



The Bromsgrove Society **NEWSLETTER**

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75p

Bill Bows Out - see page 5



(photo courtesy of the Bromsgrove Messenger)

The Bromsgrove Society

Reg. Charity No. 510542

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Subscriptions

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.



**Lloyds
Bank**

*The Society wishes to record its
grateful thanks for the ongoing
support afforded by its bankers,
Lloyds Bank PLC of Bromsgrove*

From the Editor

One of my husband's Christmas presents was a book by E.R. Delderfield on the Kings and Queens of England which describes King John as "the archetypal wicked king". I prefer to quote the beginning of A. A. Milne's delightfully whimsical poem remembered from my childhood:

*"King John was not a good man,
He had his little ways,
And sometimes no-one spoke to him
For days and days and days."*

Whichever you prefer, it is clear that there are not many flattering descriptions of this much maligned monarch. However, we people of Bromsgrove do have to thank him for granting the town's Royal Charter in 1199. We celebrate the 800th Anniversary of the event this year with a wide variety of activities, beginning with the John Foster Memorial Lecture, which is a joint venture with the Court Leet on April 15. This is followed by an exciting music festival programme whose highlight is the Bromsgrove Charter Anniversary Concert on 25 April. The Court Leet is keen to involve as many local people as possible in its summer activities so watch the local press for further details.

No prizes for guessing who features on our cover, but for those who are newcomers to the town we would like you all to be able to recognise the familiar face of Bill Kings, our new (and one and only!) Honorary Life Member, who can regularly be seen around and about the town centre with his trusty bicycle.

Art lovers among you will be interested to read the fascinating story from Trevor Morriss about the restoration of wall paintings in Blackwell Methodist Church; all the more so because the Pre-Raphaelite style in which they were painted is very much in vogue at the moment with the Burne Jones exhibition having enjoyed so much success in Birmingham during the Winter.

I would also like to thank Winifred Bird for responding to my imaginings of last summer about life in the apple orchards at Tardebigge. It is nice to know that somebody reads the editorial.

Finally, we had snowdrops out on Christmas Day and the first daffodils were in full bloom in a sheltered corner of our garden on 9 January. This was a record for us, and I assume it is an effect of the new wet and warm winter climate. Are many of our old familiar patterns to change because of it? Just for fun I would like to start a competition for the reader to hear the first cuckoo, the winner to receive the original illustration for the spring editorial. Is anybody game?

Fran Rogers.

Chairman's Notes

You may have seen in the local press the proposals to build on the Oakalls and the NEW College land. The Buildings & Environment Committee will keep a careful watch on these developments. They will have a significant impact on the Town - both in terms of population and increased traffic at the Stratford Road island and on the A.38.

I recently obtained details of the new Hereford Arts Centre (called The Courtyard). This was designed by Glenn Howells - the same Architects chosen by the District Council for the Arts Centre. It looks an impressive and innovative building. We wait to see - with interest - the plans for Bromsgrove. The financial implications for local non-commercial users and to all Council Tax payers are still to be unveiled.

Graham Reddie (Chairman from 1983-1986) received the M.B.E. for services to the built environment in the Midlands in the New Year Honours. He is Secretary of the Midlands Amenity Societies Association. Congratulations, Graham.

The Society's A.G.M. is 8th July 1999. Perhaps YOU would like to become more involved by serving on a Committee or becoming an Executive Committee Member. Every Society needs "new blood", providing differing approaches and ideas to situations. Please contact me if you would be interested.

The John Foster Memorial Lecture is on 15th April 1999 at 7.30 p.m. I feel sure we shall have a very informative evening.

Isobel M. Jarrett, Chairman, February 1999

The Bromsgrove Guild Book

This book has received a good deal of welcome publicity in recent months which has resulted in much extra information being received. We are most grateful to those who have given their time and memories and lent photographs. Including this new material into the book has delayed publication somewhat and we are now working towards a book launch in June. All those who have ordered a copy of the special limited hardback edition will receive an invitation in due course. If you have any queries please contact John Weston on 01527 873483

New Members

We have quite a long list of members who have joined in the last three months, some of them due to reading December's Rousler. We extend a warm welcome to them all. They are: Mr & Mrs. Bricknell, Mr. Bridgman, Mr. Clarke, Miss. Courts, Mr. Mason, Mrs. Potter, Mrs. Powell, Mr. & Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Rutter, Mr. & Mrs. Turner, Mr. Webb, Dr. & Mrs. Wilkinson and Mr. Wise.

Report of the Chairman of the Buildings and Environment Committee.

I am proud to have been elected your new Chairman and will try to justify your faith in me, but it will be difficult to measure up to the standard set by Norman James, my predecessor, as he will be a hard act to follow.

Since the last report in September's Newsletter the Buildings and Environment Committee have met twice, on 22nd October and 7th January, 263 Planning Applications have been considered, 59 have been scrutinised and 29 commented upon.

The Recreation Ground saga continues - Planning Permission has been granted, an Archeological assessment has been carried out and Glenn Howell Associates have won the competition to design the arts centre.

Planning Permission has also been granted on two other longstanding and controversial schemes- namely Barnsley Hall (despite our written objections on 26th Nov 1996), and The Oakalls (although technically still in the green belt). We will continue to carefully monitor progress on all the above. The Barnsley Hall redevelopment will result in the demolition of the water tower as no suitable alternative use has been found.

A revised scheme to redevelop part of NEW College is under discussion with Council Officers and a planning application is awaited for a Business Park and Residential development on two separate sites.

The Oakalls development which will comprise 650 houses, community centre and local amenities, and the NEW College scheme (if approved) will create a considerable increase in traffic at peak periods. This will necessitate improved Traffic Management on the A38 from the Slideslow roundabout to the traffic lights by The Mount School. I am hoping to discuss this with the Director of Planning in the near future.

Another smaller but equally important application has been approved- the demolition and redevelopment of the site of Whitford Hall School. The proposal is for 19 Detached Houses and it is important that all of the specimen trees on site are retained. This will be monitored by the Landscape Committee.

Jim Griffith, Chairman, Buildings and Environment Committee

Midlands Amenity Societies Association (MASA, for short).

In 1987 MASA was formed on the initiative of Jim Lloyd of Burton-on-Trent and myself, when 17 societies including Bromsgrove voted to join together. The principal aims are to exchange information and thereby keep informed and abreast of events in order to try and influence the future, and to

make representations to the Government, the Civic Trust and others, on matters affecting civic societies in the Midlands backed by strength of numbers. To achieve the latter, membership has risen to 74 civic societies in ten years.

Throughout this period I have been the Hon. Secretary and general ‘dogsbody’/organiser.

With members geographically spread from Boston across to Shrewsbury, and Hereford up to Chesterfield, major tasks include keeping members informed and acting as a channel for policy matters both to and from the Civic Trust, Government, national and regional bodies. We hold, for instance, regular meetings with the Government Office for the West Midlands, and quarterly General Meetings are often addressed by a speaker. For instance last September in Stratford-upon-Avon the English Heritage Inspector Mr. John Yates spoke about Listed and the ‘listing’ of buildings, sites of particular historic interest, grant aid and how to obtain it, and he gave advice for regeneration and conservation schemes. The December 1998 meeting was devoted to discussion of “domestic” issues concerning the National Council of Civic Trust Societies on which I am one of two West Midlands elected representatives.

MASA members also, as always, consider a host of Consultation Papers from Government and others e.g. Countryside Commission, British Waterways, on a range of planning and related issues, to which MASA makes representations on behalf of all members. Generally it is only your Civic Society delegates to the MASA meetings who get to know about the nitty gritty, but it is our way of getting involved in Government policy making, and every so often the views which we express are taken on board. If we did not convey our views who could blame the Government for adopting the old adage “silence means consent”. Some of the proposals by the Government (Tory and Labour) we are most unwilling to accept, and we say so.

In 1998 MASA considered topics as varied as telecommunications development control, “investment in culture” (their name, not mine !), a cluster of documents on aspects of “modernising local government” (which will affect us all very soon) and of modernising planning procedures, the government’s favorite topic “integrated transport policies”, regional planning guidance, strategies for sustainable development, Village Design Statements (Lickey Hills and Alvechurch in our District are producing these), proposed revisions to by-ways, footpaths and access to the countryside, Environment Agency plans e.g. affecting rivers and streams, Environment Week in September, Urban Design Week in October and much, much more.

All this keeps us pretty busy ! On your behalf !

Graham Reddie

Editors note: This article underlines the hard work and commitment of Graham Reddie and I would like to join all our members in offering congratulations upon his award of the M.B.E in the New Year Honours.

Baron Sidemoor Leaves the Stage

On the front cover of this Newsletter there is a photograph of that well known Bromsgrovian Bill Kings. The champion of all things Bromsgrove, especially the Bromsgrove Society, was recently honoured with Honorary Life Membership of the Society. The photograph is taken appropriately outside the Tudor House in New Road which is the logo of the Society (photo courtesy of the Bromsgrove Messenger).

The following tribute to Bill Comes from our regular contributor, Charles Berwick.

Last September I attended the apparent swan-song of a man I am pleased to call a friend, and there was not a dry eye in the place.

I saw Bill Kings in his early days in the old Drill Hall when he stepped into the ring to box a far larger and heavier man. After two rounds, through bruised lips, Bill said to his second, Harry Pantall, "Harry I've had enough, he's murdering me." Harry's reply was loud and clear "Carry on Bill he hasn't laid a glove on you yet."

Bill's reply was "If that's right H, keep your eye on the referee because someone's giving me some stick."

We came together again after the Rovers ground had been chopped to pieces by American service-men playing Baseball. Bill organised a gang of us to repair the surface, paint the stands, mark the pitch and other tasks. A local builder agreed to make new goalposts for £7 each, but a visit from Bill later persuaded him to waive his charge.

When 38 years of age I had retired from football but was stopped by Bill one Saturday in the High Street. "Wag, we're playing Malvern this afternoon. Help us out - it will be a bit of fun." I thanked him but declined on the pretext of having no boots. Bill had the answer by saying that he had a spare pair of size tens. On arrival at Malvern, Bill threw a parcel at me and in it were two football boots one size ten and one size eight - both without laces!

Bill, a lifelong non-smoker and teetotaler never turns down a cry for help. One day at Chadsgrove School for the physically handicapped, a visiting speaker had not turned up. Bill stepped into the breach and immediately gathered an armful of pictures etc, and came to the school. He kept the whole school laughing all afternoon and then signed up the staff for a town walk the following week.

I remember when the Duke of Edinburgh came to Crown Close and the Messenger carried a photograph of Bill and the Duke. People enquired "Who was that bloke with Bill Kings!", that's the measure of the man.

During his final talk Bill recalled some of his memories of 80 years in the town. He was Bromsgrove's first Kings Scout. For 4½ years he was a private in the Bromsgrove No 7 Platoon of the Wartime killing machine - The Home Guard! He told the story of the evacuee who hadn't mastered the art of "Bucket & Plank" toilet arrangements and fell into the half full Sidemoor privy.

During his talk, we travelled very modestly for Bill, through his successes and failures with Trades Union organisations, politics and Council work. We went to the cotton pool and the early Bromsgrove swimming baths. Then on to the future. As the owner of a very ancient Reliant Robin, I was very pleased to hear that by the year 2010 I would have three cars in my garage (or on the road).

The Bromsgrove Society paid him the honour of making him an honorary life member. Well done Bill. It couldn't happen to a nicer bloke!

An Artistic Pilgrimage

by Trevor Morriss

It all started 12 years ago when my wife and I, together with our three young sons, moved from Harborne in Birmingham to a new house in the village of Blackwell. This proved to be a move that we have never regretted, exchanging suburbia for a semi-rural paradise.

Being a practising Methodist I very soon started regularly attending the small Methodist chapel on Greenhill in Blackwell (and because it was a small church it wasn't long before I was roped into becoming a Steward at the church!).

When I first started going to Blackwell Methodist Church I quite soon noticed several unusual features about it. Firstly, it is built very much like an Anglican church, in the shape of a cross (cruciform I am told is the correct term) and with the font by the entrance door to the church.

Secondly, all the windows in the church are of stained glass which, whilst being very picturesque, does tend to make the building a little dark. One at least of these windows is of particular note, showing St Christopher dressed as a soldier and also in his more recognisable form (on hundreds of medallions) carrying Christ on his shoulders across a stretch of water - representing him before and after his conversion to Christianity.

A third feature I noticed but at first thought little of (other than "that's unusual") was that there were some wall paintings in the church and on closer examination these were on canvas which had been glued to the walls. The paintings are along both chancel walls and around the main stained glass window above the altar and they depict:

- * the Annunciation
- * the Nativity
- * Jesus Blessing the Little Children
- * Jesus Raising Jairus' Daughter
- * the Holy City

Even so I still felt they were unremarkable, even if attractive.

A few years later, when reading the church's centenary booklet (it was built in 1882) I read that they had been painted in 1913 by a Birmingham-born artist called Bernard Sleight and had been executed in the Pre-Raphaelite style.

What was very evident about the paintings was that, after over 80 years in the church, they were in a very sad condition with decades of grime on the surface and in some places they were starting to come away from the wall. We decided as a church to investigate the possibility of their being restored, which we knew would be very costly.

The first step was to establish whether the works themselves had any intrinsic artistic merit and therefore whether any expensive work would be worthwhile. Here we were helped and encouraged enormously by Glennys Wild, Curator of the Art Department at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Given the interest in Pre-Raphaelite and related work at the Gallery she was most interested in the paintings and also put us in touch with Roger Cooper, a London based art expert and the country's leading authority on the work of Bernard Sleigh. The consensus of opinion was that we should at least find out how much restoration would cost because the artistic merit of the works justified their being saved if possible.

Roger Cooper was also able to provide us with an enormous amount of information about the artist, some of which I summarise below (information taken from "Bernard Sleigh, Artist and Craftsman, 1872-1954" by Roger Cooper).

Bernard left school at 14 and became an apprentice wood engraver in Birmingham. Over 6 years of cutting drawings of brass bedsteads and the like for local firms he developed an "unbearable hatred of the cheap and often vulgar jobs" that he had to do and became an assistant art tutor at Central school.

In 1893 he received his first public credit for an engraving in "A Book of Pictured Carols" - each carol was illustrated by a different student and Bernard cut two engravings to illustrate "I Saw Three Ships". Other works followed with illustrations in magazines and various books.

On a more local note Bernard Sleigh became involved with the Bromsgrove Guild from 1897. His first work for the Guild was for a church in Wallasey, Cheshire. He painted a frieze around the Communion table and decorated the panels of the pulpit. He also painted the ends of the choir stalls with representations of the elements - earth, fire, air and water.

He married one of his students, Stella Phillip, in 1900 and in 1902 his son, Linwood was born. The Sleighs also had a daughter, Barbara, born in 1906. During this time Bernard also had his first major exhibition - in Bayswater in 1904.

Other Bromsgrove Guild work included stained glass windows and masonic banners carried out in the years leading up to World War I. During the same period he carried out many commissions, mostly involving the decoration of churches.

And then came Blackwell.. Roger Cooper writes "the most complete decoration scheme by Bernard Sleigh was made in 1913 - paintings covering three of the four walls of the Chapel, Blackwell, near Bromsgrove. They were a gift to the congregation from the Taylor family. The biggest of the paintings shows on one side a kneeling shepherd on the other a kneeling king, both are looking up at Bethlehem (painted over the altar). On one side of the Chapel is the Annunciation and the Nativity. The other side has Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead. Adjoining this scene Jesus is blessing the little children - his left hand rests on the head of a boy (the model was Bernard's son, Linwood), the right hand is on the head of a younger girl (the model was Bernard's daughter, Barbara)."

A factual description but.. Barbara was Bernard's favourite child and the significance of the right hand resting on her head must have been deliberate. The picture features another young girl staring straight out of painting at the

viewer and this is believed to be a Bernard Sleight trademark in that the eyes of the child that look directly at you are Bernard's own eyes. At the time when the painting was done Bernard will have known that his marriage was coming to an end, so the inclusion of his two children in such a telling scene is extremely poignant. His marriage finally broke down in 1914 and he saw very little of his children after that.

In 1915 Bernard Sleight advertised that he would carry out commissions for "memorial windows, wall paintings and inscriptions in metal or coloured gesso" aiming to "assist in recording the bravery and self-sacrifice of those who have given their lives in defence of their country" and went on to list amongst places where examples of his work could be seen in situ "the Chapel, Blackwell, Bromsgrove".

So back to 1997 - convinced now that restoration work was justified for the works of art in Blackwell Methodist Church, not for the church alone but also for the community within which it stands, we found out that the work would cost in the region of £13,000 - far beyond a very small church's resources.

However, many months and countless begging letters and appeals later the money has been raised. The restoration work will end an artistic and historical pilgrimage will be over and Blackwell's wall paintings may again be seen in their proper glory.

Editors note: if you would like to see the wall paintings and/or make a contribution to their restoration, please contact Trevor Morriss (telephone 0121-445 1389) Senior Steward, Blackwell Methodist Church



Fruit Growing at Tardebigge

by Winifred Bird

I suppose that one can only say that the heyday of fruit production at Tardebigge was in the fifties and sixties. Many people in Tardebigge then worked in fruit production for Tardebigge Orchards, who maintained some 25 cottages for the workers and a large office at Broadgreen for the administration staff. The editor of Bromsgrove Society Newsletter wondered what Tardebigge was like in those days. There were 500 acres of fruit trees, both apples and pears that produced a sea of blossom in the spring and red and green apples and golden pears in the autumn. The varieties of apples grown were George Cave, Beauty of Bath, Worcester Pearmain, Laxton Superb, Cox's Orange Pippin, Russet, Golden Delicious, Spartan, Discovery and Bramley cookers. Pears were mainly William, Conference and Comice.

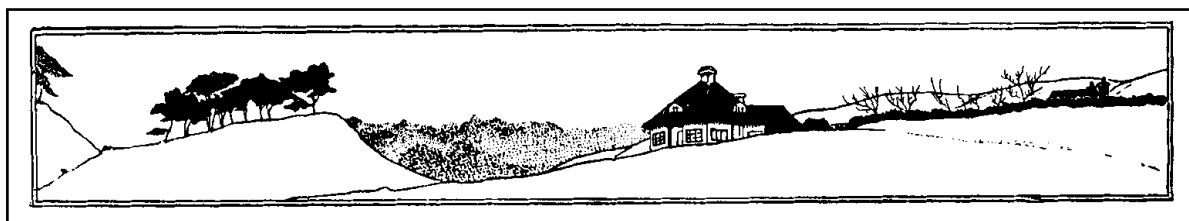
There is never a slack season in fruit growing and we will start at the end of the harvest. A check must always be kept on the fruit in cold store and the administrative staff arrange sales and the packing house staff prepare the fruit for sale, both apples and pears.

The orchards have to be cleared of boxes, ladders and bins and then 500 acres of fruit trees have to be pruned and prunings collected or chopped up. This lasts until about the end of March, when fertilisers and weedkillers are applied. The fruit trees have to be watched very carefully for the development of fruit buds because certain sprays against summer pests have to be applied at the right moment; weeds have to be kept under control and grass has to be mown. Bees are brought in at blossom time and are imported from a distance because local ones pollinate the weeds.

In dry weather irrigation pumps have to be started and the pipes moved from patch to patch several times during the day after an inch of water has been put on. Crops have to be watched very carefully for the correct time to start picking and during the fifties and sixties it was difficult to get extra help for picking because there was full employment in the Midlands.

The fruit farm as a whole was sold in the early seventies and split up. The only part of the farm now still growing fruit is at the Ashboroughs at Burcot where pick-your-own was started in 1971.

If readers would like to read more about T.&M. Dixon (Farmers) and Tardebigge Orchards an excellent book has been written by the Revd. Alan White, vicar of Tardebigge, entitled 'A Worcestershire Dynasty'. Published by Brewin Books of Studley and can be purchased locally for £8.95.



Sunday School Treats continued

by Audrey Wheeler

After reading my article in the June Newsletter, Laurence Crane offered the loan of Ebenezer Sunday School records 1939 to 1990 for the completion of the story.

The high points in my memory were 1938 and 1939 when the destinations were Habberley Valley and Kinver. Six Midland Red buses carried the children to Habberley Valley at a cost of £9. Five 'buses went to Kinver the next year. Afternoon teas at the tea-rooms were 1/- for adults, 8d and 7d for children. These places were ideal, having plenty of space for play and games, and became popular venues for the treat over many years.

Then came the War with rationing and restrictions on travel.

In 1940 after appealing to friends to give butter, tea and sugar, the teachers were able to provide a tea in the schoolroom. This was followed by games in "The Meadows" playing fields. At the next meeting the occasion was pronounced a "tremendous success".

For the next two years the weather was wet on treat day. On the second bad day the games were cancelled, the previous postponed games attracting a small attendance. A Christmas party was planned in compensation.

The Bromsgrove Sunday School Union was not meeting, and each school organised a treat separately from 1938. Ebenezer teachers agreed to have no treat in 1943, stating that none of the other schools was having one.

The catering for the Christmas party was made easier by allowance from the food office of 2½ lbs of sugar, 1¼ lbs of tea and 12 pints of milk. However margarine was still scarce. Most fillings for sandwiches cut down on the quantity required. Boiled eggs mixed with a little fat and fish paste were the main ingredients.

The treat in July 1944 was again tea in the schoolroom and games in George Turners field.

Optimistic at the end of the War in Europe, in 1945 the teachers decided to go to Habberley Valley. Things did not run smoothly as Mrs Tibbetts, proprietor of the tea-rooms informed them that she was not catering for big parties due to rationing. She was asked to supply hot water, crockery, tables and seating, which she agreed to do at 3d a head. This problem solved, there was a strike of Midland Red employees, causing worry and delaying the treat for a week.

There is no record of a treat in 1946. In May the teachers discussed the persistent bad behavior of some of the older boys, and decided this would be taken into consideration when awarding prizes. Were teachers discouraged by this and the difficulties of the previous year, or did low funds make a treat impossible?

The funds certainly could no longer bear the full cost of the outing; in 1947 a charge of 1/3d and 1/6d was made, with a free ticket issued to all the children who took part in the Sunday School anniversary services. Clent was the



destination, and tea was booked at the Adams Hill Tea-rooms with the proviso that there should be NO fishpaste sandwiches.

1948 was a stay at home year. The education authority agreed the Sunday School could use the School playing fields (the Meadows) but not the school lavatories.

Two of the older teachers went to the Habberley Valley in 1949 to find alternative tearooms when Mrs Tibbetts wrote to say she was no longer doing this work. Mrs Landen of White Cottage agreed to cater on similar terms and the treat went ahead on 20th August. Those over 14 paid 1/- and those younger 6d.

Sutton Park was suggested as a change of place in 1951, but teas at 2/- and 2/6d were too expensive. It was known that the Baptist School had been there and the question was how did they manage it? Someone enquired and discovered that they took their own food and ordered tea by the gallon from the tea room. That year Ebenezer decided on Habberley Valley and Kinver for the following year, Sutton Park being agreed on in 1958.

In 1953, Coronation Year, the idea of presenting each school with a souvenir Hymn Book was put forward. This would be in place of the treat, but the teachers voted to go to Habberley Valley, and to buy Bibles with the money saved by having no Christmas party.

Funds were raised from concerts, bazaars, gift trees and collections at Sunday School anniversary services. The books given as prizes took a large slice of the budget. Bibles and Hymn books were looked over and repaired every year but needed frequent replacement. When Sunday School representatives asked the Church to redecorate their room, they offered part of the cost. Donations were made annually to charities. Added to these items were the expenses of the treat and party.

At this time family theme parks became popular, and for three years from 1954 the children enjoyed visiting Drayton Manor Park. Other scholars had fun there in 1975, 1980 and 1987. Alton Towers, with similar entertainment, was the destination in 1962, 1963 and 1979.

Occasionally the children were given a choice of where they should go for the treat, and they usually voted for the place they went to in the previous year.

When animal parks became popular in the 1970's the teachers organised trips to Burford Wildlife Reserve, Twycross Zoo and West Midlands Safari Park. It became normal practice to take picnic meals; eventually the children took their own sandwiches and the teachers provided drinks, crisps and cakes.

Sunday School numbers had decreased and parents and Church members were encouraged to join in the "Annual Outing" to help with expenses and supervision of the children. Advertised trips to Carding Mill Valley, Woburn Abbey and Weston-super-Mare were chosen.

The school was at a very low ebb between 1966 and 1972 when no records appear. Again in 1988 and 1989 there were few children attending. In these last two years a coach party went to the Christmas entertainment at the Swan Theatre, Worcester.

Many people, as I do, will have happy memories of the treats, and on reflection feel admiration and respect for the teachers who devoted so much time to the work of the Sunday School.

The records of Ebenezer Sunday School end in 1990, but the life of "The Bromsgrove Christian Church" on the same site continues.



The Bromsgrovian Bard

a Homage to A.E. Housman by A.G. Brodrick

Remember well, the Bromsgrove Bard,
Who stood and gazed at Shropshire's Hills,
And pondered long, with deep regard
their verdant slopes and mystic rills.

All was a dream in that young mind
seen through a haze of youthful desire,
When could he travel the miles to find
the wonders of that distant shire.

Daily he wandered along the lanes,
Down through the 'Bumbles' ruts and mire,
Skirting 'neath trees, the elms and planes
dwarfed by the church's pointed spire.

After a day of work and fun
passing the Hall that was once his home,
Gazing away to the setting sun
allowing his wandering thoughts to roam.

Came true the dream he'd always had,
As so often does when God so wills,
He came to be a Shropshire Lad,
And walk upon those glorious hills.

Then he walked o'er those distant hills,
Breasting the slopes of that mighty Brown Clee,
Seeking the source of those rippling rills,
Awed by those vistas his vision could see.

Down in the vales he could see the small houses,
Homes of the friends he was shortly to meet,
Knowing their work and the thirst it arouses,
Tilling the soil in the warm summer heat.

Down to the inn at the foot of the hill,
Grateful to sit in the shade of the eave,
Happy to gossip and sip at a gill,
Spending the hours till the time came to leave.

Home to their beds feeling weary and mellow,
Happy was he knowing their deep regard,
He was part of the party, a regular fellow,
But still to his townsmen,
The Bromsgrovian Bard.

The Bromsgrove Society and the Ancient Court Leet & Court Baron of the Manor of Bromsgrove, in celebration of the 800th Anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter by King John, invite you to:

**THE 1999 JOHN FOSTER
MEMORIAL LECTURE**

**“WOODS, WORKERS AND
WILD WOMEN”
400 YEARS OF THE
TOWN OF BROMSGROVE**

**by Chris Dyer & Simon Penn
University of Birmingham**

7.30 p.m. on Thursday 15th April 1999
at Routh Hall, Bromsgrove School.

Meet the Speakers informally in the Dining Hall after the lecture,
when refreshments will be available at modest cost.

Tickets £5.00 Available from:

Baylis Furnishers
W.E. Dawes
Wilsons Pet Centre
Avoncroft Museum

or call Isobel Jarrett - 0121 453 2100, David Slade - 01527 875740

ROVER CYCLES

“SET THE FASHION TO THE WORLD” *The Cyclist*
A study of Rover Cycles 1885 - 1925



**Includes a special section on Land Rover Bicycles
by John Pinkerton and Derek Roberts
Foreword by Dr Andrew Millward**

A Limited Numbered Edition available by Subscription only

This book has been carefully researched by Derek Roberts and John Pinkerton, two world-acclaimed cycle historians, over a period of years using Rover catalogues, the cycling press of the period, and a great deal of help from the four corners of the world where Rover cycles were sold from 1885 onwards. The book contains over 300 pages, and in keeping with other Pinkerton Press publications it is profusely illustrated with catalogue pictures, advertisements, and 'live' photographs, both old and new, showing Rovers in use.

Not only does this book describe the history of Starley & Sutton 1878 to 1884 and Rover cycles, but it also gives us an insight into the development of the Safety Bicycle from its infancy in 1885 to the ultimately refined racing machine of the early 20th century. Long-distance tours and racing are not overlooked, and details are given of Olympic, World and National successes.

Although the Rover company ceased sales of bicycles in 1925, the name has been recently reintroduced in the form 'Land Rover' on some models of Pashley APB bicycles. The book contains a review by Tony Hadland of these modern Land Rover bicycles.

**Copies are available from D. Pinkerton, 522 Holly Lane, Erdington,
Birmingham B24 9LY England. The cost is £17 each**

Dates for Your Diary

Tuesday 16th March

Ron Moss will speak about

Chain Making in the Black Country

7.45 p.m. Methodist Centre, Stratford Road

Thursday 15th April

The 1999 John Foster Memorial Lecture

“Woods, Workers and Wild Women”

400 years of the town of Bromsgrove

by Chris Dyer and Simon Penn

University of Birmingham

7.30 p.m. Routh Hall, Bromsgrove School

Tickets £5 available from T. Baylis
Furnishers, W.E. Dawes, Wilsons Pet Centre
and Avoncroft Museum.

or Phone Isobel Jarrett 0121 453 2100