

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

news
February 2023

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February 2023

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Editors Notes

At the February meeting in Bream, I gave a 20 minute talk on 'Writing for the Newsletter'. I promised at the meeting that the internet addresses of the more useful online 'research' websites presented at the meeting would be included in the newsletter. Unfortunately we have run out of space this time, so you will see the article in the May edition. Chris Sullivan is also working on producing an updated and more wide ranging 'Guide for Researchers' which you will shortly be able to download from our website. Don't forget that if you need any advice about your research, please contact any member of the Committee, who will be pleased to put you in touch with the person most likely to be able to help you.

I recently had the pleasure of working with Roy Close, a retired printer who used to work on production of our much valued local newspapers. We produced an article together ('Pressing the Advantage through a Bright Idea') which featured in the last New Regard. To my surprise, after the New Regard was published, Mary Sullivan (our hardworking Publications sales 'guru') presented me with a script by the late Tom Bright, titled 'Early Forest Newspapers'. Much to my embarrassment, Mary had found the material in the FODLHS library. This was about the only information resource I hadn't delved into whilst researching the NR article! Anyway, thanks to Mary, you can enjoy Tom's piece in the centre section of this edition. It serves as a good companion piece to the NR article.

No doubt you recognise the photograph of Cannop Ponds on the front cover. Currently the subject of much debate as Forestry England wrestle with how they deal with the potentially 'doggy dams' at Cannop. We all, no doubt, have our own personal views about what should happen to the aquatic landscape in the Cannop Valley. As our Chair explains opposite the Society will be involved in the debate from a historic built heritage viewpoint.

On the back cover we have a unique appreciation of our recently retired New Regard Editor Ian Standing, written by his wife Diana. As you will probably know, Ian is a Verderer of the Forest of Dean and one of our Vice Presidents and will continue in both roles. In addition to Diana's excellent appreciation, I think it is also worth noting a few more 'stats' about Ian's almost life time involvement with the Society. Along the way he has given or conducted at least 11 talks and walks, and written 15 articles for the New Regard. Quite an achievement!

Keith Walker

Short pieces of news, views, and opinions for the Newsletter are always very welcome. Every effort will be made to reproduce articles as presented but the Editor reserves the right to edit as necessary. The Editor will assume that all necessary authorisation for attachments, photographs etc has been obtained and the FODLHS will not be held liable in the case of a subsequent query.

Views From The Chair



Welcome to a new year, one which, from the History Society's point of view, is already packed with interesting talks, walks and events. A huge amount of 'behind the scenes' work goes into producing a varied and interesting programme (thank you Cecile) and I hope that you will be able to support Your Society by attending as many of these as you are able.

We have noticed a steady increase in the numbers attending the talks at Bream so we are optimistic this trend will continue.

You will all, I am sure, be aware of the current controversy surrounding Cannop Ponds and Forestry England's recent document "Cannop Ponds: The Next Chapter". (www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Cannop%20Ponds_The%20Next%20Chapter_.pdf), The document sets out the options, as they see them, to address the issue of the dams, which are reported to need attention.

The issue appears to have polarised views across the Forest, and I am sure you will have your own opinions on the proposals. Your Society has been invited to attend a Stakeholder Engagement Event at the Speech House Hotel on 2 February. We will report on the outcome of the event in due course.



I mentioned in my last 'piece' that our Secretary, Nicola Wynn had stepped down. I am delighted to report that we have been fortunate that Owen McLaughlin has stepped up to the plate and taken on the role. Owen moved to the Forest with his family, around two years ago, having moved from the Fens in Cambridgeshire. He retired last year after 35 years in IT following an earlier career in teaching. Owen says the Forest of Dean suits his family's interests with its complex and

fascinating history together with endless opportunities for outdoor activities. I am looking forward to working with Owen over the coming years.

One of my 'passions' is maps (I know, I should get out more!) We are blessed in this country with the Ordnance Survey whose maps are the envy of the world. Maps contain so much information in a readily accessible format. Technology now allows us to look at old maps and the internet has many sites containing ancient maps. Some sites, such as Know Your Place (www.kypwest.org.uk) enable you to overlay old maps on modern versions giving a view of how an area has changed over the years (centuries in some cases). They make an ideal research tool.

Another source of research which I have recently become aware of, is the website, Vision of Britain (www.visionofbritain.org.uk) The website contains a huge amount of information including census details, maps, photographs, place names and more.

All this talk of research leads me to extend an open invitation to any member of the Society to submit articles for either this publication, or our award-winning journal, New Regard. If you are minded to take up the challenge and write an article, have a chat with any of the Committee members who will be able to assist with advice, guidance and encouragement!

As the weather slowly starts to improve, I look forward to welcoming you to our meetings at the West Dean Centre.

John Lane



MEMBERSHIP

A happy new year to all our members. We are now well into membership year 2022/23. Thank you to the vast majority of those who have renewed their subscriptions to the Society. If you have not previously received one, membership cards for those who have renewed their membership accompany this newsletter.

This year we have asked for a contact telephone number. This is only so that if you are booked onto an event of which details have had to be changed at the last minute, we are able to contact you quickly. Please keep a look out for emails from me informing you both of FoDLHS events and also of upcoming presentations from other organisations such as the Heritage Hub which runs an excellent programme of events.

As well as renewals I am pleased to welcome the following new members to our Society: Angela Jenkins, Phil Bellinger, Duncan Boughen, Patrick Gale, Valerie Hill, Keith James, Roger Hook, Sharon Moffat, Tracey Powell, Mary Brown, Jan Trouw, Elizabeth Trouw and F. Lauri. We hope you enjoy your membership and look forward to seeing you at forthcoming meetings and events, which are now in full swing!

Ian Gower (membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk)

GUIDED TOUR OF GOODRICH CASTLE SUNDAY MAY 21ST, 2PM

This event is 'self-drive', and offers a unique opportunity to join the knowledgeable Dr Rob Jones as he leads a guided walk around Goodrich Castle. Goodrich Castle has stood since the 11th Century, but most of what stands today was the work of William de Valence, Henry III's half-brother, in the late 13th century. The castle survived largely unaltered until a two month siege in 1646.

Entry to the castle is free, but the tour fee is £7 per person. For practical reasons, the numbers of those going on the guided walk will have to be limited. Therefore if you are interested in going on the walk, could you please let Cecile Hunt know as soon as possible. Cecile will advise you on how to pay when you email or telephone your booking(s) to her.

Email: meetings@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Phone: 01594 842164

You will find the Castle at Castle Lane, Goodrich, HR9 6HY

FORTHCOMING INDOOR MEETINGS

Saturday 18th February 3pm
West Dean Centre, Bream

**Averil Kear relates the story of
Lydney & Dilke Hospitals**

Friday 31st March 7pm
ZOOM MEETING

**William Marshall - Earl of Pembroke
with Dr Rob Jones**

Saturday 11th March 3pm
West Dean Centre, Bream

**Naylor Frith describes the
History of the Severn Ferries**

Saturday 15th April 3pm
West Dean Centre, Bream

**John Lane leads us on a virtual walk through
Parts of Historic Gloucester**



DHC News Update *with Nicola Wynn*

Dean Archaeological Group Exhibition - 18th Feb to 13th July 2023

This exhibition looks at the work of DAG, explaining archaeology and the excavations they have carried out over the last few years. Find out about Welshbury Hill Fort, Welshbury Wood, Dean Road, Breckness Court and Legg Barn, Blakeney. Come and see what they were looking for and what they found.

New playground

We are having an exciting new playground installed which will be ready for February half term. Great for younger children, grandchildren will love it!

February half term

At half term we will be open Tuesday to Sunday (closed Monday) and will have a range of family and children's activities, see our website for more details. Look out for Easter activities in April.

Book Review

Why the title (*Riding Two Horses*)? Ford writes *'I've juggled internationalism and a fidelity to the European project with the English left's socialist chauvinism'*. Passing over a densely-written political introduction, we move to simpler, more autobiographical writing, and subjects more relevant to a review in a Dean history newsletter.

Brought to the Forest by a relative, Ford's orphaned father initially worked at Lydney tin works. He married a Bream girl. Wartime took the family to Stonehouse. Glyn Ford was born in January 1950 at Gloucester Royal. Fortnightly, Glyn returned to a Forest grandmother – well water, no bathroom or toilet. Why did Forest cottages have a huge deeply-dug vegetable patch? Fortnightly, the night-soil had to be buried somewhere.

From the Dean, Ford learnt to value class struggle values from the 1920s, and the joys of political infighting. After grammar school took him to universities and academic roles, he used that training as a Tameside councillor and as a Member of the European Parliament. As an MEP and afterwards, he became respected and valued, particularly in the Far East, as a pro-democracy, anti-racism campaigner. We hear little about the priorities of his constituents, including in the Dean.

This thick, tightly-bound book is organised into subject-related modules covering various periods, rather than a chronological narrative. It does not matter whether I agree with Ford's analysis, though quite often I do. The important thing is that Ford's book makes me think, and examine my own recollections and the evidence for them. A list of abbreviations is wisely provided. Non-Whitehall readers might need Wikipedia on *'rapporteur'* to appreciate how influential Ford's *rapporteur* roles were in the European Parliament.

Book review by Chris Sullivan (sometime National Executive member of a Whitehall trade union!)

Riding Two Horses- Labour in Europe. Glyn Ford, Spokesman Books 2022, £14.99 399 pages.



Early Forest Newspapers by Tom Bright

This is part one of a two part series of articles, written by Tom Bright in 1974 to celebrate 100 years of our local Forest newspapers and the Bright family connection with them. Tom was a former President of the Local History Society. He died in 1984. You can read more on this subject in New Regard Vol 37 'Pressing the Advantage through a Bright idea'.

During the first three quarters of the 19th century the Hough family had run a printing business at Coleford. My grandfather, Thomas Bright, served his apprenticeship with the Hough's, rose to the position of foreman and in 1874 the then proprietor of the business, Charles Cooper Hough, took him into partnership. On July 3rd of that year my grandfather published the first number of the *Dean Forest Guardian*.

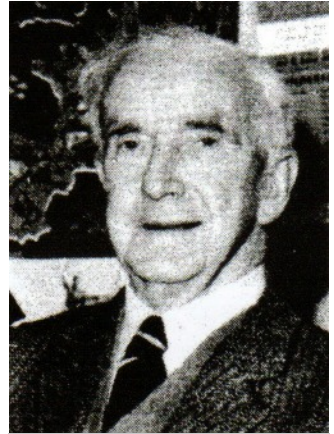
The late 19th century saw a tremendous increase in the number of local newspapers because of the abolition of stamp duty in 1855. When I was young there was an old printer named Bird in Coleford who was very fond of producing newspapers. Ivor Waters, writing about Chepstow printers in his book *About Chepstow*, stated that in 1865/66 he produced one for a brother in Chepstow, though that town already had two competing papers which used much of their space for libelling each other, which naturally increased the circulation of both, and from 1884 to 1888 another paper for another Chepstow man.

A Colefordian named Salter, who served his apprenticeship with Mr Bird, once told me a most amusing story. Mr Bird once came into the works where one of his papers, possibly the *Forest of Dean Free Press*, and called to the operator, "Stop the Press." "But Mr Bird" said the operator, "we only print 100 and I've printed 99 already." "Never mind," said Mr Bird, "I've got a good advertisement here from a draper in Cheltenham." So, they stopped the machine, substituted the advertisement for something the previous 99 had contained, sent the paper to the advertiser as his voucher copy, and he never knew that only himself and the printing staff had seen his advertisement.

Another printer who started with Mr Bird was Mr George Harper, who worked for us at the *Guardian* office for 60 years and became well known locally for his services to football. He hinted to me that Mr Salter's stories had to be taken with a grain of salt. Another story Mr Salter told me was that when he went to London on holiday, he used to call on Moberley Bell, then manager of *The Times*, and give him advice on how to run his paper, so perhaps Mr Harper's advice was not too wide of the mark, but it would be a pity to spoil a good story for the sake of veracity.

There had been a previous newspaper published in Coleford from the 1850's onwards, *The Forester*, but about the time the *Guardian* started it was taken over by the Gloucester Citizen, and subsequently published in that city until the 1880. Other newspapers were published in towns near Coleford: *The Monmouthshire Beacon* started in 1837 and the *Ross Gazette* in 1867.

Our issues of July 5th, 1974, contained an article that mentioned a number of events which were dealt with in our first issue. An early issue, July 24th, 1874, contains a list of subscriptions towards compensation for seven people whose property was damaged to the extent of £939 in the West Gloucestershire Riots at Cinderford.



Tom Bright

The *Dean Forest Mercury* in its early issues called the *Cinderford Mercury*, was started at Cinderford by John Cooksey in 1881. Whereas my grandfather had given as his reason for starting the *Guardian* the need for the growing power of Conservatism in West Gloucestershire to have a paper of its own (The Forester was Liberal). Mr Cooksey naively gave as his reason the fact that his paper, which was Liberal, would be a very good thing for its owner.

I knew a cousin of Mr Cooksey's, Mr George Jones, who worked on the first *Mercury* and remained at the *Mercury* office for over 60 years. He told me about the exhausting work needed to produce the paper with the aid of a hand press which would only print one page at a time.

Both papers must have had a hard struggle to survive in the aftermath of the Great Depression of the late 1870s. My grandfather died of consumption, then a regular scourge in the Forest, in 1890, and was succeeded as editor by my father, Arthur Thomas Bright, then in his mid-twenties. Under his editorship the paper went through a period of mild success, and a legacy received as a result of his younger brother's death enabled him to buy out the Hough interest.

The first crisis to hit the *Guardian* came following the death of the Liberal member for the Forest, Sir Charles Dilke in January 1911. The local Liberal party looked round for a new candidate who, like Sir Charles, was wealthy enough to bear most of the expenses of elections etc. and hit on Mr Harry Webb. He was a poor speaker, and to support his cause tried to buy up all the Forest newspapers. He succeeded with the *Mercury*, and *Lydney Observer*. But my father alone stood out. From the time of the purchase of the two newspapers both were printed at Cinderford.

A period of hectic competition between the *Guardian* and the other two papers followed. To meet this father bought a linotype in 1912. Previously all typesetting had been done by hand. Setting by linotype was a good deal quicker and saved the necessity to sort the type for re-use, since all that was necessary was to remelt it after it had been cleaned. Father now was able to print the whole paper at Coleford instead of half and therefore to give more space to local news.

After the Great War started the newspaper war became impossible and owing to shortage of reporting staff it became customary for only one of the rivals to send a reporter to any event to provide a report for each of them. When the War ended Sir Henry Webb, as he had by then become, at the December 1918 election was thoroughly beaten by the Labour candidate, James Wignal. And consequently, lost interest in the Forest. He had made himself rather unpopular as commandant of the Forest Battalion of Gloucestershire Regiment though he did not accompany them to the front. He sold his interest in the Forest papers to his manager, Mr H W Grimwade.

Not long after, in July 1922, Mr Grimwade and father entered into partnership and from that time all three papers were printed at Cinderford, and all three became non-political and non-sectarian. Under Father's editorship of the *Guardian* had little political tinge and even under my grandfather, a keen Tory, the correspondence column was headed "Audi altrem partem" – Listen to the other chap's point of view.



Original home of the Bright family, printing works and shop, in Newland Street, Coleford

Don't Be Foxed by this Name! *by Cecile Hunt*



The Silver Fox Cafe in 2012
Photo © Colin Pyle (cc-by-sa/2.0)

Fashion followers of the 19th century avidly followed what royalty was wearing. In 1876 Queen Victoria was spotted, on visiting the London Hospital, wearing a black velvet coat trimmed with silver fox fur. Later in the year the Princess of Cornwall was seen to be wearing a 'black velvet jacket trimmed with jet and the fur of the silver fox.

Importation of silver fox pelts into UK was big business in the 19th century. Silver foxes were among the most valued fur bearers, their pelts worn by nobles in Russia, Western Europe and

China. Captive populations were more guaranteed to produce the silver coat morph as they were exclusively mated with members of the same colour which is a melanistic form of the red fox.

In 1883 the fur trade recorded 2,000 silver foxes killed in that year "which was a decline on previous years". By the end of 19th century silver fox pelts were becoming a rare commodity. It was noted that in 1899; "so rare are the silver fox skins that only 535 were garnered by the white and Indian trappers of north west America".

By the early 1900s silver fox fur was commanding high prices and in 1900 a single silver fox skin from the Hudson Bay Company fetched a record £500 [2017 value: £58,418.48]. In the same year another fashion guru wrote; "Silver Fox, one of the most exquisite of all furs, is domestic to America, and is very costly when real. The real silver fox, with its soft long white tipped fur, and the dark rich streak down the centre of the skin, the size and depth of which regulate the price, is considered quite as elegant as Russian sable, and is more generally becoming. One skin makes the muff, using the head and tail, and three makes the pelerine or scarf." (*The Torquay Times, December 7th 1900*).

Breeding of silver foxes started on Prince Edward Island, Canada in late 1890's. In 1922 a Colonel Chute, who already had a skink farm on Dartmoor and in 1925 he introduced silver foxes to his farm; the start of silver fox breeding in the UK. Word spread and other silver fox farms sprung around the country. In 1933 there were 80 fox farms in Great Britain the Silver Fox Breeders Association, in one year, registered over 1,000 cubs. Decline in the industry had set in by the 1940's.

One of Great Britain's silver fox farms, trading during the early 1940's to 1945, was on the A48 at Broadoak, Newnham. Cages were placed on legs for when the Severn flooded (regularly!). The site of this breeding farm is now commemorated in the name of the café sited there; The Silver Fox Café. Launched in 1947, trading in 1957 as a transport café, it was revamped in 1982, but ceased trading in 2016. In 2018 plans were put forward to demolish it and build two commercial offices and an industrial unit, however, in July 2021 the café doors re-opened.

Refurbishment in 2020 discovered footings probably dating back to late 1700's. It was a smokery from the late 1880's to 1940's. Before the first Severn road crossing opened in 1966 the A48 was busy with all types of motorists including celebrities travelling from gig to gig and home to home. Regular celebrity callers at the café were: The Beatles, The Who, Rolling Stones, Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor, Shirley Bassegy plus many, many others. Many signed photos of celebrities who stopped for refreshments used to adorn the walls.

Well worth a visit for coffee, cake and much more!

Why Minsterworth is Such a Long Village

by Terry Moore-Scott

So many times, I've been asked why Minsterworth is such a long strung-out village. Undoubtedly, the presence of the River Severn and of the main roadway has influenced its development (the road was turnpiked in 1726), but the origins of the matter are more historic and go back at least to Anglo Saxon times.

The Domesday Book commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1086 describes the lands controlled by Anglo Saxon lords before the Normans took control and it provides us with a good idea of what the area we now think of as Minsterworth looked like. It comprised three separate manorial estates Murcott and Dunny and a third deduced to be Minsterworth. Thus, we have a picture of three separate hamlets or communities under different manorial lords, forming a stretched-out parish of Minsterworth.

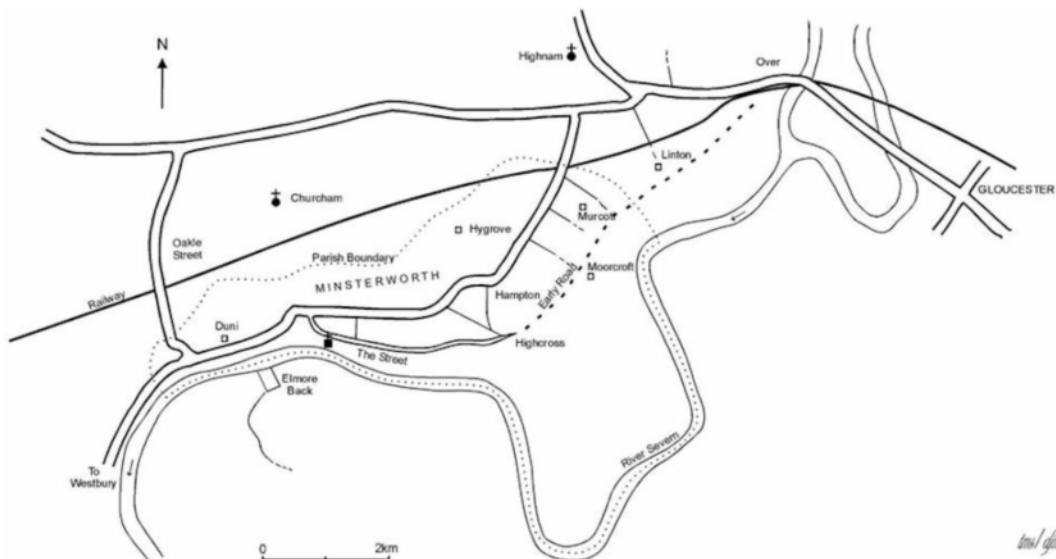
This situation continued through much of the medieval period with all three estates being held by the abbey of St Peter's Gloucester but under the over-lordship of the Crown and then of the Duchy of Lancaster. By the 13th century a parish church was set up to serve this collection of settlements and this too had the effect of bringing them closer together as a single parish.

Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, the lands of Minsterworth were redistributed or sold off by the Crown to wealthy new owners and we begin to see the development of a single manor of Minsterworth. Its centre and manor house was probably near to the church, very likely where Tithe Cottage now stands. By 1757 when Sir Charles Barrow acquired the rights to the manor and set up his grand residence at Hygrove, Minsterworth was effectively a single manor estate* and a consolidated settlement stretching from Murcott in the north-east down to Dunny in the west.

* Up until the late 19th century, the ancient parish and manor of Minsterworth also included parcels of land on the opposite side of the River Severn.

This article is taken from Terry's book "Discovering Old Minsterworth".

Copies are available from Terry himself, via email: terrymoore-scott@outlook.com, or phone: 01452 750160. Or copies can be obtained from the Family History Unit in Gloucestershire Archives.



Meetings in Review *With Simon Moore, Keith Walker & Owen McClaughlin*



*Mary Cole
circa 1790*

Saturday 12th November saw Cecile Hunt once again treat us to a telling of ‘The Berkeley Affaire’, a tale of intrigue, scandal and absurd adherence to social etiquette of the 18th century, that deprived an heir of his title and must have kept the social elite of the time on the edge of their seats! The previous telling of this tale was in September 2021 at the first meeting ‘in-person’ of the society after the lockdowns, which had a low turnout; however it was well received and deserved a second outing!

This is a very complicated story involving a young lady called Mary Cole, born in 1769 to a farmer/publican from Gloucester, she was sent to London to enter service with her sister, Susan. Neither took to the life of a maid and so Mary returned to Gloucester and Susan became a ‘kept woman’. At one of her parties Susan introduced Mary to Francis 5th Earl of Berkeley; Lord Berkeley became infatuated with Mary who refused his advances until he had rescued her from a set

up kidnapping at an evening soiree at Susan’s London house in 1785. They married in the church at Berkeley soon afterwards but it was kept secret...presumably for fear of scandal at marrying below his station; he was 40 and she was 18; the marriage produced 4 sons and 3 daughters. Even when baptising the children, the marriage was not acknowledged.. the registered entry for William Fitz Harding the first born reads ‘son of 5th Earl Berkeley and Mary Cole’; even at home the servants were instructed to call her ‘Miss Tudor’, and her mother who had come to help her was to be referred to as ‘Old Nurse’.

Clearly Lord Berkeley had got himself in a muddle and was concerned that his first born son, his heir, would be compromised by the deception they had created.. He sought legal advice, which threw doubt on the legitimacy of the first marriage. In 1796 a second marriage took place, this time in London and Mary was given the title of Countess Berkeley; and produced a further 6 children. This complicated things further; especially for the children as Francis wanted to pass his estate and title to his first born, William Fitz Harding (known as Fitz) but he was illegitimate; would he have to let the first born son of his second marriage to Mary, Thomas, take the title? Francis took the matter to the house of Lords in 1799; who refused to rule in favour of Fitz. At this time, and in order to remove herself from the scandal, Mary took herself off to Madeira for a while...well you would wouldn’t you?

Francis died in 1810, Fitz inherited Berkeley Castle, and much later was awarded his own peerage. Thomas inherited his father’s Earldom but refused it in deference to his father’s wishes. Mary continued to live in seclusion from society, though as the Countess of Berkeley at Cranford the Berkeley Dower House in Middlesex. She died in 1844 aged 77 years. Fitz died in 1857, the self-styled ‘King of Cheltenham’.. and not a particularly nice person by all accounts.

S.M.

On a cold day in December (10th), Patrick Furley came to Bream to present his well-travelled ‘Magic Lantern Christmas Show’. To start, Patrick gave us a ‘blast’ of song from his accompanying wind-up gramophone.

He then used some of his collection of Magic Lanterns to explain the history of the device. The earliest known documentation describing a ‘projection lantern’ dates from 1420, but it took the development of convex lenses from about 1650 onwards to open the possibilities of workable lanterns. The term ‘Magic Lantern’ was believed to have been coined by Thomas Walgenstein, who travelled around Europe demonstrating and selling them. Later from the 18th century onwards, improved lens & mirror quality coupled with improved light sources led to Magic Lanterns of sufficient power to be useable in front of larger audiences.



*Lantern Slide courtesy of
lucerna.exeter.ac.uk*

Patrick then presented a series of slides shows, using his dry wit and charm to provide a well-rehearsed commentary to accompany the visual show. At one point the Society's Conservation Officer, Simon Moore, formed a double act with Patrick to provide readings as the slide set unfolded.

All the slides came from Patrick's extensive personal collection, and many of them were 100 years old or more. We saw historic photographs, including appropriately, one of Bream Maypole. We enjoyed cartoon like slide sets of raucous Christmas's of the past, interspersed with the occasional contemporary advert from the time. The highlight of the show was undoubtedly the 'moving' slides. We enjoyed unusual (cartoon) depicted events like a man asleep swallowing rats, a ship whose sails were instantaneously raised, and two men who alternately and magically grew long noses!

Patrick's somewhat different presentation from the usual history related talks was enjoyed by the audience, who continued to ask questions of him well beyond the normal time for tea. After tea, Cecile Hunt presented another of popular quizzes.

K.W.

In a well-received talk, Mr Paul Barnett presented the life of Henry Hook VC to a large audience at West Dean Centre in Bream on Saturday, January 14th. He used a wide range of slides to illustrate the more complex issues particularly in relation to the military aspects of the story.

Alfred Henry Hook was born in Churcham in the Forest of Dean in August 1850. His early years were unremarkable and there was little to suggest that he would do other than live a worthy and devout life in the Forest supporting his wife and 3 children. He was by all accounts a hard-working man as well as a Methodist lay preacher. Then suddenly, at the age of 26, he enlisted in the regular army and in 1879 found himself in the province of Natal on the eve of war with the Zulu nation.

Mr Barnett spoke about the duplicity and incompetence that characterised the British invasion of Zulu territory. Following the British defeat at Isandlwana, several thousand Zulu warriors headed for the outpost of Rorke's Drift which was defended by a force of only 150 British soldiers. During a siege lasting almost 12 hours the defenders held off repeated assaults on their perimeter earning themselves undying fame and no less than 11 Victoria Crosses. One of these awards went to Henry Hook who defended the burning hospital complex with extraordinary courage and helped to rescue eight patients from certain death.

Such are the facts, which might be sacred to some but not the film industry. Mr Barnett took great exception to the manner in which Henry Hook had been depicted in the 1964 film 'Zulu' where he was portrayed as a drunken and insubordinate malingeringer. The records show he was in fact a teetotaler who had volunteered for hospital duty.

He left the army less than 2 years later and moved back to England, but not to the Forest and his wife and family. Instead, he settled in London where he found employment at the British Museum as a 'duster'. His job application was supported by references from some very prominent men including Lord Chelmsford. He taught himself to read and write and was promoted to a more senior post looking after the property of museum visitors. But in the end he returned to the Forest of Dean and died of tuberculosis aged 54 in 1905, his enduring fame demonstrated by the many thousands who attended his funeral. He is buried at Churcham where he was born.

But Henry Hook the man remains something of an enigma. What compulsion took him from Churcham to Natal and then to the British Museum where he must have been something of an exhibit himself, the epitome of the muscular Christian and an authentic hero of the empire.

O.M.



Albert Henry Hook VC

An Appreciation of Ian Standing *by Di Standing*



Ian has been a member of the Local History Society for as long as I have known him, which is 47 years. He first served on the committee in 1981 and over the years has been Indoor Meetings Secretary, Chair (1985-1987) and editor of the *New Regard* from 2013.

Ian's main interest has always been the industrial era, particularly iron ore extraction and processing. He was the instigator in saving Whitecliffe Furnace and gave numerous talks on the subject. However, he also researched the history of ancient woodlands and has spent many hours seeking out and measuring the Forest's largest trees. His children often comment on the lack of childhood photos, only taken when they were used for scale against a tree or furnace.

Ian also re-introduced active engagement by members with field trips looking at landscape history. Using aerial photographs taken during one of

the years of drought, some surface markings were selected for team investigations such as the Roman Villa close to the chicken farm at Clearwell, the moated manor at Breckness Court and a site close to Dean Hall. Ian took part in the dig on a section of the Dean Road, then called a Roman Road – the controversial results showed it to be much later. He has been part of the latest surface mapping team using information from the new LiDAR Maps, still walking the ground interpreting the humps, bumps and hollows.

A great deal of time was spent with Gordon Clissold, retired Ordnance Surveyor, painstakingly transferring the 1608 map (some missing, lots of rat holes) and scaling it to fit the modern 6 inch maps. Many field trips resulted, looking for places named such as Kings Pond, Windmill Field etc.

Ian was keen to encourage members to write up their research, and along with others started up the *New Regard* in 1985, when he was Chair. He has consistently supported the journal up to and including his present role as editor. From the beginning he believed its survival lay in making it self-funding and of a high quality in terms of content and presentation. These have continued to the present day, and the *New Regard* has been an award-winning publication.

Cyril Hart wrote the introduction to *New Regard* No 1, stating that he hopes “this, (journal), will become a major literary depository for the history of our unsurpassed district, with a final plea that our research, writing and publication be of an accurate and reliable standard, separating fact from what may be fanciful hearsay and tradition; and always quoting authorities and references - enabling future researchers to return to study prime sources.”

When looking back through Volume 1, I noticed there were many articles recording activities in the field (or woods) whereas today most articles are research-based. Is it once more time for change and to hear the tramp of feet in the Forest?

Although Ian does still tramp around the Forest, he has decided it is now time to retire as editor. His extensive knowledge of Forest history in all its aspects both practically and editorially, and his access to the library he has built over decades, will be hard to replace.

Ian will not be idle. Editing the *New Regard* left little time for research and writing his book on an explanation of Sopwiths Plans which we will now await publication with great interest.

Note: Thanks are due to the rest of the New Regard editorial team. David Harris sets out the articles to fit within the pages, making sure photographs are clear and in the right place. The very important role of proofreader is taken on by Gill Claydon. And not forgetting those who have helped in the distribution and sales, and last but certainly not least, the contributors.