



## NEWSLETTER September/October 2019

### **The Ragged School**

David Botham

Tuesday September 17th  
2019

Chesterfield Ragged School opened in July 1878 as a mission to the children of the poor who lived in the cramped and insanitary yards nearby.



### **A Twist in the Tale**

Tony Hallam

Tuesday October 15<sup>th</sup> 2019

The story of St Mary and All Saints. Ask the question...is the Spire really crooked? The answer may not be quite what you expect.

# Chesterfield Church Spire – in the right place at the right time.

Michael Jackson

In about 1947 my school friend John Ryman and I were invited by a friend Desmond Mottershaw to visit the spire. John lived near the bottom of Hady Hill and Desmond further up. We both expressed interest and went with him to the church. He was in the choir there and knew the way up the steps to get to the square top of the tower. We next went into the spire, no locks or doors that I remember and no one asked what we were doing. So off we went up the ladders, about eight or nine I think, and arrived at a side door about 3ft 6 x 1ft 9, which was about 20ft below the cockerel. It was on the north side and a terrific view was before us. Norton water tower was easy to see, but the abiding memory was what a lot of trees there were.

In August 1951 I was an articled pupil at Mr W. A. Derbyshire's architect's office in Glumangate. One day Mr Charles Gaunt of C. E. Gaunt, contractors, who had an office and depot in West Bars railway goods yard, called in to see Mr Derbyshire. They were friends of a similar age and he often called in for a chat. As he was leaving he called in the main office and told us that his firm was working on the spire and if anyone wished to have a look we were welcome to do so. He said we could be pulled up in a bosun's chair or could go up the internal ladders to reach the scaffolding all-round the top 20ft of the spire. Colin Morse, a former articled pupil but with us during his summer vacation from Leicester College of Architecture, and I said that we would like to accept the invitation and the next day we went into the church, up the stone steps and then up the ladders. Again no locked doors or anyone to ask what we were up to. When we got to the small door it was open and we could easily access the scaffolding and see the two workmen from Gaunt's.



The foreman was Harold Moore from Old Whittington who died about 2016 and his assistant was Charlie Ashmore, although that might be incorrect. The work involved replacing various timbers which had got in a bad way. Chiefly it seems to have involved a large 10in x 10in central post approximately 18ft to 20ft long. They had had to haul up this very heavy timber and then lower it into position, but the hoist was suitable for the required length and the post had to be released and dropped a short distance into a sort of cradle. Fingers were crossed that it would work correctly otherwise the weight might destroy the cradle and if that happened it would soon have progressed straight down to floor level in the church. All had thankfully gone well. On top of the new post a wood block, almost circular, had been fitted as a base for the cockerel which had 'flown away' to have its feathers regilded. I never saw the cockerel at close quarters but two years ago I was talking to fellow railway enthusiast, David Aldis, who said that he seen and touched

the cockerel whilst it had been on the ground. The top 20ft of lead cladding was also being renewed but I believe not by Gaunt.



As I had taken my camera I took a photograph of the other three on top of the scaffolding. Once on the ground I realised that I had forgotten to ask someone to take a photograph of me 'on the top' and it seemed too much of an effort to climb back up just for a photo.

I was very fortunate to have been invited up the spire on two occasions by being in the right place at the right time. Looking back we did not have to wear hard hats or high visibility jackets, neither of which would have been any help if we had fallen off.

## Can you help?

These postcards belong to one of our members, Carol Bygrave.

They are taken outside the Queen's Head on Glumangate, where the landlord was John Elliott from 1909 until his death in 1913. On the second photograph the name of the licensee is M. Elliott, who was his widow Maria.

According to Kelly's Directory of 1922 she was still the licensee. In July 1924, 100 members of the Queen's Head Outing Club



boarded seven charabancs for their Annual Outing to Dovedale and Buxton, partaking of refreshments at Ambergate, Dovedale and Tideswell.

Shortly afterwards Knifemithgate was extended and the Queen's Head Hotel was rebuilt at the junction of Knifemithgate with Glumangate.

Apparently the solid tyres and oil lamps date the vehicles to the early 1920s. Can anyone confirm this?

## Heritage Open Days 2019

### **Elder Yard Unitarian Chapel**, Elder Way, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 1UR

Visit the oldest nonconformist meeting house in Derbyshire, which is still in use as a meeting house.

Opening Times **Saturday 14 September: 10.00-16.00; Thursday 19 September: 10.00-16.00; Saturday 21 September: 10.00-16.00**

### **Spital Cemetery**

**Tuesday 17 September:** Tour led by Cllr Shirley Niblock: *Keeping the people in check: Changes to Chesterfield and Derbyshire police over the years.* 6 - 7pm. Meet at the chapels.

**Saturday 21 September:** Displays/refreshments/facilities 1 - 5pm at St Leonard's Centre, Valley Road.  
*CHAMPIONS OF THE PEOPLE TOUR IN THE CEMETERY* 3 - 4pm. Meet at the top gates.

### **Ragged School Evangelical Church**, Markham Road, Chesterfield, S40 1TA

**Opening Times Saturday 21 September:** 10.00 to 16.00 plus concert by Stonebroom Gospel Crusaders Choir at 19.00 to 21.00; **Sunday 22 September:** 18.00 to 20.00. Harvest Celebration Service commencing 18.30

### **Tour of the Mayor's Parlour at Chesterfield Town Hall**, Town Hall, Rose Hill, Chesterfield, S40 1LP

Opening Times **Friday 20 September: 13.00 - 14.00 and 14.30 - 15.30.** As there is limited space booking is essential

**Booking Contact:** Leanne Mowbray

**Call:** 01246 345239

**Email:** [Leanne.mowbray@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:Leanne.mowbray@chesterfield.gov.uk)

**Write to:** Chesterfield Town Hall, Rose Hill, Chesterfield S40 1LP

**Booking opens:** 12 August 2019 10:00

**Booking closes:** 16 September 2019 16:00

### **Local History Day, Chesterfield Museum**, St. Marys Gate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S41 7TD

Meet local organisations who are exploring Chesterfield's history, including CADLHS

Times **Saturday 21 September: 10:00 - 16:00**

### **Winding Wheel**, 13 Holywell Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S41 7SA

Take a backstage tour of the Winding Wheel Theatre and learn a little about its history and its Grade II listed status.

Times **Saturday 21 September: 10:00.** The tour must be pre-booked at: **Chesterfield Theatres Box Office**  
Call: **01246 345222**