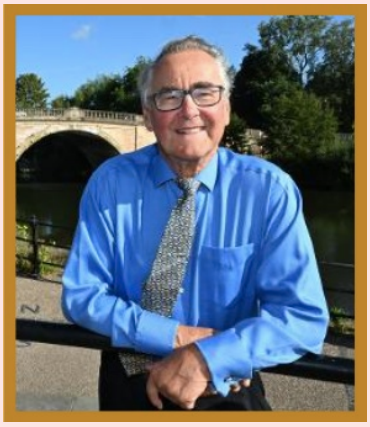
BEWDLEY CIVIC SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1944

Autumn 2026 Newsletter

BCS Chairman Honoured in the King's Birthday List



Sharon Harvey, Mayor of Bewdley, reflects on our Chairman's wonderful achievement

We all now know our chairman by his full name: James Richard PERRIN.

On 13th June, Richard was recognised for his service to the communities of Bewdley and Kidderminster in the King's Birthday Honours List 2026. He receives the British Empire Medal.

Throughout his life, he has given unwavering and distinguished service to civic life, supporting many organisations, charities, and community initiatives.

As Bewdley's longest-serving Civic Society Chairman, Richard leads by example, with perceptiveness, quiet determination, and a dry sense of humour that endears him to us all.

His words and actions are always aligned. He turns vision into results while maintaining the highest standards of fairness and propriety. These qualities have earned him deep respect, and even reverence.

While Richard's nominators may remain unknown, it is clear that many people across the community and beyond support his award.

Congratulations Richard. We thank you for your continuing service.

(Richard will be officially awarded his medal in October 2026)

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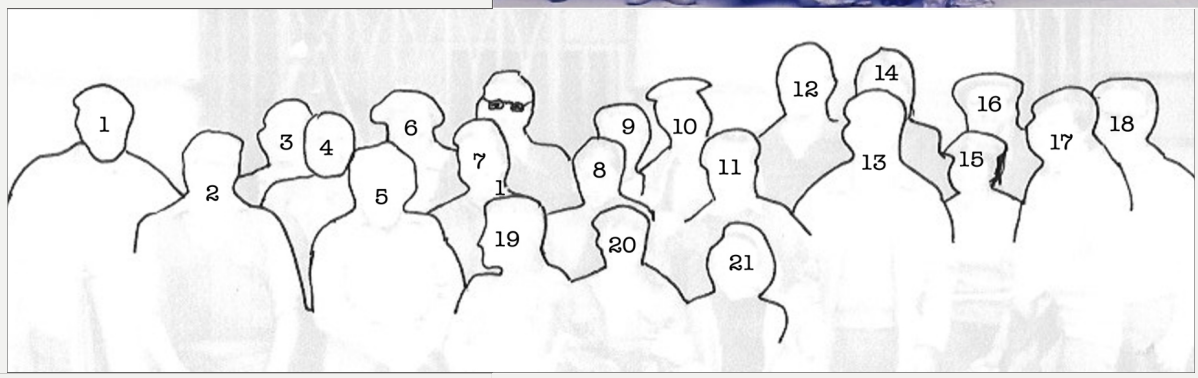
Thanks for your help with the Litter-Picking Mystery

Contributions from: Cat Banks, Eileen Bayliss, Joan Hobson, David Thomas and Richard Perrin

The Litter-Pickers have been identified as:

1. Ken Beeston (see below)
2. To be identified
3. Ray Bayliss (see below)
4. Ken Stroud, then Chairman BCS
5. Beryl Stroud
6. Helen Mackeness
7. Eileen Bayliss (see below)
8. Joy Godfrey
9. Joan Hobson





10. Mr Godfrey (first name?)
11. Tim Key
12. Jim Beasley
13. Dennis Barnes
14. To be identified
15. To be identified
16. Ian Latimer (see below)
17. John Instance (verification needed)
18. Terry Vaughan
19. Sarah Reeve (now Sarah Pouny)
20. Kate Wilson (now Howotson)
21. Cat Latimer (now Banks)

The photograh is a group of litter-pickers organised by then BCS Vice-chairman Roger Key on Keep Britain Tidy Spring Clean Day, Friday 22nd April, 1988. We asked you to help us identify them and we nearly have a full set.

Some of you stepped forward and we now know that Eileen and Ray Bayliss were leading lights of Bewdley Footpaths Association at the time.

Also that, Cat Latimer, Sarah Reeve and Kate Wilson recall that the day was ‘quite exciting’ and it must have been a school holiday because they don’t remember ‘bunking off’ for the day!

In 2008 Ian Latimer, who in 2024 would be made Mayor of Bewdley, had already served 32 years as a volunteer on the Severn Valley Railway in 1988, and recently received its 50 Year Service Award.

BCS Member David Thomas provided this information about Ken Beeston (#1): ‘*Ken was a scout with the 3rd Bewdley troop, went on to become a member of the Rover Crew, then a Scout Leader. It is in this capacity, presumably, that he took part in the event. He was a Bewdley character. Many knew him as a roofer who worked alongside Tony Goodwin at Goodwin Brothers.*

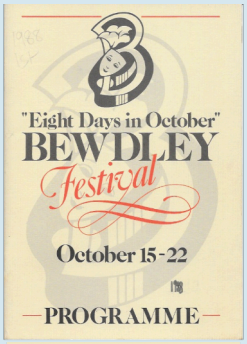
‘Ken was brought up in Northwood Lane and loved fishing. He would take his rod and line to scout summer camp. His main camp task was to keep the woodpile topped up. He was one of the first up every morning to light the fire, get the water on for tea and start cooking breakfast.

‘He lived in Whispering Street with his wife Dot and close to his favourite pub The Black Boy *– now* The Bewdley Inn*. Ken was kind, funny, hard working and much-missed by many Bewdley people when he passed away.’*

There are still four people to be identified and it would be good to hear about any of the other ‘characters’ in the picture. Please email: editor.bcsn@proton.me.

Bewdley Festival Committee Member Greg Williams takes us back to its origins ...

For nearly forty years Bewdley Festival has been a permanent fixture in our town's calendar. Its beginnings can be traced back to February 1988 when sixty residents attended a Bewdley Town Council meeting to show their support for a proposal to start a new arts festival. A committee was formed, overseen by the remarkable Jock Gallagher – and as head of network radio at BBC Pebble Mill Jock had a very helpful contact book!



1988 Front Cover

The inaugural Bewdley Festival took place in October that year, and featured a wide range of performers including Roger McGough & Brian Patten, a live BBC Radio 2 broadcast of *Folk on Two*, Jonathan Dimbleby with a live edition of BBC *Any Questions*, and Laurie Lee who, it is said, brought along a new young talent called Stephen Fry!

In Jock Gallagher's' introduction to that first festival programme he wrote: *In planning these 'eight days in October' we have kept two main aims in mind. We have tried to construct a series of performances and exhibitions that not only brings the best to the town but also brings out the best in the town. … we declare our belief that the idea of a festival in a small town like ours can only flourish if it is organised by local people for local people … but mindful of the larger world beyond*.



An advert in the1988 programme in the persuasive style of the times!

All these years later the ethos is unchanged. Bewdley Festival is still run by a busy team of volunteers (plus one part-time Festival Manager), manning the Festival Committee and supporting its events to ensure everything goes according to plan. And indeed, since 1988 (with the exception of the Covid year), Bewdley Festival has had an unbroken run. A glittering array of personalities has visited Bewdley over the years: Kate Adie, Tony Benn, Bill Bryson, Germaine Greer, Bob Harris, Geoffrey Hurd, Stirling Moss, Chris Packham, Robert Plant, Prunella Scales, Richard Stilgoe, Lord Robert Winston and many more. Performers have always commented on our favourable riverside location and the beauty of our heritage architecture. Mostly though the feedback is about the warm welcome acts receive, and the professionalism of our organisation. Long may it continue!

While the October Festival - or to give it its correct title, The Festival of the Arts - has been the mainstay of Bewdley Festival's calendar, these days there's a wide array of events taking place throughout the year, including our children's reading festival *Step Into Stories*, our series of *Pencil & Paint* art workshops, and one-off events such as last year's *Death In Paradise* evening and this year's *Car SOS*. For many years now the October *Soup Trail* has also been a sell-out festival curtain-raiser.



How things have changed since 1988!

We're working hard to ensure that this year's festival, beginning on October 9th, will prove to be another triumph. A few events are already sold out, but limited tickets are still available for others. Information and online ticket sales can be found on our website: www.bewdleyfestival.org.uk.

The aim of Bewdley Festival is to provide the best possible arts experiences to the people of Bewdley and beyond, and to entertain, engage and empower everyone along the way. We're indebted to the many businesses and organisations (including Bewdley Civic Society) who choose to become our Partners, and likewise to the valued individuals who support us as Patrons. We're also extremely grateful to the several hundred people who join us as Friends of Bewdley Festival. Of course, should you wish to become a Festival Friend, or indeed a Partner or Patron, we'd love to hear from you – our Festival office telephone number is 01299 404808.

Robert Smith, Civic Society member and retired Severn Valley Railway signalman welcomes a new trial rail link for commuters

With my longstanding connection as a volunteer on the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) and as a member of Bewdley Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, I'm delighted that something we had put in the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Bewdley has come to fruition so quickly and SVR heritage trains can now carry commuters from Bewdley to Birmingham.

Under an eight-week feasibility test, that was scheduled to start on September 1st, the SVR and West Midlands Rail Executive and West Midlands Railway have joined forces to run a unique regular passenger rail service from Bewdley to the city.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, the service will be up and running (fingers crossed!) with SVR heritage steam and diesel trains operating over the three-and-a-half-miles between Bewdley and Kidderminster. Passengers then take connecting West Midlands Railway services to and from Birmingham.



The weekday commuter service will operate on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the trial, with two morning departures from Bewdley at 6.40 am and 7.40 am. After changing at Kidderminster, passengers will arrive at Birmingham Snow Hill at 7.46 am and 8.46 am respectively. The total journey time being just over an hour.

Evening return services leave Birmingham Snow Hill at 4.46 pm and 5.46 pm, bringing commuters back from the city at either 5.57 pm and 7.02 pm again after changing at Kidderminster.

This cooperation between a mainline company and a volunteer-operated heritage railway, allowing passengers to make the combined journey on one ticket, is believed to be the first of its kind in the UK. If it's successful it could pave the way for introducing regular passenger rail services between Bewdley and the wider network.

At this stage the project is assessing passenger demand and only if it is successful will residents of Bewdley be connected more closely with the regional and national network. Recent years have seen significant growth in house building in and around our town. Better rail connectivity has the potential to reduce road congestion while making Bewdley an even more accessible destination for leisure, tourism and business.

We really need Bewdley people to use the trial commuter service so that it becomes permanent and can be further expanded. It's a case of use it or lose it. If it's successful, we might even see a day when we have direct services from Bewdley to Birmingham giving faster access to its connections to the rest of country.

For more information see:
https://svr.co.uk/news/

Civic Society Member wades in ...

In the middle of August, after two months without rain, and with river levels at the lowest for 50 years, Barbara Miller decided to take matters into her own hands and collected three full bags of rubbish from the river bed. As Barbara says,"We are all custodians of our beautiful river. Even small actions like picking up litter that might end up in the river is a way we can all contribute to passing on a healthier river for future generations."





Tony Leach, BCS Executive Committee member and chair of the Society's Planning Sub-committee explains the council plans affecting Bewdley:

A Plethora of Plans

Bewdley Town Council Neighbourhood Plan

In a changing world Bewdley needs to protect its unique character whilst encouraging sensitive development for the future. The Neighbourhood Plan is at the heart of this task and is the gatekeeper of the future. It has been developed over a number of years with widespread consultation, taking into account the views and aspirations of the people of Bewdley.

Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) has carried out a statutory consultation on this plan which ended on August 21. The result of this, which included the views of Bewdley residents, will be given to an independent government inspector. There will then be a simple referendum of Bewdley residents before the Bewdley Town Council Neighbourhood Plan is formally adopted. This should be early in 2027. It may appear a long and convoluted process however it is important bearing in mind the developments in the WFDC Local Plan.

WFDC Local Plan.

The WFDC Local Plan was adopted in 2022 and was the template for developments within the Wyre Forest until 2036. This WFDC Local Plan resulted in the three large housing developments in Bewdley. This local plan is now under review for 2 reasons:

Firstly, it should be reviewed every 5 years to ensure its relevance hence the review planned for 2027. WFDC has already started that process with a Scoping Consultation carried out this summer. Formal consultation should take place in the early part of 2027.

Secondly central government has more than doubled the number of dwellings (576 per annum) it expects WFDC to supply.

Hence WFDC carried out a Call for Sites exercise last Autumn where landowners / developers were asked to put forward sites for potential housing development. Within Bewdley 14 sites have been submitted. If you visit the WFDC website and search for 'submitted sites Bewdley' you will see a detailed map. Please refer to the following link to view the map showing sites submitted for consideration: https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/sitessubmittedmap

Alternatively scan this QR code:

It should be made clear that because a site has been submitted it does not mean that WFDC will support its development. It will carry out an analysis including widespread consultation before allocating sites. This consultation should occur in the early part of 2027.

I would encourage Bewdley residents to take part in any consultations regarding any of the issues in this short article.

A final thought; there is an elephant in the room – Unitary Councils. In the near future WFDC as a separate body will cease to exist. Instead local democracy will lie with a North Worcestershire Unitary Council consisting of Bromsgrove, Redditch & Wyre Forest. Who knows what joys that will bring.

Hence the importance of getting adopted a Bewdley Town Council Neighbourhood Plan and a reviewed WFDC Local Plan which reflect the views of Bewdley residents.

August 2026

In November 1953 the "Extra-Mural Department of Birmingham University" invited an Architectural Review to collaborate in an experimental series of four townscape studies of West Midlands towns which faced 'townscape threats'. It claimed to be the first time an academic body had interested itself in townscape as a public cause.

The result of the review of Bewdley is this paper by D Dewar Mills.

(Editor's note: Googling 'D Dewar Mills' does not prove fruitful. He was clearly a man of strong and fixed opinions. This extract from the proposal is unedited and is included for its entertainment value rather than its architectural validity. An editor of a more cynical bent might conclude, given the manner of D Dewar Mills's commentary, that this 1953 'paper' is an elaborate hoax.)

The Introduction to the So-called 'Midland Experiment'

Bewdley town once thrived because of its river, for here was one of the few crossing points between England and Wales and also one of the highest points reached by the Severn barges. Now, although no more commercial traffic comes to the town by water and there are many other crossing points, the river is still there and the old quays form a waterfront which places Bewdley among the most delightful towns in the Midlands and indeed in England.

Unfortunately, because the word quaint – in its antiquarian sense – has been applied to the town and also because of its convenient situation in relation to the crowded industrial cities, the weekend traffic pours in with the usual results: litter, choc-ices, fish-and-chip shops, half-crown teas, boraxed* buses and cars. These disgorge crowds of passengers who, having no real interest in the place, pick their way among parked vehicles, lounge at street corners waiting for the pubs to open or for something to happen – and wonder why they came.

The river is obviously at once the attraction and the danger. This slumbering town whose last merchant long ago closed his wharfside warehouse, without making any genuine effort to encourage or discourage the tripper trade, has done hardly anything to guard against the disasters which weekend tourism brings. Rather has the riverside been allowed to moulder and degenerate into a dusty, dreary, scruffy-edged road-cum-car-park where half-hearted and misplaced municipal improvements of the stock-list variety succeed in being totally out of character. What should be the town's greatest asset is turned into a visual liability by unsuitable flowerbeds and railings, scruffy grass, narrow pavements where there should be none, seats where there is no room for them and, in much of the little area left over, by parked cars.

Bewdley was certainly once – and potentially still is – one of the more favoured towns in the Midlands. It has a wealth of fine Georgian houses. narrow streets debouching into the magnificent central, room-like main street which, in turn, opens out onto the riverfront; a series of first-class townscape features. There is no call here for "improvement". All that's wanted is a strong lead to preserve and enhance its existing charms. To save the riverfront, integrate it with the shopping centre and stop the beam-crazed people who go around pulling down excellent 18th-century facades in order to expose some dreary half-timber.

A recent pamphlet on the town enthuses over the unmasking of one such house '... revealing the Tudor timber framing to the admiring gaze of the world'. Over-enthusiasm in this direction should be restrained as should the leaning towards Tudorbethan in new buildings. Bewdley is visually a Georgian town, one of the best in the county, and it would be mad indeed to exchange this lovely birthright for a mess of knottage.

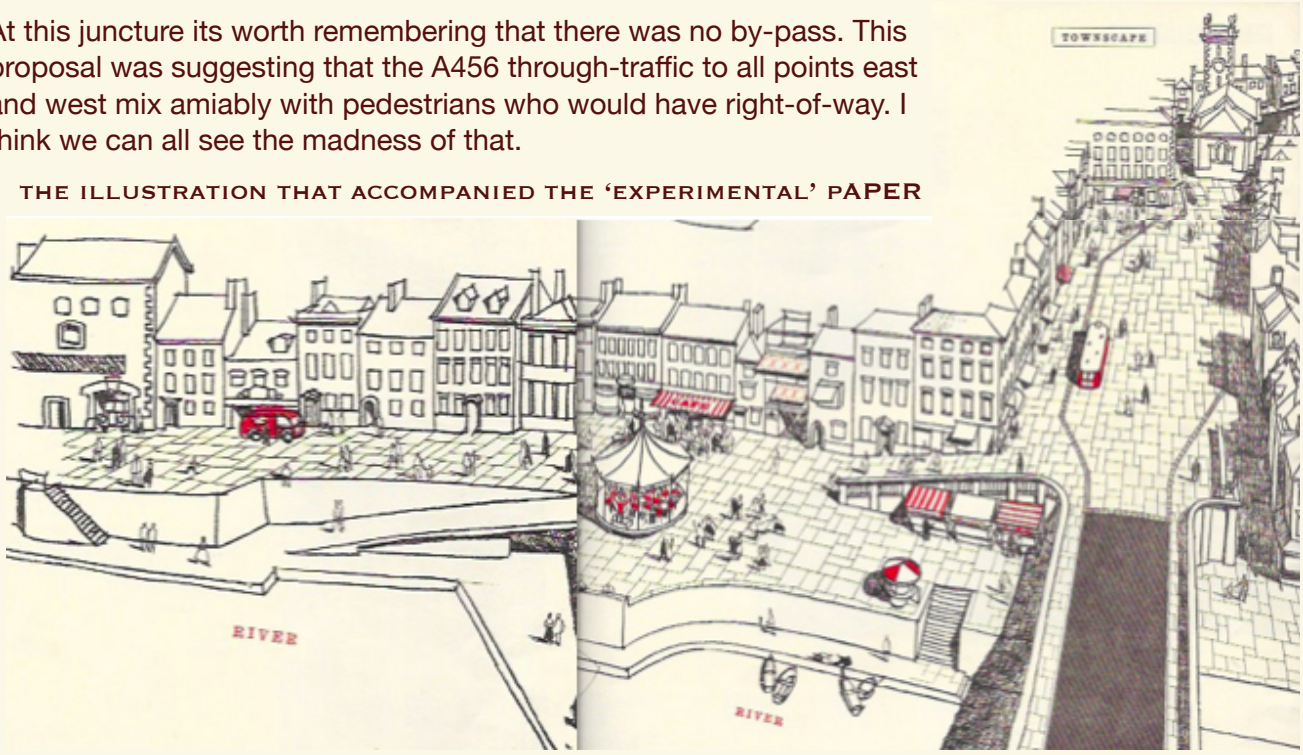
(*Definition of boraxed: Flashy on the surface but tacky, poorly made, or lacking genuine value.)

...

The interesting point of all this is that as far back as 1953 'planners' were addressing the notion that Load Street could be pedestrianised. The supposed result of D Dewar Mills's diatribe was a proposal primarily concerned with, "accentuating the reception room qualities of this central space. Ideally scaled as a town piazza, the abolition of the segregated pavement and the introduction from wall-to-wall of surfaces associated with pedestrians will indicate their priority and suggest to the motorist that, for the moment, he is no longer on the open road".

At this juncture its worth remembering that there was no by-pass. This proposal was suggesting that the A456 through-traffic to all points east and west mix amiably with pedestrians who would have right-of-way. I think we can all see the madness of that.

THE ILLUSTRATION THAT ACCOMPANIED THE 'EXPERIMENTAL' PAPER



Undaunted, the proposal went on to address the state of what we know as Riverside North. It concerned itself with the junction with the bridge, "at present the ramp with its puny pavements is open to all motorists who see the river front terrace as a convenient car park. This is turning an amenity into a mere utility. It is it is suggested that this quay be closed to wheeled vehicles." The result would be, "a revitalised quayside with the relationship between it and the town centre accommodated by the floor surface which flows through from the main street ... to the quay, the continuity of treatment tying the shopping centre as well as the quay to the river."

In this last aspect, perhaps, the plan was being more pragmatic and today's reality is nearer to the 1953 drawing. The 1953 designers envisaged keeping the bandstand but lowering it and removing the railings that, "forcibly, unnecessarily and messily railed [it] off from the people". Of course in 2004 the Environment Agency took a different approach and demolished the whole thing to accommodate the flood defences. The depiction of a café with its outside tables is perhaps the only futuristic element of the plan that now looks familiar.

In conclusion, whatever the provenance of the so-called review, it's likely that many members of the Society would like to see Load Street become the pedestrianised piazza envisaged in the 1953 'plan'. However, since those heady days when a motor car was a luxury afforded by only 15% of households, vehicular traffic has become dominant. Nowadays there seems to be no way of closing off Load Street without interrupting access to at least one of the routes in and out of Bewdley.

Rob Ireland

Eddie Burton reports on the members' outing to Chirk Castle on 4th June 2026

Driven by the lovely Terry, our coach set off to Chirk in typically showery weather that failed to dampen the happy and chatty mood aboard.

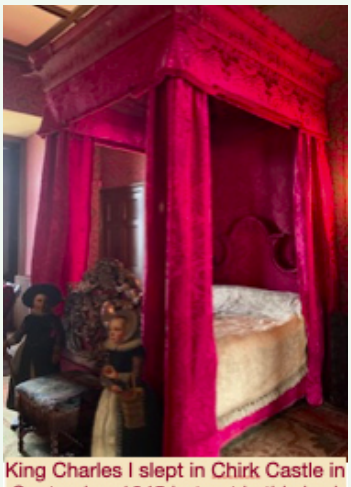
We had a good view of the stunning 'Davies Gates' as we neared the castle. These baroque, wrought-iron gates were commissioned in 1712 and crafted by local blacksmiths Robert and John Davies. They are considered to be masterpieces of 18th-century metalwork.



We moved onto the grounds where we were welcomed and given maps to aid our explorations using the gravel paths that made it easy to find our way as we dodged the showers. The gardens featured conical topiary, introduced in 1872 by Richard Middleton Biddulph. The extensive lawns were edged with exuberant annual herbaceous borders. The views across the Ceiriog Valley to the Cheshire and Shropshire plains were stunning.



After being driven up the steep hill to the Castle we went inside to investigate the treasures. These included: the rare Shagreen Japanese chest dating to circa 1600 and acquired by the East India Company; The Servants' Hall Table, a17th-century survival piece made from one continuous, 17-foot-long piece of oak where up to 40 castle staff once ate; and the Y Beibl Bach, Sir Thomas Myddelton's personal copy of the first Welsh Bible published in 1588. This artefact is credited with preventing the Welsh language from dying out. The volunteers manning the state rooms were very informative and eager to inform us about all of the displays.



King Charles I slept in Chirk Castle in September 1645 but not in this bed that dates from around 1700

Those of us who were able to brave some steep and uneven steps were able to visit the Adams Tower and dungeon where we could spot the murder holes and arrow slit windows.

We returned in good time to Bewdley, again expertly driven by Terry, and, glad to say, there were no mishaps.

Now onto our next adventure that was to have been a visit to Ironbridge Gorge. Sadly it has been postponed for the time being because it is not accepting group bookings. We are aiming to try again for 2027.

As members will know, the coach was already booked for September 17th so we changed the destination to The Black Country Living Museum. By the time you read this the outing may already have happened and we hope it lived up to its promise of a fun and interesting day out.

Thanks for all your support.
Eddie Burton
eddieburton@btinternet.com
07732012258

(I am sure I speak for all the membership when I say 'thank you so much' to Eddie for all her hard work organising the members' outings. Ed)



When King George VI, died peacefully in his sleep at Sandringham House on 6th February 1952 the news was greeted with shock and grief throughout the country. Cinemas and theatres closed, BBC programmes and sports fixtures were cancelled. A silent, weeping crowd gathered outside Buckingham Palace during the afternoon and, despite the bitter cold and rain, it was still there long after it grew dark. The flag on St Anne's Church tower, as in every town and village throughout the land, would have been flown at half-mast.



At the BCS Executive Committee meeting a week later the minutes recorded, '*Members stood for two minutes as a token of homage and sorrow on the death of His Late Majesty King George VI'*.

The main business of that meeting, and many before and after, was the the Bridge Toll House which was in a sorry state and slated for demolition. It was noted that: '*a letter was read from the Clerk to the County Council [which said] you might be interested to know that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government has also had a report from the Ministry of Works. They think that the toll house could be restored … at a cost of about £1500. This compares with your architects estimate of £1000*.'



Bewdley Bridge Toll House
Note the Belisha Beacon to the right that indicated a Zebra Crossing existed on the bend. It too has been lost.

The society had been fighting for the Toll House to be renovated rather than demolished for some years. The Annual Report for June 1952 recounted that, '*The toll house is an integral part of Telford's famous Bridge and it is important to preserve it not only on account of its historical value but because it forms part of the Bewdley scene*.'

In the St Anne's Church Yearbook for 1951/52, an article called *An Hour in Bewdley* notes, '*the present Bridge designed by Telford was opened on the September 28, 1801. Then and until 1834 bridge-tolls were paid and the picturesque little toll house remains (though in need of structural repair)'*.

Two years later the June 1954 BCS report said, '*The society's main preoccupation has again been a scheme for the restoration of the tollhouse*' and that a plan for the preservation of the building was being prepared.

That plan, as we know, came to nothing because in 1960, despite the many years of campaigning by the society, the Toll House was demolished and an important historical feature of the town was lost to posterity.

When a monarch dies a coronation follows and on June 2nd 1953 Queen Elizabeth II was crowned as successor to her father George VI. Later that year the Society planted trees to commemorate this and the birth of Prince Charles five years earlier. Sadly, both trees were vandalised and died in 1960 – a bad year for conservation. The plaque for the original Coronation tree is stored in the Society's archive (see image).



RI

Civic Society Executive Committee member Peter Waldron took a walk along the riverside towards Dowles and made an interesting discovery

Civic Society members enjoying a riverside walk towards Dowles this Summer will have noticed the extensive renovation work in progress at the Old Gas Works House, adjacent to Greenacres Lane. They may have admired the stylish sitting area across the path from the house, affording a commanding view of the river for the owners' enjoyment, and thought it's a pleasant spot; but they would pass by, assuming that that the new signage at the entrance said, *Private – Keep Off* or one of the other depressing phrases so prevalent at favoured locations these days.

It would have been a rash assumption, because the sign reads as is shown here:



Your reporter, somewhat overwhelmed by the generosity of spirit shown by the owners Dawn and Tony Rowe, nevertheless took them at their word and duly bode a while on one of the comfortable benches provided, if only to to recover his customary cynicism.



The town and its visitors are assuredly grateful for this ray of sunshine! This especially since Society Members may remember that this quarter of Bewdley has seen discord in the past – notably our long and arduous struggle to correct the anomaly that Greenacres Lane was NOT included on the definitive list of Public Rights of Way. Our then Chairman, the late Kenneth Hobson, was an indefatigable champion against stiff opposition and the matter was finally settled successfully after a three-day public inquiry.

But how did the new 'Riverside Terrace' appear so suddenly? Well it didn't – it reappeared after many years buried under greenery, and it isn't, or wasn't originally a terrace, but a WWII air raid shelter! The stylish sitting area is housed on that structure's reinforced concrete roof and its interior, where Gas Works employees and others sheltered, is now clogged with river silt.

The house was built in 1839 as accommodation for the manager of the Gas Works that stood adjacent and behind it from that year until 1952 – which means that, only about now, first-hand memory of it as an everyday sight for over 100 years, is slipping from our grasp. Indeed, Alan Scaplehorn wrote in 2005 of hearing a recollection of children being taken there to inhale the tar fumes as a cold cure!

With thanks to Bewdley Historical Research Group for access to two excellent publications, both of them meticulously researched, very informative and eminently readable: *The Best in Worcestershire, A Short History of Bewdley Gas Works* by Alan Scaplehorn – now out of print, but it is hoped with a re-print planned; and *Bewdley at War 1939 - 1945* by David Thomas, available from Wyre Forest Books today!

WHAT'S ON ...

Monday 21st September 2026
Lecture and book launch:
PORT, PEWTER & PIRATES
A new book on Bewdley by Heather Flack
7.30 pm St George's Hall

Friday 9th to Saturday 17th October
BEWDLEY FESTIVAL

Tuesday 27th October 2026
Lecture: **TEN MILE TREASURES**
Francis Engleheart
7.30 pm St George's Hall

Friday 20th November 2026
ANNUAL DINNER
St George's Hall
7.00 pm for 7.30 pm

Saturday 21st November 2026
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FESTIVAL
Society stall in St Anne's Church

Monday 11th January 2027
Lecture: **FURTHER REFLECTIONS OF DOWLES**
Nick Trustram Eve
7.30 pm St George's Hall

Thursday 11th February 2027
Lecture: **SEVEN WORCESTERSHIRE TOWNS**
A REDACTED TV FILM FROM 1967
Graham Gooderham
2.30 pm St George's Hall

Monday 8th March 2027
Lecture: **A FASCINATING HISTORY OF 70 LOAD STREET**
Seb Coulthard
7.30pm St George's Hall

Monday 12th April 2027
THE ANNUAL RUSKIN LECTURE

WITH APOLOGIES TO FANS OF EDDIE BURTON'S REGULAR NATURE PAGE, I'M AFRAID IT HAS HAD TO BE HELD OVER TO THE NEXT ISSUE BECAUSE OF LACK OF SPACE IN THIS ONE. EDITOR

OFFICERS OF BEWDLEY CIVIC SOCIETY

President – Beatrice Grant
(Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire)

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Paul Crane, Barbara Longmore

Chairman – Richard Perrin

Vice-chairman – Martin Guard

Secretary – Barbara Longmore

Treasurer – Richard Willetts

Membership Secretary – Pauline Geddie

Chair of Planning Sub-committee – Tony Leach

FROM 'THE SEVERN VALLEY'

by **Joseph Lamb (1875)**

Bewdley then appears on the scene,
Tis lovely to behold;
A sweeter valley ne'er was seen
Than Beaulieu's arms unfold.

The Summer House and Winterdyne,
Netherton House and Severn Cot;
Oh were those charming villas mine,
Methinks I'd leave them not.

Sandbourne House and Tickenhill too,
Tho' old will never tire,
With pleasures ever fresh and new,
Fulfill the soul's desire.

Blackstone Rock and Ribbesford Wood,
Their beauties now unfold;
The feeling cannot be withstood,

That fills the heart with love untold.
Dowles Church and Brook do not forget,
When Bewdley's charms are spoken;
And long shall I remember yet
Wassell Wood with charms unbroken.

The newsletter is edited by Rob Ireland

Email: editor.bcsn@proton.me

Articles, letters and photographs welcome

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Autumn 2026 Newsletter
Richard Perrin



from the chairman's desk

I was delighted and very honoured to receive the British Empire Medal award. I have lived locally all my life and it's a pleasure to have been associated with community activities in Bewdley and Kidderminster. My principal interest, of course, has been the Civic Society. My father was the founding Treasurer, and my mother was a force on the Executive Committee for many years so it's good that I have been able to continue the family tradition in recognising the importance of preserving our heritage. In fact, my wife, Sue, was elected to the Executive Committee (in 1977) before me and I've lost count of the Annual Dinners she has organised. She certainly deserves a part of the medal for the support she has given me.



Bewdley's Cherry Fair was held in mid-July and the society again had a stall in the foyer of The Guildhall. The stall is pictured with executive committee members Nicole Harper and Jane McDonagh.

I wonder how many readers of the Summer Newsletter when reading the article about the history of Bewdley Town football club doubted Derry Thompson's assertion that the club was formed by the merger of two local teams viz: the Old Boys and the Woodcolliers. When phoning Derry to say, "what about the Bewdley Comrades?" he politely pointed out that they didn't fall in until a couple of years later. Happily, it seems that the Club might soon adopt the nickname *The Comrades*.

We were pleased that the Environment Agency recently recognised the enormous efforts that the late Gill Holland made towards the alleviation of the problem of flooding in Bewdley with the commissioning of a commemorative plaque on the new Beale's Corner flood defences. Civic Society Hon. Secretary Barbara Longmore and Executive Committee member Sue Perrin accompanied the Mayor at the occasion and Gill's three children were there to acknowledge this lovely gesture and unveil the plaque.







This photo of Gill with Tony Blair was taken when the PM visited the town during the floods in 2000. No doubt Gill was giving him some harsh words about the need for flood defences on *both* sides of the river. Blair's government completed the townside works by 2006 but it would be four PMs later, after Boris Johnson promised to 'Get Bewdley Done', before plans were put in train to protect Beales Corner.

The Society is grateful to Mary Lovell and James and Caroline McLachlan for their recent donations to our archives. Mary has gifted an 'entire'* posted in Bewdley in 1840 and the McLachlans some books about Bewdley including a valuable and rare copy of Burton's *History of Bewdley*.

(* A complete postal item— an envelope, folded letter sheet, postcard—that retains all of its original parts.)