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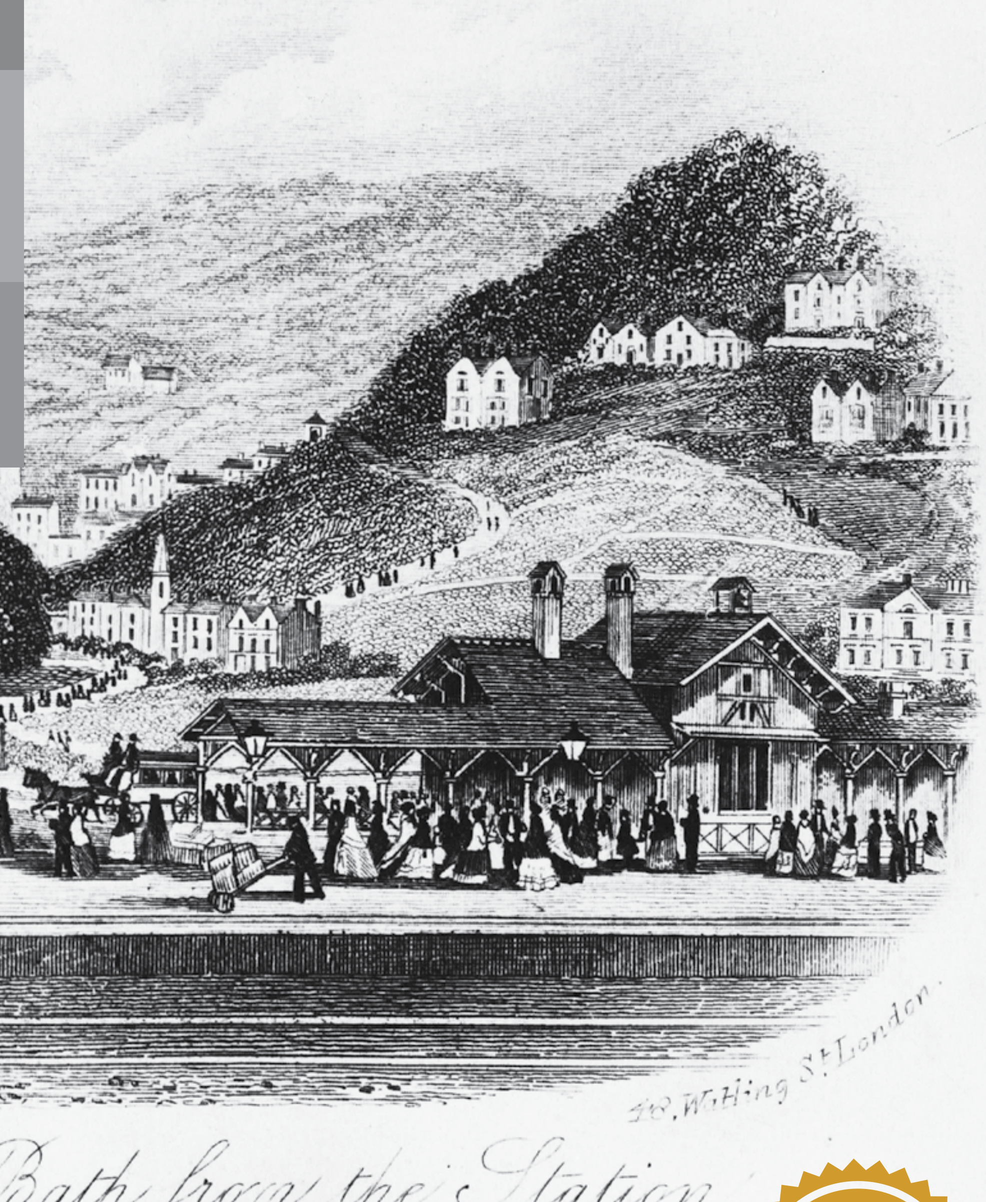

FREE

PLUS Homes for Hinckley's heroes • Ruddington: A "large and well-built village"of handloom weaving and much more

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Oresta Muckute, Dr Helen Drew, Dr Hannah Nicholson
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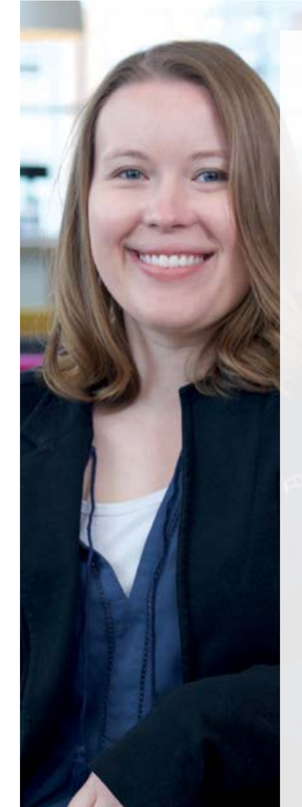

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NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

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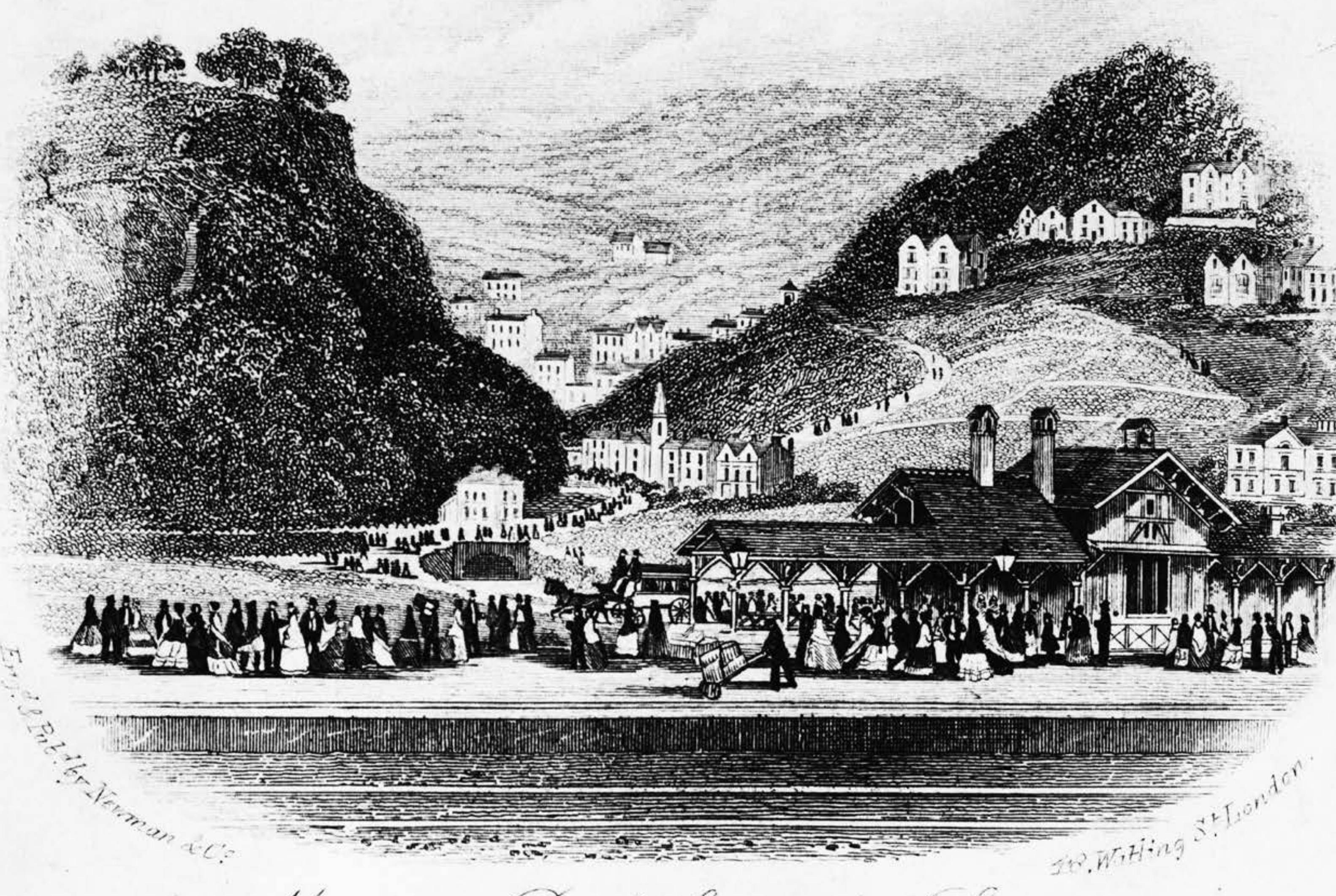
BY CHRISTOPHER CHARLTON AND DOREEN BUXTON

Matlock Bath: An East Midlands trippers' *paradise*



The years following the end of the Napoleonic wars were challenging for the smaller inland spa resorts. Their wealthy clientele could now return to the German and French spas that had been denied them by so many years of conflict. Also, they faced increasing competition from the coastal towns offering seaside fun and treatments based around saltwater bathing. Nor could they compete with the larger inland resorts, such as Harrogate, with its new medical treatments and, later hundred bed hotels and high-quality entertainment.

Matlock Bath was no exception. For some years after the war it still welcomed its coroneted visitors, but it now catered predominantly for the middle class, the farmers and tradesmen, from across the region. Yet a new life for the resort was on the horizon. The first step towards the development of a different economy was taken in May 1840, with the opening of the North Midland Railway from Derby to Masborough, Rotherham. At the beginning of July, the line was further extended to Leeds. It passed through a place then known as Amber Gate (now Ambergate), and the sharper minds in Matlock Bath, and in the railway company, were quick to recognise a potential new tourist trade, where passengers were carried onward, by coach or canal boat, to the Bath, as it was known to locals, about 8 miles away. And so began Matlock Bath's reinvention as a regional day-tripper destination.

Mary Cumming, the proprietor of the Old Bath Hotel, was among the first to exploit this new opportunity, advertising an omnibus service to meet trains as they arrived at Amber Gate. The railway companies sometimes worked with her. In June 1842 the Midland Counties Railway advertised a special train from Leicester, with a connecting service from Rugby, to Amber Gate. It would arrive about 9.30 a.m., where *"Fly Boats conveniently fitted up for the conveyance of Passengers [would] immediately proceed onwards, along the Cromford Canal to Matlock, where they will arrive about Eleven O'Clock; returning from there at Seven p.m."* Refreshments were to be provided at *"Cummins (sic) Old Bath Hotel"*. First class from Rugby cost 17s and from Leicester 12s; second class 11s and 8s. Prices quickly fell. Two years later, seats on a Midland Railway excursion train from Leicester, in second-class carriages, also with boat transport, cost only 5s from Leicester and 3s from Derby, so bringing a day out in Matlock Bath within reach of a wider public.

The traffic was clearly significant. *"Looker-On"*, writing to the Derby Mercury in August 1842, noted the special trains which, within the last month, had brought *"hundreds and thousands to see this mystic vale."* The potential was not lost on the directors of the Manchester, Buxton, Matlock and Midlands Junction Railway as they contemplated a new line extending north from Amber Gate to connect Matlock Bath directly to the national rail system. As its chairman, George Henry Cavendish MP, reminded shareholders, there were already *"thousands of individuals"* visiting Matlock; once they were in business *"the existing large traffic would be immensely increased."* He was right. The railway reached Matlock Bath in June 1849. Already by November *The Illustrated London News* could report that, since the opening of the 11 1/2 miles of line from Ambergate to Rowsley, *"trains [had] incessantly poured in from all the principal towns of the Midland Counties."* Matlock Bath's future as a regional day trip honeypot had been secured.

The actual number of day trippers in these early days, or indeed throughout the century, via this rail link, is difficult to establish precisely. The figures so often seem prodigious. How could a village of Matlock Bath's size accommodate such an influx of visitors? But the consistency of the newspaper and other reports suggest the numbers have to be accepted, at least as ballpark figures. Just a year from the opening of Matlock Bath's station there was news of a single party of 1,700 from schools in Sheffield and, a month later, of a train of 47 first- and second-class carriages from Gloucester, Cheltenham and Birmingham. Years later, towards the end of the century, figures as high as 20,000 or 30,000 visitors on a single day are noted. Such days would have been public holidays but it is clear that on a summer Saturday, if the weather was reasonable, the Bath would have been buzzing. For a resort with generations of experience of dealings with a leisured and moneyed elite, there were painful changes to be made. The shops that once sold costly Blue John ornaments to the Dukes of Devonshire and Rutland now dealt in cheap trinkets and souvenirs; and stalls sold objects from the petrifying wells and a range of spar products.

In the early days of this revolution in its fortunes, temporary measures were adopted to manage the sudden influx of visitors. At the Old Bath, first-class ticket holders were fed inside; second-class outside in a marquee. The arrangements were not foolproof. In July 1842 a disgruntled second-class ticket holder from Leicester returned home unfed. He was told the fault was his because the marquee was fully *"capable of containing hundreds of occupants"* and enough food was left over *"to furnish dinner to 250 or 300 persons."* Enlarged eating places later emerged, catering for immense numbers. The Central Restaurant, for example, could seat 500. Touts now stood outside the station and on the pavements imploring visitors to patronise their establishments or use their carriages, cabs or donkeys to explore the neighbourhood. It took the resort many years to come to terms with the demands of this new way of life. As late as June 1871 the Local Board was being urged to consider the provision of urinals *"for the convenience of the excursionists"*, because as Mr Parkin, a member of the Board, admitted: *"at present there [are] no public conveniences whatever."*

The attractions, too, that had once offered a bespoke service to the well-to-do now had to adapt to the needs of huge parties. In 1844, for example, Benjamin Bryan, who styled himself the principal Matlock guide, and who was the proprietor of the Devonshire Cavern from 1832 -1847, met a 700 strong party in Cromford and conducted them through the cavern. On one such occasion he found himself at the head of a party leaving the cavern where the tail of the group had yet to enter.

Aside from the practical issues there were also social tensions. Cheap rail travel brought to the resort members of a humbler social class than would previously have visited. Some groups, funded by philanthropic generosity, even contained people from a stratum of society which, in the strictly hierarchical system of the period, was regarded as being the lowest rung of the social

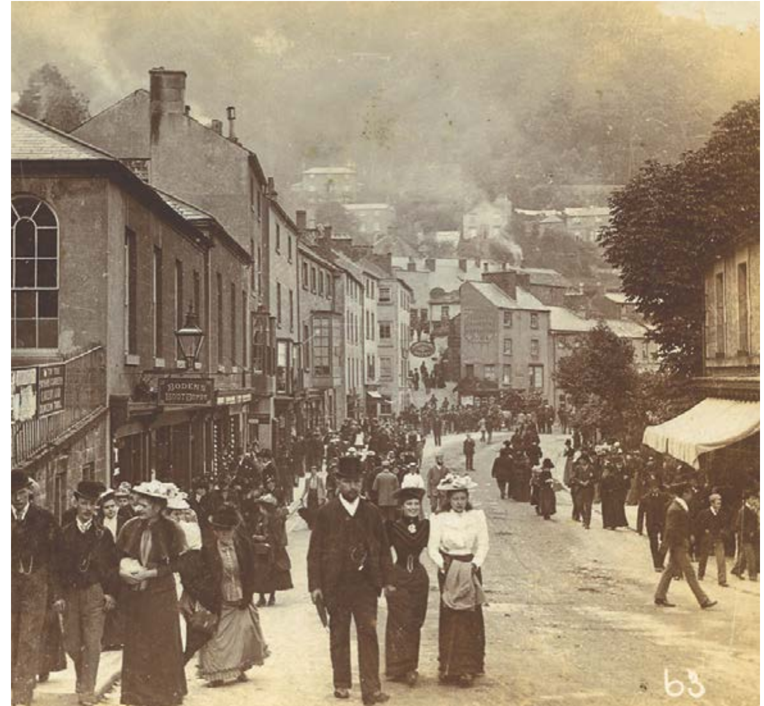


IMAGE OPPOSITE: MATLOCK BATH FROM THE STATION, ABOUT 1869. VISITORS HAVE SET OUT TO EXPLORE THE NEW ROAD UP THE HILLSIDE TO THE HEIGHTS OF ABRAHAM.
IMAGE RIGHT: VISITORS IN THEIR 'SUNDAY BEST' ON SOUTH PARADE, MATLOCK BATH, 1890S, ENLARGED HALF STEREOGRAPH, PHOTOGRAPHER ALFRED SEAMAN.

Further Reading: Christopher Charlton and Doreen Buxton, *Matlock Bath A perfectly romantic place ISBN 978-1-9161609-0-3*, (Matlock 2019).

THE LAST TRAIN, MATLOCK, FROM ABOUT 1910, ONE OF A SERIES OF CARTOON POSTCARDS SOLD TO MATLOCK BATH VISITORS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

“they covered the hill sides with picnic parties” and thronged to *“the museums, caverns and other objects of interest.”*

ladder. How would such people behave? Would there be trouble? This was put to the test in May 1858 when a special train brought 300 scholars, teachers and friends from the Moseley Street Sunday School in Birmingham. Among them the *Derbyshire Advertiser* identified *“a numerous detachment “of the Birmingham “shoe-black brigade”*, noting with evident relief, that *“the boys conducted themselves with strict propriety and decorum.”* Not all such visits ran so smoothly. Five years earlier, a party of between three and four thousand, also from Birmingham, organised by two well-intentioned gentlemen from the Temperance Hall, had made a very different impression. The organisers had rejected a deal with Benjamin Bryan which for £10 would have given them access to all the principal attractions. Consequently this huge party was restricted to the streets and public spaces with little to do. Their behaviour was described as *“about as bad as it well could have been. A great number of them”* were considered to be *“characters of the lowest grade, many robberies and a great deal of damage”* was done.

This widened social mix was potentially unsettling for the resort's traditional visitors, those who might book into one of the hotels to stay for some days. Their concerns were addressed partially by the travel and food critic, Lt.Col Newnham Davies, writing in the *London Pall Mall Gazette*. Newnham Davies sought to re-assure his metropolitan readers that if they were to book rooms in the refurbished Royal Hotel, the subject of his piece, they would find that Matlock Bath remained quintessentially a quiet, respectable retreat: *“the trippers disturb the sunny peace of Matlock but little. They arrive by train in the morning, and start off at once by char-a-banc to Haddon Hall or Chatsworth, or one of the other show places of the Peak District. They return in the afternoon, eat a big tea, feed the fishes in the pond, listen to the band and the Pierrots, dance a little, maybe, and go off again by early evening trains. They are quiet decent folk in the main, who have chosen a day amidst beautiful scenery in preference to the fiercer joys.”*

Of course, whilst many visitors did spend their day outside the village, huge numbers did not. As one eyewitness noted: *“they covered the hill sides with picnic parties”* and thronged to *“the museums, caverns and other objects of interest.”* There were some who felt the resort paid too high a price in embracing the day visit economy so comprehensively. The classicist and travel writer, John Benjamin Firth, wrote in 1905, *“they have deliberately degraded Matlock Bath into a Trippers Paradise, and encouraged the railway companies to let loose daily in the summer-time among its sylvan beauties a horde of callous rowdies - - The debasing influence of the day tripper is everywhere visible in Matlock - - it is a wanton outrage to one of the finest scenes in England.”*

In general, the excursionists had about six hours to fill and from the sustained popularity of the experience it was evidently felt to be worth the expense and discomfort of what for many would have been a long rail journey. For some this would have been on hard wooden seats and even in an open carriage. At least for the passengers who endured nearly five hours travel from Cambridge, in September 1867, for just under seven hours in the resort, there was the reassurance they would be in covered carriages rather than the open wagons often used for special trains.

Year after year the summer season found the Midland Railway delivering day trippers to Matlock Bath in large numbers. On Whit Monday in 1911 there were said to have been 80 trains, of which 26 were excursion specials. It was overwhelmingly safe; just one serious accident has come to life. This occurred on Good Friday, 1877. Fifteen or sixteen special trains had delivered fourteen or fifteen thousand excursionists from London, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Derby and other intermediate stations. At nine p.m. the return journey began. *“Four trains ran into the station at the rate of four or five miles per hour. A cry of ‘any more for Derby’ was no sooner raised than a general rush was made to the approaching train, which consisted of some 30 empty carriages, and the result was that 20 passengers were precipitated head foremost upon the train. Several persons fell through under the train and many carriages passed over some of their limbs.”*

With the resort's reputation as a destination secured, its partnership with the Midland Railway acquired a new dimension. Trains were now supplied for particular events, planned specifically as regional attractions. The first Matlock Bath well dressing in May 1865 secured an enormous number of visitors. In the words of the *Derby Mercury*, *“the Midland Railway Company carried heavy human freight from and to Sheffield, Belper, Derby, Chesterfield, Nottingham and many other towns.”* Later, there were annual regattas and swimming events, despite the fact that the effluent from most of Matlock Bath's residents and visitors, and more from the settlements upstream, all poured directly into the River Derwent. And from 1897 there were Venetian fetes. The Venetian illuminations captured the public imagination. In that year they were combined with the wakes and a regatta and then, in the evening a *“magnificent display by fairy lamps, Chinese lanterns etc. on the Lovers' Walks and exquisite presentations of Venetian illuminated boats on the river”*.

The day visit economy instigated by those first Midland Counties and North Midlands special trains continues, though rail travel ceased long ago to be the dominant mode of transport. By the 1930s motorists were being invited, via local newspapers, to park in the Riverside Car Park, *“a delightful rendezvous for motor-car picnics,”* cars 6d, motorcycles 3d. Thus, for the last 70 years, the coach and the car have prevailed. The line from Ambergate to the north was closed in 1967 but reopened in 1972 from Ambergate to Matlock and it now performs a valuable service for commuters and visitors; but not even on bank holidays are its passengers counted in thousands.

Christopher Charlton and Doreen Buxton
The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Educational Trust

“They Prefer the River”

Nottingham's Trent Baths, 1857–1941

BY LUKE DANES

For almost eighty-four years, a short stretch of the River Trent in Nottingham was home to what was once described in the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* as *“the finest open-air baths in the kingdom”*. Today, no trace remains of this once popular spot, which in its prime could attract many hundreds of swimmers who were eager to escape the warm and chlorinated indoor pools and embrace the wild and natural freedom of the river.

The River Trent had been enticing swimmers since the mid-1700s, when two bathing sites were established in the vicinity of Trent Bridge. The Records of the Borough of Nottingham state that in March 1857 the Corporation of Nottingham had tasked a new committee with improving the facilities for those bathing in the Trent, which in June of that year suggested:

> *“the erection of a shed on the North bank of the Trent opposite the Osier Holt between Wilford Boat and the Trent Bridge for … [100] yards which with the necessary accommodation for bathers is estimated to cost about £140.”*

These proposals were agreed unanimously, and the Trent Baths formally opened on 27 July 1857. Sensing the need for this to be continually staffed, it was further recommended that *“A man with a boat should be engaged as attendant at not more than £1 a week.”* the first baths attendant was a man known only as *“Wagstaffe”*, and he was soon followed by James Dick (1827–1885) who served in the role until his death in 1885. He was succeeded by Henry Tootell (c.1845–1909), an accomplished oarsman. Tootell was followed by Thomas George Davis (born c.1871), a well-respected local gentleman who had been seen to save over twenty swimmers in distress. The attendants were integral to the Trent Baths, and in addition to keeping a watchful eye on the bathers and helping those in trouble, sold half-penny buns to those who had finished bathing. They became friendly and familiar faces to regular visitors, and it is to their credit, bravery and quick reactions that as of 1907 only two bathing fatalities had been recorded at the Trent Baths.

The Trent Baths were an immediate success, although not always for the most obvious of reasons. The *Nottinghamshire Guardian* reported in March 1859 that, along with the encouraging numbers of well-behaved swimmers, *“the prevention of indecent exposure on the banks of the river”* provided *“ample justification for any outlay requisite”* for their continued maintenance. The problem was that, while their activities were popular, Trent Baths quickly became a financial burden, something which would continue to plague them for the duration of their existence. The crude and flimsy structure, invariably described as a *“shed”*, quickly fell into disrepair due to its exposed location, and damage caused by ice and flooding over the winter of 1860–1861 alone necessitated repairs costing around £80.

Not everyone, however, was impressed with this new addition to the riverbank. One critic, writing to the *Nottingham Journal* in July 1875, compared the Trent Baths to London's floating pool at Charing Cross, caustically branding Nottingham's offering a *“miserable specimen of municipal wisdom”*. There was also a degree of antagonism between some of the Trent Baths' patrons. One swimmer in June 1883 complained that:

> *“there are men and boys who take their soap and towel and use the bath as a place for cleansing their bodies. This is very unpleasant for people who go to swim and do not care for swimming in soap-suds. A slippery bath can be had for a very small sum at Sneinton”.*

By 1894 the Trent Baths were in serious need of modernisation and underwent a major transformation at a cost of around £1,000. The work was carried out by contractors W H Raynor and Sons and took five months to complete. Among the many notable new features were changing rooms with lockers and a cabin for the attendant. The Trent Baths reopened on 25 July 1895, the Baths Committee having *“greatly improved the place.”*

The year 1907 marked the Trent Baths' fiftieth jubilee, and on 24 August a lavish ceremony took place to celebrate this milestone. It was attended by Nottingham's Sheriff, Mayor and Mayoress, and members of the Baths Committee, *“both the baths structure and the Corporation barge”* having been *“gaily decorated in honour of the occasion.”* The centrepiece of the ceremony was a swimming carnival featuring a variety of races, diving displays, life-saving demonstrations and water polo matches, with musical entertainment provided by the Nottingham City Police Band. In reporting on the celebrations, the *Nottingham Evening Post* praised the Trent Baths' inclusivity, observing that *“The users, too, were drawn from all classes of society, from the aristocracy, from the lace trade, from the professional ranks, and even the gutter children, and all were made heartily welcome.”*

Visit www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk or email emhist@virginmedia.com

City of Nottingham.

JUBILEE OF TRENT BATHS.

Official Programme.

Swimming Carnival

RIVER TRENT,

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24th, 1907.

Promoted by the Public Baths Committee of the City of Nottingham.

J. A. H. GREEN, Esq., *Mayor.* FREDK. BALL, Esq., *Sheriff.*

Public Baths Committee:

Mr. Councillor Dabell, Chairman; Mr. Councillor Pendleton, Vice-Chairman; Mr. Alderman Bexon; Mr. Councillor Baker; Byron; Hewson; Mr. Councillor Marlow; Milner; Swain; W. Ward

Jubilee Sports Committee:

Mr. T. W. Baker, Chairman; G. Boot; W. Benner; J. J. C. Carlin; G. H. Carlile; H. R. Cobbin; Mr. A. M. Elliott; G. R. Elliott; H. Henson; W. S. Metcalf; B. A. Richards; G. Shepherd; Mr. A. J. Shipsides; Dr. W. Stafford; Mr. F. Stapleton; J. Wilson; A. J. Houly, Hon. Sec.; J. H. Richards, Deputy Town Clerk

PRICE ONE PENNY. SIR SAMUEL G. JOHNSON, *Town Clerk.*

IMAGES FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: THE REFURBISHED TRENT BATHS, C.1895 (© PICTURENOTTINGHAM.CO.UK). THE SITE OF TRENT BATHS AS IT IS TODAY. OFFICIAL PROGRAMME OF THE TRENT BATHS' JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS (COURTESY OF INSPIRE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES)

One of the jewels in the crown of Victorian and Edwardian Nottingham was lost forever.

Over the years the Trent Baths garnered a fiercely loyal following of outdoors swimming devotees who fought tooth and nail to protect their beloved local amenity. Since opening, the Trent Baths had been free to use, but in March 1915 an announcement that one penny admission charges were being introduced prompted an outcry of opposition. After seeing that money had been unwisely spent on new diving facilities and baskets for swimmers' towels, one disgruntled bather told the *Nottingham Evening Post* that, *"After these caprices to make the public pay for admission is like taking away a child's sweets and then administering a smacking."* Opposing the charges, another swimmer told the paper *"River swimming fills one with a glee and confidence that no inside swimming can give."*

Many feared that children would suffer the most, with the charges driving junior swimmers away from the Trent Baths into more dangerous stretches of the river where they could not be monitored. Parents voiced their disapproval at the plans, with one young swimmer remarking that *"I am only a boy, and to charge even a small amount will make a big hole in my limited pocket money"*.

Over the years the Trent Baths garnered a fiercely loyal following of outdoors swimming devotees who fought tooth and nail to protect their beloved local amenity.

The prospect of charging swimmers also opened up a rift between the two communities on either side of the Trent: the working classes of the Meadows to the north, and the wealthy and prosperous residents of West Bridgford to the south. The Baths Committee insisted that West Bridgford's swimmers were opposing the charges despite being able to easily afford them, whilst the *Nottingham Journal* reported the Committee as believing that the working classes *"did not expect everything for nothing."* Either way, following the weight of the public opposition the Baths Committee dropped the planned charges and, for a time, the Trent Baths remained free and open to all.

However, the idea of charging bathers did not disappear and in June 1932 the Baths Committee introduced charges for both adult and junior swimmers alike, with a two-tier pricing structure dependent upon the time of the week and the provision of a towel. Adults were to pay two or three pence, children one or two pence, and a charge of one penny was even levied for spectators. Again, this provoked a barrage of angry complaints, mostly about the charges for children. The *Nottingham Journal* called the charges *"an almost criminal mistake"* and described their introduction as *"Petty commercialism"*. Many long-standing regular bathers began to boycott the Trent Baths in protest at the charges. Others complained that they were now an old and outdated eyesore which were not fit for purpose. Rumours that the charges were implemented to enable the Baths Committee to recoup money which had been spent repairing recent flood damage circulated, though it was reported that it was far more likely the money was needed due to neglect and subsequent vandalism.

The Baths Committee stoutly defended the charges, insisting that they had improved the bathers' conduct, increased the number of female bathers and reduced the number of thefts committed by unscrupulous spectators.

Despite receiving a brief spruce-up in June 1939, it was a case of too little, too late.

However, whilst the River Trent had long claimed the lives of numerous people who failed to heed its dangers, many now blamed drowning incidents squarely on the admission charges. The *Nottingham Evening Post* reported that a witness at one inquest in July 1933 had told the coroner *"that some boys, when given a penny for the baths, spent it on ice cream and bathed in the river."*

Nonetheless, by the mid-1930s the writing was on the wall for the Trent Baths. In July 1934 one passer-by told the *Nottingham Evening Post* that the

> *"baths look very drab and shoddy, quite out of keeping with their beautiful surroundings. The whole structure of rusty corrugated iron and odd bits of wood is a blot on the landscape. I looked inside on Monday, and the sight that met my gaze repelled me."*

With the growing popularity of lidos, the Baths Committee considered building a new open-air pool close to the Victoria Embankment war memorial, although this never materialised. Nonetheless, talk of the Trent Baths closing was never far away. Aside from their inherent lack of aesthetics, the Trent Baths were said to have been too susceptible to flooding and not sufficiently financially sustainable. Despite receiving a brief spruce-up in June 1939, it was a case of too little, too late.

The outbreak of the Second World War signalled the beginning of the end for the Trent Baths, and in July 1941 it was announced that they were closing until the conflict was over. However, it soon afterwards transpired that the closure would be permanent. The reason given was the apparent high levels of pollution which had recently been discovered in the River Trent, an explanation which bathers greeted with universal scepticism. *"Talking about pollution and closing the Trent Baths, this is the biggest piece of moonshine I have heard"*, remarked one critic in a letter to the *Nottingham Evening Post* in July 1942, whilst another earlier that year questioned how recently sighted fish could survive in such poor quality water: *"Since salmon will not enter […] polluted waters either they or the Baths Committee must be mistaken."*

Undeterred, Nottingham's dedicated outdoors swimming fraternity pleaded for the Trent Baths' reinstatement, but their requests went unfulfilled and by June 1943 the dilapidated structure had been unapologetically demolished. The *Nottingham Evening Post* was at a loss to explain what had happened and could only describe the situation as *"a mystery"* in which the Trent Baths had been *"spirited away"*. And with that, one of the jewels in the crown of Victorian and Edwardian Nottingham was lost forever.

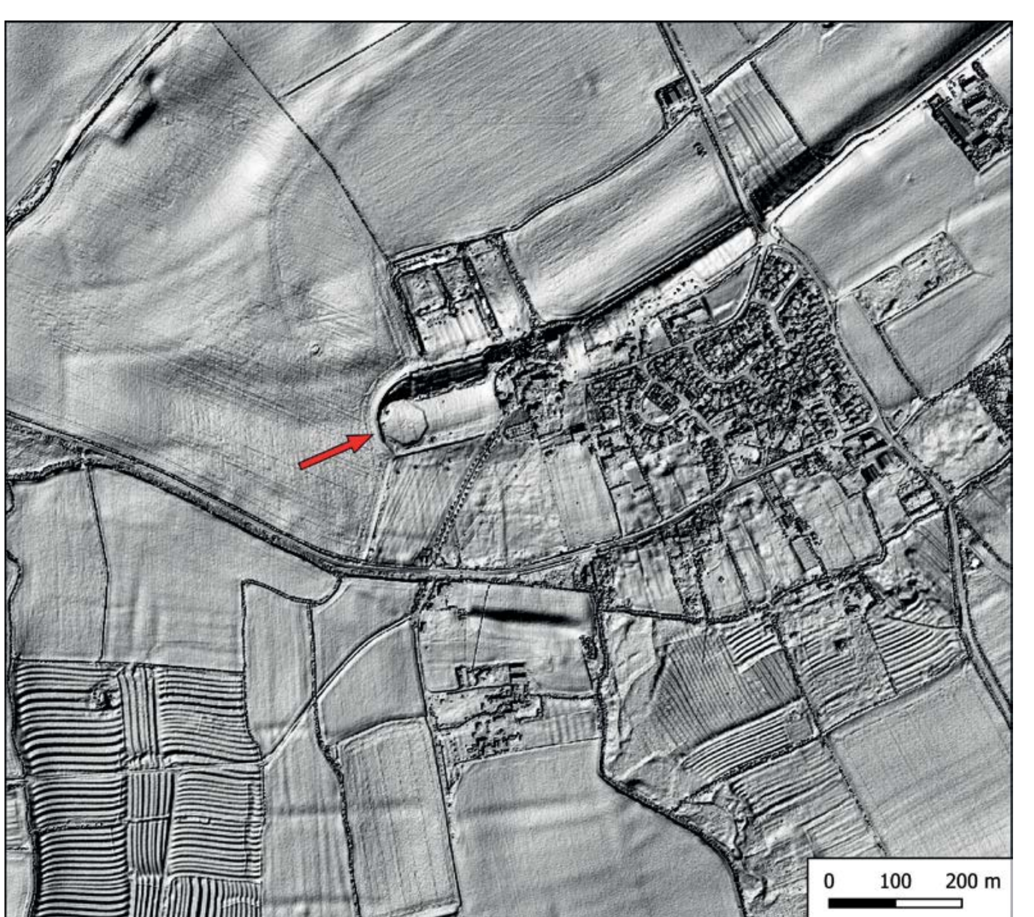
Luke Danes

Further Reading: Duncan Gray & Violet W Walker (eds.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham, Vol. IX: 1836-1900*, (Nottingham, 1956). J Holland Walker, 'An Itinerary of Nottingham', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society* Vol. 29 (1925), pp. 93-111.

Bowled Over:

a "lost" 18th Century bowling green re-found at Langar Hall, Nottinghamshire

BY NIGEL WOOD & GEOFF KIMBELL



<< IMAGE 1: SHADED IMAGE OF LIDAR DATA OF LANGAR & LANGAR HALL WITH OCTAGONAL FEATURE MARKED BY THE ARROW

The 1754 General Election became famous for the challenge made to the Duke of Newcastle's longstanding control of local politics. In the past, he had been able to secure the return of his own Whig candidates in four out of eight seats available in Nottinghamshire, one each in the county and in the boroughs of Newark, Retford and Nottingham. The challenger was John Plumptre, the sitting member for Nottingham. Traditionally a loyal Whig who had Newcastle's patronage, Plumptre changed his allegiance to the Tory cause following a demand from the Duke that he stand down in favour of his preferred candidate, George Augustus, 2nd Viscount Howe of Langar Hall. The campaign became notorious for both the levels of violence and bribery that took place in the weeks leading up to the election.

No doubt amongst the entertainments on offer would have been the opportunity to play a game of bowls, a then popular sport which involved significant opportunities for gambling.

IMAGE 2: PLAN OF TOWNSHIPS OF LANGAR & BARNSTONE SURVEYED IN 1818 WITH LOCATION OF FEATURE MARKED WITH A STAR (ORIGINAL COURTESY OF JOHN WALLWIN)

Plumptre's challenge proved unsuccessful. He received 915 votes, but Howe polled 980 votes and a rival Tory, Sir Willoughby Aston, 924 votes. Howe's success was in no small part due to the lavish entertainment he provided for the local burgesses. According to Thomas Bailey in his *Annals of Nottinghamshire*, Howe went so far as to entertain a number of these *"for months"* before the election at his seat at Langar Hall. He even went so far as to give their families a guinea every week. In the days immediately prior to voting he *"regaled them with such profusion"* that a number were rumoured to have died as a consequence! No doubt amongst the entertainments on offer would have been the opportunity to play a game of bowls, a then popular sport which involved significant opportunities for gambling.

Langar Hall had not always belonged to the Howe family. In the 13th Century the Manor of Langar passed into the ownership of the Tiptofts, and then to the Scropes with the marriage of Margaret Tiptoft to Roger le Scrope in 1373. The Scropes built Langar Hall, which was described by John Leland in 1540 as being *"embattled like a castle"*. The last of the Scropes was Emmanuel, Earl of Sunderland who died on 30th May 1630. His legitimate offspring all died in childhood but he did have four illegitimate children by a maidservant. One of these, Annabella, married John Grubham Howe, a Gloucestershire politician, and it was they who inherited the Langar estates and began the dynasty that would culminate with Admiral of the Fleet Richard Howe, 1st Earl Howe, the victor at the Glorious First of June naval battle against the French in 1794.

Although not the primary home of the Howes, Langar Hall was used for entertaining their guests, particularly Whig politicians and members of the Hanoverian court. The estate underwent a transformation during the 18th Century with emparkment of the land to the west of the hall and the rebuilding of the hall in a Palladian style. Formal gardens and water features were laid out and, following the then current fashion, it is likely that a bowling green formed part of the design. Following Earl Howe's death in 1799 the estate went into decline and the hall remained uninhabited except for the steward, Mr Hall. In 1818 the Langar estate was put up for sale and bought by John Wright, the Nottingham banker and joint owner of the Butterley Company. The Wrights were responsible for the demolition of the hall due to its poor state and the damage caused by at least one fire. Sometime around 1828 they replaced it with the much smaller current Langar Hall, now a country house hotel, which was built as a farm house for Hall Farm, one of the farms created out of part of the estate. This farm was under the tenancy of the Marriott family for many years. The estate was divided up into individual parcels and sold by the Wrights in 1883 and Langar Hall came into the ownership of the Bayley family from whom the current owners are descended.

When we visited the hall grounds on a training exercise for our project the last thing we expected to find was a possible link to the hedonistic days of the Howe ownership of Langar Hall but this is how it came about. ›

Project SEAL (St Ethelburga's Archaeological Landscape) was established as a community group in 2019, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to research the history and archaeology of the medieval pilgrimage site of St Ethelburga's and its landscape in the village of Langar, Nottinghamshire. As part of the research by members open-access LIDAR data was obtained from the Environment Agency and processed to produce shaded images.

Lidar (Light Detection and Ranging) is a remote-sensing technique, used for high resolution survey of landscapes. The technology is based on the use of laser scanners mounted on an aircraft in which the scanners emit pulses of laser light at a rate of many hundreds of pulses per second, producing highly accurate measurements and imagery of the ground overflow. With this technique it is possible to identify surface details not easily seen by the naked eye.

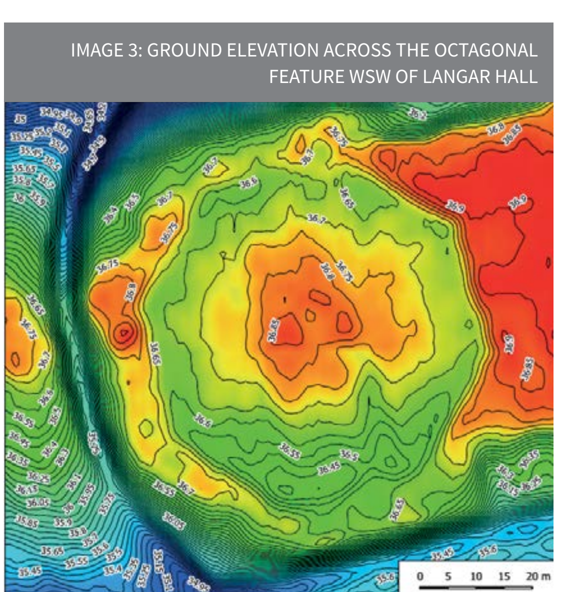
Examination of the resultant map identified a significant feature, octagonal in shape, in the paddock to the west of Langar Hall centred on SK71923459 (Image 1). The feature does not appear on the *Plan of the Townships of Langar and Barnstone surveyed in 1818* (Image 2, marked with a star). There are a variety of possible explanations for the feature. It could perhaps be a garden feature such as a pond or belvedere, a replica fort built in the 18th century for Admiral Richard Howe and his brothers to play upon when children, or a bowling green dating from the 18th or 19th centuries.

Although the site was outside the period of interest of our project, we took the opportunity to train our volunteers in "ground-truthing" the LIDAR interpretation by walking over the area in which the feature was located to see if anything was visible. The octagon was found to be readily seen as a shallow depression. Despite there having been heavy rain in the days preceding the visit the site was dry with no indication of it holding water, unlike the surrounding fields. This suggested that the feature was not an ornamental pond. As the feature is a depression with the ground surrounding it being at the same level as the paddock in which it is located it is unlikely to have been a belvedere, although the surrounding terrace could have been used as such but with no advantage of increased elevation for better viewing.

The suggestion of a model fort was discounted as there were no other obvious features such as bastions. The approximate width between the parallel faces of the octagon is 55 metres making it likely to be too large even for the most indulgent parents. This left the option of a bowling green albeit of an unusual shape. Further processing of the LIDAR data created a map of the ground elevation across the feature. This indicated that the centre of the feature rises to a similar level as the surrounding paddock, especially to the east

Project SEAL (St Ethelburga's Archaeological Landscape) was established as a community group in 2019, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to research the history and archaeology of the medieval pilgrimage site of St Ethelburga's and its landscape in the village of Langar, Nottinghamshire

IMAGE 3: GROUND ELEVATION ACROSS THE OCTAGONAL FEATURE WSW OF LANGAR HALL



(right hand side of the map). This suggests a "Crown Green" style of bowling green (Image 3).

It might be thought odd that a bowling green would be octagonal in shape. There is, however, one remaining elsewhere, which previously was thought to be unique. Bishop's Castle Bowling Club in Shropshire plays on an octagonal green on the site of the motte of a Norman fortification. It is believed that the green was created in 1719 or shortly after but was certainly in place by 1809, as it appears on a map of that date

The club plays crown green bowls. The playing area is approximately 45 metres between the parallel faces of the octagon. The rules of the game allow a number of matches to be played simultaneously using the entire area and in different directions.

In fact, the paper trail revealed that the Langar find was almost certainly a bowling green. An entry for the hall is to be found in the brochure produced for the sale of the *Osmaston Estates, No. 2, The Nottinghamshire & Leicestershire Division* held on 25th July 1883. It is listed clearly as No. 31 "Bowling Green and Paddock" with an area of 10 acres 3 roods 27 perches. This area corresponds exactly with that quoted for the field shown as number 31 on the Township Plan of 1818.

Exact dating still remains problematic. We know it was there in 1883, but why isn't it shown on the Township Plan of 1818? Does that mean it is a nineteenth century construction? As stated earlier, the current Langar Hall was built ca. 1828 as a consequence of the demolition of the original hall and was used as a farmhouse by tenant farmers. Although not impossible, it is unlikely that it would have been created during the period between 1818 and 1883. More likely, it would have been constructed in the 18th Century as part of the development of the Langar Hall estate into a park used by the Howes to entertain their political allies and other important guests. More work will be required to confirm this suggestion.

Nigel Wood and Geoff Kimbell
Members of Project SEAL

Project SEAL is most grateful to Louise Skirving of Langar Hall for access to the site.

HOMES FOR HINCKLEY'S HEROES

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

GRANVILLE ROAD, HINCKLEY - UDC HOUSES BUILT BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

As the First World War drew to a close, Britain faced a housing crisis. Severe pre-war shortages had been compounded by the lack of domestic building during the conflict. Thousands of troops were due to return home and there were fears of unrest. The Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, pledged *"to make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in"* and gave a commitment to build 500,000 new homes in three years.

The promise was accompanied by a dramatic change in approach. Before the war, the vast majority of people rented their home from a private landlord and it was assumed that private enterprise would meet the nation's need for housing. Now the Government was to act as a major provider and wanted councils to be its main agents. It also determined to improve standards and was much influenced by the ideas of the 'Garden City' movement. For a short period, housing became a flagship policy heralding the Government's commitment to improve the lives of ordinary people. In the view of some historians, it amounted to an insurance policy against revolution.

This article considers how the new approach was received in Hinckley and district. It describes what action was taken by the local councils, the difficulties they encountered and the houses which they eventually provided. Finally, it explores the legacy of this brief but intense period of activity.

Housing was already in short supply in Hinckley and the surrounding area prior to the war and the situation had deteriorated further. As well as individual hardship, there was concern about the effect on the local economy. The *Hinckley Echo* explained: *"the whole future development of the town greatly depends on the housing of the working classes. Industries cannot branch out if the workers have no-where to live"*. Even before 1914, the local hosiery and footwear industries had had to rely heavily on operatives who travelled daily from the surrounding settlements and, with both industries prospering in the immediate post-war period, the pressure on accommodation increased.

The Housing Act of 1919 required councils to carry out a survey of housing need in their area. Where sufficient houses *"for the working classes"* were not likely to be built by the private sector, the council was obliged to provide them itself. Subsidies were made available but only on condition that councils followed the Government's wishes on design, standards, costs and rent levels. The process was far from straightforward. The exceptional economic and social conditions which gave rise to the Act also created a very difficult environment in which to take advantage

Further Reading: Paul Griffiths, 'Homes for Heroes', *Hinckley Historian*, no.84 (winter 2019); Paul Griffiths, 'Early Council Housing: Hinckley leads the Way', *Leicestershire Historian*, no.53 (2017); Paul Griffiths, 'Hinckley's Answers to the Housing Question, 1923-1933', *Leicestershire Historian*, no.55 (2019).

RDC HOUSES ON AVENUE NORTH, EARL SHILTON

of it. The immediate post-war turmoil and economic 'boom' conditions produced shortages of building materials and skilled labour. This greatly increased costs and affected reliability. In addition, although the government's grant was generous, the way it was administered was laborious and had an inbuilt tendency to create friction between government officials and councils.

In Hinckley and district, two councils were involved. Hinckley Urban District Council (UDC) covered the town itself and had a population of about 13,650. Hinckley Rural District Council (RDC) was responsible for the surrounding area and included eleven parishes with a combined population of about 14,300. In the 1921 Census, four of these had a population of over 1,000 – Earl Shilton (4,434), Barwell (3,098), Burbage (2,589) and Stoney Stanton (1,507).

Hinckley Urban District Council (UDC)

The UDC was in a strong position to take advantage of the new Act. It was one of the few councils which had provided homes for rent prior to the war and already owned 28 houses, mainly on Granville and Rugby Roads. Its Surveyor, Edward Crump, had designed these houses and, despite still being on military service in France, had started to draw up new plans. In addition, the Council had identified two more sites for housing whilst the war was in progress.

Within days of the Armistice, the UDC confirmed its wish to proceed with a housing scheme. By December, it was considering Crump's preliminary proposals for 90 houses on the Park Road site and was organising a housing conference at which to consult interested parties. Already, however, there was concern about rising costs and rent levels. Over the next five months, the plans were refined to reflect councillors' views and to comply with the Government's requirements.

Within days of the Armistice, the UDC confirmed its wish to proceed with a housing scheme.

At one stage, the Council was ahead of the Government and had to revise its layout plans in order to take account of Government guidance which had only just been issued. As a consequence of all the changes, the number of houses which could be accommodated on the site fell from 90 to 59.

A comparison between these plans and those agreed in 1913 for the Granville Road scheme is revealing and highlights the higher standards which were now expected for council housing. Straight terraces of identical narrow-fronted houses were no longer acceptable and almost all the new houses were semi-detached with wider frontages. There were a variety of designs on the same site and some houses were laid back from the road in shallow crescents. All were set in substantial gardens. Inside, each house was provided with a separate bathroom and half of them included a second living room or 'parlour'.

By the end of 1919, a contract had been let to a local builder for the first six houses. These were occupied by the autumn of 1920, a comparatively early date by national standards. The Council had also carried out the survey of housing need and estimated that 300 houses would be required to meet 'unsatisfied demand' and to replace existing properties which were unfit for human habitation. It immediately instructed that layout plans be prepared for its second site, off Rugby Road.

Negotiations continued at length with the Government's Housing Commissioner who had to approve both the detailed house designs and the costs. The latter proved particularly troublesome in Hinckley where a buoyant economy meant that local builders could easily find other, more profitable, work. The Council persisted but was finally rebuffed by the local Builders' Federation in February 1920. It considered employing labour directly but this would have been too expensive. Eventually the Council received an offer from a Birmingham company to build a minimum of 100 houses at an average of £880. This compared with £175 in the last pre-war contract and reflected both higher standards and the rapidly escalating costs. Nevertheless, it was acceptable to the Housing Commissioner and approval was granted for the remaining 53 houses on the Park Road site and the first 47 houses on the Rugby Road site.

UDC HOUSES ON PARK ROAD, HINCKLEY

Even with a contract in place, the Council could not escape the shortages of materials and skilled workers. One consequence was that it became embroiled in a lengthy dispute between the builder and the Commissioner about whether tradesmen should be paid at Hinckley or Birmingham rates. The lack of plasterers in early 1921 was especially frustrating for councillors as, by then, the shells of about 20 houses stood empty for weeks, waiting to be 'finished off'. Local opinion was acutely aware that Hinckley had been one of the first towns to act but was now falling behind others.

In time, completions did take place and the houses were let to their first occupants, although it was not until November 1921 that the final group of tenants was selected. Rents were initially set at twelve shillings and six pence (62.5p) per week for houses with a parlour and ten shillings (50p) for those without. This meant that only 'better off' working-class families could afford to live in the new houses.

Late in 1921, work switched to the Rugby Road site but, by now, the post-war 'boom' had ended and construction proceeded uneventfully. The houses were finished by the end of 1922 but, by then, the Government had long ceased to consider proposals for further council house building. In total, the UDC had provided 106 houses under the 1919 Housing Act.

Hinckley Rural District Council (RDC)

In 1918, the position of the RDC was much less promising. Like most councils, it had no experience of providing houses for rent although agitation by Barwell Parish Council in 1915 had briefly forced the issue on to its agenda. It held no land for housing purposes. The RDC's population was spread across eleven parishes and the Council was under pressure to provide houses in most of these locations. As a consequence, it decided to develop many small sites, thus increasing its workload and costs. The presence of distinct village communities also introduced an extra layer of democracy because parish councils wished to be involved. This was sometimes helpful, for example when the RDC drew on the local knowledge of parish councillors to identify potential housing sites and to select tenants for the completed houses. However, at other times it introduced delays. Despite these drawbacks, the RDC set about creating a housing programme with enthusiasm. At first, it concentrated on the three largest settlements and the parish councils at Earl Shilton, Barwell and Burbage were soon at work looking for possible sites in their localities.

By the summer of 1919, discussions were well advanced on the sites which were eventually chosen.

The housing programme was soon extended to other villages in the district and, after the needs survey in the autumn of 1919, the Council announced its intention to provide 300 houses in eight settlements. Like the UDC, it followed Government guidelines on design so that, for example, all its houses were semi-detached and set in sizeable gardens. Also like the UDC, it encountered problems in dealing with the Housing Commissioner. Land valuations at Earl Shilton and Barwell were a particular problem until a compromise was negotiated in March 1920. This allowed the first building contracts – at Earl Shilton, Barwell and Burbage - to be agreed soon afterwards. Over the next few months, three more contracts were signed for houses at Sapcote, Stoke Golding and Stoney Stanton. The RDC used the 1919 Act to provide 180 houses in total. An idea of the impact on individual families is evident from the tenants nominated for the first houses at Barwell. They were all were currently sharing a home with at least one other family and recorded an average of 3.4 people for every bedroom.

The Legacy

The 1919 Act was terminated abruptly in July 1921 in greatly changed economic and political circumstances; only schemes which had reached tender stage were allowed to proceed. Nationally, the Act produced around 170,000 new council homes. In Hinckley and district, the final totals are shown in Table A.

TABLE A: Houses provided in Hinckley and district under the Housing Act 1919

Council	Location	No. of Houses
Hinckley Urban District Council	Park Road site	59
	Rugby Road site	47
Hinckley Rural District Council	Earl Shilton	80
	Barwell	38
	Burbage	20
	Stoney Stanton	16
	Sapcote	14
	Stoke Golding	12

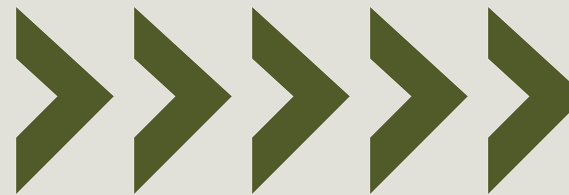
By Leicestershire standards, Hinckley UDC's performance was typical of the smaller urban councils. However, Hinckley RDC confounding all expectations, provided more houses than any other council in the County (except Leicester) and its ratio of one house for every 79 residents was only exceeded by the tiny Ashby Woulds UDC. Overall, the 286 extra houses in Hinckley and district increased the number of homes by roughly 4.5%. This did not match need but was a creditable performance within a short and turbulent period.

However, the significance of the 1919 Act does not rest on numbers alone. Although originally intended as a temporary measure for exceptional circumstances, it did in fact establish councils as large-scale housing providers and laid the foundations for later expansion. By 1980, there were just over five million council homes in England and nearly 30% of the population lived in them.

The 1919 Act also set high standards and provided houses which ordinary people in earlier generations could only have imagined. In so doing, it raised expectations which, by and large, have been maintained. Almost all the houses built in Hinckley and district under the Act are still occupied, although not all are now owned by the Council. Council houses were almost unknown before the First World War but, from the 1919 Act onwards, they became an important and distinctive feature of most towns and villages across Britain and, over the years, have provided decent and comfortable homes for millions of people.

Paul Griffiths
Hinckley and District Museum

Researching your own history can often be enlightening and rewarding, helping you to better understand the roots and quirks of your family and, in turn, yourself. At other times, this worthwhile pursuit can come with much confusion, which each researcher has to find a way to address. Here's the experience of one of our readers.



BY STEVE GLASCOE

A voyage round my Grandad

I didn't know my Grandad well. John Allen died when I was fifteen, and we lived far from his home in Matlock Bath. Hence on our occasional journeys north, my principal memories of him as a child were of a rather corpulent man, often confined to his bed; and a curious tinge of yellow to his complexion which I later learned was jaundice from cirrhosis of the liver. But I also remember him as a kindly old man, always interested in my progress at school and my interests outside it. When I told him I wanted to be a doctor he was delighted and said: *"Don't let anyone try to talk you out of it, lad. If you want something bad enough, and work hard enough at it, you can do anything."* In the years following his death in 1966, aged seventy-nine, I found myself wanting to find out more about his life, and with the help of my mother I was able to piece together a few details. ▸

A VOYAGE ROUND MY GRANDAD

Visit www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk or email emhist@virginmedia.com

My grandparents, John and Emma, taken in 1963. He was 76 at the time, my grandmother two years his junior

Born in Cromford in 1888, one of no less than fourteen children, John's parents were both farm labourers who lived on the edge of poverty their whole lives. They were not literate: I have seen their marriage certificate from 1878 and both had signed their names with a cross; *"His mark/Her mark"* had been written next to their crosses by the registrar on the day. My grandfather himself received only the most basic education, though he did learn to read and write.

When the Great War broke out in 1914 he immediately volunteered to serve with the Derbyshire Yeomanry, and in 1915 took part in the disastrous campaign in the Dardanelles, where he was struck in the face by a piece of shrapnel which temporarily blinded him. Shortly before he died, he told me he could still remember that day, the shrapnel whizzing around him *"like birds in flight"*. One eye eventually recovered, but the other was beyond healing and had to be removed. (Years later, despite being warned not to do so by my grandmother, Emma, he would often terrify his grandchildren, myself included, by removing his glass eye and handing it to us, a wicked twinkle in his one remaining eye.)

Having received a 'blighty wound', that is, a wound sufficiently serious to warrant repatriation to the Home Country, he took a job as compositor at *The Matlock Mercury*, a post he held for nearly twenty years. But John was also passionately interested in local politics, and in 1926 he was elected as a Labour member for Matlock Urban District Council. The records I have unearthed about his nearly thirty years in the Council Chamber show him to have been an eloquent, feisty, even formidable orator who was, according to his obituary notice in *The Matlock Mercury*: *"An enthusiastic and fearless advocate for the betterment of his beloved Matlock Bath, and a man of great independence of thought who was never afraid to take an unpopular line if a principle was at stake."*

But he had his maverick side, as the following tale from 1941 illustrates. I should say that this story came not from my mother, but from gleaning the microfilmed archives of *The Derby Daily Telegraph*, held at the Derbyshire Records Office in Matlock. In the edition of 10th March, 1941, there appeared the front page headline, *"COUNCILLOR AND MINISTER IN DIGGING MATCH"*, with the sub-headline, *"MATLOCK SPADE DUEL TO BE STAGED"*. The story was that Councillor Allen, who had said at a council meeting that some parsons in the district *"ought to take their coats off and do some work for the war effort"*, had received a challenge to a digging contest from a local minister.

In a letter to the council read out by the chairman, the minister said that he and his fellow parsons were not above taking off their coats, *"And I therefore challenge him to a digging match, the stake being ten shillings* [equivalent to £15 today], *the loser to make a contribution to the Spitfire Fund."* The item then says that Coun. Allen accepted the challenge. But that was not all. Four days later, a second article appeared in the *Derby Telegraph*, also on the front page, which carried the headline, *"DIGGING CONTEST "NOT DIGNIFIED""*. Below it was revealed that the Council had dissociated itself from the digging match on the grounds that it was *"not likely to add to the prestige of the Council"*. At a meeting, apparently convened especially to discuss the issue, one member suggested it would be *"a public spirited gesture if Councillor Allen would decline the challenge"*. But John Allen replied that as he had been challenged by the minister, he was bound, as an Englishman, to accept.

I found no more on the subject in any of the local newspapers, and I can only assume that, the Council washing its hands of the affair, the contest never took place. But the story says a lot about my grandfather's character, and indeed about the workings of local councils in the not-so-distant past.

Fascinating as it was, trawling through old newspapers had not been the original purpose of my visit to the Derbyshire Records Office. That was actually peripheral to my main task, which was to scan back numbers of the magazine *Derbyshire Countryside* (later renamed *Derbyshire Life*). This was because my mother had told me that her father, John Allen, had been a regular contributor to that journal in the 1940s and 50s. With the help of the extremely efficient and friendly staff at the Records Office I was quickly able to find numerous articles written by a J.W. Allen. Well written and entertaining, they covered a wide range of subjects, including *"Garland Day"*, an ancient festival to herald the arrival of summer, held on Oak Apple Day (May 29th) in the town of Castleton, walking in the Derbyshire Dales, and a piece telling the story of how the town of Matlock Bath got its name.

But was J.W. Allen my grandad? His birth certificate shows him to have had no middle name; he was plain 'John Allen'. It could have been a pseudonym, of course, but then further research uncovered another local man who *was* called J.W. Allen, with a different date of birth and death. I have to face the possibility that my grandfather did *not* write those articles in *Derbyshire Countryside*, and that the stories my mother had told me, namely that his articles were the talk of the town, with people saying things like *"have you seen what John Allen's been writing about this month?"*, were either mistaken, or joking. As I have said, my grandfather was intelligent and articulate; he could have written all those pieces, but I have to accept that it is more likely he did not. I think it will have to remain a mystery, though if any readers have any information on the subject I should be most interested to hear it. Researching the history of one's family, I suspect, often raises more questions than answers, and I suppose that is the nature of all historical enquiry. But one thing cannot be denied: it is enormous fun.

Steve Glascoe

I have to face the possibility that my grandfather did not write those articles in *Derbyshire Countryside*

MY MOTHER, JOAN, AS A PRETTY >> SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD IN 1940

'DUO' AT BISHOP LONSDALE, DERBY >>

Ronald Pope
The 'Secret' Sculptor

BY TONY HUBBARD

Ronald Pope (1920-1997) was a sculptor who deliberately preserved his privacy and divorced himself from the public world of art, even though many of his sculptures were commissioned for public display. In his poems, he wrote:

The secret artist works alone
Driven by an inner urge
To create again
A special version of the truth
Devoid of material gain
Satisfying universal need

He was a sculptor of the 'Modernist' school, and is listed in the Henry Moore catalogue of Modern Art. He created over 400 unique and loved sculptures, with large collections at Derby Museums, and the Djanogly Gallery, University of Nottingham. These sculptures are scattered around Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire. Further afield he has major work in Hertford, Sheffield and many other locations, including a large collection at Watford Museum. For much of his life Pope worked in Melbourne, Derbyshire, drawing inspiration from the High Peak and the Derbyshire Dales, Snowdonia, the Lake District and Norfolk.

After leaving school Pope attended an art school in Derby, but began his working career in 1938 as an engineer apprentice with Rolls Royce. He was a good engineer, but art was in his soul, and at lunchtimes he would borrow a room and paint in oils. He had no expectation that this would lead to anywhere other than an interesting hobby, until a former teacher and friend suggested he try for the Slade School of Fine Art, London. In 1945 he applied and was immediately accepted.

While studying at the Slade, Pope lived with his wife, Joan, in Ticknall, Derbyshire, renting a former gamekeeper's cottage called Knowle Hill, where their two children were born. They recall that the cottage was basic, having no electricity, mains water or sewage and no bathroom, remembering their father describing bath time as *"Monday left arm, Tuesday right arm"* and so on! The cottage was built around 1766 by the Burdett family of Foremark, but fell into disrepair after the Popes left in 1957. Fortunately, the Landmark Trust came to the rescue and restored it for use as a holiday let.

It was at Knowle Hill that Pope began to establish himself as a sculptor. However, recognition came at a price which Pope was not comfortable to pay. The more the quality of his work became recognised, the more he retreated from the public gaze, and the more he became increasingly frustrated with the commercialism he would need to adopt to deal with it. He wrote: *"Art is a conniving mistress/Drawing young minds/Into a complex web."* He had several large exhibitions during this time, but he was uneasy with the concurrent demands on him, and intrusion into his private life. His rejection of public acclaim was not a product of introversion. Far from it. Pope was a man with a clear mind and determined nature; but he was, at heart, a philosopher, a 'truth-seeker', who believed deeply that *"True art is a loving art"*, and that everything he created was *"sufficient to itself"*. He studied philosophy, especially the works of Martin Buber, and throughout his life he tried, through his sculpture, to explore the deeper meanings of love and life, and by this manner, to convey his thoughts to the wider world. His ideals are also conveyed through his poetry, in which he wrote:

One makes a space within oneself
Where ideas and thoughts
Mature and grow -
To be brought to fruition
By the creative process
Untrammelled by external fashion.

WIGSTON ACADEMY

> Throughout his life, he struggled to reconcile his passion for peace, compassion and understanding in a world he saw as mechanistic, aggressive and driven by ambition, and his sculpture, at times, portrays this conflict.

These ideals are expressed in much of his sculpture. On the ground floor of the Cathedral Cafe, Derby, is a sculpture in elm called *The Family*, depicting two parents and a child, in a somewhat typical 'family of three' pose. However, look closely at the attitude of the figures: one parent embracing the other, who is then embracing the child, who is, in turn, in an attitude of prayer. All three are joined by bindings. The effect is to create the impression of a strong family bond, and to inspire spiritual reflection on the nature of their relationship. This was without doubt the real core of Pope's life; his belief in the 'oneness' of the family, and indeed, humanity. His murals at St Simon and St Jude Primary School (Earl Shilton, Leicestershire) and at Wigston Academy (Wigston Magna, Leicestershire) are typical of this ideal, using both figurative and abstract representations of the adult/child relationship - the essence of love. Many schools have added distinction to their Pope sculpture by using it as a logo, or by placing it in a prominent position. Derby Moor Academy, for example, has redesigned its front entrance around its Pope sculpture.

Whilst living at Knowle Hill, and walking in the local area, his inspiration appears to have come from home and the sense of family. There are several sculptures, in stone, wood and metal, from this time with names such as *Mother and Child*, *Child with Flower*, *Family Group*, *Mother and Child with Bird.* Young children and a sense of growth feature in his work.

CRUCIFIX AT ST MICHAEL WITH ST MARY CHURCH, MELBOURNE

He was prolific in his sculpting output, and also sketched many dozens of drawings for works he had no time to complete. All his sculptures are unique, and there are no copies. Two years ago, an art dealer sold a Pope sculpture, thinking it to be one of a set, but on realising it was unique he promptly bought it back!

Initially Pope concentrated on relatively small sculptures, but as his reputation grew, he was offered larger, more complex commissions, including the stone sculpture *Duo* for Lady Paget at Kings Newton Hall. The statue was eventually moved to Bishop Lonsdale College, Derby, and is now on display at the Ashbourne Road site of Derby University. Interestingly, the Pope sculptures on display at the University vividly show the range and versatility of his imagination. A few feet away from *Duo* are three abstract sculptures by Pope, one in aluminium and two in bronze. The former captured the interest of the Henry Moore Institute, as representative of Pope's work, and the maquette is now in its collection of works of Modern Sculptors.

By the end of the 1950s, Ronald and Joan Pope were able to buy a plot of land and build their own home, Blue Orchard, with its own studio, in Melbourne, Derbyshire. Pope's versatility with materials and the range of his imagination blossomed at Blue Orchard, for by now he was working in stone, steel, copper, bronze and wood, producing sculptures large and small, for commissions from private collectors to Sir Basil Spence (Church of St Catherine of Siena, Sheffield).

Throughout his life, he struggled to reconcile his passion for peace, compassion and understanding in a world he saw as mechanistic, aggressive and driven by ambition, and his sculpture, at times, portrays this conflict. The crucifix sculptures at churches St Michael with St Mary's (Melbourne, Derbyshire), St John's (Long Eaton, Nottinghamshire) and Grangewood Methodist Church, (Wollaton, Nottingham), are indicative of Pope's mind. Two of these sculptures, each in the form of a crucifix, convey this conflict by challenging conventional norms. Yet, by expressing discord within the guise of a crucifix, they effectively reject conflict, and consequently convey the Christian message of peace. The third is less severe, but makes a similar statement, nevertheless, by its challenge to custom. By its similarity to the cross of St George, rather than the conventional cross of the crucifixion, and by its stark outlines, it provokes uncertainty. The Very Reverend R.A. Beddoes, Provost of Derby (1953-1980) said of his work *"the resolution of apparent contradictions (in life) is attempted almost tenderly in his paintings and drawings, tautly in his sculpture."*. Nonetheless many of his works, both lifelike and abstract, represent compassion and unity.

It was during his time at Melbourne that he began to explore the Peak District in Derbyshire, with his wife, Joan. They would travel miles together on the trails, giving him the opportunity to investigate, and help protect Neolithic sites. He was particularly critical of plans to adapt the site of Minninglow (off the High Peak Trail). His main purpose, however, was inspiration. He was enthused by rock formations on cliff faces, such as Curbar Edge, taking dozens of 35mm slides to use as the basis for sculpture. These images were translated into drawings, going through many stages before emerging as final designs for sculpture.

Ronald Pope was an extremely resourceful sculptor, and because of his output it is difficult within this short article to explore the full range of his inventiveness. For instance, he created a number of related sculptures, mainly in copper and bronze: the Musician series, single figures, pairs of figures, and the Crowd series. The inspiration for the latter came from his visits to the then Westfield Shopping Centre, now 'The Intu', in Derby. He was enthralled by the visual impact of the rhythmical movement of groups of people. Much of Pope's sculpture can now be viewed on the Ronald Pope website.

Although predominantly known as a sculptor, Pope also painted in watercolours. He loved painting and drawing, and in later life returned to it at the expense of his sculpture. They challenge his sculpture for the spotlight: his paintings are soft and gentle, described by enthusiasts as atmospheric, his drawings expressive.

It is quite probable that during his lifetime Ronald Pope would not have approved of a published account of his life and work - he would have preferred that his sculpture speaks for itself. But it is now imperative that he is brought more into view because public sculpture is being destroyed, including many works of his own. It is estimated that there are around 170,000 publicly owned, and/or displayed, sculptures in the UK, many of which are at risk, and a significant number are located in the East Midlands. The thoughtless, and sometimes wanton, destruction of sculpture has prompted the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (PMSA) and Art UK to begin a nationwide programme of cataloguing all public works of art. Fortunately, many are already 'protected' by their location or owner (e.g. The National Trust), or by the fame of the sculptor, but works not so protected, and by sculptors who have remained out of the spotlight, are at great risk of destruction. Several of Pope's sculptures have been destroyed, mainly because the (often new) owners had no idea of their artistic value. Equally, it is often the case that no heed is paid to the importance of the sculpture to local communities. Public sculpture commissioned by public bodies is arguably held in trust for the people they serve; it must surely not be regarded as absolute property to be disposed of at will.

Fortunately, recognition by the Henry Moore Institute, PMSA, and Art UK have raised Pope's sculpture to the mainstream of Modern Art, which hopefully will help to protect his work in the future. This recognition is underpinned by the many people and institutions that appreciate the value of his work.

From February 2020 to May 30 Derby Museums has an exhibition of sculpture which will explore The exhibition will explore the process of 'Making', with emphasis given to the inspiration, design and creation of Pope sculpture. Pope might not have valued the publicity, but given his early beginnings, he would no doubt have appreciated the irony of his inclusion - the themes of engineering and art. Would he have thought they would finally come together?

Tony Hubbard
Ashbourne, Derbyshire

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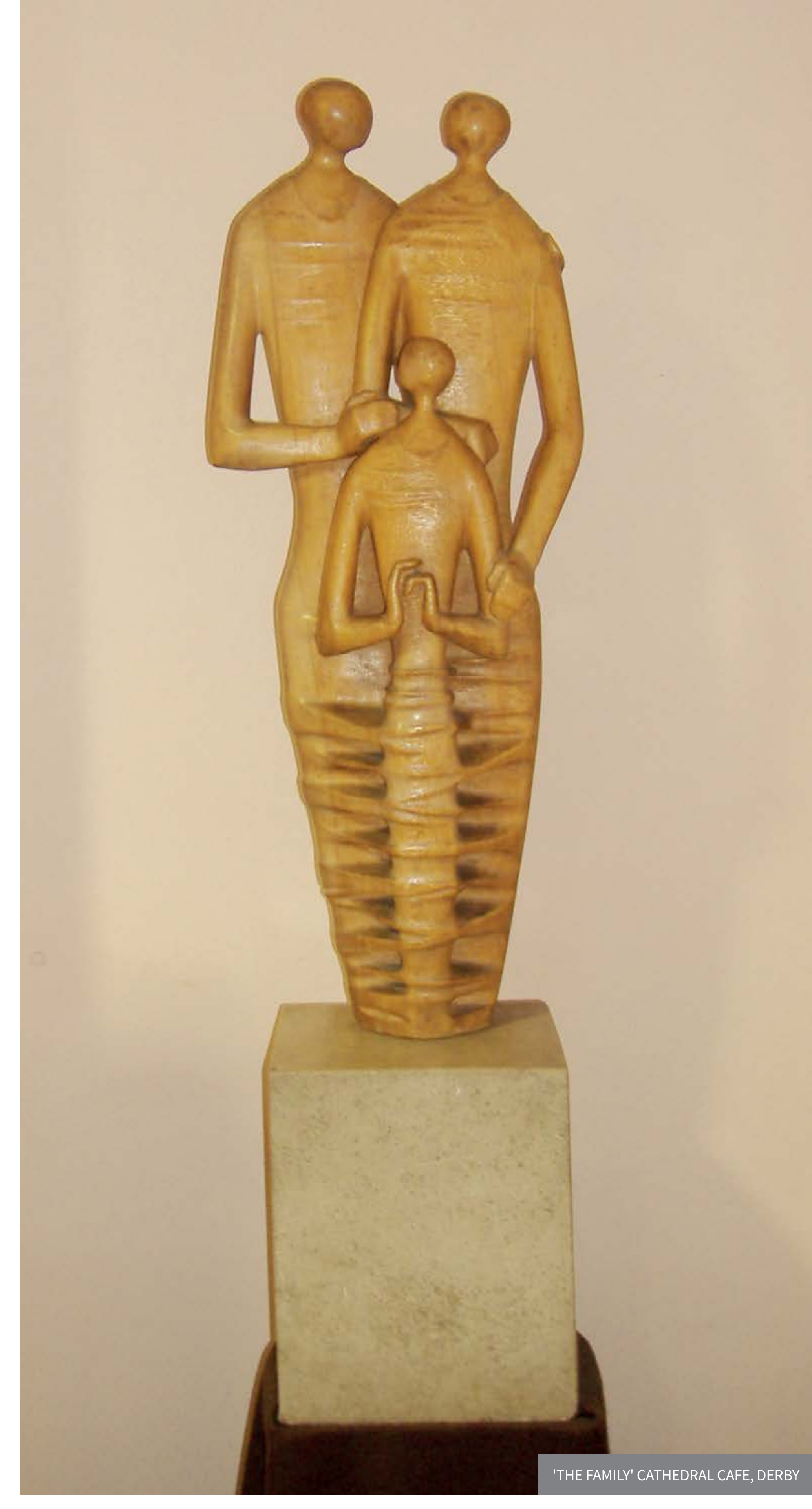
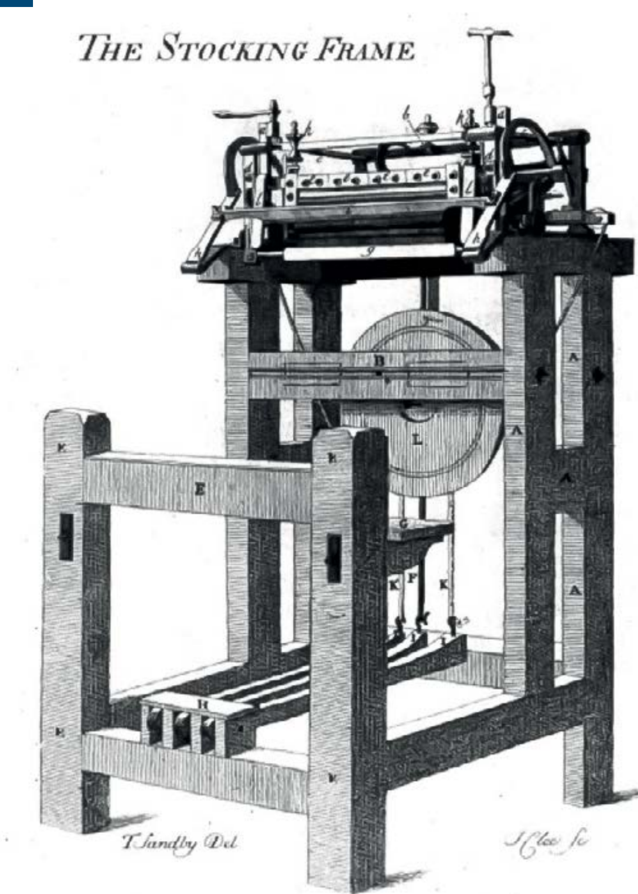

'THE FAMILY' CATHEDRAL CAFE, DERBY

Ruddington: A "large and well-built village"of handloom weaving

BY JOHN PARKER

Whites Directory of Nottingham for 1853 referred to Ruddington as being 5 miles south of Nottingham, a *"large and well-built village"* and parish. The parish consisted of 2,900 acres of fertile land, chiefly of a gravelly loam, with a marl sub-soil and a rateable value of £5,659 5s 8d. It was enclosed in 1767 through an Act of Parliament when the four large arable fields together with The Meadow, The Moor and The Pasture were consolidated and re-allocated. The vicar of Ruddington received 52 acres and Sir Charles Cavendish 466 in lieu of tithes, and 400 acres were bought by Charles Paget.



THE STOCKING FRAME (CHARLES DEERING 1751)

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David Hey, Family History and Local History in England (London, 1987).
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Joan Thirsk, 'The fantastical folly of fashion: the English stocking knitting industry, 1500-1700', in N.B.. Harte and K.G. Ponting (eds), *Textile History and Economic History : Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann* (Manchester, 1973), pp. 50-73.

By 1801 the population was 868, which made it the largest village in the Rushcliffe Hundred. Ruddington had more than twice the population of any other village in the Hundred and, although it had more farming families than the other villages (it was after all the largest parish with the greatest acreage), it was also the only village to have more families dependent on manufacturing, trade and handicraft than on farming. The 1851 census for Ruddington shows a population of 2,181 broken down equally between male and female (1090 male, 1091 female), a little over 35 per cent were less than 15 years old (851 out of 2181) and almost 78 per cent (1696 out of 2181) were less than 40 years old. Overall, 32.9 per cent (718 out of 2181) of the population were involved in manufacturing, specifically in framework knitting.

Such was the importance of Ruddington to the local hosiery industry that it was one of the villages selected to take part in the 1845 Royal Commission enquiring into the condition of framework knitters. Seventeen individuals from the village were interviewed. It became clear from the enquiry's report that Ruddington was not only a major site but also a local hub for the industry. Thomas Hart, described as a hosier employing 75 frames, was probably typical in that he not only manufactured in his own right, but he also put work out to the surrounding villages of Bradmore, East Leake, Keyworth and Gotham. Thomas Felkin, author of *History of the Machine Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufactures*, who was also a major witness to the Commission, reported that there were 330 frames working in Ruddington in 1844 and another 13 which were either being repaired or no longer in use. In comparison, East Leake had 119 frames, Gotham 90, Keyworth 78, Bradmore 34, Costock 30, Rempstone 12, Normanton-on-Soar 10, Bunny 3 and Wysall 1. The physical evidence of industry in Ruddington still remains in the form of workshops, storerooms and cottages located on Chapel Street (now The Framework Knitting Museum), as well as other workshops near the village green and on the High Street.

> Such was the importance of Ruddington to the local hosiery industry that it was one of the villages selected to take part in the 1845 Royal Commission enquiring into the condition of framework knitters.

The popular memory of hand-frame workers is one of three decades of decline following the end of the Napoleonic wars, and of poverty wages, as prices were driven down when faced with factory competition. How true was this of hand-loom knitters in Ruddington? Samuel Parker, gave evidence to the Commission and his testimony revealed that he worked a 20" wide frame and produced shirts for a warehouse in Nottingham for which he was paid 14 shillings a dozen. He did not own the frame he worked and he paid one shilling and sixpence each week for the use of it. He was also responsible for two other frames, which his sons worked, and for paying for finishing work and tools and materials. He reported that he had plenty of work and generally good supplies of yarn from the warehouse and was earning about twelve shillings each week, as were his sons (at a time when the average weekly wage was about ten shillings, and the average skilled wage roughly double that). Whilst this was significantly below what those in the trade were earning at the turn of the century, it was still twice that then currently earned by framework weavers in Lancashire. The Commission was particularly concerned about the state of families in the village and about half of the interview focuses on children and welfare. Samuel reported that for most: *"children followed their father's trade as a matter of course, for the main alternative, that of agriculture, offered even worse prospects"*. The children had access to a free school from the age of six but many of them were taken out and put to winding (putting yarn onto bobbins for use on the frames) as soon as possible.

There were also 4 Sunday schools provided by the Church, the Primitive Methodists, the Baptists and the Wesleyans, all of which were well attended.

One of the conclusions of the Commission's Report was that overall frame rent and other expenses could amount to a third of the knitter's wage but this does not appear to have been the case with Samuel, where frame rent amounted to only about 11 per cent of his income Nor does he appear to have been subject to 'stinting', where knitters were obliged to pay a full week's frame rent even when work or materials supplied by the hosier only provided for a few day's work. Thus, Samuel appears to have been relatively prosperous in comparison to framework knitters in other areas and his only complaint was about the frame rent, which he would rather not have paid at all. Samuel also appears to have been fortunate to have a garden, which was unusual for framework knitters in Ruddington, for which he paid one shilling and six pence each year. According to another resident, James Clarke: *"It would be a great benefit if we had them, there is not a vegetable in the place, only what is brought in from Nottingham and other places"*. One of the other Ruddington witnesses, Thomas Hart, claimed that *"We are better off than other places; but at other places we hear greater complaints of their being out of work. We do not have that to say here"*.

Framework knitting is not, unlike mining or mineral extraction, geographically or geologically constrained. As Joan Thirsk points out there is no obvious reason why one location should see development and another not. She writes, *"there is no certainty or finality in any explanation for the growth of a rural industry in one district rather than another."* Evidence indicates that in 1844, 90 per cent of the stocking frames in the British Isles were located in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire and it has been suggested that these sort of domestic industries tended to occur in areas with a high incidence of pastoral husbandry and a subsequent surplus of cheap labour. Keith Snell observed that it also helped if there was a weak manorial framework which could and often did permit an unusually rapid growth of population through immigration. Snell further suggested that parliamentary enclosure added extra impetus to a process which had been developing over many years and this was the growing dependency on waged labour and the growth of cottage industry which probably provided alternative employment for those displaced from open fields.

It was the dispossessed and landless labourers who became the ready employees of an industry which very early on in its development became based on a capitalist system of production. Maxine Berg notes that the coming of some domestic industries made the difference between destitution and decency for the poor and dispossessed. Indeed, the development of these sorts of domestic industries allowed a higher standard of living among the hand and framework knitters.

The framework knitting industry in its initial development in the Midland counties of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire operated on a craft system where the more prosperous farmers, mercers and other people who already had an interest in the wool trade, owned their own frames. The production of cheaper goods made from wool and worsted quickly extended the market for machine-knitted hosiery, but to take full advantage of conditions of high elasticity of demand, cheap labour was essential. It has been suggested that framework knitting tended to become established in open villages: populous, sprawling and rather unruly and a magnet for migrants looking for work. Villages which depended heavily on framework knitting in 1844 were those which two hundred years before had been the largest and had contained a high proportion of poor households. ›

RUDDINGTON: A "LARGE AND WELL-BUILT VILLAGE"OF HANDLOOM WEAVING

Visit www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk or email emhist@virginmedia.com

In the East Midlands labour and capital were available in and around the towns of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and local supplies of wool were also readily to hand, but probably of more importance was the existence of a body of long-established framework knitters which had already developed an infrastructure complete with the management of skilled labour, the manufacture and repair of machines, warehousing, finishing and marketing facilities. It is also worth noting that there was a clear link between the framework knitters and the widespread weaving industry of the region and up to a late stage hosiery framework knitting was still known and regarded as 'weaving', although the process was fundamentally different.

It appears that in Nottinghamshire the industry initially developed in those parishes in the west of the county which already had large populations. These parishes and others where settlement and building were not restricted then attracted further labour as enclosures created agricultural unemployment and rural depopulation. The surplus labour in the parishes was then quickly absorbed by the rapidly expanding framework knitting industry and the domestic system, complete with 'putting-out', quickly spread the manufacture of hosiery throughout Nottinghamshire. Although there was a high degree of dispersal throughout the region there was also a tendency to cluster around the main towns which acted as organizing centres which put work out and to which finished goods were returned. Within the areas served by these towns there were also 'hubs' like Ruddington, for Nottingham, and Shepshed, for Leicester, which acted as both manufacturing centres and as secondary putting-out centres.

There were few barriers to entry into the early industry, the cost of a frame was between £10 and £15 and frame rents were low. The cost of workshops and other premises were also low and often less than the value of stock or raw materials that they contained. Costs were deliberately minimised and capitalist organizers limited their financial commitment to it. Fixed capital investment was kept to a minimum. However, from the middle of the eighteenth century costs rose as technical advances allowed for specialisations in production and fixed capital investment increased, some of it from the established framework knitters themselves but, increasingly, the industry became dominated by entrepreneurs, including local businessmen, mercers and maltsters, and it became difficult for the rural framework knitter to acquire the capital that would enable him to become a hosier in his own right. A new breed of middlemen emerged who rented out frames, supplied the raw materials and took away the finished goods. If the initial birthplace

WORKSHOP CONVERTED TO HOUSING ON PARKYNS STREET

of the industry in the Nottingham district was entirely a matter of chance and the enterprise of William Lee of Calverton, it is clear, however, that at some critical point in time the East Midlands appears to have had a distinct advantage over other regions in terms of labour availability, infrastructure and production costs which induced London manufacturers to relocate to the industry's original birthplace.

In 1851 the Nottingham business of Hine & Mundella built a large warehouse and steam-powered factory adjacent to the Midland railway station on an open gallery plan said to be inspired by the Crystal Palace exhibition hall. The factory was the first one purpose-built to make hosiery by power and it drove the newly developed circular knitting machines which produced tubes of fabric for stockings and underwear. For some years this production complemented that of the firm's framework knitters who produced fully-fashioned goods in their own homes, but the building was beset with problems and other local firms were reluctant to follow suit. By 1899 I & R Morley were the largest of the knitting-based businesses in the region and probably accounted for ten per cent of total national output, employing over 3000 in their seven factories and over 1200 in their warehouses but even it still had 3950 framework knitters on its payroll. For the Ruddington framework knitters themselves there is no evidence that local craft manufacturing developed into local factory manufacturing and what little factory development that there was in the village came as the result of the opening of the Great Central Railways' London extension in 1899 which connected the village directly by rail with London, through Loughborough and Leicester, and with Manchester and Sheffield through Nottingham. There was some development of specifically built workshops, rather than converted cottages, providing separate working and living accommodation on the same site consisting of back-to-back cottages and a purpose-built frame-shop built in the shape of an enclosed rectangle. This at least separated the workspace from the home space but not by much. The Ruddington Village Buildings Survey of 1968/69 showed that there were 38 of these sorts of frame-shops left in the village in varying stages of preservation or decay and many of them were being used as back garden outhouses or extensions to dwelling houses. There is no evidence of frame-shops being created as additional floors to existing framework-knitting cottages. The last of the Ruddington framework knitters, John Parker, died on May 4th, 1929 and he is buried in the local cemetery on Shaw Street.

> ...probably of more importance was the existence of a body of long-established framework knitters which had already developed an infrastructure complete with the management of skilled labour, the manufacture and repair of machines, warehousing, finishing and marketing facilities.

TYPICAL TWO STOREY WORKSHOP (F N MUSEUM)

John Parker
Nottinghamshire Local History Association

BY ANN GEORGE

The Mysterious tenant of Thoresby Hall

In October 1605 Thomas Percy, one of the known Gunpowder plotters, employed two servants, William Tailboys and Thomas Fenwick, to deliver a portmanteau of money (of an undefined amount) and horses from Prudhoe Castle in Northumberland to London. The items were destined to reach Percy's fellow conspirators, but following the failure of the Plot, Tailboys and Fenwick called upon one Marmaduke Machell, and on his orders the delivery was redirected to his own residence in Cotness, Yorkshire.

Machell was closely connected to the Percy family, as he was married to Thomas Percy's sister Anne. The money referred to was seemingly gathered – according to one of the servants employed to deliver it – by the recusants (those who remained Catholic despite the conversion of the country to the Church of England) of Hexham prior to the Gunpowder conspiracy and the discovery and thwarting of the infamous plot. Yet the exact connection or involvement between the Gunpowder conspirators, the plot itself and Marmaduke Machell remains very much a mystery, as, to a great extent, does the man himself.

It is clear that unlike known recusants and plotters, and unlike the servants charged with delivering the money, Machell was not questioned over the incident, which is intriguing in itself. Indeed, one of the servants, Thomas Fenwick was questioned in 1605 and then again on three further occasions in 1616, suggesting that his involvement and that of his employer were of great interest to those wishing to remove the Catholic threat in England. During the examinations both Tailboys and Fenwick directly identified Marmaduke Machell as being the person they were tasked to find or contact. Fenwick describes that *"they went to Islington that night and lay at the Sign of the Halfe Moone, there from thence Tailbois went to the Signe of the Bucke in Islington to speak with Mr. Machill as Tailbois told this Examinate who had married the sister of Thomas Percy and was then at the Sign of the Bucke"*. In Tailboys' examination from December 1605 he named Machell: *"And being examined saith that he…then went to Holdenshire to enquire for one Mr. Duke Machell who dwelleth at Cotness to know if he were come from London and findeth he was not returned departed thence the next day…"*

"they went to Islington that night and lay at the Sign of the Halfe Moone, there from thence Tailbois went to the Signe of the Bucke in Islington to speak with Mr. Machill as Tailbois told this Examinate who had married the sister of Thomas Percy and was then at the Sign of the Bucke"

In one of the examinations of Fenwick in 1616 he confirms that a few short days after the failure of the Gunpowder Plot, he delivered the money and a letter into the hands of Machell's wife (Percy's sister) at their home, which at that point was in Yorkshire. Exactly what was enclosed in the letter to Anne, and the destiny of the suspiciously collected money is unknown.

Fenwick says that having fallen ill he remained at the Machell home in Cotness for a period of 20 days, at the end of which Tailboys returned and they then departed for Dilston, Northumberland, taking the money back from Mrs. Machell. He further says in his Examination that he thought the money returned to Northumberland amounted *"to 500 l., as this Examinate conceived by the quantity and weight thereof"*. We will probably never know whether the same amount of money left Cotness as arrived there, nor exactly as to its original purpose, or why the Machell family took temporary possession. However, from some remaining archival evidence we do have some insight into the life of Marmaduke Machell, some of which involved parts of the East Midlands.

No records exist for the birth or baptism of a Marmaduke Machell, but, from clues present in other surviving records, it is suspected that he was born around 1561. The first conclusive record for Marmaduke Machell dates from 1588/9 when he was called as a witness for Robert Smyth in the Star Chamber Proceedings for Rampston v. Smyth and Machell. Testimony reveals that Machell had been in the service of Smyth for twelve years, so would have begun his employment with them at around fifteen years old. The document refers to *"[Marmaduke Machell] Having some knowledge in the Latin tongue"*. Smyth also appears to have been heavily reliant on Machell for information, suggesting that Machell was his clerk and had a fair level of education. Smyth was appointed to *"an office under her Majesty in her Highnesses stable"*, which would have required a move to London to be close to the royal court. It is likely that Machell moved with him - where he made connections that would serve him in later endeavours.

In 1585 William Machell of Cotness died, and subsequently Marmaduke returned to Yorkshire to take up permanent residence in the area, where he became involved in community life and affairs in Howden. He appears in the Churchwardens Accounts for the parish of Howden on a number of occasions up until 1613. One particular entry from 1601 provides a detailed description of the clothing supplied to a servant when he was put to the service of Mr Machell. The accounts also include a good example of his signature, which is quite distinctive (see below, bottom right).

By the end of the 1590s Machell would have been around 39 years of age. Documents produced years later at his inquisition post-mortem confirm that his wealth was expanding. He was making loans in the form of bonds to individuals in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Locally he seems to have been a man of some importance, and one who was on an upwards trajectory of wealth and notoriety.

In 1609, four years after the failed Gunpowder Plot, one Martha Percy, late the wife of the traitor Thomas Percy, and Ellen their daughter, were the subject of a case in the Court of Chancery, referring to £500 put into the hands of Lord Monteagle by Thomas for an annuity of £50 p.a. for the benefit of Martha and Ellen long before the treasonable plot. Marmaduke Machell appears as a witness in this deposition, further confirming connections between the families prior to, during and following the ill-fated plot.

"Marmaduke Machell of Cotness in the County of Yorke, gent, of the age of 49 years or thereabouts forsworne verily deposes" and he says *"about the latter end of the Reign of our late Queen before the said money mentioned in the Interrogation was left in the hands of the said Lord Monteagle the said Thomas Percy being at this deponent's house … great store of money… did tell this deponent that he the said Mr. Percy was then going into Lincolnshire to pay the said money to … Tyrwitt of … forth into his hands £500 for an Annuity or Rent charge of £50 p.a. which Rent and Annuity should be for the use and behoof of … wife and Ellin their daughter And would have had this Examinant to have gone with him at that time into Lincolnshire."*

The deposition is signed by *"Mar. Machell"*. Some of the document is illegible, but there is enough to confirm that he was known well enough to Thomas Percy to have some knowledge of his financial and family arrangements before and at the time of the Gunpowder Plot.

In 1611 the geographical focus of Machell's life shifts when he moved to the East Midlands. An indenture dated 25th November 1611 shows that Sir Henry and Dame Frances Pierrepont agreed the lease of their Manor of Perlethorpe and manor house of Thoresby Hall Nottinghamshire to Marmaduke Machell for the period of 21 years. It would have been an immense expenditure, with rents on hall and the estate, not to mention the upkeep of his family home in Howden.
But from where did all of this money originate: was it his inheritance, well thought out business ventures and the repayments on the loans he made, or could his wealth have emanated from another source entirely?

Thoresby itself was well situated to afford connections with some important places and peoples in the Nottinghamshire area. The Saville family were based at Rufford Abbey, roughly five miles away, and in Worksop Welbeck Abbey was owned by Sir Charles Cavendish, Bess of Hardwick's third son and brother

> We have proof that money taken to London by Tailboys and Fenwick was delivered to Mrs Machell at Cotness a few days after the Gunpowder Plot was exposed. Perhaps this was the source of Machell's new-found wealth?

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to Frances Pierrepont. Taking over the lease of Thoresby Mansion and Perlethorpe Estate was a long-term financial commitment. We have proof that money taken to London by Tailboys and Fenwick was delivered to Mrs Machell at Cotness a few days after the Gunpowder Plot was exposed. Perhaps this was the source of Machell's new-found wealth? What is certain is that it would have been difficult for anyone to have made an accusation of theft, given the origins of the money.

By 1611 Machell had access to properties in London, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, and had business and social connections in these areas. The Parish Registers for Howden dating from 1618/9 show an entry recording the burial of *"An Wif to Mar. Machell of Cotnes, gent"*. As is the case of Marmaduke Machell's birth and baptism there is no record of his marriage to his second wife, but she is believed to be Anne Austen of Caverswall in Staffordshire. They had six children: Matthew, Marmaduke, William, Francis, Mary and Alice, all of whom were raised at Thoresby. Machell continually purchased land and property in the East Riding area. In 1618 he bought property in Alfreton, Derbyshire – further cementing his position and connection to the East Midlands region.

In January 1626 Marmaduke Machell died aged c.65. By this point he had a growing family with his second wife, was comfortably living in a mansion, was the owner of multiple properties and had acquaintances and connections with those who would initially have been above his station.
The Perlethorpe Parish Register records his burial, but there was no proved Will, and administration was left to his wife Anne. Machell's inquisition post-mortem was held at Kirkbymoorside in Yorkshire on the 25th October 1626 and confirmed that he held lands in Yorkshire and Derbyshire but did not mention the lease of Thoresby. His eldest legitimate son, Marmaduke, was named as his heir, and was aged just five and a half at the time of his father's death. It is believed that Marmaduke Machell rests in the churchyard at Perlethorpe.
In the centuries that have passed a new church has been built to replace the one in which Marmaduke would have been mourned, and most of the churchyard has been cleared of headstones, meaning the precise resting place of such an intriguing man is now unmarked and therefore uncertain. His exact connection with the Gunpowder Plot conspiracy remains a mystery.

Ann George
Local Family History Researcher

TOP: THOMAS PERCY (NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

BOTTOM: ENTRY BY "MARMADUKE MACHELL, CHURCHWARDEN THEN FOR COTNESS", HOWDEN 1598

Mansfield *revived*

BY PETE BROWN

Building pride in Mansfield and we need your help!

What's happening to Mansfield? People in high viz vests perched in a cherry picker clearing gutters around the Market Place, blasting the Bentinck Memorial clean and demonstrating signwriting in Leeming Street! What's going on?

The answer is the Mansfield Townscape Heritage Project – Mansfield Revived. It's supported by a grant of nearly £850,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and delivered in partnership with Mansfield BID, Vision West Nottinghamshire College and Nottinghamshire County Council.

The five-year project is about conservation and community. Focused on Leeming Street and the Market Place conservation area, the funding will help local businesses and owners enhance the architectural quality of their historic properties and provide opportunities for volunteers of all ages to learn new skills while celebrating the return of one of Mansfield's most elegant shopping streets to its former glory.

Mansfield Revived is part of a wider vision by Mansfield District Council to improve the appearance and vibrancy of the town centre and to put Mansfield back on the map as a great place to live, work, invest in and visit, aligning with council priorities for Place, Growth and Aspiration, and Wellbeing.

The long-term aim is to help Mansfield meet the challenges of the changing face of the high street – something that's happening across Britain – by encouraging more independent retailers and making the town centre as much a place for socialising, entertainment and living in, as it is a place for shopping.

Property owners in the conservation area can apply for match-funded grants of up to 75% to help with the cost of making improvements that are in sympathy with their building's heritage.

Alongside the conservation work, there is a full programme of related activities and events in which everyone can take part, including conservation and restoration workshops, historical research, oral history gathering, writing and story-telling, street theatre, and art and photography activities.

We've already got lots of partners, including Mansfield Museum, Inspire Culture (Mansfield Strategic Library Service), Vision West Notts College, The Palace Theatre, Old Mansfield Society and Sherwood Archaeological Society, primary and secondary schools, local artists, photographers and writers. But we can't do it without you! We need volunteers to help in the following areas (training will be provided):

- Historical research (to find information on old Mansfield in the museum, library and archives).
- Story gathering (recording oral histories of the town).
- Project booklet and interpretation (we need writers, designers and printers).
- Marketing and promotion (people interested in publicity and social media).
- Photography (individuals interested in learning photography skills and recording the townscape area before and after the improvements).
- Heritage walks (people to act as visitor guides around the town).
- Events (general helpers to make sure our events are inclusive, safe and enjoyable).

For more information, to apply for a conservation grant or join us as a volunteer, please visit: **www.mansfield.gov.uk/townscapeheritage**

Pete Brown
Mansfield Heritage Project Community Participation Coordinator

The leaves of Southwell

Southwell Minster was awarded a £1.9million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant in summer 2019 towards the implementation of plans that seek to conserve and celebrate the internationally renowned Leaves of Southwell.

These 13th century naturalistic carvings are amongst the finest in Europe and have long been a source of inspiration to artists and writers. Nikolaus Pevsner remarked: *"Southwell's pride is its unbroken width saved baldness by a beauty of foliage decoration unparalleled in thirteen-century chapter houses. You find leaves of the Southwell, fresh and resilient, lustily spreading all over the capitals of the forty-five columns which separate the seats, all over the tympana, crockets and finials of the gables above the seats, all over the vaulting shafts and bosses of the roof, all over the capitals and voussoirs of the double archway … It is the decorator's joy and skill … that accomplish the miracle of the Southwell carving."* The project aims to enable more people to visit and enjoy the Leaves, the Minster and its environs, and to secure the fabric of the building.

The Chapter House stonework has been assessed as 'heritage at risk'. The wide-ranging scheme includes the renewal of the main east roof and the stabilisation of the Chapter House environment to preserve the stonework for future generations. It will also help control such risks as water ingress and allow the regulation of temperature and humidity. The grant will fund measures to improve accessibility and interpretation of the Chapter House. This will include the installation of lighting to allow clearer inspection of the multitude of carvings close to the roof. The installation of a central mirror at floor-level will also assist visitors to examine the vaulted ceiling. The passageway to the Chapter House is currently only accessible down steps, so a cantilever lift will be fitted at the passageway entrance to allow access to wheelchair users. Improved external lighting will make the western paths and main north porch much more useable and welcoming in dark or inclement weather.

Updated publications will offer new interpretations of the Leaves and the Minster. The Education Garden, which already offers a place of health and wellbeing, will be doubled in size enabling the growth of the plant species seen in the Chapter House. This will build on the success of a previous collaboration with The National Lottery Heritage Fund and, in addition, an outdoor classroom will be a focus for education activities.

Dr Helen Bates has been appointed as the Community Engagement Coordinator and she is particularly focusing on coordinating a heritage skills programme, adult education activities, volunteer recruitment and opportunities for student placements. MA Heritage students from Nottingham Trent and Nottingham Universities will be heavily involved in the programme.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact **helen.bates@southwellminster.org.uk**

Helen Bates
Southwell Minster

References: Nikolaus Pevsner, *Leaves of Southwell* (London, 1945).

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