

Today, some of our members began their talks about this year's project, All the members have chosen roads, streets, areas of where they live in Wyre Forest and have researched the origins of the addresses.

Jean told us about the hamlet of Puxton, which is within the parish of St Mary's. At the top of Puxton lane stood the Sunnyside Nursing home, which in 1936 Lionel Stretton offered to the hospital, it had been the Stretton family home. Many of the town's residents were born at Sunnyside, including some of our members. At the bottom of Puxton lane was the site of Townsend Carpet Works. Also on the site was a mill alongside the river Stour which was purchased in 1874 by Frederick Francis Jelleyman, a rope, twine and tarpaulin manufacturer. Around 1890 he started to manufacture carpets. In 1963 the site was purchased and became Carpets of Worth. The Mill was Grade 2 listed in 2005.

Along the bridle path stood the home of John Pearsall, the founder of the local carpet industry in 1735. The house built in 1765 was of 4 storeys with a fine oak staircase and a cellar which was frequently flooded. The house stood derelict for years before being demolished in 1980. Farther on stood Puxton House and Farm, it is thought that it was listed in the Domesday Book in 1086. During the first half of the 19thC it was occupied by Joseph White of a wealthy landowning family. The farm extended across Fairfield into Wolverley to the river Stour. Later on the house was home to solicitor James Amphlett Morton until his death in 1929. The house was demolished in 1970 as the Marpool estate was developed.

The 22 acres of Puxton Marsh Fen was created an SSI in 1985. It is linked with the marsh areas of Wilden and Stourvale Marshes and Springfield Parkland. It is recognised as the most important wetland habitats in the Midlands.

The flood storage scheme alongside the marsh was started in 2003 when huge storage tanks were constructed to hold water from the river Stour. The flows are controlled by a concrete culvert, this operation saves the town from being flooded. The works were completed in 2006 at a cost of £11million.

Franch Court is of immense importance, being another medieval site recorded in the Domesday Book. The remaining buildings now front the modern Franch Court drive built in 1972. The original buildings of the working farm until the mid 19thC were accessed from Lowe lane. From

1835 the house became a gentleman's residence before being demolished by the carpet manufacturer Michael Tomkinson about 1900, as he expanded his Franche Hall estate.

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Liz told us about the Habberley Valley area. Formed 230million years ago during the Triassic Period, the hill of Trimpley overlooks the hollow sandstone valley. Local legend has it that the giant Fingal when drunk fell from Ridgestone rock into the hollow below, he was buried where he died, in the centre of the valley now known as The Giant's Grave. Peckett's Rock has been eroded over the years by the generations of climbers carving their names into the sandstone.

In the 1900s the valley was a popular leisure site for Victorians and Edwardians and many folk still remember the swing boats of Jennings Fun Fair.

Yew Tree Inn built in 1840/50 and owned by William Henry Anderson until taken over by M & B in 1895, changing its name to Habberley Valley Hotel. It was sold to MR D F Pritchard in 1914 who renovated it back to a family home, it is still a family home for the Hudson's.

The valley has been damaged by modern motor vehicles, so in 1991 Wyre Forest bought the whole site, with plans to preserve the ecology and to secure its future. In 1994 the valley was declared a Local Nature Reserve, since then much conservation work has been undertaken to preserve the valley for future generations.

The land where Farfield now stands at the top of Comberton Hill was in 1780 owned by Lord Foley, and developed between 1840 and 1900, to coincide with the opening of the railway in 1851, the Station Inn opened in 1849. The small close of The Firs was built on land belonging to two large houses, The Firs occupied in 1851 by William Bogatt and Farfield House by Henry Brinton with John Brinton living next door.

Notable residents of Farfield: John Mills Baptist Church minister, Thomas Blunt of the boot and shoe shop in the Bull Ring, Henry Gethin, whose 2 sons played cricket for Worcestershire, Alfred Jenns, town Ironmonger, whose daughter Elizabeth became a well known star of British cinema appearing in the 1937 version of "A Star is Born" in Hollywood.

The development of Farfield reflects the varying fortunes of the carpet workers and gives an insight into the growth of trade and middle-class in Kidderminster.

Villiers Street, in 1839 the St Georges Land Club started to develop the land in the corner of Love lane (Offmore Rd) and Chester lane (Chester Rd North) This work created Villiers St and Lorne St. This small street is now one-way from Chester Rd North and Lorne Street. It consists of 16 terraced houses on either side of the narrow road with access to lockups at the rear. The Cricketers Arms PH built in 1886 stood at the end of Villiers St in Lorne St, sadly now turned into residential property. On the corner of Lorne St and Villiers st stood a typical open all hours general store, family owned and run by the Grundys.

Wendy chose three streets within a stone's throw of each other, Talbot St, Plimsoll St and Hume St.

The land around these 3 streets were all at one time part of the Caldwell, (Caldwell) estate, which went from the town centre past Brinton's park to the canal which borders the river Stour, the land was owned in 1842 by John Jeffrey.

The school of Art and Science was important in the town as facilities were needed for training the craftsmen and engineers in the carpet factories. The master weavers, designers and engineers wanted a better standard of housing compared to the other workers' cottages.

So came about the land clubs set up by factory owners and the towns' business people. They bought pockets of land from the Caldwell estate and built villas and terraces in order to attract the best craftsmen.

At this time children did not attend school but they were working in the factories. In 1870 the law changed and children were being sent to the Board schools which were being built by these town benefactors

Hume St: Sarah Talbot married to the town solicitor William Talbot was well known for her commitment to Womens' Rights and she became the only female member of the Board of Governors for these schools. Hume street school was one of these first schools, was built amongst the terraced houses, but many of these with the school were later demolished under compulsory purchase to build the new Town general hospital in 1971. All of the terraced houses in Hume street had been built under the Caldwell Land Club directors, all of whom were local industrialists and businessmen.

Plimsoll Street, Born in Bristol in 1824 Samuel Plimsoll was a social reformer who sat in Parliament and brought about the changes in Merchant Shipping. He was the instigator of the law about the plimsoll line on ships to avoid them from sinking due to being overloaded. The law saved many lives from being lost at sea, on rivers and canals. Our area relied heavily on water transport to move coal, wool and carpet products so the word Plimsoll would be very familiar to the townspeople. Samuel Plimsoll died in 1898.

Talbot Street; the name goes back many generations in the town, with many family members serving as solicitors and as local government officers.

In 1865 Sarah, William's wife spoke to the owner of Pike Mills about forming a Cooperative Society. At the Anchor Inn 112 men and Sarah met with Richard Baxter a cotton mill owner from Blackburn Lancashire and he agreed to become the first president of this local Cooperative society. The committee purchased land in Oxford St and built the first Kidderminster Co-operative Society store.

Do you remember Santa's sleigh ride in the Christmas Grotto?

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Rose chose a famous family that left their mark on Bewdley town, streets and surrounding areas, The Baldwin Family.

In August 1867 Stanley Baldwin was born to Alfred and Louisa. In 1888 Stanley entered into the family iron works business based in Wilden lane. He remained working there until he became MP for Bewdley in 1908.

In 1892 Stanley had married Lucy Ridsdale from Rottingdean and lived in Dunley Hall. In 1912 the family was growing and Stanley bought Astley Hall. He was active in Parliament throughout his political life, promoted to the front bench, in 1920 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1923 became Prime Minister for the first time. After the 1924 Election he became PM for the second time and in 1935 he succeeded Ramsey MacDonald as 3rd time Prime Minister. In 1937 he retired from office and took the title 1st Earl of Bewdley. In 1947 Stanley died at Astley Hall aged 80. He was a great benefactor to the people and his workers in our area. In Sept 2018 a sculpture of Stanley Baldwin was unveiled by the Duke of Gloucester, it stands near to the entrance of Bewdley Museum.

Lucy Baldwin, nee Ridsdale born June 1869, she was a writer and activist for maternity health. In honour of her many charitable activities she was invested as a Dame of Grace, Order of St John of Jerusalem. In 1929 she founded the Anaesthetics Appeal Fund to raise concerns about pain in childbirth, this work contributed to the 1936 Midwives Act. In 1937 she was given the title of Countess Baldwin of Bewdley. Lucy died in 1945 at Astley Hall aged 76.

In honour of her work in maternity care the philanthropist Julian Cahn donated the funds to build the Lucy Baldwin Maternity Hospital in Olive Grove, Stourport. In the 1960s a new device for administering nitrous oxide and oxygen for obstetrics was named the Lucy Baldwin Apparatus for Obstetric Analgesia.

There are roads in Bewdley named after varieties of Apple, Rose told us about 2 of them:

The first Bramley Seedling tree had been planted in a garden from pips by Mary Ann Brailsford in Southwell in 1809. When this cottage was sold in 1846 the new owner Matthew Bramley named the un-named fruit, Bramley Apple. In 1856 a nurseryman took cuttings from the tree to grow on. The first recorded sale of a Bramley apple was in 1862, the cost 3 apples for 2 shillings. In 1900 despite being blown down in a violet storm the tree survived and continued producing fruit for two centuries. In 2006 the original tree began to suffer from honey fungus and that proved fatal.

The town of Southwell still holds many celebrations in memory of the first Bramley Apple.

The Laxton Superb Apple was developed in 1897 by the Laxton brothers, it is cross between Cox's Orange Pippin and the Wyken Pippin. The Laxton brothers were a Victorian company of plant breeders in Bedford and they introduced the apple to the public in 1922.

In 1957 the company was taken over by Bunyard Nurseries but when that closed down the orchards were built on. But the Laxton Superb Apple variety still lives on in Bedford, as in 1999 the town planted an orchard to preserve the name in memory of the Laxton brothers who first developed it.