



NEWSLETTER October 2021

Chesterfield in the 1930s

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The major street improvements of the 1920s continued in the 1930 resulting in new buildings which are often overlooked.

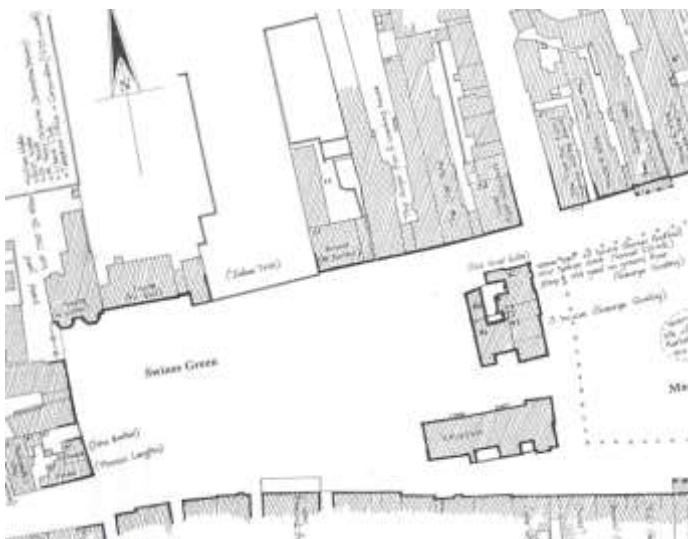


Meetings are held at the St Thomas' Centre Chatsworth Road, starting at 7:30pm

Members free, Visitors £3

New Square Part 1

When the new market place was opened towards the end of the 12th century the west boundary ran from the bottom of Glumangate to Wheeldon Lane which ran south from the over-gateway on the east of the present Crown and Cushion. Pigs were sold in the area to the west of the market place which became known Swines Green. Senior's plan of Chesterfield in 1633 shows that there were buildings bordering the area. After the exchange of land between the Dukes of Devonshire and Portland in the 1790s, Peter Potter surveyed the Duke of Devonshire's property in Chesterfield and produced a map which was replotted by Jackson and Fryer in 1947.



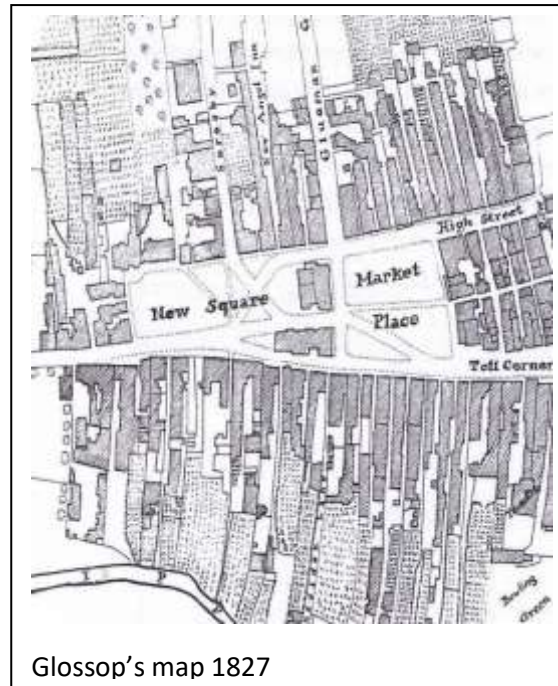
On the north side of Swines Green is an empty plot owned by Joshua Jebb. This was originally the site of a mansion house owned by the Soresby family. It was eventually sold to Joshua Jebb who decided to demolish it and sell it in the form of building materials in 1812, giving the address as New Square. Shortly afterwards part of the site was used for the construction of Soresby Street which ran from New Square to Saltergate.

The Moothall was included in Senior's survey so it dates back to at least 1633. It was used for the court of the Manor of Chesterfield and the Hundred of Scarsdale. It was demolished in 1828 by which time it was dilapidated.

Glossop's map of 1827 clearly shows the long, narrow burgage plots (land owned by the burgesses of the town) to the north and south of the square. Some of the plots on the north stretched as far as Saltergate. In the south they stretched as far as the River Hipper, which lay further north until the construction of the Lancashire Derbyshire and East Coast Railway meant that it had to be diverted further south.

Little is known about Wilcockson's, the other building in the square. In 1849 it contained Thomas Wilcockson's shop, a cheese warehouse, the Cross Daggers and a bakehouse. It was demolished soon afterwards to make way for the Market Hall which was erected in 1857.

In 1882 a horse drawn tram service began from Brampton to a terminus below the Market Hall.



Glossop's map 1827



Later the service was electrified and extended to Whittington Moor; however at weekends it was unable to pass through the town centre and the Brampton section still terminated at the Market Hall. Proctor & Sons seed merchants moved to New Square in 1897 so this image must be later than that. In 1927 the trams were replaced by trolley buses but they didn't last long as they were replaced by motor buses in 1938.

Just outside the square the Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway was opened in 1897. Its construction resulted in the closure of the access to Queen's Park from West Bars. To compensate the railway company had to construct a new road from New Square to the gates of the park.



Today it is difficult to believe that this was once a very busy road with traffic lights at the junction with New Square. In 1963, following the closure of the LDECR, Markham Road was extended to West Bars, reducing the traffic on the top part. About this time the Council was considering a major shopping development stretching from the Shambles to New Square. The first scheme was abandoned because of the cost.

The next scheme, drawn up by Hammersons in 1972, was for a single storey structure housing 51 shops, an assembly hall, two public houses and some of the market stalls, the rest being housed in New Square. There was also to be parking space for 660 cars. It would have resulted in building over the market square, the destruction of the Market Hall and three listed buildings on Low Pavement. In January 1973, a letter from a schoolboy, David Ellis, to the *Derbyshire Times* said that 'Chesterfield is a nice town – the development will spoil it.' Spearheaded by local engineer, Graham Robinson, a campaign began to oppose the plan despite the council insisting that it would go ahead. A petition was launched which collected 32,000 signatures. The petition was delivered to the council in July 1974. Only when the march reached the Town Hall was the size of the protest apparent.



Where were you?



A small committee called the Chesterfield Heritage Society was formed. Meanwhile a fire at the dilapidated Peacock Inn revealed an important timber-framed building. Despite admitting that their experts had not visited it, the Department of the Environment initially refused to protect it by listing it. It is now listed Grade II. The campaign reached the national press and attracted the support of some powerful supporters including Jennifer Jenkins, secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society who had lived in Chesterfield as a child. The final blow for the council came in April 1974 when Hammersons withdrew after the property market collapsed. Much work still needed to be done before in 1976 a conservation oriented approach was adopted and the road across the square closed.

The illustration shows New Square in 1982. The fountain, which came from Eastwood Park was returned to the park in 2000.

The new scheme attracted national and European awards. Further information about the campaign and the development can be found in *New Shopping In Historic Towns* by Tony Aldous. Given the changes in high street retailing one can only be grateful that the Hammerson's scheme did not go ahead. In 2013 the Market Hall was redeveloped. Once again in 2021 the future of the New Square and the Market Square is under discussion.



Part 2 will give the history of some of the buildings in New Square