



Tewkesbury Museum Supporter's Newsletter

**March
2023**

March, they say, comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Cold weather isn't quite what is meant, but the promise of spring at the end of the month is to look forward to.

February has seen some cold days in the museum as well, but it hasn't affected visitors. Despite some quiet days, we've had more February visitors since records began!

An Exciting Find

It isn't often that you get a phone call about a box of documents cleared out from a land agent's office closure, rescued from the skip, left forgotten in a shed for decades and then rediscovered. The owner wanted to know what to do with them. That's simple. Gloucestershire Archives, via Wendy.

It turned out to be a big, metal, box with the remnants of Moore and Lear's closure. What was inside it will be revealed slowly as they are catalogued and transcribed. The first, and undoubtedly most important identified is the missing account book from the Giles Geast Charity records. A journal which has survived from the middle of the eighteenth century! There is more, and Wendy is working through deeds connected with Geast properties, which will fill in gaps in our knowledge of Tewkesbury past. More to follow!

Roast Swan for Breakfast

This letter, from an indignant George Blizard, appeared in the Worcester press in 1861, following a public reaction to Councils feasting on swan, a custom which seems to have died out. The letter tells the story:

Sir, —The pleasure with which I generally peruse the Herald was considerably damped on Saturday last as I read, under the head of "Horrid Proposals," a report of a Town Council meeting given in one of your columns, and the very courteous and gentlemanly expressions used in an "Editorial Article"

The care of the Worcester swans is committed to Mr. Rea, the city chamberlain. Some short time ago, I was in conversation with that gentleman, and the subject of the swans was started by his mentioning that it had been proposed to kill two of the cygnets, and have them for the Mayor's breakfast. I then told him that one of the young birds appeared to have taken up its abode here, and asked him to give it to me and I would present it to the Tewkesbury Corporation for a similar purpose. Mr. Rea at once gave me the cygnet, and requested me, as the Tewkesbury Corporation dinner was to come off before the Mayor of Worcester's breakfast, to let him know how the bird ate, and this I did.

This statement, and I repeat it, Mr. Rea did give me the bird—is very different from that contained in your report of the "Horrid Proposal." Either Mr. Rea Stated at the Council meeting that which was erroneous, or you have misrepresented what he did say.

Of course if the members of the Worcester Corporation are so squeamish and timid that they dare not touch a roast swan, there can be no possible objection to your proclaiming

their amiable weakness.-I wonder if they would have courage enough to swallow raw oysters, or to help to devour a wild duck—but surely that is no reason why they should be horrified at those who are less fastidious, although possibly quite as careful and delicate in their eating as themselves.

Amongst those who favoured the Mayor and Corporation of Tewkesbury with their company on the 9th instant, were the Hon. F. Lygon, the Hon. W. Coventry, Sir E. A. H. Lechmere, Mr. Empson, the Rev G. H. Clifton, and some other Worcestershire gentlemen, all, or nearly all of whom partook of the cygnet, which you so forcibly and elegantly say was "killed and eaten by savages at Tewkesbury," and they, I take it, are included in the list of those who, with delicate irony, you term the "nice people of Tewkesbury."

If I recollect rightly, some time ago several of your swans were favoured with a dose of melted pitch, a pigment not adapted to increase the beauty of their snowy plumage. which some scamps poured upon them from a boat. This is a kind of treatment which, if they have the power of communicating with each other, was very likely to have induced them to locate themselves elsewhere. It is likely too, that as they have increased in number, they have not been so regularly fed, nor so well attended to as they were in the earlier days of their settlement.

Persecution and want have frequently been the cause of breaking up more important communities than that of the Worcester swans, and may therefore have had to do with driving many of your pets to "somewhere between Iron-bridge and Shrewsbury," and other, of them to this neighbourhood. At this time there are twenty of them at least up Old Avon, giving a great deal of attention to the men who are unloading stone for the railway, and who in return give the swans some of their food.

Being a plain man of business, and therefore not qualified to write strongly-phrased articles for newspapers, I refrain from speaking of you or any of your fellow-citizens as "savages" at Worcester; and as I am not gifted with the powers of administering that gentle sarcasm, which, "like a polished razor keen," wounds with a touch that's scarcely felt or seen; I will not call you a "nice" person thereby insinuating that you are a nasty one; I will, however, take the liberty of telling you that if the Worcester swans are kindly treated and well fed, they will stay at home in quite sufficient numbers to ornament the Severn at your attractive and very spirited city; and if from natural increase, some of them should fly away, do not fret yourself if one of them should occasionally be treated as 'feroe natura', for after what has been said and written, it is not very likely that your chamberlain will give me or anyone else permission to kill another.

I remain, your obedient Servant, GEORGE BLIZARD.

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 the authorities back then. Here are the fourth five, which say what mustn't be done on the streets, or with pig styes.

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):-

XVI. - Every person who shall place or leave any furniture, goods, wares, coal, or merchandise, or any cask, crates, tub, baskets, pail, or buckets, or any other thing, or use any standing place, stool, bench, stall, or showboard, on any public way, so as in any way to cause any obstruction or impediment to passengers, or shall place any blind, shade, covering or awning over or along any footway at a height less than seven feet from the curbstone.

XVII. - Every person who shall place, hang up, or otherwise expose for sale any goods, wares, merchandise, matter, or thing whatsoever, so that the same shall project into or over any footway, or beyond the line of any house, shop or building, at which the same shall be exposed.

XVIII. - Every person who shall keep any swine or pig-stye within 20 yards of any dwelling house situated in either of the three principal streets, namely, High Street, Church Street, and Barton Street, or any lane, court, alley, or other avenue branching out of the same.

XIX. - Every person who, in any thoroughfare, Shall burn, dress, or cleanse any cask or hoop; cleanse, Fire, wash, or skulls any cask or tub; or hew, saw, bore, or cut any timber or stone; or slake, sift, or screen any lime; or burn any rags, or other offensive substance, so as to be a public nuisance.

XX. - Every person who shall shoe, or bleed, or farry, cleanse, dress, turn, or drive loose any horse or other animal, or kill or slaughter, singe, scald, or dress any animal or carcass in any part thereof, (except in case of accident,) or clean, make or repair any part of any cart or a carriage, except in case of accident, where repair on the spot is necessary.

Safety at Work

From the museum collection, this postcard shows Church Street from a high vantage point sometime at the end of the nineteenth century. The tradesman, unaware of the camera and working away on the roof of the Plough Hotel, shown enlarged, reminds us of the changes in working practice from then to now.



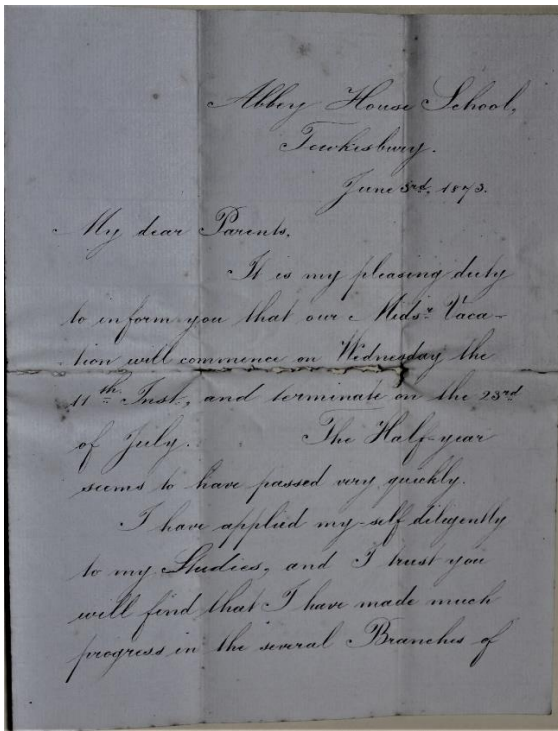
Hospital Beer Rations

Not a Tewkesbury item, but in 1861, Worcester Royal Infirmary, which had less than 100 beds at the time, reviewed the patient diets. They found that they had consumed 6,346 gallons of beer in the previous year, so they resolved to reduce consumption. It was decided that in future boys under fourteen should only receive half a pint a day and those under eight would be given milk, and no ale.

Francis Thomas Palmer

The interest in many of the museum's objects isn't simply their historic value but the story which the object reveals. A small collection recently received from a lady in North Wales was such an example. It was what remained of her great-grandfather's school work. An

exercise book inscribed 'Abbey House School, Tewkesbury', a letter home and a dialect poem all dating from 1873. The latter two items are in poor condition, but full of interest. The pupil was Francis Thomas Palmer, whose only connection with Tewkesbury was that he went to school here. Wendy's detective skills located him at Tibberton. Born in 1858, he was living at Brick House Farm in 1861. He was 15 when he wrote the letter home which has survived (below). He became a seedsman in Ross on Wye. He married the Tibberton schoolmaster's daughter in 1896, who had a son the following year at Norman's Farm, Taynton, so he seems to have followed his father's occupation. He died in 1941.



Only the first page is reproduced, to show off the quality of handwriting of 1873 scholars.

*Abbey House School
Tewkesbury
June 3^d 1873*

My Dear Parents

It is my pleasing duty to inform you that our Mids^r Vacation will commence on Wednesday the 11th Inst, and terminate on the 23^d of July. The Half-year seems to have passed very quickly.

I have applied myself diligently to my Studies, and I trust you will find that I have made much progress in the several Branches of my Education. It will afford me much happiness to know that you are pleased with my improvement.

The Prizes, for which we have earnestly worked, will be awarded on Tuesday the 10th Inst. Please do give my love to my dear brothers and sisters. With kind love to yourselves,

*I remain,
My dear Parents,
Your affectionate Son,
F, T. Palmer.*

P.S. Mr and Mrs Priestley desire their kind remembrances.

Museum Talks

The first talk of 2023 was a departure from the accustomed pattern. Patrick Furley's talk and demonstration of the magic lantern entertained us to a history of projected images. His collection of old magic lanterns gave a glimpse into the early days of home entertainment. Almost fifty people, from as far away as Upton and Minsterworth were treated to a magic lantern show of slides through the ages, with a well-practiced commentary. And all rounded off with tea and home-made cake!

The next talk is sure to be equally interesting, in a different way with a different topic, returning to Tewkesbury's history.

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

Other People's Talks

On Thursday **9th March**, at 7.30 The Civic Society have a presentation about the Cotswold Way. It will be in the Old Baptist Chapel, in Church Street.

On Wednesday **15th March** at 2.00pm Tewkesbury Library will be hosting a session about how to date old photographs. A useful skill!

On Wednesday **23rd March**, at 7.45 Richard Chatham will be talking about Stoke Orchard – 'from Cider to Glider'. This Historical Society talk will be in the Methodist Church.

Treasure at Ashchurch?

Treasure search called off

Digging to find £28,000 which a former German of prisoner of war claims he buried at an Army depot at Tewkesbury was called off yesterday.

Ex-POW Hans Leichsendring says that the money came from black market deals. He has pin-pointed five spots at which he claims he buried it in cocoa tins.

Workmen yesterday broke up thick concrete near the soldiers' canteen, explored three other spots in the security compound and searched near the camp theatre, but found nothing.

Leichsendring married an English and is now a haulage contractor in Belgellav, Merionethshire.

The camp adjutant, Capt. A Luck, said "I checked carefully on Hans' story and credentials. I have no doubt that he a prisoner of war at the time the Americans were here.

"He did not have a map of the where the tins were buried, but he was able to say within a foot or two where they were. He knows that the money, if still there, belongs to the Army"

Lt-Col J. J. Seth, the CO, said they would not look any more "unless we get some further information"

- *Nottingham Guardian - Tuesday 07 January 1964*

Alley Strolls

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

Big-Time Angling

The sport of angling remains popular on Tewkesbury's rivers, but its economic effect on the town is nothing compared with the past. This is part of a piece which appeared in the paper in September 1928. Not the 'Register' this time, but the *Lincolnshire Standard and Boston Guardian*.

The following letter has been sent to secretaries of the Associations affiliated to the National Federation of Anglers, by Mr. W. A. Neale, of Birmingham A.A., which Association has charge of this year's match.

Dear Sir—Kindly let me know whether your team members agree to this suggested programme, and the date and time they will reach Tewkesbury.

Draw at 9 O'clock Monday morning. September 24th, Tewkesbury, (The estimated furthest distance peg number from Tewkesbury will be six miles. Motor transport will be arranged for this).

Match to commence at 11 o'clock sharp. Match to cease at 3.30 in the afternoon.

The L.M.S. Railway Company is prepared to provide a special train from Tewkesbury at 5.40pm. to Birmingham. The fishing must cease at 3.30 to catch this train.

The special train will reach Birmingham in time for the 7.30 L.M.S. Railway for the north, enabling teams to reach their home towns the same night as follows: -Burton, 7.52; Derby, 8.08; Nottingham 8.47; Leicester, 8.36; Sheffield, 9.17; Leeds, 10.10; Bradford, 10.42; Mansfield, 10.12; Lincoln, 10.30; Peterborough, 11.00; Manchester Central (via Derby), 10.25; Liverpool (via Derby), 11.52 p.m. Crewe, 9 56; Stockport, 10.82; Shrewsbury, 9.22; Paddington, 10.13; are among the train connections which may caught travelling to Birmingham ex Tewkesbury, 3.40 p.m.

The Tewkesbury Chamber of Commerce kindly offer a civic welcome and free concert on Saturday evening if there are a sufficient number of visitors in town that night.

The letter continues with details of licences, accommodation and other things. A train-full of anglers from all over the country must have brought a lot of business. Pubs competed hard to stage the weigh-ins for these competitions, but the fate of the poor fish must have been far worse than today's.

John Rogers' Journal

Mr Rogers' journal ends on March 15th, so this is the last extract. It finishes with a report of the death of Widow Smith. Almost all these entries are reports of sick visits and the prospects for recovery of the people he visited.

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.

March 5th

A fine day but very cold. I visited Widow Boverux [*Devereux*] today she still getting weaker. Blind Mr Nichels [*Nichols*] is now getting better and hopes soon to be well.

I spent a little time in the Abbey Church today and took a walk to Gubshill

March 6th

A very fine day but cold wind. Called to see Widow Duverax [*Devereux*] and visited my old friend and neighbour Mr Nicheles [*Nichols*] also I went to see Mr Young but his [*word missing*] said he was asleep and could not be disturbed.

I then visited Mr and Mrs Smith and his wife at Barnes Alms Houses. The wife have been blind for thislast 20 years. The husband is a shoemaker by trade and is an old soldier with a

pension of sixpence a day. He served in the Russian War in 1855 and got a Medal of Honour for his service.

March 7th

A fine day. Visited Widow Moody who now is much better. Also John Buckel [*Buckle*] in the Old Baptist Chapel Yard who is very near blind and have been so for many years. He was a verger at the Abbey Church for the long time of 35 years. He was pensioned off duty some years ago and they still give him the wages as he used to have when he was in active service though he is a very intelligent man and knows a great deal about the history of Tewkesbury and the leading men of the Town during the 18th Century

March 8th

A very fine day. Sunday. I went Chapel in the morning.

The love of God to men. The love of God ruled the actions of men etc

In the afternoon attended Brethren Meeting and at night the Baptist Chapel where there was a Memorial Service to the late Mr Griffiths who died a short time ago. The text was th 90th psalm and the words was – so teach us to number our day[s] that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom

March 9th

A rather stormy day some rain most of the day. I visited a poor Widow Mrs Duvreux [*Devereux*] twice today. She seems to be drawing near her death

March 10th

A fine day. Widow Duverux [*Devereux*] is no better but rather worse. Not expected to live long and as far as I can judge it will be a happy release

March 11th

A fine morning but strong cold wind. I visited Mr W. Healing this morning and found better after a rather long illness. He went to Bournemouth thinking he should get better there but the air did not agree with [*him*] so he came home

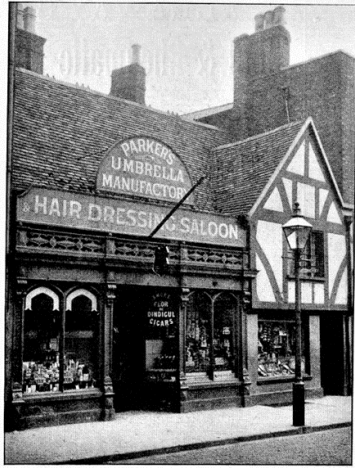
I had a long talk with him in his private sitting room and he told me he was turned over 70 years old. The age of man is three score years and ten. He gave me some money to help the poor with.

My second visit was to a poor blind Widow whose name is Anderson. My third visit was to an old Widow in the Churchyard Alms Houses named Hollands. My fourth visit was to a very poor Widow in Barnes Alms Houses her name is Smith she is 86 years old she is very ill hardly expected to live through the night. My fifth visit was to a poor Widow named Duvreux [*Devereux*] she is on the point of death

A very sudden death took place at one of the new houses on Gloucester Road on the 10th March his name was Patching. He came to the Town last Autumn he was engaged to the building firm of Collins and Godfrey and Co as the Chief Foreman of the Works and Offices. The house he went to live in was not quite finished and perhaps it was damp and led to the poor man's early death. He died through Rheumatic Fever. His age was 33 years and he leaves a young wife and a young child to mourn his sad loss.

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.



RECOMMENDED by the LEADING GENTRY of the Borough and District.

HAIRDRESSING in all its branches.—Private Rooms for Ladies, Children, and Gents.—Country and Town Residences visited to order.

TOBACCOS, Cigars, Cigarettes, Pipes, Pouches, Cigar and Cigarette Holders of all the best and leading makes in stock. Any brand or make of goods not in stock, procured at a day's notice. Repairs to Pipes, &c.
Wholesale Trading at lowest prices for cash.

UMBRELLAS & SUNSHADES made, repaired, and re-covered on the premises, equal to any London Factory. Customers can select their own materials from a sound and reliable stock.
Low Prices, Best Goods, Sound Work, and Quality of Material Guaranteed.

LADIES' & GENT'S TOILET Articles in Stock. Toys and Games of all and every description. Combs, Pins, Purses, Curling and Waving Irons, Spirit Lamps, Brushes, Side Combs, Back Hair and Fringe Nets, &c. What you don't see please ask for.
Our Trade Motto is to Oblige.

ONLY ADDRESS:—
W. M. PARKER.
—Hairdresser, Tobacconist, and Umbrella—
Manufacturer,
HIGH STREET, TEWKESBURY.

117 and 118 High Street is one of the more interesting of High Street buildings. Its style is of a medieval Hall House with a Solar cross-wing. Without any dendro-dating to help, it is estimated to be early sixteenth century or maybe older.

The earliest record we have is from 1789, in the will of Sir William Codrington (the door to the right is alleged to have once been Codrington's Alley). It passed through several hands until in 1870 Charles Dowswell, hairdresser, took it over. He sold it to James Maysey, umbrella manufacturer in 1889. It transferred to Mrs Harriet Franklin. In 1891, though, William Parker, hairdresser, is in occupation, and as this 1903 advertisement shows, he has combined umbrella manufacturing and an ever-profitable tobacconist business. An unusual combination. Maybe somewhere tucked away in a local attic is a Tewkesbury broolly? Mr Parker sold the business in 1952, when he was 82 years old. It was taken over by A. W. McHugh, who was a tobacconist and newsagent but also sold toys and fishing tackle. No umbrellas. Next owner was Mr. Kendall-Ward, who went bankrupt in 1962.

In later days it was Gale's toy shop, Petal's Florists, Gregg's Bakery, then the Baker's Oven. Now it is a restaurant.

CONTRIBUTIONS

This newsletter is written 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@tewkesburymuseum.org.

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