



Great War link with the town

It's not every day that one comes across an item which directly links the town with that tragic conflict of one hundred years ago – the Great War.



So I was surprised to discover and obtain a "Rum jar" made in Chesterfield during the war. This particular item was made by Barker Pottery and was marked on the base as such. Rum Jars marked S.R.D. are a common association with the Great War.

It's well known that the rum ration issue was made at dawn and

to those who wanted it. Of course, many soldiers were teetotalers and declined the offer.

Many tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of these jars were made during the war by potteries all around the county.

Drunkenness was considered a crime in the army and so much care was taken to ensure the jars and their contents were not "won" or otherwise spirited away. The jar featured in this photograph is securely tied by stout string to the post of the dugout and guarded by the officer!

All the jars were marked S.R.D. which in itself spawned a whole host of quizzical interpretations such as "Seldom Reaches Destination" or "Service Rum Diluted" or "Sergeants Rarely Deliver" the list goes on and on. There is still debate as to what the letters actually stand for, but the two most likely interpretations seem to be Service Ration Depot or Supply

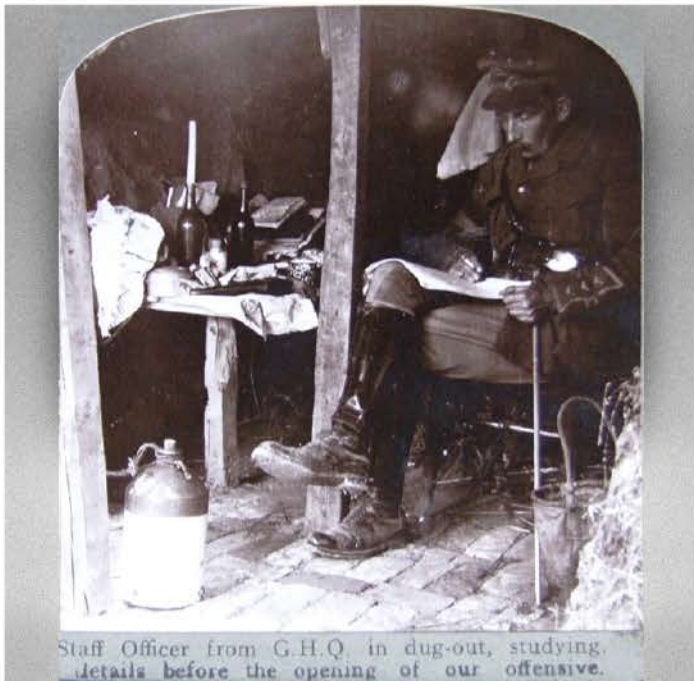


Reserve Depot.

Chesterfield had many potteries at that time and it is likely that most made some jars for the war effort. Those most commonly encountered are made by Pearson's Potteries. Normally the jars were made in the one gallon size, but as the photograph shows, there were also half gallon jars. The larger jar to the left and the half gallon jar were both made and marked by Pearsons.

The marks are; Pearson & Co The Potteries Whittington Moor Nr Chesterfield and Barker Pottery Chesterfield within an oval stamp. What is interesting is that the Pearson's jar is obviously much larger than the Barker jar. The point to remember is that these jars are not measures.

(Continued overleaf)



dusk when the troops had to "Stand to" manning the front line in anticipation of an attack.. The senior non-commissioned officer would come round and offer a tablespoon of service rum

Great War link with the town

Continued from front cover

All that is required of them is that they contain sufficient internal volume to be able to accommodate a measured gallon or half gallon of rum. Even so, Barkers must have used far less clay than Pearsons. Interestingly the Barker Pottery Company was only formed in 1914, so this may have been one of their first orders.

It was the Barker Pottery jar I acquired recently. It provides a wonderful link to an important industry within the town (one which has loads of research potential for anyone interested in looking into it) but also a chance to hold an artefact that survived the trenches. One can only imagine the jokes told by some war-torn Spireite veteran, knee deep in Flanders mud when he noticed the name of his old town on the bottom of the jar.

These jars are still easily available in any of the shops in Ypres, the Somme or local markets in France and Flanders for only ten euros or so. They can also be found regularly in antique centres throughout the UK.

Dave Feltham

An afternoon meeting?

We are aware that some Society members do not come to evening meetings, possibly because they are not happy to go out in the evenings. I am also aware that some people, who are not members of the Society, missed the recent talk about the black and white buildings of Chesterfield at the Winding Wheel because they too do not like going out in the evenings. Unfortunately most talks given in the daytime (not just by myself) are usually to specific organisations who do not welcome visitors.

We would like to know if any members are interested in coming to an afternoon talk about the black and white buildings of Chesterfield. It would be free to members but a charge would be made for visitors. At this early stage the date and venue are not decided. If such a meeting is successful then it might be possible to arrange further talks. Please note that this meeting would be in addition to, not instead of, our usual evening meetings.

If you are interested, then please contact me on 01246 234687 or by e-mail at janmurphy255@btinternet.com

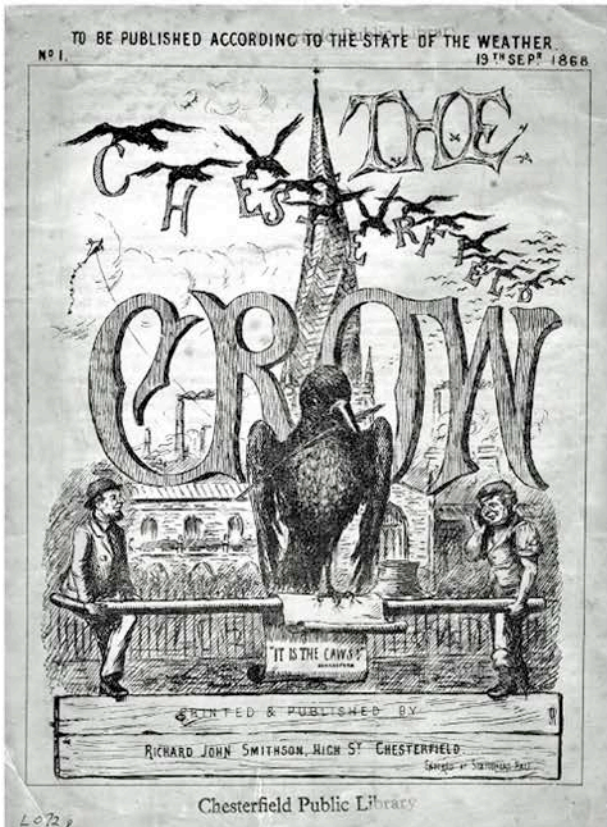
Janet Murphy

The Chesterfield Crow Cartoons

Until 1867 Chesterfield was part of the North Derbyshire parliamentary constituency. The new constituency of East Derbyshire covered the mining areas of the county and extended from Norton in the north to Alfreton in the south, with its headquarters at Chesterfield. Although the 1868 election was held in November, the campaign to elect two representatives began as early as June.

There were four candidates: for the Liberals, Captain the Hon Francis Egerton, son-in-law of the 7th Duke of Devonshire and the Hon Henry Strutt of Belper and, for the Conservatives, Gladwyn Turbutt of Ogston Hall and William Overend Q.C., who was one of the authors of the report into trade unions in Sheffield after the Sheffield Outrages.

An unusual aspect of the campaigning was the publication of a series of cartoons by the Chesterfield Crow on behalf of the Liberal cause.



This cartoon is the only one in Chesterfield Local Studies Library. Others were issued in landscape format and a set is held by Sheffield Local Studies Library. It is possible to identify the characters in some of the cartoons and this will be done in future issues of the *Newsletter*.

The artist was identified in the *Derbyshire Courier* of 28th December 1895:

Mr J P Atkinson – the artist in question – was, at one time, a clerk in the offices of the Midland Company at Derby, and achieved more than a local reputation by the work he did for the “Derby Ram”.

Amongst his admirers and friends he numbered the late Mr Sterland Gratton, for so many years the land agent to the Midland Company, and it was the gentleman’s brother, Mr R T Gratton, of Chesterfield, who was chiefly instrumental in securing Mr Atkinson’s artistic services in the 1868 election. It was necessary that Mr Atkinson should be brought into close contact with his subjects without arousing their suspicions, and during the greater part of his stay in Chesterfield he was known as Mr Priestman – the second of his Christian names – and the sketches were subsequently evolved at Mr Gratton’s house, where he stayed during the contest.

The result was quite close, Egerton 2089 votes, Strutt 2032, Turbutt 1999 and Overend 1970. The *Derbyshire Courier* thought there had been a surfeit of electioneering – a view some hold today. The East Derbyshire constituency did not last very long; in 1885 Derbyshire was divided into seven constituencies with Chesterfield being one of them. By now having risen to the rank of Admiral, Egerton represented East Derbyshire for the whole period of its existence and then served as MP for North East Derbyshire for a further two years. The Irish question dogged the Liberals throughout the period and this may be why he stood down – or perhaps he had had enough of politics – and he retired to his home in Byfleet.

Janet Murphy

The Straw Boxes of the French Prisoners of War

After reading about how French Officers captured in the Napoleonic wars were billeted in Chesterfield, I was delighted to find that boxes made by these men, made of, or decorated with straw, were held in the Chesterfield Museum.

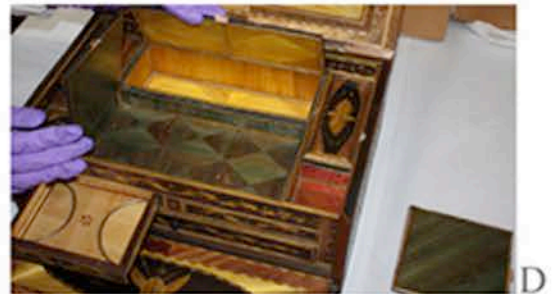
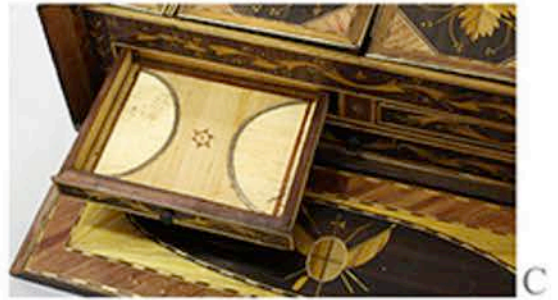
Museum Collections Officer, Maria Barnes, kindly arranged for me to photograph a few of these boxes and they will feature in a longer article about the French Prisoners of War in Chesterfield, planned for later this year. But here is a sample of what I was shown; A B C & D are shots of a writing box, made of wood but decorated with straw in a form of marquetry. As is typical of such

boxes, there were multiple levels with various drawers all beautifully crafted using straw.

E F & G are an example of a smaller box styled to look like a book, it is around seven inches long, by four inches wide by three inches deep.

These delightful curios from the early nineteenth century are not on view to the public and I thank Maria for allowing me to photograph them for our members.

Peter Maycock



E

F

G

Local Events this Summer

As we go into our summer break, here are a few events that might interest you:

Rose Hill United Reformed Church, Chesterfield

A Flower Festival

12 – 14 May 10am – 4pm,

15 May midday to 4pm.

Chesterfield Museum

Cestrefeld – Medieval Town

14 May to 2 July 2016

Chesterfield was a medieval market town. This exhibition looks at Chesterfield in the medieval period.

Chesterfield Menagerie

9 July to 1 October 2016

An exhibition showcasing some of the great objects in the collection, showing animals and looking at animals from the town's past.

History of Whittington Walk



Local historian and collector Barry Bingham has suggested leading a walk around the many places of interest in Whittington on June 21st. This may be of interest for anyone who will not be able to attend the meeting on September 20th - or even as well as coming to the meeting if you are a lover of fresh air and like a more hands-on approach. Whether this is an afternoon or early evening event depends on the number of people interested and their preferences. There is no charge associated with this event.

If you are interested, please let me know as soon as possible, along with your preferred time.

You can call me on 01246 230303 or email me: info@cadlhs.org.uk

Peter Maycock

Next Meetings

Tuesday May 17th - 7.30pm



Derbyshire Churches Architecture & Archaeology

by Paul Newsham

Paul is an excellent speaker who brings his subject to life in a special way.

Admission £2.00 - Free to Members

United Reformed Church
(Next to Town Hall)

Tuesday Sept 20th - 7.30pm



The History of Whittington

by Barry Bingham

A personal journey around Whittington by a local collector and historian.

Admission £2.00 - Free to Members

United Reformed Church
(Next to Town Hall)

Tuesday Oct 18th - 7.30pm



From Slums to Homes Fit For Heroes

by Janet Murphy

The early history of social housing in Chesterfield.

Admission £2.00 - Free to Members

United Reformed Church
(Next to Town Hall)