



Tewkesbury Museum

Supporter's Newsletter

MAY
2022

May is now with us and clouts can be cast, because whichever version of May, the month or the bush, you swear by, it's out! We've had the Easter rush in the museum, which reduced the average age of visitors through the school holidays, and now we're in that quieter period waiting for what used to be Whitsun and the beginning of the summer rush.

ALLEY STROLLS

Since lockdown ended, 245 people have participated in the alley strolls programme, raising money for the Museum and the Alleycats project. It is a fairly unstructured two hours looking at alleys and imagining life in them without all our conveniences. Now that the longest day is getting close, they have moved from Sunday afternoons to Wednesday evenings, the first on 11 May at 7.00pm, starting at Warder's Alley, (next to M&Co). Due to circumstances, this is this month's only stroll.

TALKS

The Museum's next talk, on **Tuesday May 3rd** is special. It won't follow the normal pattern of a talk followed by tea and cake. It is the Museum's 60th birthday party and Julie has promised to bake a cake! It will be a chance to contribute stitches to the Stitch Story tapestry, if you've not already done so.

The next, and last, talk of the spring series is on Tuesday May 17th. It promises to be the best. Entitled '**Ripping Yarns & Wizard Wheezes: The Golden Age of the Children's Comic**', it will be given by John Reid, who we know well for his knowledge of the middle ages, but this is in a different league! My advice is to arrive early to secure a seat.

The Historical Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday May 19th, in the Methodist Church. There are no details yet of the after-meeting talk, but it is guaranteed to be knowledge-extending. John's 'Anchor University' session at midday on 10th May, is about the centenary of Tewkesbury's War Memorial.

WHAT THE PAPER SAID

Though the Borough Council had earlier attempts to open a museum (see Tewkesbury Historical Society Bulletin 25) it was not until 1962 that a determined effort was made, and despite a lot of stuttering it is still in business. These two reports about the grand opening are from the Tewkesbury Register.

4 May 1962

Museum opening: An event, which although it will not make a stir elsewhere, is at least important in local history, will take place in Tewkesbury on Friday, May 11. At 3 p.m., Sir George Dowty will formally open the Tewkesbury Museum. Probably some people will take a dim view of the museum venture, but it does at long last bring Tewkesbury into line with all the sizeable and forward-looking boroughs in Great Britain. Much that belongs to Tewkesbury's past has already been lost because there was no suitable place in which archives, pictures, furniture and other objects could be kept. For instance, very few relics of the stocking loom period survive, and not many implements that were used in 18th century and 19th century farming. A good many educated people are interested in all these things. and when they visit Tewkesbury in future they will find there is at least another place open to the public besides the Abbey and the old Baptist Chapel.

18 May 1962

CAVALCADE OF LOCAL HISTORY

What will, in future years, be regarded as a historic occasion, took place in Tewkesbury on Friday. The town's first museum, in Barton Street, was officially opened by Sir George Dowty.

The ceremony, to which more than 100 guests had been invited, took place in the Watson Hall adjoining the museum.

Sir George said that those who had lived in Tewkesbury during the last 20 years had seen a great increase in industrial activity. One thing of which they could all be grateful was that most of the factories which had been built during that time had been outside the town so that they did not spoil the character of Tewkesbury.

"I always think of Tewkesbury as a very beautiful gem of old England", very beautiful gem of old England", Sir George went on. "Over the centuries it has altered very little. It has it has altered very little. It has always retained its character".

PRICELESS OBJECTS LOST

Another side of the balance sheet was that although the town was steeped in history it had been unable to afford a repository for its ancient relics. They had seen many priceless, objects go to other museums and many things had become lost or destroyed.

The new museum had come about through the generosity of an anonymous donor who had bought Nos. 64 and 64a Barton Street and presented them to the town. They were all most deeply grateful to this donor and only sorry that they could not thank him by name for his magnificent generosity.

Exhibits in the museum had come from far afield and every effort had been made to reflect the town's history and development. Some of the exhibits had been stored in the local council offices and many local people had given items of interest

OXFORD HELP

It was a very good thing that they had had the guidance of local museums. He thanked the Cheltenham, Worcester and Malvern museums and the Gloucester Library for the help they had given, and referred in particular to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford which, at its own cost, had made a copy of the famous Odda Stone, the original of which, found at Deerhurst in 1675, was now at Oxford, and presented it to Tewkesbury.

It was a stone of great historic local interest and it was especially kind of the Ashmolean Museum to present Tewkesbury with a replica of it. In forming the museum, Sir George continued, many people had put in a great amount of time and effort. Although, there was a danger, when thanking individuals, of omitting someone, it would be inopportune not to thank Mr. A. Bell, of Stoke Orchard, for his illustrated account the Battle of Tewkesbury, Mr. R. Woodfin for his contribution on industry and transport, Mr. J. Oliver, of the Tewkesbury Surveyor's department, Mr. R. S. G. Dent, of Cheltenham School of Art, and Mr. A. F. Flatley.

IMPORTANT AMENITY

Great indebtedness was also due to the Town Clerk (Mr E. W. Penn), who was the curator of the museum, and the Borough Surveyor (Mr. F. Broxton), the assistant curator, who had guided the venture through every stage.

They were sorry that the chairman of the Management Committee of the Museum, Mr. M. G. H. Cadbury, was not able to be present, for they all knew the great amount of work he had put in.

"The residents of this delightful town and district will, I know, take a great pride and interest in what, I feel sure, is going to prove a most important amenity," Sir George concluded. Sir George was introduced by the Mayor, Coun. H. O. Workman, deputising for Mr Cadbury. Over the past years. said Coun. Workman, Tewkesbury had been affected mainly by industry and transport. In 1720 the population was 2,800 and this had risen to 4,200 by 1800. In the 19th century the stocking and wool trades were thriving and the malting and corn trades were greatly stimulated by the laws of 1813.

BIG POTENTIAL

In the years following, Tewkesbury seemed to lose its industries one by one and became something of a backwater. In the Past 30 years, however, the tide had turned and the town now had the potential of a great future.

Coun. Workman stressed the part played by Sir George Dowty. Not only had he helped to bring full employment to Tewkesbury, he and Lady Dowty had taken a great interest in the town and in its youth and old people.

He felt it was most fitting that the museum should be opened by Sir George, a man distinguished for his success in modern industry and his great interest in antiquity.

After the opening ceremony, Sir George. and Lady Dowty and the guests inspected the museum and also the exhibition of paintings, sculpture and pottery which is being staged in the Watson Hall for one week by the Cheltenham and Stroud departments of the Gloucestershire College of Art.

The Hastings Stitch Story

Tewkesbury's Stitch Story is following a tradition which is at least a thousand years old, with maybe the best-known embroidered historical story being the Bayeux Tapestry. Radio 4 (who else!) recently speculated about the people who stitched that tapestry, with some interesting, and entertaining, conclusions. The embroidery was done by Anglo-Saxon women, who were not completely at ease with their new Norman overlords. There are some interesting details in the tapestry which the stitchers sneaked in, which you don't notice if you concentrate on the death of King Harold. They tell something of the stitchers and their attitudes to post-conquest life. The programme can be found [HERE](#)

ZOOMING

Historic England have been staging interesting Webinars about looking after historic buildings which they have now made available as recordings, which might be of interest in a town with a large stock of such buildings. SPAB is the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Nothing to do with politicians.

[Webinar on Building Craft Skills: The Prince's Foundation Programme](#)

[Webinar on Fire Alarm Systems in Historic Buildings: Installation and Design](#)

[Webinar with SPAB Scholars 2021 Programme on Traditional Building Materials and Availability](#)

[Webinar with SPAB's William Morris Craft Fellowship on The Repair and Conservation of Timber Framed Buildings](#)

REV. HENRY WELSFORD

The earliest record we have of 64 Barton Street, the Museum building, is of its sale to the Society of Friends, the Quakers, by Thomas and Ann Andrews, linen drapers, for £200. The Quakers wanted the back of the plot, to make space for the grand new meeting house (now the Watson Hall) which they built on the plot alongside.

The earliest residents we have names for are the family of Rev. Henry Welsford. A native of Crediton, like his wife Susan, he came to Tewkesbury in 1819 as minister of the Congregational Church (now the home of the Jehovah's Witnesses) in Barton Street. Our first record is from the 1841 census which shows him living there with a large family and a servant.

Rev. Welsford took an active, and seemingly positive, part in the life of the town. In 1833 he was one of a delegation of three sent to London to lobby against slavery, part of a national campaign. Thirty years later he was still involved in campaigns against slavery, as a speaker at a public meeting in the Music Hall (now the Watson Hall) on the topic of the American civil war and negro emancipation.

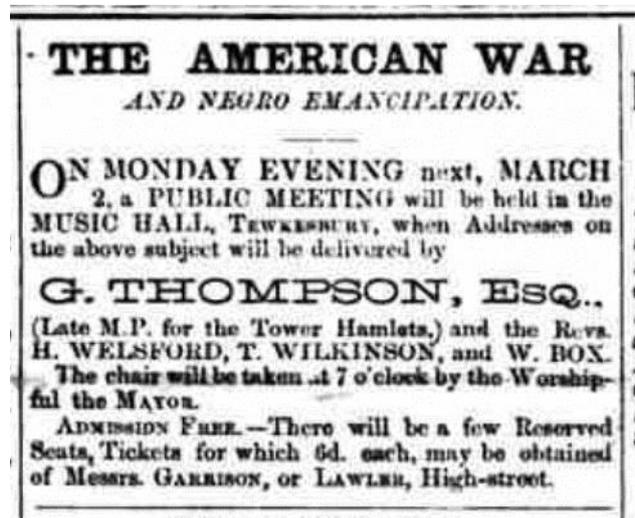
There were many more local things occupying his time in a seemingly endless round of public meetings. He was on the committee which established a

Tewkesbury Police Force and the first Public Health Committee, which did great service to the town. As far as education was concerned, he supported Mrs Hewett's Seminary for young Ladies in Hanbury Terrace and was a strong supporter of the Mechanics Institute.

The Welsfords had a large family. In 1841, eight children are listed. His eldest daughter, Susan, died in 1843 at the age of 19. A second daughter, Mercy, married Joseph Lloyd, a confectioner but she died suddenly in 1861, leaving two children. Henry's three sons moved out of the family home (one becoming a minister), but his other daughters remained at home, unmarried in his lifetime.

In 1847, one Sunday evening just before Christmas, 64 Barton Street was broken into by picking the lock. Five chests of drawers and several boxes were forced open, the whole of the house ransacked, and robbed of a quantity of plate and other property of considerable value, with which the robbers escaped. This was whilst the family were attending a service at the Chapel. The thieves seem not to have been caught.

In 1862, their landlords sold the house (with sitting tenants) and the sale particulars give us a description; A walled-in garden, dry underground cellaring, entrance hall, three sitting rooms, kitchen, back kitchen and brewhouse, 5 chambers and laundry. Well supplied with spring water and also soft water from a large reservoir.



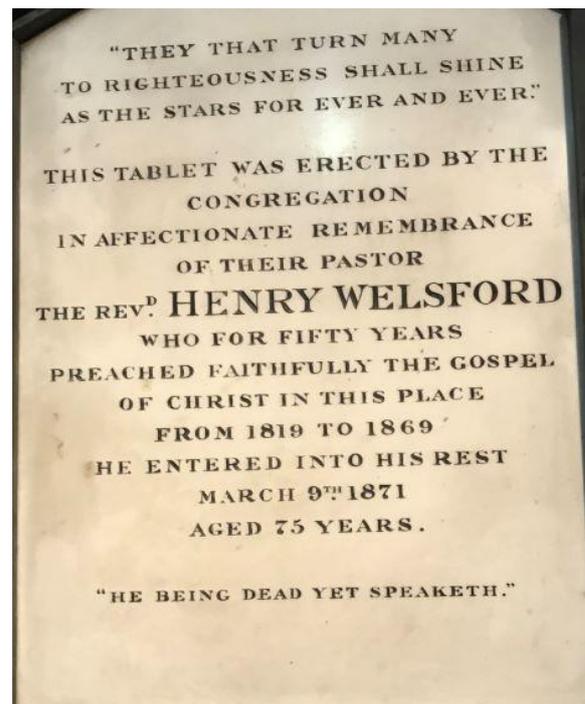
Rev. Welsford celebrated many anniversaries of his arrival in Tewkesbury and he must rank amongst the longest serving clergy in the town. In 1869, special events celebrated his fiftieth year here. On Sunday 13 June, Rev.

Ferguson, of London, preached two sermons. On 14 June there was a Tea Meeting in the Music Hall followed by a Public Meeting in the chapel where he was presented with a cheque for £400 from his friends and congregation. A strong indication of the respect he'd earned.

He died soon afterwards, though, in March 1871, aged 75. He was interred in his chapel graveyard. His wife, Susan, continued to live at 64, with three daughters until her death in 1873.

In March 1874, the house was sold, with vacant possession. It was bought by Mary Ann Jones for £200.

A memorial plaque to Henry Welsford was erected in the Independent Chapel, which became the Congregational Chapel. When it was purchased by the Jehovah's Witnesses, arrangements were made to move it to the Methodist Church, where it can be seen today.



As a postscript, here is a snippet from a very long report which appeared in the Gloucester Journal of 16 November 1850, entitled 'The National Protest Against Popery', expressing sentiments which are now, we hope, alien to England. The context was that Pope Pius IX had restored the Catholic diocesan system in England, appointing an Archbishop and Bishops, which was universally misunderstood. At the end of a long, formal, meeting of protest:

We may mention, that the proceedings of the occasion ended with revival of an old custom. The Rev. Henry Welsford, Independent minister, just before the business of the meeting had been concluded, proposed that the meeting should carry his Holiness the Pope through the streets. The proposition was received with immense favour, and no sooner said than done. A band of music and torches were hand, procession was formed, and effigies were produced, mounted on a waggon. These consisted of the Pope, clad in all the gorgeous array of his office, and Cardinal Wiseman, wearing the scarlet hat and stockings. Standing behind them were two friars, in masks and robes (represented by living men), and inscriptions were hoisted, of "No Popery", "No Puseyism", "No Humbug" Through the streets the procession moved, the band playing, the mob roaring, amidst discharge of pistols and crackers, lighted by the sparks of squibs and more ambitious feux d'artifice; torches glared and streamed out in wild flames, covering the scene with the most picturesque light and shade, and flashing on the windows - filled with gazers - of the quaint, grave old houses, the relics of another age, which seemed to look down astonished on the tossing, roaring crowd beneath. The greater part of the population, we should imagine, turned out, either to share in or witness the demonstration. After the town had been paraded from end to end, the procession proceeded the spacious and beautiful meadow, lying between the River Severn and Shakespeare's own Avon. There materials of a huge bonfire had been piled by public contributions. His Holiness and the Cardinal were duly enthroned on tar barrels, the friars cast their vestments and masks like slough, and then a light was applied to the combustibles, amidst a loud shout. The more the flames spread, the louder the spectators shouted, running here, there, and everywhere, tossing firebrands in the air, and discharging crackers, whilst at distance they seemed like mites, dancing flames. The darkness of the night was dispelled far and wide; the beautiful hills which surround the spot were bathed in

red light, and here and there were streaks of fire flashed on the dark, silent stream. These sights and sounds contrasted strangely with the quiet town, lying like a rampart on one edge of the scene, the old Abbey standing sentinel over it, and the multitude returned slowly to their homes, only when the demonstration smouldered in its ashes.

Journalism isn't like that anymore. Neither are celebrations on the Ham!

BANNERS

Nowadays, Tewkesbury is known for its street banners as well as its Abbey, alleys and historic buildings. These are taken down for maintenance every winter and the time to put them back up is fast approaching. The Town Hall will host banner 'open days' on Friday 6th and Saturday 7th May where the team behind them will be taking orders for banners for the summer and explaining what they do and how they do it.

Putting banners up for the summer is scheduled for Sunday June 12th.

A TICKET FOR DINNER

Things that arrive in the Museum don't need to be glitzy to be interesting. Liz Jones, from Ashby de la Zouch, sent a ticket to a Coronation dinner which she thinks belonged to her grandfather, Edward Hayward. Researching it revealed some fascinating insights into the end of the Victorian era.

Edward Hayward was a boot and shoemaker, living with his family at 27 Chance Street and trading as T Hayward and Son at 115 High Street (M&Co now stands there). He was declared bankrupt in 1900, citing expenses because of family illness as the reason for overspending. His stock, fittings and household furniture were auctioned in March 1900. Eventually, the family moved to Gloucester.

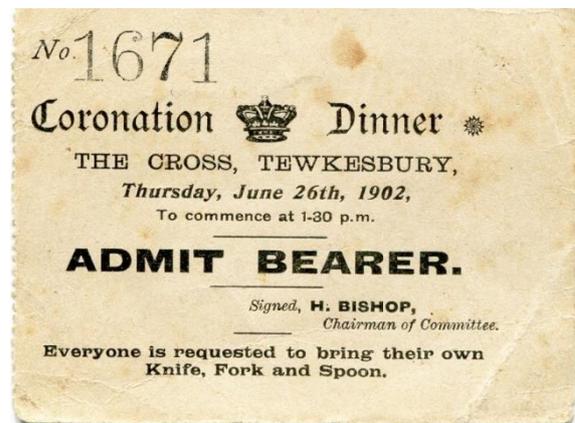
The ticket is numbered 1671. The venue is the Cross at 1.30 on June 26th 1902 and everyone is asked to bring their own knife, fork

and spoon. This is effectively a street party for more than 2,000 people in the streets around the Cross. Imagine arranging something like that for the Queen's Jubilee!

The coronation was a novel event. There'd not been one since Queen Victoria's in 1838, and a lot had changed during her reign. This was planned to be a huge popular celebration, the first of its kind, fitting for the Kingdom's, and Empire's, premier place in the world order. The Government arranged for a two-day holiday and 3,000 bonfires. They asked the population to assemble in convenient locations and unite in singing 'God Save the King'. Other arrangements were left to local committees.

Tewkesbury's committee spawned sub-committees for bonfires, fireworks, children's events, a bicycle parade and illuminated boats. The Public Feeding committee, which dealt with the dinner, was the biggest. Additionally, there would be a magnificent parade to the Abbey for a service of thanksgiving and there would be bell ringing through the day. Decorations went up all over town, and awnings were erected around the Cross.

Then there was a national disaster. Two days before the planned coronation King Edward fell ill with perityphlitis; an abdominal cyst. This was so serious that it necessitated an urgent



operation under full anaesthetic, a very worrying procedure in those days. It was carried out by Lord Lister and Sir Frederick Treves on the table in the Music room at Buckingham Palace. It was a success, but the coronation had to be postponed until August.

This created a quandary, as huge efforts had been made all over the country, at considerable cost. The King was insistent that the celebrations should go ahead, and in particular all the feasts. In Tewkesbury, the decorations were left in place; there was a solemn procession to a service of Intercession at the Abbey followed by the feast. Everything else was cancelled. The Gloucester Artillery Band, who had been engaged for the occasion, probably played less joyful music than they had planned. The diners would undoubtedly have made the most of their meal, though.

This was a lot to learn from a slip of paper.

CORONATION 1911

Continuing the coronation theme, ahead of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, here is a photograph of the start of the procession for King George V and Queen Mary's Coronation.



The scene in the town was described by the press:

The streets of Tewkesbury have ever lent themselves to decoration, and it is very doubtful whether they ever were decked with such an array of bunting as was displayed on this occasion. Under the direction of Mr. Ridler a fine lot of flags and streamers was used by the Corporation. At the Town Hall a handsome crown and cushion, from which hung a magnificent basket of flowers, was suspended over the middle of the High Street, and from this radiated strings of coloured flags attached to the adjacent buildings. Over the Town Hall the Union Jack floated, and the front of the building had its lines marked with rows of gas jets which, in the centre, formed a replica of the Borough Arms. Above this was the word

"Tewkesbury" and the words "Borough of Tewkesbury" also labelled the structure. With bell turret, clock and windows out-lined, the effect at night was delightful. The inhabitants generally generously responded to the request that as much decoration as possible should be used, and efforts in this direction were stimulated by prizes offered, in three classes, for the best decorated houses of varying rateable values.

The Abbey Churchyard presented a charming spectacle. The avenues were decorated with strings of coloured flags and Chinese lanterns in great profusion, the brilliant colours in contrast with the green foliage having a very striking effect, and the illumination in the evening drew the admiration of all. At the entrance to the Churchyard was a blue banner, with the inscription "God save the King," and on the Abbey tower a white ensign floated. The Pleasure Grounds were also very beautifully illuminated, the walls, bandstand and arbours being outlined with fairy lamps and same form of illuminant displayed the words "God save the King" in huge letters, and there was a well designed crown at the lower end of the grounds.

The Abbey Gateway was also prettily decorated with coloured streamers. There were few houses without a flag of some kind, though it is difficult to give an adequate description of all.



Barton Street neighbours: Nos 22 and 31

MALVERN CHASE?

This is a bit of a personal rant.

Through the 1970s and 1980s the Museum was kept in existence thanks to the sterling efforts of Edna and Bryan Linnell, who acted as managers and curators. Their work can be seen everywhere. One of Bryan's interests, and he had many, was local place names and their origins. In 1978, long before the advent of digital on-line research databases, he published his booklet 'Theot, Guppy and Wulf'. In this, he systematically named each field

and road in the old Borough, and traced the origin of the names through history. There are errors, but given the scope of the project and the number of sources used that can be excused. It is an invaluable reference.

What was noticeable about names of streets as the town expanded was that new roads were almost always named for historical areas, like Hollams Road, or local notables; Howell, Knight, Troughton. From its beginning with Margaret Road, the development of Prior's Park's road names has linked to Medieval Tewkesbury or the Battle. Where they deviated from this approach, Bryan made his opinion known!

Early major developments reflected existing names, even 'Wheatpieces' echoed an existing field name, though 'Stonehills' somehow corrupted the name of Stonehouse Farm. Later estates just seem to pick random names, like the infamous 'Water Meadows' (a name still remembered on the electricity sub-stations in the estate) and elsewhere we have Tewkesbury Meadow and the Barleyfields, which mean nothing at all, with road names with no local relevance whatsoever.

My personal *bête noire* is still advertised on a 'temporary' road sign on the Belisha beacon post at the Cross end of Church Street. 'Malvern Chase'; an estate on the Bredon Road. It can't really be Malvern Chase, though, because that's a huge tract of land between the Severn and the Malvern Hills, in a completely different county, with its own unique history. The housing development in question is completely hidden from the Malvern Hills, so couldn't even truthfully be 'Malvern View'. The fields which used to be there were Ox Meadow, Lady's Meadow and Shearing Hill. Using one of those would have been more honest, and would have preserved a little local memory.

Surprisingly, the Borough Council has a street naming policy. It says that developers must display proposed names for public comment and that parish councils are consulted. Maybe the growth of inappropriate and inane names is through lack of public diligence?

CONTRIBUTIONS

This newsletter is intended for supporters of the Museum. It is confined to local history, the background to items in the museum collection and things which the editor thinks are interesting. I hope you also find them interesting!

Contributions are very welcome, and will add to the range and variety of topics covered. If you have a few minutes to type up something you're researched, or even to suggest a topic which would be of general interest, please email info@teiwkesburymuseum.org.

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