

Issue 36  
July 2006



# B. & D.L.H.A. Newsletter



**Birmingham and District Local History Association**

Website - [www.bdlha.org](http://www.bdlha.org)

## Editorial

I would like to use this space to tell you how pleased we were with the favourable comments generated by Issue No.27 of the Birmingham Historian. A lot of this interest has arisen from Brian Henderson's article, 'The Hortons of Wood House'. A copy of the journal was sent to a lady now living in Canada, who wrote back saying that while they had local history publications there, she had seen nothing to equal the standard of the *Birmingham Historian*. A lady living in Shrawley, whose mother was a friend of Ruth Horton, telephoned me and asked to be put in contact with the author. One man, the son of the local farmer had his interest stirred further by Bill Ainsworth's article on Chatwin's Exhibition Hall (Bingley Hall). He recalled going there with his father to cattle shows. Judging from the number of comments I received regarding the Chad Valley article, quite a few of our members had relatives working there.

We found this level of interest very encouraging.

In this issue, we bring to a close, the recent series on Local History websites. It is by no means the end as far as we are concerned, for as long as there are websites on local history, we shall do our best to bring them to your attention.



**Contact Me:**  
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**Birmingham. B14 6BX**  
**Tel: (0121) 444 7470**

## Next Issues

Sept 2006 (to cover Oct – Dec 2006)  
Copy Deadline 30th July 2006

Dec 2006 (to cover Jan – March  
2007)  
Conv Deadline 31st October 2006

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## Society News



SMETHWICK HERITAGE CENTRE TRUST

**Report to the B&DLHA Newsletter. May 2006**

### Staffing changes at the centre

Curator Dr. Delia Garratt has now left us to take up her new post. To thank her for the sterling work she has done in her time at the Smethwick Heritage Centre, we hosted a small farewell party and presented her with a gift to show our appreciation. She has promised to keep in touch and, in fact, she appeared at our Roadshow on 13<sup>th</sup> May where we caught up with her news.

To help fill the void left by Delia we have appointed two part-time staff members. **Ron Chatwin** is now our Centre Manager responsible for the day to day running and maintenance of the Heritage Centre and **Stuart Lane** who is continuing some of the curatorial work. Ron was born in Smethwick and spent much of his working life in the town, finally running his own engineering-related business. Stuart gained his BA (Hons) in History at the University of York and has done volunteer work at the Black Country Living Museum and the Birmingham Back to Backs and is studying for his MA in Heritage Management.

### Roadshows

The Trust's series of Roadshows continues to attract many people - members, friends and non-members. The task of transporting car-loads of items to a local church hall is usually undertaken by some of the Working Group who are now expert at knowing just how to pack and load a car. Over the years we are proud that careful handling has avoided any serious damage and I believe nothing has yet been lost! (Yes I am touching wood as I type this and also wondering if we should apply for jobs with Pickfords or BA when we `retire`!.)

The latest Roadshow was at Holy Trinity Church and one feature was a display of local `bus and coach companies - the Midland `Red' of course and other firms such as Gliderways, Mains, Graingers etc. The visitor response to this was excellent and the display drew in many ex-employees who found others to talk to. This display is now going into our Exhibition Hall at the Centre for the next few weeks. Our next Roadshow will be on 9<sup>th</sup> September at St. Mark's church hall and the Smethwick company under the spotlight will be the giant GKN (still known to many of us `old tins' as "Nettlefolds") - a firm who employed many local people.

### Heritage coffee mornings

These have got off to a good start with the first event, on April 5th being so well-attended that extra tables and chairs were quickly brought in. In May a steady flow of

customers kept us busy from 10 until 12.30. One aim of the coffee mornings is, of course, to bring in some cash to keep the Centre viable and to introduce more people to the history of Smethwick. BUT our other aims are wider; we hope to make a place where local people of all ages can meet in a welcoming, friendly and interesting atmosphere. I must mention that our first customer on April 5th was a lady with three under-school-age children. They enjoyed biscuits and orange juice rather than the coffee enjoyed by their guardian. The local police patrolling the area also called in for coffee and a chat and we hope this will be a regular visit. During the Summer coffee mornings we are responding to a request by planning a conducted "stroll around the park" (weather permitting). We hope this will be another chance to share memories.

### Amazing

I could think of no other heading for this paragraph. In April it was obvious that we (the Trust) needed to do something quickly to help to negate the loss of Dr. Delia Garrett our Curator. We found someone who could work for us on a part-time basis and who had the necessary knowledge and experience....but...where would we find the resources to pay a salary? Chairman David and his wife Sheila decided on a course of action - they wrote to every member explaining the need and asked anyone who felt able to contribute whatever they may be able to afford to a fund to enable the work of the Centre to continue. The target was £10,000. In just over three weeks, the target was met. Perhaps you will agree that one word to use is `amazing' and others would be `wonderful' and `heart-warming'. To know that in this world of often downbeat news, gloomy forecasts and apparently superficial values, there are extra-ordinary people who value or love their hometown enough to make such an effort is truly wonderful.

### And ..... David Goes To Buckingham Palace

On a lovely, sunny 10<sup>th</sup> of May Chairman David Bryant went to the Palace to receive his MBE award from the Queen. After the Investiture - and the photographs - his family gathered for a Celebration Lunch..... The next day he was back down to earth - busy hauling stuff into cars ready to transport to the Roadshow.

*Christine Round*

Publicity Officer SHCT



## News From The Pen Room

- Our exhibition on Marion Richardson, put on by Hanna Morrall one of our volunteers, during February and March attracted a great deal of attention. Her name rang bells with many people of a certain age who had been taught to write using her system. We were proud to think that she was trained at the Birmingham School of Art and taught at Dudley Girls School. As an artist she encouraged children to draw and use patterns of letters in a repetitive way until they acquire the shape of the letter. Although she died in the 1940s her influence extended over many decades. It was good to revive the memory.



- We had a stall staffed by Hanna Morrall and Paul Waring at the St George's Day Celebration in Victoria Square and attracted an enthusiastic crowd of adults and children eager to read about St George, colour in flags, write with a range of writing implements including quills and have their names written in Braille by Keith Hancox our volunteer, who is blind.

- We were so pleased to hear recently from the Museums Libraries and Archives Association that we had been awarded full Accreditation Status. We had previously been a registered museum but the system had changed to Accreditation which involved us in a detailed process of tightening documentation procedures, introducing improved systems of collection care and having a robust approach to access arrangements. This award was such an achievement but we were also delighted to receive a special commendation. This is all down to the hard work and commitment of our volunteers assisted by our Curatorial Adviser who prepared our submission.

- We will be running our handwriting competition for children and calligraphy competition for adults during the summer. Further details can be obtained from the Pen Room.

- We shall be part of the Heritage Open Days from the 7th — 10<sup>th</sup> September

Our programme of special exhibitions now extends over the whole year. See below for forthcoming events.

### July – September.

Exhibition: *'Do you know your Alphabet?' A hysterical and historical look at the Alphabet.*

### October - November

2006 is the Tercentenary of the internationally renowned printer, John Baskerville's, Birth date. To mark this year "Typevenets" have arranged a national conference at the Custard Factory with exhibitions at the Birmingham and Midland Institute and Central Library.

### December

Exhibition: *Calligraphy Competition*

### January - February 2007

Exhibition: *The Birmingham Pen Trade.* At Floor 6, Birmingham Central Library, plus Ground Floor display boards.

For more details contact:

The Pen Room

Unit 3, The Argent Centre,

60, Frederick Street,

Hockley,

Birmingham B1 3HS

Phone/Fax 0121 236 9834

Email: [pentalk@penroom.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:pentalk@penroom.freeserve.co.uk)

Web site: [www.penroom.co.uk](http://www.penroom.co.uk)

*Brian Jones*

Secretary



### George Dixon

Ever wondered how old George Dixon is? No, not the man, the School!!

The School is over 100 years old. In fact, it began

in 1884 in the centre of Birmingham and it moved to City Road when the Ritchie building was completed. Yes, the City Road site is 100 years old this year.

Those of you who were able to attend our Open Day on Sat., 1st July will know this and will also know that the school has produced a school history book which was on sale at that event. If you were unable to be present but would like to purchase a copy of the book, please contact **David Housley** on Tel: (0121) 434 4488 for full details of price plus postage and packing.

## West Bromwich Local History Society



### West Bromwich celebrates Trafalgar Bicentenary

A joint effort by members of All Saints Church, West Bromwich Royal Naval Association and West Bromwich Local History Society culminated in a successful day of celebrations marking the West Bromwich link with the Battle of Trafalgar

via James Eaton. Family descendents of James Eaton travelled from Sutton Coldfield, Lichfield and Brighton to attend the commemoration service and re-dedication of his memorial stone. As signal midshipman on HMS Temeraire, Eaton passed on that famous Nelson message "ENGLAND EXPECTS...." And on Saturday 22nd we could see that message again as the flags were displayed on a line from the roof of the church.

A great deal of information regarding Nelson, the battle of Trafalgar and James Eaton was gathered together over the summer months and put on display in the Lady Chapel of All Saints Church. The exhibition ran for two weeks attracting many visitors and good coverage in the local newspapers.



**West Bromwich Union Pauper Memorial Group.**

The Pauper Memorial Group, including members of the Local History Group, have secured a grant of some £20,000 from the Local Heritage Initiative to raise awareness of the history of the Paupers of West Bromwich and its Workhouse.

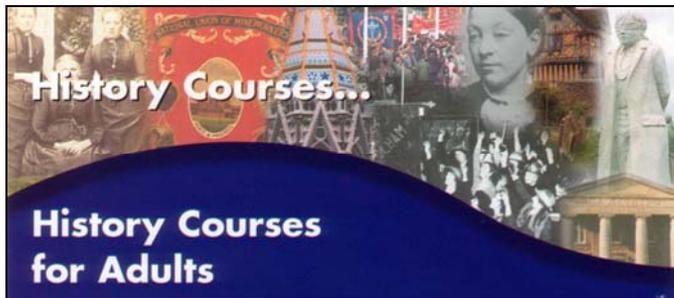
Among the initiatives planned for next year are:

- ❖ A programme of presentations to schools and interested local groups.
- ❖ A Pauper Trail which is being developed which includes areas of relevant interest.
- ❖ A memorial in Heath Lane cemetery where many of the paupers are buried in unmarked graves

The project was launched by Prof. Carl Chinn at All Saints Church on Friday, 7th April with some 150 people attending including the Mayor and Mayoress of Sandwell, the Chair of the Heritage Committee and relatives of one of the Masters of the Workhouse from the early 1900's.

*Moreen Wilkes* (Chairman)  
West Bromwich Local History Society

**Courses**



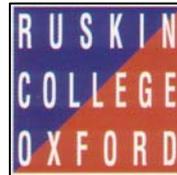
Certificate in Higher Education one year full time (or two year part time)  
The History course covers new ways of looking at twentieth century Britain, radical, socialist and feminist movements of the last 200 years, ideas and practice of History, and writing a short project based on your own research.

We also run short introductory courses including courses on writing family history and materials for history, in conjunction with different archives.

**MA in Public History. Unique in Britain.**

This 2 year part time - or full time - course involves one late afternoon/evening a week.

Themes cover different approaches to Public History, using the visual in History, Oral History, Time and Memory. Topics include heritage, family history, popular history and collecting and is based on interactive group seminars and individual tutorials.



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Walton Street,  
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Tel: (01865) 554331.  
See our website: [www.ruskin.ac.uk](http://www.ruskin.ac.uk)

**Speaker Available**

Illustrated talks on Historical Subjects including:

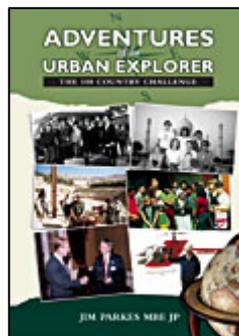
- ✓ *A tale of two suburbs: Edgbaston and Bournville compared.*
- ✓ *Prince Albert and the Crystal Palace Exhibition.*
- ✓ *Leisure in Victorian England.*
- ✓ *Victorians abroad: the British in India.*
- ✓ *The 1851 Religious Census in Birmingham and Worcestershire.*

Available for day or evening meetings.  
Suggested fee £20.

To get more information or to book John for any of the above subjects contact:

**John Aitken,**  
**38 Blackthorn Close,**  
**Birmingham**  
**B30 1SB.**  
**Tel: (0121) 458 3949.**

**Publications**



**Adventures of an Urban Explorer**  
Jim Parkes MBE JP

This is the story of a 45 year journey to 109 countries. During this time the author has been blessed by Mother Teresa and Desmond Tutu, thanked by Nelson Mandela and Prince Philip, honoured by the Queen

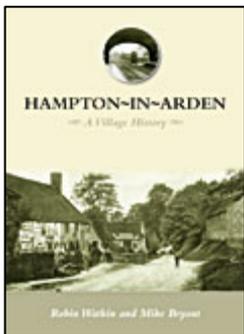
and frowned upon by Fidel Castro. Labelled by the media "Lucky Jim" for being a survivor and "Brummie OAP, the new Phileas Fogg" for being an adventurer. Not bad for a back street boy bullied by a cockerel and Hitler's bombs.

Without the support of bodyguards or an army of media technicians, war zones have been experienced in Israel, Lebanon, Iran, Afghanistan, Nepal, Russia during the Cold War and China prior to the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Injury was avoided when car bombs went off in Brazil, Cyprus, Israel and Turkey. There were anti apartheid street riots in Cape Town and racial riots in Mexico City and Kuala Lumpur. Terrorist attacks experienced included the Israeli rocket attacks on Hizbullah in Beirut, Maoist attacks in Nepal, the Tamil attack on my hotel in Colombo, the Kashmiri attack on the Delhi Parliament and the siege of the Japanese Embassy in Peru.

Nature has intervened with an earth tremor in Tanzania, a typhoon in Japan, cyclone in Fiji, floods in Prague and Brazil, a dust storm and a volcanic eruption in Mexico. There have been five road accidents and eight arrests, twice by the Russians in East Germany.

Organisations described include the Twenty Two Club in Birmingham, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Outward Bound Trust.

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**Hampton-in-Arden –  
 A Village History**  
 Robin Watkin and Mike Bryant

Hampton-in-Arden's growth and development as a Warwickshire village is carefully charted from Roman times to World War II and beyond. The village's Saxon origins are explained and the story continues with descriptions

of the village in the Tudor period and the changes incurred during the Industrial Age.

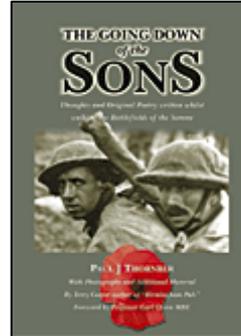
Details of the early years are followed by chapters dealing in depth with the Manor, the village's churches, mills around the parish, the educational changes through the years and the coming of the railway.

Subsequent chapters look at inns, sporting activities, the impact of war on the village and the numerous organisations which continue to make up the social fabric of village life.

The book concludes with a look at some of the more prominent residents of the village through the years and a survey of some of the events and happenings which

took place. The text is illustrated with many previously unseen photographs.

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**The Going Down of the Sons -  
 Paul J. Thornber**

Birmingham poet Paul Thornber and Terry Carter, the author of "Birmingham Pals" regularly visit the Battlefields of the Somme, the scene of the attack commencing on the 1st July 1916, along an eighteen mile front which, by the time it had stagnated into

stalemate in mid November, had cost the predominantly British forces 420,000 casualties of which 125,000 were dead. Ground gained for this staggering cost was, in some places around 7 miles, in others none.

The 250 military cemeteries and the 6 memorials to the missing, in an area no greater than one of the suburbs of Birmingham, bear mute witness to this sacrificial "Going down of the Sons".

Many books have been written on the military aspects of events which took place at a time at the very edge of memory in this evocative area. None have attempted to probe into that memory, by attempting to reflect in poetry and text the feelings and emotions of those who were there...and are there still.

Paul's intuitive and sensitive poetry coupled with Terry's military expertise and understanding makes this unique book... A JOURNEY YOU MAY NEVER FORGET, AMONG THOSE YOU MUST NEVER FORGET.

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**Finally Meeting Princess Maud –  
 Shirley Thompson and Seamus Dunleavy**

From around the Second World War onwards, a new migration from the West of Ireland began, to the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere, many

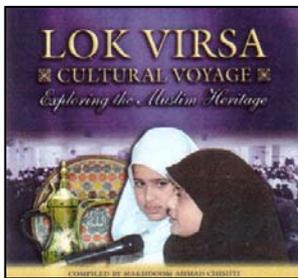
making the journey in the ship The Princess Maud. In this trailblazer of a book, in the sense that it concerns settling in England, Seamus Dunleavy relates his fascinating life story to biographer, Shirley Thompson. He is assisted by his wife Mary and his three children, Tracey, Shamus and Russell.

Born one of nine children, into an impoverished Charlestown family, Seamus has tackled all manner of difficulties, including an attempt on his life, with a determination that reflects the rugged Mayo landscape from which he hails. His imagination and humour mirror the sea, lakes and skies of his homeland, with mystical tales of banshees and fairy forts.

After emigrating to England at the age of seventeen, Seamus became a famous wrestler, in company with his brother, Mickey, and eventually, a highly successful businessman. He has built a permanent life in England, for himself and his family, but keeps in touch with his roots, via frequent trips back to Charlestown. This is a story not to be missed!

*"Amongst those who made their mark so resolutely was Seamus Dunleavy. With the strength of an ancient warrior, yet has he the speech of the seannachai. His tales about the Charlestown days, about the donkeys and the fleas, teachers and characters, handball and tossing school, draw us to an older world, whilst his stories about his wrestling, night clubs, pubs and hotels, take us to a newer and more tangible world. Like the country from which he hails, Seamus stands in the present, beckons to the future and harks to the past. And as proud as he is to be a Mayoman, he is as proud to be an Irish Brummie."* **Professor Carl Chinn, M.B.E.**

240mm x 170mm Paperback  
Fully Illustrated  
ISBN: 1 85858 284 9  
**£14.95**  
Available: **July 2006**



**Lok Virsa —  
Cultural Voyage.  
Exploring the  
Muslim Heritage**  
*Makhdoom Ahmad Chishti*

Lok virsa, meaning 'cultural voyage' is the culmination of a project, which has targeted Muslim communities heritage in the West Midlands. This project has raised an awareness and understanding of the cultural heritage and legacy of diverse Muslim communities living in the West Midlands.

A great cultural heritage influx from east to west and west to east is emerging from indigenous Muslim cultural heritage. Thus, it is important for Muslim communities to understand the differences in cultural heritage and how they can play a positive role in the success and

progression of their own, while respecting others' heritage.

The organisation has worked with a number of Muslim communities in the West Midlands by holding heritage training workshops, and by carrying out training to collect the primary source materials such as photographs, artefacts and stories, which have been used in this publication, a website and CD ROM. The stories of the role models who have influenced a great deal of cultural heritage in the West Midlands have also been used.

Lok virsa has tried to transform the image of the diverse Muslim communities within other wider communities and to highlight the positive input and contribution of Muslim heritage to the lifestyle of Britain. Every community's past is central to their future. Every individual has their own specific heritage, historical roots and origins, which incorporates arts, sports, music, festivals, motifs and much more.

Lok virsa has played a role in celebrating multiculturalism by strengthening links and developing a network between people. The culmination of the project is the Lok Virsa book which encompasses all the information and illustrations obtained during the project from the diverse Muslim communities now established in the West Midlands.

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# FRIENDS OF KEY HILL CEMETERY



The Friends are holding an Open Day at Key Hill Cemetery on Saturday 9th September. They will be wearing Victorian dress and look forward to you joining them on the day.



Among the attractions will be guided tours of the cemetery, where many notable Birmingham people are buried. It is the last resting place of other lesser known but very important

people. An example of an early hearse will be on show and there will be stands with items on display and to purchase.

Refreshments and toilet facilities will also be available.

For further information please ring:

**Pauline Roberts**  
Tel: (01827) 330711  
Mobile: 07799 040455.

## Forthcoming Events



*Bringing the past to life*

### Avoncroft Museum of Buildings

**24th - 28th July and 31st July - 4th August**

Hieroglyphics to Cans and String –  
Communications through the ages.  
Fun activity weeks for all the family

**Sat. 29th & Sun. 30th July**

1940s Weekend in association with World War II  
Historic Society.

#### Visitor facilities:

The Museum car and coach park is free of charge for  
visitor and guests.

#### Other facilities include:

The Pavilion Tea Room - serving a range of light refreshments.  
The Gift Shop - buy that perfect souvenir to remember your visit.  
Picnic Area - you are welcome to bring your own refreshments.

**Avoncroft,  
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Worcs.  
B60 4JR.**

For more details please visit our website:

[www.avoncroft.org.uk](http://www.avoncroft.org.uk)

or contact us on

**(01527) 831363 or 831886.**



### Weoley Castle Open Day

#### Location:

Weoley Castle, Alwold Road, Weoley Castle  
Birmingham. B29

Tel: (0121) 464 2193

**Date:** 16th July 2006

Guided Tours of the Monument, Childrens' Activities,  
Sword Fighting Demonstrations, Archaeology/Finds  
Displays, Medieval Knight on a Horse, Ecumenical  
Service on the site of the old Chapel.

**Admission:** Free

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 Chester  
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E-mail: [info@wartours.com](mailto:info@wartours.com)

## Local History Websites

Welcome to the final part in the series of articles looking at the number and diversity of Local History websites relating to Birmingham and the surrounding areas.

Though this may be the final part in this special series, we will be keeping an eye on what happens in cyberspace and bring any interesting sites to the attention of our readership. To round off the series, I took a look at websites belonging to larger organisations, museums and places of interest which have a connection to Birmingham and local counties and their local history, but do not belong to a Local History Society. There is a lot of this type of website about, so I have been very selective of the sites presented here. As we shall see, when an organisation has more funding to commit to its web-presence some wonderful sites can be achieved.

We'll start off in Birmingham City Centre with one of the City's best loved institutions...

### **Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery**

<http://www.bmag.org.uk>

It is 120 years since Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery first opened its doors beneath the clock tower on Chamberlain Square. Since those days BM&AG has gone from strength to strength and is now home to artworks and artefacts that are the envy of the world.

More than half a million objects fill the cabinets and walls of Birmingham's museums. Here you will find everything from Renaissance masterpieces to 9,000-year-old Middle-Eastern treasures. BM&AG is particularly admired for its Pre-Raphaelite paintings and drawings – the museum boasts the largest collection in the world.

Bronze Buddhas and Egyptian Mummies also reside here in this diverse and fascinating place. The BM&AG collections encompass fine art from the 14th century onwards; applied arts like ceramics and metalwork; and historic collections, including everything from local archaeology to world cultures.

The website too is a fascinating site to look around. It has a good easy to use structure, with clear concise menus on the left of the screen and well illustrated pages describing the museums' services, artifacts, exhibitions and details of the other museums run by the City Council. All in all, it's an attractive and easy to use site, one which will keep your interest for a long while and of course, once you exhaust the contents of the site, you can also visit the museums themselves to find even more to satisfy your thirst for the history of our area.



Stairway at Aston Hall

You might not realise that Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is just one part of a remarkable extended family.

Tucked away in other parts of the city are six more inspiring museums, showcasing everything from the city's thriving jewellery heritage to its stately Jacobean past.

From the tranquillity of **Sarehole Mill** to the historic grandeur of **Blakesley Hall**, the story of the Midlands is brought to life. But it's not just the collections that are important - the buildings all have an interesting tale to tell. **Aston Hall** became a haven for King Charles I during the English Civil war, while **Soho House** was home to Matthew Boulton, one of the fathers of the Industrial Revolution. The twelfth-century ruins at **Weoley Castle** have been the site of numerous archaeological investigations. And a perfectly-preserved nineteenth-century jewellery factory is now home to the **Museum of the Jewellery Quarter**, which lies at the heart of the region's jewellery and silversmithing industry.

# The Birmingham Historian Issue 28 : Spring 2006



Free to Members  
£3.50 to Non-Members

## In this Issue:

### Arthur Vickers 'Midget' V.C.

The story of one of Birmingham's own Victoria Cross Winners.

### The Quaker Lloyds family, Bingley & Slavery

### From Birmingham to the China Wars.

The Diary detailing Gunner James Alderton's experience in the Chinese conflicts of 1859-60 and More...

## To get your copy:

Either contact: Joan Davies, 112 Brandwood Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham. B14 6BX.  
Tel: (0121) 444 7470

## Or:

Get your copy from:  
Local Studies and History Department.  
Floor 6, Central Library,  
Chamberlain Square. Birmingham. B3 3HQ

## Back Issues:

Ask about previous issues of the Birmingham Historian. Issues 1-14 (where available) £1.50 each.  
Issues 15-27, (where available) £3.50 each.

The first thing you may note, is that I'm not doing this part of the series in alphabetical order...Ah! Sweet Chaos... This is, at least in part because I'm scatter-brained, but mainly because I'm doing this as I remember or discover another website.

## Revolutionary Players of Industry and Innovation.

<http://www.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk/>



The website came about from a project supported by the New Opportunities Fund focusing on the history of the Industrial Revolution in the West Midlands between the years 1700 and 1830.

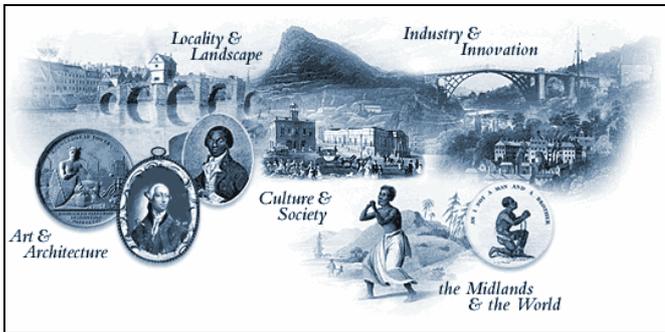
The region became internationally significant for achievements in science, industry, art and culture. The website contains images of many resources from museums, archives and libraries representing the history of the period. There are four main ways of accessing this material: **Time**, **Place**, **People** and **Theme**.



You can also read **Articles** on historical subjects, enter the **Digital Library** of primary sources, explore a **Gallery** of images and create your own **Album** of items from the site.

The site contains several thousand images of original source material which was laboriously and carefully scanned over a period of nearly three years to make the backbone of a database of material which few people would know even existed and which fewer still would be able to handle for the purpose of research. The site has a great deal of academic content and is a remarkable

resource for anyone studying the development of the Industrial Revolution in the West Midlands. The subject matter covers not only the technical developments, but also covers biographical information of all of the main people involved in making the developments, which evolved into what we know and take for granted today.



Subjects like Slavery are covered extensively, the people who used and benefited from the slave trade and the growing movement against the trade in human slavery. There is information on the Lunar Society, its key members and activities and many, many more subjects besides.

A great deal of work has gone into creating this site and a great many hours would be needed to read everything within its pages, but It would be many educational hours well spent.

### Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings

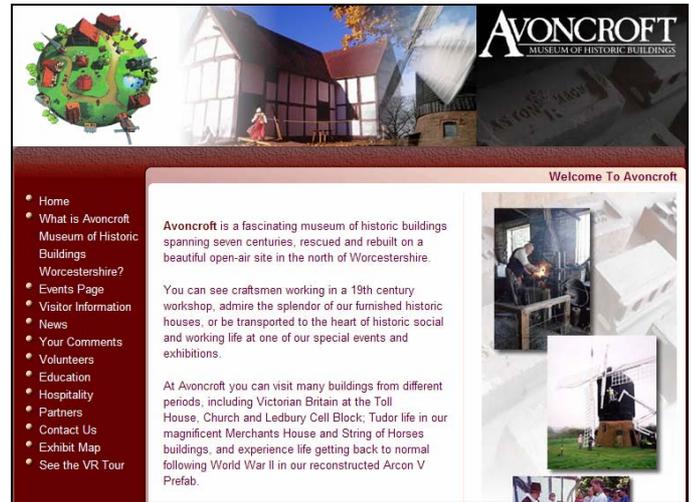
<http://www.avoncroft.org.uk>

**Avoncroft** is a fascinating museum of historic buildings spanning seven centuries, rescued and rebuilt on a beautiful open-air site in the north of Worcestershire.

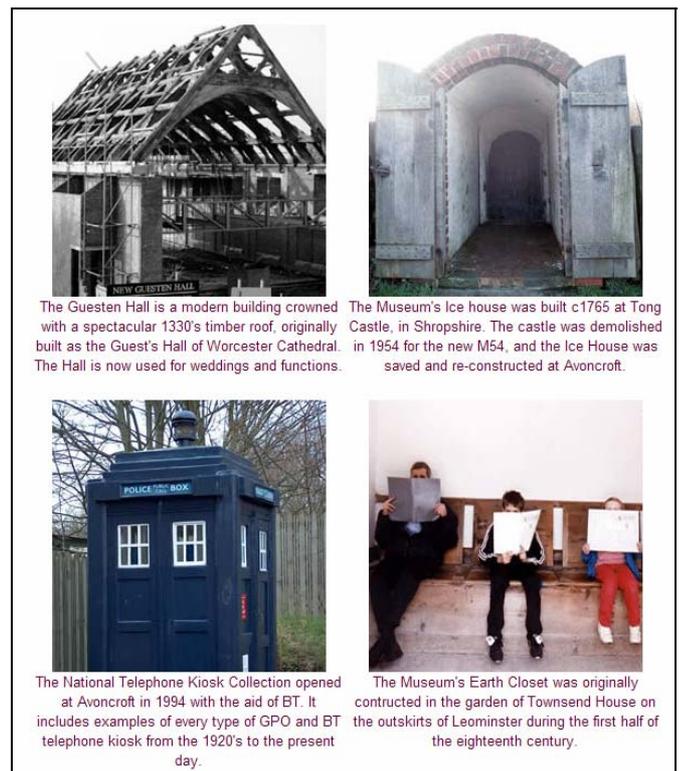
You can see craftsmen working in a 19th century workshop, admire the splendor of furnished historic houses, or be transported to the heart of historic social and working life at one of the special events and exhibitions.

At Avoncroft you can visit many buildings from different periods, including Victorian Britain at the Toll House, Church and Ledbury Cell Block; Tudor life in a magnificent Merchants House and String of Horses buildings, and experience life getting back to normal following World War II in a reconstructed Arcon V Prefab.

I first visited this museum as a child of about 10 years of age and at that time the place had little more than a windmill and a handful of dusty, decrepit buildings set in a windy, damp and drizzly field... First impressions of a 10 year old are hard to escape... The site has evolved over the many years since *'I were a lad'* and now features a lot more to see and do, so, to the website...



The website is an attractive one with a good, clean layout which enables you to find what you are looking for with ease. The aim of the website is to encourage you to visit the museum and as such is not, in any great sense, educational. By comparison with the other sites looked at on the pages of this newsletter, it is tiny, but I am *'comparing apples to oranges'* here and the purpose of the sites differ completely.



The Guesten Hall is a modern building crowned with a spectacular 1330's timber roof, originally built as the Guest's Hall of Worcester Cathedral. The Hall is now used for weddings and functions.

The Museum's Ice house was built c1765 at Tong Castle, in Shropshire. The castle was demolished in 1954 for the new M54, and the Ice House was saved and re-constructed at Avoncroft.

The National Telephone Kiosk Collection opened at Avoncroft in 1994 with the aid of BT. It includes examples of every type of GPO and BT telephone kiosk from the 1920's to the present day.

The Museum's Earth Closet was originally constructed in the garden of Townsend House on the outskirts of Leominster during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Throughout, this website is nicely illustrated to show the collections held by the museum. A collection, which was unknown to me previously and one which may be of interest to *'Dr Who'* fans is the *'National Telephone Kiosk'* collection which features a certain character's iconic Police Box, amongst other telephone boxes.

One feature, at which I enjoyed looking, was the Virtual tour of the museum site. I have used Virtual tours on other sites and they are fine for what they do... you can see a pseudo 3d representation of the place in question and revolve on the spot to get an idea of what the place

looks like, as if you were really there, but what the Avoncroft site does really well with this is that they link a number of VR tours together from all around their museum site and you can move from one point to another as though you are physically there walking around the museum grounds. It's difficult to describe a virtual tour, you really have to experience it. You can select your Virtual tour by clicking a point on an overhead plan of the Museum site, which opens the 3 dimensional walkthrough. It's excellent. Try it out.



Here, as they say, 'endeth the tour'. It's hoped that you have found the series of articles looking at Local History related websites interesting and informative. There are countless web pages 'out there' in Cyberspace, so point your browser and get 'Googling'

**This index covers issues 1-18 of the Birmingham Historian and contains entries for items which appeared in the Feature Articles and Current Bibliography sections of the journal.**

Index compiled by Chris Sutton. 2001.

**A new index is in preparation which will extend the coverage to include up to Issue 28 and should appear in Issue 29 of the Journal due for release, Winter 2006.**

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# To all Society Secretaries

If your Society's activities have not yet appeared in our Newsletter, please send me full details so that they can be published in the appropriate edition.

Please check page 1 for publication and deadline dates.

Contact me:

Joan Davies,

112 Brandwood Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham. B14 6BX.

Tel : (0121) 444 7470

## Society Listings

Please note - I have only put the full details of where and when a Society meets the first time it is mentioned. The only exception is if a meeting is arranged at a different venue than normal.

## July 2006

4th

### Small Heath Local History Society

Small Heath Methodist Church, corner of Blake Lane and Yardley Green Road  
6.45pm

Do you know Small Heath ?  
Val Combe & Edna Somen

6th



Quinton Parish Church Hall, Hagley Road West  
(A-Z ref. Page 87 E)

Doors open 7.15. Evening starts at 8.00pm.  
Joseph Chamberlain  
John Lethbridge

6th



Community Room, Acocks Green Library 7.30pm.  
Odds & Ends & family tales  
Joyce Phinnemore

7th



### West Bromwich Local History Society

All Saints Church, corner of Newton Road & All Saints Way, West Bromwich  
Visit to Smethwick Heritage Centre, Victoria Park  
7.00pm.

10th

### Ward End & Hodge Hill Local History Society

Ward End Library, Washwood Heath Road  
7.00pm

Comic Capers in Birmingham (comedians & entertainers) Patrick Baird

10th

### Earlswood Historical Society

The Village Hall, Earlswood. 7.30pm.  
Timbered Houses in Warwickshire  
Mr. England

12th

### Shard End Local History Society

Shard End Library, Shustoke Road 1.15 for 2.00pm.  
The History of Lea Marston  
Harry Johnson

15th



**THE WESTERN FRONT  
ASSOCIATION  
(Birmingham Branch)**

The German Army's Experience of the Somme  
Ian Passingham

This meeting will be held at The National Memorial  
Arboretum Alrewas, signposted from the A38,  
commencing at 2.00pm and is in commemoration of the  
90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme 1st July  
1916. Tickets at the door £5 to cover costs.

## AUGUST 2006

1st

**Small Heath Local History Society**  
Fun Quiz  
Larry Jackson

1st



50 years behind the counter  
Jean Owen

## SEPTEMBER 2006

1st



**West Bromwich Local History Society**  
100 years of Housekeeping  
Anna Meredith

4th

**Alvechurch Historical Society**  
The Society's Museum, School Lane, Alvechurch  
7.45pm  
Capability Brown & Croome Park  
Mr. M. Smith.

5th

**Small Heath Local History Society**  
An update of Thornton Junior School  
Marie Fogg.

5th



The life of a Master Thatcher  
David Wood.

7th



AGM & Twenty Miles around the Boundaries of Yardley.  
Mike Byrne

11th

**Earlswood Historical Society**  
AGM & Harvest Supper.  
Talk on Fowlers Cheeses (Fowlers of Earlswood)  
David Fowler.

11th

**Ward End & Hodge Hill Local History Society**  
Life in Sattley and Ward End  
Mrs. Olive Deegans.

13th

**Shard End Local History Society**  
Local History on Postcards  
Tom Hill.

18th

**Solihull Local History Circle**  
Treasures of the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.  
Brendan Flynn.

19th



The History of Post Boxes, why they were needed in the  
first place and why there were changes in design.  
Mel Matthews.

20th

King's Heath Local History Society



**Kings Heath Local History Society**  
Kings Heath Library.  
7.30pm.  
Herbert Austin and the Austin Village.  
Don Hazzard.

26th

**Romsley & Hunnington History Society**  
St, Kenelms Church Hall, Bromsgrove Road, Romsley  
7.30pm.  
Tramways Old and New.  
John Boynton.

# B&D LMA

