



George Harry Miles — based on information supplied by Andy Miles

My great grandfather was George Frederick Miles, a brewer's clerk. According to the 1891 census, he was born at Kedleston, the son of a coachman George Miles. The family then moved to Okeover where the next five children were born, followed by one at Ashbourne and two more at Chesterfield, when the family was living in Spital at Hady House. There were seven boys and two girls. George was the eldest at 18 and Charles the youngest at 4 days old.

Grandfather, George Harry, emigrated to Canada in the early 1900's along with a number of his uncles. (Charles, John and Allen) and a cousin, Walter. His original idea was to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway. However, when he arrived, there were signs saying 'no English'. He therefore got himself another job, sawing up ice on the Great Lakes for railway export to New York for use in Martini cocktails.

Returning to England he went to live in Manchester where he married his wife Sarah in 1907 before moving to Sheffield where his son Stanley was born in 1908 and by 1910 he was living in Chesterfield where his daughter Joyce was born.

Whilst in Canada and Manchester he won prizes as a 'physical cultureist' and began training amateur football teams in Manchester. He gained qualifications in physiotherapy and became a



gymnastic instructor under the Sheffield Education Committee. From September 1910 until January 1912 he was the trainer for Chesterfield Football Club. His Uncle Tom had played for Spital Olympic.

After he left the football club he became a newsagent renting a shop at 10 Holywell Street next door to Eyres. Local historian, David Howes, tells me that my Grandfather took

three halfpence on his first day of trading having sold three halfpenny comics! When the property was sold in July 1912 he was renting it for £10 8s per year.





This photograph of my Grandfather standing in the doorway of his shop on was taken on August 22nd 1912. The headlines refer to the new leaders of the Salvation Army following the death of General Booth and the collision of the Allen liner, the *Corsican*, with an iceberg whilst on her way to Liverpool only a few months after the sinking of the *Titanic*.

In 1911 an order was made for the closure of the Leopard Inn on the opposite side of Holywell Street which was not carried out until December 1912 and grandfather took over the rental of the property and transferred the newsagent's business to this larger property

My father Maurice remembers living at his father's shop at 19 Holywell Street and that at the back of the shop was a long kitchen, then a long Best room, a wash-house with large brick coal fired boiler and a coal place and laundry. Then

came the stable with a loft. A step down outside the Best room led down to the beer cellar which was a useful shelter during Zeppelin raids in the first war. To the left of the shop on the photo there was Leno's Pawn Shop. Next to this was Goodwin's wallpaper shop, then Bowers the bakers. On the right Mr Martin the veterinary surgeon, lived at Sycamore House (Holywell Veterinary Infirmary), which later became another part of Eyres. Next door was the Unicorn Arch, a high wall with a stone figure of a horse on top and a drive to front of house which faced over Tapton, a stable yard and a paddock riding school. In the far distance was the Clifton (Temperance) Hotel and to the right the Stephenson Memorial Hall. On the opposite side of Holywell Street to grandfather's shop were Eyres Furniture Shop and three other shops including Ibbotson's Penny Bazaar.



Grandfather held various positions in the Chesterfield Branch of the National Federation of retail Newsagents, Booksellers and Stationers. He is also reputed to have run an illegal bookmaking business out of the shop, and at one point, having been unable to lay off the bets, the future of the shop and the house was riding on the result of a particular race!

In 1923 when the plans for the Picture House (later the Odeon and now the Winding Wheel) were first submitted they were turned down as the Council wanted to widen Holywell Street by demolishing the buildings on the north side. Although the Picture House was opened the rest of the street scheme was delayed because of the cost and it was not until 1930 that the extension was opened. The work involved the demolition of the former Leopard Inn and the building of a new shop. My father's bedroom was next to the Odeon ballroom, which has a spring floor. Whenever there was a dance my father's bedroom used to

move around!

By 1936 he was joined in the business by his eldest son Stanley and a second shop was opened on the south side of the Market Hall.

In the late 1930s Grandfather also began to sell tickets for coach and rail trips and events. However he now had a competitor as the Ellis Travel Bureau also opened in Holywell Street. Eventually the shop on Holywell Street was closed and converted to an Indian restaurant.

As the postcard bears the words 'Come and see our window' it was likely to have been produced during one of the shopping festivals



Can anyone help?

In this image the smallest building straight ahead is George Miles's first shop.

Clearly the card was posted from Chesterfield to France in 1915 but can anyone decipher the message which appears to be in German?.



Brian Austin 1934-2021

Brian, who died recently at the age of almost 87 years, was a very supportive member of the Chesterfield and District Local History Society returning to live in the town following his retirement from his work in the Northampton shoe industry. His father was a Chief Inspector in the Derbyshire County Police before transferring to the Chesterfield Force in 1945 shortly before the two forces amalgamated. Brian grew up in one of the police houses at the top of Brimington Road, property that is still standing, and he attended Chesterfield Grammar School.

The history of Chesterfield then became his great interest and he was often to be found in the Local Studies department of Chesterfield Library poring over the microfilms copies of the *Derbyshire Times*. He contributed no fewer than six of the Society's History papers. All were extracts of articles from the *Derbyshire Times*, including *Chesterfield's Monster Cakes*, *The Great Lace Making Machine of Chesterfield* and *Chesterfield's Last Town Crier*, all stories which particularly appealed to him. For a time he was a member of the committee and at those meetings and on other occasions too he would launch into the telling of other tales he'd discovered in the *Derbyshire Times* especially those involving the misdemeanours of Chesterfield citizens and ending with his favourite phrase 'I kid you not'

When he left Chesterfield some years ago to live near family in Northamptonshire he was much missed. Brian was a great friend, always cheerful, and never forgotten by those who knew him and enjoyed his company during those retirement years in Chesterfield.

Maeve Hawkins

New Books

Derbyshire Record Society: Derbyshire County Bridges 1530–1889. ISBN 978-0-946324-46-0 236pp including 20pp colour plates. Price £30 + £3 postage and packing. It is cheaper to join the DRS for a year (£5) and get it for £20 post free.

The Bridges Act of 1530 required the court of quarter sessions to repair bridges in its county or borough for which no-one else was responsible. The text includes a brief history and description of about 140 county bridges in Derbyshire, ranging in date from the thirteenth century to the early nineteenth. All are located on a series of maps and a representative sample are illustrated. The gazetteer is prefaced by an introduction outlining the work of quarter sessions under the Bridges Act of 1530 and later legislation, including the careers of the county surveyors. The book is Vol. 45 in the DRS hardback series)

McCloy, Andrew Peak District Pubs – A pint-sized social history ISBN 978-0-9955609-9-4 210pp.

Price £11.99. It includes over 160 photographs.



Originally published in 2005 this revised edition was written between lockdowns and as the author says 'it can only capture a moment in time' in the unfolding story of Peak District pubs. It covers the evolution of pubs from the humble alehouse through to the present day. It shows that often their names tell us something about the everyday life of their local communities. As well as detailing pubs that have closed it discusses the recent rise of micropubs, brew pubs and community pubs.