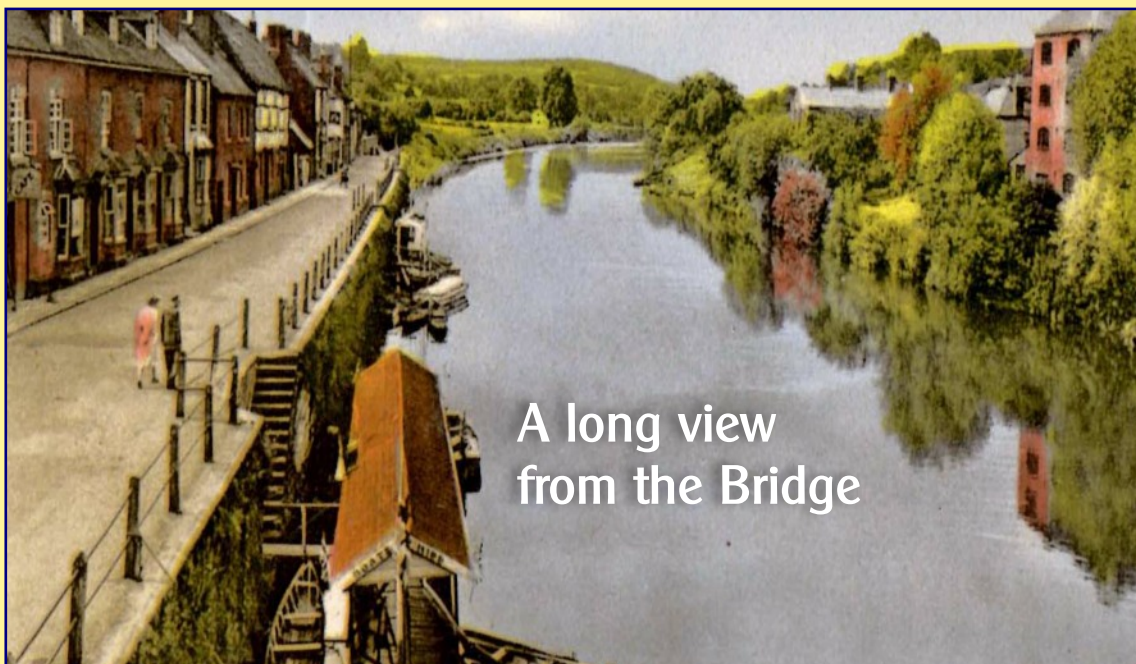
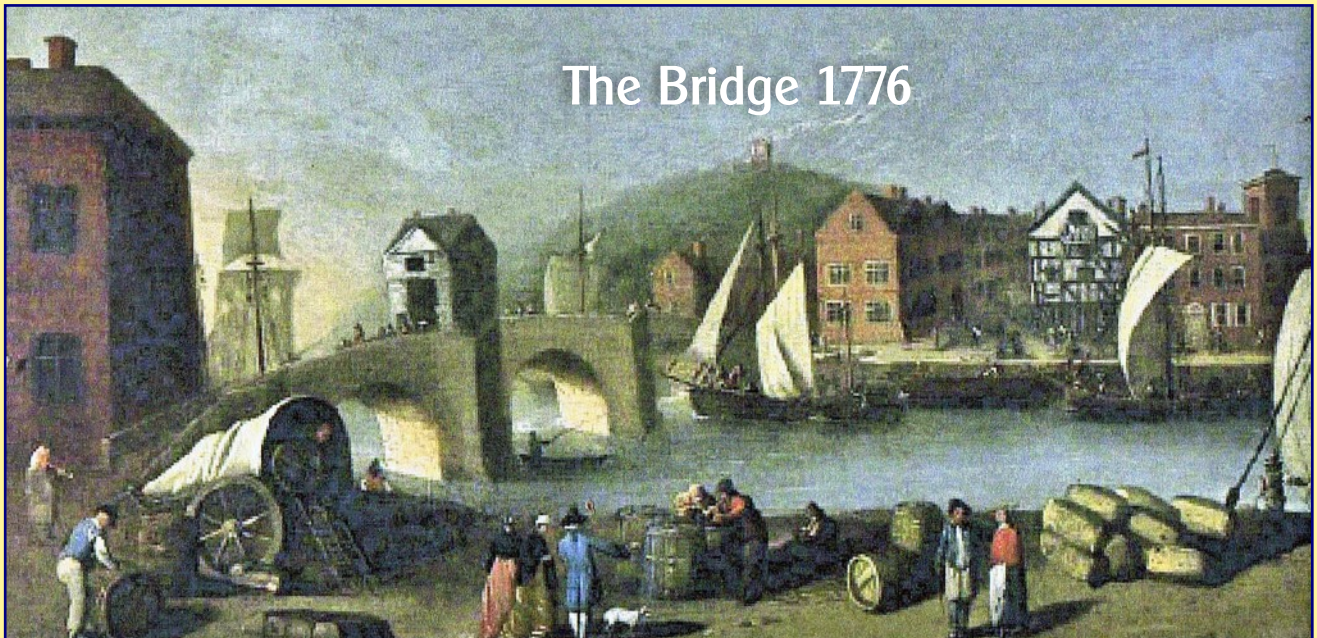
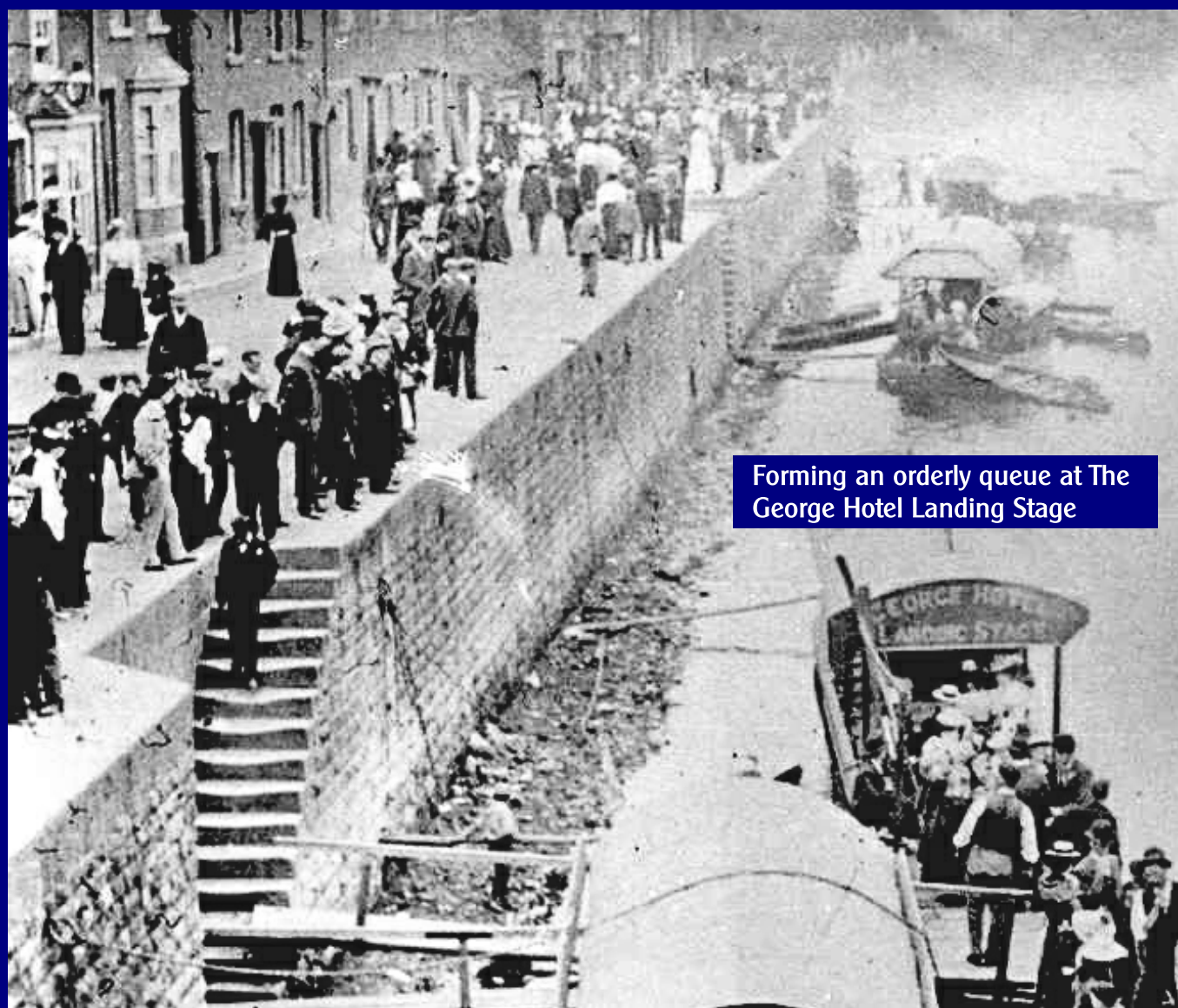
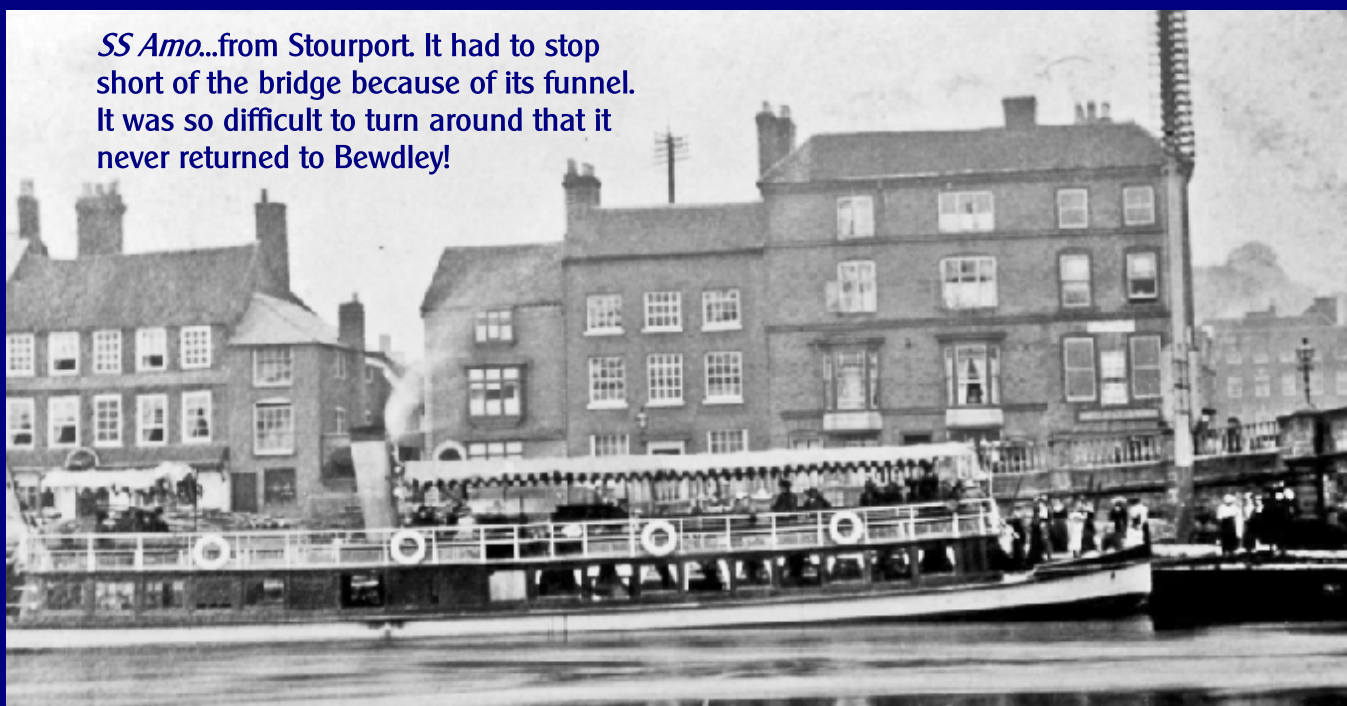


Bewdley's boats parade

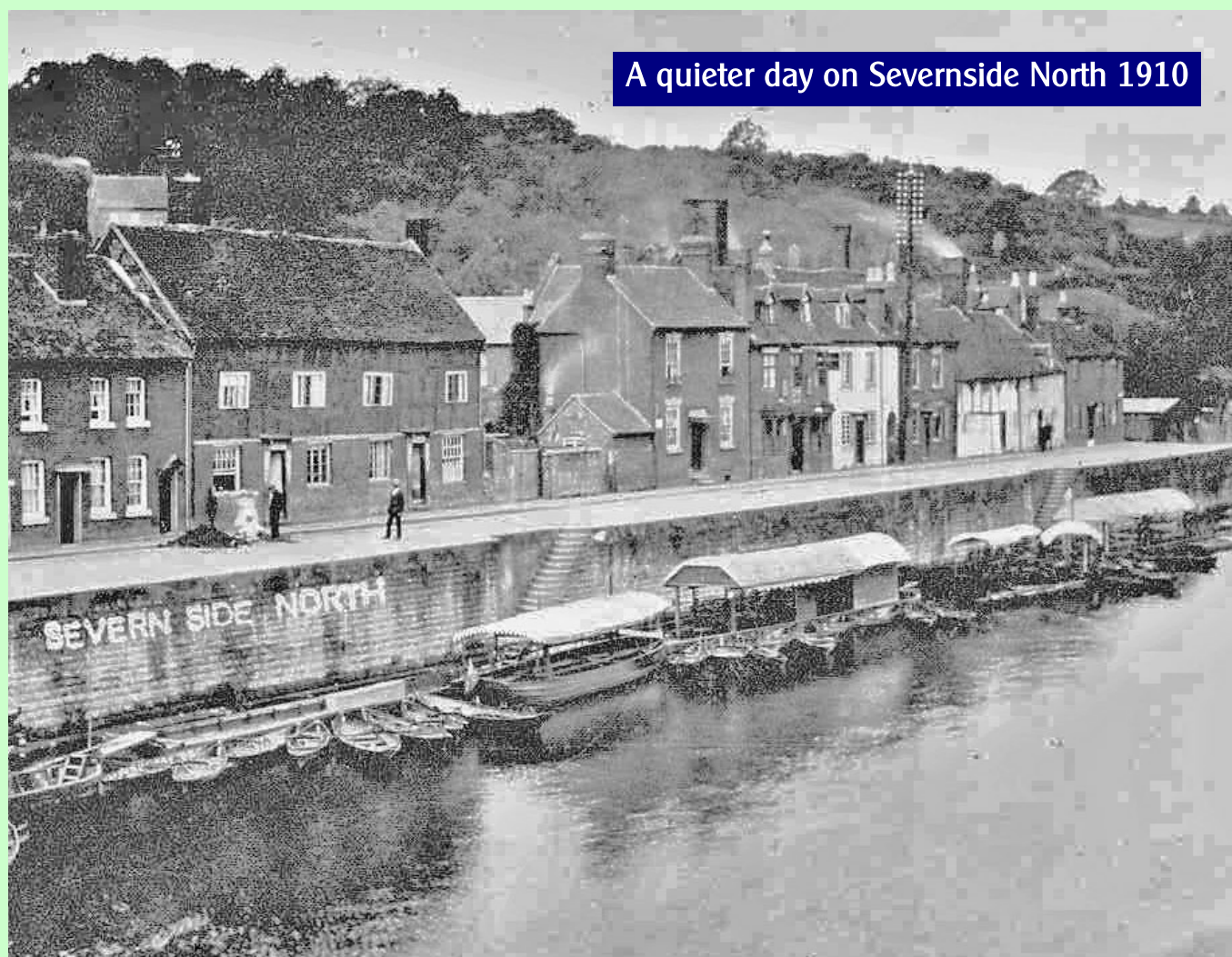
With its lengthy river frontage one could reasonably expect there to be quite a selection of boats moored alongside Bewdley's striking quay sides. But this is not the case, today. That was not as it used to be and I hope that the following snaps show this.



SS Amo... from Stourport. It had to stop short of the bridge because of its funnel. It was so difficult to turn around that it never returned to Bewdley!



Forming an orderly queue at The George Hotel Landing Stage





Preparing for a fishing trip



Coronation
celebrations 
June 22, 1911 (King George V)

There will be a further selection of boat photos in the Summer issue

Benchmarks in Bewdley

All these benchmarks are shown on the large scale Ordnance Survey map for Bewdley and give figures as to their respective heights above sea level. Quite how useful that information is nowadays is somewhat doubtful. But it may be of some comfort to Severn Valley Railway enthusiasts to learn that the lowest point of the Wribbenhall viaduct is 26.06metres above sea level. The clearest local benchmark is that sited on the war-memorial side of St Anne's Church (below). Many of the others are



much more difficult to spot without the help of the local OS map.



Benchmarks are the visible manifestation of Ordnance Datum Newlyn (ODN), the national height system for mainland Great Britain and forms the reference frame for heights above mean sea level. ODN is realised on the ground by a network of approximately 190 fundamental benchmarks (FBMs). From these, tens of thousands of lower-order BMs were established. But the network has had little maintenance for 30 years. *Which is why they are sometimes difficult to spot!*

The mark on the wall shows the viaduct is 26.06 metres above sea level

This hardly noticeable mark (left) is half-hidden by a more contemporary rail in the quayside wall along Severnside South.



Below: the mark on Castle Cottage is down behind the wheely bins



Castle Cottage Wribbenhall

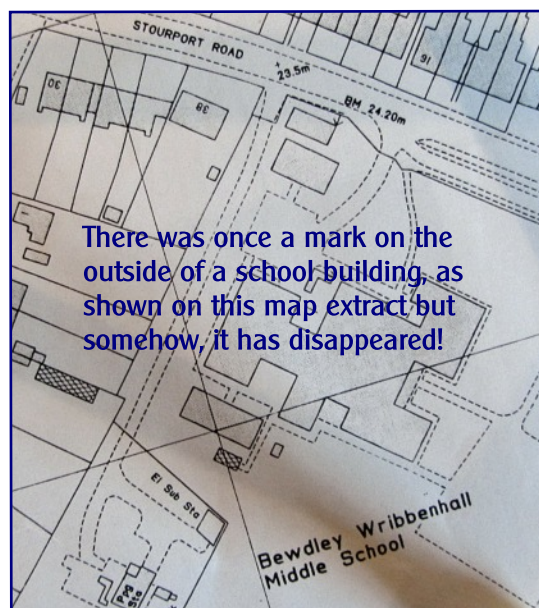
Stanley Baldwin's birthplace in Lower Park sports a benchmark at the bottom of the Lax Lane wall



Bench Marks 2



There's yet another benchmark in the retaining wall to Welch Gate, just in front of No 48. Sorry about those wheelie bins...but they are green.



What is very odd is this mark which has been cut into the kerb opposite 7 Severnside North, without there being any reference to it in any record or map. Sadly, we may never know the height it maintains above sea level. Perhaps when they came to measure, the Surveyors found it flooded - i.e. too far below sea level!



Mark on the corner of the old Police Station

Shoe shocker!

Speaking of marks. A Bewdley lady woke up one morning to find that one of her garage doors had received quite a heavy bashing. Beside it was a shoe: the obvious instrument. The police recommended her to keep the shoe, which she did. But she was a bit horrified a day or so later to find scrawled over the boarding-up, in large letters, the words WHERE IS MY SHOE?



121 Stourport Rd

What makes news in Bewdley

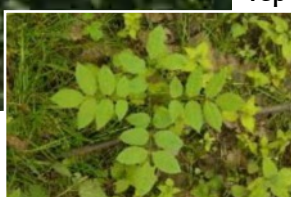
LOAD STREET'S UNEXPECTED DELIGHTS

Councillor Helen Dyke (member for operational services) said "The toilets have been improved to a high standard which will ensure a better visitor-experience for everyone." *Kidderminster Shuttle*



CONCERNS ABOUT BEWDLEY'S ASH TREES

There is increasing concern that Britain's ash trees could go the same way as our elm trees because of the spread of the ash die-back disease - *Chalara fraxinea*. As tree wardens, Gren Jones and I have been asked to keep our eyes open for any signs of this disease locally. To do this we need to know where the ash trees of Bewdley are situated. Please help us by reporting the location of any ash tree known to you. The location, described as accurately as you can, should be sent by e-mail to townclerk@bewdley.org.uk or by note left in the Bewdley Library, the Tourist Information Centre or the cafe in St. George's Hall, any of whom will pass the message on to us. To date there is nothing to suggest that *chalara* is present in the vicinity of Bewdley. But what we would like you to do is to tell us where there is an ash tree. We can then keep on eye on it and report any future problems to the experts *Cliff Willmot. Bewdley Tree Warden*



These are not single leaves but are compound and made up of several "leaflets." They are lance-shaped with slightly toothed edges. Leaflets are arranged in pairs with an odd one at the end

THEN AND NOW 10



Lax Lane 1969



Lax Lane 2014

Who's who?
around
Bewdley

ANSWERS TO OUR WINTER QUIZ

1 Joe Oakes 2 Ann Hyslop 3 Bob Carlyle 4 David Binnian 5 Francis Parker
6 Margery Grainger 7 Marguerite Cooper and 8 Stan Lewis



1



2



3



4



5



6



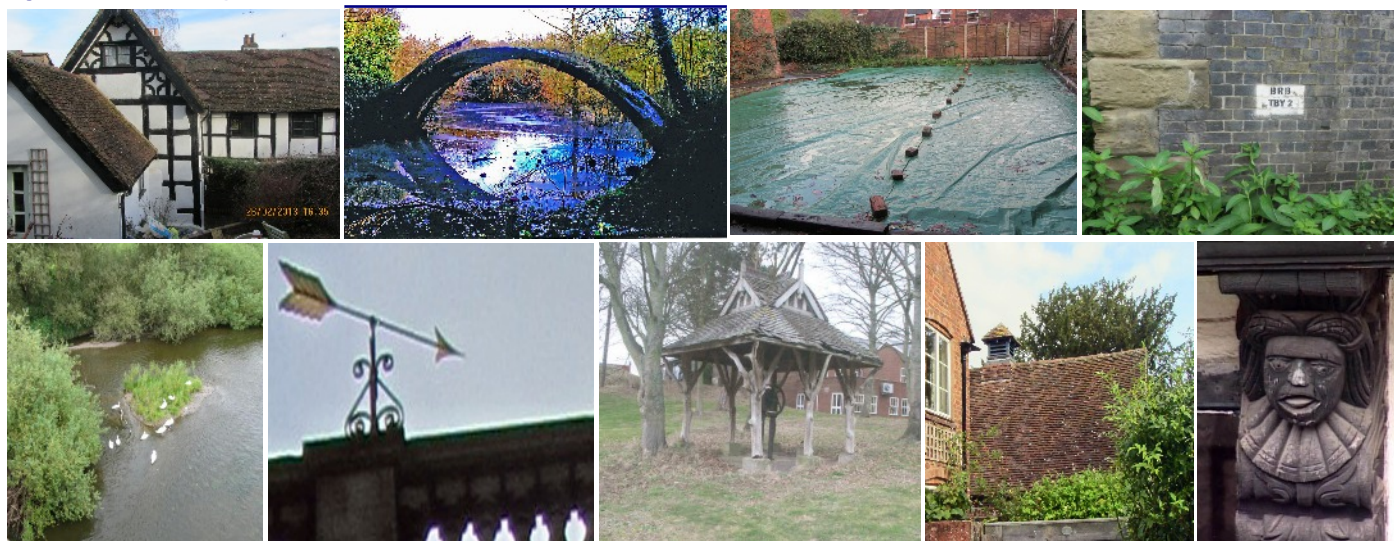
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8

ARCHITECTURAL QUIZ

An award will be given by our Chairman, Richard Perrin, to the first Society member to inform him verbally - and correctly - as to the whereabouts of the following features. The member must be prepared to give his/her identity and to agree to that being disclosed in this newsletter.



Balsam with a very destructive power



THE ATTRACTIVE KILLER

It looks a most attractive bush. But is, in fact, a very invasive weed which is taking over large sections of our river bank and destroying much of the English wildlife plants and bushes. The Civic Society Committee is therefore arranging working parties to pull out the balsam. First we have taken advice from Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. And this is what they say : *"Plants should be pulled out roots and all and then hung to dry and roots to die. If this is not possible stack in small piles on dry ground, as on moist ground the base ones will tend to root again and flower. They are notorious for re-rooting easily. Pile well away from watercourse banks in case of flood. Easier to pull around mid-May when tall and before seed pods are visible and beginning to mature (with climate change this date may be earlier). It is back-breaking to pull small ones. Wear gloves and avoid ingesting sap."* Members interested in restoring our river-bank vegetation do please contact Ken Hobson (on 402700) so that working parties can be arranged and decisions made as to the parts of the bank that we tackle.

The balsam was introduced from Japan in 1839 as an attractive-looking addition to the gardens of stately homes in Victorian times. Their seed pods explode when ripe, greatly assisting the spread over wide areas. This, coupled with high nectar production which attracts pollinators, often allows the Himalayan Balsam to out-compete native plants. It was introduced at the same time as Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed. It was promoted at the time as having the virtues of "herculean proportions" and "splendid invasiveness" which meant ordinary people could buy them for the cost of a packet of seeds to rival the expensive orchids grown in the greenhouses of the rich. Within ten years, however, it had escaped from the confines of cultivation and begun to spread along our rivers.

HOW DOES BEWDLEY GET WATER?

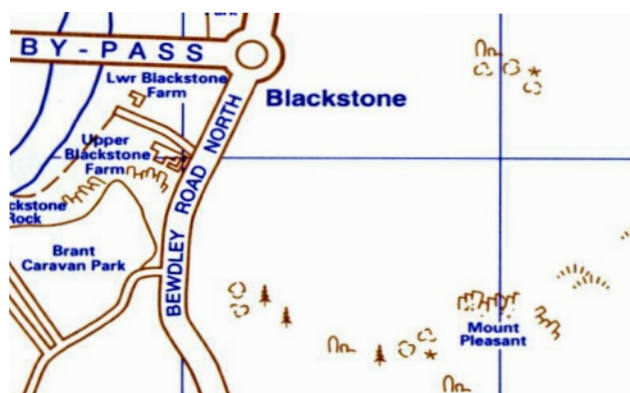
Personally, I was quite unaware, until I made enquiries through Severn Trent Water sources that there was a sandstone aquifer lying underground at Blackstone providing pure water and from there it is pumped into a reservoir lying at the top of Mount Pleasant and thence into our taps. I was fully aware though (having lived in both towns) that Bewdley water is far more pleasant than that used in houses in Kidderminster. KH

Today we take for granted our fresh water supply but it was a long time coming to Bewdley and some 20 or 30 years after Kidderminster and Stourport. As far back as 1869, Worcestershire County Council had written to the Local Government Board that Bewdley Town Council was in default for not providing a proper water supply.

In 1897 a government inspector, Dr Thompson, was sent to see exactly what was going on here. He reported that "the residents depend on private wells or the six public wells. The supply to the former was apt to be unsatisfactory with water failing altogether, or becoming very scanty during periods of drought, and even the public wells cannot be relied upon for a sufficient supply." As a further detail he added: "The public well in Welch Gate supplied about 200 residents but sewage was found to be percolating into it and the town council was obliged to close it"

The tardiness on the Council's part seemed to be due to the likely cost to rate-payers of improving matters and failure to agree on a site for a bore-hole that would be acceptable and secure official approval. Eventually a geologist from the University, Professor Lapworth, was called in and suggested the current site at Blackstone. After a public enquiry, the town council successfully applied to the Local Government Board for a loan of £12,000. The proposed scheme had an 180,000-gallon reservoir at Mount Pleasant (the hill on the left on the road to Stourport: *see map right*) and a further smaller 60,000 one above the *Running Horse* public house on Long Bank, with a 16-inch diameter, 200-feet deep bore-hole into aquifers in the new red sandstone rock, with associated pumps, in a purpose-built castellated pumping station at Blackstone.

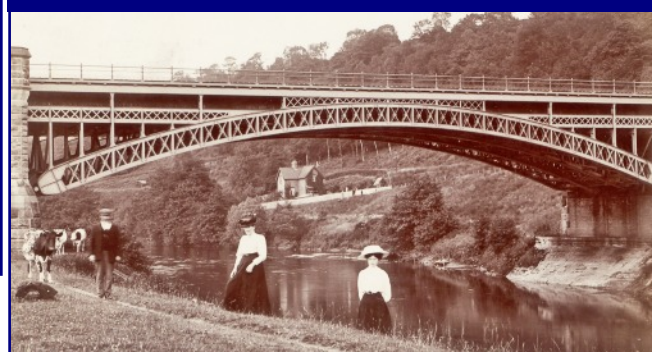
The work started with digging the first sod for the reservoir on Mount Pleasant on 15 April 1901 and celebrations on completion were held at the pumping station on April 30 1902



The buildings at Blackstone Pumping Station



Birmingham had a decent water supply long before Bewdley by the installation of the Elan Valley aqueduct...which passes us at Hawkbatch Aqueduct (below).



Mount Pleasant Reservoir being built - with J.F.Parker and his fiancée Alice Tangye (of Tickenhill). Did they contribute?



Trench warfare 1902 The workers, stoutly secure behind their shovels, seem ready to repel the toffs and their even toff-ier children, who watch the pipe-laying with fascination. Both groups have clearly learned they must all stand stock still for the photographer!

Vintage waterworks

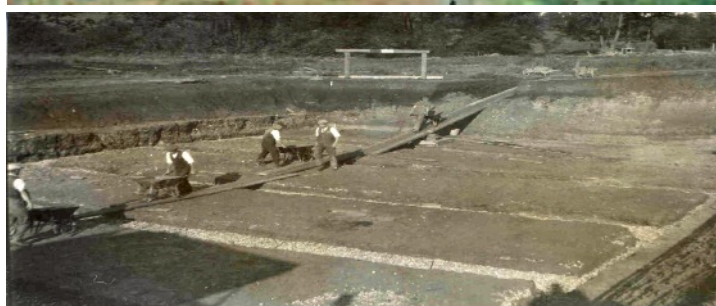
By the beginning of 1904, 367 Bewdley houses had piped water and by 1907 this had increased to 593. In March 1915 work started on laying mains in Wribbenthal, with water turned on in June 1915.

Over the intervening years demand for water has increased massively and all the equipment has been replaced many times, new and deeper bore holes dug, the reservoirs and pumping station rebuilt and enlarged and a water tower built at the top of Long Bank to increase the pressure at the higher parts of the town. In 1929 the decision was taken to supply some water to Stourport.

In 1962, as part of a national rationalisation, the Bewdley undertaking was absorbed into the NW Worcestershire Water Board and somewhat later that too was absorbed into the much larger Severn Trent organisation. In order to make the local supply more resilient, the Bewdley works in 1992 were linked to the Elan Valley pipeline and Trimpley Reservoir, (which takes water from the Severn) and to other local undertakings. Remnants of the previous organisations can be seen in many BWW and NWWWB pavement cover plates and the art deco fencing around the Long Bank tower, partially desecrated under the guise of road-safety access. Several of the old Bewdley pumps are retained at various waterworks museums.



Blackstone Pumping Stating: Front entrance



SPRING Newsletter 2015

EDITOR Ken Hobson

with layout assistance from Jock Gallagher



NEW MEDICAL CENTRE A STEP CLOSER

We knew that they meant business when this extra car park (above) was laid out in February, even though we were not allowed to use it, even if we paid. But people might like a reminder of what the site (below) looked like with its trees and greenery.





Richard Perrin

**from the
 Chairman's Desk**

The year ahead

This Spring Issue of our Newsletter follows on from your receipt of the Annual Report for 2014 and our Programme for the next 12 months. I hope that in the latter you will find many things to interest you. Coming up soon is the Outing to Ludlow and Stokesay Court with a similar format to the trip we made last year to Shipton Hall and Much Wenlock which was extremely successful. In case you have lost the application form, one is attached and we hope for another good response. I also hope that the scheduled talks will be as popular as last year's. We have brought back Tim Porter who gave us a wonderful talk about the Marcher Lords and our own John Chester returns to tell us more about the fascinating life of our Founding President, Earl (Stanley) Baldwin of Bewdley. We also look forward to the Talk by our member, Paul Crane, who is an expert on porcelain china.

RECENT SOCIETY LECTURES

We have been surprised and delighted with the attendances at the Lectures so far this year which have all exceeded 100; one attracted over 130! In January Dr David Symonds gave us an insight into *The*



Staffordshire Hoard and I know that a number of members followed this up with a visit to see the exhibition (right) in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. David is the Museum's manager in charge of antiquities. In February Richard Hayman entertained us with a talk entitled *Severn - the Great British River*. This was packed full of fascinating information about the river and its place in British history so much so that he overran somewhat.

The last Lecture in the winter series in March was by Kidderminster historian, Nigel Gilbert, about *The Mansions of the Kidderminster Carpet Barons*. Again it was a most engaging talk albeit tinged with sadness by the fact that so many of these grand buildings disappeared in the 1960/70s.

WEST MIDLAND SAFARI PARK

Elsewhere in this Newsletter we are reproducing our letter to the Planning Authorities in response to additional information they have sent us. Our initial response to the proposals was detailed in the Annual Report and our latest response reinforces what we said originally. It is important to point out that we are not against this very substantial development in principal, rather we wish the visual impact on the Green Belt, in which it lies, to be minimised and to achieve this we believe it should be located in a more suitable position in the Park.



Bewdley Passion Play

I think most people will agree that the Bewdley Passion Play enacted over the Easter weekend was a great success bringing hundreds into the town. The BBC said there were 2000 attending on the soaking wet Good Friday. The Musical on the Saturday evening in Jubilee Gardens was no less amazing and admission was free. Although this event is heavily supported by the Anglican Church in Bewdley (which provides the majority of the performers) it relies on donations from organisations such as ours for it to take place. The Society was pleased to make a donation of £500.

OBITUARIES

The Annual Report recorded the death at the turn of the year of our dear friend, Graeme Wormald. Sadly, since then I have to report that three more members have passed away.

Dr Ruth Lillie, a long standing member, died on Boxing Day at the age of 99. She and her husband, Dr Jock Lillie, had bought into Dr Miles's Practice in Load Street soon after WW2 but she was widowed prematurely in 1960. It was always her ambition for Bewdley to have a purpose-built Medical Centre and she was instrumental in this being achieved. Most people will remember her not as a GP but as an accomplished musician. In her funeral tribute we were told that she was still playing the violin at 99 and that this had been her only sport! Stephanie Barnes passed away suddenly in March. She was one of our most loyal members and had been our Outings Secretary for 20 years, taking us to visit a great variety of wonderful places. She had served on the Executive Committee for pretty much the same period and many will remember her late husband Dennis who also contributed so much to the Society. We owe Stephanie a big debt of gratitude.

Very recently we learnt that Brian Seymour had passed away after a brave fight against cancer. Brian was always vigilant to any untoward development especially in the northern area of the town and kept us well informed. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the families.

Programme 2015-16

Sat/Sun May 2/3
Spring Fair
Civic Society Guided Tours
(ring 01299 405823)

Wed May 27

Day Outing, Ludlow and Stokesay Court

Sat/Sun July 23/26

Civic Society Cherry Fair
Load Street, Bewdley



Wed September 2

Day Outing to Tewkesbury Town and Abbey
(details to follow)

Wed September 16 Lecture *The Dr Ordered Clay: Dr John Wall and the history and products of the Worcester Porcelain Manufactory; during the First Period 1751-76* by Paul Crane

7.30pm St George's Hall

Sat/Sun October 3/4

Harvest Fair

Society Guided Tours

(ring 01299 405823 for details)

October 9 (Fri) to October 18 (Sun)

Bewdley Festival



Tues October 27

Lecture *The history of Stourbridge Glass* by Dr Kate Round
7.30pm St George's Hall

Fri November 13

Annual Dinner

St George's Hall



To book ring

Sue Perrin on 01299 405823

Sat November 28



Christmas Lights Festival

Society stall in Load Street outside Deli

2016

Tues January 12

Lecture *Reluctant Rebel, the story of Owain Glyndwr* by Tim Porter (of "Marcher Lords" fame)

7.30pm St George's Hall

Wed February 17

Lecture *Baldwin - A Reputation*

Restored by John Chester

2.30pm St George's Hall

Tues March 15

Lecture *Birmingham Back-to-back*

House by Derek Clarke

7.30pm St George's Hall

Wed April 20

Annual General Meeting 7.30pm St George's Hall



Safari Park Society letter to Planning Officer

The photo-montages recently submitted wholly vindicate the Society's concern with the visual impact of the proposal in this most sensitive area between the two towns. Of particular interest are those pictures taken of Bunker Hill from the approaches to the Catchems End roundabout.

They confirm that the Waterpark development will be not only particularly obtrusive but, by being located so close to Catchems End, will urbanise and visually extend the built environment into this important green open area between the towns.

Bunker Hill provides an important green and open foil between the WMSP and Catchems End and should remain as such.

The photos themselves paint a misleading picture by not showing the full impact of the development on Bunker Hill. Not shown are the terraced car parking areas, the incised new access road nor the toll booths off the Catchems End roundabout. Add these missing developments to the pictures and the actual extent and impact of the development is more fully appreciated. The development is likely to be extensively lit as it is an all year round facility.

The Society concludes that the development will seriously impinge on and erode the openness and visual amenity of Bunker Hill.

The Waterpark development, as the photo-montages confirm, will seriously erode and damage the openness and amenity of this Green Belt area between the two towns. The advantages of this development do not outweigh the serious and damaging impact this proposal has on this important Green Belt area. The Society is not against the development per se but advocates that the development should be relocated to a more discreet location within the Park in line with previous decisions. This would retain and maintain the most important of the Green Belt principles and not conflict so heavily with Local Plan policy.

The Society remains very supportive of the Town Council view concerning the traffic implications of this development. The conclusions of the Traffic Report are seriously questioned in the known reality of the WMSP traffic's present impact on the two towns. The development will exacerbate these existing problems and yet provides no solution nor improvement. The additional pressure on the already overloaded Catchems End traffic island will be enormous and may well at certain times land-lock the town discouraging visitors, affecting trade and the general well-being of the area.

The Civic Society maintains its strong objection to this present proposal for the reasons set out in this and the earlier letter.