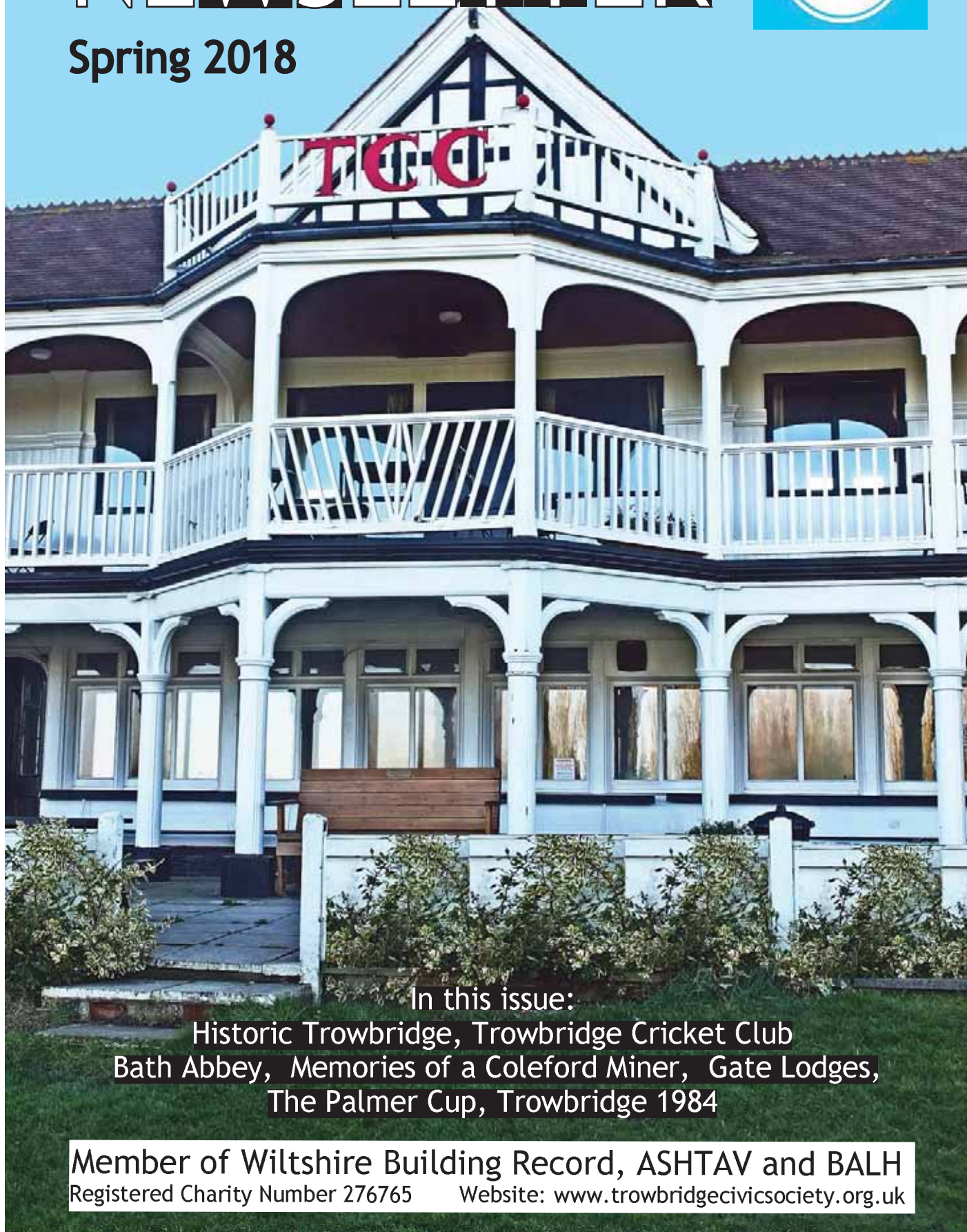


Trowbridge Civic Society

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018



In this issue:

Historic Trowbridge, Trowbridge Cricket Club
Bath Abbey, Memories of a Coleford Miner, Gate Lodges,
The Palmer Cup, Trowbridge 1984

Member of Wiltshire Building Record, ASHTAV and BALH
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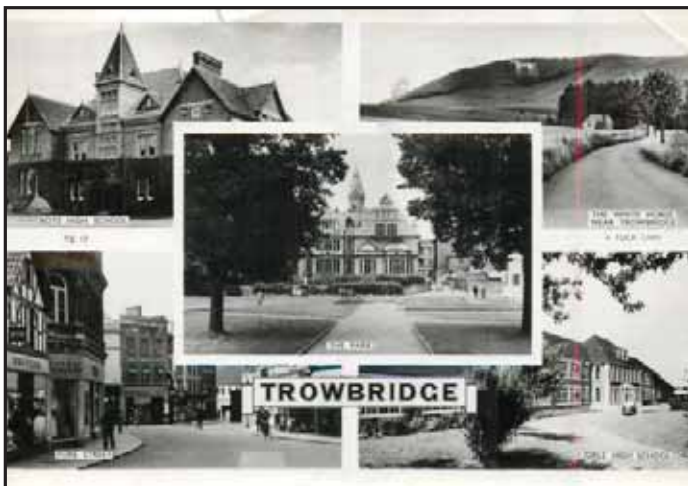
On the Web. The internet is a rich source of historical photographs and we have often referred to local sites in past issues. In this issue, on this page and on the back page, we highlight two more sites that you might find interesting, See if you can identify where the photographs were taken.

Historic Trowbridge

Gill Cooper

Historic Trowbridge is a Facebook group that started in Autumn 2016. The reason behind it is that I've enjoyed being part of the 'Historic Melksham Group' and as I have lived in Trowbridge for nearly 50 years I thought it would be nice to celebrate the pictures and memories of Trowbridge and the surrounding villages. I know that a lot of people have taken pictures of old Trowbridge and it would be interesting to see them here and evoke some memories.

[Please have a look at this site if you are on Facebook. If you are not, a good reason to join! Very many photos, of ancient and modern Trowbridge. Below is a selection. Ed]



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EDITORIAL COMMENT

After the talk about the Somerset Coalfield last November, Diana Ingram has written a fascinating account of her grandfather's life as a miner in North Somerset. We also have a history of Trowbridge Cricket Club written by another society member, Ian Lund. I am sure everyone will have heard about the removal of pews in Bath Abbey. Sarah Richardson has written about what is going on there. Her article is in two parts - Part 2 in the next issue. And we have discovered another couple of websites that members might enjoy.

This year is the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the Civic society. We would like to commemorate this in the next issue. If you have any photos, views on or reminiscences about what the Society has been doing, we would like to hear from you.

TROWBRIDGE CIVIC SOCIETY INFORMATION

President: Kenneth Rogers
Vice Presidents: Michael Marshman;
Wende Maunder;
Norman Rogers

Chairman: Glyn Bridges, 4 Alma Street, Trowbridge. Tel 755784

Vice Chairman: Margaret Howard, 52 Avenue Road, Trowbridge. Tel 764691

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Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Janet Carpenter, 2 Chepston Place, Trowbridge. Tel 752770
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Committee members: Sue Glover; Kevin Hartley; Jonathan Hawkes; Diana Ingram

Newsletter: Jennifer & Peter Collier Tel 761270
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Photographic Recorder: Kevin Hartley

Web Site: Jonathan Hawkes

Subscription Rates: Single £6, Joint £10, Corporate £30
New members welcome - please contact Membership Secretary
Deadline for next issue - End of May

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TROWBRIDGE CIVIC SOCIETY

will take place on Tuesday 13th March 2018 at 7.15 pmin the Supper Room Trowbridge Town Hall

AGENDA

1. Welcome by the Chairman
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting
4. Matters Arising
5. Election of Officers - Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary
6. Election of Executive Committee
7. Presentation and Adoption of Annual Reports
8. Appointment of Auditor
9. Any Other Business

TROWBRIDGE CIVIC SOCIETY NOMINATION FORM

I wish to nominate the following member for the post of Chairman/Secretary/Treasurer/Executive Committee.

Name

Address

Tel. No

I have/have not obtained his/her permission.

Proposer

Date

From the Chairman

Trowbridge Cemetery Lodge on the Down has remained empty for many years. The Trowbridge Almshouses Trust offered some time ago to manage it on behalf of the Council if their concern was 'right to buy' as this rule does not apply to almshouses. No interest was shown by Wiltshire Council. The Town Council has also tried to discover what is to happen with the lodge but to no avail. Our local County Councillors have also been unsuccessful in their attempts to determine its future.

When there are so many people desperate for accommodation it is a disgrace that a perfectly good home should be kept unoccupied and for so long.

We are led to understand that Wiltshire Council is short of cash but this is clearly not the case as no effort has been made to let the property which, if let at a modest rent of £600 a month, would net £7200 per annum. Over the last 5 years that would have mounted up to £36000, not including Council Tax, and the property has been empty for much longer than this. I also believe that if this property been occupied there is a good chance that the Sir Roger Brown Mausoleum would not have been vandalized.

We must keep up the pressure on the Wiltshire Council officers otherwise they will have to change the notice over the entrance at County Hall to read 'Wiltshire Council - where everybody matters - unless you are homeless and live in Trowbridge.'

Planning Matters

Planning permission has been granted for two new developments, both of which are on well known Trowbridge sites. The first relates to the area of land to the rear of The Ship Inn public house which fronts onto Frome Road. The southern boundary of the site adjoins County Way and a public right of way crosses the east corner of the site. Permission has been granted for the erection of ten one-bedroom apartments with car parking and associated works.

The address of the second site is St Georges Works and Town Park, Silver Street. The former club building is to be demolished. Numbers 7 and 8 will be converted to flats and 24 more flats will be created in a new 4-storey building. On the park side, existing garages and store will be demolished and a new secure storage building and parking area will be provided with associated works access and landscaping. The Civic Society supported the application in principle but in a letter to the planning officer raised issues, including those of highway safety, and refuse and recycling collection. The conditions of approval include provision of 3 affordable housing units which would be sold at open market value minus 25% in perpetuity. Details of at least 2 bat roosting features and nesting opportunities for birds must also be submitted.

A less obvious development is the conversion of The Carpenter's Arms public house in Roundstone Street to residential accommodation with 8 single bedroom flats provided with secure cycle parking and a bin storage area.

There is good news for people who would enjoy a take-away on their way home from Trowbridge railway station. Number 45 Stallard Street, opposite the station entrance, is to be converted from an office to a Thai Restaurant. Although it is adjacent to a number of listed buildings, the planning officer feels that it will have no adverse impact on the setting or harm the heritage assets. Obviously a town can never have too many eating opportunities!

Glyn Bridges



Sue and Kevin Eames



Corporate Member: **The Trowbridge Museum**

A Long and Distinguished Innings - Notes on the History of Trowbridge Cricket Club

Ian Lund

Cricket had probably evolved in the Trowbridge area during the post-medieval period as it had done over much of southern England. The earliest record¹, however, is of a match played between Trowbridge and East Somerset in July 1844. Strangely, the game was held at Staverton, probably because the Cooper brothers who played for the town owned land surrounding their woollen mill (now Cereal Partners etc.).

For most of the 19th century, the Trowbridge Cricket Club played at a ground in Hilperton Road². In 1852, under the Presidency of Richard Penruddocke Long of Rood Ashton, the club was reorganised and the ground levelled. This is land now occupied by a large roundabout and main road leading into the Paxcroft Mead housing development. In 1875, Walter H Long donated a pavilion, and a photograph of 1880 held in the Wiltshire History Centre shows a timber-framed structure beneath a roof thatched in the traditional Wiltshire Long Straw style. It is believed the pavilion survived until the 1950s when it was burnt down by an itinerant, by which time it was the home of the Trowbridge Rugby Club.

During the 1880s, cricket was moving into its “golden age” and there was a push to establish a Wiltshire cricket team. Following a meeting in the George Hotel, Trowbridge (now Clarks shoe shop in Fore Street) the WCCC was formed. Meanwhile, the Trowbridge Cricket Club was prospering and in 1885 none other than Dr W G Grace guested for the team in a match against Warminster. Ten years later, land owned by Mrs Elen Gauntlett and used by an athletics and cycling club was under consideration for housing development. This land lay between the top end of Timbrell Street and Coal Ash Lane (later to be re-named Seymour Road). The plan for urban expansion was stalled by the intervention of George Llewellyn Palmer of Springfield House, Trowbridge (demolished in 1958³) and Charles Awdry of Shaw Hill House, Atworth, who jointly purchased the land for £2,250. Palmer was later High Sheriff of Wiltshire, and M.P. for the Westbury constituency. The acquisition was quickly developed into the new county cricket ground, although it seems that Trowbridge Cricket Club had precedence and they soon hosted their first match at the new facilities against the Bath Association. Wiltshire soon followed and played its first ever match, at Trowbridge, against Bedfordshire. Palmer and Awdry had invested a total of



£3000 but the levelling and fencing was provided by the club at a further cost of £1000.

The formal opening of the Wiltshire County Ground and pavilion took place in May 1896 and was celebrated by a match between an eleven captained by W G Grace and a Trowbridge team led by Walter Long M.P. In the next year, Palmer & Awdry handed over the ground and pavilion to trustees to hold for the benefit of county cricket in Wiltshire. It must have been at this time that the Trowbridge club moved permanently away from its old home in Hilperton Road.

The next key phase for TCC was the return to the town of F (Fred) W Stancomb, after schooling at Harrow. In adulthood, Stancomb became a principal of the family cloth manufacturing business at Cradle Bridge Mills, and he lived at Ravenscroft in Hilperton Road. Cricket was his passion and he first played for Trowbridge in the 1870s. In 1882, at the age of just 19, he was elected as captain of the first XI. This marked the start of what was eventually to become what is probably a unique record. He was re-elected in each of the next fifty seasons! Apart from being an accomplished batsman and wicket keeper - good enough to play for the county - according to his obituary⁴ he was a respected leader and a generous benefactor, giving a donation of not less than £100 for several years.



In the post-war era, Trowbridge Cricket Club entered a comfortable period, enjoying arguably the best cricket ground in the West Country and a strong fixture list. The Club, however, was initially left languishing following the intensification of league cricket during the 1980s. It was reluctant to pass up long-established annual fixtures in favour of unpredictable opponents thrown up by the league administrators. In time, however, the club went with the flow and there was an enthusiasm to work up through the league structure. With the development of a youth programme, there were a number of successes and the first XI eventually moved up into the West of England

Premier Division. The splendid old pavilion was modernised and a first floor inserted within the original tall “Luncheon Hall”. A second pitch was developed for youth, and third and fourth XIs on land leased from the Hospital Board.

The intertwining with Wiltshire persisted, and occasional Minor Counties fixtures were played at Trowbridge. Accomplished management of these games resulted in the Club being awarded a number of higher-profile fixtures. Gloucestershire used the ground to host a one-day game against Hampshire in 1989, and the following year a combined Minor Counties team played a first class game against the touring Indians, whose team included Sachin Tendulkar and Anil Kumble. The Minor Counties team also hosted the Australia, West Indies and Pakistan in one-day matches at Trowbridge.

The modern era hardly gives touring countries scope for anything other than Test matches and the major fixtures at Trowbridge came to an end. There have also been structural problems to overcome in more recent years. A number of cricket grounds have been lost in Trowbridge over the years. There is no trace of a ground that once existed on the south side of Wingfield Road 5, nor the pitches that existed in Bradley Road where the B&Q and Spitfire Retail developments now dominate. The loss of cricket squares at the town’s secondary schools also resulted in a reduction in the pool of potential players. The Trowbridge 1st XI was thus unable to sustain its position in the top tier of the league structure, and the loss of the hospital ground has been a recent blow to the status of the Club. The third XI now has to play its home fixtures at Bratton.

On a positive note, however, the Club still maintains an impressive ground and pavilion which contribute strongly to the heritage of the town. In June 2001 the Wiltshire Times described the pavilion as “one of the town’s hidden treasures” (main entrance from Prospect Place). The team is rising again through the leagues (Glos/Wilts division in 2018), and a number of professional players have benefitted from their time with the Club. Assad Fudadin, originally from Guyana, went on to represent the West Indies in Test matches, and Andrea Agathangelou had a spell with Leicestershire before returning to first class cricket in his native South Africa.

References: ¹Victoria County History Wiltshire Vol 7 ²D. J.Mattock Wiltshire Record Office June 1988

³M Marshman Trowbridge in Old Photographs 1988 ⁴Wiltshire Times 29th August 1936 ⁵O.S. map of 1880

David Albert Shrapnell

[In a recent issue of the newsletter we published an article about the Shrapnell family and Midway Manor by David Shrapnell. Here we publish a short obituary by his son Kevin on his father who passed away recently.]

David passed away on the 13th December 2017. He was born at 3 Unity Square, Trowbridge, on the 27th August 1931. He did National Service with the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Regiments from 1948 to 1951. From the early 60s, he ran a newsagents business, before purchasing a mini-market in Bristol. The family moved to Bristol in 1964 until 1981, when he took early retirement.

David studied the Shrapnel(l) family name for the last forty years and was active in many family history and research societies. He was well known in online communities and was the authority on the Shrapnel(l) name. His extensive research will be archived and made available for future generations. David was a very independent and active man, even in his 80s, often walking 10 miles a day. He is survived by his sister, son, daughter and 5 grandchildren.

Bath Abbey - From Indoor Graveyard to Geothermal Warm Floor

Part 1

S Richardson and D Nelson

Bath Abbey is well known as one of the key buildings in the UNESCO World Heritage site. It occupies one end of the Abbey Churchyard, just yards away from the world-famous Roman Baths and Georgian Pump Rooms, and its west front, with ladder of angels relief, is a must on the tourist trail.

In April 2016, the authors attended a talk in Bath Abbey, given by Fergus Connolly of Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects. The subject of the talk was not the decorative structures, or the fine fan vaulting (both medieval and from the George Gilbert Scott restoration of the 1860s), but the floor. According to Mr Connolly, Bath Abbey is the fifth most visited church in England, and, as such, it needs a solid floor to withstand a high level of foot traffic.

Sadly, the floor is not solid. 891 ledger stones commemorate those buried under the Abbey floor, from its donation in post-Dissolution of the Monasteries ruins to the city in 1572 to the last burial in 1845. The



long standing presence in the city of the medicinal spa and the high proportion of those affluent enough to afford a burial within the Abbey walls must represent the triumph of faith and optimism over the realities of human frailty.

Burial vaults were popular between the 17th and 19th centuries, and the Abbey has over 8,500 bodies under the floor. The tightly packed tombs have in some cases a mere one brick thickness of vault wall between them, and decay of the materials has led to significant levels of underlying voids. This has created a problem both structurally and in archaeological terms, and has been a growing issue for a long time.

Between 1863 and 1874 the Scott restoration, although primarily focused on the exterior and interior visual aspects of the building, also undertook works to stabilise the floor, laying a lime-based concrete float. Scott dealt with settlement issues, underpinning and archaeology, but recent investigations have shown that these works took little account of the underlying archaeology, as the distribution level in which the ledger stones were sitting was only a lightly compressed granulated course,

which contained bone fragments. This layer extends around 1100mm below the floor level. Beneath this are the burials and the failing voids.

Scott also had the current underfloor heating installed, a typical late Victorian hot water trench system of metal gratings releasing warm air which rises gently up to the high roof, and descends again once it has lost its heat to lightly chill the heads of the congregation in their pews. The 19th century systems worked on a low-pressure hot water principle, whereas contemporary wet systems are based on low temperature hot water (LTHW) basis.

21st Century requirements

The Abbey is an important space for the modern city. Religious use is but a proportion of the many activities which use the building. Open to tourists daily except for services and special events, it is also used for concerts, organ recitals, and choral events, as well as hosting ceremonies such as graduations for the Universities and music and singing sessions for children. Bath is short of large acoustic venues for live performance so the Abbey takes its place as a city performance resource. All these uses put a strain on the internal configuration of the furniture, the strength of the floor, and illustrate the ineffectiveness of the heating system.

The Abbey authorities have a cunning plan, called Bath Abbey Footprint:

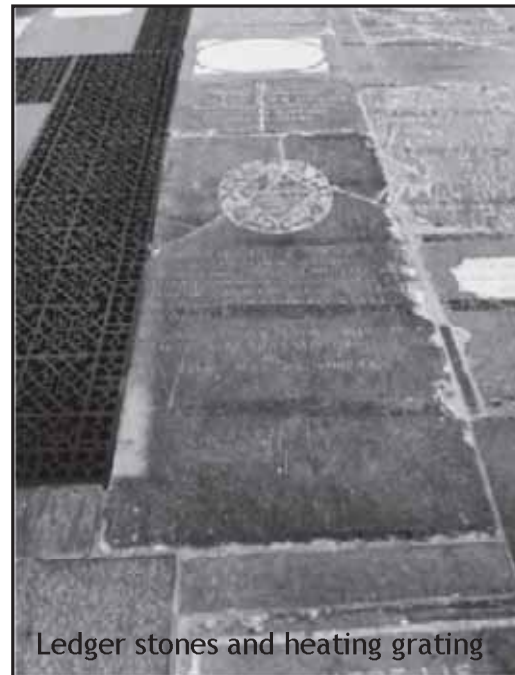
<http://www.bathabbey.org/footprint>, to modernise the welfare and leisure facilities, expand the service and interpretation space, update the rehearsal space for the choir, house the archives, highlight the archaeology, and upgrade the floor and the heating system; . The structural weakness of the floor provides the intervention justification for disturbing the underfloor archaeology and human remains, and will bring huge benefits in terms of the exciting plans for a geothermally sourced underfloor heating system.

To understand the proposals, it is useful to understand the surrounding archaeology. The current Abbey was started in 1499 by Bishop Oliver King, he who supposedly dreamt of angels ascending to and descending from heaven, inspiring the wonderful façade of the west front. It replaced an earlier, much larger, Norman cathedral, started in 1099 by Bishop John of Tours. Bishop King's monastic abbey was still unfinished by the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, and the City authorities refused to buy it from the crown, so it was stripped and left for ruin until Queen Elizabeth 1st supported a project to raise money to repair and rebuild it as city parish church in the 1570s. The Norman foundations remain under the surrounding courtyards, where to the south also lies the Roman Great Drain and archaeology

associated with the Roman temple and baths complex of 1st century AD. A separate project from the City Heritage services, the Archway Centre, will provide underground interpretation space for the Roman archaeology.

Conservation Conundrums

The Abbey interior was dressed by the Scott restoration with typical Victorian low-rise pews over the ledger-stone dominant floor in both nave and side aisles, and more decorative tiered pews in the chancel. The floor repairs and plans to re-order the interior with stackable seating replacing the pews in the body of the nave have met with some opposition, notably from the Victorian Society, who oppose the permanent removal of the nave pews as the loss of a key work from George Gilbert Scott's church restoration period. Bath Preservation Trust (BPT) have, however, come out in support of the project, considering that "on balance (it) believes that the conservation and communal benefits achieved by the overall project outweigh the harm," and also that the interior space as revealed by the pew removal more closely represents the Georgian experience of the Abbey and many of those buried beneath its floor. The BPT have called for the ledger stone records and the associated history to be a publically accessible resource.



Ledger stones and heating grating

The Victorian Society, in their campaign to preserve the interior dressings, describes the Scott nave furniture as "intended to 'complete' the church as it would have been if the Reformation had not stopped its construction." The pews are described by the Victorian Society as "modelled on those in other 16th century Somerset churches." Until the floor stabilisation works started, the Scott pews covered a large proportion of the ledger stones, both protecting and obscuring them from view. In the experimental North Aisle, once the pews were lifted, "In just four days (including one day of training) volunteers from the Abbey and NADFAS (National Association of Fine and Decorative Arts) cleaned, recorded and photographed over 100 ledger stones." (Bath Abbey Footprint Project website) This activity was extended over the whole floor in the early spring of 2017, when more than 50 volunteers captured information for each stone on condition, inscription and position. The Abbey proposes to use the stories collated from the inscriptions as part of their interpretation plans for the future configuration of the site.

Next Steps

In March 2016 the project team heard that they had been successful in obtaining an HLF grant of £10.7 million, which put them well on their way to the project total of £19.3 million, to complete a range of modernisation works of which the floor repairs and underfloor heating represents only a part. Fund-raising continues but the Footprint project is off to a racing start in their ground-breaking eco-friendly underfloor heating challenge.

References:

Unpublished MSc dissertation by D Nelson: "Underfloor Heating within Churches: An Opportunity from Below?" University of Bath, Sept 2016

Talk by Fergus Connolly of Feilden Clegg Bradley, April 2016

Internal Report: Abbey Hot Spring Water Heat Recovery Description of Works © BuroHappold Engineering 2016

Internal Report: Great Drain Weir Tests Record of Activities & Measurements © BuroHappold Engineering 2016

First published in Context issue 152, journal of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and used by kind permission of the IHBC. Illustrations by Daisy Nelson.

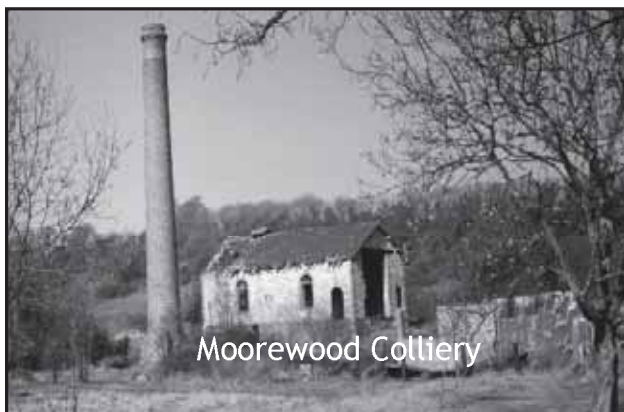
Update A Consistory Court was held at the Abbey on 4th and 5th October, to address the objection by the Victorian Society to the removal of the Scott pews as part of the Abbey Footprint Project. These courts are a fairly rare stage in the Ecclesiastical planning process, which are chaired by the Chancellor of the Diocese, usually a practising senior lawyer with experience in planning matters and a member of the Church of England.

The Chancellor issued his judgement on 18th December, and he found for the Abbey, so the Footprint project can proceed subject to funding. There is an appeal option to the Court of Arches which is available to the Victorian Society if they wish to pursue their case. In the meantime, the Abbey are obliged to store the bulky and non-stackable pews for five years after removal from the nave.

Memories of a Coleford Miner

John Coles was born on 6th February 1869 in Coleford to William Coles and Mary Ann (nee Wilcox), 7th child in the family which totalled 12 children, four of whom died in infancy. He was small in stature and his health was ruined by working in the pits. In 1879 he was made to leave school and go out to work to help support this large family and on his first day at work at Vobster or Breach colliery he made his journey down into the pit sitting on his father's lap in the wrought-iron cage. He always felt that he had been cheated out of his education by this and afterwards always advocated reading as a method of learning for all of us. He started out working the bellows as there was a very high gas content in this pit and he had to keep the air going at all times to keep the gas down. He also lifted the coal into carts on skids to be taken to the bottom of the shaft to be hauled above.

Diana Ingram



In the late 1880's John decided to go to South Wales, as did many other Somerset miners to look for work. He worked at Six Bells near Abertillery and even did some work at the Aberfan Colliery. While there he lodged with the Gibbings family who originated from Devon but by then lived in Clydach in the Rhondda. His brother Frederick was already married to one of their daughters, and not to be outdone, John did the same! He always said that he felt that Elizabeth, his eventual wife, was being made a "skivvy" by her mother and he wanted to

take her away from all this. As she was only 19 he was only allowed to marry her if he promised not take her away from the area. After they had been married about a year, he claimed that he had lost his job and needed to return to Somerset in order to get work. He was out of work for a while, but then resumed work in the pits starting at Moorewood Colliery where he worked for a time as a coal-getter where he wore the notorious gus and crook for his work.



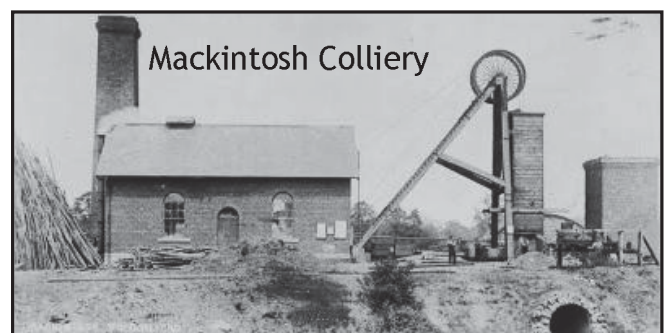
Miner wearing a gus and crook to haul coal

He always said that you could stand at the bottom of the pit and tell what the weather was on the surface - the pit was 655 feet deep. Lots of the old miners would tell you this. In those days people moved from colliery to colliery looking for work in the 1890's to the 1930's. They used to let one another know by telegram. They moved to a lodging house in Coleford, in the High Street which is still in existence and is now called the "Hidden Cottage". This cottage was also known as a stop-over for prisoners being transferred between Ilchester and Shepton Mallet gaols.

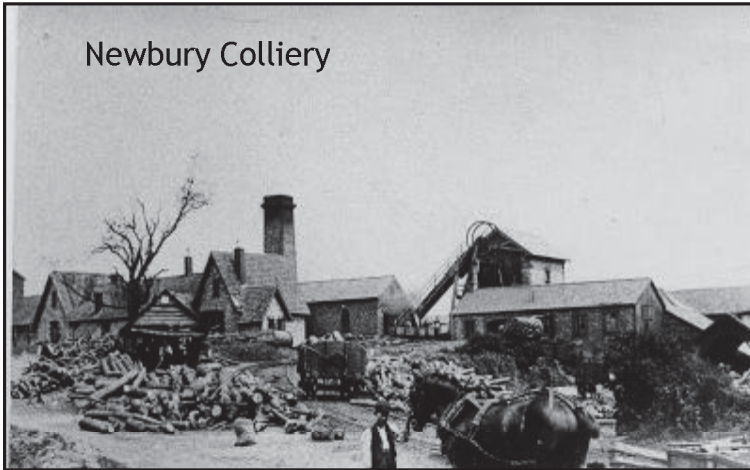
After leaving Moorewood, John moved to Mackintosh then Newbury, where he was made up to a deputy shot-firer. One particular time, in Mackintosh pit when the water levels came up because the pumps had

broken down, John and another man named Harry Button had to get the pit ponies out, but the escape route to Newbury was too narrow and they were unable to get them out. The ponies had to be destroyed underground - the method used being too gruesome to describe here. The beam engine from Newbury pit is still in existence, now on show in the Cornish Mining Museum at Pool in Cornwall, with a plaque giving a description of its origin. John continued working in Newbury and Mackintosh pits, even working with a cut in wages to keep the pit going in December 1922 and March 1923. After the 1926 strike the pit closed.

A lot of miners used to wear a flannel belt around the waist to protect their backs. One particular miner, Albert Gibbings (yes, he was related to the Coles) used



to do a good trade in “backache” pills which he used to make by rolling them in his hands. What they contained nobody knows but they were very popular. Most miners, in spite of all their hard work, would come home after a hard shift and work in their gardens, often providing vegetables for all the family. Another familiar sight was that, when miners gathered around the village to talk to one another, they would always squat in the road rather than stand about. Miners used to squat a lot in their work because the ground beneath them was often wet and if they sat...! Toilet facilities were non-existent but if the necessity arose - a shovel was involved. Sacking was hung up to drive the air round the different roads. Doors in the main roads had to be closed each time you went through before opening the next one. This was to stop the air going to the other areas.



In the 1920's some of John's brothers and their children, plus two of John's sons, emigrated to Canada where work was plentiful. They left from Tilbury Docks in 1923. Then, in the early thirties when the Depression hit, they had to start queuing at the soup kitchens so they decided to come home. They wrote home for some money to pay their boat fares and came back to England around 1933. The sons of John Coles, Bill and Jack, eventually came back too and worked at Newbury and Mackintosh pits.

John Coles finished in the pit in the early thirties through silicosis. He had to use an inhaler just to walk a short distance because of

this disease so he then kept a general shop at Underhill for many years. During the war he used to tell his grandson Robin about the terrible conditions underground and warned him never to work in a pit! Robin went down the pit in 1952!

Other Memories

- The banksman put the empty tubs back in the cage above ground. The onsetter at the bottom would put the loaded tubs into the cage with an assistant. Bells would be rung by people, either at the bottom or top of the pit, to signify what was coming up in the cage. If it was coal or was empty, the cage travelled very fast, but when it contained people it went a lot slower. There were also people known as “riders” who used to go down to inspect or deal with various incidents. They rode on the top of the cage and would disappear very quickly from view loaded up with their equipment.
- In Norton Hill and Ludlows pits, some of the seams were so limited for space that the miners had to turn their feet sideways in order to work. Sometimes they couldn't use the shovel and had to hew coal with their hands.
- At Norton Hill pit 800 men had to be brought up 4 at a time. There were electric engines for winding under ground which had to be charged up each night. These pulled “mine cars”. They had bigger tubs than any other pit in the Somerset coalfield.
- Rock pit used to have fires on the coalface caused by coal dust and these had to be extinguished by spraying water on them.
- Once, while blasting in Rock, a miner, Cecil Price from Coleford was killed. A shot misfired, acrid smoke appeared and when he went to correct the shot it exploded just as he got there.
- Fullers earth was used to prevent fires or put them out quickly. Fullers earth would also be spread around when a new seam was opened before starting to use it.
- Some pits used to light fires in order to circulate the air. The hot air would rise and drag the cold air in.
- One of John's sons was an “overman” at Slant - a drift mine also known as Charmborough Pit. He was in charge of the deputies, next to the under-manager. This drift mine was the last known to be opened in Somerset. Owned by the Beauchamp family, there were three drifts in all. It used to flood a lot. During the second world war the Bevin Boys worked there.
- Close to the Coleford area it was said that the Bilboa Pit and Mells Pit were the only places in England where limestone was found on top of coal. The miners could hear the quarrymen firing and vice versa.

Contributed by four of John Coles' 15 grandchildren:- Robin Thompson, Ann Wells, Michael Wells - and set down as this record by Diana Ingram after listening to them all at various family gatherings.

Wiltshire's Gate Lodges

Wiltshire Buildings Records member James Holden is carrying out research for a book on the county's gate lodges. The book will feature the history and architecture of many of the most interesting lodges and will contain a gazetteer. He has identified around 280 lodges so far but is keen to make the gazetteer as complete as possible. He asks for help to alert him to any he might have missed. So if you know of any lodges in out of the way places he would love to hear from you at vjholden@gmail.com

The picture is of the 1860 West Lodge to Fonthill Abbey, perhaps the archetypal Victorian gate lodge.



Help! What was the Palmer Cup?

There are various references on the internet to the Palmer Cup held in Trowbridge. For example, here is a posting on the "LTLF Forest" forum. This is an online forum for supporters of Nottingham Forest football club (LTLF stand for Lost that Loving Feeling!) There is also an extract from the history of Bristol Rovers.



The Wiltshire Times
Saturday, April 29th, 1933

GREAT ATTRACTION
"Allen Palmer" Hospital Cup
Match
BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE
Wednesday Evening,
May 3rd.

NOTTS FOREST
(HOLDERS) versus
BRISTOL ROVERS
(FULL ENGLISH LEAGUE TEAMS)

Admission 1/- (Stand 1/-extra).
Kick-off 6.30.
Convenient Trains, at Excursion
Fares, from all surrounding towns
have been arranged by the G.W.R.

"Hands up who knew that we were once the proud winners of the "Allen Palmer" Hospital Cup. I didn't till I spotted this ad for the game. You can see that it lists us as the holders. It seems that we beat the previous winners Wolves, who by the way had won it three years in a row, by 3 goals to 1. The format appears to be that the winning team is invited back the following year and faces another invited team. All proceeds from the match went to Trowbridge Cottage Hospital. The players received medals like this one that failed to sell on ebay. The game against Bristol Rovers was reported to be our first against them, though I haven't checked that. We lost the game 2-0."

Played at Trowbridge.

Southampton, 1-May-1935. Allen Palmer Cup. Date and venue found by Steve Bell.

Lack of success in the FA Cup was mirrored in the Allan Palmer Cup where Rovers, as holders, played Exeter City at Trowbridge. Billy Vaughan, once an inside-forward for Rovers, played for the Grecians, and his teammate Billy McDevitt scored the only goal after twenty minutes. Defeated, Rovers were nonetheless to regain this trophy on three further occasions in the 1920s.

Trowbridge 1984

Mike Lloyd

The Trowbridge 1984 photo collection is a social research project with the negatives being stored at Chippenham Archives, the idea being to post the photos and gather memories (and corrections) from the readers. In 1980 I was the District Manager of the Gateway Building Society in Fore St. Trowbridge. As 1984 approached it occurred to me it would be a good idea to create a photographic record of what the world in 1984 actually is like. The small world of Trowbridge that is. So I set out everyday to take a photograph. <http://www.mikelloyd.org.uk/mikespage/trowbridge-1984>

