It’s been a busy few months since the last issue of Wellingtonia; there have been several developments in both the archaeological and historical aspects of our district’s life, some of which are covered in this edition to help you get up to date.

There are quite a few events of a historical nature taking place, especially during October when the annual Wellington Literary Festival presents us with a bewildering choice of speakers and a wide range of subjects to fill more than a few dank Autumnal evenings... and, apart from a few events, it’s all free! Who says you can’t get something for nothing!

There are also a few new publications in the offing, details of which are included in these pages... and make sure you don’t overlook the back page!

There have been several ‘initiatives’ in recent weeks to encourage interest in local history matters elsewhere in the Wrekin area. If you have come across any information which may be pertinent to Wellington, The Wrekin Hill or the Weald Moors, please let us know.

In the meantime, our chairman Allan Frost would like to know if you have any old photos or other paper memorabilia to do with Wellington Carnivals or Pubs, please contact him.

History, as well as the future, is a never ending journey of discovery. Please help us on the way.
Newspaper cartoons like Thelwell, Giles, Tintin, Asterix and the modern Guardian cartoon ‘Clare in the Community’ can be brilliantly entertaining.

A great one was Flook drawn by Trog for the Daily Mail from 1949 to 1984. Long after we had become irritated with the paper’s style we continued to take the Daily Mail simply for Flook.

Many readers will remember Rufus, the ginger headed schoolboy and Flook, the creature that came from one of his dreams and accompanied him.

Other characters included Douglas Bodger, a ham fisted kind hearted gaolbird-villain, his sister, Lucretia, a witch resembling Lucretia Borgia and ‘The Colonel’, a retired blimpish officer. The cartoon poked fun at celebrities and especially politicians in a spirit of cheerful irrelevance.

The action took place in a fantasy world. People in the news filled the frames, often with Flook asking the simple questions politicians couldn’t possibly answer without getting themselves into dreadful trouble.

There was a lot of quite sophisticated satire, with singers, artists, especially those ‘famous for being well-known’ being gently laughed at.

Wally Fawkes (below, left) of the jazz group Troglydotes was the artist and signed himself Trog. The script was written by a galaxy of musicians including Humphrey Littleton, George Melly, Barry Took and Barry Norman. No wonder the text was highly intelligent!

‘But whatever has this to do with Wellington?’

Thank you for being patient enough to get this far without knowing. The answer is that a replica of Flook was made at the Chad Valley works in Orleton Lane, near the railway bridge.

This was a little known factory that had the place of the Crown Works, where such things as school furniture had been made. Later the works was used by the Pearce family’s DIY store and its place has since been taken over for housing.

The factory mainly made rubber ducks of the kind that floated in so many baths. These were made from latex rubber, poured into plaster of Paris moulds and stuffed with kapok. Most had small squeaks in their bottoms. For a few years my father, Eric Evans, was a foreman at the factory. It’s not everyone who can say his father worked in a rubber duck factory, but mine certainly did.

Let me explain how the little Flook dolls were made. First a designer made a model; I think it was originally from wood. When the product had been approved by the Chad Valley’s board the Orleton Lane works were given the go-ahead.

A series of moulds were made from plaster of Paris by pressing the model into the plaster while it was still wet and drying it. The moulds were in two parts, held together by latex bands, and had a narrow funnel through which the liquid latex was poured.

The workers poured latex into the mould and baked it in an oven for a short time, then emptied out the latex from the centre, leaving just the ‘skin’ baked. Spare rubber was kept for re-use.

The moulds were put back in the oven for more baking and drying, after which they were dusted with talcum powder, trimmed and stuffed with kapok; later, ‘squeaks’ were inserted in the nose and each one painted.

Flooks were made by the dozen, gross and great gross.

(Most readers will know that a dozen is 12 and some will know a gross is 12 X 12 = 144. But do you know a great gross is 12 x 12 x 12 = 1728? Try asking your friends.)

So there’s the story of Flook, made in Wellington. Please let us know if you still have one.

Who remembers Flook?
And who remembers the rubbery incarnations of this famous cartoon character made at Wellington’s Chad Valley’s toy works?
George Evans jogs a few memories...
Randall’s short study of the notable eighteenth century iron-making family focuses on John Wilkinson, who operated ironworks in this area at Willey, Hollinswood, Snedshill and Hadley, and who was described by Thomas Telford as ‘King of the Ironmasters’. A dispute between John and his brother William somewhat blighted their later years.

The above extract is part of a letter written by Gilbert Gilpin to William Wilkinson in about 1800. Gilpin had left John Wilkinson’s employ at Bersham near Wrexham in 1796 and had worked for the Botfields at Old Park before setting up as a chain maker, first at Coalport, then at Aqueduct.

He corresponded regularly with William Wilkinson, keeping him informed of developments in the iron trade in East Shropshire but also passing on gossip about his brother John.

This letter, however, contains a most interesting reference to the Emery brothers, who were both involved in the manufacture of nails in Wellington. Richard Emery of Watling Street sold property in Hadley to John Wilkinson in 1791, and Wilkinson later built furnaces there which came into blast in 1804.

Richard Emery himself, in addition to his nail-making activities off New Street, Wellington, leased limeworks at Steeraway and Little Wenlock from George Forester, in a partnership (1798-1828) which appears not to have included his brother William.

However, William was involved in the family’s nail making business; and he clearly seems to have thought it worthwhile pursuing an opportunity of improving his prospects which the news from America presented.

Did he succeed in obtaining his perceived American inheritance? It will take more research on both sides of the Atlantic to find the answer.
In a previous issue of Wellingtonia we looked at beginning an investigation into the family history of a lady in Wellington and her Grandmother. Amongst the information we were given was a family photograph and the comment that ‘Uncle Bob’ Braddick served in the army during the Great War – but she knew no more.

We began our search for ‘Uncle Bob’ by looking closely at the photograph – it didn’t show any badges of rank or any wound or NCO stripes but it did show, rather unclearly a cap badge. Scanning the photograph into the computer and enlarging the badge it would appear to be that of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry. At this point in the search we knew his name – Bob or Robert Braddick, and we suspected that he served in the KSLI during WW1, now we could look for his service records.

The records of the men who served in the Great War, or First World War, are available at the National Archives at Kew all who served, men, NCOs, and officers, but on the ancestry web site, www.ancestry.co.uk are records only of men, not officers.

A word of caution, not all records of enlisted men have survived – during the Second World War, about 60% of the records were destroyed as a result of enemy action. If you are searching for your relatives in these records expect to be disappointed – it is a matter of luck whether the records have survived.

Mary knows her grandfather served in WWI, having post cards he sent to his family and photographs in uniform, but there are no existing records that we have found about his service. Whereas Geoff, whose uncle also served throughout WWI; he remembers his mother saying ‘Our Joe wasn’t the same after the war’; found 16 pages of “Our Joe’s” military record in the National Archives on film, showing he enlisted in 1915 in the South Lancs. Regiment after serving two years in the Royal Navy, and was later transferred to the Tank Corp, from which he was demobbed in 1920, and all these pages are now available on the www.ancestry.co.uk web site.

Records of officers can be found at the National Archives not on film but are ‘original paper records’ (Unfortunately they are not available on the internet). The records of another of Geoff’s uncles who became an officer, survive in their original form on paper. Indeed, if you have an ancestor who was an officer in the First World War, handling their actual original paper document can be a very emotional experience, as Geoff found when he read some original letters from his uncle outlining his military service, beginning as a private in 1914 and ending as a major in 1919. Included in the file was the original handwritten commendation from his superior officer recommending his award of the Military Cross in 1918.

To return to Bob Braddick of, we suspect, the KSLI – we searched on the internet at www.ancestry.co.uk and found some records of his war service. This service confirmed he enlisted in the 4th King’s Shropshire Light Infantry.

The first thing to notice about the images of these pages are the edges – burnt and damaged. Indeed these records in the National Archives are often called the ‘burnt records’; the effects of enemy action in the Second World War.

The images of these pages provides a wealth of personal information about Bob Braddick – his address, occupation, marital status, age, and all that quite precisely; age 18 years & 10 months!

In addition it tells us that he enrolled at Oswestry and the date; the enlistment form required his own signature. Interestingly his desired, preferred branch of the service was the ASC – Army Service Corp, certainly not the Royal Navy!

The second sheet – also completed initially on enlistment but subsequently updated with his
entitled to medals will appear in these records. Not all soldiers were eligible – perhaps they didn’t serve long enough, or in a ‘war zone’ but were on garrison duty in ‘Blighty’. Additional records exist of soldiers who were entitled to a ‘war pension’ due to war wounds or length of service, these records also exist and are searchable. Your ancestor may appear in these if their service records have been destroyed. In the case of an ancestor who paid the ultimate price in the service of their country the Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org website will have a record of their resting place and probably other personal details.

A note of caution, you need as much detailed information about a particular soldier as you can find, before you begin to search. This is particularly so if the name is a common one. Although we know that Mary’s grandfather served in the Great War, in the Gloucester Regiment, and we know his full name, we are not able to identify any of his records because all his names were common for the period, and records seem to be inconsistent, in that sometimes only one or other of the Christian names are used, sometime both, and more confusing frequently records only identify the soldier by initials. In addition, we don’t know for how long grandad served, only that he was a soldier in 1917 from a postcard he sent home from the north east of England.

Ask the remaining family members for as much information as possible, don’t always believe it! – use it as a guide; search out the old photographs and mementos, search for all possible clues.

There is a wealth of searchable records for soldiers who served in the Great War, and we have only ‘touched upon’ those we used to find out about ‘Uncle Bob’.

---

military service, tells us that when he enlisted he was five feet eight inches tall and details of his chest measurements, relaxed and fully expanded.

This Service Record indicates that this Waggoner from Oswestry served in Egypt in 1917 and it was here on the 31st of October 1917 that he received a GSW (gun shot wound) in the elbow. One can only wonder how such a man from the Shropshire rural working class coped with his service in a faraway country, of such a different culture; and indeed how he was wounded.

This second page also tells us that Bob was eligible for the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. This was confirmed when we searched the Medal Rolls, these can be seen on film at the National Archives, or on the ancestry web site.

We were fortunate that some of the service records for ‘Uncle Bob’ had not been destroyed. When the service records of men of the Great War are part of the 60% destroyed, you should not give up hope.

Medal Cards have not been destroyed and remain available, unfortunately only soldiers, both officers and men, who were
I began to look at my family tree on the suggestion of a good friend. He showed me how he used the ancestry.co.uk site and informed me that I could get a free trial.

‘Great,’ I thought ‘I’ll get it done in a fortnight if I really try.’

That was over four years ago and I am nowhere near the end of my journey, but I am having lots of fun on the way.

There had always been a few unanswered questions in the family, two of which concern the Turner side.

My great grandfather was Henry Lunn Turner but we had no explanation for the appearance of Lunn in his and his siblings’ names, the obvious one, that it was his mother’s maiden name not being the case.

The second question refers to a Bible signed A Prichard Millbank House 1856 (see the inscription above). Why is this book in our possession?

Not knowing where to start, I began building a paper trail for the family from the Census returns, starting in 1901 on New Street, Oakengates.

There was nothing unusual here, the names of the seven children were as expected, the unmentioned firstborn never making it past his second birthday. I remembered photos in a box at my Mom’s and began to digress from my mission as I dreamed up a document recording the birth, marriage and death date beneath an image of each child, putting the leaves on my family tree.

This was important to me because I had inherited all the family photographs and wanted to share the resources with my cousins.

In particular, four of the children had died without offspring, two from tuberculosis within three days of each other, and to most they were nothing but names. We could do better than that.

Returning to the main mission: in 1891 the family were in Church Street, St. Georges, but in 1881 they were on Mill Bank, Wellington, next door but one to his Mother, Aunt and three siblings; maybe the Bible had been left by a previous occupant?

I tracked back to 1871 and found the house uninhabited.

Back another ten years to 1861 and my mouth dropped open when I read that the house on Mill Bank contained Ellen Lunn and her sister Ann Prichard, both born in Stone, Staffordshire.

I was getting somewhere, because the house also contained Ellen Lunn Turner, my great grandfather’s sister, listed as a niece. In one hit I knew that the Bible belonged to us and where the name Lunn had come from!

I drew up a speculative tree of how the family pieced together and waited for the time to visit Stafford Record Office to track the Turners further.

However, it was a few years before I filled in the picture, and the pieces came to me here in Wellington, but that’s another tale.
Wellington, like many towns, had a surge of house building just before the Last World War. Many new properties were built by the Urban District Council under ‘slum clearance’ schemes, when poorly built houses in places like New (formerly Parton) Square were demolished and council houses at Arleston and Hollies Road were constructed to rehouse the occupants.

This led to jokes about the new occupants keeping coal in the bath because they had never seen a bath before.

At the same time there was an expansion of owner-occupied property by the up-and-coming middle classes, who needed mortgages to buy them.

Firms like Cooper and Green were selling semi-detached houses of 1,000 square feet and less, which were very popular.

Roads like Herbert Avenue, Barnfield Crescent and Roseway were added to existing houses in, for example, Victoria Avenue, each with its own reputation as a place to live.

A MONKEY ON THE ROOF

Before this time most people had rented their houses from private landlords and were unable to buy, even if they wanted to, until they had saved up enough money for the purchase.

The newcomers into the housing business were the Council, providing rented accommodation, and Building Societies lending money to purchase. There was plenty of argument as to whether it was better to buy with a mortgage or rent from the council.

Renters said they didn’t want a monkey sitting on the roof, meaning a debt that had to be paid off monthly for perhaps 20 or 30 years. They were convinced that this would impoverish their families and restrict their spending.

They realised that mortgages were hard to keep up and said that, for all their show of being house owners, even food had to be restricted. So they referred the areas of owner-occupied houses as ‘Snobs’ Alley’, ‘Kippers and Curtains’, ‘Monkey Row’ and ‘Christian Avenue’.

A CAUTIONARY TALE

The tales and traditions of families are not always as they might seem. Beware of assuming that ancient stories are non-fiction.

Some time ago I wrote a little story about my grandfather Thomas Hall Fail. It was published in Wellington News. A family researcher spotted his unusual surname and sent me more information that really surprised me.

Thomas had always claimed to be descended from a Scottish family, previously named McPhail, though he had been born in Chester. According to the records, however, the facts were that his family came from Northumberland, not Scotland. I had never imagined that the Scottish story could be untrue; he was such an upright sort of man who would never dream of telling a lie. I can only suppose that he believed what he told me.

My other grandfather, when asked his age, always used to say, ‘As old as my tongue and a bit older than my teeth’. He would never deviate from that.

When he died the family found his birth certificate and his parents’ marriage certificate; they both gave the same date. Did his mother really get married on the day she was giving birth to her son? This time it’s the official records – or at least one of them - that I don’t believe.

The classic joke is about the professional family researcher who charged £100 for looking up records and £1,000 to keep quiet about them.

When it comes to family legends; it ain’t necessarily so!
I was born in Regent Street, Wellington in 1920s and have lived here all my life apart from an exciting period during the Second World War when I was posted overseas. I can remember clearly the town as it was in my youth and with my family as they grew.

The first part of our estate to be built in the late 1930s was nicknamed ‘Little Russia’. It comprised of the present Windsor Road, Harvey Crescent, (above, named after Cllr Harvey of the Urban District Council), Highway View and Arleston Avenue. The land on which it was built had been farmed by Tommy Stone whose farm house was near the entry to the present builders merchant, then a sand quarry.

The aristocratic Forester family used this area for falconry, a mention of their right is still on the deeds to my house. Barn Farm School was built on the land owned by Mr. Exley, a gentleman farmer, and then the Griffin family both of whom lived in Arleston Manor, before the land was acquired by Wellington Council.

Why was it called ‘Little Russia’? When the first part of the estate was built, people were moved from three very poor parts of town. The first was Chapel Lane, (where the Chapel Lane Health Centre is now). The houses were one up/one down terraces, with an outside loo for every four houses and an outside tap. Secondly, they came from the High Street area (now flats) and finally from Glebe Street, where the Latter Day Saints’ church stands.

I believe it was Mellor Harrison, the local labour agent, who first called it ‘Little Russia’. At this time Stalin was moving vast numbers of people from western Russia to Siberia and, as a joke, Mellor Harrison was comparing it to Wellington’s very minor population transfer to Arleston. He used to ask for party volunteers to canvass the ‘Little Russia’ area and everyone knew where he meant! It was not meant in a critical way, as the people were hard working and honest; there was very little crime despite the poverty. This small estate was all there was of Arleston until the second phase started in 1939/40.

The next section built was Woollam Road (below). The houses have a distinctive 1930s style with flat roofs and an art deco design. The road was named after a Labour councillor on Wellington UDC, Cllr Woollam. The houses were owned by the Air Ministry and housed their workers employed on the extensive military airfields at High Ercall.

My friend Mr. Price has lived on Woollam for a long time

When I left school at I went to work at Sankey’s as a machinist, but as soon as war was declared in 1939 I joined the RAF, aged 19 years. ‘Better to volunteer for what you wanted rather than be drafted somewhere less attractive’ was my thinking. I was responsible for the maintenance of guns, refuelling and re-arming Spitfires and...
Hurricanes at RAF Manston, Kent, which was on the front line in the Battle of Britain. We lost two hangers to a force of 20 JU 87s which had the misfortune to run into a returning flight of Hurricanes. Only eight of the German planes got back over the Channel.

From this excitement, I was posted to Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada. It was cold, bleak and desolate. We had to fly out to Iceland and back to protect the Atlantic shipping lanes from submarine attack, a two hour flight in a Lockheed Hudson each way. There was no road up to Goose Bay and so we flew in a Dakota to Montreal for recreation.

I had some UK leave due, and got married in the Registry Office in Norwich in March 1942. My wife, Gladys, was a nurse in the city so, declining the kind Canadian offer of another year at Goose Bay, I applied for a transfer to Newmarket. Being near my wife was really good but my job at Newmarket did not really exist. I had nothing to do all day. I went to my CO and asked for a change of duties.

It was six weeks of hell at the RAF Regiment’s physical training centre at Bury St Edmunds. Two weeks later I found myself with full kit on a boat in the Solent waiting for two days before landing on Sword Beach on D Day, 1944. We had to storm an airstrip at St. Croix sur Mer inland from the beach. We got it ready for aircraft within three days, the first operational airfield in Normandy for rocket-firing Typhoon fighter aircraft. I got a certificate from our French Allies for this action.

After the war I went back to Sankey’s in production control, living in my mother’s house at 189 Regent Street. Accommodation after the war was a national problem. Some were driven to squatting on old military camps, or even old prisoner of war camps like the one at Cluddley. Our house had three bedrooms for myself, my wife, my first child, my two grandparents and my mother. Compared to some, we were lucky. I applied for council ‘social’ housing and thought I would be quickly rehoused, as service in the Forces gave you an additional 30 points up the housing queue. Two years later I was still waiting. The Housing Manager claimed to have lost my papers in ‘a fire’.

Pressure from Ivor Thomas, MP, quickly obtained results and in 1950 I got my present house, built by McKeen and Hunt, on Manor Road. I later bought it for £7,500. The ground works for the estate (roads and services) were put in by Italian prisoners of war with picks and shovels. The local paper says that German prisoners from Cluddley were involved in building this part of the estate as well.

Wimpey built the other 250 houses on Kingsland down to the shops and on the right hand side of the main road. Some were built out of concrete poured into steel shuttering and reinforced with steel rods, not that well insulated and quite cold in winter.

In those first years, life was good on the estate. There was a strong sense of community and very little crime. Most of the residents were hard working people with local jobs and with a strong commitment to the area.

I am not sure why this has changed but would welcome any initiative to help improve the morale and quality of life here.

Do you buy things of a historical nature off Ebay? If so, don’t rely on item descriptions being absolutely correct. A common mistake made by sellers is wrongly identifying which ‘Wellington’ is featured on a postcard. Quite often, Wellington College scenes don’t relate to ‘our’ Wellington, but rather the (arguably more) famous college in Somerset. To avoid confusion, our college renamed itself to Wrekin College in January 1921.

The above card, one in a ‘Nostalgia’ series produced in the early 1990s gives the description as ‘N19 - Shropshire Bowl Turner c.1900 Postcard’, which is fine as far as it goes.

If fact, the photo was taken by and appeared in the Wellington Journal & Shrewsbury News in 1939. It shows 72 year old Jack Turner, who worked as a wood turner at R. Groom & Sons timber yard in Wellington. He was one of a few in the country who knew how to turn out bowls using an ancient pole lathe. He’s seen here demonstrating on the company stand at the Royal Agricultural Show, Windsor, where his skills were witnessed by the King and Queen. Apparently, Jack never lost a day’s work through illness. Does anyone know what happened to him?
Greater Novelties than ever!
OPEN FOUR NIGHTS LONGER.

NEW TOWN-HALL, WELLINGTON.

On Tuesday Evening, 22nd Inst.
The Exhibition will be UNDER THE IMMEDIATE AND DISTINGUISHED PATRONAGE of

ST. JOHN CHIVERTON
ESQ. OF APLEY CASTLE.

WIGELSWORTH'S
ORIGINAL, MECHANICAL, AND PICTURESQUE
THEATRE of ARTS
UNRIVALLED BY ANY OTHER EXHIBITION IN THE KINGDOM, WILL REMAIN OPEN

ON MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY, AND SATURDAY,
the 21st, 22nd, 24th, and 26th Days of March, 1842.

Mr. W. takes this opportunity of returning his warmest acknowledgments to the Inhabitants of Wellington and its Vicinity for the liberal manner in which they have been pleased to patronise his Exhibition. The rapturous plaudits with which the Performances have been received, are sufficient evidence that he has been successful in his selection of amusements; and he begs to assure his kind patrons that this success will stimulate him during the remainder of his stay to still further exertions, in bringing forward a succession of Splendid Novelties, such as have never been equalled in this part.

PART I.—A BEAUTIFUL REPRESENTATION OF
GREENWICH
HOSPITAL

Which presents one of the finest Views to be met with in the World; and stands on the South Side of the
River Thames, on which will be seen many beautiful Vessels, Steam-Packetts, Barges, Boats, &c.
NEVER EXHIBITED HERE BEFORE, THE EQUESTRIAN FIGURE OF
PRINCE ALBERT,
AND ESCORT OF THE 11th HUSSARS OR PRINCE'S OWN,
AND
THE AQUATIC SPORTSMAN DUCK-SHOOTING.
In this View will be presented a Grand Allegorical Tableau, entitled
THE BIRTH OF VENUS!

PART II.—A NEW AND BEAUTIFUL VIEW OF
DAMASCUS!
NEVER EXHIBITED HERE BEFORE:—
"I will also break the bar of Damascus."—Amos 1. 5.
Painted from Finden's Landscape Illustrations of the Bible,
In which will be introduced Elephants, Camels, and a Variety of Figures, &c.

PART III.—A GRAND ROMANTIC REPRESENTATION OF
NAPOLEON
CROSSING THE ALPS
AND THE GREAT ST. BERNARD, WITH
AN ARMY OF 30,000 MEN!!
AND ARTILLERY, BAGGAGE, &c.
After an arduous struggle every obstacle is surmounted, and they at last arrive at the summit of this awful Barrier.

PART IV.—AN EXACT REPRESENTATION OF
A STORM AT SEA!
WITH ALL ITS CHARACTERISTIC PHENOMENA.
The whole painted by MONS. RUBENNE, Artist to the Exhibition, and will be accompanied with Music.

LEADER OF THE ORCHESTRA, W. L. MATTHEWS.
Doors to be opened at half-past Seven, and the Performance to commence at Eight o’Clock precisely.
RESERVE FRONT SEATS, 1s. 6d. PIT, 1s. GALLERY, 6d. Tickets to be had of Mr. Houlston.
**t* The Proprietor will feel obliged by Tradesmen allowing the Bills to be seen in their Windows.

JOHN HOULSTON, PRINTER, MARKET-PLACE, WELLINGTON, SALOP.
The saying ‘Every picture tells a story’ is as true today as it was hundreds of years ago when the great mass of people could neither read nor write. Imagine life in the days of medieval peasant – toiling from dawn till dusk in the fields, getting back to your poor hut and eating by the light of a candle, if you could afford one; then sleep; only to repeat the same tomorrow.

The only break in the routine was when they went to church and the Law required that they attend or pay a fine; a service in Latin which they couldn’t understand; but there was some ‘light relief’, often the walls of the church were painted with images telling biblical stories. There are small fragments of wall painting high in the ‘Cludde Chapel’ in St. Peter’s, Wrockwardine.

Later the local lord of the manor and church filled the empty windy window spaces in the church walls with glass, and coloured glass at that. This gave these authorities opportunity to project their power, authority and influence by placing ‘edifying and enlightening’ pictures in these window spaces; images which were intended to show the uneducated villagers who was ‘boss’ and that their power was reinforced by the Christian church.

Unfortunately in Wellington we have few examples of glass of this early medieval period to illustrate this theme as most of our churches are more modern, but visit any church and you will find windows which tell stories.

St. Catherine’s church at Eyton upon the Weald Moors does have some examples of medieval glass. In one of the north windows there are four portions of very old glass – not particularly brightly coloured but clearly illustrating the prestige of the Eyton Family through their Family Motto, plus the story of St. Catherine, a saint martyred and killed on the wheel for her faith.

In the same church there are also six windows dated about 1600, which again illustrate the predominance of the Eyton Family – in the centre of each is a ‘medallion’ commemorating the marriage of an Eyton. These are believed to have been originally in the ancestral home, Eyton Hall before it was demolished; the windows re-sited in the new church of 1743. The very colourful East window, of about 1851, illustrates the martyrdom of St. Catherine; in this one building there are examples of three distinct periods of coloured ‘story’ glass.

All Saints Church, the parish church of Wellington, is worth a visit; although of ancient origins, the present building dates from about 1790, and there are no remnants of any ancient glass. But look around there are plenty of windows which tell stories.

The early windows are Victorian and combine a biblical story almost always with a memorial. Unravelling these messages can provide clues to local history and perhaps family history.

Recently I heard of somebody researching their Anslow ancestors, but they were unaware of the two windows in the Chancel dedicated to his memory. One on the south side illustrates St. John the Evangelist whilst that on the north side shows an image of John the Baptist, each includes a memorial ‘To the Glory of God and in loving memory of William Anslow of Eyton’. What a treasure-chest of family history could be uncovered by finding your ancestor in a memorial window.

Another window is a memorial to the ‘Glory of God in loving memory of Malcolm Allison’ who was organist and choirmaster for 37 years, and illustrates appropriately St. Cecelia.

Wander round All Saints and you will find other memorials to noted local personalities, often exhibiting Biblical themes. These ‘window stories’ are reminiscent of the original intension to illustrate the doctrines of the
Christian life, instructional for the less literate ‘masses’. Remember universal education was only realised in the Twentieth Century. ‘Window stories’ need not contain a Christian message; there are two locally significant windows in All Saints: one commemorates Wellington Girls’ High and Boys’ Grammar schools, both of which ceased to operate after 1978; and the second installed in memory of the Wellington Urban District Council.

The Victorian or Post-Victorian coloured windows in Christ Church generally have a consistent theme illustrations from the Book of Revelation and each a memorial to a notable personality associated with the church; Church Wardens, past Vicars; one which perhaps stands out is the memorial ‘In Appreciation of William Arthur Smith for 33 years the Blind Organ Blower of this Church...’. The windows in St. Patrick’s Church, again rather modern in date, mainly Twentieth Century illustrate many of the characteristics of earlier generations – lives of saints and biblical stories, frequent memorials to past noted personalities.

The central group of five windows behind the altar depict the Crucifixion, Mary and John, the outer ones St. Anthony and St. Vincent de Paul. This latter one appears to be the only one of these dedicated to an individual, a former parish priest, who it is believed to be represented as the boy in the image.

Most intriguing is the Centenary Window which is full of symbolism. Traditional windows representing well known Biblical stories are fairly straightforward to interpret knowing the story, and perhaps we don’t look closely enough; but these two Centenary Windows deserve to be looked at closely – the winding stream is symbolic of the River Severn; the gallows, Tyburn, the place of execution of many martyrs. This is just a flavour!

One window which demonstrates the principle of instruction, even in the Twentieth Century is that which illustrates that well known children’s hymn ‘All Things Bright and Beautiful’. Perhaps when we get the opportunity to look in any church at home or on holiday we ought to consider the stories in the windows, they are well worth more than a casual glance – do they contain clues to our family’s past, local history and people who have shaped the town?
From slow beginnings in the late seventeenth century, a form of singing in the English parish church really took off from about 1720. This was the singing of psalms and other sacred music from galleries specially built at the west end of many parish churches in Shropshire and throughout England. Groups of singers and instrumentalists were paid by the parish to lead the congregation in their worship.

What became a strong tradition was excised from history in Victorian times by the wish for a more conformable congregation together with changes to the interiors of churches. Organs, barrel organs and harmoniums were becoming cheaper to buy and gradually replaced the former instruments and singers.

In the 1970s, Rollo Woods, a librarian and archivist in Dorset, began to see various manuscript books turning up, such as those of Thomas Hardy and his father and grandfather who had been members of just such a church band. He and other researchers, including my husband Gordon Ashman, often with an interest in folk music, began to take notice and led to the music being sung and played again.

When Gordon was researching in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library in Cecil Sharpe House in the early 1980s, the librarian showed him some manuscript books from Wellington, Salop. A man called John Moore, who described himself as a nurseryman and seedsman had written down, in 1837 and 1839, both sacred and secular music for his own use, a common practice when books were expensive. The psalms were all four part: soprano, alto, tenor and bass and were the popular ones of the previous century. Typically for the time, the melody was in the tenor line rather than the soprano as is usual now. His secular music was of dance tunes, with only the melody line written down, and were grouped in sets as is done today for country dances. John himself could have been a fiddler.

Richard Moore and Elizabeth Brown were married in All Saints Church on October 8th 1818 and both signed the register in a good hand. Their son John was born on August 18th 1819 and baptised in All Saints on September 12th 1821. In Pigot & Co.’s Commercial Directory of 1828, a Richard Moore was a Nursery and Seedsman in New Street and so Gordon made a guess as to the connection with the John Moore of the later manuscripts. An 1830s map (above) shows the name Mrs Moore on nursery land off Jarratts Lane (now Glebe Street). The piece of adjoining land has the name of John Brown, so one might speculate that it may have been Elizabeth’s father whose name was on her marriage certificate.

Wellington under the Wrekin, within sight of that stupendous mountain of 1,100 feet, was the description of the town in Pigot’s Directory. It was a market town, neatly built with many good houses and well lit with gas. The material trade was in iron with coal mines and lime-stone quarries within a few miles, as well as considerable glass making.

On the edge of the east Shropshire coalfield, Wellington had come through some difficult times at the end of the previous century when a series of poor harvests hit the area very badly. By the 1841 census, John and James Moore (brothers perhaps) were living next door to Elizabeth and in a tithe evaluation in 1842, John is named as the owner of both houses so, perhaps, they were doing reasonably well for themselves.

The original owners of manuscript books such as John Moore’s, some of whom composed their own music, would be surprised to find that the discovery of their books has proved a catalyst for a thriving revival of it. At a music weekend in the Museum of Iron, Coalbrookdale, in May 1990, the West Gallery Music Association was created to research and perform this, once lost, music.

In pride of place then as in every May weekend there since, the roof has been raised by the singing of the words by Sir Isaac Watts, *Come ye that love the Lord* to the tune *Birmingham* from John Moore’s manuscript book. His name may not be famous in Wellington but, to the members of the WGMA, he is now like a much loved friend. The John Moore Quire, formed in his memory, does its best to keep his name alive.
We are quite fortunate that Wellington has been mentioned in county-based trade directories since at least the 1820s. We are also lucky that the town was large and prosperous enough to warrant the printing of its own town directories. The earliest one readily available is that for 1878 published by Hobson’s in Market Square.

Whereas very little detail appears in county-based directories (like Pigot’s, Cassell’s and Kelly’s, which are often confined to name, bare address and business type), town-based directories can provide a great deal more, often entertaining information. Most directories tend to provide a list of advertisers, which helps reduce the time taken to see if a business has paid for a separate advertisement, in which case it guides you to the relevant page.

One thing to be wary of is that not all directories, even those (like Kelly’s) purporting to include every business in a township, actually do so. Not every trader was willing to pay for an entry in the listing. Similarly, some businesses had, in fact, ceased trading before the year shown on the directory cover, implying that entries could simply be carried forward from one year to the next. Finally, I have found that the information in some town directories, like Hobson’s and John Jones’s, although dated for a specific year, actually contain information relating to the previous year.

The message here is not to take the information provided in directories as absolutely gospel; always try to find an alternative proof. However, whenever you find an advertisement, be it in a directory, newspaper, book or other document, take time to read the words carefully as you can find evidence of what was important to potential customers.

---

**ANCISTRAL ADVERTISING**

Were your ancestors in business? Or do you know who your ancestors worked for? If so, advertisements can give an insight into the type of work they did and where they did it.

---

**Above and aside:** extracts from Hobson’s 1878 Directory of Wellington.
In the previous issue of Wellingtonia, I wrote a brief account of some discoveries made while 14 Market Square was being refurbished a few months ago. The shop front has been tastefully restored and awaits new occupants.

As a result of a request to the leader of Telford & Wrekin Council, he agreed to have his workmen dig a few test pits to see if more interesting facts could be found before Market Square is repaved as part of the Borough Towns Initiative.

Time was limited, as was the area in which exploratory holes could be dug; this was due partly because emergency vehicular access had to be maintained (so we couldn’t dig anywhere near the northern exit to the Square) and for fear of cutting through water, gas and electricity sub-surface conduits which had already been plotted. You can get some idea of the location of the holes by comparing the relative positions of properties in the photograph below.

The main feature I wanted to see was evidence of the foundations to the Market House which had dominated the Square from before 1680 until about 1908 when it was dismantled to improve (horse drawn) traffic congestion, among other things.

The only visual evidence we have of the existence of a Market House is on a map dated 1793 produced for the Lord Forester. Superimposing the approximate size and shape of the House from the old map onto a more accurate 1882 Ordnance Survey map gave us a starting point (see top of page). Other documentary evidence suggests the overall dimensions of the House were 12 metres by 6 metres. What we don’t know for certain is whether the half-timbered House (which acted as a public meeting hall as well as a probable seat of town governance) stood on timber ‘legs’ or stone columns. If the latter, my own feelings are that it would have looked similar to the market hall which has survived (and is still used) at Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, seen here.

According to Baxter’s History of Wellington (1949), Wellington’s Market House ‘is reputed to have been as fine as the one which still adds interest and character to Much Wenlock, but it must be admitted that its situation gave some excuse for removal. Some forty years ago, pictures of this market house were still to be found, but I have been unable to obtain one for reproduction here.’

Quoting from Miss H. Auden’s Memoirs of Old Shropshire, Baxter also says, ‘Wellington possessed... a fine market house as late as 1804, but it has now disappeared... there are drawings extant of a fine half-timbered Market House of seventeenth century date.’

There has also been ongoing speculation that there was an earlier building on the same site. Could this be confirmed when three test pits were dug in early August 2010?

The short answer is a disappointing, ‘NO.’ But there are good reasons for this. Two of the three holes showed that there has been a great deal of ground disturbance over the last 200 years, partly because of the burying of Victorian cast iron water pipes, plus more modern gas and electricity equivalents. This was only to be expected.

The holes, as I have said, were dug in a very limited area and, if the Market House had been built even on stone columns (as opposed to wooden stilts), the chances of ‘hitting’ the foundation base or plinth of one of the columns was always going to be a (hopefully) hit and (more likely) miss affair.

Disappointing as it was not to have found incontrovertible evidence of Market House foundations, two of the holes revealed proof of a cobbled surface. Furthermore, the third
hole exposed a small section of intact cobbles in one corner, the surface of which lay some 80 centimetres below today’s pavior level (see above)... and at about the same depth as cobbles exposed adjacent to (and running partially underneath) the frontage of 14 Market Square (both photos below).

What are the implications of this evidence?
To begin with, it appears to prove quite conclusively that Market Square (or, to give it its original name, Market Place) benefitted from a cobbled surface using stones rounded and made smooth by water-based attrition. George Evans, having an interest in all things geological hopes to examine a selection of the stones, which have been given to the Wrekin Museum Partnership for safekeeping) to ascertain their origin. But what is particularly intriguing is the depth of the old surface in relation to today’s. 80 centimeters is quite a depth, especially when you try to imagine stripping away that much soil to see what is visible where buildings meet the open ground.

This is where detailed maps made more that 200 years ago would come in useful. We can be fairly sure that the Square was much larger many years ago (bearing in mind it probably began as a Medieval field, rather like venues for modern car boot sales) and covered a much wider area. Over time, as more and more buildings appeared, they encroached on the open area. The evidence at 14 Market Square, where the level of cobbles runs beneath the present frontage, tends to confirm this.

Another point to consider is: how do modern cellars fit into the ‘raised ground’ question? The short answer is, ‘I don’t know.’

More research needs to be done, not just around the existing boundaries of Market Square but also in the land surrounding it, including that in Bell, Duke and Crown Streets which are themselves the result of building on and extending into the original Market Place. It seems obvious that raising the ground level has to do with general improvements to the infrastructure of the town and levelling surfaces to assist drainage and vehicle movement.

The story cannot end here... in the meantime, take a look at the objects found in the latest holes (pieces of clay pipe and animal bone, below) and the assortment of clay pipe stems, glass, porcelain, glazed ceramics and pieces of burnt timber saved by contractors working on the 14 Market Square refurbishments (bottom). These items are now in the safe keeping of the Wrekin Museum Partnership.
July
SKATING RINK OPENS
The American Roller Skating Rink opened on Tank Bank on land that had formerly belonged to a croft cottage and which would later become home to the Grand Theatre (now Pussycats night club and Whispers wine bar; see Wellingtonia issue 4 for more details of the history of this site).

Reports stated that over 300 skaters were present, plus a band and refreshments.

October
PRETTY SKATING CARNIVAL
The skating rink at Tan Bank had opened earlier, proving to be a great success with hundreds of people taking advantage of the facilities and ‘its introduction to the town has been justified to an empathic degree’.

A Fancy Dress Carnival was held with festoons, and ‘scintillating illuminants but the paramount attractiveness was in the skaters themselves’. The Journal reporter went to say that ‘Many of the conventionalities of life are ignored and prim propensities suspended with unrestricted merriment and romping gaiety.’

The fancy dress costumes depicted different nationalities, army, navy, scouts and airmen, heroes, heroines of tragedy and comedy, fact and fiction.

Prizes were distributed for events such as Ladies’ Egg and Spoon, Best Comic Costume, Gents’ Potato Race. After the prize distribution there was a ‘confetti battle’ which lasted over two hours: ‘And so the fun waxed fast and furious. Conventions were cast to the wind in the merry encounter, no quarter was asked for or expected, and if the battle was bloodless, many were placed hors de combat in the merciless fusillade, and emerged from the contest disorganised, bedraggled, perspiring and motley, and then had to run the gauntlet of badinage from an unsympathetic crowd of festive spectators.’

It is reassuring to read that ‘Britishers who are supposed to take their pleasures sadly, can be exceedingly funny when occasion requires it.’

November
THE LATE MRS. SLANEY
The demise and funeral of Mary Jane Slaney of Sunnycroft (below, now a National Trust property at 200 Holyhead Road, Wellington), was reported extensively.

She was the widow of the wine and spirit merchant whose family had been trading in Market Square since towards the end of the eighteenth century. She bought Sunncroft in 1893 after its original owner, John Wackrill of Shropshire Brewery, died. The house was considerably extended in 1899.

Her well-attended funeral took place at Christ Church, where she had worshipped for many years.

Rev. Frank W. Argyle (below), new to the parish and who se ministry ended here in 1913, officiated both at the church and the General Cemetery (off Linden Avenue) where her remains were buried.

Because her son Jack was working in Australia and not interested in living in Wellington, Sunnycroft was acquired by John V.T. Lander, a town solicitor, in 1912.

If you’d like to visit Sunnycroft, check www.nationaltrust.org.uk for opening hours and details of events held there, or telephone 01952 242884.
A lot can happen in 50 years, let alone 100. Who’d have thought, for example, that the Charlton Arms, a cherished institution which opened around 1850 (not, as is occasionally stated in the Telford Journal, a hostelry dating back to the (at worst) Middle Ages or (at best) the seventeenth century), would have been allowed to fall into decay by an outside property developer?

Above is what it looked like in May 1960. Below, on the other hand, is my class at Park Junior (now Wrekin View Primary) school in North Road taking part in a May Day depiction of the 400th anniversary of the 1660 Restoration of the monarchy, which brought the turbulent interregnum years of Oliver Cromwell’s Commonwealth to a long-awaited end.

Note the carefully crafted costumes and realistic oak tree (as seen at Boscobel House).

It’s a shame that local authorities see the need to change the names of long-established schools, as if doing so will somehow enhance their reputation. It’s also a shame that more isn’t done to encourage pupils (and their teachers) to take an interest in their area’s history.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

TELFORD HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

If you’re interested in listening to a variety of other speakers and enjoying history-based entertainment, pay a visit to the pages at:

http://thas.co.uk

NEW LOCAL HISTORY BOOK

TELFORD THROUGH TIME
by Allan Frost

The Telford landscape is an ever-changing canvas in which so much has disappeared forever under the banner of progress. New roads, housing estates, shopping malls, business parks and enterprise zones have restructured the local economy and affected ways of life. Using a selection of illustrations from different periods, the reader is encouraged to examine these differences as time continues to march through this historically intriguing English district.

Meet the author and buy your signed copy between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday 16th October, 2010, at W.H. Smith’s store in Wellington. Only £14.99.

Meet the author and buy your signed copy between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday 16th October, 2010, at W.H. Smith’s store in Wellington. Only £14.99.

Kuldip Singh Sahota (aside) will be speaking at Wellington History Group’s event on Tuesday, 19th October... but what about? For details of this and other free-to-attend events at the Annual Wellington Literary Festival visit http://www.wellington-shropshire.gov.uk/Festival+2010.htm

Below, June 2010: Blessed Robert Johnson History Club members take a tour of Victorian Wellington with our chairman, Allan Frost. During the walkabout, they compared old photos of special points of interest with what things look like now. They also paid a visit to the Library in Walker Street, where Jim Hatfield gave them details of what the Local Studies section there has to offer.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please address general correspondence to:

Secretary: Joy Rebello, 6 Barnfield Crescent, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 2ES.
Tel: 01952 402459. email: joyrebello@hotmail.co.uk

Other officers of the Wellington History Group committee are:

President: George Evans, 18 Barnfield Crescent, Wellington, The Wrekin, TF1 2EU.
Tel: 01952 641102. email george-evans@talktalk.net

Chairman: Allan Frost, 1 Buttermere Drive, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9RE.
Tel: 01952 299699. email: a.frost1@btinternet.com

Treasurer: Wendy Palin, 35 Pembroke Drive, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 3PT.
Tel: 01952 244551. email: palinfamily@tiscali.co.uk

DISCLAIMER: Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press. Wellington History Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions, nor do opinions expressed necessarily reflect the official view of the Group. All articles and photographs are copyright of the authors or members of the Group and must not be reproduced without prior permission and due credit.