



Tewkesbury Museum Supporter's Newsletter

**February
2023**

Though February is the middle of winter, those signs of spring are all around. Snowdrops, buds breaking out, squabbling birds and noticeably longer days. And the Museum is open again. There's even good news about some of the building repairs. Is it too soon for optimism?

An Anniversary

Not quite an exhibit and often disregarded, the Museum's sign is, I think, forty years old this year. It was made by Pete Linnell, son of Edna and Bryan, as a project during woodcarving lessons with local sculptor Len Clatworthy, at the request of his dad. It's stood the test of time!



Bye Laws 1852

In 1852, the Borough Council's bye laws (based a national model) were approved by the government. They say something about what concerned people back then. Here are the third five, most of which are earlier versions of our parking regulations.

That every person who in or near any street, passage, or other public place within the borough of Tewkesbury, shall be guilty of any of the following offences, shall be liable to a penalty of not more than £5, no less than one shilling for every such offence, besides costs, (that is to say):-

XI. - Every person who shall sell, or distribute, or offer for sale or distribution, or exhibit to public view any profane, indecent, or obscene book, paper, print, drawing, painting or representation, or present any indecent printed or written paper relating to any disease or cure, or sing any profane, indecent, or obscene song or ballad, or write or draw any indecent or obscene word, figure, or representation, or use any profane, indecent, or obscene language, to the annoyance of the inhabitants or passengers.

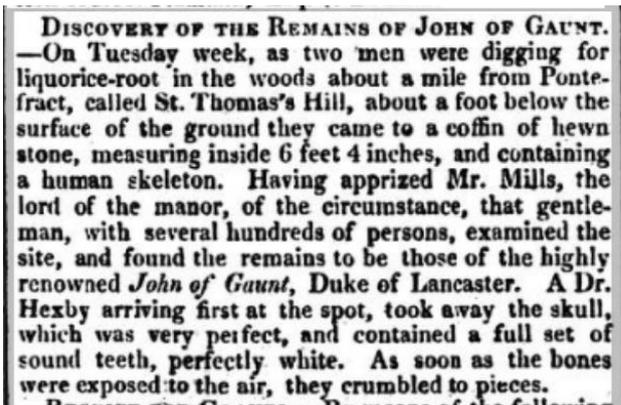
XII. - Every person who shall wilfully and unlawfully extinguish the light of, or break or injure any lamp used for lighting any street, passage or other public place, or for the convenience of the inhabitants.

XIII. Every person who shall leave any wagon, cart, sledge, truck, barrow, or private carriage, with or without horses, To stand longer than may be necessary for loading or unloading, or for taking up or setting down passengers, (except any Hackney carriages standing for hire in any place appointed for that purpose) or who by means of any wagon, carts, sledge, truck, barrow, or carriage, or any horse or other animal, shall wilfully cause any obstruction in any thoroughfare.

XIV. - Every person who shall lead or ride, or drive any horse or other animal, or draw, drive or wheel any carts or carriage, sledge, truck or barrow, or carry or wheel any sedan, wheel or other chair, or fly, upon any footway or curbstone, (unless in conveying an invalid,) or fasten any horse or other animal, so that it stand across or upon any footway.

XV. - Every person who shall roll, draw, or carry any cask, tub, hoop, or wheel, or any bag containing soot or other articles, or any timber, ladder, plank, pole, showboard, placard, or any burthen suspended on both sides the carrier, upon any footway, except for the purpose of loading or unloading any cart or carriage, or of crossing the footway.

John of Gaunt



DISCOVERY OF THE REMAINS OF JOHN OF GAUNT.
—On Tuesday week, as two men were digging for liquorice-root in the woods about a mile from Pontefract, called St. Thomas's Hill, about a foot below the surface of the ground they came to a coffin of hewn stone, measuring inside 6 feet 4 inches, and containing a human skeleton. Having apprized Mr. Mills, the lord of the manor, of the circumstance, that gentleman, with several hundreds of persons, examined the site, and found the remains to be those of the highly renowned *John of Gaunt*, Duke of Lancaster. A Dr. Hexby arriving first at the spot, took away the skull, which was very perfect, and contained a full set of sound teeth, perfectly white. As soon as the bones were exposed to the air, they crumbled to pieces.

This short article, very confident in its assertions, was printed in the Birmingham Chronicle of 25 April 1822. It reflects the approach to archaeology of the day, and who knows how much evidence of the past has disappeared in this way?

John of Gaunt died in Leicester and there seems to be no reason to doubt that he was buried, with his wife, in St Paul's Cathedral. Though the tomb was lost in the fire of London, Wenceslas Hollar had made an etching of it for posterity. Mr

Mills, Lord of the Manor, must have had his own reasons for thinking he'd been buried in a wood near Pontefract.

A New Museum?

One of Tewkesbury's more celebrated residents made the news in 1996:

Birmingham Mail 14 December 1996

The world's most prolific author Dame Barbara Cartland wants her grandfather's house turned into museum claiming huge amounts of money could be generated by cashing in on her name.

The self-styled Queen of Romance, who is 95, says that converting Walton House in Tewkesbury Gloucestershire would benefit the whole town

"All the things I've touched have made people an awful lot of money" she said. "In the first two months of this year the Barbara Cartland Tearoom in Norfolk had 10,000 people going there and it has made the owner a multi-millionaire. There's picture of me in a lovely dress and lots of things to do with me.

"Then in Scotland they've got a Barbara Cartland room in a cottage and people on their way to John O'Groats stop to see it. It makes a lot of money. She proposed that her grandfather's huge house where she stayed as a child should be saved from conversion into flats.

"I thought if there was museum then people would pay even if it only shillings to go in. it's a benefit for the whole town" she said "It doesn't matter it's called - Tewkesbury Museum perhaps. I mean I wasn't putting myself forward."

Dame Barbara's sudden bout of civic anxiety comes just weeks after she was snubbed by Tewkesbury Council when councillors decided not to name road after her.

An article from further away gives a view from the council:

From the Glasgow Sunday Mail, December 15th 1996:

Dame Barbara Cartland has told a town that it needs a museum ... dedicated to her. Her letter telling the folk of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire that she could put their town on the map was written on headed PINK notepaper.

The 95-year old romance novelist said: "It could feature a model of me in one of my gowns and the sound of a recording I made of me singing love songs accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra." Dame Barbara said her mother, father and brother are all buried at Tewkesbury Abbey.

Tourism officer Julie Woods said: "There are many more important parts of Tewkesbury's history more worthy of promotion." And Councillor Stan Greenland added: "It may have come up for discussion with other ideas but there are no current plans to include such an idea."

Museum Talks

The talks are getting closer, with the first later this month. Remember the dates:

On **21st February**, Patrick Furley will be presenting A Magic Lantern Show, with a real magic lantern (not from the museum's collection), slides of Tewkesbury and a horn gramophone!

On **7th March**, Ian Boskett will talk about the Ashchurch to Tewkesbury railway, the town's connection to the main line. Entertainment is guaranteed.

On **21st March**, Steve Goodchild will ramble on about the perennially fascinating life of Tewkesbury Inns, Taverns and Beer Houses.

On **4th April**, Linda Pike will present 'Changing Reels, Changing Roles; Women Projectionists in World War 2', giving an insight into her years of academic research.

On **18th April**, Andrew Crowther will talk about Tewkesbury's Hospitals and community medical services. Andrew was a local GP for many years, author of a history of Tewkesbury's hospitals and was Chair of the Museum Trustees. This is particularly appropriate in 2023, the 75th anniversary of the NHS.

The venue will again be the Baptist Church, with talks commencing at 7.00. Tea and cake will be served afterwards.

Gloucestershire Archives

The first 'Zoom' talk in the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub 'leisurely lunchtime learning' sessions, '*If Walls Could Talk*', was well attended, and went through all the tools which can be used to investigate the history of buildings. The talk was recorded and can be viewed on-line [HERE](#)

The next talk in the series on Wednesday 22nd February is called 'Tall Stories' and is about Gloucestershire's literary connections. The 'blurb' says:

*Gloucestershire has been the home of and inspiration for numerous authors and storytellers over the years, some well-known others less so. This presentation will look at some of the work of these writers such as Gurney, Haines, Harvey, **Moore** and Lee as well as others. We will also look at the county's other literary connections, ranging from weary ways, rabbit holes, pirates, cricket pavilions and even a ring of power. We will also investigate some of writer's tools of the trade in terms of ink and paper ...will all this cut the mustard?*

Other People's Talks

On Thursday **9th February**, at 7.30 The Civic Society have a presentation about King John and the Magna Carta. It will be in the Old Baptist Chapel, in Church Street. King John, of course, had Tewkesbury connections before he became king.

On Wednesday **16th February**, at 7.45 Dr. Andy Moir will be reporting on the Gloucestershire Dendrochronology Project which he led in Tewkesbury (as well as Gloucester and Newent). This is a Historical Society talk, and will be in the Methodist Church.

What Photographs Do

The Photographic Collections Network is always a good source of ideas and information. They also have a programme of on-line learning events, and in this spring's offerings is a topical item about museum photographic collections, entitled 'What Photographs Do'. It is free, though like the museum they appreciate donations. Here's the Network's own introduction to the talk:

What Photographs Do : Fri 3 March, 1:30-2:30, free/donation, online

What are photographs 'doing' in museums? Why are some photographs valued and others not? Why are some photographic practices visible and not others? What value systems and hierarchies do they reflect?

This talk by Elizabeth Edwards and Ella Ravilius explores how museums are defined through their photographic practices. It focuses not on formal collections of photographs as accessioned objects, be they 'fine art' or 'archival', but on what might be termed 'non-collections': the huge number of photographs that are integral to the workings of museums yet 'invisible', existing outside the structures of 'the collection'. These photographs, however, raise complex and ambiguous questions about the ways in which such accumulations of photographs create the values, hierarchies, histories, and knowledge-systems, through multiple, folded, and overlapping layers that might be described as the museum's ecosystem.

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Alley Strolls

The programme of fortnightly Sunday alley strolls continues, with the next walks on Sunday 19th (High Street alleys) and March 5th (Barton Street alleys). They start at 2.30 at the bottom of Warder's Alley.

Last month I reported that the 26 walks in 2022 raised £202 each for the Museum and the Alleycats project. That was a miscalculation. The amount raised was £505 each.

Antarctic Curios

October 9th 1909. — On Saturday evening there was a crowded gathering in the large hall of Bristol University, on the occasion of the students' first reception. Upon a table was exhibited a unique collection of Antarctic curios brought by Mr. R. E. Priestly - who was present at the reception - from his home at Tewkesbury.

Among the articles were a couple pairs of fur boots used by members of the expedition for snow travelling, some dog-skin mittens, leather ski boots used in the summer for rock travelling, a few odd sheets from the book printed at Cape Roydes, 77deg. 33min. South; the menu of a mid-winter dinner at Cape Roydes, bearing a full-page illustration of the hut under the shadow of Erebus, with the Aurora Borealis [*This should say the Aurora Australis*] playing over that mountain. Amongst the courses are seal cutlets, penguin pates, roast reindeer and black currant jelly, plum pudding, and mince pies. At the foot are the words "Sledges at 12.30." Champagne and whisky accompanied the feast. Of this menu there are only fifteen copies in existence.

There were also to be seen geological specimens of the rocks at Mount Erebus and the immediate vicinity. Not the least interesting feature of Mr. Priestley's exhibition was about a pound of tea with a history. This tea was left at the Discovery Hut at a point about twenty miles south of Cape Roydes by the Antarctic expedition of 1901-4. It was found in 1908 by Lieut. Shackleton and brought back. At the hut the party used some of the tea, which had been left in an open tin, despite which circumstance it was in good condition. That which returned to England was in sealed tins.

Refreshments were served at the reception on Saturday evening, and the beverages included a brew of the very tea found by Lieut. Shackleton in the Antarctic regions.

John Rogers' Journal

February 1903 was a gloomy month for John Rogers. As well as the problems of his acquaintances there were other disasters; a fire in an asylum killed 51 poor women, the crew of the Mumbles lifeboat were drowned, the nation was obsessed with the gruesome details of murders in Leyton and the King was ill. These occupy the first days of February, so the excerpt this month starts on 10th.

The text has been transcribed by Wendy. The spelling and grammar are Mr Rogers'. Wendy's translations, explanations or comments are in italics in square brackets.

February 10th : *A very fine day. I took a walk to the Lower Lode this morning it was very pleasant the sun shone very nicely and I quite liked it*

Mr D. Chandler called to see me after his long illness I never thought to seeing him again up street any more but God have spared his life I hope for a good purpose.

February 11th : *A fine day today. I took a long walk on Barton Street Road. It was quite warm.*

Rev Mr Preece called to collect money to buy a wreath to be on our late Pastor's coffin who was to be bury on Thursday in the Cemetery. I gave 2 /- towards it and others subscribed.

I paid Mrs Creese half years interest today it amounted to about £16

February 12th : *A very fine sunshiney day took a walk a mile up the Ashchurch Road*

February 13th : *A fine dry day. I had a long walk on the Roads today. I visited Widow Douveux [Devereux] in Spring Gardens. She is much worse and not expected to live long. Also visited Widow Ford who is very ill and not expected to live long. And I visited Mrs Moody about 84 years old*

February 14th : Valentines Day noted by young people as the time to pass Love Letters etc to one and other of their acquaintances

The Rev Thomas Wilkinson was buried in the Cemetery on Thursday the 12th day of February 1903 at half past 12 o'clock in a polished Elm [coffin] with Brass fittings and Breast Plate on which was engraved the following "Thomas Wilkinson died February 9th 1903"

Two large wreaths was on the coffin and after the grave was filled up they was placed on top of it and there they are now and will very soon lose their beauty and be scattered by the wind into fragments and Rest? upon the face of the earth

One man when writing about his Epethet [Epitaph?] said 'When I am dead no flowers for me for youth and beauty keep your flowers to gladden life those fair things be no flowers for me'

Mr Wilkinson became the Pastor of the Baptist Church in the year 1851 and he [kept] the office till June 19th 1885. That would make his service somewhere about 34 years. His salary was £120 a year and when he had been Pastor for 25 years subscriptions was set on foot to make a present to him as a reward for his long labours amongst us. The sum rose was £100 which was given to him in the year 1867 [sic] [1876]. He was chosen Pastor of Natton Seven Day Chapel for which he received £75 a year that brought his income up to £195 a year and he had £1 for preaching one sermon a year at the village of Naunton near Upton on Severn

He also received the interest of money that was kept to buy a Minister's House in the future which was £15 a year making a total of £211

During later years the Natton Charitys have some what less than usual on account of the Land in Essex [Essex?] Have fallen in value but about a year ago the London Trustees readjusted the salary and fixed it for him for life at £81 for life

February 15th : Sunday A dry day but very dull and rather foggy. Went to Baptist Chapel in the morning. The Minister's text was the 90th psalm his Disconts [?] Mostly upon the frailty and mortality of man as displayed in the prayer of Moses and that beautiful hymn which is so often sung amongst all Christians - Our God in ages past and our hope for years to come etc is taken from the 2 Chapter

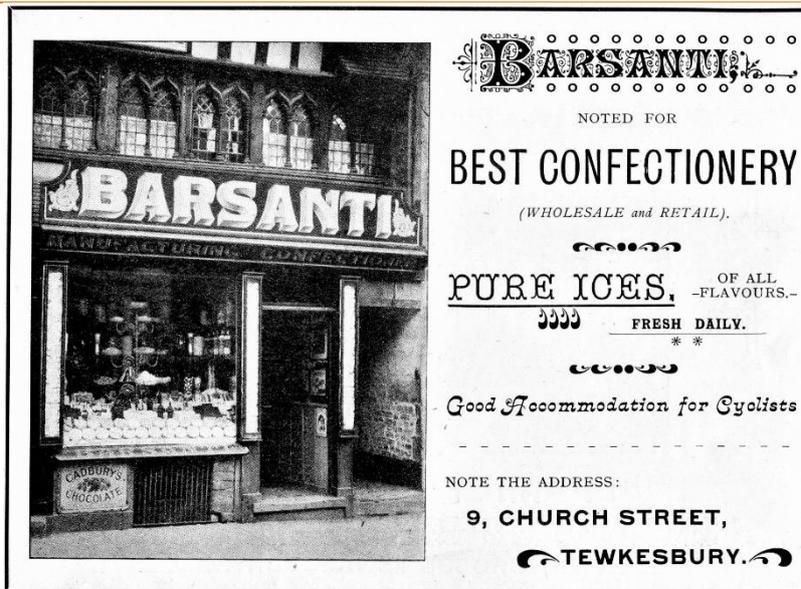
I went to Brethren Meeting in the afternoon and at night to the Baptist Chapel text was 53 Chapter of Isaiah and 6 verse All we like sheep have gone astray We have turned everyone to his own way and the [Lord] have laid upon him the iniquity of us all

Called on a Mr Buckel [Buckle] an old man who has been an invalid for many years. This morning about 8 o'clock an aged Widow died very suddenly she was taken with a pralalatic [paralytic?] stroke and died soon after a Doctor was called in at once but she died soon after he came

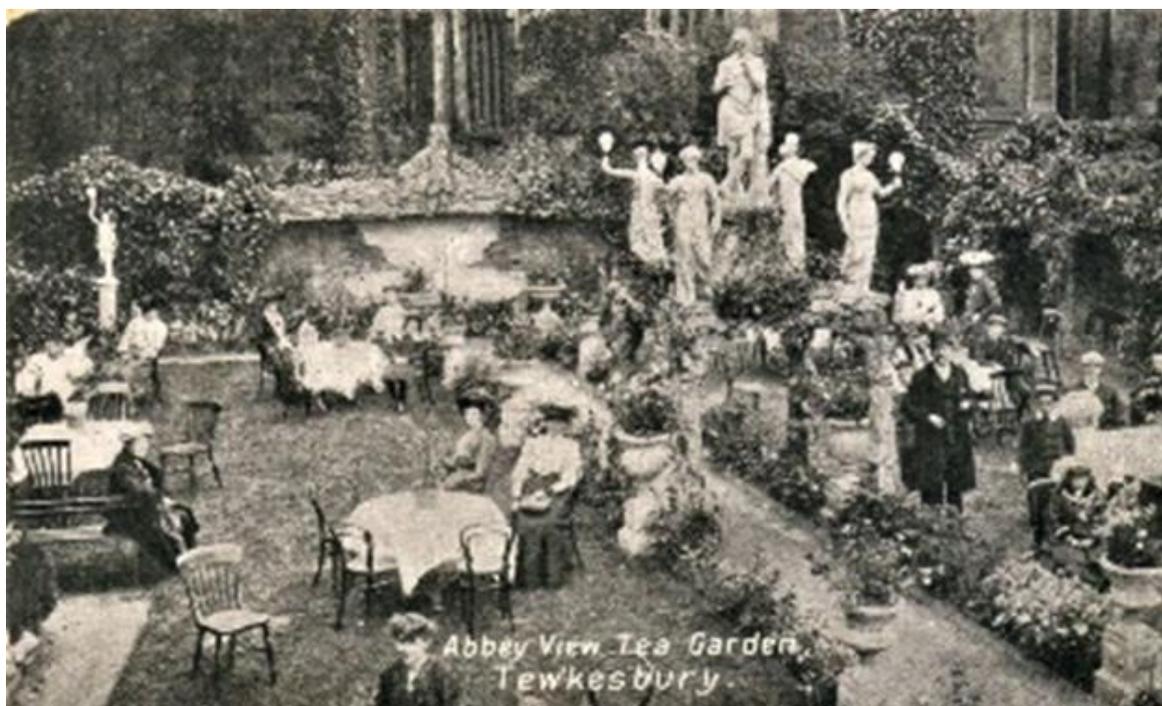
Her was an acquaintance always met with us at the Brethren in the Old Baptist Chapel yard. Her name was Harper she was Morthor [Mother of] Harper the butcher who for many years carried on business in Church Street. She was highly respectable and respected and I believe a true Christian woman her life proved it.

Past Tewkesbury

A Tewkesbury guide book from 1902/3 contains a series of sixty full-page advertisements for Tewkesbury businesses, most with photographs of the premises.



In about 1888, Palmiro Barsanti arrived in Tewkesbury from Italy. There's no indication as to why. He was only 21 years old. He quickly established a confectionery business at 9 Church Street. This was one half of what is now the shop between the Berkeley Arms and Jennings' Carpets. This advertisement must have been one of his last for this premises, because in 1903 he moved to 40 High Street, a long-established baker's, and opened his Abbey View Tea Gardens in the area behind, which is now the Abbey's 'secret garden'. This garden, filled with Italian sculpture, became very well known and was the subject of many a postcard. Both shops were owned by Francis Godfrey, once partner to Thomas Collins, so probably his move was straightforward.



Mr Basanti integrated very quickly. He was a very active member of the cycling club, which maybe explains why he was offering 'Good Accommodation for Cyclists'. He was also an active member of the bowling and billiard clubs.

His business thrived at 40 Church Street, where he offered accommodation as well as baking and a full restaurant service. His fame spread far and wide. Patrons included the Earl and Countess Beachamp as well as, on one occasion, five hundred people from Derby Sunday Schools who had chartered a train for an excursion to Tewkesbury.

He died In August 1928, after a short illness. He was only 60 years old. He was married but had no children. His wife Annie continued to live in the property, and presumably manage the business, until her death in 1943. The furniture and fittings, including all the statues, were sold on 30th March of the same year.

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 compiler 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 might be of general interest, please email info@teiwkesburymuseum.org .

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