She was just eighteen years old when Victoria learned of the death of her uncle, King William IV, in the early hours of Tuesday 20th June 1837. Her coronation took place a year later and Wellington, along with countless towns and cities throughout Britain, marked the occasion in its own way.

As a monarch, Queen Victoria presents historians with several anomalies. The period bearing her name is characterised by major technological developments, economic power and social reform and yet she preferred the status quo, resisted change and preferred to ignore the problems caused by Britain's class-aware society.

She reigned over a nation that was supposed to idealise motherhood and the family, yet she hated pregnancy and disliked babies and children (apart from, presumably, the nine she had herself).

As a person, Victoria was well aware of her position and prone to egotism, determined to hold onto political power at all costs, yet her reign witnessed a transformation of the monarch's position to that of a ceremonial leader and thus preserved the role of the monarchy which, politically, had been in some doubt at the start of her reign.

Wellington in Victorian times reflected what was happening throughout the rest of the country: it had its own social and economic problems, yet the period also witnessed many improvements.

This edition of Wellingtonia reveals just a few of the many facets of Victorian Wellington.

We hope you enjoy reading it.
The great Queen-Empress, so far as I know, never came here, but her presence was universally felt, even when she was mourning or hibernating in a palace. England was the centre of the British Empire, on which the sun never set, the largest empire the World has ever known. Now, barely a century later, people who understand Romans, Genghis Kahn, Napoleon, Hitler and Mao, know little of Victoria’s empire.

My generation was brought up by Victorians. Our parents, grandparents, teachers and shopkeepers were Victorians. They were proud of the Queen-Empress; everyone stood to attention for the National Anthem and prayed for the Queen’s health every Sunday.

World maps were coloured pink for ‘our’ Empire. This included around a third of the globe; Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, New Zealand, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, British Somalia, British Guiana, Nigeria, Jamaica and The Gold Coast were only the larger ones. We also ‘owned’ Gibraltar, Singapore, Hong Kong, many Pacific islands and goodness knows how many more. Britain was the ‘Mother Country’.

Wellingtonians often visited the Empire. Men volunteered for the Army and were posted, like my grandfather, to India. The Northwest Frontier was quite as wild as it is now. Men joined the Royal Navy, then as large as all the other navies in the world put together, or the Merchant Navy, again the largest on Earth.

Other men – and women – became missionaries, spreading the Christian Gospel to far-flung countries, whether they liked it or not. These intrepid characters raised money locally and set off to exotic places to set up churches of various denominations, returning occasionally with pictures and artefacts like Bible quotes written on bamboo to raise more money. They also took Bibles and, of course, Hesba Stretton’s charming books.

In Victorian times there were many paupers. They came in two sorts – deserving and undeserving. Often that meant sober and drunk. Many children starved, and women starved themselves to feed their husbands. Soup kitchens and ragged schools were set up. Our Union Workhouse was in Walker Street (later a brewery, now the library) until a new one between Union Road and Street Lane was built.

Banks emerged and expanded. Their managers often resembled Captain Mainwaring of Dad’s Army. The North and South Wales Bank became the Midland (now HSBC) and had a huge hardwood counter, across which all business was transacted by men in suits.

Everybody was graded in classes and ‘knew their place’. The middle class expanded and lived in rented villas to suit their income. Mrs Beaton was the guru for housewives, who had few labour-saving devices. Many private schools (including Wellington College and Hiatts) supplemented church schools (National and Methodist). Respectability was much sought-after and demonstrated in dress, manners, church attendance and speech.

Families were large, especially among the poor, who were usually semi-literate at best. Many churches set up Sunday Schools to teach them to read the Bible and other ‘improving’ books. Boarding schools were common for those who could afford them, and Dame schools for the aspiring but less well off. Even Prince’s Street Methodist school charged 2d a week fees. Discipline was strict and corporal punishment frequent.

Adults were never addressed by Christian names except for family, close friends and underlings. Men carrying walking sticks wore suits with waistcoats bedecked with watch chains and class-identifying hats. Women never wore trousers; skirts and coats were ankle length and elaborate hats, jewellery and umbrellas were de rigueur.

The railways to Shrewsbury, Crewe, Stafford, London, Dawley and Much Wenlock came mid-century. Coaches and other artefacts were made at the large, short-lived Shropshire Works, later Groom’s timber yard. Almost every village had a railway station and Wellington passenger and goods stations were the hub of the system. This, with John Barber’s Smithfield cattle market, stimulated a boom in agricultural machinery manufacture (Corbett’s and Bromley’s) newspapers (Wellington Journal), publishing (Houlston’s) and small specialist shops for farmers, their wives and people from the industrial towns to the east.

Victorian manners were formal. Crime was rife but heavily punished by instant dismissal, gaoling, flogging, deportation or hanging. Both drunkenness and teetotalism were common. Health and unemployment insurance were by ‘Friendly Societies’ (Oddfellows, Foresters, Buffaloes and Rechabites). Governments didn’t govern so much as now. Most people were proud to be British and of the Queen and Empire. Black, brown or yellow people were hardly ever seen. ‘We went to ‘them’; they weren’t invited here.

Wellington was very different but is still a small, friendly market town.
Did a ghost really appear at All Saints church? Or was it all a misunderstanding?

1842

**HOST ALARM!** - For several days and nights lately, the town of Wellington and neighbourhood for some miles round have been greatly agitated with the tale that there were strange sights beheld in Wellington Church and Church-yard.

The rumour having begun, many went to see, and returned confirming the report, but could not tell what they saw; it was a non-descript, sometimes a long figure, sometimes short, and then round or square; at any rate, it was like Ignis Fatuus. The tale increased, and at length of an evening and at night, great numbers of people were congregated together in the Church-yard to the number of one or two hundred, they clipp’d the Church to turn away the Ghost, but all would not do.

Some thought they saw a warrior dressed in full armour, standing at the top of the tower of the Church, equipped in all points, exactly 'cap-a-pie', with sword by side, which 'ever-and-anon' he shook, as if in wrath, towards the assembled multitude below. Even some of the clergy made their appearance, but Mr. Ghost would still be Lord Paramount. The question was, What could it be? There were great searchings of heart, some said, all was not right in the Church-yard, others, surely it portended the prophecy of the 'Monk of Dree' was going to be fulfilled, but that it related to Wellington as well as to London, and perhaps all England was going to be involved in a general ruin.

Whilst these cogitations were working with many, some a little more reflective began to suspect, that surely the late great improvement of illuminating the town with gas, promoted by the public spirited St. J.C. Charlton, Esq., James Oliver, Esq., and some other influential, had something to do with it, by the escapement of the gaseous fluid in some way or other, they knew not. At length, however, the humble individual who was watchman of the belfry (lest elves and hobgoblins should frolic and dance to a merry peal), having some of the mental ability of Archimedes, though perhaps he knew it not, bethought himself of a small window which looked out of the belfry into the body of the Church, which corresponded with an opposite window, upon which the fine lights from the gas lamps shone brilliantly, and acted as a mirror to throw the reflection down into the Church, varying in its form according to the power of King AEolus upon the lights. This part of the mystery being solved, the imagined figure on the tower was accounted for by considering that the ball and cross had lately been burnished, and in the late nuptial rejoicings, a large flag had been appended, but which Master AEolus had severed into streamers. The shining ball with the strong light from the lamps upon it, would very well represent the warrior’s helmet, the vane and quarter points, his floating plumes; and the streamers shaking in the wind, the sword by side or lifted in terroe ... it was something like a ghost.

[Editor’s note: The Medieval Monk of Dree was renowned for his predictions. Aeolus was the King of the Winds in Greek mythology.]

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Price wars are nothing new. When the railway network expanded during the middle of the nineteenth century, there was keen competition between the different railway companies to attract passengers.

This story shows how desperate competing companies were to dominate. It was first published in the Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News some twenty years after the event.

‘In the year 1854, two of the most powerful railway companies in the United Kingdom (the Great Western and the London and North Western) were pitted against each other in the most violent and uncompromising competition ever known in a similar connection or ever since. Between the towns of Wellington and Shrewsbury, a distance of 10 miles, both companies had, as they have still, the right to use the railway in common. It was in this section that, in the year referred to, the crux of the fierce competition was experienced.

The fare between the two towns, which was originally 10d [almost equivalent to today’s 5p] each way, gradually dwindled down to a penny, the lowest railway fare for 10 miles on record. When matters had reached this point, the public, who largely availed themselves of the cheap ride, began to wonder what would be the next development.

It was rumoured that the North Western would carry third-class passengers from Wellington to Shrewsbury without any charge whatsoever, and that the Great Western Company threatened that if this was done they would not only follow suit, but give each passenger a glass of free beer at the end of the journey. Matters never reached this absurd pass, both companies coming speedily to the conclusion that the war was one of mutual destruction and that on both sides ‘discretion was the better part of valour’!
Pollution problems might seem to be a hazard of modern life but, looking at the proposals for the building of Wrekin Road Schools in 1879 in Wellington, it appears they were very relevant even then. Not that they were at first that obvious.

A committee was set up to look into the building of a new school because it had been reported that there were 1,191 children of school age in Wellington and, of these, 953 were attending public elementary schools, 115 attended ‘adventure’ or dame schools and 123 were not attending any school. Of these, 87 were infants and 36 between seven and 13.

So there were 238 children in Wellington not attending the public elementary schools.

Wellington School Board wrote to the Education Department to effect that a new school should be built on land in Wrekin Road for 125 infants and 125 in the mixed department.

There were long discussions about the production of plans, one architect having designed schools at £7 10s per child exclusive of master’s residence, while another undertook to build a school, including fittings and boundary walls for £6 a head, or £5 without boundary walls.

Plans were received from no fewer than 70 applications and those submitted by Messrs. Haddon Brothers of Malvern were accepted. This was in November 1879. In December came the bombshell.

Mr W. Mansell wrote to the school board calling attention to the fact that his foundry with cupola for casting purposes adjoined the site on which the board were about to erect their new school. He was of the opinion that the sulphur arising from the casting process might be inhaled by the children and ‘possibly prove injurious’.

He thought it best to call their attention to this before they started building. He was willing to give in exchange for this site one of equal quantity of land belonging to him on the road leading out of Haygate Road to the Gasworks.

This offer was turned down by the board but Mr Mansell then agreed to purchase for them another site in Wrekin Road from a Mr Clayton in exchange for the land next to the foundry.

There were 17 tenders for the building of the schools and in May 1880 it was unanimously resolved that the tender of Mr W. Griffiths of Knockin for £1,590 be accepted. It was agreed the Home Secretary should be made a party to the land exchange with Mr Mansell.

At the December monthly meeting of the Wellington School Board, Miss Hannah Jones of Hixon, Stafford, was appointed mistress of the Wrekin Road Mixed School at a salary of £60 a year, with half grant on examination and half grant for music, her duties to begin on January 10, 1881.

Miss Lucy Ellis of Wednesbury was appointed mistress of the infants school at a salary of £50 a year.

The chairman told the meeting that, since the last meeting, difficulty had arisen as to the water supply. The Waterworks Company could not supply it for less than £80. He and Mr Webb had consequently made arrangements for sinking a well and putting down a force pump which would cost less than £40 and give a good supply.

It was agreed that the schools should be publicly opened on the evening of Monday, January 10, but at the next meeting the Wellington School Board chairman, Mr T. R. Groom, explained that the opening had to be delayed until after the present schools had been examined.

The clerk was instructed to obtain hat and cloak pegs and a 12 light gas meter for the schools. A tender was received from Mr T. Shaw, a jeweller of New Street, to supply two clocks for the schools and keep them in repair for 12 months at £3 each.

Managers were appointed: Rev. A. Grace, Mr W. Mansell (jun), Mr W. Smith, Mr J. Ashley, Mr R. A. Groom, Mr Mitchell and Mr W. Partridge.

Ann Parton, wife of Isaiah Parton of New Street, was chosen from 14 applications to be caretaker at 5s a week. Her husband was employed to pump water, attend to and keep in order the yard, playground, closets etc., and get in coal and clean ash pits for 1s 6d a week.

The Wrekin Road Schools were opened on Tuesday, January 18 and in the first week 33 pupils were enrolled in the mixed department and 14 in the infants. By the second week this had risen to 65 in the mixed and 27 in the infants.

By February 1881 the numbers had risen to 92 in the mixed school and 34 in the infants.

Miss Ruth Gough was appointed assistant mistress of the school at £25 a year and Agnes Richards and Emma Turner were appointed monitors.

Mr S. Jones, schools officer, reported that in 1872 there had been 1,315 children in elementary schools in Wellington. In 1875 there were 1,915 and by 1881, there were 2,226. It seems that Wrekin Road Schools were built just in time.
walk through Wellington’s streets today will reveal a variety of shops serving the consumer. You’ll find a grocer, butchers, bakers, sandwich bars, pubs, outfitters, book shops, florists, newsagents and charity shops to mention just a few.

Go back to 1851, however, and as well as some of the services listed above, you’d have found a very different picture.

Some of the streets have changed name since the 1850s, names that once reflected their use, such as Duke Street known then as Dun Cow Lane and Market Street which was Butcher’s Row. Bell Street was Swine Market, Glebe Street was Jarratt’s Lane and Holyhead Road, in much quieter times before the advent of motor vehicles, was Street Lane.

Wellington had no less than eleven butchers, seven grocers, three bakers, two confectioners, a fruitier and a fishmonger. There was no excuse for not looking your best when there were fourteen tailors, seven dressmakers, five hatters, eighteen shoemakers, three bonnet makers, a bootmaker, a patten and clog maker, a hosier, two milliners and seven drapers for those little bits and pieces. Last but not least there was an old clothes dealer for those down on their luck.

Trades were extremely well represented, plumbers and glaziers, painters, cabinet makers, builders, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners abounded. Particularly pertinent to the time were basket makers, cooperers, tin plate workers, braziers, tanners, saddlers and curriers, rope and twine makers, umbrella makers, chair makers, nail makers, wheelwrights, coach builders, stonemasons, blacksmiths, a brass and iron founders in King Street and watch and clock makers.

There were chemists, provision and smallware dealers, salt and tea dealers, hairdressers, jewellers represented by the delightfully named Delvecchio & Dotti in New Street, timber merchants, pawnbrokers, book binders and stationers, silk mercers, a postmaster, namely Benjamin Smith, father of the Wellington authoress Hesba Stretton, a toy dealer, a seedsmen, several travelling drapers, an agent for the intriguingly named London Bone and Guano Company in Wrekin Road, veterinary surgeons, an iron founders, Mansell’s in Foundry Lane, a corn miller, an agent for brick and tile makers, ironmongers and tallow chandlers.

A familiar name still to some Wellingtonians is Hobsons. In 1851 Robert Hobson was already established selling stationery and books, publishing the *Wellington Advertiser* and acting as Honorary Secretary for the London Art Union. The shop exists still in the Square but is now a travel agency.

Professions represented throughout the town included surgeons, clerks, the High Bailiff to the County Court, highway surveyors, solicitors, Robert Newill (a name still linked locally with the legal profession) based in New Street, curates and sextons, a superintendent of police, schoolteachers, Inland Revenue officers, the manager of the Shropshire Union railway, a scripture reader and a Professor of music, auctioneers, boarding school proprietors and many, many more.

People in Wellington never went thirsty in 1851. There were no less than thirty-four beerhouses which were often someone’s front room where homemade beer was served. Twenty-six pubs catered for thirsty customers: The Bell Inn, Kings Head, Bull’s Head, Odd Fellows’ Arms, Nelson Inn, Red Lion, Duke of Wellington, Queen’s Head, Duke’s Head and George & Dragon were all situated in what was then New Street. The White Lion, Market Tavern, Crown Inn and Fox & Hounds jostled for custom in Crown Street, while the Fox & Grapes in Market Street or Butcher’s Row saw proprietors Ann and Helen Shakeshaft also trading as braziers.

Then there was the Wicketts (note the spelling), the name referred to a small gate, the Red Lion and the Holly Bush (the latter now a private house), all to be found on Street Lane. The Dun Cow not surprisingly in Dun Cow Lane, the Charlton Arms on Church Street, the Britannia on King Street, the Sun Inn, Queen’s Head, Groom & Horses and The Raven Inn, for some reason now renamed Rasputin’s, on Walker Street; and lastly, the Cock Inn on Watling Street.

Of these, just a few still exist. Some have been demolished and some, such as the Fox & Hounds and the Bull’s Head have been utilised as shops and offices.

People in and around Wellington in the 1850s relied on their market town; travel was restricted, the combustion engine had yet to be thought of; trains were relatively new and not generally for the working classes who would have walked unless able to find alternative methods such as getting a lift on a horse drawn cart.

Wellington, the hub of the area, certainly filled most needs.

* * *

The original Fox & Hounds inn, Crown Street.
That a rich vein of Wellington’s history would be available to us had more of the district’s leading citizens published their memoirs.

Imagine, for example, the diaries and/or notebooks of doyens like stock agent John Barber, brewer O.D. Murphy, schoolmaster John Bayley, rebel workhouse reformer Edward Lawrence, or timber king Alfred Groom.

Thankfully however, we do have the late Dr. H.W. (Harry) Pooler’s two autobiographies covering his life, and general medical practice, written in the late 1940s. Dr. Pooler was born in Wellington in 1866 and grew up in the town during its Victorian era.

And it was a glorious time – not just for Wellington, but for all of England as industrial and commercial innovation, world trade, and increased general well-being gradually began to improve the lives of a growing population.

As a boy, Harry Pooler lived with his parents, five sisters and infant brother in a large townhouse and shop overlooking The Square. Pooler senior was a prosperous master draper (see advert opposite) and highly respected as an ardent Church of England worshipper. Every day at home in Market Square there were prayers involving family and servants – an unfailing ritual.

Young Pooler loved the countryside around the town, and was familiar with the folds, nooks and crannies of The Wrekin. He was familiar with the folds, nooks and crannies of The Wrekin. He had more of the district’s leading citizens published their memoirs.

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Young Pooler loved the countryside around the town, and was familiar with the folds, nooks and crannies of The Wrekin. He writes lovingly of Wrekin and Ercall, of vigorous rambles and picnics on summer Sundays, then, tired out, journeying home at twilight by horse-drawn wagon.

The little Pooler clan enjoyed the advantage of a grandstand view from the front window of their town house when anything of public interest occurred in The Square. In the days before cinema, motorised road transport, and radio, events bordering on the sensational (for the times) included visits by military bands and fairground folk with dancing bears. The family also witnessed the triumphant return of Captain Matthew Webb following his first successful English Channel swim.

Then, too, there were the annual parades of the various Friendly Societies – Foresters, Oddfellows, Druids, and the like – in full regalia on their way to Church, he writes. ‘And at Christmas the Morris dancers with their accordion player, and their St. George and the Dragon, a fearsome beast, but nonetheless welcomed by us children from our box seats in The Square.

‘By no means to be forgotten [was] the Town Crier in his uniform with gold lace and red lapels and his cocked hat, like a Field Marshall’s, and his bell – Oh Yes, Oh Yes! ‘And yet again, the annual visits of the circus, and the front view we had of the procession through The Square, with the elephants and caged lions, a dancing bear, and horses and ponies, and the beautiful ladies in widely flowing skirts, but above all, the clowns.

‘In this house we continued to live until I was about twelve years old. Then we moved to a house on the outskirts of the town called Winton Lodge [in King Street].’

Dr. Pooler was the nephew of one of Wellington’s pioneer medical practitioners, Dr. George Hollies (Hollies Road was named after him). Dr. Hollies took on young Harry as his student in practice at a time when medicine was moving forward in step with late Victorian times.

Personal and professional hygiene was at last beginning to be recognised as the solution to so many surgical disasters, and to so many mysteriously rampant outbreaks of deadly disease among the general, and particularly urban, population.

Under his eminent uncle’s watchful eye, H.W. was on his way to an eminence of his own. He moved to Birmingham to complete his medical qualifications, and remained in that city for many years as a busy general practitioner, medical innovator, and highly respected City Councillor.

Of his time learning the profession in Wellington, he writes: ‘Medical work in the 1870s…there were no telephones and no cars. I used to start out (on horseback) about 10am, lunch at the nearest suitable pub, and return home about 4pm, perhaps to find a message waiting for another patient 7 or 8 miles away; this involved saddling another (fresh) horse and attending to his needs on my return. It was hard but pleasant work, for the countryside was beautiful.’

Dr. Pooler recalls how frustrating it could be treating critical patients in Victorian England – with no more than a little knowledge, or guesswork, as the practitioner’s only remedy.

‘The greatest scourge of children in those days was diphtheria, and the lay person could hardly imagine the horror which seized a household when diphtheria made its presence known. I can well remember how the Vicar of Wellington lost three children in a month. It broke him up completely, and ultimately was the cause of his utter ruin.’

* * *

[To discover more, read Dr. H.W. Pooler’s books My Life in General Practice and My Life in Three Counties.]

Dr. Harry Pooler in the 1890s

WELLINGTON’S MEDICAL HERITAGE

John Westwood

Wellingtonia: Issue 5, Winter 2009
Dates are all around us, yet we seldom notice them. Shame, really, as our forefathers thought it important to record when something special was erected for the benefit of Wellingtonians.

Dates can be important signposts to the past, indicating stages in the development of the town.

Here we have a little test: do you know where these dates appear in Wellington? All were created during the late Victorian period.

Answers are given on page 17, but see if you can identify where they are located before turning to that page.

Next time you’re in town, see if you can spot any more.

* * *

Advertisements from R. Hobson’s Wellington Directory & Almanack, 1878.
The railway that came to Wellington in June 1849 was intended for passengers only. In time, it expanded to include engine sheds and facilities for transporting goods like Royal Mail letters and parcels, milk churns and other relatively small-scale items. Consequently, the station became an important facet of the town’s economy.

In its early years, the station was the gateway to travel between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton and beyond. But growth of the railway network was seen as vital to Britain’s economy, so additional lines were laid, linking small town and villages to the main arteries of travel. As with Wellington, most new stations were intended for passenger transport but it wasn’t long before special yards were constructed to accommodate industrial needs.

Consequently, special facilities were provided in various locations on the east Shropshire coalfield for the distribution of raw materials (as at Madeley) and at important manufacturing centres (Joseph Sankey’s at Hadley, for example). These sidings afforded vital links to the national rail network via junctions: Wellington enabled goods to be transported on north- and southbound lines as well as east and west.


Spot the differences:
1882 (left) and 1901 (right)
was sold to Richard Groom who developed it into a massive timberworks which continued in business until the 1970s. Groom's became the largest importers of foreign timber, and the most important stockists of indigenous timber, in Britain. The fact that The Shropshire Works was linked directly to the railway was vital to the success of the business.

As might be expected, the Goods Yard adjacent to the works played another important role in Wellington's economy. Long trains of rolling stock carried all manner of goods into the town, where they could be collected or transported from the yard to locations in and around the town by horse drawn wagons belonging to the railway.

Coal was particularly important to the local as well as national economy, and the town's gas works as well as coal merchants found it most convenient to set up in business as near to the goods yard as possible.

Some time after the new Smithfield was opened in 1868 on the northern side of the railway, John Barber successfully negotiated with the railway companies for the provision of sidings for the exclusive handling of livestock arriving at and leaving his auctions.

This led to an interesting situation where animals arriving at the southern sidings had to be led by drovers into Bridge Road and across the bridge into the Smithfield yard: a few recalcitrant cattle were known to make a bid for freedom, much to the alarm of bystanders. Less hassle was caused by woollen fleeces, which arrived by the sheet-(or sack-)load to be stored in marquees erected on a field (now part of North Road) for auction to national buyers from June 1860 onwards.

Particulars for the sale of The Shropshire Works, 1857. Advertisements such as this can provide a fascinating amount of historical information, all the more valuable because they provide eye witness accounts of situations at that time.

So, Wellington's growth was stimulated during Victorian times not only by its passenger railway station but also by its ability to store and transport goods and raw materials both locally and to national (indeed, international) destinations.
It’s impossible to overemphasise the impact railway services had on the development of Wellington during the Victorian era, or the effect they had on the way of life of its residents.

The passenger station, of course, enabled people to move around the country on a scale and with such ease as had never before been experienced, provided the fare could be raised ... not everyone could afford the initial high cost of travel and poorer folk had to make do with the long-established practice of walking or seeking a lift on a horse-drawn wagon.

Nevertheless, one of the most noticeable aspects of the Railway Age was that employment could be sought in distant towns and, perhaps equally important, new businesses created.

How did this affect Wellington? By increasing the number of small businesses catering for the social and service needs of a growing community: solicitors and accountants dealt with legal matters; in the absence of supermarkets, in town shopping included everything to keep a home functioning smoothly (butchers, bakers, grocers, fishmongers and fruitierers, etc.), DIY stores (ironmongers, candle and rope makers, timber merchants, etc.) as well as a wide range of artisans able to make or install whatever else might be required (furniture, heating and water supply systems, carriages, buildings).

The list is endless and the article on 1851 Wellington in this issue gives some idea what the situation was like after just two years of the railway arriving.

The railway enabled goods to be transported far faster and in greater bulk than ever before, with the result that residents benefitted from a greater variety of, for example, foodstuffs than hitherto: fresh game, and fish from Grimsby and other ports could be delivered daily and stored in cellars packed with ice ... at a time when refrigeration was otherwise impossible. Yes, large estates (like Apley Castle) had ice houses, wherein ice cut from frozen lakes in winter was stored below ground to enable it to be used during summer months but, until travel via rail and ocean-going vessels became faster, few could enjoy its benefits.

Enter Wenham Lake Ice, a trade in which epitomised what improved transport in Victorian times was all about.

Wenham Lake (above, c.1900) is in Massachusetts, New England, USA: its high-density winter ice was considered as clear and pure as spring water. From the 1840s to early 1900s, tons of this ice were being cut annually, transported by rail to the coast and thence 3,000 miles by ship to Britain (and also as far away as India) where it was again loaded into railway trucks for dispersal to towns throughout the land ... and to our fishmonger and fruitier John Bowring in New Street.

If ice could be transported such a distance without melting, importing fresh fish from British ports and fruit, timber (and guano!) from far flung corners of the Empire in particular and the world in general presented fewer logistical problems as time went by. Businessmen benefitted while their customers gained access to an increasingly widening variety of goods.

Many products, like tea, became affordable, no longer the preserve of wealthy households, as transport costs fell dramatically. Similarly, speed of delivery encouraged increased trade in all manner of goods: items ordered from, for example, a supplier in London by sending a postcard in the morning could be delivered later that same day, or next day at the very latest, thanks to railway services. The introduction of telegraphic services and, later, telephones, almost guaranteed same-day deliveries for customers ... an aspect of modern customer service virtually unknown; so much for progress!

Railways reduced the cost of transporting goods in bulk and made deliveries faster, thus leading to lower prices ... which in turn led to increased demand ... which led to more jobs being created ... which led to higher...
profits and more jobs ... and more disposable income ... and so on.

It’s easy to overlook the fact that, whereas travel between stations became easier as the network expanded, passenger travel and the carriage of goods to and from stations and goods depots continued to rely on more traditional forms of transport.

The carrying of raw materials and finished goods via rail made manufacturing an important aspect of Wellington’s economy. Whereas small-scale domestic ‘factories’ had been in existence for decades (nail making being one of many), more impressive industries took hold: Samuel Corbett’s award winning agricultural machinery works in Park Street is a prime example: the firm’s contraptions were exported all over the world. Coal became the mainstay of the British economy, not just for the heat it provided for smelting iron and other ores but also because it produced another essential fuel: town gas which, as time passed, lit the streets and homes as well as heating homes and factories.

Coach and carriage works (like Clift’s on Tan Bank) also gained custom partly because of the railway: as Victoria’s reign continued, the concept of tourism developed so that an influx of visitors arrived, wanting to hire vehicles to take them to see important archaeological sites in the district as well as to climb The Wrekin Hill.

Visitors also encouraged the smartening up of hotel and other overnight accommodation, whether in conventional hotels (like the Charlton Arms, Duke of Wellington, Ercall, Wrekin and Station) or in ‘Temperate’ ones like Wycherley’s in Crown Street and Ruskins in Walker Street, both of which catered for a niche market. By the same token, locals took advantage of cheap day trips by rail to the seaside. And what do holidaymakers buy while on holiday? Souvenirs. So, just like many other towns, Wellington witnessed stationers (like Hobson’s in Market Square) producing illustrated books and postcards, and A.E. Bourne in New Street doing a brisk trade in low-cost porcelain and china ephemera bearing images of The Wrekin, the Halfway House and (after 1889) the Forest Glen Pavilions as well as imprints of an imaginary ‘official’ town crest.

Talking of stationery, easier travel boosted interest in the usefulness of town directories both to local residents as well as casual visitors, so much so that their number and frequency grew as the nineteenth century progressed. Hobson’s in Market Square, for example, apparently first published a directory in 1874 and continued to do so (although not for every year) until the late 1930s. National and local newspapers, too, gained popularity, as did reading generally, encouraged by speedy rail deliveries which ultimately led to the introduction of more daily (in addition to the customary weekly) newspapers. Improving rail services also improved postal deliveries.

Easier and more comfortable travel didn’t just mean ordinary people could travel around the countryside in search of jobs, it also enabled people from different areas to interact as never before, a fact confirmed by decennial censuses where ‘Place of Birth’ was increasingly less likely to be the town in which census details were being recorded.

Entertainment provided by travelling theatres and musicians became more frequent and varied ... companies of players found it easier to stage events in several townships in fairly rapid succession, whereas before rail services came about, short ‘seasons’ often entailed several days interim travel.

There is absolutely no doubt that, by the 1870s, the rail network throughout Britain presented the nation with greater benefits than would have been thought possible when Victoria ascended the throne. The world had become a smaller place. People, materials and manufactured goods could be conveyed with ease ... and there was money to be made by those prepared to work hard. ‘Progress’ became synonymous with ‘profit’.
Edward Lawrence

‘Oh, that God would make me a good, happy man!’
The fervent prayer of the Wellington Workhouse master ... Was it ever answered?

Extracts from his diary reveal his frustrations, opinions, and a craving for fulfilment and happiness.

When the workhouse master died in 1890, Edward Lawrence applied for the position. Despite being a guardian of the poor law union, his application was not well received as it had not come through the prescribed channels and, moreover, there were doubts about his administrative ability, his personal life, uncompromising views and sarcastic manner.

Edward Lawrence was born around 1839. His father was a successful draper and tailor in New Street, and put Edward in charge of the shop ... thwarting his ambitions to study law.

“Oh, that my dear mother had been allowed her way and made me a lawyer; where might I not have gone to?”

On his father’s death, Edward became owner of the family house and shop, but set up as an auctioneer and appraiser in Walker Street. The business failed and his wife Sarah opened a small private boarding school at Sunfield.

Lawrence was a keen racegoer and founder member of the Charlton Bowling Club; he also followed the Hawkstone otter hunting and contributed to the ‘Wellington Journal’ on the sport.

Lawrence was a keen racegoer and founder member of the Charlton Bowling Club; he also followed the Hawkstone otter hounds and contributed to the ‘Wellington Journal’ on the sport. He served on the local improvement commission, the school board, highway board and burial board. Seemingly compassionate and seeking justice for the poor, his radicalism nevertheless caused controversy.

His character flaws were well-known. According to the Government Board’s Inspector, as a businessman he was ‘in very low water, and is said to be supported by his wife, who keeps a small school in the town. His general character for sobriety and morality is not good, though there is nothing that the board can lay hold of in this respect.’

An anonymous letter commented on his love of ‘the drink’ and hinted at illegitimate children.

No surprise, then, that Lawrence was not viewed as an ideal candidate. Lawrence finally achieved his ambition of becoming master, albeit by a narrow margin, and without the support of most of the guardians. He recorded he was now ‘monarch of this small world’ and felt he had returned “to the people I have loved so well!”, “prayed to God to help me and to forgive my past misspent life.” He was determined not to “stick to the old narrow-minded ways, but do what my conscience tells me is right.”

However, within three weeks he wrote: “the men are bone idle and refuse to obey orders, the women are thieves, liars and as false as hell” and he rebuked the inmates for coughing so much when he read the prayers. And some time later “The same routine day by day. The same petty jealousy existing all round.”

His opinions of colleagues are forcibly expressed in his diary:

“He styles himself a minister of religion yet fails to shew the world what his tenets are.” ... “(he) is determined to hold his own and really knows how to do it” ... “If he had his own way would never come at all” ...

“Very much annoyed the Clerk, but that I care not for one jot” ... “Met Dr Caesar. Don’t like this man.”

He was as scathing of his coworkers: “Matron cannot understand the Journal. Her views on it are just simply ridiculous and petty”. His relationship with the

Porter was stormy and when the unfortunate man came in wearing a new suit, Lawrence observed in his diary “The man who cut it should go and learn the art of cutting.” And on a suspicious, sarcastic note “The Assistant Matron and Porter are RATHER friendly”.

Lawrence’s mastery was short-lived. He continued to upset the guardians: those who had voted against him had not changed their opinion and his generally rude and insulting way of speaking to the Board had won him no friends. But they needed a valid excuse to get rid of him.

They didn’t have too long to wait. Lawrence resented the Farm Committee appointed by the Board to advise him and used ‘heated language’ on at least one occasion, Here was the excuse the Board needed. A submission was made to the Local Government Board (LGB) on the grounds of ‘wilful disobedience to the orders of the Farming Committee and want of respect to the Board in general’. The LGB had also received an anonymous letter alleging that Lawrence ‘spends most of his time away from the house and he has been turned out of nearly every respectable public house or hotel in the town’.

He denied the accusations and reminded the LGB of his years of public service. He regretted having spoken as he did, but felt justified in disregarding the Committee’s views.

“When a Guardian, they could trust me to spend a thousand pounds but, now Master, I cannot be trusted to spend fifty shillings. Poor miserable lot”... “Could not take the word of ONE ... must have a committee. Alas no breed”... “Shall see what the morning looks like. But go to bed with my own opinions still uppermost.”

An appointed inspector concluded that ‘the master has by his offensive and disrespectful manner towards the board of guardians and his disregard of the Farm Committee proved himself unfitted for his post’. He was immediately dismissed, despite a petition of public support, but was nonetheless, re-elected to the Board of Guardians in 1891.

Lawrence set up an antique Sunfield House School, Wellington. Principal—Mrs S. H. Lawrence, Highly recommended to Parents who appreciate the many advantages of a Small Home School for Girls and Little Boys. Next Term will begin January 19th. Boarders please return on the 15th.

Wellingtonia: Issue 5, Winter 2009
business at 6 Walker Street, and
died in 1910. His wife survived
him by four years. It was said she
'suffered silently and without
complaining.'

His Will stated his funeral was
to be brief and simple; his coffin
would only bear his initials and be
carried by six workhouse inmates,
no funeral attire, no flowers, and
no mourning coaches.

The Wellington Journal called
him ‘the people’s Edward’ (sound
familiar?) and reported on the
crowds of people lining the streets,
many in their working clothes,
commenting that ‘his kindly
consideration for the inmates [of the
workhouse] became proverbial’.

Conditions under his
mastery had improved with
regard to the provision of the food,
gas and lighting and his diary
notes that he cut flowers from the
garden and took them into the
infirmary.

He defied the establishment,
shocking his colleagues by
defiantly wearing black and
white check trousers at
funerals, but seemed surprised
that “the commissioners at the
funeral were cold and distant”.

His obituary described him
as ‘a man of striking personality
and distinctive individuality.
Endowed with far above average
intelligence, possessing a retentive
memory and an exceptional gift of
humour, he was always
entertaining in company’,
making allowances for his
cynicism and sarcasm which
was ‘always tempered with such
witticism as relieved it of its
sting’. However, to a friend he
was ‘a very unfortunate man …

born under an unlucky star or
planet’.

His diary reveals a frustrated
idealist with frequent references
to: “... did my best all the day to do
my duty” and his desire to “feel a
really happy man” which is not
borne out with his comment “very
happy and very low; strange queer
feelings. Oh the curse attached to
poverty and a misspent life are
dreadful to bear.”

Prevented from studying law,
unsuccessful in business, perhaps
Lawrence saw the mastership as a
chance of fulfilling his potential.
Described as contemptuous,
intolerant, sarcastic, supercilious
and directly rude in his dealings
with fellow guardians, he seems to
have remained unfulfilled but
unable to find the cause – or the
cure.

Top: Workhouse Inmates, c.1900.
Below: Workhouse plan, 1882.
Countless English towns, cities and landmarks have been immortalised in music over the centuries, but are Wellington and The Wrekin among them? Deep in the vaults of the British Library is a collection of Victorian sheet music that proves that they are – or at least once were.

In 1876, aged just 18, Wellington’s Samuel Corbett (son of that industrious local metal-working family) had one of his compositions put into print. An accomplished organist, his musical talent was notable not only in light of his young age, but also the fact that he was blind.

His first published composition was entitled The Wrekin Polka, and was written for that must-have home entertainment system of the Victorian middle classes, the piano forte.

For over thirty years by this time, publishers had been churning out sheet music for Britain’s budding amateur pianists, and Corbett’s polka wasn’t the first to celebrate this corner of Shropshire in musical form.

In 1840, another local musician named Thomas Hayward had published a collection of tunes entitled The Wellington Quadrilles for the Piano Forte. It comprised four dances, the first named after the town, and the three that followed taking the names of nearby estates: Apley, Eyton and Cluddley – home to Wellington’s most distinguished families (the Charltons, the Eytons and the Cluddes).

Three years later in 1843, Mr Hayward came up with The Wrekin Waltzes, clearly intended for similar at-home gatherings.

This was divided into six short tunes, the first entitled The Wrekin, and the four that followed honouring ‘the noted rocks on the mountain’, comprising The Raven’s Cup, The Cuckoo’s Nest, The Needle’s Eye and The Bladder Stone. The collection rounds off with the Wellington Galop, a fast-paced dance designed to tax the pianist and exhaust the dancing couples.

As his adopted home town and place of business, it is not surprising that Thomas Hayward acknowledged Wellington in the titles of his dance collections. He advertised his shop on the front page of The Wrekin Waltzes: ‘Musical Instruments of All Kinds, and all the most fashionable music, sold by T. Hayward, Wellington’.

Living at 29 Church Street, Mr Hayward described himself as a Professor of Music in the census of 1851, where he was listed alongside his wife Caroline and three children.

A native of Shifnal, he had married and started his family in Broseley, perhaps moving to Wellington because its growing size and importance seemed to offer better prospects. Certainly producing his own sheet music with a distinctive local feel would have helped him win the approval of his new Wellington clientele.

In 1847, four years after Hayward’s Wrekin Waltzes, the composer George Jackson was tapping into the same vein of local pride when he penned his Lays of The Wrekin.

In a rare illustration of mid-19th century Wellington, the front cover of this volume is as interesting as the music itself. It shows a well-dressed couple walking arm in arm through an arc of romantically wispy willow trees, an exaggeratedly-steep Wrekin and Ercall creating the perfect Elysian backdrop behind.

Also prominent is an almost brand-new Christ Church and, most interesting of all, the windmill that gave Mill Bank its name – a structure I’ve never seen depicted anywhere else. These features locate the scene somewhere to the south of where Wrekin College now stands.

Light-hearted and nostalgic, the Lays of The Wrekin were not dances but songs, and ideal for an after-dinner recital or sing-along.

The first song, Ah who when in
Wellington has several claims to fame when it comes to the writing and art in Victorian times. First and foremost, of course, was Hesba Stretton,

whose writing exposed the truth behind poor living and working conditions in Victorian England. Hesba’s own opinions were influenced by observations she made of time in Wellington, as my biography of her life explains.

Another person of note who is also unjustifiably forgotten these days is Cecil Lawson. Born in 1851 at Fountain Place, New Church Road, his paintings of English country scenes led to much excitement in the Art world: even Oscar Wilde said they were ‘wonderful landscapes’.

Sadly, Cecil’s health deteriorated before the full extent of his talent could be realised. He died in 1882.

Neither of these two songs stand out for their musical quality, but the lyrics do give us a perfect taste of the times. The first song, for ladies, was wistfully romantic and reminisced about innocent youth and young love, whilst the second, for men, had a heartily patriotic tone. With its references to British liberties and brave Salopian sons, it fused local identity with national pride, adding a mention of wine and beautiful Shropshire girls for good measure. Most importantly of all, both songs treated The Wrekin as an emblem of home and old friends, a symbol of safety and happiness – particularly prescient at a time when the Empire was taking so many Britons overseas to the ‘wild desert climes’ that one of the verses refers to.

Just as our food, our clothes and so much else in our lives today is the same from place to place, so too the music we know rarely reflects local distinctiveness.

For all their faults, the Victorians did at least take pride in their towns and cities, and their artists and musicians, as well as their merchants and dignitaries, often reflected that pride.

Displaying a passion for the place you live can be seen as parochial or small-minded in our cosmopolitan age, but there’s nothing small-minded about wanting to champion your town. Perhaps there at least, Victorian Wellington can teach twenty-first century Wellington a thing or two.

* * *

INK AND PAINT

Allan Frost

W
When the Duke of Wellington (whose title was named after Wellington in Somerset) died in September 1852 and plans were being made for his state funeral, it was realised that many people would want to travel to the capital to pay their last respects to the victor of Waterloo, who was idolised in old age as an incomparable public servant.

The previous year, the Great Exhibition had presented its challenge to the railways and gave them their chance to show dramatically that they were equal to the unprecedented demands made on their passenger facilities. So, too, in late 1852 the railway companies put into operation similar plans to enable intending travellers from different parts of the country to get to the Duke’s funeral.

In early November the above handbill was published in Shrewsbury announcing such a service to London. A copy of the original handbill is in Shropshire Archives: it measures 16 cm by 37 cm, is printed on yellow paper and uses 20 different type faces! (With reference to details of the outward journey, departure from Wellington was at 11.55 a.m. and ‘Cov.’ means covered or closed, denoting 2nd class accommodation.)

This notice is of particular interest because not only does it give details of an early railway excursion to a national event but it also demonstrates the rivalry between local railway companies at that time.

The line between Shrewsbury and Wellington had been jointly built by the Shropshire Union Railway and the Shrewsbury & Birmingham Railway companies and was opened in June 1849. The Shropshire Union line continued through Newport to Stafford, opening at the same time.

The Shrewsbury & Birmingham line from Wellington to Wolverhampton was opened as far as Oakengates also in June 1849, but problems with the tunnel there and the embankment at Shifnal delayed through running to Wolverhampton until November of that year.

Even then, Shrewsbury & Birmingham trains were prevented from continuing through to Birmingham on the Stour Valley line because of a dispute with the London & North Western Railway over the use of the station at Wolverhampton; and it was not until February 1854 that they were able to do so. Not surprisingly, in view of this hostility, the Shrewsbury & Birmingham amalgamated with the Great Western Railway in September 1854, and its trains then used the latter’s Wolverhampton and Birmingham stations, with passengers for London arriving at Paddington.

The excursion advertisement in 1852 twice reminds intending passengers that travelling on this particular train via Stafford and then direct to London avoided going via Wolverhampton (where a change of train would be necessary) and Birmingham (where passengers would have to cross from New Street station to Curzon Street station to be able to continue to Euston).

The excursion train got passengers to London by early evening on the Wednesday. They then had the whole of Thursday to participate in the events surrounding the Duke’s funeral. For most, the return to Shropshire would have been on the Friday morning, but for those wishing to stay longer in London another return train was available the following Wednesday. Whichever they chose, Conductor Lewis reminded them of the need to be at Euston station well before the train left.

The funeral itself (below) was a full heraldic state affair. The Duke died at Walmer Castle in Kent (his honorary residence as Warden of the Cinque Ports) and his body was taken by train to London, where it lay in state at Apsley House (the Wellington residence at Hyde Park Corner) before being carried in procession for burial at St Paul’s Cathedral. No doubt the mass of people who thronged the route of the funeral procession included those who had travelled on the excursion train from Shropshire the day before. In the cathedral, the Duke’s sarcophagus was placed next to that of Lord Nelson – something referred to in the effusive praise given in Tennyson’s poem, Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, which attests to his stature at the time of his death.
1. HSBC Bank on the corner of Station Road and Market Square, erected in 1901, was then occupied on the ground floor by North & South Wales Bank, with a tailor’s shop on the upper floors as well as in the adjacent building to the left (now incorporated into the bank premises). The date stone is partially hidden behind the balustrade above the large upper corner bay window.

2. This date is above the main doorway above the porch to Telford Central Mosque on Tan Bank, which was originally built in 1898 as a replacement chapel for Primitive Methodists in the town. Their earlier chapel had stood on ground, also in Tan Bank, directly opposite this chapel.

3. Thomas Howes, a grocer in New Street at the time he contributed towards the cost of building a new Congregational church on Constitutional Hill in 1899. The original church had been on Tan Bank. Thomas’s foundation stone lies on the right of the main entrance to what is now Union Free church.

4. This memorial plaque is on the right hand pillar supporting the main large iron gates from The Green into All Saints parish churchyard. Fishmonger and fruiterer John Crump Bowring (yes, he of Wenham Lake Ice fame on page 10) paid for them to commemorate Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

5. The old Police Station and Magistrates’ Court, erected in 1896 on the corner of Church Street and Plough Road, was essential in upholding the Law and meting out punishment to criminals until the mid-1950s when the present Police Station was built off Glebe Street. The building has since had a variety of uses.
Victorian Wellington’s businesses comprised an intriguing amalgam of manufacturing, provisions and service industries: in short, a healthy mixed economy, where no one aspect dominated the scene but where all worked together for the common good.

Small shop keepers were the commercial mainstay of the town; not all bothered to advertise in directories or newspapers, relying on reputation to make a living. There seems to have been greater emphasis placed on making modest profits sustained over a long period which probably enabled competing businesses to thrive side-by-side and, indeed, help one another in times of trouble. It was a healthy attitude which continued to exist at least until the outbreak of war in 1939.

When we think of businesses in Victorian Wellington, we tend to place greater emphasis on those firms which did particularly well: R. Groom & Sons’ timber merchants, saw mill and woodware manufacturers (below) and Samuel Corbett & Son’s agricultural engineers, iron and brass foundry, for example.

Yet there were others which, at the time, were considered businesses of note (both of the above are cases in point, as was the Smithfield) but all have since disappeared from the economic scene and subsequently forgotten. Others, like the Wrekin Brewery, were not thought particularly special but eventually gained an important position in the town’s economic structure.

But which businesses were considered most important to Wellington’s townsfolk towards the end of the Victorian period? We are given a unique view in a report which was published around 1893.

The Heavies

In addition to Groom’s and Corbett’s, the report mentions other firms engaged in ‘heavy’ goods and manufacturing: Benbow & Davies (ironmongers and cutlers, Market Place); J. & C. Bromley (ironmongers & agricultural implement makers); Clift & Son (Excelsior Carriage Works, Tan Bank); Kynaston Brothers & Jarvis (ironmongers, cutlers, gas fitters, locksmiths, etc., Crown and Duke Streets); W.R. Mansell (Wrekin Foundry, engineers and ironfounder, Foundry Road; the photo below may be of the foundry celebrating Victoria’s 1897 Diamond Jubilee); Richard Stone (house furnisher, furnishing ironmonger, jeweller, China and glass dealer, Crown and Duke Streets); J. Wheatley (general and furnishing ironmonger, 5 New Street) and last but certainly not least, G.H. York (hydraulic, hot water and sanitary engineer, plumber, glazier, painter, house decorator, and sign painter at 75 New Street).

Keeping up appearances

Wellington had been renowned for its haberdashers and tailoring establishments since at least the eighteenth century, providing the latest fashions for those who could afford them, and cheaper alternatives for those who couldn’t.

Among their number were R. Brisbourne (tailor, Old Bank House, Church Street); E.J. Capsey (draper and outfitter, 13 Market Square and 3 Duke Street); Walter
Queen Victoria died in January 1901 after reigning for the longest term by any British monarch: 63 years and seven months. In this cartoon from Fun magazine, the mourning British lion captures the deeply felt loss of a queen and empress.

Davies (hatter and gentleman’s outfitter, 18 Market Square); J. Jenkins (tailor and woollen draper at The Old Basket Shop, 17 New Street); J.L. & E.T. Morgan (The Cash Drapers at 2 Church Street); E. Shaw and Co. (high class tailors, Park Street); C. Venables & Co. (silk mercers, general drapers and mantle makers, tailors and outfitters, 1 Walker Street (above)) and J. & E. Webb (general drapers, silk mercers, milliners, dressmakers, etc., Market Square).

What Ales Ye?
The provision of beverages in all their forms was of paramount importance, at least until safe and regular drinking water supplies could be guaranteed. ‘Soft’ and medicinal drinks were advertised in the 1893 report by Butler Brothers (grocers, tea dealers and tobacconists, Church Street), J. Hall (dispensing chemist, 14 Market Square); J. Morgan (grocer, tea dealer, hop and seed merchant, etc., Market Place) and Stead and Co. (wholesale and retail grocers, tea dealers and provision merchants, 29 New Street).

For those in need of something more fortifying, alcoholic drinks could be readily obtained from Frederick William Jackson (Charlton Arms Family & Commercial and Posting Hotel: posting’ usually meant horse drawn vehicles could be hired); H.W. Pointon (Station Hotel and Forest Glen Pavilion (above)); Slaney and Son (wholesale and retail wine and spirit merchants, Market Square); James Clegg Smith and Son (wine and spirit merchants, Church Street); The Union Brewery Co. (Walker Street) and John G. Wackrill (Shropshire Brewery, Watling Street).

Essential Luxuries?
Finally, the report contains advertisements and background information on several other businesses which might be described as purveyors of luxury goods as well as essential commodities. They include:

- A.E. Bourne (carver, gilder, looking glass and picture frame maker, dealer in oil paintings, etc., 72 and 73 New Street (aside)); J.J.P. Bowler (portrait and landscape photographer, Wellington and Oakengates (above right)); G.W. Harvey (watchmaker and jeweller, 9 Market Street); Hobson and Co. (booksellers, printers, stereotypers, publishers, stationers, account book manufacturers, bookbinders, news and advertising agents, paper merchants, paper bag manufacturers, music sellers, etc., Market Square and Shropshire Printing and Stationery Works, Market Building) and John Jones (watchmaker and jeweller, stationer and printer, 8 Church Street).

These are just a few of the many businesses which helped make Wellington a thriving town. Our secretary can email a free copy of the report upon request. It contains a great deal more information about each firm and is well worth a read.
To discover more about the Wellington area, you might like to read these currently-in-print books. Please contact us if you have difficulty obtaining them from any U.K. bookseller.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PUBLIC TALKS
January to June 2010
All talks will start at 7:30 p.m. in the Civic Offices at Wellington. Admission is free but donations are invited after each lecture. Note: the venue may have to change if work on the new Civic Quarter affects the situation.

* * *
Tuesday January 19th: Allan Frost
LOST WELLINGTON

* Tuesday February 16th: Geoff Harrison
A MEDLEY FROM EYTON UPON THE WELD MOORS

* Tuesday March 16th: George Evans
WILLIAM WITHERING

* Tuesday April 20th: Neil Clarke
WELLINGTON AND THE SHREWSBURY CANAL

* Tuesday May 18th: Phil Fairclough
HOMES FIT FOR HEROES?

* Tuesday June 15th: Allan Frost
WELLINGTON’S MARKETS AND FAIRS

* If there’s a demand, we may provide one or two evening walks around Wellington in June.

* * *

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