

Spring is at last in the air and the cold winter weather has definitely left us. The Canal Basins are looking particularly attractive at the moment and already with this wonderful spring the visitor season is upon us. We now have a new editor for our newsletter who would welcome any articles that you think would be of interest to members. Is your interest the environment, the river or the wonderful countryside we have around us? Have you recently moved to the town or lived here all your life? Please feel free to send in an article.

## NARROW BOAT BRAMBLE

NB Bramble, the Narrow Boat which has been lent to Stourport Forward for educational use, is a poor looking boat. She has not been well looked after throughout her life.

This life started in April 1934 for the company of Fellows Morton & Clayton. She is the type of boat called a "Josher". Originally she had a butty which was called "Argus" but they became separated over the years. Her length has changed a number of times during her lifetime; starting at 72 feet, then down to 40 feet, and then to her current length of 68 feet. She was originally used to transport clay, coal, timber and grain; which when you think about it is quite a mixture of cargos with the boat having to be cleaned between loads.

Now that Stourport Forward has her, it is our intention to restore her as far as we can to her original state, and back to her owner's paint work colours.

If there is anyone who has any boat items that they do not want and you think we could use, please contact me as I am trying to arrange the work load and obtaining material to carry out the work. We are looking for items such as lace mats, old flat irons, iron kettle, chamber pot, eating utensils, enamel plates and mugs, patchwork covers and any old pictures of narrow boats. Also, if anyone has any timber that they no longer require I would be interested as any donated items and materials will help keep the restoration costs down.

£1990 has already been spent on repairs and refitting so far, but there are still repairs to the prop shaft as well as connecting the controls to the engine. This has been costed at £2500 and that does not include a contingency sum of £500!

If you would like to see Bramble as it is now please contact me so that I can arrange access as getting on and off is a difficult thing at the moment. Alternatively you can see the outside of her by walking along the towpath by the

lock shop. Why not stop for afternoon tea at the Lock Shop café which is now under management.

If there is anyone who thinks they may be able to help, either in restoring or painting please contact me.  
(Tel 07706412753)



Jim Amos

## THE HAIRDRESSERS



We have an additional attraction to offer this year as WFDC have given Stourport Forward a temporary lease on the former hairdressers' shop in Bridge Street, adjacent to the Lloyds' Garage site. The Civic Society, in partnership with Stourport Forward, will be running the premises as a Visitor/ Heritage Centre. We plan to open for the mid-May heritage weekend and hope to be able to open the premises during weekends throughout the summer months. It will provide an ideal opportunity to advertise the town's many attractions and to sell Civic Society products. Bewdley Museum are going to lend us objects from their store so we will be able to offer changing exhibitions throughout the season.

Needless to say, we will need help, so if you are able to offer a couple of hours or half a day, do get in touch with Liz Sheerin (Tel 01299 822827) so we can include you on our list of volunteers. If this facility proves successful, it means we already have "a foot in the door" for when the Bridge St Redevelopment takes place.



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### *Forthcoming Events in Stourport Basins*

**Sunday & Monday 24th & 25th April Easter at Stourport Basins** Including an Easter Trail, British Waterways Historic Working Canal Boat and Heritage Rooms open

**Saturday & Sunday 14th & May 15th Stourport Heritage Weekend** Including Heritage Rooms open and British Waterways Historic Working Canal Boat in Stourport Canal Basins

**Saturday & Sunday 11th & 12th June Pirates Weekend** Including town "Pirate Trail" and Heritage Rooms open

**Saturday 20th August Mikron Theatre Company** Outdoor evening theatre performance in Stourport Canal Basins 'Hell and High Water'

**Saturday & Sunday 10th & 11th September Heritage Open Days Weekend** Including Heritage Rooms open and British Waterways Historic Working Canal Boat in Stourport Canal Basins

**Saturday & Sunday 29th & 30 October Halloween at Stourport Basins** Including Halloween Town Trail, Heritage Rooms open and British Waterways Heritage Working Canal Boat in Stourport Canal Basins

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### *The Monica Baldwin Mystery*

At last I have found the explanation for Monica Baldwin's journey from Bruges to Britain in 1941 when Belgium was occupied by the Germans. Jane Robinson, a fellow Baldwin researcher, has finally received a reply from the English Convent in Bruges.

It would appear that during her years in the convent Monica alternated between a convent in Hayward's Heath and Bruges. In 1938 she transferred to St Monica's Priory in Hoddeson (Hertfordshire) and it was from there that she was released from her vows in October 1941.

Pauline Annis

## THOMAS JONES DAY at Wilden School



My son Stephen, attended Wilden All Saints First School from September 1996—July 2000. The Headmaster was Nic Harvey ably assisted by his wife Lyn and all the other excellent and enthusiastic staff. His confidence and outgoing nature is in part down to the wonderful time of fun and learning he had there in his early school years.

All pupils and their parents learn about Thomas Jones Day early on in their school career. Thomas Jones Day is a wonderful and unique event in that school's calendar, where pupils, teachers and parents gathers around the grave of a humble benefactor, laying flowers and singing songs to celebrate his birthday on 15th July (St Swithin's day) each year.

Thomas Jones was born on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1820 and lived in the Parish of Stone, earning 12/- or 60p in today's money as a Cowman. He was also the very proud owner of a field in Wilden Top. It is also believed that he owned other small pockets of land locally. He leased the land and would collect the rent dressed in a smock. He would enjoy watching the children of Wilden School during their breaks and he also attended Wilden Church.

In June 1899, a Mr Millward was called from the cricket field by an insistent village doctor to attend a dying man who wished him to write his will. Mr Millward knew Thomas Jones as a worker for James Seager of Cakebole House and of his modest wage. He was sceptical about Mr Jones having any money. It was only after everyone left the room that Thomas revealed to Mr Millward various bank books with entries totalling several hundred pounds. The will was signed with the mark of a cross by Thomas Jones. Various small sums were left to local people totalling £385. It included £50 to Alfred Baldwin, father of Stanley and provider of Wilden Church and School, who subsequently donated it to the school and ensured that the instructions contained in the special will were carried out.

The 4.5 acre field raised £303 18s 6d which contributed to an estate worth £1211 18s 0d, a considerable amount of money in 1899. This was donated to the managers of the school, who set up a trust to provide the children with an annual treat. In the early days the school children were treated to an outing with a picnic. The income from the trust remained just £13 per year, so the treat became an ice cream and eventually was donated to the school's swimming programme.

The final condition of the will and legacy that is still performed today, is the simple ceremony of singing and laying of flowers on his grave on THOMAS JONES DAY.



In 1999, as part of the centenary celebration, ex-pupil James Taylor painted a large and very colourful mural of the graveside celebration on the wall of the School Hall.

David More

## *THE Worcestershire Connection to Christchurch, New Zealand*



With the recent earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, it is perhaps a good time to remember our county's close association with the setting up of the colony there. With the Japanese earthquake and Tsunami happening just a few days after the earthquake at Christchurch, and subsequent events in Libya, the news coming out of New Zealand has been put on the backburner in the news rooms of the world.

It is as well to remember a piece of our own history.

The story is told of how three friends were walking over the Malvern Hills in 1847. They were George Lyttleton, whose home was at Hagley Hall. He was a brother-in-law of W.E. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, and was serving in the Government as Colonial Secretary, so a man of some influence. The second friend was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, an eccentric but forceful character, who was regarded as an authority on colonial settlement. The third friend was John Robert Godley, an Irish lawyer.

Wakefield was talking at some length of an idea he had been thinking of since 1843, it was the creation of a British colony on the other side of the world, in fact in New Zealand. This would be a colony like no other as it would be a settlement of members of the Church of England and those going out to it would be tradespeople and skilled workers of many trades. This, then, would be in stark contrast to the usual pattern of events, for in all other cases it was adventurers and even convicts who went out to these new settlements.

Largely due to the efforts of Lord Lyttleton, using his persuasive powers, a committee was set up to put the enterprise in motion. The Archbishop of Canterbury was elected Chairman, and in March 1848 the Canterbury Association held its first meeting. The members were rather an interesting group including 14 bishops, peers of the realm, Members of Parliament and Church of England clergy. Land was bought from the New Zealand Company and sold on to settlers at £3 per acre. All was now ready.

In 1850 four ships set out from England:

- The Charlotte Jane
- The Randolph
- The Cressy
- The Sir George Seymour.

They arrived safely in New Zealand in September 1850. The skills of the passengers were most interesting. They included 111 shepherds and agricultural workers, carpenters, plumbers, blacksmiths, stone masons, printers, millers, bakers, gardeners, wheelwrights and butchers. Among the women on board were milk maids, cooks and nurses.

They gave the new province the name Canterbury, while the settlement was called Christchurch, which came from a suggestion from John Robert Godley, whose Oxford College was Christ Church. This is now the capital city of the province of Canterbury. At its heart is a cathedral which was designed by Sir Gilbert Scott. It had a seating capacity of 1,100 and was started in 1864 being completed in 1881. It was laid waste in the recent earthquake when more than half of it was destroyed. I somehow think that this will be high on the list of buildings to be restored.

Also locally, there was once a horizontal pulley wheel under the old railway bridge just a few yards North of the "Bird in Hand". This enabled the horse, which could obviously not leave the towpath and cross the canal, to pull a boat out of the interchange arm (which still exists) and into the main canal by simply walking along the towpath in either direction. This pulley disappeared relatively recently. Some people know where it is, and efforts are being made have it returned and replaced into position. It is of no practical use now – but it is part of our history, and we do not want to lose it.

## *THE Worcestershire Connection to Christchurch, New Zealand continued*



The 450 acre park in the centre of Christchurch is Hagley Park. The river which runs through the city is the River Avon. The four principal streets are Worcester Street, Hereford Street, Gloucester Street and Malvern Street. The city's leading newspaper is the Lyttleton Times and the port which serves the city is Port Lyttleton.

So, from an idea sparked off on the Malvern Hills, a great province grew, and with it the world-wide farming industry of New Zealand lamb. Today, despite the earthquake, Christchurch remains one of the greatest cities of the Commonwealth.

While, over the years, the Lyttleton connection to New Zealand goes on. The present lord's father, always known as C.J.Lyttleton, a great sportsman who captained Worcestershire County Cricket Club in the 1930's, went out to be New Zealand's Governor General some years ago. The usual tour of duty was four years but C.J. was so popular with the colonials that he was persuaded to do a further four year tour. On retirement he became Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire and it was in this role that he was responsible for carrying out the official opening ceremony at Stourport Civic Centre.

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### *Dates for your diary*

**We now have the confirmed dates for next years meeting which are shown below:**

Thursday	15 September 2011	Thursday	8th March 2012
Thursday	13 October 2011	Thursday	12th April 2012
Thursday	17 November 2011	Thursday	10th May 2012
Thursday	12th December 2011	Thursday	14th June 2012
Thursday	12th January 2012	Thursday	12th July 2012
Thursday	9th February 2012		

We are still finalising our speakers, but it promises to be a very varied programme. Subjects include: The Edison Lighthouses, The Iron Industry of Cleobury Mortimer and the Swan Rescue Charity.

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### *Subscriptions & AGM Reminder*

It is that time of year when subscriptions become payable. Mary Johnson, our Treasurer will be very pleased to receive your renewal at our next meeting, the AGM on 12 May 2011. The Subs of £7.50 have remained unchanged for many years and represent excellent value.

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### *HERITAGE SURVEY ON STAFFS & WORCS. CANAL*

There has been some anxiety in recent years that we are steadily losing many of the historical artefacts connected with our canal system. Because of financial restrictions British Waterways tend to use more sub-contractors, who have no background knowledge of the canal system, to undertake maintenance and repair work. Also, many of their own staff do not have the years of experience behind them which older employees, who worked for many years on the system, used to have.

Consequently, objects which once had a use in the days of the working boats, often drawn by horses, are no longer needed and are often thoughtlessly cast aside when essential repairs are made to existing structures. A good example is the cast iron protection bars which were used on bridges to prevent wear to the stone or brickwork by the friction of wet, grit-laden towing ropes. Several, with their many grooves worn by the ropes, can still be seen in the Stourport area. Except where horse-drawn trip-boats operate this protection is no longer needed, but canal enthusiasts love to see it, point it out, and explain its original use to newcomers on the waterways.

## HERITAGE SURVEY ON STAFFS & WORCS. CANAL *continued*



There must be many older residents of Stourport who clearly remember seeing these artefacts in use, as delivery of coal to the power station (known locally as the Stourport Light) by narrowboat ceased only in 1948, when the railway link was constructed. That link itself has now been almost completely demolished.

There are many other objects of this nature which can be spotted by experienced canal users. Most of these, including bridges, aqueducts, canal-side cottages, and many other structures were all listed in a Survey commissioned by British Waterways in 1994. At that time, British Waterways were able to pay a professional Industrial Archaeologist to carry out the survey. Many repairs have been carried out since then, as well as much canal-side development, and a new Survey was urgently required to see what we had lost.

British Waterways is virtually the **only** Nationalised Industry left in this Country and has been funded by the Government since it was created in 1948. Apart from the rental income from some of its canal-side properties it makes no profit at all and the majority of its income comes from the taxpayer. Recently, maintenance payments have been reduced by some £30 million, and the vast majority of the remaining funds has to be spent on essential maintenance like dredging and the maintenance and repair of locks, bridges, aqueducts and other vital structures.

The recent survey of the Staffs. & Worcs. Canal commissioned by British Waterways has therefore been conducted entirely by volunteers who are keen to help save as much of our heritage as they can, assisted and managed by the very few professional Industrial Archaeologists British Waterways can afford to employ. Our canal was chosen for a "test run" to see if such an undertaking could successfully be carried out by volunteers.

As I have been, for several years, the Coordinator of the Staffs. & Worcs. Canal Society Lengthsman Scheme, by which we continually keep a close watch on the whole 46 miles of our canal, I was asked to recruit volunteers to undertake this Survey. Several of our Lengthsmen agreed to take on this extra short-term responsibility, and those who were unable to were supplemented by other members of the Canal Society who were willing to do so.

Stourport canal basin has a rich collection of heritage sites, including 29 Listed Buildings. The total number of sites amounted to 47. After I made an appeal for help at a Civic Society monthly meeting, Keith Jones and Reta Powell kindly offered to assist Ken Durnell and myself to undertake the Survey around the basin – each taking responsibility for 12 sites of their choice.

The procedure was not very arduous. It involved looking at the documents and photographs taken at the last Survey in 1994 and then looking at each building or structure, taking a photograph, and commenting on the changes. Some of these were quite dramatic – York Street Medical Centre and the old White Lion public house being notable examples.

All the documents and photographs have now been submitted to British Waterways, and as far as we are concerned the 2010 Heritage Survey has been completed.

Arthur Page

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A full colour version of this Newsletter is available online:  
[www.stourporttown.co.uk/civic\\_society.htm](http://www.stourporttown.co.uk/civic_society.htm)