

2014

# Autumn Newsletter



## FISHING IN BEWDLEY



1944-2014: 70 years of the Society - see pages 9-11

As one walks along the river-bank paths (originally known as tow paths), one see signs regarding fishing.: Mainly negative!



So where and when is fishing allowed? It's a very popular sport and people come from all over the country to fish at Bewdley. Fisherman say the fish are now more plentiful and the river water is very clear this year. Bewdley supports two fishing shops.

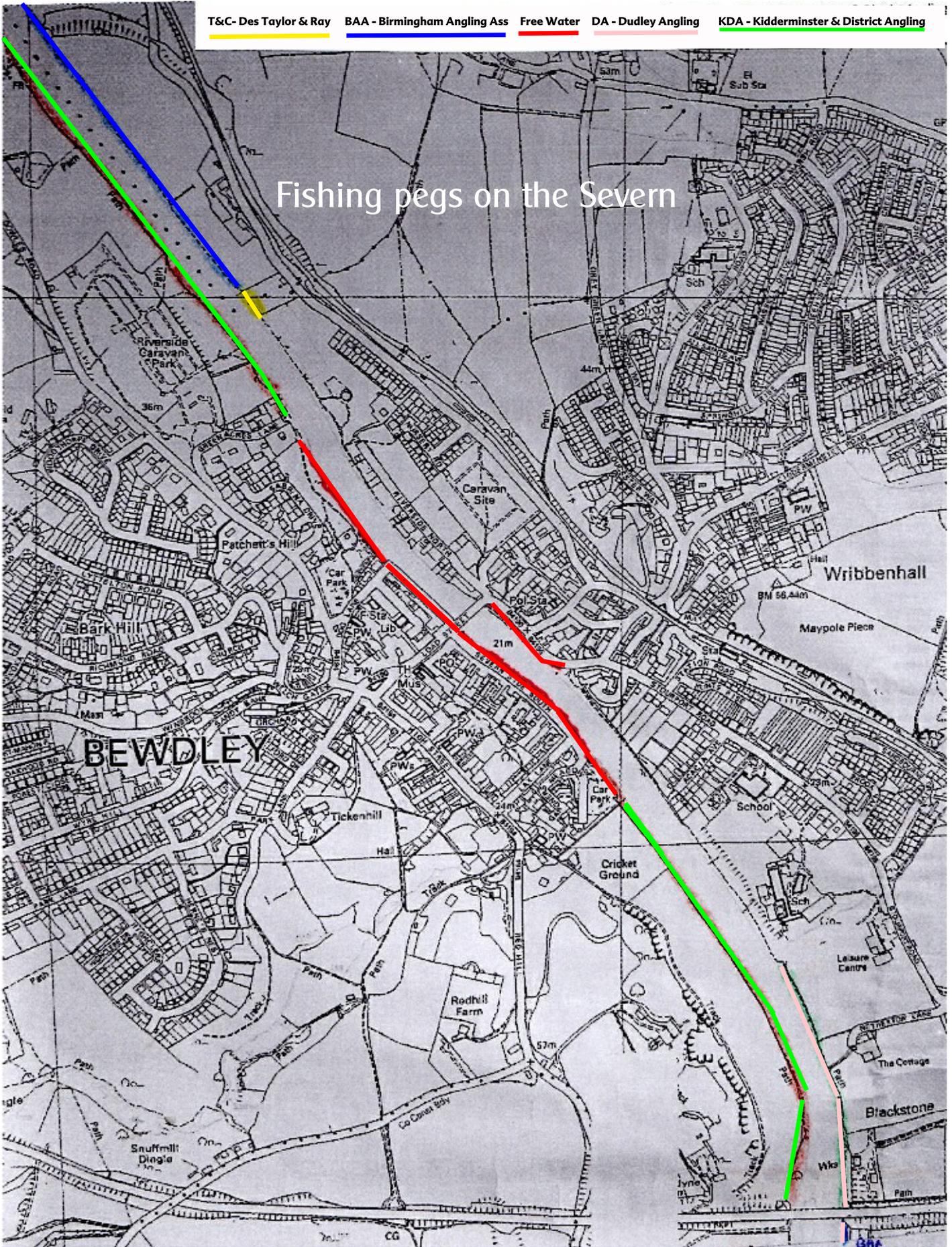


Rumour has it that while fishing took place on Severnside South, when the County repaired the Quay wall, they did so in exchange for fishing being given up. There's no fishing there now!



T&C-Des Taylor & Ray    BAA - Birmingham Angling Ass    Free Water    DA - Dudley Angling    KDA - Kidderminster & District Angling

# Fishing pegs on the Severn



## FISHING on THE SEVERN

### Who owns what?

We have a map on the previous page with the position of each angling club's group of coloured fishing pegs...as far as we can tell. There might be inaccuracies. There does not appear to be an overall authority, like the Land Registry, whose word is law. In fact, in among each of the coloured sections are landowners who, quite rightly, claim riparian rights co-extensive with the land which they own down to the river-bank. Some of these claims are disputed. For example, the notice on the right appears three times along Severnside North but are believed, by some, not to be genuine. They have WCC but were they really put up by the County Council?



### General Practice in Bewdley 1952-84: Part 1

by Dr David Sargent

*Unsubstantiated memory is a very inaccurate historian! So what follows can only be seen as an impression made out of a multitude of recollections.*

The early Fifties were not good years for entry into general practice. The NHS had only been running for four years and many established doctors were very suspicious of it and were anxious about their futures. Added to that, the market was flooded by newly-qualified people, many of them ex-servicemen. Advertised vacancies for practices could easily attract between 50 and 100 applications in a desirable area. I was extremely lucky and came in by the back door. Having done my time with the RAF, I - with Helen and our two eldest children - arrived in Church Street, Kidderminster, to do a six-weeks job for Drs Seattle, Wadsworth and Russell. During the course of that job, Dr Jock Lillie of Bewdley was laid low with back troubles and I was asked if I could act as a locum for him for a few weeks. The practice then consisted of Dr Bob Miles, Dr Jock Lillie and his wife Dr Ruth Lillie.

The latter two had fairly recently replaced 'old' Dr Miles. People spoke of him with bated breath and in awe and affection. As Dr Lillie's back made only slow progress, I was asked to stay on as an assistant. Six months later, on the grounds of the devil-you-know-is-better-than-the-devil-you-don't-know, I was offered a junior partnership.

For the first few months, this involved us living in the top flat of the Dog Wheel. Prams had to be taken up and down flights of stairs and we had no phone. When I was on call, messages were sent to the police station and a constable would be sent across, day or night, to give me a message!

Later, Dr Bob moved to Kidderminster and I was required to buy 70 Load Street so I was the one who lived "over the shop" for that was our surgery. So there were now four doctors in our practice. The rest of the work was done by our secretary/receptionist, Miss Pritchard, and the cleaner. Plus all the work done by the doctors' wives. In those days, when I was on call so was Helen. She had to be available all the time to answer the phone and take messages at the door...at the same time as running the house and looking after an ever-increasing number of children. Not an easy job!

For a number of years, Mrs Tolley (Olive) was the surgery cleaner. She lived at the flat over 71 Load Street with her husband Ted and younger daughter Joyce. Ted looked after the garden and Joyce helped with our children. That garden is now occupied by the town Library and the Medical Centre.

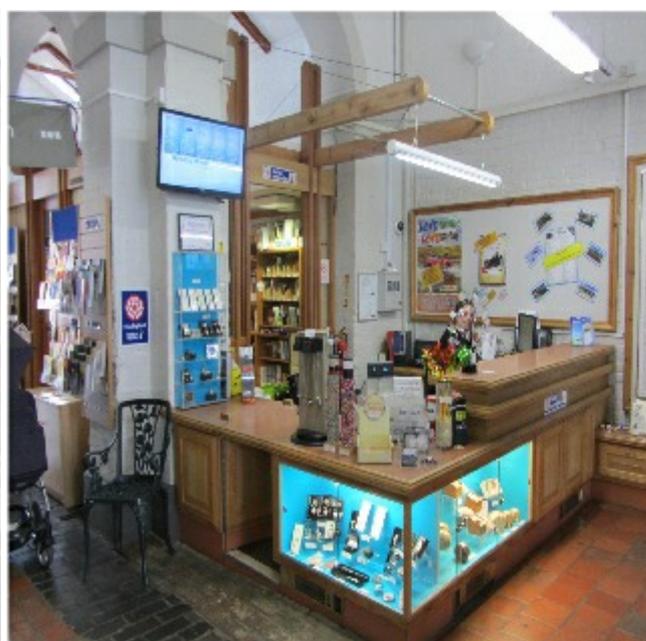
### SISTER TULIP

It is with deep regret we have to report the death of Miss Nieuwenhuis (fondly known as Sister Tulip). There must be many living in Bewdley now who were helped into the world by her. She came from The Netherlands, where she spent the five years of the Second War under German Occupation.

### Tourist Information Centre

## Visitors' odd questions

Originally situated (until 1997) in that part of St George's Hall which has since been demolished, the TIC is now in an attractive shop at the entrance to the Museum. With interesting and lively local goods on sale and where local events are chronicled - not just for the benefits of visitors. There are reduced prices for tickets to the Safari Park and Severn Valley Railway. It displays two screens: one giving Bewdley's weather forecast for the day and the other shows other local events worth a visit. Among the odd requests for information, the manager, Jo Haycock (right) is being asked: "But where are the cars?" The visitor was thinking he was in Beaulieu, 160 miles away. And others: "Where's the beach?"; "Where can I buy a custard pie to throw at someone?"; "I'm seven feet tall, Where can I find a bed large enough in a local B & B?" "Was it permitted to throw their deceased relative's ashes into the river from our bridge?" Last year, the Museum had 160,000 visitors. They all passed the Tourist Information Centre and many of them would have looked in. Sales are buoyant



**2013**  
**Worcestershire**  
*Awards For Excellence*  
Sustainable Tourism ~ Highly Commended



## THE GARDEN CINEMA LEGEND

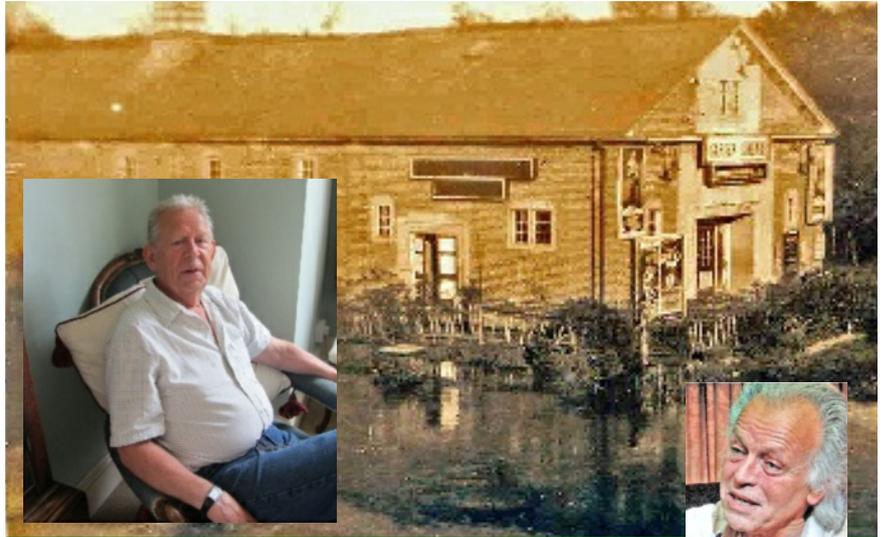
Someone asked: "Was it a great monument?" Others suggested it was open-air viewing. Well I can tell you, it was a boring, uninteresting little brick place easily passing today for a discount warehouse. But once inside, it could become the Taj Mahal, the Painted Desert, the Mean Streets of New York...images came readily to the captive audience.

The ability to escape post-war Britain brought about by a strip of celluloid could never be dismissed lightly. Our very existence seemed somehow transformed for one hour and twenty minutes and could be described as the purest escapism.

Alas however, as the flower of progress began to push through the warm Spring soil, the brave new world, only glimpsed at the Garden Cinema, became a reality and mass movie audiences declined.

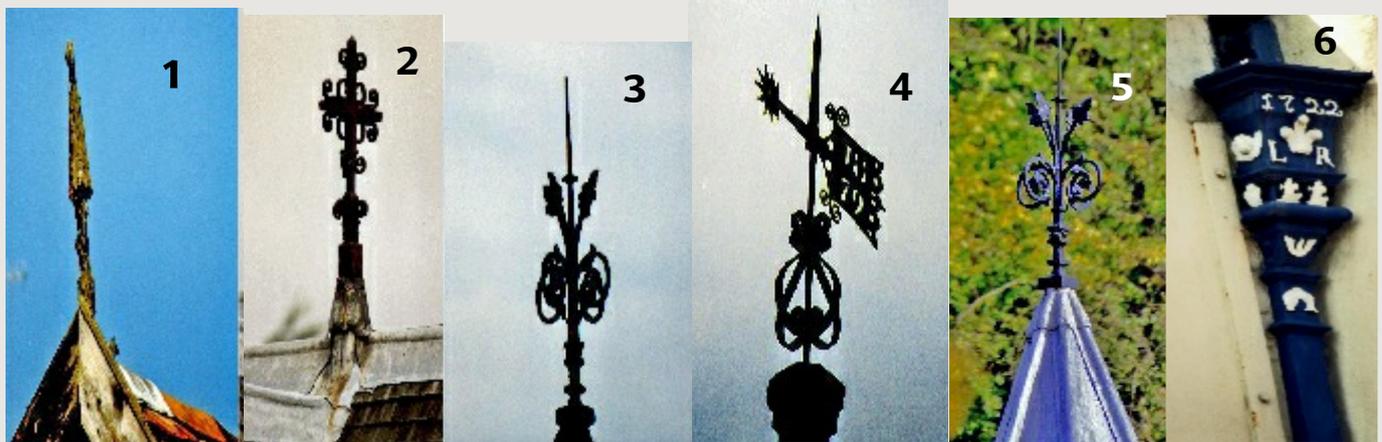
With the opening of St George's Hall as a regular cinematic treat, interest has been revived in what went before: the legend of the *Garden Cinema* was re-born.

Geoff Goodwin *Rewind Boy*  
and *part-time projectionist*



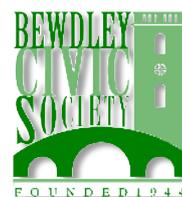
### ...and an apology

In our previous issue, we inadvertently reported Geoffrey Goodwin (above left) as describing happenings at the Garden Cinema when, in fact, they were recorded by his late brother Tony (inset right). Geoff wants us to make clear that he never sat in the back row with girls and that nothing would have been more abhorrent to him than chips-in-bread-cob. He says his mother would have considered such partialities to have been very undignified. We do apologise for connecting Geoff's name with such matters. See left for Geoff's description of life at the Garden Cinema.



## An inspiring competition

An award will be given by our chairman, Richard Perrin to the first member to inform him verbally - and correctly - as to the addresses of the properties to which these decorative features (above) were affixed. The member must be prepared to give his/her identity and to agree to that being divulged.



1944-2014  
70 years of  
the Society

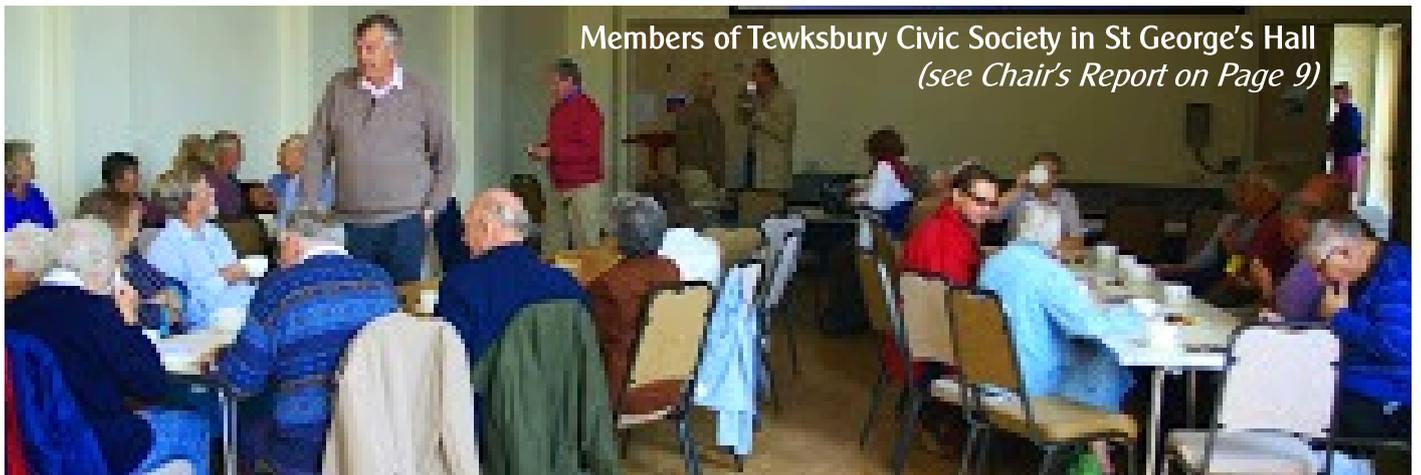
The Newsletter is edited by  
**KENNETH HOBSON**

with layout assistance from  
Jock Gallagher

# Guests at the Queen's Summer Garden Party



As recompense for all the untiring work undertaken by Richard and Sue Perrin (not only in connection with the Civic Society), they received an invitation to Buckingham Palace earlier in the year.



Members of Tewksbury Civic Society in St George's Hall  
*(see Chair's Report on Page 9)*



## MR SYDNEY COLES

Abigail Coles (right) feels that her father, Sydney (left), was - in a newspaper report included in our last issue - shown to have been unreasonably violent towards local cricketers when, despite earlier complaints, cricket balls had been received many times beforehand: one of which had landed close to where his baby was lying in her carry cot. We do apologise for the suggestion that Mr Coles had behaved in an unseemly manner.



## Civic Society School Heritage Project

This year's school project has again involved collaborative work with the Bewdley School and Sixth Form Centre. The theme chosen, "The Life and Times of Stanley, Earl Baldwin of Bewdley" coincides with the Civic Society's 70th Anniversary Year (*see following pages*). Stanley Baldwin was the Society's first President when it was founded in 1944. He had retired from his political career just seven years earlier and had served Bewdley as the town's MP for 30 years. Describing Bewdley as *My Native Town*, he obviously nurtured a strong affection for both the landscape and the people of the Wyre Forest district.

I met with Becky Newbold from the school several times during the year to plan the project which was to include a 2-day history workshop in the school. I gathered together resources for the students to use during this event and was grateful to Heather Flack, Suzanne Duffield (Bewdley Museum) and John Chester for their help in working with the young people at the school.

As part of the project, the Civic Society funded a 2-day music workshop, during which Stacey Blythe (right), a music professional who also works with the Welsh National Opera, enabled a wide age range of pupils to compose a piece of music, which they performed to a very high standard at the School Showcase event in July.



With guidance from English teacher, Mrs Alison Shiels, the pupils produced a book of poetry reflecting on World War I (during which time Stanley Baldwin served as Bewdley's Member of Parliament).

Members will be able to view examples of the students' work at the Civic Society Exhibition in the Bewdley Museum September 22 and November 3.

Barbara Longmore

## THE CHERRY FAIR 2014: A FRUITFUL EVENT

Since the Cherry Fair was revived in 2011 the event has become more ambitious each year, members of the Civic Society working jointly with Bewdley Museum. This year, during a warm sunny weekend, the Fair was a pleasant family event, with something for all.

Advance publicity in our Newsletter, a prominent poster at Beale's Corner, the Kidderminster Shuttle and the Express and Star was timely, then a brief telephone interview by BBC Hereford and Worcester Local Radio, all made effective promotion for the week-end.

The main supermarkets responded to a request to draw attention to cherries and local fruit. Correspondence continues on how best to organise for next year.

Our stand in the foyer of the Guild Hall is an ideal site, forming an introduction as visitors proceed to the Museum and the attractions organised by museum staff. Our stand-up posters and a display of old photographs of orchards explained the work of the Civic Society and the purposes of the Cherry Fair. Varieties of cherry trees suitable for gardens, were for sale, some old, some modern: Amber Heart, Celeste, Lapins 'Cherokee', Merton Bigarreau, Merton Glory, Morello (*photo right*), Stella, Summer Sun, Sweetheart.



This year the crop on old local trees was poor and nationally the season was about two weeks early. By mid July, even late varieties had finished and growers had sold out. This made displaying and demonstrating the qualities of different cherries difficult and only a few varieties could be shown, for example; Ambrunes, Colney, Kordia, Lapins, Napoleon, Penny, Regina, Sweetheart and Van.

The museum staff planned the occasion as a launch of the 'holiday season' with live music, dancing, foods, drinks, events for children and a range of traditional stalls, all with a cherry theme. Later the Express and Star ran a full page illustrated feature describing the Fair and saying; "The Harvington Household Re-enactment Group enjoyed a cherry filled afternoon tea party and dancing in traditional Georgian manner....There is something for everyone. It is a lovely free day out for all the family...It has been a lovely day, such a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon."

The Bewdley Cherry Fair can be traced back to about 1817. When it started is not known. It seems to be the only event of its kind so perhaps we should consider it something special. The museum staff sold several boxes of cherries, the Civic Society covered its costs and it is hoped some of the several thousand visitors who enjoyed the cherry themed events learned something and may take more interest in cherries in the future. Thanks are due to those Civic Society members who helped to make a successful and enjoyable event.

Brian Stephens

# The Civic Society at Seventy

Reproduced by courtesy of *The Bridge*



Founding President  
Earl Baldwin

On May 15, 1944, Bewdley Civic Society was founded with Earl Baldwin of Bewdley K.G as President with the principal object of safeguarding the interests of the inhabitants of Bewdley. At first glance this date may seem an odd time for such an event. D Day hadn't happened so the war was not nearly won. So what were our forebears thinking? One can only assume they thought the tide was turning and once we had won the war, it would be a case of "out with the old and in with the new." And how right they were. There was much at stake in terms of Bewdley's wonderful heritage. Well, how successful has the Society been in meeting its prime objective? Without wishing to be boastful there is not enough space here to list the achievements but a few significant ones come to mind:

Launching of the By-pass campaign resulting, with the help of others, a successful outcome. (See photo below)

Successful representation to County Council for a Conservation Area.

Inauguration of plans for Bewdley Museum.

Laying out of the former Wribbenhall Burial ground as a garden.

Successful representation to County Council to save The Bailiff's House from demolition. Our initial objection to new Medical Centre was catalyst for provision of additional car parking.

Have we had any major failures? Yes: the demolition of Telford's Toll House in 1960.

Despite raising a considerable amount of money we were unable to persuade the County Council to retain it.

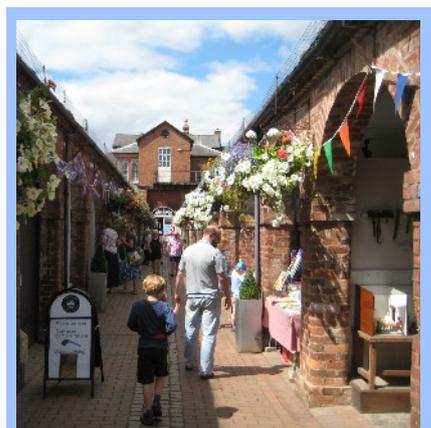
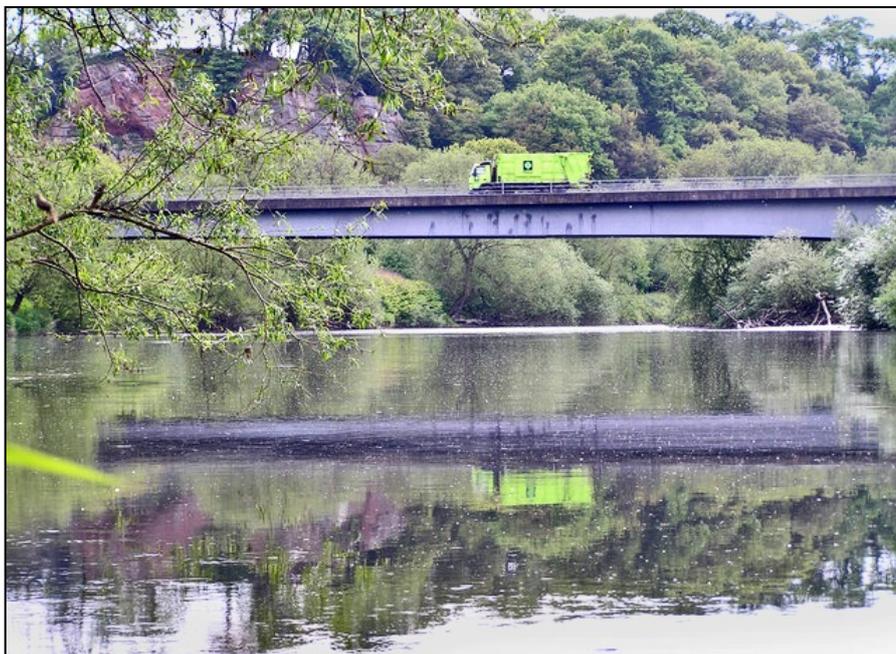
We have been fortunate to have had a long line of dedicated Presidents and Chairmen who have upheld a strong tradition of civic responsibility. Not least has been the contribution of the current President, Kenneth Hobson, whose photograph we show alongside Stanley Baldwin. *Kenneth's wonderful collection of photographs of Bewdley will be on show at the Exhibition throughout the autumn in St George's Hall. See Page 11*

We have adapted to the times. For instance, we are to meet a senior official of Tesco to discuss their plans for the Angel Inn. We have an active programme of lectures, outings and social occasions and our membership of over 500 makes us the largest amenity society in the county.

Richard Perrin

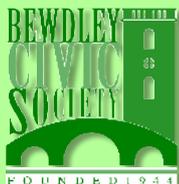
**BEWDLEY NEEDS A  
BY-PASS NOW!**

PUBLISHED BY BEWDLEY CIVIC SOCIETY



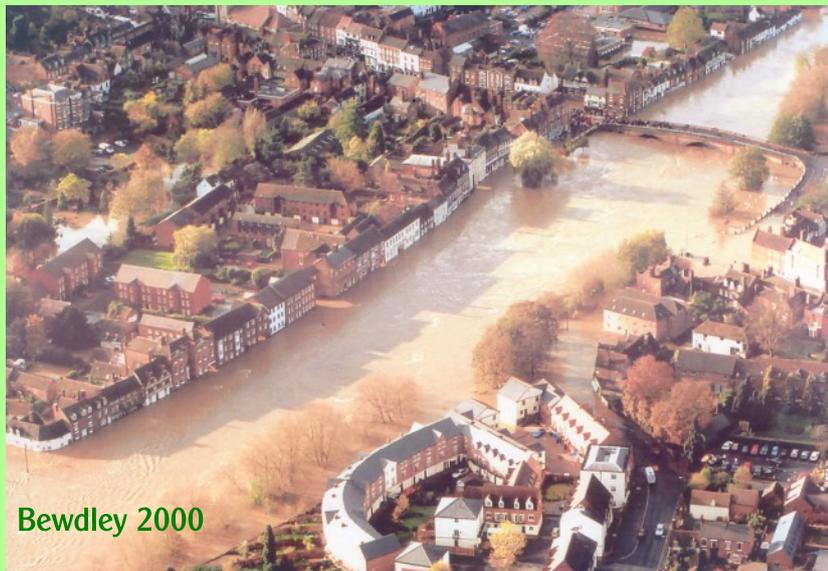
The Cherry Fair in the  
Museum (see Page 8)

© Copyright Kevin Skidmore  
River Sever, Bewdley Bypass  
Road Bridge



# @Seventy

1944-2014



Bewdley 2000

*Reflecting Bewdley  
over the past  
seventy years*

Featuring previously  
unseen photos from  
the extensive collection  
of Society President  
Kenneth Hobson

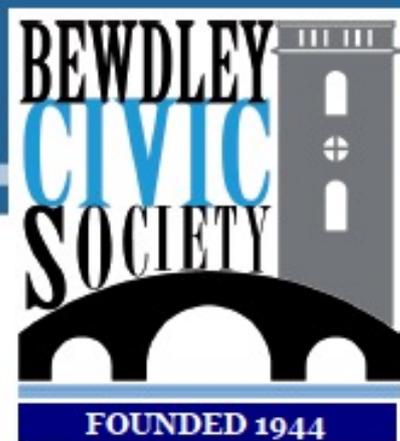
September 30 - October 19  
The Cafe in St George's Hall

## *Anniversary Exhibition*



*Bringing the past alive through food...  
history through the sights, smells and  
taste of the past*

**Celebrating 70 years**  
of looking after the town's  
interests, the Civic Society is  
pleased to support the Festival  
by sponsoring



# Georgian Dining

with Nick Trustram Eve

Thursday 16th October at 10.30am,  
St George's Hall

We have over 500 members!

Why not support us by joining NOW - Contact Mrs S. Bolam  
Tel: Bewdley 401188 [www.bewdleycivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.bewdleycivicsociety.org.uk)

# The Civic Voice of Bewdley



**Sir Hugo Baldwin Huntington-Whiteley, 3rd Baronet 1924-2014**

We were saddened to learn that Sir Hugo passed away in June. He was our President for 17 years until 1993 and took much interest in our activities. He had succeeded his mother, The Lady Margaret Huntington-Whiteley, daughter of Stanley Baldwin, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, upon her death in 1976. Stanley Baldwin was the first Baldwin of the Society and his grandson, Edward Baldwin, 4th Earl, remains a member thus maintaining our unbroken link with the Baldwin family.

Visit from Tewkesbury Civic Society (see photo)

**W**e were delighted to entertain no less than 44 members of the above Society in September including the President and Chairman. We were pleased to house them in the newly refurbished St George's Hall (photo Page 8) for coffee and give an illustrated talk about the history of Bewdley. They then visited our lovely Museum before partaking of lunch in the sunny Mug House garden. The majority then took the steam train to Bridgnorth although a party had the pleasure of a guided walk around our historic town centre.

We are currently making arrangements for a return visit in May next year

## 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**L**ast but by no means least, I'm pleased to report on what is happening to mark this significant milestone.

Firstly we include a short article (see Page 70) appearing in October's Bridge magazine which has been prepared to coincide with our Anniversary Photograph Exhibition (see Page 8) in St George's Hall commencing on September 29 in the SGH Café.

Our President, Kenneth Hobson, has put together a montage of significant events associated with the Society over the past 70 years and I do hope that as many of you as is possible will be able to view it.

## ANNUAL DINNER

**A**fter the great success of last year's dinner we are returning to St George's Hall for our 70th Anniversary on Friday 14th November. Attached to this Newsletter are full details including the menu choices which please complete and send to the Dinner Secretary. Our caterer once again is Kit Bamford of the Birche, who provided such a good meal last year and we shall have a Guest Speaker to mark the special occasion. It would be super if we could top the 100 mark for attendance which we so narrowly missed last time.

## Planning Matters

### TESCO Express: parking plans could present a danger

**U**ndoubtedly one of the main topics of conversation in Bewdley currently is the *Tesco Express* development of the Angel Inn in Load Street.

It was mentioned in our Summer Newsletter that, by a quirk in the planning laws, change of use approval was not required for the change from a pub to a store.

However Tesco has also assumed that change of use of the existing beer garden (in front of the pub) from a beer garden back to a car park is also not required on the basis that it was used as a car park for many years.

We have taken informal advice on this matter and conclude that express consent is indeed required and have written to Wyre Forest District Council accordingly.

We believe that usage of the eight car-park spaces will cause considerable disruption to traffic movements in Load Street with potential danger given the close proximity of the bus stop.

We are also unhappy with the proposed signage and paraphernalia which is the subject of a formal planning application by *Tesco*.

We believe it is inappropriate for the Conservation Area and would prefer them to use more sympathetic signage which we know they have in their portfolio. We have objected accordingly.

It is our belief that *Tesco* is community minded and hence we have written to the Chief Executive seeking a meeting with a senior official. This has met with acceptance although it is currently proving difficult to tie him down to a definitive date.

## The 2014 Youth Project (see Page XX)

We are indebted to Barbara Longmore once again for undertaking the third Bewdley School and Sixth Form project which is such an important part of our activities. Barbara has kindly written her own update of progress to date.