



November 2016

New Surroundings for the New Season



As of October, we have now moved into the main chapel building for our monthly meetings. After many months squeezed into the room at the rear of the premises, we have now been allowed to use the main chapel giving our meetings a light, airy feel with all the luxuries and technological benefits of the main chapel room. We thank all involved for making this happen

FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 13 th December Members Evening Mince pies included	Tuesday 17 th January Visit to Chesterfield Museum	Tuesday 21 st February AGM Followed by a presentation by David Howes
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If you are hoping to visit the Museum in January please could you let me know so that I can let the Museum some idea of the numbers.

Janet Murphy

ELLIS TRAVEL BUREAU

This colourful poster, part of the *Post It* exhibition at Chesterfield Museum, reminds us of the growing popularity of trips to the Channel Islands as people took their first holidays abroad after the war. A familiar name in the bottom left hand corner is that of the Ellis Travel bureau.

Arthur Constantine Ellis, son of an estate agent, was born in 1887, by the time of the 1911 census he was a commercial clerk with an engineering company. During WWI he was in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps serving in France, Italy and Russia. Perhaps his experiences encouraged his interest in travel.

In June 1932 a short paragraph in the *Derbyshire Times* advertised cheap trips by LMS to Belle Vue, Blackpool and Alton Towers. By September the range of trips had increased and an LMS display advertisement stated that tickets were available at the station or could be booked at the Ellis Travel Bureau,

16 Knifesmithgate, which is the first mention of the bureau. A novel way of attracting people's attention to the business was to show the week's *Derbyshire Times* pictures in the window so that people could then go through the bureau

Although the move to 21 Holywell Street was said to be because of the expansion of the business, the building was probably about to be demolished to make way for Marks and Spencer. In turn number 21 was demolished to make way for the Electricity Board Showrooms and Ellis Travel Bureau moved to number 29, next door to the Punchbowl.

The bureau advertised that personal attention would be given to all matters concerning travel to all parts of the world by Road, Rail, Sea and Air. As well as operating as a travel agent the bureau offered "personally conducted continental parties and cruise parties". For the time these were quite adventurous and included a trip to the WWI battlefields in 1933 and a trip to the World Fair in New York in August 1939. The outward sailing was aboard the *Queen Mary* and the return sailing aboard the *Scythia*, which allowed five days ashore at an inclusive cost of £44 10s third class or £60 5s tourist class.

Conducted parties by road and rail or annual outings could be arranged inclusive of transport, meals, theatres etc. A party of 200 Grammar School pupils were escorted to Vauxhall Motors at Luton followed by a trip to Whipsnade Zoo. But the most amazing feat of organisation must have been the Robinson & Sons Centenary Celebrations when 3,700 merry makers made their way to London aboard eight trains where they boarded eighty buses for tours round London. Refreshments were served at four Lyons Corner Houses before everyone made their way to the Albert Hall for an evening's entertainment followed by a weary journey home.





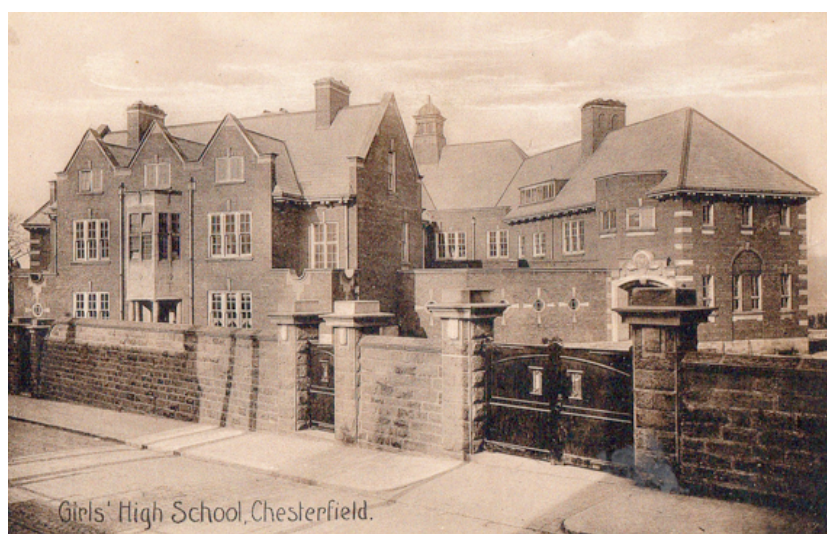
The commemorative panel on Goyt Side Road

Did the bureau continue to operate in a limited way during the war? In 1941 the offices were taken over by a squadron of the ATC. But in 1950 the company was back in business offering a trip to South Africa aboard the Pretoria Castle with a ride on the Blue Train. At 280 guineas only the wealthy could afford it.

In 1968 Ellis Travel Bureau opened a branch in the Co-op. presumably that didn't last very long, as a branch was later opened in Swallows. Arthur Ellis died in 1971 but the company is thought to have continued until at least 1973. Does anyone know about its final years?

Janet Murphy

NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR OLD ST HELENA BUILDING



The former St Helena School on Sheffield Road is due to reopen after undergoing a long awaited face lift and major internal overhaul by its new owners Derby University.

Built in 1911 the school served as a grammar school for girls of Chesterfield until 1991 when it became one of the four sites of Brookfield School under the Secondary School reorganisation. A couple of years later it was put to use as offices by Derbyshire County Council. When they left in 2013 the once magnificent building began to fall into disrepair. Former staff and students began to wonder if it would be lost forever until it was purchased in 2013 by Derby University to be used by students on their highly popular Nursing courses.



St Helena School under wraps April 2016



The stained glass window in the school hall depicting St Helena

After three years of restoration the building is ready to reopen. Many of the original features have been retained including stained glass windows featuring the figure of St Helena and the Chesterfield Seal, original doors and floors returned to their former glory and draughty windows replaced with modern casing alternatives.

As a Grade 2 listed building the work has been negotiated with the local Conservation Officer.

Former staff and students were invited to an open day where they could take a tour and reminisce about their experiences at St Helena School.

Wendy Pockson

More of Wendy's photos can be seen on the Chesterfield and District Local History web site.