

*Silver Jubilee Year*



The Bromsgrove Society  
**NEWSLETTER**

Volume 25 No. 3

September 2005

£1

*Bromsgrove Society's  
Architectural Awards 2005*



**Hewell Grange Gardens**

Private visit for Bromsgrove Society members

Admission on 21 st September 2005 by ticket only

For all details including pre-purchased tickets see article in this Newsletter.

# *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:**

Mrs Jill Palmer, 37, Fordhouse Road, Bromsgrove B60 2LU  
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Individual Membership	£7
Family Membership	£10
Pensioners & Students	£5
Pensioners Family Membership	£7
Corporate Members	£25 Minimum

**Newsletter Editor:**

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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***

The Constitution of The Bromsgrove Society was signed on the 11th July 1980, so this year's A.G.M., held on the 7th July was the twenty-fifth of The Society. To mark the occasion Architectural Awards were presented to a number of new projects which have been completed in the area. Photographs and details of the projects appear in this Newsletter.

Graham Reddie has kindly arranged a visit to Hewell Grange on Wednesday 21st September, so if you are interested contact him immediately as time is short.

If anyone can assist with the inquiry from the other side of the world Jez Ford would be only too pleased to hear from you.

A very strong plea from the editor! Letter and articles are very welcome - we are still looking for more histories of local shops.

*Anne Maguire*

## ***From The Chairman:***

The Society continued to celebrate its 25th Anniversary by having a stall in the High Street on Fair Day. We were also part of the Court Leet Fair Day procession which, as many of you know, marks the granting of the Bromsgrove Market Charter.

The Architectural Awards for 2005 have also been held.

Unfortunately Ronty and I were unable to be at the annual general meeting due to our son, Adam, being in critical care. Many thanks to all who carried the meeting through, particularly to Graham Reddie who chaired it in my absence, and also to those who sent good wishes. Adam is now showing signs of a good recovery.

*Des Clarke, Chairman*

## ***From the Membership Secretary***

The Society is pleased to welcome new members who have recently joined. They are:- Mrs. C. Bishton, Mrs J. Dyer and Miss. M. Jones.

Also 3 new Corporate members:-

***Cupitt, Jewellers, Elizabeth's News, and Miller House Eye Clinic.***

*Jill Palmer, Membership Secretary*

## ***Letters to the Editor***

*Dear Editor*

Following a recent nostalgic visit to the Lickey Hills Golf Club, I was reminded of the subject matter of several letters to you over the last few years, namely on the whereabouts of sites of "Ridge and Furrows". John Weston, Philip Amphlett and Dr. Tony Cowan, to name but a few have previously given details of such locations, but had not, to my knowledge, identified those at the Lickey Hills. Golfers familiar with the course will recall the furrows across the 16th fairway, running at right angles to the Birmingham side wood, which are also easily viewed from there if you do not play golf.

My playing partner on the day, a retired Veterinary surgeon, informed me that in addition to being formed by horse drawn ploughing in opposite directions probably initially to drain the land, the result also provided the farmer with a dual crop choice. Anything requiring high levels of moisture would be planted in the furrows whilst others needing a much drier environment would be planted on the ridges.

I would be interested to learn if others concur with this interpretation of events or can offer another view.

*John Sketchley*

*Dear Editor,*

As one of your furthest-flung Society members out here in Sydney, Australia, I would be interested to hear whether anyone could shed light on a reference to Bromsgrove I came across recently in a 1948 publication entitled 'The Minor Traditions of English Mythology', by Lewis Spense.

Spense refers to a pamphlet published in 1845 by one Jabez Allies, entitled 'The Jovial Hunter of Bromsgrove, Herne the Hunter and Robin Hood', describing the manner in which allies traced an ancient ballad dealing with this 'Jovial Hunter'.

Spense writes:

*This [ballad] was associated with the district of Bromsgrove, formerly an afforested area, in Worcestershire. He [Allies] remarks that "there is a place by Shepley Heath, near Bromsgrove town, called Burcot, and an old story has been handed down in the district that the devil kept a pack of hounds at Hales Owen, and that he and his huntsman, Harry-ca-nab, used to ride on wild bulls and hunt the wild boars on Bromsgrove Lickey."*

*The ballad, which was taken down from the dictation of an old peasant, one Benjamin Brown, described how a certain Sir Robert Bolton had three sons, one of whom, Sir Ryalas, was "a jovial hunter". A lady whom he found sheltering in a tree told him that a wild boar had killed her lord and his thirty men, and if he would track the monster he must wind his horn. Sir Ryalas did so, and the boar advanced in his direction, "thrashing" down the trees as he came. After a severe combat Ryalas slew the creature, whereupon a wild woman emerged from the forest and reproached him bitterly for killing her "pretty spotted pig". She demanded as compensation his horn, his hound and the lady, who had accompanied him to the scene of the combat. But Ryalas despatched her also. The sorceress, or wood-demon, and the boar were both buried in Bromsgrove Church.*

Does anyone know more of this story? Was there ever a Sir Robert or Ryalas Bolton in the district? There seem some interesting parallels in Bromsgrove's use of the boar as a town symbol, and between the burial of a wood-demon at Bromsgrove Church and the tree circle there which has long been considered sacred.

Spense writes of the story in the context of a section devoted to Herne the Hunter, although the connections he draws between Herne and the Bromsgrove story seem, on the face of it, fairly tenuous.

More conjective still might be to posit a link between the Halesowen devil and hounds and the Bromsgrove devil gargoyle relocated from the old Cottage Hospital on New Road to its new role scaring unsuspecting children in the town library. Do we know of the history behind that devil?

While it isn't clear whether Jabez Allies was a local man, it seems possible, as he also authored a piece called 'Antiquities and Folk-Lore of Worcestershire'. It is also worth noting that there are Allies still in Bromsgrove - one of them, Neil, becoming a local legend himself on account of his quality axe-work in a number of Bromsgrove bands in the 1980s.

Best regards from sunny Sydney,

*Jez Ford*

## ***A Memory of Mr. Lemmon***

In about 1929, when I had grown into head choirboy the Vicar called and invited me to visit someone in Bromsgrove. As he had recently acquired a new Austin 7, it was a great thrill.

The gentleman we were visiting was Mr. Lemmon. The object was to take delivery of a new processional cross.

We arrived at the front door and rang the bell. I, in my school blazer and short trousers, the Vicar more formal in his dog collar and spats.

We were invited in, passed down the hall, opened a door, down two steps and we were in his workshop. On the bench lay the cross. Mr. Lemmon saw the look of bewilderment on my face. It was less like any cross I had ever seen so he started to explain.

It was a St. Chad's Cross. St. Chad had been a cripple, this meant he walked with a crutch. His crutch had been a flat piece under his armpit and a single support, so to make up the design they had mounted three flat pieces to the top and the long portion was the pole.

St. Chad, because he had had many associations with the area: Chaddesley, Chadwick, St. Chad's church in Rubery, and one of our church wardens had named his house 'Chadcot' as he was completely convinced the village was misnamed and should have been Chadshill and not Catshill.

Mr. Lemmon carefully explained this and we departed. The cross was duly delivered and used for many years. I had the privilege of leading many processions at festival services until I joined the Army in 1940. I believe it is still in the Vestry at Catshill Church in 2005.

*A.G. Brodrick*

## *Visit to Hewell Grange Gardens*

As a contribution to the Society's 25th anniversary celebrations and in support of Heritage Open Days run by The Civic Trust, the Society has sought and been offered a conducted tour of the Gardens by the Estates Manager, to take place on Wednesday 21st September 2005 commencing at 5.15 p.m, taking about two hours.

Hewell Grange is Bromsgrove's stately home, where lived the Windsor family, the Earls of Plymouth. The house was built with no expense spared at the end of the 19th century, the last great house of the era. The extensive grounds owe much to important designers including Humphrey Repton and Capability Brown; both featured in The Bromsgrove Lectures of 2002 and 2003. Hewell Grange is now in the care of H.M.Prison Service, and access is obviously carefully controlled. We are grateful to the Governor of Hewell Grange for making it possible for some of us to visit the Gardens and associated buildings.



The visit will be made by coach in order that some 40 persons will arrive/depart in one party rather than in some 25-30 cars. The coach will depart from the Swimming Baths car park in School Drive at 5.15p.m. The coach fare will be £6 per person. Admittance to the Gardens will be free.

Tickets will be allocated first-come-first-served, for which written application must be made to Mr. G.Reddie at The Landscape 41 East Road, Bromsgrove B60 2NW before Sunday 18th September, and with cheques made out to The Bromsgrove Society, please.

Many people at our AGM indicated a wish to make this visit, thus it is being restricted to paid-up members of the Society. We have to submit names in advance to the prison staff, and we must take photographic identification with us on the visit e.g. passport. This may all seem Draconian, but control of visitors to a prison is inevitable. After the first Open Day some 10 years ago the then Governor said "never again". He has moved on. The present Governor has fortunately taken a more relaxed approach.

# *Bromsgrove Society's Architectural Awards 2005*

As the Society was to celebrate its 25th anniversary in the year 2005, the Executive Committee thought it was appropriate to incorporate an Architectural Awards event as an integral part of the year's programme. Since the Bromsgrove Society's foundation the architectural award has taken place on an approximate five yearly cycle, the last occasion being 2002.

The judges' appointed by the Chairman were Derek Davies and Jeremy Sharp, this year's Bayliff of the Court Leet and John Sketchley who acted as Chairman. The panel was ably assisted in the administrative work by David Slater.

The judges report and views on the entries are set out in the following paragraphs. As the purpose of the award, as referred to in the constitution, is to highlight achievement in good design, as a means towards raising the general standard of environmental design throughout the district of Bromsgrove, particular attention was given to the external elevations and the impact of the building in its individual location.

## **1. Landscaping and New Works Category**

### **St. Leonard's Churchyard, Beoley-Worcester Diocese.**

*Bromsgrove District Council's Architect's Department (Timothy Hawksworth and Mrs. Ann Gilhooly)*

*John Hendey Construction*

Historically it has been rare to have submissions which fall into this category but the panel's visit on a showery afternoon proved to be visually rewarding and revealed a tranquil westerly-facing site with mature woodland on either side and the church itself standing high above to the east. Breedon limestone gravel to the footpaths and a grassed central area together with wooden seating set against the mature trees around the periphery, completed the feeling that this peaceful new sanctuary had been created by nature, not man, as a place for reflection and recollection.



## **2. Conversion of Buildings to Alternative Use Category.**

### **The Pleck, Crabtree Lane, Sidemoor.**

*R.L.S. Associates*

*Spadesbrook Construction Co. Ltd.*

Previously, for many years, the building had served the local area as a "corner shop" and newsagents until its use became un-viable against the commercial competition of the large supermarkets. Having stood empty for a while, presenting an untidy backcloth to the approach from Broad Street, the property was completely renovated with its use becoming two office suites, one on ground floor and one at first floor. In particular, the improvement to the front elevation with contrasting finish of white rendering to first floor level to compliment the brickwork above, has greatly enhanced the street scene at this important location whilst environmental improvements to the rear courtyard-service area have also benefited the locality.



### 3. New Buildings Commercial Category

#### (a) The Ladybird Lodge, Aston Fields.

*Christopher Jones*

*Ash Construction*

The design of the building harmonises with and compliments the Ladybird Inn, formerly known as The Dragoon Inn, the two being linked by a large conservatory, which functions as a restaurant.

It occupies an important site, being adjacent to Bromsgrove's Train Station and therefore presents an immediate impact on passengers arriving in the town for the first time. However, the height of the floor levels both above the station platform level and street level, due to the natural site contours and the planning need to match roof ridge levels with the Ladybird Inn, do detract from these aspects. This building completes the site development and adds a great deal to the central area of Aston Fields.



#### (b) The Clock House, Metal and Ores Industrial Village, off Navigation Road, Stoke Prior.

*Forrester Associates (M. Forrester).*

*J.J. Taylor Building Contractor.*

This is the second of two prominent new buildings on the frontage plot of the Industrial Estate and the Clock House stands adjacent to converted and refurbished canal-side units. Distinctive design with a prominent central clock tower and excellent brickwork which compliments and blends with the much older buildings adjacent to the Birmingham-Worcester Canal. A café business and office accommodation is provided within the building, whose design and workmanship are at their highest level and this creates an important impact on the local environment both for residents and visitors alike.



### 4. New Buildings Educational or Ecclesiastical Category

#### (a) Bromsgrove Preparatory School, Old Station Road

*Hickton Madeley, Architects. (David Bough and Malcolm Bennett)*

*Thomas Vale Construction Ltd.*

The single storey structure extends into the existing landscape of the Lower School, encompassing both other new and old buildings and includes naturally ventilated and day lit classrooms, a library, a hall, sports changing rooms and staff facilities. The double height glazed reception area is eye-catching and creates a dynamic main entrance in addition to providing surveillance and security of children whilst outside the building. The building brings a new contemporary feel to the Lower School and the sweeping mono pitched roof, parting midway down to accommodate an existing mature tree, relates to the natural contours of the sloping site.



The design also incorporates a new vehicular eastern gate approach from Old Station Road to provide adequate parking and delivery/collection space within the school complex, thus overcoming the disruption experienced by local residents over many previous years.

The use of exposed hardwood timber structurally and quality all round workmanship completed a building enjoyed by both staff and pupils.

**(b) The Wheel, St. Catherine's Chapter House, Blackwell.**

*Associated Architects (John Hancock, John Christophers and Simon Jesson)*

*P.J. Rowden Ltd.*

This new community circular building is adjacent to and linked with St. Catherine's Church, a grade II listed building, designed by Herbert Luck North in 1939-40. The design of "The Wheel" was conceived from the original circular windows set in the north-west corner of the church, and this consequently gives a very clear and distinct identity which does not interfere with the integrity and architectural quality of the listed building. A glazed foyer connects with the church's north door, allowing



the old and the new to be used separately or together. Four large openings punctuate the circular wall, allowing ventilation and generous views in and out and good natural light is provided by high level clerestory glazing situated between brick piers. The twelve-spoked wheel of oak timber rafters which support the roof is a unique feature of the design. Ancillary accommodation, in the form of a small kitchen and toilets, is sited off the foyer with a lower roof below the clerestory adding a sense of order to the form and these are extended in plan to create a screen wall to the north.

The new chapter house is constructed in rough pebbled render over a plinth of facing brickwork to match the existing church. The foyer and loggia are constructed of seasoned oak and the shallow pitched roof is finished in standing seam tern coated stainless steel, which over time will weather to the same patina as a lead roof.

Set in the existing well maintained landscaped area of the church and overlooked by mature trees, the building now gives the impression of being an integral part of the original pre-war building.

## **Award Winners**

The awards were made at the society's A.G.M. held on the 7th July when three plaques and three certificates of commendation were presented by the acting chairman to the respective recipients, who were as follows:-

### **1. New Buildings Educational or Ecclesiastical Category**

**Society Plaque Awarded to:**

**"The Wheel", St. Catherine's Church Chapter House.**

**Promoter/Client: David Parker, Church Warden.**

**Architect: John Christopher**

**Contractor: Tony Oldershaw**

### **2. New Buildings Commercial Category**

**Society Plaque Awarded to:**

**"The Clock House" Stoke Prior.**

**Promoter/Client: M.R. Banham**

**Architect/Designer: M. Forrester**

**Contractor: Jeff Taylor**

### **3. Conversion of Buildings to Alternative Use Category**

**Society Plaque Awarded to:**

**“The Pleck” Sidemoor.**

**Promoter/Client: R.L.S. Associates - R. Smith**

**Architect/Designer: R. Smith**

**Contractor: Leslie Lowe**

**The Certificates of Commendation were awarded in respect of the following submissions:-**

### **4. New Buildings Educational or Ecclesiastical Category**

**Bromsgrove Preparatory School.**

**Promoter/Client: David Crompton**

**Architect: Christopher Bain**

**Contractor: Jon Davies**

### **5. New Buildings Commercial Category**

**The Ladybird Lodge.**

**Promoter/Client: Christopher Bird**

**Architect: Christopher Jones**

**Contractor: Christopher Bird**

### **6. Landscape and New Works Category**

**St. Leonard’s Churchyard, Beoley.**

**Promoter/Client: Councillor, Mrs. Jean Luck**

**Architects: Timothy Hawksworth and Mrs. Ann Gilhooly**

**Contractor: John Hendey**

I conclude with thanks on behalf of The Bromsgrove Society to those parties who nominated their projects for consideration and to the professionals who were employed on the schemes in this, the 25th anniversary year of the society. Thanks also to my fellow judges for their time and input.

*John Sketchley, Chairman of the Judges Panel*

*Note: The Bromsgrove Society acknowledges the kind help of The Bromsgrove Photographic Society and in particular that of its past President Bill Chambers in providing the photographs used with this article.*

***The Chairman has pleasure in inviting members and friends to a seasonal supper***

**Friday, 2nd December. 2005, 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m. The Executive Suite, Bromsgrove School, Old Station Road £16.00 per head**

### ***Menu***

**Mushroom and Chive Souffle**

**oOo**

**Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding with Chefs Selection of Vegetables and Potatoes  
(A Vegetarian Course can be provided on request)**

**oOo**

**Caramel Apple Pie**

**oOo**

**Coffee and Petit Fours**

**Please send cheques payable to The Bromsgrove Society to Mrs.I.M. Jarrett, 28 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove B60 1PA (Tel:0121-453-2100) by Friday, 25th November 2005**

## ***Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Bromsgrove Society Held at the Guesten Hall Avoncroft Museum on the 7th July 2005***

There was an attendance of approximately 65 members and invited guests at the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Society.

**1. In the absence of the Chairman**, Mr Des Clarke who had been unable to attend due to family illness, the President, Mr Graham Reddie MBE welcomed members and asked the Secretary to report the apologies: Miss P Cooper, Mrs K Dimond, Mr & Mrs Massey, Mr & Mrs D Turner, Mr. M Durkin, Mrs Raybould, Mrs W Bird, Mr I Marchbank, Janet Seldon, Mr & Mrs G Long, Mrs E Fellows.

### **2. Minutes of the AGM held on 8th July 2004**

The Chairman moved that the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting be adopted, and this was unanimously agreed. There were no matters arising from those minutes.

**3. Amendment to Constitution Clause 5** - "audited accounts" to read "Independently examined accounts".

This amendment was proposed by Mr John Rowlands, and seconded by Mr Roger Brazier, and carried unanimously.

### **4. Chairman's Review of the Year 2004/2005** (corresponding with the Financial Year).

The Society has continued to carry out its activities within the terms of the Constitution.

2005 is the 25th Anniversary Year of the forming of the Bromsgrove Society. Celebrations to mark the event were planned during the year which included the lecture, medieval crosses, architectural awards and a further town sign.

There was no Bromsgrove Lecture during the financial year. However on 7th April The Duke of Gloucester presented '18th Century Architecture'.

The Local History Group under their new Chairman Miss Pat Tansell, again held their normal series of successful winter meetings. The committee is strong and growing and has lots of ideas. Pat has acted to draw the LHG closer to the centre of the Society which can only be good for us all. Additional items planned by the group included separate meetings to publicise the Society with stalls at VE celebrations and Fair Day.

The Landscape Committee has been busy with the second town sign, the Church steps and many other items which affect the environment of Bromsgrove. The decision by Worcestershire County Council to fund the reinstatement of the Church steps is a positive result of work stemming from 1997. There has also been work to provide signs to the orchard at Avoncroft Museum.

The Building and Environment Committee has dealt with the usual inspections of planning applications and in addition the 25th anniversary celebrations and also tackling tourism.

Our President suffered ill health for a period of six months but is now refreshed and involved fully in the society's activities. This has included planning arrangements for the lecture and exhibitions of Mary Long's work and the continuing liaison with MASA.

In October certain members of the Executive Committee met with the leader, deputy leader and Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council. The issues discussed included refuse collection, the future of the Spadesbourne Suite, Town Centre Review, Church steps, cleaning and graffiti, footpath maintenance and grass cutting, medieval crosses, Bromsgrove lecture, town signs and Avoncroft orchard.

A Society dinner with approximately 50 in attendance, was held in November at Bromsgrove School for committee and society members.

Many thanks are extended to all members and others who have spent their valuable time in our committees and in preparation for meetings and also to the Newsletter and Rousler editors, and the Membership Secretary. A special mention and thanks go to our Secretary who has decided to retire after 5 years of valuable service.

### **5. Committee Chairmen's Review of the Year**

*(a) Buildings and Environment Report - Mr J Griffith*

Since the last AGM on 8th July 1004 this committee has met on five occasions.

Amongst the subject discussed were

- The possibility of spot listing Parkside and Meadows First School
- The proposed refurbishment of Catshill Village Hall
- Bus Station redevelopment
- Proposal to crease a Motor Village at Buntsford Hill
- Marlbrook sub-post office
- Proposed rendering plant at Alvechurch
- Proposals to redevelop the Market Hall
- Future of Spadesbourne Suite
- Artrix
- Lack of shopping facilities at the Oakalls
- Proposed crossing from Mill Lane to Asda store
- Possibility of meeting with Bromsgrove School to ascertain what they proposed at Perry Hall
- Continuing discussions and update on the 25th Anniversary projects

During the course of the year various questionnaires have been received and dealt with

- Minerals and waste development framework-Consultation **WCC**
- Statement of community involvement **WCC**
- Mill Lane improvements **BDC**
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - Modification Order
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - Parish review **WCC**
- Bromsgrove Local Plans Team - core strategy discussion group **BDC**
- Survey of buildings of local architectural and historic interest
- Nominations for local listing **BDC**
- Worcestershire Tourist Forum **WCC**

The number of planning applications lodged has decreased considerably owing to the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note and Moratorium criteria laid down BDC in 2004, with a resultant drop in the number of objections raised but there were still many cases that cause concern: Ashborough Farm, Burcot Lane; Abberley House; Bromsgrove Branch Post Office, Lickey Road, Rednal; land at School Drive (16 apartments and 6 houses) and mobile phone mast by Golf Club

25th Anniversary Programme ‘ three meetings of the committee (involving members from all the three committees) were also held during the year. An ongoing programme was finalised as follows:

1. Produce a book on the history of the Society. This to be a series of articles in future editions of Newsletter and Rousler. Several local families have already contributed
2. Third town sign ‘ a suitable picture has been chosen from the late Mary Long’s art portfolio but the necessary arrangements have not yet been finalised
3. Street furniture/hard landscaping ‘ have yet to agree requirements with Council
4. Duke of Gloucester Lecture ‘ organised by President and Chairman
5. Bromsgrove Society Architectural Awards to be announced at AGM
6. Elizabethan Market ‘ being organised by History Group
7. Medieval Rogation Crosses project now completed. Crosses blessed on 1st May.

My sincere thanks to all those who helped make this happen:

Cross Design	Tony Turpin
Cross Manufacture	Leander Architectural
Red Cross Plinth and Lectern	Bromsgrove Guild
Display frame	Fitzpatrick Woolmer

Information Panel

Dr. Alan and Sheila Richards ‘

researched the original map

Dr. Alan and Shelia Richards and Jenny Townshend ‘ the history of the crosses as used on the information panel

Panel Artwork

Prepared and sponsored by Webb

Display Services Ltd.

Listed Building consent

Obtained by Ron Skidmore

Siting and permission to erect display panel, plinth and lectern

Negotiated with Highways Partnership by John Sketchley

Erection and fixing of Display Panel and Bromsgrove Crosses

Patrick Lees and his team from Bromsgrove District Council

Owners/tenants of the buildings upon which the various crosses are fixed for their kind co-operation.

Bromsgrove Planning Department and Highways Partnership for their help, co-operation and advice.

The Blessings and procession organised by The Rev. Nigel Marns Vicar of St. John’s and attended by 5 other clergymen, members of their respective organisations, Bromsgrove Society committee and other members, the Bailiff of the Court Leet and the Town Crier.

Finally I would like to thank Graham Reddie, Des Clarke and all the members of both committee’s for all their hard work, support and advice during the last year and a special thank you to my wife Valerie for all her help and consideration in putting up with my rather eccentric and at times inconvenient timetable and to Martin for giving up the whole of his Sunday to act as ‘official photographer’ for the Society and the local press on 1st May.

*Jim Griffith, Chairman, Building and Environmental Committee*

*(b) Landscape Committee Report - Mr R Skidmore*

**New Town Sign:** Following the unveiling of the second town sign last June; it was reported at last year’s AGM that proposals are being put forward for third sign in Stourbridge Road; this has moved forward and the possibility of a fourth sign in Birmingham Road is now being discussed.

I was heartened to see that our Stratford Road sign has at last had some flowers planted around it when it had previously looked a little forlorn amidst uncut grass and empty flower beds.

**Avoncroft:** In 1994, the Society promised to pay for a sign showing the location, type and name of the fruit trees in the orchard and this promise has now been fulfilled

**Hewell Grange:** The lottery bid for nearly £1,000,000 for the first phase of the restoration of the grounds was turned down by the Heritage Lottery Fund. New proposals for a more modest bid are now under way.

**The Church Steps:** At last the move to reinstate and renovate the steps to St. John’s Church seems to be gathering momentum and the Society’s Chairman, President, Isobel Jarrett and myself have taken a keen interest in pestering, prodding and generally making nuisances of ourselves with anyone who we considered might have some influence in getting things moving.

Following radio interviews, several meetings both at the steps and in the offices of the Highways Partnership attended by representatives of the Council, County Highways, the Church and Bromsgrove Society, funds have now been made available to carry out the necessary work to completely renovate the flight from Market Street up to the Church Lych gate, which is itself in a parlous state, but we understand that the damage caused to it is the subject of an insurance claim and is being dealt with as a separate matter.

After consulting with senior representatives of the Highways Partnership, I am happy to report that competitive quotes will soon be sought and a start on site is projected for later this year if the programme can be maintained.

**Home Zones:** You may recall at last year’s AGM there was a short video presentation about Home Zones; this is a subject dear to both my and the Society’s Presidents heart; to this end,

Graham Reddie and I met with the Chief Planning Officer for Bromsgrove District Council earlier this year to discuss in outline terms the possibility of creating a pilot scheme in Bromsgrove; we came away from the meeting not entirely convinced that the Council had any enthusiasm for such a ground breaking project; however, I for one will keep trying.

To refresh your memory, a Home Zone is the creation of a pedestrianised residential street with a shared surface for both vehicles and pedestrians, a speed limit of 10m.p.h and the introduction of additional hard and soft landscaping; they are very popular and successful in countries such as Holland and Denmark and seem to be catching on in this country too in some of the more enlightened councils.

Other matters: Although I was not here to deliver last year's report, you may also recall my concern over the apparent continued erosion in the quality of Bromsgrove's environment and I am sad to say that this decline appears to continue unabated, with the spread of graffiti, chewing gum smeared pavements, unsightly and uncared-for traffic islands and road verges, inappropriate and unsightly repairs to the High Street paved areas and so on. As citizens of this town, it's time we became more vociferous and proactive in trying to reverse this worrying trend.

Ron Skidmore, Chairman of Landscape Committee

*(c) History Group - Miss Pat Tansell*

Since last year's AGM, the Local History Group has undergone a period of change. I succeeded Neville Billington as chairman in September and received valuable help from Neville, John Weston and others during the handover period. The group has a strong team with a good grasp of local knowledge and has added new members during the last year.

Our season of talks ran during the autumn and winter period. Topics included the Vernons of Hanbury Hall. Each year we try to include a subject from the wider area. A talk on the Birmingham pen trade was accompanied by a very interesting display of writing goods and related items. The next season begins on 20 September and includes talks on the local workhouse, the River Severn and the history of the postal service in Worcestershire. The full programme can be seen on the back of the current newsletter.

Jenny Townshend once again edited The Rousler. Her tireless work and that of John Weston resulted in our annual magazine being ready early.

As a group, we think it is important to go out into the local area and raise people's awareness of The Bromsgrove Society.

On 28 September, I attended the AGM of the Worcestershire Local History Forum where along with members from other groups I gave a very short overview of what we do.

In November, members of the Local History Group visited Arden House Social Club and led a short reminiscence session focusing on the High Street now and then.

On 2 March, Thelma Lammas, Jenny Townshend and I visited Brook Court to give a short illustrated talk about the history of Bromsgrove.

We have expanded the range of display material that we can use and have used various opportunities to show our work and the wider work of the society. We have attended several events at venues including Hanbury Hall. At each event, we have been able to sell books and postcards and to forge links with other local groups and organisations.

Since handing over leadership of the group Neville has been helping Lickey Parish Council members with research relating to the drinking fountain outside the village hall. They are hoping to carry out some restoration

Group member Roy Albutt recently published a book about the stained glass windows of A. J. Davies.

We are looking forward to the next year and hope to see you on the 20 September when we meet at the Methodist Centre to hear more about the Hughes Collection project which aims to identify the subjects of photographs taken in the town during the late Victorian and Edwardian period.

*Pat Tansell, Chairman of the Bromsgrove Society Local History Group*

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

The Society's financial position is strong and secure. At the end of the financial year reserves stood at £45,863 of which £38,465 was invested in the Charities Deposit Fund.

Income fell compared with the previous financial year by 35% to £6,557. This was due partly to there being no Bromsgrove lecture during the financial year but mainly because there was no fund raising effort to compare with the very successful Old Time Music Hall concert in the preceding year.

Expenditure fell by 20% to £8,786 due partly to the reduced scale of donations,.

There was an operating deficit for the year of £358 which is reflected in the level of reserves.

Details information is available from the independently examined financial statements for the year ended 5th April 2005, on the Society's website or on request by telephoning 0121 445 3017.

The Financial Statement had already been circulated. The Treasurer, John Rowlands stated that all creditors' invoices have been cleared. Subscriptions are down slightly, which is somewhat disappointing, and he urged members who are tax payers to register with Inland Revenue.

He recorded his appreciation of John Weston's efforts with sales of books. The cost of the Newsletter had risen, due in part to the extra cost of printing, and the fact that this year we had had extra copies printed. We had also had to pay a considerable amount for the Planning Guide. The deficit of £358 was lower than that budgeted for. As there were no questions from the floor, John Rowlands proposed that the accounts be approved, and this was seconded by Jim Griffith. Carried unanimously. The Chairman thanked John Rowlands on behalf of the members.

## **6. Appointment of Auditor**

John Rowlands proposed that Elaine Duffill be appointed as Auditor to the Society. This was seconded by Robin Shaw and carried unanimously by the meeting.

## **7. Election of Officers**

John Weston proposed that the officers and members of the Executive committee be elected en bloc. These are:

President (Graham Reddie), Chairman (Des Clarke), Hon Secretary (Marion Lancaster) Hon. Treasurer (John Rowlands), Membership Secretary (Jill Palmer), Newsletter Editor (Anne Maguire). Cyril Baker, Mrs Audrey Chapman, Jim Griffith, Richard Guest, Tim Harris, Mrs Isobel Jarrett, John Sketchley, Ron Skidmore, David Slater, Miss Pat Tansell, Tony Turpin, John Weston and Bailiff to the Court Leet (J Sharp)

The proposal was seconded by Ray Meredith and carried unanimously.

## **8. Questions or Comments**

There were no questions from the meeting.

Graham Reddie said he had written to the new lady Governor asking if people could be allowed to look around Hewell Grange primarily to view the buildings. He asked if members would be interested in an arranged visit, and a considerable number indicated that they would.

At the 2004 AGM Graham Reddie had spoken about the Bromsgrove Pride campaign. Having launched this idea, he is now keen to continue as he felt it right and proper to be behind the Bromsgrove District Council in their efforts. He would proceed with this during this year, and if anyone has any good ideas he would be pleased to receive them.

### **Architectural Awards**

Following the meeting John Sketchley welcomed the representatives of the entries for the 2005 Awards, and explained the various projects involved. The Chairman, Graham Reddie, then presented the Awards, and thanked John Sketchley, plus his team of Derek Davis, David Slater and Jeremy Sharpe for their considerable efforts on behalf of the Society.

*J.R.Rowlands, ACIS, Honorar Treasurer*

# *The Bromsgrove Society Executive Committee*

for 2005-2006 comprises all those officers of the Society shown on the inside of the front cover plus the following members:-

<b>Cyril Baker</b>	551, Birmingham Road, Marlbrook Bromsgrove. B61 0HY	0121 445 3633
<b>Roger Brazier</b>	(Vice President) 36 Harvington Road, Bromsgrove B60 2BA	01527 878889
<b>Mrs Audrey Chapman</b>	58 East Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2NJ	01527 873410
<b>Jim Griffith</b>	(Vice Chairman of The Bromsgrove Society & Chairman - Buildings & Environment Committee) 24 Ragley Crescent, Bromsgrove. B60 2BD	01527 833252
<b>Richard Guest</b>	36 Church Road, Bromsgrove. B61 8QH	01527 831580
<b>Tim Harris</b>	Church Green Cottage, 44 Church Road, Bromsgrove B61 8QH	01527 872451
<b>Mrs Isobel Jarrett</b>	28 Alvechurch Highway, Lydiate Ash, Bromsgrove. B60 1PA	0121 453 2100
<b>Ray Meredith,</b>	(Vice President) "Hillborough", Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove. B60 3AX	01527 831083
<b>John Sketchley</b>	16, Brueton Avenue, Bromsgrove B60 2AW	01527 876626
<b>Ron Skidmore</b>	(Vice Chairman of The Bromsgrove Society & Chairman - Landscape Committee), 12, College Road, Bromsgrove. B60 2NE	01527 880196
<b>David Slater</b>	Pepperwood House, Dordale Road, Bournheath Bromsgrove. B61 9JX	01527 871559
<b>Miss Pat Tansell</b>	(Chairman - Local History Group) 20 Oakhurst Drive, School Drive, Bromsgrove. B60 1AR	01527 575590
<b>Tony Turpin</b>	89 Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove. B61 0AL	01527 876659
<b>John Weston</b>	Breakback House, 20 Sunningdale Road, Bromsgrove. B61 7NN	01527 873483
<b>Ex-Officio Committee Member:</b>	The Bailiff of the Court Leet	

## *Corporate Members*

*Our current schedule of corporate members is set out below*

<b>All Saints Garage Ltd.</b>	<b>Morton Fisher, Solicitors</b>
<b>Baylis and Co.(Bromsgrove) Ltd.</b>	<b>Polymer Latex</b>
<b>Bromsgrove Golf Centre</b>	<b>A.Victor Powell</b>
<b>Central Office Services</b>	<b>R. &amp; S. Antiques</b>
<b>Clarks Motor Services</b>	<b>Rashwood Care Home</b>
<b>Designed Systems Interiors</b>	<b>The Red Lion (Bromsgrove)</b>
<b>Harris Super Coaches (Bromsgrove) Ltd.</b>	<b>Regal Garage (Bromsgrove) Ltd.</b>
<b>Thomas Horton &amp; Sons</b>	<b>Rotary Club of Bromsgrove</b>
<b>Jukes Insurance Brokers</b>	<b>Scotts, Solicitors</b>
<b>The Ladybird Inn</b>	<b>Townsend Textiles</b>
<b>Lignum Crafts</b>	<b>Weaver PLC</b>
<b>Lloyds TSB. Bank</b>	<b>Webbs of Wychbold</b>
<b>Mr.B. Manning (B.G.M. Associated)</b>	<b>Wilson's Pet Centres Ltd</b>
<b>Millfields First School</b>	<b>X.L.Displays</b>

# *The Bromsgrove Society Local History Group*

**Tuesday 20 September 2005**

## *The Hughes Collection*

*(An update on the project to identify the subjects of glass plate negatives by a Bromsgrove photographer).*

**Terry O'Brien**

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**Tuesday 18 October 2005**

## *Worcestershire Postal History*

**Chris Jackson**

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**Tuesday 15 November 2005**

## *The Upper Reaches of the River Severn*

**Brian Draper**

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**Tuesday 6 December 2005**

## *A History of Whistles*

**Simon Topman**

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**Tuesday 21 February 2006**

## *Worcestershire Milestones*

**Terry Keegan**

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**Tuesday 21 March 2006**

## *Bromsgrove Workhouse in the Nineteenth Century*

**Neville Land**

**To be held at the Methodist Centre, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove  
commencing at 7.45.p.m.**

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