The Severn Bridge Disaster

Stinchcombe History Society presents a talk by Paul Barnett

On 25 October 1960 at 9:45pm, two tankers travelling up the Severn careered into the Severn & Wye Railway Bridge. The tankers were Arkendale H, travelling from Avonmouth and carrying 190 tonnes of tar, and Wastdale H, who set off from Swansea with 200 tonnes of petrol. They followed the blue leading lights (which can still be seen today) up the river.

British Rail owned the bridge at the time, and were undertaking strengthening works. Amazingly, the six workmen survived as they had absconded to the local pub to watch a boxing match on TV! As the workmen were welding, there cannot have been any gas in the mains, so talk of a gas explosion is a local myth; however, the flames from the fuel that the tankers were carrying could be seen 8 miles away and turned the sky orange. Also, the Forest lost its gas supply for quite some time. Another local myth is that the two tankers were tied together; whilst this was illegal, it did happen to save fuel and manpower as only one boat needed to be operating.

Come and listen to the whole story……

£3.00 payment on the door is CASH only!