

FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

news
November 2020

*The History
Society 'zooms'
into a new era*



Inside this edition

- Boy Killed on the Waterloo Creeper - Part 1
- St Tecla's Chapel, Beachley
- Sir Thomas Rich - Part 1
- New Regard 35 - just out -
- full details
- 2021 Calendar of Events

November 2020

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Editors Notes

At the time of writing the spectre of Covid19 is once again looming large over our lives. As you will see from the pull-out 2021 calendar pages in the centre of this edition, the Committee has decided that our regular meetings will have to be held via 'Zoom' for the foreseeable future.

The first such meeting, (using Zoom), was held in October and was a success. The front cover features our Chair Mary Sullivan, the speaker Sarah Franklin, along with just some of the audience at that meeting. So please, don't allow fear of technology to get in the way of joining us at our Zoom meetings. I can promise you that it is a really easy application to use and further instructions as to how to 'attend' will be sent out by email by Cheryl, our Meetings Secretary, a few days prior to each meeting.

The other parts of the pull-out section in this edition feature an order form for the latest edition of New Regard. Clearly as we are not meeting 'in person' you will not be able to buy your copy at our regular meetings. There are several options for you to get hold of a copy at the discounted members price. You can use the order form in this edition, or you can contact Mary Sullivan or Ian Standing to arrange to pay and pick up your copy from their respective homes (contact details are on the order form). Finally you can order via our eshop, but don't forget to use the discount code, which you can find on the News pages.

Elsewhere in this edition, Steven Carter has provided a story about the 'Boy Killed on the Waterloo Creeper', Averil Kear writes about St Tecla's Chapel, Beachley, and Cecile Hunt gives us the history of Sir Thomas Rich.

Last but not least, there is an appreciation of our former Chair, Christine Martyn, who recently passed away. Reflecting the strange times we live in, on the day of Christine's cremation, my wife and I stood alongside Speech House Road to pay our respects and watch the horse drawn cortege pass by, then dashed home to watch a live video stream of the service held at the Crematorium.

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 - *with Mary Sullivan*

Hello to all members.

I write this as the clocks fall back and put us into dark evenings. I know that, for me, history society meetings help get me through the winter months. So, I am very disappointed that we are unable to get together in the usual way at Bream or other familiar venues.



But I was very pleased by the positive response of so many members to our AGM and first talk on 10th October via Zoom. Nearly 50 people joined us, so we were quorate for the AGM. We were lucky that our first speaker, Sarah Franklin, as a University lecturer, was someone used to speaking to people online. Some of our future speakers will be less familiar with the technology but I know they will all do their best to offer us an interesting slot on a winter Saturday afternoon.

New Regard volume 35, a bumper edition of 80 pages, is selling well. Members are getting a real bargain getting all that content for only £6! There are several engaging and different articles. In no particular order, I have so far been absorbed by the story of Ellen Hayward, wise woman of Cinderford; the history of the Fountain Inn; the quantity and quality of the letters written by Mushet to his wife and fascinated to learn about our first President, Scott-Garrett, fossil discoveries. I am lucky to yet have nearly as much again to read about Waterloo Pit, the Severn Engineering Works and mine rescues.

Sadly, some of the special events that have been planned for next year are likely to be postponed. The GLHA day on the theme of the history of education in Gloucestershire is now likely to be pushed back to April 2022. Likewise, planning for our new Local History Festival is halted until the new year when we will review the situation. We want to hold an outside interactive event and that is unlikely to be possible next May. Maybe later in 2021. We will have to see. Fortunately, our new Children's History of the Forest is progressing very well. We still hope to launch this publication in 2021, although the launch may end up online.

Thanks again to members who have chosen to donate the amount of their subscriptions or more to the Society this year. It will help us to keep whatever activities we can offer members and avenues of communication to members going.

Many thanks to our indefatigable editor, Keith Walker, for another entertaining edition of our prize-winning newsletter. We understand that members prefer a colourful paper copy to reading the same online, so that is what we are providing.

If you have any ideas for new talks or activities that will be welcome to members please let me know. I would also welcome regular feedback on how you are finding our zoom meetings. So do join them if you possibly can.

I hope you can have a pleasant, if not a normal, Christmas and New Year.

All best wishes and stay safe.

Mary Sullivan



MEMBERSHIP

It's lovely to see that, despite the constraints on our meetings, the Society is still attracting new members. Welcome to: Mark Horton, Ed Drewitt, Sue Ablett, Tony Williams and Christopher Medley.

Enclosed with this newsletter is your membership card for 2021 with another year of interesting talks and walks. You will see that the card has no meeting venues listed. This is because we will hold our meetings on line until we can once again meet physically.

However, this means that it's more important than ever that I have your current email address so we can keep you informed about events and send you invites for the meetings. If you have not been receiving emails from me recently but believe you have supplied me with an email address, please contact me so I can check you are on the list and that I have your current details. If you haven't supplied one before, please think about doing so. And if you change your email, don't forget to tell me.

Finally, as you know, we are not collecting membership fees this year. Many of you have kindly made donations or paid the equivalent of the membership fee in lieu. Thank you for your generosity and also for your kind words for the committee and our efforts to keep the show on the road. If you wish to donate, the details are below.

Cheryl Mayo membership@forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Donations to the Society in lieu of membership fees can be made
Via cheque payable to the Forest of Dean Local History Society and posted to
FoD LHS Treasurer, 45 Allaston Rd, Lydney, GL15 5SS
OR BACS payment to: Sort code: 401805; Account no: 11071963. Please include your surname and post code as reference.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday 14th November - 3pm - ZOOM MEETING - details will be sent via email
Geoff Davis - "An Illustrated Talk about the Bream Heritage Walk "**

**Saturday 5th December - 3pm - ZOOM MEETING - details will be sent via email
Steven Carter - "Timothy Bennett: Forgotten Mitcheldean Benefactor and Forest Industrialist"**



News from Dean Heritage Centre

We are managing to operate sufficiently whilst doing more funding applications and planning for next year. What we do over the next several months depends on what funding we secure, extent of restrictions and visitor numbers. We will continue opening Thurs to Sun until Christmas except for October half term when we will be open all week. We will be having low key activities for children during holidays.

Nicola Wynn

On Saturday 10th October, our Chair, Mary Sullivan, welcomed some 45 members to the first 'virtual' meeting to be held by the Society using zoom. She presented her report, starting by reminding members of the varied series of talks which had been delivered during the year before the pandemic struck. She thanked all Committee members who played important parts in making the Society function well.

2020 Annual General Meeting

Mary then singled out those members of the committee who were standing down for especial thanks. Firstly, Liz Ridge and Caroline Prosser-Lodge, for their hard work over three years in putting together the programme of events for the Society. Then Roger Deeks, who, due to the many calls on his time from his other wide-ranging activities, was standing down as Vice-Chair and from the committee. Mary said how pleased she was that Sue Middleton had volunteered to take on the Vice Chair role, subject to the committee elections.

The winner of the Cyril Hart Prize, presented for the best written and researched article in the New Regard, vol 34 was awarded to David Mullin for his piece entitled 'Better To Light A Candle – Royal Observer Corps Monitoring Posts Around the Forest of Dean'. The Chair also announced that David had won the GLHA Bryan Gerrard Award for an article in the previous year's New Regard, 'Forty Shilling Freeholders'.

The Scott Garrett prize for the best presentation at the previous year's meetings was awarded to David Clammer of Tidenham Historical Group for his talk 'Beachley & The First World War'.

The election /re-election of the committee then took place. Mary Sullivan explained that, due to the current situation under the pandemic, it had been difficult to plan or arrange major changes for the coming year. So she was willing to continue as Chair for a fourth year as allowed under the constitution. A slide was then shown to the meeting listing the full proposed committee as all the remaining committee members were willing to remain in post, with the principal officers being Mary Sullivan (Chair), Sue Middleton (Vice Chair), Cecile Hunt (Treasurer), and Nicola Wynn (Secretary). With no other candidates coming forward the attendees at the meeting were invited to vote via the 'Zoom poll function'. All attendees indicated their acceptance of the listed committee members continuing in post and they were therefore re-elected en-bloc.

The Treasurer, Cecile Hunt, presented the Annual Accounts for 2019-2020. Regarding the General Fund, she reported that total receipts for the year ending 31st July 2020 were £4521.55, whilst total payments were £3787.70, leaving net receipts for the year at £733.85.

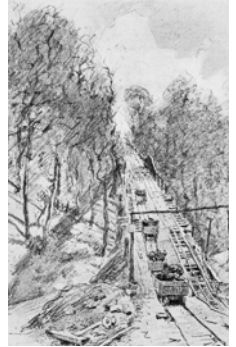
The Publications Fund was next under scrutiny. Sales of the New Regard produced £2934.16 in income, up from last year. The cost of production of the New Regard was £1401.53, slightly up from the previous year. The total receipts for the Publications Fund were £3725.50, whilst total payments were £1617.09, leaving net receipts for the year at £2108.41.

The monetary assets of the Society at 31st July were declared to be; General Fund, £5466.42; Publications Fund, £6939.06; Reserve Fund, £10688.25; Paypal Fund, £242.03



Boy Killed on the Waterloo Creeper *by Steven Carter*

Many in the Forest remember that a boy was killed on the Waterloo Creeper, an endless 800-yard rope haulage that pulled coal tubs between the Arthur & Edward (Waterloo) Colliery, now the site of the Waterloo Business Park, and the Screens at Miery Stock (Waterloo Screens). The precise details and significance of what happened and of the Inquest that followed are less well-known. Yet this tragic incident provides a window on how the power of the Colliery owners was experienced not just by the workers, but also by the wider Forest community in those last years before nationalisation. This article uses the precise wording from a contemporary newspaper report and family recollections from Dennis Kear, brother of Clifford, the boy killed on the Waterloo Creeper.



The Waterloo Creeper attracted the attention of local children from its earliest days. Sidney Kear stated that when he was a boy, before the First World War, he went there and had many a ride, and boys had been going there regularly. In the 1920's Winifred Foley often went to watch 'the slag-filled carts crossing the bridge from Waterloo pit to the slag heap.' In the following decades employee George Kear (no relation) reported seeing children riding on the carts. Workers used to stop the rope and go down to chase the children off, but before they could reach them, they had run away. This had not happened very often – they might go months without seeing any children there. Naturally, the moving trucks would be an attraction to children. He had stopped the rope because he appreciated the apparent danger. George Kear said he may have told the management about it, but he could not recollect having done so. He thought they were very aware – quite probably they had seen for themselves, but the men took the responsibility themselves of driving the children off. They might go 12 months without seeing any children, then they might come twice or three times in one week. He had no instructions from the company about children, but he had not to let employees travel in the carts.

On Saturday morning, 31st October 1942, Clifford Kear, aged 10, and his friend and next-door neighbour Ivor Jordan (8) went to see some men at Brierley. Then they came to Miery Stock cross-roads and went over the tump – a sheep track – up on to the line. They went up by the trucks, near the mid-way point. The trucks travelled at a maximum speed of four mph. On Saturday, the Waterloo Creeper would be working practically all day. Clifford suggested that they should have a ride and they both got on the trucks. One was going up to Miery Stock Screens and one was going down to Waterloo. Clifford got on the one going empty down the line. Ivor jumped off safely and ran by the side of Clifford's truck. After he had only had a very short ride, Clifford went to get off the truck. He intended to jump on another one. His foot



1940's OS map Hereford LIV, showing the Waterloo Creeper (marked 'Tramway') between Waterloo and Miery Stock Screens. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Boy Killed on the Waterloo Creeper - *continued*

slipped, and he went into the up rails. Before he could scramble to safety, the full truck going up pushed him in front of it. As Ivor Jordan watched this horrific incident unfold, he could not see anybody else about there. Clifford's brother Dennis, then only twelve months old, later heard that Ivor picked up a stick and tried to stop the truck from going [perhaps imitating skilled haulage workers stopping trucks with a metal rod], but to no avail. Ivor ran up to his Dad at the top of the screens to stop the truck. Before Ivor could reach the Screens, the grim details of what followed are that the loaded tub pushed, decapitated, and then dragged Clifford's body some distance up the incline and passed the bridge over the Coleford-Cinderford road.

George Kear (no relation), from Lower Lydbrook, had been a colliery fettler for the last six months, with the duty to repair the Creeper line. Before that he had been the clipper for 20 years at the Miery Stock end, taking the full trucks off and putting on the empty ones. On Saturday morning George was doing some repairs to the rails almost at the top. He saw no one on the line. He stepped aside for the full cart to go up when he saw a body being dragged almost at the back of the cart. He immediately caught hold of the body and placed it between the two tracks, then he signalled to the clipper to stop the rope. The clipper stopped the rope and then ran to telephone for the police. George went back down the line where some other men had found the boy's head about 100 yards from the body. Colliery Surface Manager Llywelyn Fothergill Barter was behind the mount when a man came running up to him to say a child had been killed on the line. Barter returned and jumped into his car and went for the police because at that moment the telephone was out.

PC Finch arrived at 12:25 pm and made details of the incident. The decapitated body was on a stretcher, 50-60 yards from the top clipper. PC Finch found the head between the two sets of lines 220 yards down the line, away from the body. 100 yards further, towards the colliery, was a drag mark which extended 320 yards, where the body was recovered. The truck's off front wheel was bloodstained and there were marks on the axles consistent with the truck having passed over the deceased. The weather was dry, but the wheels were greasy from the damp. The body was removed to the colliery ambulance room. It was not badly knocked about, and but for the head injury PC Finch did not think it would have been fatal.

The Crump Meadow Colliery Company, like other colliery owners, regarded accidents and fatalities in their pits as an inevitable part of their business. But now their industrial process had brutally taken the life of a young child. The Company's response at the Coroner's Inquest - and the degree to which the Forest community could hold powerful Colliery owners to account - is explored in Part 2.



The Waterloo Creeper ran through a sea of bracken. The entire length was illuminated as tubs travelled 24 hours a day when the night shifts were being worked.

Photo: L E Copeland.

Source: Pope, Ian and Karau, Paul, Severn & Wye Railway, III.393.

Sir Thomas Rich - 1st Baronet of Sonning *by Cecile Hunt*

Who was Sir Thomas Rich, 1st Baronet of Sonning; what were his connections with the Forest of Dean?

His father was also Thomas Rich, an alderman of Gloucester, serving as sheriff of Gloucester four times and in 1603-04 one term as Mayor of the city. He owned a large house in Eastgate Street. This property was inherited by his son (Sir) Thomas Rich.. Currently the site of the house is home to Gloucester's historic Guildhall, built in 1890. Anne(s), Sir Thomas Rich's mother was a daughter of Thomas Machin, who was three times mayor of Gloucester (1579-80, 1588-9 and 1601-2) and a wealthy mercer. A memorial to Thomas Machin and his wife Christian and their family can be seen in the north aisle of Gloucester cathedral.

Born Gloucester in 1601, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Thomas Rich was baptised at St John's Northgate church. The top portion of the spire from this church was removed in 1910 and placed in St Lucy's Gardens, behind St John's Church Hall, in Hare Lane. St John's Church Hall was built circa 1994 on the church's old burial ground where it is said *'no less than seven Mayors of Gloucester are buried..)* - maybe these burials include Sir Thomas Rich's father and possibly his father-in-law Thomas Machin?



Sir Thomas Rich died on 15th October 1667 in Sonning Berkshire. He is buried in the Rich Chapel in Sonning parish church. His monument is a marble table monument with urns and cherubs built in black and white marble.

Sir Thomas Rich's connections with Forest of Dean families can be traced from Sir Thomas' mother Anne's maternal grandmother, she was an Elizabeth Brayn (Brayne) (d. 1567) and Anne's grandfather Henry Machen, husband of Elizabeth Brayne. Elizabeth Brayne could well have been part of the Brayne family who have long associations with Brayne Court and Dean Hall, Littledean. The Brayne family appear to have married into several wealthy families over the centuries including Winters of Whitecross, Lydney and Dyrham Park, Chippingham.

A direct line to the Machens of English Bicknor can be found going back to a Henry Machen, an alderman of Gloucester in 1568, grandfather of Anne Machen (Machin) mother of Sir Thomas Rich. Henry Machyn (sic) was a citizen and Merchant Taylor of London in the mid-16th century. Allegedly Anne's brother, Edwardous (Edward) was the builder of Eastbach Court, the Court may have been owned by one of Anne's other brothers Richard. Eastbach Court was also the home, by inheritance, of Edward Tomkins Davies (b.1783 d.1862) who took the name and arms of Machen on his marriage. Edward's father, James Davies had already taken the name and arms of Machen on succeeding to the Eastbach Estate in 1789. Edward was Deputy surveyor of the Forest of Dean 1808-1857 when he lived at Whitmead Park (house demolished c.1970). Edward was elected as a Verderer of the Forest of Dean in 1860.

Sir Thomas Rich not only came from a wealthy family he went on to become immensely rich in his own right. When he died in 1667, he left £16,000 (£3,871,454 in 2019) to be used for charitable purposes by the Mayor and burgesses of Gloucester. Part two of this article will look at how it was used and describe more connections with the Forest of Dean.

Christine Martyn - An Appreciation



Christine Martyn, at a History Society meeting in 2008

The recent death of former Chair Christine Martyn has robbed the History Society of an outstanding supporter and member of many years standing.

Christine was born in Sharpness in 1934, but later moved with her family to Gloucester. By the late 1940's her father had purchased Crump Farm Lydney, where Christine's life-long association with farming began. In 1955 she married Ken Martyn, and they continued to develop Crump Farm. By November 1963 they had sold Crump and purchased Barnage Farm, located in the hills above Woolaston. Christine lived there for the rest of her life.

Christine was educated at Lydney Grammar School and harboured an ambition to complete her education at Oxford University. However, the death of her father, life on the farm, marriage, and children, scuppered those plans. Later in life, as her children were tackling their 'O' and 'A' levels, Christine began an Open University course, that ultimately led to a masters degree.

She first became involved with the History Society Committee in 1995, undertaking a wide range of roles including Noticeboard Officer, School Prize Officer, Librarian, and Vice Chair. She was Chair of the Society from 2006 to 2009, during which period the Society installed the Geomap at New Fancy. Christine was also involved in organising the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Society. After stepping down as Chair she continued as Newsletter Editor, until the death of her husband Ken in 2011.

Always active in research, Christine had many excellent wide ranging articles published in the *New Regard*, including 'The Bread Riots of 1795', 'Forest Miners and the Growth of Trade Unions', 'Lady Skimmington Rides Again', 'Parliamentary Elections in the Forest of Dean 1900-1997', 'Three Ages of Lydney High Street', and last but not least 'The War to End All Wars : The Forest at War 1914 – 1918'. The latter piece was reprinted as the main anchor article in the History Society book 'The Forest at War – Life in the Forest of Dean During World War One'.

In 2015, at the age of 81, she finally published her 'magnus opus', "The Forest of Dean Revisited - A Modern History". The book was a culmination of many years of research. It did not follow the well established tradition of history books in following timelines. Instead in each of the 13 chapters Christine explored a theme, some expected such as 'The Freemaners', some less so, such as 'Gypsies and Travellers'.

Christine was a great supporter of local charities and for many years was also a 'Green Badge Guide' providing commentary for coach parties visiting the Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley.

Christine was a lady with forthright views and extensive knowledge of the history of Lydney and the Forest of Dean. She will be much missed.

Meetings in Review *with Mary Sullivan & John Powell*



We were very fortunate with the good weather for the weekend of Averil Kear's walks. Fifteen lucky people on Saturday 12th and then Sunday 13th September got to stroll around the three inclosures of Oldcroft in a socially distanced way, and learn about the history of the village as they went. The

old enclosure stones were pointed out and clearly visible as Averil had been kind enough to clear the grass around them for the benefit of the walkers. We saw the old post office, and by chance spoke to the previous postmistress of the village. We saw several old cottages and heard their history, returning past the old school and through the cricket field, now fenced to keep out the boar. Many thanks to Averil for giving up her time not only on two sunny afternoons, but also for the thorough preparation of such interesting material. M.S.

Being inquisitive (Sarah Franklin called it being nose-y) is a trait shared by most Foresters. Walking in the woods and meeting others, it is quite natural to greet them with a warm "Morning, a grand day", rather than pass by wordless and intently gazing at the ground. At least I thought it was the correct thing to do until a stroll with friends visiting our neck of the woods for the first time brought a response that it was something you should avoid. I was firmly told it was "unwise to make eye contact."

For the record I'm on Sarah Franklin's side. If I do meet anyone then I'm nose-y enough to want to know whether they come from Soudley or Cinderford and if they have seen any deer or pigs. Being nose-y has certainly paid off for Sarah. Having won rave reviews for her splendid first novel, '*Shelter*', her second work is soon to be unveiled and once more it is set in the Forest of Dean. Sound research is at the heart of Sarah's fantastic achievement. Her story is woven round the life of a lumberjill and her relationship with an Italian prisoner of war. To achieve the necessary depth and feeling of reality involved many hours of research in the archives at the Dean Heritage Centre and the Imperial War Museum.

It also involved hours of talking to people who had memories of the Second World War. Her investigations also brought about a fundamental re-examination of the relationship of the Forest and its residents with the power of government. Sarah's online talk on Saturday 10th October was a first for the society, was a success for first-time Zoomers, and did much to cement her reputation as the latest literary light to shine brightly from the Dean. Her talk was absorbing and instructive and it is to be hoped she will return to tell us more, perhaps after the publication of novel number three!

In addition to writing, Sarah is a senior lecturer at the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies. But her roots are in the Forest and she returns frequently to visit family and to walk in the woods. Don't be surprised if she stops you for a yarn! J.P.

“I Witnessed the Beginning of a Music Revolution”

After featuring the contemporary advert for the famous Beatles concert at Lydney Town Hall in the last newsletter, member John Belcher has since provided us with an eye witness account of that very concert. Lucky man!!



It was the late summer of '62. Lydney Town Hall, our local music and dance venue, was ending its annual summer recess to resume the Friday and Saturday night dances to live music.

The main band that evening was from Liverpool, new on the JayBee circuit, unknown and peculiarly calling themselves 'The Beatles'. The support band, The Rebel Rousers, was better known in the area and would play first.

As a consequence there was some lack of interest and the Town Hall was only half full with around 200 people present, but those of us who considered ourselves pop and rock aficionados gathered at the front anyway, to see what this new band was like. The four young musicians, whom we'd seen previously in the Town Hall café, took the stage. They were all sharply-suited in black and had similar mop hairstyles. They launched into their first number and Wow!

Twelve Bar Blues played with energy and accuracy, also great Rock 'n' Roll numbers to a driving beat by drummer Ringo Starr. John Lennon sang, played the piano and harmonica as well as guitar. George Harrison, sporting a beauty of a black eye, was great with his riffs and solo guitar and Paul McCartney sang and played base guitar left-handed. Their harmonies were spot-on. What a great session and we all applauded as if it was a concert.

Finally, Paul McCartney introduced one of their own songs which they were about to record called 'Love Me Do.'*

As the group left the stage, Pete (Fiddy) Lane, the Lydney music expert, turned to us and said "those boys will go far". Boy, was he right. They changed the world of music forever and our Society beyond that.

*It reached No. 19 in the charts. Their next single 'Please Please Me' reached No.1.



Archaeologists Visit Lydney Park Roman Site

Lydney Park Gardens were Covid-closed this summer, but after lockdown, three archaeologists visited the Roman site and Museum with Committee member Chris Sullivan. They were seeking comparisons with material at other Roman sites. The photo shows Dr Jac Cahill Wilson FSA, Professor Mark Horton FSA, of *Time Team*, and TV presenter Nick Knowles, a rather good

amateur historian. Perhaps there will be some new, non-intrusive, archaeology based on the original excavator's notebooks some 200 years ago, turned up by Chris in the Museum last year.

St Tecla's Chapel, Beachley *by Averil Kear*

On a tiny island in the Severn estuary about half a mile south-west of Beachley, near the Severn bridge, stands an ancient ruined chapel that was originally dedicated to St Tecla (Treacla) and, later to St Triog, Rioc or Twrog. The island called Chapel Rock is frequently cut off by the dangerous tidal waters of the estuary and access can only be had when the tide has gone out. The ruined chapel, now only a few walls and an archway, dates from the 13th century, although there was an older chapel on this site back in the so called 'Dark Ages'. Inside the ruins there is a holy well that was once well-known for its healing properties. In the 1540's the chapel was abandoned and left to crumble away, the people were now fed up of having to wade across the estuary and sometimes even having to stay on the island for many hours when they were caught out by the fast, incoming tides.

Little is known about St Tecla who was, according to legend, a 4th-5th century princess from Gwynedd, north Wales, and daughter of an unidentified Romano-British king or chieftain called Requi or Reguli. St Tecla became an anchoress on the island after abandoning her father's court in order to seek a religious life, but she was later murdered in her cell by sea pirates. She is probably the same saint who has a couple of churches dedicated to her in mid and north Wales (Llandegley), but her name has often been confused with a 1st century female saint called Thecla, who was a follower of St Paul the Apostle. In the 6th-7th century her cell was used by another Welsh saint called Triog or Twrog and it was he who kept a beacon burning on the island to warn sea vessels of the dangerous rocks (known locally as Chapel Rocks). Today a more modern solar-powered light house stands on the island.

But there was a 6th century St Tecla or Tecychius, who was a disciple of St Tatheus (Athan), according to author Bryan Walters, in his work *'The Archaeology And History Of Ancient Dean And The Wye Valley'*. So could the tiny island chapel and its holy well be dedicated to this saint?



*St Tecla's Chapel,
Beachley.*

*OS Grid
Reference:
ST5484 9002*