



The Bromsgrove Society **NEWSLETTER**

Volume 22 No. 2

June 2002

75p

M5 Cuts Through Housman Fields



The 4 lane M5 being constructed c1961 at Fockbury. On the extreme left is Fockbury Mill Farm which still stands today but the 2 houses to the right of the farm have now been demolished. They went when the M5 was widened to 6 lanes and the M42 slip road was constructed.

See page 5

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	£4.25
Family Membership	£7.75
Pensioners & Students	£3.25
Pensioners Family Membership	£4.50
Corporate Members	£15 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 Editor

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, the Queen will be, or will be about to celebrate her Golden Jubilee. I wonder if anyone is doing as much as was done at Queen Victoria's Jubilee. You must read the article by Anna Kingsley-Curry. Would anyone nowadays climb a greasy pole for a leg of Mutton??

50 Years for the Queen, 40 years for the M5 - can it be so long since it cut a swath through the Worcestershire countryside. Do you remember Bromsgrove pre M5?

The David Lloyd Centre seems to be close to completion and already we are being invited to become members.

As you will probably notice, there are few pictures in the Newsletter. If you have any interesting photographs of events, in and around Bromsgrove, both past and present, we would be interested to use them. Please be assured they will be copied and returned in good order.

Is there some keen photographer who would like to be our Society Photographer?

Finally many thanks to David Douglas for the loan of the photo used on the cover, which was taken by his friend John Nicholls using an 1897 camera.

Anne Maguire

Letters To The Editor

Dear Anne Maguire

I was very interested in the article on Edward Elgar's sister living in Perryfields House, Crabtree Lane, Sidemoor. I don't remember the house but I do remember it was surrounded by tall hedges.

One day while I was being taken for a walk along Crabtree Lane, Elgar's sister was coming down from her house towards town in her pony and jingle, when for some reason, the pony bolted. A local farmer, Mr Turner of Cherry Orchard farm in Willow Road was out taking a walk after recovering from pneumonia. He went into the middle of the road, waving his arms and jumping up and down. He managed to stop the pony and calm it and Elgar's sister down. After this she returned to her home, Perryfields House.

I don't remember the date, it was around 1935 or 1936. I hope that this incident may be of some interest to your News Letter.

Sheila Nicholls



Chairman's Notes

As I look back over the past months, I note that the History Group had an outstanding attendance at their last talk on Coughton Court. The Bromsgrove Lecture was less of a success - but nevertheless a good attendance and an interesting talk.

The executive committee, led by Vice-Chairman, Des Clarke had a long and detailed meeting with the council, where a variety of subjects of concern to the Society were discussed. It was felt by all, that the meeting was extremely beneficial and was conducted in a friendly and cooperative atmosphere. The Leader of the Council has suggested that in future, bi-annual meetings would be helpful.

At Avoncroft Museum, the repaired windmill sails are being replaced and Avoncroft acknowledge with thanks, the help that the Society has given to enable the project to be completed.

We are organizing a Christmas Dinner this year at the Ladybird and the Executive extends an invitation to all members who wish to attend. More details will follow.

Once again, I must acknowledge the tremendous help I have received from the Executive members during the last few months. It is a real team effort.

Tim Harris - Chairman

From The Membership Secretary

We welcome the following new members who have recently joined the Society:

Mr. & Mrs. M. Attewell, Mr. & Mrs. Bignell, Mr. & Mrs. R. Burn, Miss P Cooper, Mr. M. Floyd, Dr. & Mrs. C. Haines, Mr. G. Horton, Mrs. V. Kendall, Mrs. M. Kirby, Mr. & Mrs. G. May, Mr. M. Morris & Mrs. S. Walsh, Mrs. M. O'Connell, Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Rowlands & Family, Dr. & Mrs. M. Salmon, Mrs. E. Slim and Mrs. C. Swann.

A reminder that subscriptions are due on June 1st, the rates for which appear inside the newsletter cover. Prompt payment is very helpful, thank you in anticipation.

The Society would like to thank its corporate members for their continued support. They are:

Baylis and Co (Bromsgrove) Ltd.
Bromsgrove Golf Centre
Central Office Services
Clarks Motor Services
Designed Systems Interiors
Thomas Horton & Sons
The Ladybird Inn
Lions Club of Bromsgrove
Lloyds Bank Plc

Mr. B. Manning
Morton Fisher, Solicitors
Polymer Latex
R. & S. Antiques
Rotary Club of Bromsgrove
Scotts Solicitors
Weaver. PLC
X. L. Displays

Report From The Landscape Committee

We have focussed much of our attention in the last few years on St John's church, its surroundings and Crown Close on the basis that this area is central to Bromsgrove heritage. Our proposals for a new path and seating in Crown Close were shouldered aside by other priorities of the Council. However we flatter ourselves that our persistence helps to keep the Council giving the area maintenance - recently the trees have been appropriately lopped. The Council have also responded to our requests and repaired the church lych gate and they have replaced the Tree of Heaven near the Burma Star Memorial which the Society originally planted.

We continue to press for restoration and repair of the flight of steps to the church from the market place and in the last newsletter we reported that the Council were getting estimates for the costs involved. Given that interest, ownership and responsibility is shared among the church, the County Council, and the District Council and funds are difficult to find it is likely to take some time but it is not something we will drop our pressure on.

Then there is our interest in the ring of lime trees round the church. The Council's tree officer has concluded that the immediate maintenance requirement is for the trees to be lopped and pruned so that extraneous growth is removed and the canopies are raised and re-shaped. This will improve the views of the church and let more light below so that newer trees will flourish as well as stimulating healthy growth of the older trees. At a later stage some the trees that are suffering from disease may need felling and replacing. The Council, which many years ago took over from the church the maintainance of the churchyard, will carry out this work.

Robin Shaw - Chairman

Diary Date

***The Chairman has pleasure in inviting
members***

to a Supper on :

Friday, 29th November 2002

7.30 p.m. for 8.00p.m.

***The Ladybird Inn Aston Fields, Bromsgrove
Cost : £15 per person for a four-course meal
Further details in September Newsletter.***

Interim Report On Buildings & Environment Committee Meetings.

Since my last report in the March Newsletter we have held two further Committee Meetings. The matters discussed ranged from The Society's project to recognise the Queen's Golden Jubilee to the Government's intention to overhaul the existing Planning System and proposals to revise (and substantially alter) the Use Classes Order.

Five further objections to planning applications were lodged by the Society and one appeal against District Council's decision to refuse a planning application relating to the erection of four dwellings, with associated access drive and garages on land in Beacon Hill, Rubery.

The main item of concern is the lack of adequate parking facilities at Bromsgrove Station and the proposal to provide fewer than half of the spaces needed. We understand discussions with all the relevant bodies are still ongoing and that there is hope of a larger allocation of spaces in the (distant) future, if various legal problems relating to land use, and ownership, can be resolved.

Other items discussed included :-

The Society Award. Thirteen entries have been received. Results will be announced at The AGM.

County Structure Plan. A copy has now been received. The main points of interest are:

- **Housing** Distribution, Density and Locations.
- **Employment Land.** Amount required and Location.
- **Transport.** Rail and Road. Freight and Passenger.
- **Waste Management and Green Belt**
- **Litter problems.**
- **Marlbrook Tip.** The Environmental Agency have now ordered that action is taken to carry out the necessary remedial works to render the site safe.
- **Finstall Bridge.** Completion of this scheme is due within the next few weeks.

Since my last 'News update' both the conservation planner and conservation architect have moved on elsewhere. (I wish them well in their new posts.) It will take some time to organise our quarterly meetings, owing to the increase in workload of the new incumbent caused by their departures.

We have however had some success. A planning application to replace the feather edge timber gates at 73/83 High Street with iron effect metal gates,(similar to those at Satchwells Yard) has now been submitted. We await the Council's decision.

Bromsgrove District Plan has now been finalised and printed. A copy is awaited.

Jim Griffith. Chairman Buildings and Environment Committee.

Bromsgrove Pre and Post the M5

The following is an edited version of an “A” level Geography study entitled “An Investigation into the Effects of the M5 Motorway on Bromsgrove and its Surrounding Area” which was researched and written by Lucy Veale of East Lodge Farm, Bromsgrove. Lucy, then aged seventeen, was a student at North Bromsgrove High School until last July. She was subsequently awarded an “A” grade for her detailed and comprehensive work on the subject. As Lucy has resided close to the motorway for some 13 years, she decided she already had experienced much of the negative impact of its location but sought other views and its benefits to the town. She has kindly given her permission for us to use extracts from her study and we should record our thanks to her for this. Lucy is currently attending Stourbridge College where she is doing a one year art course prior to going on to university to study Geography.

John Sketchley, who is now a Bromsgrove Society Executive Committee member and who was for thirty years a senior engineer with Bromsgrove District Council, has edited and reinforced the work. For those readers over fifty years of age it will recall memories of those days pre M5 and for younger members give an indication of transportation delays and of the associated frustrations of motorists and the business community in the 1950’s.

Do you remember those days before the opening of the M5 on the 20th July 1962, especially all the summer weekends when holiday travellers from the north of the country joined the Midlands traffic to journey down to the beaches of the South West? What a serious traffic problem Bromsgrove had become, with its historic ribbon development having been established along the A38, Exeter to Leeds trunk road. For those who did not experience the chaos themselves, imagine just a proportion of today’s M5 traffic passing both north and south through the Strand, the High Street (now pedestrianised section), and Worcester Road! Although not the only town situated along the A38, Bromsgrove achieved an unenviable reputation as being a considerable bottleneck for transport and was best avoided if at all possible, but this was not an easy option.

The Government in the early post-second-world-war-years realised, with the increased likelihood of vehicle ownership forecast, that the country was ill-prepared. In addition there was an economic emphasis for greater amounts of commercial goods to be transferred by the road network in preference to rail. This policy would allow the creation of New Towns in rural locations and the relocation of manufacturing to support the population that would be occupying the region. A new national network of motorways was required, as was already in place or under construction in Europe. Consequently, legislation was passed in the form of the Special Roads Act, 1949, to make motorway construction possible in this country. The Special Roads Act provided for the construction of new roads or the appropriation of existing roads reserved for special classes of traffic, as authorised by the Ministry of Transport. Until that time, all types of highway users, including pedestrians, has as much right to use any public highway as the road vehicle. It was not until December 1953, however that the government announced a road programme including the first sections of motorway - the Preston and Lancaster by-

passes and the Ross Spur motorway. A further programme was announced in July 1957 based on five main objectives. This programme including the Bristol to Birmingham and Birmingham to Preston motorways now known as M5/M6. These schemes were delegated to the County Councils, being Highway Authorities at law, who acted as agents for the Ministry of Transport, or in some cases Consulting Engineers were appointed to act on the latter's behalf. The first section of motorway in England to be opened to traffic was the Preston by-pass (M6) in December 1958. Mr. W.R. Thomson, who became County Surveyor and Bridgmaster to Worcestershire County Council in the late 1950's, was a senior member of the design team on the Preston by-pass and subsequently oversaw the M5, Strensham to Lydiate Ash and A38 Rubery by-pass design and construction.

The design capacity of motorways and trunk roads was based upon statistical flow volumes on the existing periphery networks and regional principal highways, following annual traffic surveys. The survey is taken and measured on a daily or hourly basis and is broken down into numbers of each type of vehicle. On other occasions, these volume studies have to be supplemented by information concerning such topics as vehicle speeds, journey times, delay times at highway intersections, parking studies, accident records, pedestrian movements and various aspects of vehicle performance. The volume of traffic using a section of road is measured by counting vehicles passing a fixed point in both directions, and converting the results into vehicle equivalents of "passenger car units".

In June 1960, the boys of Bromsgrove School carried out their own count in Worcester Road over a twenty four hour period. They recorded that 12,594 vehicles of all kinds passed in both directions on a carriageway that was 21 feet wide. Of these 4,643 were found to be lorries and vans. No record of bicycles journeys was



How It Used To Be!

This is the A38 at Spring Pools, now better known as the Lydiate Ash Junction

made. As would be expected, the peak flow times were 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm known as the peak periods when in the latter case, a total flow of vehicles exceeded 1500. The actual design figures eventually used to determine the M5 as a dual carriageway were not available but it is recorded that Mr. Thomson at that time was of the opinion that a three lane dual carriageway would be required to meet future forecast growth traffic predictions, but was overruled on economic grounds, resulting in the original two lane dual construction. With hindsight, he was to be proved correct in his forecast as present motorway flows, even with the additional lanes indicate.

Lucy's recent study, as a comparability exercise, included her own traffic count on the Worcester Road at the same point as the survey undertaken by the boys of Bromsgrove School in 1960. The carriageway width is still 21 feet and although the Bromsgrove Eastern by-pass is now in existence, she recorded a total of 1,360 vehicles (excluding bicycles) passing in both directions, between 5pm-6pm on the 17th August 2000. This compares with the figure of just over 1,500 vehicles recorded in 1960. However a greater proportion of the vehicles in 1960 were lorries and vans, indicating the considerable increase in the use of the motorcar as a vehicle to transport people to a workplace.

In summarising her findings from interviews, questionnaire analysis and sound recordings Lucy concludes that farmers and other landowners are probably the ones to have suffered the most during construction of the M5 and are also the ones who continue to feel the detrimental effects of the motorway most. Those that are situated near to junctions seem to suffer the most due to increases in the number of vehicles. Compensation for loss of land and subsequent accommodation works in the form of cattle fencing was made, together with the provision of bridges and tunnels for stock transfer in instances where farms had land split by the motorway.

The motorway has in Lucy's conclusion, brought good and bad impacts, which are very individual. Some things such as motorway lighting are considered to be beneficial to some landowners and detrimental to others. Some landowners are concerned about the negative impact that the motorway may have had on their health, their livestock and their crops. They are particularly concerned about vehicle emissions as are the Government. Noise is the greatest negative impact, as nearly all the suggested solutions by the public are designed to reduce the level of noise. It was recorded that a large percentage of landowners felt the M5 spoilt their view and suggests that more tree planting would mitigate this and reduce the noise and pollution levels. On balance, however, she considers the overwhelming positive result of the provision of the M5 motorway to be that made to the national benefit coupled with that of all local highway users in Bromsgrove and district.

Those Bromsgrovians who regularly use the local motorway systems may indeed say that further improvement is necessary together with a review by the Highway Authority of the capacity and development along the A38 corridor as conditions appear to be approaching those of the 1950's. We do not want Bromsgrove to once again become a "place to be avoided" by motorists to the detriment of local business and shops. Additional off street parking in the Town Centre and at the train station would help to eliminate this view.

The Bromsgrove Lecture 2002

The last two Newsletters have carried articles or appeals for information about Hewell Grange and its gardens. It was therefore appropriate that the Bromsgrove Lecture this year should be given by Mrs. Hazel Fryer, Director of the Parklands Consortium. Mrs. Fryer serves on the Hewell Grange Conservation Trust, which is supported by local and national bodies. She spent most of last year carrying out a survey on Hewell Grange and its park in preparation for a bid for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for restoration of various features.

Mrs. Fryer used slides to illustrate the story of the history of the property, a history admirably summarised by Robin Shaw in the March Newsletter, and indicated areas of possible restoration. The Trust has listed a number of projects planned when matching funding can be found.

The first project listed is the lake. Originally a fishpond, its main remodelling was done by Capability Brown between 1760 and 1771, increasing its area to roughly thirty acres in a triangular shape. Later, Humphrey Repton recommended a second island with a bridge joining it to the house, but this was never adopted. During the Second World War, tank platforms were built on the banks, and the bases of these remain today. The water level has fallen due to the spread of reeds in the lake, which has made it an important nesting site for reed-warblers.

A second project is the consolidation of the Old Mansion, left as a picturesque ruin by the family when the current house was built at the end of the 19th century. It is now wreathed in scaffolding, but the Trust hope to make it safe so that visitors can see the lay-out of the house. Archaeological excavation may also be done in its basements.

The walled garden is urgently in need of restoration. This was moved to Hewell Lane when the French Garden was planted in 1828. A brick kiln was installed to provide the half-million bricks required. Many of its unusual features still remain: - a mushroom house, watercress bed, bothy, apple house and pineapple pits.

A further restoration planned is the Dutch Garden, in its time described as a 'little gem', surrounded by sandstone walls, and with walks radiating from a tessellated area in the centre, paved with red and black lozenge-shaped tiles.

Mrs. Fryer very much hoped that the park would be open to visitors on some occasion later in the year. She would also like to mount a small exhibition in the main hall of the house, which remains one of the greatest Victorian houses still virtually intact.

Report by Gillian Ford



Planning Bromsgrove's Celebrations for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee

Among the archives at Bromsgrove Museum is a hardback exercise book with a handsome marbled cover. Handwritten on the title page is, 'The Queen's Jubilee Celebration at Bromsgrove. Minute Book. 1887.' It provides an interesting comparison with arrangements for the present Golden Jubilee.

Planning began on February 15 when at a meeting of the Bromsgrove Town Local Board the following proposal was carried unanimously, 'That it is desirable that means shall be taken to celebrate Her Majesty's Jubilee in a manner worthy of the

ancient town of Bromsgrove.' Everyone was to be involved it seemed - 'a Committee (was to) be appointed to carry the above resolution into effect consisting of the ministers of all denominations, Justices of the Peace, Members of the Medical and Legal Professions, members of the local board, Country Local Board, School Board and Burial Board, the



*View of Procession in The High Street from the Town Hall.
June 1887*

Bromsgrove members of the Board of Guardians, representatives of Friendly Societies, Working Men etc who shall consider various schemes and report to this meeting Suggestions made there and then were a mixture of the worthy and the celebratory - 'to feed poor people, to observe the day as a General Holiday and to hold

Thanksgiving services in the various places of worship. the distribution of medals. A Jubilee Band; to devote a portion of the fund to the Cottage Hospital.'

Mrs Seymour seconded by the Hon Mrs Massey proposed that a similar meeting of the Women of Bromsgrove should be convened. Unfortunately the Minute Book contains only records of the Men's Committees so we have no evidence what the women did.

By March they had decided that the date of the celebration should be June 20, Accession Day (later changed to June 21). that the postmen should be given a day's holiday; that medals should be distributed, though a note of caution is struck by the request to Mr. Cotton 'to obtain information as to the probable cost' - and that a procession be formed of the Governing Bodies and Friendly Societies to attend special services.

The Parish was divided into 26 districts and various gentlemen canvassers were

appointed to collect subscriptions in them. Committees for Feasting the Poor, Sports, Finance and General Purpose were formed and later a Procession Committee was added.

The Sports Committee had the most interesting brief though its Chairman failed to appreciate its appeal - the first item on the Agenda at the first meeting was the reading a letter from Mr W G Taylor resigning his position as Chairman. Nothing daunted, Mr Humphries was proposed instead and the Committee settled down to consider the Jubilee Band, for which it proposed to ask the General Committee for £10 for instruments. Later it was decided that the full Volunteer Band should be engaged to perform throughout the day for the sum of £8 10s. Mr Saywell was to be asked for the use of a field for sports, to which he subsequently agreed. The activities themselves were to be: Donkey Race, Greasy Pole, Foot Races both handicapped for Boys under 14 and open for all males over 14 resident in the Parish, Sack Race, 'Feats of Strength by Professor Fawke' (for which services he was to be given a silver medal), Balloons, Dancing, Cocoa Nuts (sic) and Wheelbarrow Race. All to be rounded off with Fireworks, the expenditure limit for these being £5. Women were to have their own races. Egg and Spoon, 120 yards Flat Race and 100 yards for Girls under 14. There were to be cash prizes for first, second and third places, mostly in the region of 3/-, 2/- and 1/- though men's races paid slightly better, and there was a leg of mutton for winning the greasy pole competition.

Meanwhile the General Committee had not been idle. On May 17 they were applying to Mr Saywell for permission to sell refreshments in his field. They were asking the canvassers to ascertain the number of poor over 40 with their ages. They were proposing to order a special die for a medal at £2 10s and to strike 2000 medals at 16/- a gross (1500 pierced and 500 not pierced). The Secretary was asked to

'communicate with the Secretary of the Ladies' Committee with a view to providing ribbons for the same' but in the end the Secretary of the Feasting Committee ordered the ribbon.

At the next meeting of the General Committee on May 24 the Secretary was instructed to invite tenders for the supply of provisions on Jubilee day when it was



Plum Pudding Makers. Jubilee 1887

planned to feed 1200 adults, which indicates the widespread poverty of the townspeople in late Victorian times. The bedridden were to have their dinners sent to them. The budget for the meal was 1/3 a head. All children over the age of five who attended school or Sunday School - all 2000 of them - were eligible for tea at 4d a head. (Before tea, when they arrived in procession at the field they were to be presented with a medal). Tickets authorising dinner or tea were to be given away in

the field at the discretion of the Secretary but presumably the recipients were given advance notice because each person was to 'bring a Knife, Fork, Spoon and Plate and a Pint Cup or Jug' and each child was to bring a cup.

The Feasting Committee had the task of feeding the contemporary equivalent of the five thousand but with meat rather than fish. Thirteen hundred lbs of beef were ordered from two butchers as well as 80 lbs of suet. Three hundred and fifty 40-lb loaves were to be provided and four hundred 4-lb cakes were ordered from 'eight persons' at 4d a lb. Six barrels each containing 36 gallons of mild ale were to be installed in the Cricket Pavilion a few days before the great day. For the abstemious 20 lbs of tea at 2/- a lb and two and a half cwts of sugar at 18/8 were to be divided among 25 galls of milk at 9d a gall. Mr Corbett (William, the Chairman of the General Committee, not the Salt King) kindly offered to procure 10 galls of mixed pickle from Taylors in Kidderminster which, together with 7 lbs of mustard and an unspecified amount of salt, was to add relish to the beef To round off the meal 800 lbs of plum pudding were made. In the Minute Book there is a self-conscious photograph of one of the plum pudding makers stirring the mixture in half a barrel with a spade.

The logistics of getting these quantities of food to the field were daunting. It was decided to make the tea in three treacle 'punshons' (sic), Mr Fitch kindly offering to boil the water and it was suggested that Mr Gimson might lend a Railway Lorry for conveying the tea to the ground. The Secretary was instructed to advertise for four labourers to do the heavy work. Other people were required to help with serving. The services of the Postmen had been offered as Carvers (so much for their day's holiday) but they did not go far in providing the numbers needed. To capture more 'volunteers' the following leaflet was distributed, headed Bromsgrove Jubilee Celebration:

Dear Sir

Will you kindly lend the Committee your assistance as a Carver, on the 21't June, the day of Her Majesty's Jubilee, and bring a Carving Knife and Fork with you.

Upwards of 100 Carvers are required, as we have to feast 1200 people.

By filling in and returning to me the Form on the other side you will greatly oblige.

Yours faithfully

JOHN HUMPHREYS, Jun

Hon Sec

An equivalent plea, addressed to Dear Madam, asked for help in making Tea for 2000 children. In charge of the women were Messrs Nowell and Evans 'appointed to superintend the Tea Making.'

But before the Sports and the Feasting came the solemnities. Organising these was the responsibility of the Procession Committee. All involved were to gather in the field before 9am when the Procession would step out headed by the Band and led by Superintendent Jeffries on horseback. Marching four deep would be Ministers of all denominations, Churchwardens with Wands, Magistrates, Staffs of Schools, Local Board, Court Leet, School Board, Guardians, County Local Board, Overseers, Burial

Board, Cottage Hospital Committee, Old People at the Workhouse, Postmen, Rifle Corps, Voluntary Fire Brigade and the Police. Their route was to take them to Church (St Johns ?) down the High Street, Hanover Street and Capt Adams Hill. After the service the Procession was to reform in Crown Close and march up Market Street, Stourbridge Street, Birmingham Road, through the Workhouse Gates, down the Birmingham Road, Strand, High Street, Worcester Street, round Hanover Street and St John Street to the Market Place.

Assembled in the Market Place they would all sing, thoughtfully provided with 2000 specially printed copies of the National Anthem, 'God Save the Queen'.

To mark Queen Elizabeth Hs Golden Jubilee Bromsgrove Museum has a small display of Royal Commemoratives.

On permanent display is a photograph of the Bromsgrove Postmen standing in front of the Post Office decorated for the 1887 Jubilee.

Anna Kingsley-Curry March 2002

Book Review **Soldier I Wish You Well**

Editor: Jeremy Bourne, Publisher: The Housman Society

Jeremy Bourne, author of "The Westerly Wanderer" (a brief portrait of A.E. Housman) has now turned his attention to the military poems of Housman, which are published alongside letters home from his youngest brother Herbert, who served with the Kings Royal Rifles in Burma in 1891-92.

Alfred (A.E) born in 1895 and George Herbert (Herbert) born in 1868 could not have been more different. Herbert's "love of adventure" must, at times, have horrified the academic Alfred. The contrast between the two is clearly evident in the book.

While A.E. in "Shropshire Lad - XXII" is considering the life of a soldier:

*"What thoughts at heart have you and I
We cannot stop to tell,
But dead or living, drunk or dry,
BSoldier, I wish you well."*

Herbert is writing to "My Dearest Mater"

"This last week has been the Burmese Lent, like the famous Chinese feast of Lanterns and it has been fairyland."

"Tell the Dad he can't make curries too hot for me now, because I can drink red chilli soup" (letter of Oct 12 1892)

This is a rare opportunity to read the works of two brothers - an opportunity worth taking!!

The book is obtainable from Ottakars at £9.50 or The Housman Society. 80 New Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2LA (£9.50 + £1 p&p)

The Bromsgrove Society

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Ex-Officio Committee Member: The Bailiff of the Court Leet

The Bromsgrove Society Local History Group

Speakers 2002/2003

2002

Tuesday 17 September
“Cadbury’s and Bournville”
Kenneth Hughes

Tuesday 15 October
“History of Three Successful Beer Houses in Cutnall Green”
Bob Butcher

Tuesday 19 November
“Looking at Shops - From Victorian Times to Present Day”
Ned Williams

Tuesday 3 December
“Still Searching for The Bromsgrove Guild”
Quintin Watt

2003

Tuesday 18 February
“The River Severn”
Brian Draper

Tuesday 18 March
“Bromsgrove and Sir Edward Elgar”
David McBrien

**All meetings are held at the Methodist Centre, Stratford Road,
Bromsgrove and commence at 7.45.p.m.**

Admission: Members £1.50 Non-Members £2. All are welcome to attend

The Local History Group is an important part of the Bromsgrove Society. By paying a sub to the Society you are, of course a member of the Local History Group and entitled to entry at all meetings at the member’s rate.