) site in the Strand. The rescue of this important street artefact was headed by Matthew Horton whose law practice is situated in Strand House, in front of which the horse trough once again stands. The trough’s restoration was unveiled by Julie Kirkbride MP.

Before Julie was asked to cut the ribbon, Matthew gave an address to townsfolk outlining the history of the feature and the anxious moments in the most recent quarter of a century of its life. Who could have begun proceedings better than Kevin Ward, Bromsgrove’s Town Crier.

Kevin’s cry: Oh Yez, Oh Yez Oh Yez! My Lord of the Manor, Mr Bailiff, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, pray silence for the foreman of the Jury of the Court Leet and alderman of the Manor of Bromsgrove, Mr. Matthew Horton!

Applause. Mr. Horton addressed the crowd:

Thank you Mr. Bellman. It was the late Mr. Alfie Wood, who likened the restoration of this lovely building, Strand House behind me, in 1985 to the resetting of two front teeth in an otherwise gaping mouth of The Strand. Since then no. 26, formerly Lacey’s Wallpaper Shop, has been restored as has the Mitre building across the road. Following the very brave example of the Cupitt family in revitalising Beech Tree

House, the pride has been restored to the buildings of the Strand. Were he to be alive today, I am sure Alfie Wood would liken the bringing back of the horse trough to its original position to seeing a smile on the reconstructed mouth of the Strand.

As you all know, I am sure, for many years the horse trough - or The Fountain as it is commonly known - languished in a corner of Sanders Park. The Council's intentions upon its removal in the 1970s were commendable. The proposed new road layout threatened wholesale demolition in this area. But sadly over the years the fountain was forgotten and fell into disrepair. For the previous sixty years it



A view of The Strand in the 1930's showing Sanders Horse Trough prior to it's move to Sanders Park.

had stood in this place as a proud memorial by the Misses Sanders to their father Benjamin Hadley Sanders following his death in 1901.

So who was Benjamin Sanders who deserved this fine memorial? Well, in fact he was a pretty good egg of his time. As Bromsgrove's foremost solicitor of his day he had served the local Board - or Town Council as we know it now - for half a century as its clerk. He was credited with founding the Bromsgrove Rovers' Football Club - a club which has a special affiliation with this fountain and he was a champion of the town's nailing community that had suffered so many privations of hardships over the years.

There is a link between the Sanders and Nicholls families. The link was the button factory - the former water mill that stood (and still does in a different guise) in Willow Road. Benjamin Sanders grand-father, who Alan Richards wrote so knowledgably and eloquently about in 1984, founded the button factory in 1821 and since its foundation literally millions of Bromsgrove buttons and badges have been sold all around the world. In its day, the button factory was the largest employer in the town.

Four generations of the Nicholls family have run the factory starting with George Nicholls who became manager in 1870 and the last owner and manager was John Nicholls. He continued to make buttons and badges there until 1984. When the factory was sold some seven or eight years ago John's son Noel wrote to me from his home in Texas offering to leave a sum of money for a worthy project for Bromsgrove.

In response I suggested the restoration of this fountain which Noel readily agreed to. Whilst Noel has not been able to travel here today, I am delighted that his aunt, Molly Nicholls, is here with Noel's brother Clifford and Clifford's family. I do feel we need to show our appreciation to Noel - albeit in his absence - for the financial contribution that has made this project possible. Applause.

I would also like to mention other persons who are worthy of thanks, firstly the cathedral stonemasons, Nimbus Conservation from Frome in Somerset who had the



**Bess, who had the honour of using the Sanders Horse Trough for the first time is 18 years old, and she and her owner, Peter Levi, live in Wychbold.
Bess is a Clydesdale horse and her coat is strawberry roan**

expertise - dare I say the courage - to undertake the restoration. There were many anxious moments when the crane came to pick up the fountain in Sanders Park and the thought that it might crumble there - and indeed crumble again as it was resituated here did not escape a number of minds

I would also like to pay tribute to Kevin Hirons of the Council's Architect's Department and Tim Hawksworth, formerly of the same department and indeed the District Council

for providing the ground works. Finally I would like to pay tribute to Colin Willis, the Project Manager, who had the patience to see the project through to completion.

So ladies and gentlemen that's the history of the horse trough! Its lovely to restore something back to its original position even though it may not have any practical use at all, apart perhaps for our friend Bess who is here today. I am now going to ask our esteemed Member of Parliament Julie Kirkbride to perform the ceremony and cut the ribbon.

Julie's address: Ladies and Gentlemen, one of the blessings of being a Member of Parliament is that I get the glory of opening horse troughs etc when other people have done all the work! Yet again I am thrilled to be here and I feel it is particularly fitting that we are doing this on Court Leet Fair Day because the Court Leet does so much to keep the traditions of Bromsgrove alive. We have had a fabulous morning in the town with so many stalls.

Julie then thanked Matthew for his work co-ordinating the project and enhancing the lovely Strand aspect. Julie caused amusement when she revealed a rumour that with Bess here today someone was going to step forward to be a 'Lady Godiva'! She assured onlookers the volunteer was not going to be her! Laughter!!

Neville Billington

Footnote: The Sanders Horse trough - or 'Drinking Fountain' as it was more usually known - is the second such restoration Julie has undertaken in a little over a year. On the 5th of May last year she unveiled the refurbished Lickey Horse Trough and Drinking Fountain. Two horse troughs in one Parliamentary Term must surely amount to a Westminster record! Should we not recommend Julie to the Midland Heavy Horse Association for a rosette?!!



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Bromsgrove Society Held at the Guesten Hall, Avoncroft Museum, on 5th July 2007

There was an attendance of approximately 55 members and invited guests at the 28th Annual General Meeting of the society.

1. Apologies. Apologies were received from the following: Mrs. J. Dyer, Miss. P. Cooper, Mrs. W. Bird, Mr. & Mrs. D. Turner, Mr. M. Edwardson, Mr. P. Giles, Mrs. P. Fellows, Mr. J. Weston, Mr. T. Harris, Mr. J. Harris, Mrs. Edie, Mr. R. Wilkinson, Mrs. J. Wilkinson

2. Previous Minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated to members. The chairman moved that the Minutes be adopted and this was unanimously agreed. No matters arising.

3. Chairman's Review Of The Year 2006/2007.

Corresponding with the financial year

- During the past year the Society has continued to carry out activities within the terms of its Constitution.
- We were all saddened by the deaths of Norman James, a former chairman of the Society and long time Chairman of the Buildings & Environment Committee, and Richenda Brazier, the wife of our Vice Chairman, Roger Brazier.
- We concluded our 25th Anniversary Programme with a photo-shoot in Sanders Park. Members of the Executive Committee had earlier attended the unveiling ceremony of the Third Town Sign by Julie Kirkbride MP and a ribbon-cutting ceremony denoting the refurbishment and official reopening of St John's Church Steps by the Leader of Worcestershire County Council. (Our thanks go to Des Clarke, Isobel Jarrett, Graham Reddie and Ron Skidmore for persevering with this project for such a long time).
- The newly-created Environment Committee is up and running smoothly. Congratulations and thanks go to chairman Ron Skidmore for amalgamating the former Building & Environment and Landscape Committees so smoothly.
- The local History Group under the chairmanship of Pat Tansell appears to be busier than ever. Their programme of talks for the coming year looks to be as interesting as before. She was once again involved in organising a stall on Fair Day, in conjunction with Avoncroft Museum.
- Graham Reddie is currently spreading the Gospel of Global Warming and its consequences, both Architecturally and Environmentally, as well as actively continuing his MASA work.
- Members of the Executive Committee met with the Leader and Acting Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council on 4th December 2006 to discuss the Local Development Scheme, Town Centre Redevelopment, Refurbishment of Toilets and Drill Hall, Public Transport Improvements and various Planning Issues.
- The Society's Seasonal Supper was held at Bromsgrove School on 1st December 2006 with approximately 35 members attending.
- Anne Maguire has relinquished her post as Newsletter Editor. We are all deeply indebted to her for all her hard work over the last five years.
- Dorothy Myatt has stood down as Honorary Secretary. She had promised to fill the post for one year only to help us out in the emergency. This post is now filled by Adèle Clee.
- The Newsletter Editor's post has been filled by Adèle Clee who has kindly volunteered to act as Amanuensis for this evening.

My sincere thanks to all three ladies for their help and dedication.

- **Rousler** The latest issue has broken all records in the numbers sold which needed a reprints. Our thanks to Jenny Townshend and John Weston for producing such a popular edition.
- **Newsletter** Many thanks to all the contributors to our June edition, which was jointly produced by Graham Reddie, John Weston and myself. The next edition will be produced by our new Editor in the usual way.

- The membership has increased to 640, an increase of 15 since the last AGM, due to the hard work of Jill Palmer.
- The Bromsgrove Lecture by Henry Sandon was attended by over 350 people and was a huge success.
- My sincerest thanks to all members who gave their time so freely in committees and attending meetings, sometimes unconnected but relevant to the Society, and in many other ways.

Jim Griffith. Chairman.

Environment Committee Report

You may notice that there is now no Landscape Committee and no Buildings & Environment Committee: at the start of this year both Committees were amalgamated and therefore this is the first Annual Report of the Environment Committee.

1. Town Signs. The Stourbridge Road Sign was unveiled by our MP in November last year. A site location for the fourth sign has been discussed and agreed to be on Birmingham Road: matters are now in hand to have this one erected later this year. The District Council has agreed to provide the base. Projected Signs 5 and 6 on New Road & Worcester Road respectively have also been discussed and again the District Council has provisionally agreed to provide the bases for them.

2. Hewell Grange. Unfortunately, I have missed the last couple of meetings but can report that matters relating to the restoration of the gardens are ongoing.

3. The Church Steps. For about 10 years, this Society has been endeavouring to get things going to restore St. John's Church Steps and I am happy to report that earlier this year the refurbished steps were officially re-opened. Whilst the society had no active input other than to prod interested parties and effectively act as a catalyst, many thanks must be extended to Dr. George Lord, Dennis Norton and all the others who managed to find the funds and get the project finished on time and on cost.

We still believe that the lighting can be improved and this is something perhaps we can address in the coming year.

4. Bromsgrove Railway Station. I think I'm correct in believing just about everyone is delighted that Bromsgrove will finally get a new railway station. For the Society and the Environment Committee, John Sketchley has taken an active part in attending the meetings and discussions relating to this matter. Whilst a new station is needed, matters need to go much further. Parking needs to be reviewed and improved, as do public transport links to the town and this is something we are actively discussing with the Council & County Council.

5. The Town Centre. In November 2003, several members of the Society were invited to attend a brainstorming session at the District Council to develop a Town Centre Strategy; We all came away from the meeting feeling confident that the Town Centre was heading towards a 'bright new future' of regeneration but sadly, since that meeting, very little has happened. Earlier this week, the Society President, the Chairman, John Sketchley and myself attended a prearranged meeting with representatives of the Council to discuss what, if anything, was happening: we came away from this meeting feeling not entirely reassured that things were moving as quickly as they could be. With several officers involved in the initial stages having moved on, momentum has been lost and it will be a set task for the Environment Committee and the Society in general to ensure in the coming year that this lost momentum is regained.

The state of the High Street is of great concern to the Society with chewing gum and graffiti in ascendancy, poor repair work to the brick pavers and an alarming number of empty shops: indeed, it's a sad sign that even charity shops are closing down. This subject was also brought up at the aforementioned meeting and will be a continuing topic of our discussions with the Council

6. Other Matters. As I ended last year's AGM report, I do so with a similar theme this year, namely, the seeming erosion of the Town's environment. The issue is complicated and will involve many parties with different interests, including the Council, County Council, Schools, Landlords, tenants and so on. In the coming year I would like to see an improvement in the town's roundabouts, particularly those on the Stourbridge Road and outside David Lloyds Fitness Centre. I will pursue the Council on the matter of bubble gum on the pavements and graffiti, and the County Council on the state of the High Street. I would like to thank Des Clarke for his continued

efforts on the Town Signs and look forward to another year where I hope this Society can make a positive difference to Bromsgrove.

Ron Skidmore Chairman- Environment Committee

History Group Report.

The History Group is a strong team of fifteen who all wish to find out more about the history of Bromsgrove and help preserve what is known so that it will be of use to others. We are a growing Group and decided some time ago that we need something on which to focus our attention. We are therefore working on a research project called Bromsgrove High Street: Its Trades and People. There are many resources and documents available to us for study but we would be very pleased to hear from anyone willing to allow us access to documents such as deeds relating to High Street properties. We are focusing on the period between 1780 and 1980. We hope that the project will result in our publishing something in print or online that will benefit anyone carrying out research on the history of the town.

Each year the History Group hosts a series of talks at the Methodist Centre, which are attended by members of the Bromsgrove Society as well as many non-members. One of the most memorable events during the last season was John Burman's talk about the Court Leet, which finished with an entertaining song. Amongst the subjects that we have chosen for the 2007/8 Season are the Lytteltons of Hagley Hall and Worcestershire place names. I would personally like to acknowledge the effort Connie Swann puts into booking the speakers. Although the programme has traditionally focused on local subjects, we have recently decided to include a few topics with a more general appeal.

The History Group would like to record its thanks to Jill Palmer for providing a membership recruitment table at our events and to Peter Lancaster for setting up the audio equipment.

The 2006 edition of the Rousler has been a spectacular success and for the first time in its history has had to be reprinted. Its Editor, Jenny Townshend, is to be congratulated on once again producing a magazine with an eye-catching cover and varied content of interest to anyone wishing to know more about the history of our town and its residents. John Weston, who was a member of the History Group for several years, continues to work with us in certain areas. This year he has again distributed the Rousler and found new retail outlets for it: he should therefore be commended for raising the profile of the Society. John also looks after our book stock and its sale.

As a Group, we think it is important to go out into the local area and raise people's awareness of the Bromsgrove Society. Members of the History Group worked with others from the Society to set up and run a successful stall at the Elizabethan Street Fair. Fair day has provided an opportunity for us to work closely with Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings in both 2006 and 2007, sharing resources and ideas and enabling both organisations to present a good display.

Thank you to everyone who has attended our events during the past year. We are looking forward to the next Season and hope to see you on Tuesday 18th September, when we will meet at St. John's Church to hear a talk about its history given by Simon Henderson. All other talks in the series will take place at the Methodist Centre.

Pat Tansell Chairman; Local History Group

5. Report of the Honorary Treasurer and Approval of the Annual Accounts for year ending 5th April 2007.

All accounts had been circulated to members. The following points were drawn to the attention of members by the Hon. Treasurer:

- There was a small operational deficit for the year which had been budgeted for and was also smaller than expected due to excellent sales of publications this year.
- The Bromsgrove Lecture took place during the current financial year and thus was not included in the accounts for 2006-2007.
- Assets for the Society were lower at the end of the year due to the aforementioned deficit.
- ¼ of all income for the Society is from investments
- The executive committee of the society are in receipt of regular financial reports; said committee will be undertaking a special examination of the 'reserves policy' during this year.

- Tangible assets on Page 3 of the Treasurer's report are in the Charities Fund.
- Stocks/Current Assets listed are in the form of books and publications.
- Debtors and creditors listed have almost all been dealt with satisfactorily now.
- Attention was drawn to the section of Subscriptions/Covenants/Gift Aid and the Hon. Treasurer noted that £388 had been recovered from gift aid, representing 5% of the total income of the Society.
- The Projects and Events section of the report were concerned with town signs, the Lickey Fountain, 2 benches and the MASA AGM.
- The sundries section comprised subscriptions to the Civic Trust, Bromsgrove Rail Users Group, The Open Spaces Society and Worcestershire Local History Forum. Following these explanations, the accounts were approved unanimously.

6. Election of Officers.

Officers Elected for 2007/08

Chairman: Jim Griffith, Proposed: G. Reddie, Seconded: J. Sketchley

President: Graham Reddie, Proposed: I. Jarrett, Seconded: R. Skidmore

Vice-chairman: Ron Skidmore, Proposed: J. Griffith, Seconded: R. Brazier

Hon. Treasurer: John Rowlands, Proposed: G. Reddie, Seconded: N. Billington

Hon. Secretary: Adèle Clee, Proposed: J. Griffith, Seconded: R. Skidmore

Committee, to be re-elected: Audrey Chapman, Isobel Jarrett, Marion Lancaster, Jill Palmer, Pat Tansell, Roger Brazier, Des Clarke, Tim Harris, John Sketchley, Tony Turpin, John Weston, Proposed: G. Reddie, Seconded: J. Griffith

Elected to the committee:

Bob Dutton Proposed: Pat Tansell, Seconded: Jenny Townshend.

Ex-Officio: Bailiff of the Court Leet

Resignations: Cyril Baker, Richard Guest, Ann Maguire

7. Questions/Comments/AOB

i. Mr. Reddie gave the meeting a brief outline of MASA and how it had evolved.

ii. Mr. Reddie read out an invitation from Hewell Grange Prison, inviting members of the Bromsgrove Society to visit the prison, which has undergone extensive landscaping and general maintenance recently. On the 8th September 2007 members of the Society were invited to visit and partake in a guided tour of the grounds and inside the mansion. There are limited numbers of places and members were invited to take a form and return it to Mr. Reddie if they were interested in the visit.

iii. Mr. Reddie informed the meeting of a recent visit to Stourport with West Masa, in which he took a guided tour. Stourport Society is very active although much smaller than Bromsgrove Society, and have offered members of Bromsgrove Society the opportunity to join them for a tour of Stourport in September. Many members present at the AGM were interested in this invitation.

iv. Mr. Marsh raised a point of interest regarding John Corbett School in Stoke Prior. The school is scheduled for demolition pending the building of new houses on the site. Mr. Marsh wondered if there was a possibility of the Society intervening in some way to preserve either the facade or some part of this historic building. Miss. Longmuir echoed this idea and wondered if the building could not be saved per se, were the grounds around it of some historic value and thus could intervention on this count be justified. The county council currently owns the land but is up for sale at present.

v. A comment was made about the recent flooding in Hull and whether the society might look to offer some monetary donation. It was generally felt that many places, including many more locally, had been affected by the flooding and it was impossible to help all. However, the matter will be taken up by the next meeting of the executive committee.

The meeting was followed by an enlightening and entertaining talk by Simon Carter of Avoncroft Museum.

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:-

Roger Brazier	(Vice President) 7 Rowan Court, Worcester Road Droitwich. WR9 8AH	01905 795161
Mrs Audrey Chapman	58 East Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2NJ	01527 873410
Des Clarke*	19 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove. B60 1NZ	0121 453 3034
Bob Dutton	5 Woods Lane, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill DY5 2GS	01384 891074
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

All Saints Garage Ltd.

Baylis and Co.(Bromsgrove) Ltd.

Bromsgrove Golf Centre

Bromsgrove Rail Users Group (BRUG)

Clarks Motor Services

Cupitt,Jeweller

Clent Hills Veterinary Group

Designed Systems Interiors

Forrester Associates

Harris Super Coaches (Bromsgrove) Ltd.

Thomas Horton & Sons

Jukes Insurance Brokers

The Ladybird Inn

Lloyds TSB.Bank

mfg solicitors

Millfields First School

Miller House Eye Clinic

A.Victor Powell

R. & S. Antiques

Rashwood Care Home

The Red Lion (Bromsgrove)

Regal Garage (Bromsgrove) Ltd.

Rotary Club of Bromsgrove

Scotts, Solicitors

Townsend Textiles

Weaver PLC

Webbs of Wychbold

Wilsons Pet Centres Ltd.

X.L.Displays

The Bromsgrove Society Local History Group

Talks for 2007-8 Season

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 Lytteltons of Hagley

Julian Hunt

4th December

The Golden Age of Coaching

Graham Sutherland

15th Jan. 2008

Railways of Worcestershire: Past and Present

John Boynton

19th February

Worcestershire Place Names

Richard Churchley

18th March

William Murdoch and the Intelligent Pig

(The story of gas in Birmingham & Bromsgrove)

Glyn Thomas

15th April

Bletchley Park

Mrs. Betty Webb

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