



NEWSLETTER May 2021

Chesterfield and District Local History Society is recruiting a new team to take it forwards into the future.

Due to a combination of changing circumstances and long service, several members of the committee have confirmed that they are standing down at the next AGM, (which is likely to be in February 2022).

We are looking to put together a team of between 8-12 people. The skills needed ranges from chairing meetings, admin, booking speakers, representing the society at events, finance, social media, website and more besides.

If you have a passion for the history of the local area, enjoy helping unlock latest research and information and sharing that with the community then please do get in touch. Contact Janet Murphy on janmurphy255@btinternet.com or Ed Fordham on ed.fordham@gmail.com

Employment of Women in World War I

This article is based on the Museum's contribution to the celebration of International Women's Day 2021.

Addressing a meeting on the third anniversary of the beginning of the war Emma Louise Bond wife of the Revd Kenneth Bond of Elder Yard Chapel, said: "This war has done something for the women and girls – it has given them a freedom they have never had before."



(Courtesy Chesterfield Museum)

As men joined the armed services women had to take their place, initially in shops and offices. Many had to leave home for the first time. One company already employing women was Robinsons and Sons. At the Wheatbridge works the outbreak of war brought a huge demand for surgical dressings with employees working double and even treble shifts. More staff were taken on and the total soon passed 2000 most of whom would have been women.

At the Holmebrook works, where cardboard boxes were made, they also began making munition fittings whilst the number of men employed fell from 120 to less than 30 and they were replaced by women.

Another firm employing women was the Midland Preserving Company at Whittington, the products going to feed the soldiers. Possibly the products filled jars manufactured by the pottery companies who also manufactured containers for rum.



Patent Electric Shot Firing Company (Courtesy Chesterfield Museum)

The Patent Electric Shot-Firing Company was another big employer of women for the manufacture of fuses and detonators for Mills bombs – dangerous work!

In September 1915, 18 girls were taken on for munition work at Markham works rising to 50 later whilst 100 women were employed at Bryan Donkin's; 20 at Plowright's; and 100 worked at Chesterfield Manufacturing Company where they were engaged in manufacturing fuels for gas stoves. Susannah Williams was employed at Staveley Coal and Iron Company, which involved walking daily from Spital to Staveley, organising her teams of girls, who had replaced the men, and then walking home again after a long day at work. Women were also employed at Sheepbridge Coal and Iron Company.



At Proctors on Park Road 30 women were employed in manufacturing ammunition boxes; at Eyres they undertook joinery and elsewhere they made mosquito nets.

At Barrow Hill and Staveley Loco Works they cleaned engines. Other women were employed on the railways as ticket collectors, porters and cleaners. Women were also employed on the trams. By July 1917 there were 13 motorwomen (i.e. drivers) and 18 conductresses.

Chesterfield women are known to have served with the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD), British Red Cross, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service (QAIMNS) and the Territorial Forces Nursing Service (TFNS). Service could be at home (i.e. England) or abroad. Mary Fletcher was stationed in Malta, Egypt and Palestine where the weather was very different to that in England. Other nurses served in France and the Balkans.



(Courtesy Chesterfield Museum)

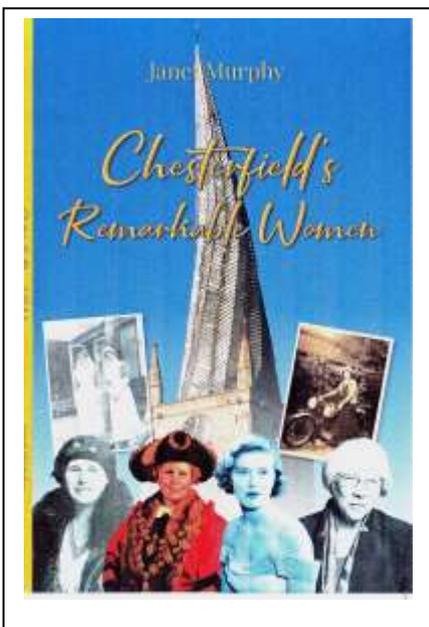
In 1917 with no end to the war in sight recruitment began for the armed service; the Women's Armed Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), known as Queen Mary's Armed Auxiliary Armed Corps from April 1918, and the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). The Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) was formed a year later. Their formation was intended to release men for front line service. In the WAAC they were employed as clerks, typists, cooks and mechanics and to maintain war graves. Four women from Chesterfield served with the WAAC, three of whom went to France.

Also in 1917 the Women's Land Army was formed.

Sadly little is known of the experience of women workers during the war. Even before the end of the war these jobs were disappearing as the men returned, unfit for combat, but capable of light work, and after the war the majority of women found themselves out of work once more and the women's armed services were disbanded.

Clearly this is a brief survey of the work undertaken by women during WWI. If you have an ancestor who worked during WWI please let us know – even a name may be of help.

Coming soon ...



Who said that this war has done something for the women and girls – it has given them a freedom they have never had before?

Who asked for the enforcement of the by-laws regarding smoke nuisance to save women a lot of time spent in clearing away dirt and unnecessary washing?

Who wrote 'Born of the British working class, reared among miners and textile workers, daily participating in the hardships and humiliations of their lives, it was there that I early learnt that the only way out for the working class is through proletarian revolution and the overthrow of capitalism.?'

Chesterfield's Remarkable Women by Janet Murphy tells the stories of 50 women with links with Chesterfield. It is due to be published shortly by Bannister Publications. Priced at £8.50, all proceeds from sales will go to Ashgate HospiceCare.

Chesterfield Street Names

Some street names date back to medieval times, Gluman (or Gleeman) Gate; Holywell (Various spellings) Street; Knifsmith (after the Knifsmith family); Saltergate and Beetwell Street and Lordsmill Street.

Outside the town centre others got their names from the places to which the roads went such as Brimington, Sheffield, Mansfield, Derby, Newbold, and Matlock. Tapton View Road and Moorland View Road are explanatory.

The arrival of the canal brought Wharf Lane and as the town expanded more street names had to be found. Some roads recall lost industries in the town — Brickyard Walk, Pottery Lane, Mill Lane, Lordsmill Street,



Brewery Street, Bobbin Mill Lane, Saltergate, Glasshouse Lane, Foundry Street, Furnace Hill and Factory Street, but others are less obvious. Owen Falls Road gets its name from the dam in Uganda for which Markham Engineering Works supplied hydro-electric equipment.

Industrialists were Bearley, Clayton, Dixon, Eastwood, Lucas, Markham, Shepley, Stephenson, and Swanwick but no Robinson although there is a Bradbury. Off Hady Lane Harvey, Houldsworth, Kenyon and Barnes are linked by mining but what happened to Haslam and who was Mr Lee?

There are many Church and Chapel streets as well those named after a church for example St Mary's Gate and St John's Road. Chapel Lane West in Brampton gets its name from a chapel which was demolished long ago as was the chapel on Chapel Yard in the town centre; the yard remains as the pathway alongside the Police Station although the name plate was recently removed. Likewise Hipper Street West is in Brampton – only the remnants of Hipper Street remain in the town centre. Other roads taking river names are Holme Brook, Whiting, Rother and Calow Brook.

The council estate adjoining the Saints Augustine Church is referred to St Augustines as are several of the streets on the estate, St Augustines Road, Rise, Mount, Drive, Crescent and Avenue, which must be a bit confusing. However on the later council estates in Newbold the streets were named firstly after places in the Lake District and then to places in Hampshire and Dorset. Dryden, Milton, Burns, Kingsley and Byron streets are on the Grangewood estate. The extension to the Boythorpe estate has Foolow, Grindlow, Hucklow and Wardlow. Inkersall and Middlecroft have streets named after places in the Peak District. The streets on the Industrial Housing estate at Hollingwood were given the name of trees.

Other roads are named after the family who owned the land at some time Foljambe Avenue, Sitwell Avenue, Maynard Road, Soresby Street and Durrant Road although the family name was Durant. A similar misspelling is Abercrombie Street which is thought to be named after James Abercromby, 1st Baron Dunfermline who was the Speaker of the House of Commons. Stubbin Road takes its name from Stubbing Court where he lived for some time. Other 19th century politicians include Shaftesbury, Salisbury, Cobden, Gladstone and Stanley, although he is better known for his meeting with Livingstone. More recent names are Bevan, Shimwell and Attlee at Inkersall. Local councillors remembered are Marsden, Markham, Eastwood, Clayton, Rhodes, Hawksley and Beckingham.

Either the developer of land in Walton was a keen golfer or he was inspired by the nearby Chesterfield Golf Club naming the streets Carnoustie, Moor Park, Birkdale, Fulford, Troon, Tylney, Halesworth, Medlock, St

Andrews, Sandiway and Greenways but I wonder how many of the residents of Creswick Close know that Creswick golf course is in Australia.

Other sporting names are Panthers Place and Rugby Drive in Stonegravels on the site of the former home of Chesterfield Rugby Club (now called the Panthers) and Stand Road and Racecourse Road on the site of the former Chesterfield Racecourse.

Neighbouring streets are often linked. Baden Powell, Redvers Buller, Lord Roberts and Dundonald are linked by the South African Wars but there is only Alma from the Crimean War although there is Inkerman Park on the other side of town.

The Duke of Devonshire owned much property in the town so it's not surprising that there are several roads with family names — Burlington, Cavendish, Devonshire, Spencer, Chatsworth, Hardwick and Hartington. Haddon Close and Rutland Road are connected with the Duke of Rutland. Although the Duke of Portland owned property in the town there are no roads in the town centre possibly because the land exchanges between the Dukes of Portland and Devonshire took place before the town was extended. Clumber, Thoresby and Welbeck are to be found at Inkersall.

New Brimington has neighbouring streets named King, Queen, Princess and Victoria but no Prince or Albert. Other royal names of the period are Alexandra and Clarence.

Most of the Yards in the town have been built over. They were often named after the landowner and consequently changed their names when the land ownership changed; of these only Ward's Yard remains; Theatre Yard once housed the town's theatre; Elder Yard was widened and became Elder Way. The line of Angel Yard can be traced from the original site of the Angel on the High Street (the passageway just to the left of the NatWest Bank) to Saltergate.



Other street names and their explanations are welcome.

Facebook pages

Have you accessed the society's web page at <https://www.facebook.com/CADLHS/>

Others which might be of interest are

Chesterfield & District Family History Society <https://en-gb.facebook.com/groups/1748408198777885/>

Chesterfield Museum <https://www.facebook.com/chesterfieldmuseum/>

Old Chesterfield Pics <https://en-gb.facebook.com/groups/oldchesterfieldpics/>

Victoria County History – Derbyshire <https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireVCH>

North East Derbyshire industrial Archaeology Society

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/pg/nediaschesterfield/posts/>

All these are public groups, which means that anyone can access them. However if you wish to post on them or view the earliest posts you need to join the group.

Chesterfield and Area History and Genealogy is a private group and to access it you need to join the group. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/169747310273742/>