

***he Story of the Forest. A children's history of the Forest of Dean*, by Andy Seed, illustrated by Ursula Hurst. Published by the Forest of Dean Local History Society in association with Foresters' Forest, a National Lottery Heritage Funded Landscape Partnership Programme. 60pp. £8.00.**

This very attractive and well-illustrated book is primarily aimed at young people, but is equally suited to all ages who are keen to learn more about the area. The language is straightforward but makes no attempt to talk down to the intended audience. The variety of pictures – photographs, primary-source illustrations, hand painted pictures – are interspersed with bite-sized information.

Following a brief overview and explanation of the importance of history to one's understanding, there is a double page map of the Forest, showing its location between the Wye and Severn, with the principal locations referred to in the book.

This is followed by a timeline, presented as a continuous stream, from the Stone Age to the 21st century. Further sections explore in greater depth aspects such as the Forest's royal heritage and its industrial past. Other areas, particularly appealing to children, include crime and punishment, the Forest at war, schools and education and living in the Forest.

Recent concerns regarding the Forest are also addressed. These include the area becoming the first National Forest Park, the 'Hands off our Forest' campaign, and ways in which young people can become active supporters through the 'Forester's Forest 2017-2022' programme. Also included is information on places to explore, forest experiences that can be enjoyed and web addresses to find further information.

Also, in boxed segments: questions are posed to encourage thinking and/or discussions; primary evidence is noted such as relevant documents, artefacts and images and, of importance to understanding a period of history, 'Things people didn't have.' It could be used as a source book for National Curriculum History topics.

The book is sponsored by the Forest of Dean Local History Society and I would thoroughly recommend it to all ages, though particularly for young people.

Sally Self