

The Cestrefeld Journal

Chesterfield and District Local History Society

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Elder Way 1932

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MR. RICHARD BARROW

(From The Illustrated London News 23rd June 1860)

Contributed by Maeve Hawkins

The portrait we give is that of one of those great members of the industrial world, who have made England what it is. With an indifferent climate and not very fertile soil, a dominion bounded by the narrow seas, the industrial classes have enabled this country to become, in arts, in science, in manufacturers, in commercial power and in political influence, the ruler and wonder of the world. What is the foundation of our power, a power burdened with enormous taxation and restricted by physical disabilities? The answer is plain – the indomitable energy of the English capitalist and the untiring industry of the English improvement and the progress of that wonderful machinery which has supplemented the labour of a population of twenty or thirty millions by mechanical agencies equivalent to the work of one thousand millions. These men make little stir in the discussions which float upon the surface of the daily news; but they leave their broad, deep mark upon the progress of the country and the practical good they effect can never be effaced.



Mr. Richard Barrow, one of the largest coal owners and ironmasters in the kingdom, is the son of the Rev. Richard Barrow, who for fifty years was Vicar Choral of the Collegiate Church of Southwell. He is the nephew of the late Venerable the Archdeacon of Nottingham and brother of W. Hodgson Barrow, Esq., formerly High Sheriff and now M.P. for South Nottinghamshire, which he has represented for many years.

Mr. Barrow was in early life a merchant connected in business with his brother, John Barrow, and conjointly they conducted most extensive establishments in Portugal, Spain and Gibraltar, and they were amongst the earliest pioneers of the more modern trade with China. Upon retiring from the business of merchants, each with an ample fortune, the younger brother John devoted his leisure to farming his own estates in Nottinghamshire and Richard Barrow, the subject of our portrait, enlarged the coal and iron works at Staveley, commenced by George Hodgkinson Barrow, where he has a lease of the coal under nearly 6000 acres and where he now produces nearly 2000 tons of coal per day and makes 1800 tons of iron per month. He now employs between 3000 and 4000 workmen and has upwards of 600 cottages for their accommodation – in fact he is the governor of a small principality, connected by road and railway, the workmen from one part of the estate being conveyed upon his own railway and by his own locomotives and carriages to the other parts daily in furtherance of the industrial enterprises in which they are all engaged.

Mr. Barrow was born in 1787 but unlike many of his class who retire in the prime of life to vegetate upon an ample fortune, he seems determined to set an example to those from amongst whom he has sprung by labouring on to the end. Thus he employs his thousands

of workmen; he is constantly enlarging his works; he has built commodious schools and a beautiful church and assisted various places of dissenting worship — his pride apparently being to set an example as an employer in a district where example may, to say the least, be absent. Men like Mr. Barrow are the unostentatious centres of great and noble circles. They make little noise, but they initiate much; they claim little applause but they deserve lasting gratitude. As a sample of the great industrial class of England we present Mr. Richard Barrow to our readers, trusting that he may long remain with us a bright example of the most useful portion of the community. Our portrait of Mr. Barrow is from a painting by John Lucas of St. John's Wood Road.

JOHN TOPLIS AND QUEEN VICTORIA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

Janet Murphy

Queen Victoria ascended to the throne on 20th June 1837 and nationwide there were great celebrations to mark her Golden Jubilee in June 1887. In Chesterfield it had been decided that the jubilee should be marked by purchasing land for a public recreation ground. Delays in raising the money meant that the celebrations took place on 21st

September, which the Mayor, Alderman T P Wood, declared was to be a public holiday.

After divine service in the Parish Church, a 'Monster Procession' of civic dignitaries, bands, friendly societies, school-children and horse-drawn tableaux, representing the businesses and trades of the town, wended its way round the town to the 17 acre field, where a memorial tree was planted. A free dinner was provided for 1000 aged persons and medals presented to the school-children. Bands played throughout the day and the Chesterfield Volunteers fired salutes. The proceedings closed with a fireworks display. It is these celebrations that were reported in the issue of the *Derbyshire Courier* of September 24th 1887 (and also the *Derbyshire Times*).

The *Derbyshire Times* of 2nd June 2011 carried a request for information about a silk copy of the *Derbyshire Courier* dated 1887 in the possession of Keith

Can you help solve the silken mystery?

IT WAS found tucked away in a cupboard in a Chesterfield home, now Keith Broomhead is asking for the help of *Derbyshire Times* readers to find out its origins.

This silk copy of *Derbyshire Courier* dates back to 1887 and was found by Keith when he was clearing out his late mum Betty Broomhead's house on Walton Back Lane.

"I don't know why she had it," admits Keith.

The *Courier* was the rival newspaper of the *Derbyshire Times* and was bought by the DT in 1922 and the two old rivals were amalgamated into one paper.

Adverts in the paper have oil cloths for sale at 9d and a town centre music shop boasts daily parcels from London.

The main story is Queen's Park opening - dated September 24, 1887 - to celebrate Queen Victoria's golden jubilee and includes a plan of the park.

"She was a royal fan," said Keith who runs dry cleaners, Chesterfield Valet Service in Elder Way.

He wonders if his mum had paid for it and saved it as a souvenir.

● Do you know anything about the silk newspaper? Email comment@derbyshiretimes.co.uk



MAKING HEADLINES: Keith Broomhead and *Derbyshire Courier* in silk from 1887. SP89333

Broomhead. When I exchanged information with Keith it emerged that Keith's grandmother Edith Mary Toplis had married Charles Broomhead in 1921. Edith was the grand-daughter of John Toplis, who was the publisher of the *Derbyshire Courier* in 1887. It is likely that few copies of the silk edition were produced and Keith's copy has probably been handed down through the family.

John Toplis was born in 1837, his father Samuel was a framework knitter. John attended the Victoria School in Vicar Lane. After leaving school he was apprenticed to John Roberts, at that time the publisher of the *Derbyshire Courier*. His apprenticeship lasted for seven years; during which time he received at first 5s and afterwards 8s weekly. After serving his time he was taken on the staff of the *Sheffield Independent* as compositor and afterwards was employed on the *Derbyshire Times*. He married Ellen Walker, whose father kept the Royal Oak in the Shambles: their first child was born in Sheffield. Shortly afterwards Toplis came back to Chesterfield as district reporter for the *Sheffield Independent*, and at the same time opened in business in a small way in South Street. By now the *Derbyshire Courier* was in financial difficulties. At the request of the liquidators, he undertook the management of the concern and after many years hard work was able to secure sole proprietorship. In 1890 he made over the newspaper and the printing establishment to the Derbyshire Courier Co. Ltd. and retired from business and for the rest of his life lived at Gladstone House, in Gladstone Road. By his first wife he had five sons and three daughters; two of the sons were journalists — one on the *Yorkshire Post* and the other on the staff of the *Derbyshire Courier*, and another was a chemist and dentist in the town. He had another child by his second wife. He died in 1897.



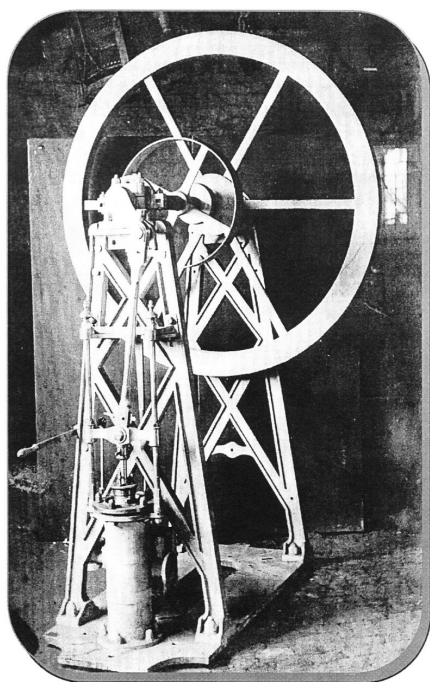
Both the Toplis and the Broomhead families were prominent members of Elder Yard Chapel and several members of the families are buried there. This is the grave of Eileen Toplis, John Toplis and his second wife Maria.

THE FIRST OLIVER ENGINE

Peter Hawkins

As many of you know one of my many interests is the history of The Oliver/Markham Company of Chesterfield. I started my research back in the 1960s. Many years later I was contacted by a distant relative of the Oliver family a Miss M Hill. During our correspondences she mentioned she had a photograph of the first Oliver Steam engine. As you can guess I was very interested and could I have a copy please? Yes, one came very quickly. Could I tell her about it, what did it do, where did it go?

Well there was not much I could tell her as the order book did not start till 1863. It appears to have been used to drive machinery but we do know that William Oliver and Thomas Brushfield Shepley formed a partnership c1854 as they are listed in the Post Office Directory in 1855 as Blacksmiths and Engineers in Shepleys' old lead workshops in Knivesmithgate to be known later as the Victoria Foundry and now the Victoria Centre. The partnership did not last long as it was dissolved on the 22nd of June 1855 (*Derbyshire Courier*), but William continued on site with the business but now joined with his father John, who was in business in Holywell Cross. This was where William had served his apprenticeship as a Blacksmith/ Whitesmith. The public notice in the *Courier* described Oliver and Shepley as Engineers and Steam Engine Makers so the date of the first engine would be c1854/5.



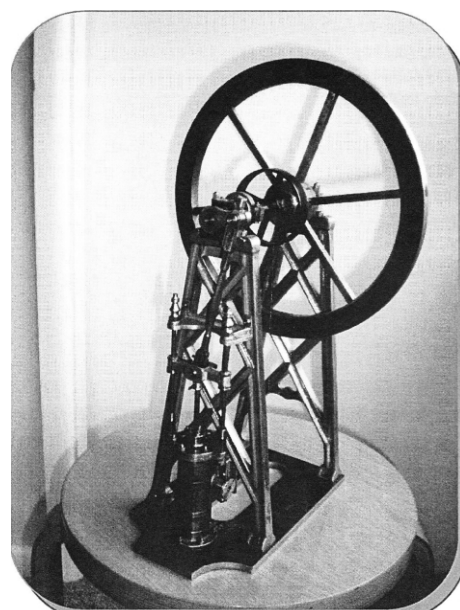
.5 -

I decided to make a model of the engine using my only guide the photograph. Looking at it one presumes it was taken in the Victoria Foundry fitting shop. In the background a window is just showing, perhaps looking over into the Unitarian churchyard and hung on a roof truss is a portable blacksmith's bellows. On the floor a brick can be seen and from this I could roughly size the engine.

I played around with sketches till I had the proportions

looking right also assuming that most of the sizes would be nominal i.e. to the nearest 6 inches as there was not the accurate measuring

equipment at the time. It seemed to work out OK. I had to guess what the rear of the cylinder looked like and also the flywheel hole. I put a square one in assuming they would not have a lathe large enough to machine the bore. The technique of the time to set anything true such



as a flywheel or a water wheel was to have a square hole and a square shaft with plenty of clearance so as to drive taper wedges in to make the wheel run true on the outside edge. Also I could see only three tapped holes in the piston rod gland and maybe two on the valve spindle. Taps, were very expensive as they could not be bought 'off the shelf'. They were used to make screw threads in holes. They had to be made from tool steel which was very expensive at the time and also had to be made 'in house'. Where possible plain nuts and bolts were used as these could be bought from iron mongers who bought them from manufacturers. These would be made out of wrought iron. The engine is basically made of iron castings and wrought iron forgings as were most engines of that period. Cheap steel was still in the future and everything needed would be made "in house".

I fabricated the cylinder out of phosphor/bronze. The finished size $\frac{7}{8}$ " bore x 2" stroke the scale being $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to the foot. The A frames are $4\frac{5}{8}$ " wide x 10" high to the bearing centre. The flywheel is built up from mild steel and is 9" diameter with $\frac{3}{8}$ " (face) thickness. The base is $4\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8" long made out of mild steel and the small pulley was fabricated out of steel with the main bearings again fabricated with split phosphor/bronze bushes. The cross head and slide bars supports are fabricated out of brass and all the nuts and bolts turned out of hexagon bar to the old standard sizes before Whitworth set the standards. When it came to making the main A frames I talked nicely to Les an old Markham pattern maker to do the patterns for me and then had them cast by Brass Founders of Sheffield who did a lot of work for Markham's in the past. Les said this was the smallest job he had ever done. Normally he needed a pair of steps when he was making patterns at work. The connecting rod was turned and then split brasses, bearings and cotters (wedges) made. Then I stressed the rod in acid and nearly forgot it. It would have disappeared! But the reason for the acid was to make it look like a black forging.

This sounds all very nice with everything falling into place BUT!! my friend John Evans came along and said he had seen a similar engine to mine which John Blagg had saved. I haven't yet seen this engine. Now, I thought the likelihood of this type of engine from the 1850s being still with us very unlikely. Then my friend Barry turned up with some pictures on his phone! This was of the remains of another engine of the same type. The flywheel was not plain like the photo but had a fancy rim and round spokes. There was no cylinder but a steam chest which would have been bolted on two flanges on the side of the cylinder ends. So I could have to make a new cylinder. And all my guesstimated dimensions could be wrong. Oh Dear! The trials and tribulations of a model engineer!

A visit to see the remains of this engine with notebook and tape is a must.

As they are not complete the current owner was very pleased to hear I had a photograph so getting together will be very interesting for us both. Fortunately he is a pattern maker and so he would be able to make some new patterns and then perhaps I could be making model Mark II.

This article was written for the Newsletter of the Chesterfield and District Model Engineers so I hope you haven't found it too technical. I feel it is of relevance to our Society being a very interesting indication of the earliest type work of this important Chesterfield company.

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THE VICTORIA FOUNDRY

The following two items relating to the Victoria Foundry were extracted from the Derbyshire Times by Alec Jackson.

The first gives a good description of the works in Knivesmithgate in 1877 when Oliver & Co. was endeavouring to sell the premises. The Company had moved to Broad Oaks in Hollis Lane in 1872 and for a time operated from both sites. The country suffered a long period of recession from the mid 1870s until the later 1880s and Oliver and Co. with their new works had financial difficulties.

No buyer had been found by 1886 for the Victoria Foundry as is indicated by the second extract. Fortunately for the people of Chesterfield a receiver was appointed to run the Company in 1886 and as the recession was ending in 1889 it was purchased by Charles Paxton Markham.

6th October 1877

VICTORIA FOUNDRY

Valuable freehold manufacturing premises in Chesterfield to be sold by auction at the Angel Hotel on Monday 22nd October. All those workshops, offices, dwelling houses, stables and yard known as the Victoria foundry lately in the occupation of Oliver and Co. Ltd. With frontages to carriage entrances from Knivesmith Gate and Salter Gate in Chesterfield. Occupying an area of 2,908 sq. yards. The premises have a frontage of 56 feet to Knivesmith Gate and 87 feet to Salter Gate and the depth is 365 feet. The workshops are five in number and of the following dimensions; smiths shop 55ft x 30ft., turning and fitting shop 95ft x 50ft, erecting shop 78ft. x 35ft, brass foundry 23ft x 37ft., pattern shop 100ft x 22ft. There are on the premises three overhead travelling cranes and a tramway connection with the two large workshops. The turning and fitting shop is fitted with shafting and pulleys and a steam engine of 40hp and two boilers in medium to fair condition. The offices have an excellent frontage onto Salter Gate and are very convenient and commodious and they contain three rooms on the ground floor and three rooms on the upper storey with suitable conveniences. There is a dwelling house adjoining the offices and fronting Knivesmith Gate and a dwelling house fronting Salter Gate, both are suitable residences for foremen or workmen. The purchaser will have the option of taking the steam engines and boilers, shafting and gearing, travelling cranes, tramways and weighing machines and offices and other fixtures at a valuation. Further information and plans may be obtained on application to Mr. Wm. Oliver, Broad Oaks Iron Works.

27th March 1886

The High Court heard a petition from Mr. E. Eastwood, creditor and shareholder of Oliver and Co. for the winding up order. The nominal capital was originally £20,000 it was later increased to £80,000. The property consists of a freehold plot of land with ironworks and built in railway sidings. In Chesterfield freehold buildings and iron foundry called the Victoria Foundry consisting of plant, materials, tools and stores.

DENTAL CARE IN 1899

*Janet Murphy
(based on advertisements in the Derbyshire Courier of
October 1899)*

Should Sozodont (a few drops daily on the tooth brush) — 'the pleasantest dentifrice in the world which cleanses teeth and the spaces in between them as nothing else will', fail in its claim to 'ensure sound and pearly white teeth, rosy lips and fragrant breath' then a visit to a dentist might be necessary. Mr R. Ruff surgeon dentist, 33, West Street Sheffield gave very careful directions to find his surgery 'three doors above Carver Street Chapel; about 100 yards below the Royal Hospital and Dispensary and note lamp over door.' He was said to be the only one in Yorkshire who has obtained a gold medal for improvements in dentistry. Prices were claimed to suit all classes. Evidently he expected his patients to travel to him.

However a near neighbour A Whitehurst, Surgeon Dentist, 136 Carver Street, Sheffield visited Chesterfield every Friday where he could be consulted on all matters appertaining to dentistry, free of charge. He also offered teeth filled with pure gold from 5s per tooth; white and amalgam filling from 2s 6d each; artificial teeth sets on Vulcanite; upper or lower sets from £2 2s; gold plates and all latest improvements in dentistry at the lowest possible charge.

He could be consulted at Wright's Confectioner, 33 Glumangate. Did he advise his patients not to eat sweets? Rather more available was Mr F Smith of 28, Burlington Street Chesterfield but he gave no description of his services. However he did visit Alfretton, where he could be consulted at the premises of Mr Jones's (saddler) and Mr J. Smith's (chemist) at Clay Cross, on alternate Fridays. As well as Mr F Smith, *Bulmer's Directory* of 1895 listed three further dentists in the town, Thomas Furness, chemist and dentist, on Knifesmithgate, (the part which was later renamed Stephenson Place); Wm Hy Slack and



Today 126 Saltergate is clearly recognisable as the left hand house. The front of 128 has been altered.

John W Slack. In 1899 the last named had just moved to new premises on Saltergate directly opposite the football ground. Mr Slack evidently enjoyed a widespread reputation for the manufacture of false teeth, having extracted the patient's own under the influence of nitrous oxide or a local anaesthetic. Mr Slack was at home daily except Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Mid week this was so that he could visit patients in their own homes! On Friday he could be consulted at Eckington.

Finally, should all else fail and new dentures be necessary, there was the possibility of getting some money back on your old ones.

OLD FALSE TEETH BOUGHT

Many ladies and gentlemen have by them old or disused false teeth, which might as well be turned into money. Messrs. R. D. & J. B. Fraser of Princes Street Ipswich (established since 1883) buy old false teeth. If send your teeth to them they will remit you by return of post the utmost value; or, if preferred, they will make you the best offer, and hold the teeth over for your reply. If reference is necessary apply to Messrs Bacon & Co., Bankers, Ipswich.

Advances may have been made in dentistry but for many people the dislike of a trip to the dentist is unchanged.

FIRE AT BROAD OAKS WORKS – PATTERN SHOP ENTIRELY DESTROYED FIRE BRIGADE LOOK FOR HORSES *DERBYSHIRE COURIER – 20TH AUGUST 1910 Contributed by Alec Jackson*

It is a very long time since Chesterfield saw such a large blaze as the one which occurred on Saturday morning at Messrs Markham & Company's works at Broad Oaks Works.

The men came to work as usual at 6 o'clock and had not noticed anything unusual up to their breakfast time. Hardly, however, had they left the yard when an immense flame suddenly spurted out of one corner of the building close to the premises occupied by the Derbyshire Courier Ltd. In an in creditable short time the fire must have travelled right across the roof for flames appeared at each corner of the pattern shop and in no less than ten minutes the whole building had been transferred into a great roaring furnace presenting a terrifying spectacle to the startled workmen as they crowded out of the large mess room on the opposite side of the road.

A telephone message was sent to the works manager (Mr. C. Slack) who immediately returned to the works. He telephoned Mr. C. P. Markham at Hasland Hall and also the Chesterfield Fire Brigade.

By this time the fire had assumed great proportions and a great tongue of flame licked hungrily at the surrounding buildings. Most of the workmen had now returned from their breakfast but they were unable to do more than get the firm's hosepipe and endeavour to attach it to the hydrant adjoining. Whilst the work was in progress Mr. Markham arrived on the scene and was cheered to the echo by the men who had confidence that some steps would be taken to induce the local fire brigade to hasten to the spot with their engine and appliances. The fire was now attacking other parts of the works, a further urgent message was telephoned to the fire station and the reply came back that they were searching for horses, a further message was telephoned to the Staveley Brigade and considering the distance that the engine had travelled and the fact that it was drawn only by one horse it seems almost incredible that they arrived only a few minutes after the Chesterfield Brigade. In any case the pattern shop could not have been saved, flames leapt up in all directions and a dense cloud of black smoke rose high above the building. It was an impressive sight and for the workmen who had been engaged in the pattern shop a distressing one for not one of their valuable tools their own personal property could be rescued from the flames.

The whole department was burnt level with the ground, at one time grave fears were

entertained that the large fitting shop was doomed especially as a considerable delay was experienced in obtaining anything like a sufficient supply of water. At last, however, the hose was fitted up and the local fire brigade under the superintendence of Inspector Fisher and the Staveley Brigade commanded by Mr. Sam Lee had got to work both inside and outside the fitting shop and a determined fight with the flames were soon in progress.

A small building adjoining the pattern shop was impossible to save and this was completely destroyed. The twisted shafting and wreckage along the far wall is all that is left of this building.

The efforts of a large body of men were successful in checking the flames and ultimately the combined Chesterfield and Staveley Brigades got the conflagration under control and became only a question of how long it would take to put out the burning embers.

How the fire started will in all probability remain a mystery. A close examination of the debris almost entirely upset the theory, which was at first, advanced that an electrical wire had fused. As far as could be seen the fire commenced somewhere near the centre of the pattern shop and must have travelled quickly across the benches and to the corner of the building where the flames were first detected. All the men deny that any light had been struck inside the building and that any of their number had come out either smoking or lighting their pipes.

However, the official view on the outbreak is that a Swan Vesta match was thrown down amongst some shavings in the shop. The damage will run into several thousands of pounds, but owing to the work of renewal and success of saving the greater part of the works no men have been thrown out of employment.

The irony of the fate was associated with the fact that only during the previous week Mr. C. P. Markham had himself purchased in London a steam engine for the works and this arrived at Chesterfield station on Saturday afternoon. Many people viewed with more than an ordinary interest during Saturday. On Tuesday the engine was given a trial and worked most satisfactorily. It is, therefore, not improbable that Broad Oaks will be able to provide an additional steam engine and may be of immense advantage in the event of another serious outbreak in the Borough.

The official report of the fire is as follows: P.c. Wright received a telephone message at 8.20 a.m. stating the pattern shop at Messrs Markham's works was on fire. The brigade turned out with a hose cart and fire engine and found on arrival that the old stores were on fire. The roof of the building had already fallen in and the fire was spreading to the erecting shops adjoining. A jet of water was to work from a hydrant in Hollis Lane and two jets from the steamer by which means the fire was extinguished. The oil store was burnt to the ground and the shops were badly damaged. The fire engine did not arrive until 8.45 a.m. owing to them being unable to get a horse. A small steam fire engine was brought from Staveley Works and this threw a good jet of water and rendered valuable assistance.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Janet Murphy

Rather surprisingly the *Derbyshire Courier* of 14th October, 1899 carried an advertisement both for Lord George Sanger's circus visiting the town on 21st October and for Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth which was to visit Chesterfield on 1st November. Lord

George Sanger's entertainment arrived in Chesterfield having visited Staveley the previous Thursday and Clay Cross on the Friday. There is no indication whether it travelled by road or rail on this occasion, but probably over such short distances road transport was the more likely. Presumably it was an unfortunate coincidence that the two entertainments visited Chesterfield in such quick succession.

By contrast Barnum and Bailey's show travelled by train. The previous day it had exhibited at Doncaster and the day after it was at Loughborough.

C H E S T E R F I E L D.
ONE DAY ONLY. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1.
GROUNDS IN SOMERSALL FIELD. BASLOW ROAD.

LAST CHANCE OF SEEING THE GREAT SHOW

Obviously such shows required immaculate organisation – the *Derbyshire Courier* of 28th October 1899 gave details of arrangements for the Barnum and Bailey Show and Sanger's circus was probably organised on similar lines. First into town was the man responsible for selecting the site which had to be near the centre of population, on adequate transport routes and of sufficient size. The smaller Sanger's circus fitted into the Old Recreation Ground, Saltergate (later the site of Tennyson Avenue). For Barnum and Bailey's show plenty of space was needed as there were three circus rings; two elevated stages and a race track, much novel aerial apparatus, a menagerie housed in 100 cages: in all 12 tents covering 12 acres, one of which seated 15,000 people. It was held in Somersall Field, which was probably the 17.7 acre field at the corner of the driveway to Somersall Hall: no doubt small boys took the opportunity to crawl through the hedges!!

Then came various agents who made arrangements for advertising, press coverage, and for provision of food and drink for both man and beast – Barnum and Bailey employed 200 performers and 700 behind the scenes, although there is no indication if this included families. Just in advance of the show came the man responsible for organising the layout of the show, and ensuring that the site was ready to receive it. He had to see that *'the various contractors are all ready to do what is expected of them'* which suggests that there was some employment of casual labour in the town.

Then came the great day. For Barnum and Bailey seven in the morning was the usual time

for arrival at the ground, breakfast was at 7:30am and by 8am all the canvas was up and the cages in position for the menagerie: the elephants being powerful and willing workers. About 9am the parade began, a street procession representing "*The return of Columbus to Barcelona*" with representations of the great discoverer, ambassadors, courtiers and nobles of the time and chivalry of 400 years ago. After an interval for lunch the first performance began.

Barnum and Bailey offered two grand performances. The animals included the largest Bengal tiger ever seen; Johanna, the only gorilla in captivity — 'amazing alike to scientists and naturalists, and a stumbling block to the doubters of the Darwinian theory'; three herds of elephants; hippodromes; a horse fair and 70 trained horses, which perform in one ring at one time. It claimed to be the only show on earth with exclusive features for children 'little folks' eyes gladdened by rare and beautiful sights, and glimpses of a genuine fairyland.' Rather less attractive to modern eyes were the 'queer freaks and pigmy creatures from every clime' including the armless Japanese maiden; an Egyptian giant; an elastic-skin man and a dog-faced boy. There were also the more usual entertainers including a sword swallower, a magician and performers on curious musical instruments.

For Barnum and Bailey packing began at 6pm. By that time the feeding of man and beast was over for the day. The great dining tent and its furniture, including an immense cooking range, which moved on its own wheels (there were 80 cooks and waiters), the stable tents and other subsidiary structures were all their way to the station before the evening performance began. At 8:30pm, after the audience had passed into the great pavilion, the animal vans were closed and the side shows demolished. Packing continued while the show was on and each piece of apparatus carried away after it was used. Half an hour after the show was over, the site was cleared. The whole was transported on four trains of 17 cars each nearly 63 feet long, with the sleeping accommodation in the last one.

All this without the benefit of mobile phones; at least there were no cars on the roads but there was no Markham Road and manoeuvring through the narrow streets of the town after dark could not have been easy.

As they had less far to travel life at Sanger's circus could have been more leisurely; the grand pageant left the ground at 1 o'clock. Presumably it included the highlight of the show:

Lord George Sanger's Great Speculator Production at every Performance.
WITH KITCHENER TO KHARTOUM
INTRODUCING
700 Men, Women, Horses, Elephants, Camels, and Dromedaries, and
THE NILE GUN BOATS!



A realistic production ... of a naval and military spectacle entitled "With Kitchener to Khartoum". An unique feature of the spectacle is the construction ... of twelve gunboats, representing the vessels of the Khalifa and the flotilla of the Sirdar, these being exact facsimiles on a reduced scale, of the boats used in the actual conflict. The whole of the vast arena is ... converted into a scene representing the neighbourhood of Omderman, and the banks of the Nile, where the action took place.

Upwards of 500 persons are engaged in this striking representation, 460 horses and mules and a herd of elephants and camels. Another great feature was the 100 horses performing in the ring at one time. A series of platforms were erected, rising tier upon tier, the apex reaching a height of twelve feet, upon which the horses trotted in opposite directions at the word of command.'

Also performing were 'Beautiful Lady Equestrians, Sensational Gymnasts, Daring and Thrilling Mid-air Performers and a host of Merry Clowns and Jesters. '

On view in the grounds were 'twenty carriages of Wild Animals of the most rare and valuable species; twelve monstre (sic) elephants; South African Ostrich farms; an aviary of rare and valuable species; two herds of camels; two Soudanese War Dromedaries and a superb stud of 400 horses and ponies'. Prices of admission ranged from 10/6 to 6d and there was reputedly accommodation for 20,000 persons in the largest waterproof Marquee ever erected. There were performances at 2:30pm and 7:30pm. Coinciding with the latter performance of Lord Sanger's Circus was a performance by the celebrated Black Dike (sic) Band at the Stephenson Memorial Hall. The population was spoilt for choice, if they could afford the entertainment.

**ELEGANT AND SPLENDID RESIDENCE CALLED
HOLYWELL HOUSE
AND UPWARDS OF FOUR ACRES OF PASTURE LAND
TO BE DISPOSED OF BY PRIVATE TREATY**
Derbyshire Courier – 24th February 1844

All that splendid and recently erected mansion called Holywell House situate at the north entrance into the town of Chesterfield in the County of Derbyshire; late the property and residence of Frederic Lely Esq. and now occupied by Mrs. Lely. The mansion consists of spacious vestibule with a handsome stone staircase and an elegant suite of apartments on the ground floor comprising of dining room 28 feet x 19 feet, drawing room 19½ feet x 19 feet, breakfast room 18 feet x 17 feet and all 12 feet 8 inches high; commanding a beautiful prospect to the east; fitted up with a splendid Italian marble mantelpiece and in all other respects decorated in a most superb and costly style, together with an excellent kitchen 21 feet x 22 feet, a back kitchen, housekeeper's room, butler's pantry, larder, excellent and spacious cellarage and all other requisite offices with a constantly supply of hard and soft water.

Also six excellent bedrooms, dressing room and water closet on the second floor; a servants room in the attic; together with the Pleasure Ground and Shrubberies divided from the lawn by a sunk fence: two good walled in kitchen gardens well clothed with choice fruit trees, garden houses, melon ground etc.

Also a commodious Back Yard (paved) with two excellent Stables therein for four horses; saddle and harness room and hay and straw chambers over them; a double coach house and chamber over it: a cow house, piggery and manure and wood yard etc together with four acres of Rich Grassland. The whole being well walled round.

THE PALACE THEATRE FIRE

Janet Murphy

On December 27th 1911 a troupe of girls were preparing to perform a song and dance routine between film shows at the Picture Palace, which stood behind Burlington Street. The dress of one of the girls caught fire; she panicked and, as she brushed past other girls, other dresses were set alight. Five of the most seriously injured girls were carried to the hospital. Sadly all of them died the following day. Those who died were Lizzie Bell (aged 13 years); Lydia Smith (12); Mabel (13); Ada Tindall (13) and Winifred Wood (13). A memorial service was held at the Parish Church on January 1st 1912. The church was packed and, after the service, the coffins were taken to Spital Cemetery where the girls were interred in paupers' graves.

More information about the tragedy can be found in the reports of the Coroner's inquest. The dressing rooms were the upstairs rooms of a cottage adjacent to, but not attached to, the theatre. Each room had a fireplace in which was a small fire with an adequate fire guard, and each room was lit by electricity. There were 20 children divided between the two rooms. The girls were dressed in white cotton skirts with a flannel bodice. Five children were dressed to represent Eskimos; they wore jackets with cotton wool stuck onto them and a cotton wool cap. These were the five children who died. No one giving evidence actually saw how the fire started and no definite conclusion was reached.

However, after the tragedy, reports appeared in the press that there had been smoking in the dressing room. A survivor, Amy Lawson, said that the previous night she had seen two of the children, both of whom had died in the fire, passing a lighted cigarette between them, but no children had been smoking when the fire broke out. Winifred Wood told her father before she died that one girl had lit a piece of paper and another had knocked it out of her hand and some sparks fell on the first girl's jacket. A partly smoked cigarette was found by the fireplace but there was no indication how long it had been there.

A possible explanation is that, when the woman in charge of them left the room to go to the other dressing room because the children there were making a lot of noise, one girl lit a spill in order to light a cigarette, which a second knocked from her hand with tragic consequences. As the cigarette hadn't been lit no one would have been seen smoking and there would have been no smell of cigarette smoke.

All the children whose costume was decorated with inflammable cotton wool died in the fire. The other children whose clothes caught fire survived because the flames were more easily extinguished.

The verdict of the jury was that the children had died as the result of burns accidentally received. They added riders that they believed that reasonable care was used by the management for the protection of the children and that something should be done to promote legislation to prohibit the use of cotton wool or other inflammable material in any play acting whatsoever.

On the 24th December 2011 the Friends of Spital Cemetery held a memorial service at the gravesides of the children who died; a cross was erected and a wreath was laid.



Members of the Whale family are buried in the grave in the foreground. The victims of the fire are buried in unmarked graves; Winifred Wood; Lydia Smith and Ada Tindall lie to the left of the Whale's grave, Lizzie Bell at the head and Mabel Swaine at the foot. There is no known connection between the Whale family and the victims.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Janet Murphy



This photograph of a very ordinary street scene forms part of the collection of the former Borough Engineer's Department now housed at Chesterfield Museum and Art Gallery. However, when the image is magnified and it becomes apparent that the board in front of the building in the right distance refers to the New Ship Inn,

immediately becomes a very interesting picture. In 1892 Chesterfield occupied only about half a square mile and it had a rateable value of about £43,000. Following the Borough's expansion in 1893 the rateable value rose until it reached about £92,000 in 1901 and, following a further expansion in 1910, it reached £133,000 in 1911. This potential increase in the Borough's income meant that the Council had more money to spend, and it was in a better position to borrow money to finance a programme of improvements to the town. Initially these included establishment of an adequate fresh water supply; development of a sewage disposal system; establishment of undertakings to provide reliable gas and electricity supplies; and the purchase of the Chesterfield Tramways Company.

Probably with the extension of the tramway system in mind, street improvements proposed in the 1900 Chesterfield Corporation Bill included the widening of Burlington Street and part of Packers Row. It could have come as no surprise that the property owners strenuously opposed the plans and, faced with the expensive procedure of compulsory purchase, the Council abandoned the proposals with the exception of the widening of the northern end of Knifesmith Gate to form the new Stephenson Place.

With the increasing number of motor vehicles on the road and the passing of 'The Chesterfield Corporation Railless Traction Act' in 1913, which gave the Council powers to operate trolley vehicles and motor buses and to extend the tramway, the problems caused by the narrow streets and dangerous corners became even more acute. An ambitious scheme of over 20 street improvements were drawn up and the Improvement Act of 1914 gave the Council powers to widen roads, improve corners and construct new roads.

The photograph illustrates one important part of the scheme – the improvement of the Lordsmill Street / St Mary's Gate / Vicar Lane / Hollis Lane junction. Clearly road junctions like this were very hazardous. The driver of a horse and cart would not be able to see if the road was clear until the horses were out in the road that they were joining. Also, as the roads were so narrow, the rear wheels of the cart could come in close to the edge of the road; the building on Vicar Lane appears to have suffered as a result as possibly a metal post has been placed there to give it protection.

The outbreak of war in 1914 brought work on the scheme almost to a halt, but work started again in 1919.

The photograph was taken in 1921. It shows the New Ship Inn nearing completion. Chesterfield Borough Council had offered the site at the top of Hollis Lane to Brampton Brewery in exchange for the land on Lordsmill Street on which stood the Old Ship. The building on the right of the picture was a shop which stood next to the Old Ship. Once the New Ship was completed the Old Ship and the adjacent shop were demolished and a row of shops built back from the corner. The architects for the New Ship were Wilcockson & Cutts and it was the first of the pubs they designed for the Brampton, Chesterfield and Scarsdale Breweries.

The low building opposite is the Angel, a popular pub, 'Canon Ales' in the windows shows that it was owned by William Stones Ltd. Comparing the height of the gentlemen on the corner and the door, it must have had low ceilings and been rather gloomy inside. The police objected to a renewal of the license in 1920 but William Stones Ltd. must have been successful in appealing because they reapplied for a license in 1921.

This time a license was granted provided the Angel was rebuilt. After the war there were so any complaints that cinemas and pubs were being built instead of houses, of which there was a shortage, that the Ministry of Housing brought in a regulation that, in order to get permission, cinema and breweries had to agree to build houses as well. However the Council anxious for the work to go ahead that rebuilding of the Angel was allowed to go ahead without The Angel and the adjoining shop were demolished and the new Angel built back from Hollis Lane.

A photograph taken at the same junction in 2010 — only the Ship (now Late Lounge) remains of the buildings in the first photograph. The entrances to Hollis Lane and Vicar Lane have been widened and the corners of Vicar Lane and one of Lane corners are now rounded, thereby improving visibility and ease of cornering; and St Mary's Gate /Lordsmill Street are wider. What a difference.



the Hollis Lane corners are now rounded, thereby improving visibility and ease of cornering; and St Mary's Gate / Lordsmill Street are wider. What a difference!

DAME EDITH SITWELL

Sandra Struggles

Edith Louisa Sitwell was born on the 7 September 1887. She was the daughter and first born child of Sir George Reresby Sitwell, 4th Baronet Sitwell of Renishaw and Lady Ida Denison.

She was not popular with her parents who would have preferred a son.

Edith was born at Wood End, Scarborough, the home of her grandmother, Lady Louisa Sitwell who had bought the house when her husband, Sir Sitwell Sitwell died in 1862, leaving her with two young children, Florence and Sir George who became the 4th Baronet at the age of two years.

Sir George Sitwell was in his mid twenties when he married Lady Ida Emily Augusta Denison on the 26th November 1886. She was only seventeen years old and was made to marry against her will. A few days after the wedding she ran home to her parents but they made her go back. Lady Ida was the daughter of Albert Denison, 2nd Baron Londesborough and Lady Ursula, the daughter of Henry Somerset, 7th Duke of Beaufort.

Wood End was only two doors away from where the Londesborough's had a house.

Lady Ida claimed her descent from the Plantagenets, through the female line. In fact, Edith was remarkably like King Henry V and Queen Elizabeth I with the long nose, haunting features and hands of the Plantagenets.

In December 1892 Edith's brother Osbert was born. He was the son and heir his parents had longed for and then in November 1897 another son, Sacheverell was born.

Sacheverell was the maiden name of Katherine who married Francis Sitwell in the 17th century.

Edith's parents had little time for her. She was tall and thin and had a slightly curved spine. She was made to wear a back brace to improve her posture and appearance and a nose

truss which must have been awful for her.

Edith always said it herself – *"she was an unwanted child."*

Sir George spent most of his time in seclusion studying genealogy, architecture and heraldry. In 1909 he bought a huge castle at Montegufoni in Italy and restored it. He also designed the gardens at Renishaw in the Italian style.

In 1912 Lady Ida was involved in a financial scandal and was summonsed to attend trial at the Kings Bench. She was found guilty of fraud and served three months in Holloway prison in 1915.

"Lady Ida was heavily in debt in 1912 to moneylenders."

Edith left Renishaw during this period and moved into a flat in London with her governess, Miss Helen Rootham.

"It was a shabby fourth floor flat in Bayswater."

In 1932 Edith and Miss Rootham went to live in Paris with Miss Rootham's sister.

Edith never married but was once in love with a Russian artist called Pavel Tchelitchew, sadly it did not last.

On 12th July 1937 Lady Ida died. She was buried in the churchyard of St. Mary and St. Peter's church in the village of Weedon Lois, Northamptonshire. Edith did not go to her mother's funeral.

"She never forgave her mother for making her wear an iron back brace and a nose truss as a child. "My parents were strangers to me from the moment of my birth" she said.

Close by the village of Weedon Lois was Weston Hall where the Sitwell's were living when Lady Ida died. It had been the childhood home of Lady Louisa Hely-Hutchinson and eventually came to the Sitwells.

Edith came back to live in England about 1937 and when Miss Rootham died 1938 she moved to live with her brother, Osbert, at Renishaw Hall.

All three children of Sir George and Lady Ida were very clever writers and poets.

"Sir Osbert, Sacheverell and Edith were all writers and poets."

"She wrote under the light of oil lamps and during the second war she knitted clothes for the army. Alec Guinness received a pair of socks which she had knitted."

Sir George died on 8th July 1943 in Locarno, Switzerland where he had been living since the outbreak of the war, having left it too late to return to England from Montegufoni.

The Sitwells were always looked upon as being very eccentric and Edith was no exception.

"She was very eccentric, particularly in her dress, a characteristic feature of the Sitwells and quite odd to look at."

"She wore plush velvets, black satins, exotic silk turbans, heavy gold ornaments, aquamarine rings the size of ice cubes."

She is said to have opened letters with gloves on to avoid infection.

In 1948 she was awarded Honorary Doctorates of Literature by Durham and York Universities. She was invested by the Queen as Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1954 at Buckingham palace. Also in 1954 she was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church. Evelyn Waugh, her friend, stood as her godfather.

"She was swathed in black like a 16th century infanta." He wrote in his diary.

By 1957 her health had deteriorated, she had to use a wheelchair.

In October 1962 she was honoured at the Royal Festival Hall in London on the occasion of

18

her 75th birthday.

"She wore a flowing red velvet robe, a giant golden head-dress and gold shoes."

Edith died on Wednesday night, 9th December 1964 at St. Thomas' Hospital, London. She was 77 years old.

The following report appeared in the Glasgow Herald on Monday 5th April 1965;

Second burial for Dame Edith. – Dame Edith Sitwell, the 77 year old poetess, who died in December, was buried in the wrong grave.

On Home Office sanction the body was exhumed and re-buried in the correct grave within a few days of the first interment. She is now buried near the grave of her mother.

The first committal at Lois Weedon churchyard, near Towcester, Northants was private and followed a memorial service in London five days after her death on 9th December.

It was a short time later that her brother, Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell discovered the mistake. He lives near the churchyard at Weston Hall.

Dame Edith, who left more than £24, 000 net was buried a second time at a private ceremony.

The *Derbyshire Times* reported the following on 11th December 1964;

"Edith Louisa Sitwell of Bryher House, Keats Grove, London, W3 and formerly of Renishaw Hall, near Sheffield, who died on December 9th left £28,836.0s.0d gross. £24,136.0s.0d net. Duty paid –£5,080.0s.0d."

Wood End Mansion in Scarborough was closed in 1925. It was rescued and bought by Scarborough Corporation and turned into the Natural Museum in 1951. The Sitwell room contains books written by Sir Osbert, Sir Sacheverell and Dame Edith.

Sir Osbert never married and, when he died in 1969, his brother Sacheverell succeeded him as 6th baronet.

Sir Sacheverell married Georgia Doble and had two sons, Sir Reresby who became 7th Baronet and Francis.

Sir Reresby said of his Aunt Edith *"She was very annoyed after having invited D.H.Lawrence to visit Renishaw that he used it as a model for Wragby Hall in his book, Lady Chatterley's Lover, and even more annoyed when she recognized herself in another of his books."*

There is a Sitwell Collection in the Local Studies Department of Chesterfield Library.

Edith's vast collection of jewelry is held in the Victoria Museum, London.

Edith was fascinated by Queens and her book *"The Queen's and the Hive"* is absolutely genius and amazing from beginning to end.

Here are some excerpts from it

Chapter 1 – Queen Mary

In the late autumn of the year 1588 the night lying over England was appall of darkness that shuddered like the ash left over from remembered fires. The sun hung in the firmament like a lump of blood.

Chapter 2 – Edward VI

After the Atridaeen tragedy of King Henry the imagined incest and the curse from Heaven, the coming and death of the witch queen, there was a pause during which Edward, son of Ann Boleyn's supplanter Jane Seymour reigned – the phantom of Henry's huge passions. But the little ghost-king dwindled, like a sorcerer's wax image before the flame for days after the King's death, it was rumoured that he had gone ... then a white despairing face

was seen looking through a window of the Palace – a face with no hair. After his death rumour spread that he had been poisoned.

Chapter 2 – Edward VI

July 1553 was a month of flame. But on the afternoon of the 6th an appalling blackness enveloped the city, the houses shook beneath the rolling thunder as if in an earthquake. The tempest increased in terror, and after the young king's death at six in the evening it was said that the rolling, earthquaking noise was not that of thunder but of King Henry the eighth bursting open his tomb in rage at the defiance of his will, the death of his son.

Chapter 3 – Prince Philip of Spain

On Monday 23rd July 1554 a procession made its way from the sea towards Winchester. And, at the head of the cortege, riding through the rain that shone with such brilliance, fell with such violence, that it seemed forked lightning, rode a figure in a black velvet suit, with a felt cloak of "damned colour" thrown over it – a figure with a face as pale as the White Horseman of the Apocalypse – Prince Philip, only son of the Emperor Charles V.

Chapter 4 – Cardinal Reginald Pole

A tall figure robed in scarlet, with the long ascetic face of the Plantagenets, mounted the stairs of the palace at Whitehall and was greeted with tears of joy by a woman who was about to bear a child. The queen's cousin, the long exiled Cardinal Pole, now Papal Legate to England, greeted her with the words of the Angel to the Holy Virgin.

Chapter 6 – Queen Mary

For days, the hard black winter roads echoed with the sound of the flying hoofs of horses – a sound like that of the black armour clashing on black armour. The courtiers were leaving the Palace in London where the Queen lay dying, for another court deep in the country, where a 25 year old Princess sat waiting for news.

Chapter 6 – Princess Elizabeth

We see a thin-waisted gold body, like that of the Bee Priestesses, with a high ruff and sleeves like the thin wings of these we see a gown that seems descended from the Minianh or Cretan civilisations. Her appearance was that of the Plantagenet race. Her ugly face, so full of fire, so full of intellectual power, wisdom, vanity and a strange fascination was the face of the Plantagenets. She had the great hauntingly beautiful eyes of Anne Boleyn but the high thin and arched nose, whose nostrils seemed as breathing fire, the long curve eyelids, the long and beautiful hands, were the Plantagenet's nose, eyelids and hands.

Chapter 8 – Queen Mary

On the 13th December 1558, the late Queen was borne to her grave. Then came the corpse, in a chariot, with an exact image representing Queen Mary, dressed in crimson velvet, with many gold rings on her hands. The pall over the coffin was a black cloth of gold intersected by a cross of cloth of silver. The body was followed by the chief mourners; the queen's ladies came after on horseback but their black trains were long enough to sweep after them on the ground.

Chapter 8 – Queen Elizabeth I

Over the wide roads a winter firmament of black glass from which the hooves of thousand horses splintered great stars, moons, planets and meteors, the procession made its way towards the capital and at the head of the cortege, a blazing comet in the melancholy day, rode the Queen and next to her, a magnificent figure, whose face, as yet, could not be seen clearly – lord Robert-Dudley – her master of the Horse. As he was born on the same day of

the year as his Queen, their lives were ruled by the same planet and according to Camden this was the reason for their life long infatuation with each other.

Chapter 12 Queen Elizabeth I

The young woman whose childhood had been spent in dependence on her father's whims and who was now Queen of England, lived surrounded by magnificence. Her bedroom at Windsor Castle was that in which King Henry VI had been born. In the room was a table of reed marble with white streaks. At Hampton Court, in one chamber, there were numerous cushions with gold and silver, many counterpanes and coverlids of beds lined with ermine. At Whitehall the queen's bed was ingeniously composed of woods of different with quilts of silk velvet, gold silver and embroidery. And the room contained two silver cabinets" in which the Queen keeps her papers and which she uses for writing boxes." Also a little chest in which she keeps her bracelet and rings.

Mass was served for the Coronation at Westminster Abbey which was decorated with the handsomest and most precious tapestries that were ever seen, they having been purchased by King Henry the eighth, representing on one side the whole of Genesis, on the other side the Acts of the Apostles. The Queen was received by the Archbishop and another Bishop, they having perfumed her with incense, giving her the holy water and the pax, the choristers singing. The mass concluded, her Majesty then retired behind the High Altar and having offered up her crown, robes and regalia in St Edward's chapel, she appeared again robed in violet velvet, ermine and a crown of state and the great train returned to Westminster Hall. The banquet lasted till the ninth hour of the night (1 hour 18 minutes am). So great was her exhaustion, owing to this and a severe cold, that the Queen remained in bed for a week.

Chapter 18 – Francis King of France

The Queen of Scotland's young husband, Francis – that little pale phantom, so like in his coming and going, to her cousin Edward the sixth of England – was now King of France.

Chapter 23 – Francis, King of France.

That unhappy child, Francis the second, King of France had been in a strange condition. He had long suffered great pain from an abscess in the ear. His face was discoloured by vermillion patches that seemed attempting some ghastly despairing mimicry of health. Was it possible, the whisperers asked, that he had leprosy – due to his conception by a sterile mother. Women gathered up their children and fled as he galloped past on his horse. (He was only 16 year old when he died in 1650).

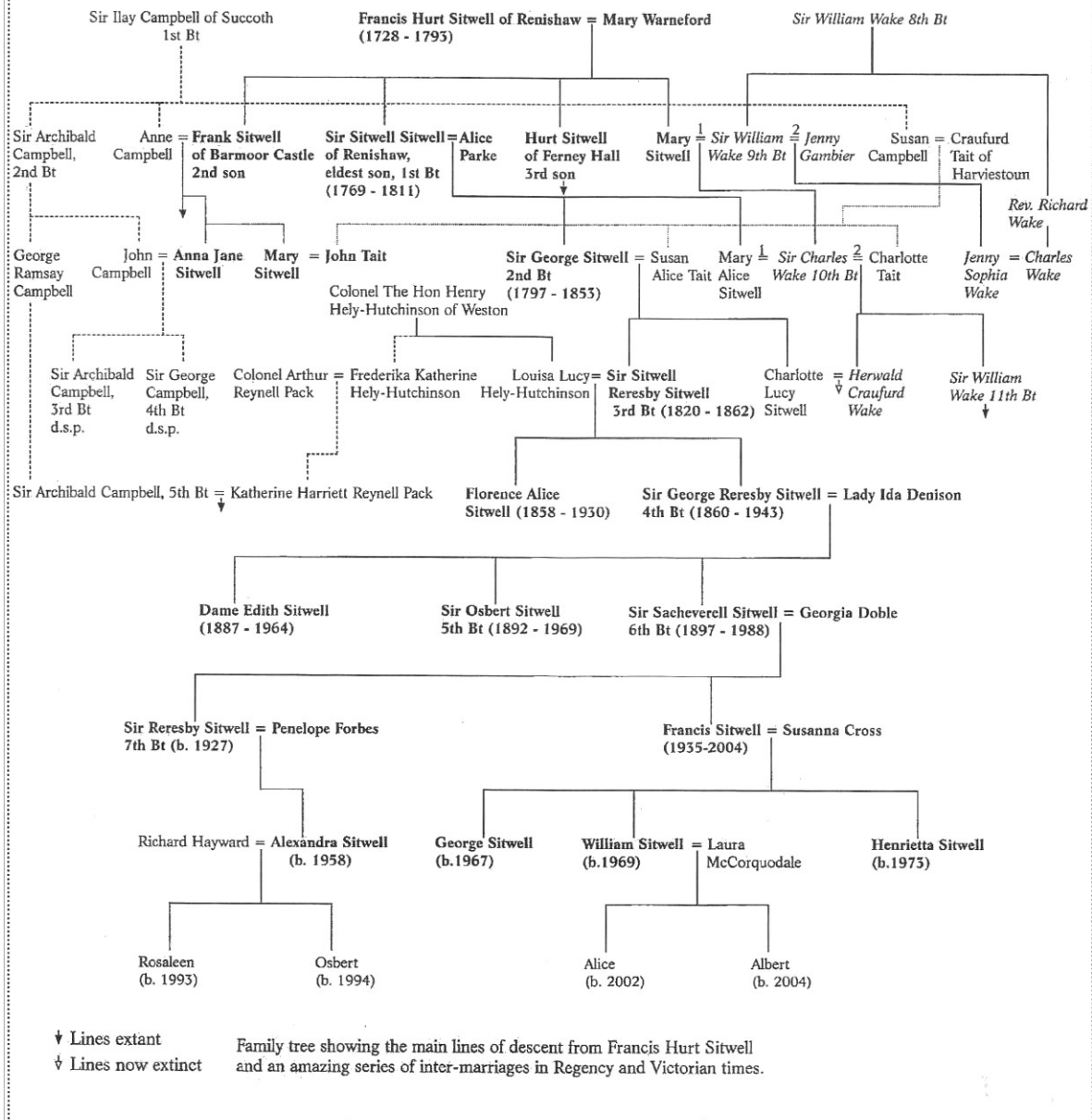
Chapter 24 – Mary Queen of Scots

Both heaven and earth seemed resolved to remind the recently returned Queen of Scotland of her bereavement. Enormous black mourning wreaths and trains of weeping cloud descended to join the black mists, the impenetrable fogs, which, according to John Knox, her coming had involved the realm. Every morning in her room shrouded from these and lit by candles she, sitting up in her great bed of fressit (frosted) cloth of gold, with draughts of red silk in figures of gennets and personages and branches of holly – the hangings fringed with thread-of gold and cramosy silk, eating a boiled egg was told of the impenetrable mourning of the heavens.

Chapter 25 – Mary, Queen of Scots

Upon the 20th day of January 1563 there fell (in Scotland) wet in great abundance, which in falling freezed so vehemently that the earth was but a sheet of ice. The fowls both great and

STEMMATA SITWELLIANA



small freezed and might not fly, many died and some were laid beside the fire that their feathers might resolve. And in that same month he sea stood still as was clearly observe and neither ebbd or flowed the space of twenty four hours.

Chapter 27 – Lord Darnley

The long and boneless waxworks King, Lord Darnley with his white, flaccid, meaningless face, like the taffeta mask-he was so soon to be obliged to wear with his curling marigold coloured hair and his long hands – like satin gloves filled with damp sand, arrived at Edinburgh on the 12th February 1563. He was presented to the queen and a week afterwards, dancing with her and whispering in her ear.

Chapter 50 – Bess of Hardwick

The marriage in 1568 between the Queen of Scots, gaoler, the 6th Earl of Shrewsbury (a widower) and his thrice widowed, brassy, marigold haired, self complacent, furious tongued intriguing Bess Cavendish had been at first extremely happy.

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JOHN MIDDLETON

Janet Murphy

I had often thought that the Town Council in late Victorian and Edwardian Chesterfield must have been a remarkable group of men, but it was not until I came across a small brass tablet on the chancel arch of the Parish Church in memory of John Middleton, Town Clerk at the time, that I realised quite how much the Council had achieved.

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN MIDDLETON
TOWN CLERK AND HONORARY FREEMAN
OF THE BOROUGH OF CHESTERFIELD
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE
27TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 1915,
AGED 61 YEARS

HIS PERIOD OF OFFICE WAS MARKED BY GREAT
ACTIVITY AND PROGRESS. THE BOROUGH BOUNDARIES
WERE TWICE ENLARGED. THE GAS &
WATER BOARD ESTABLISHED AND MEASURES FOR
THE INSTALLATION OF ELECTRICITY, STREET IMPROV
MENT, PUBLIC HEALTH, PUBLIC PARKS AND TOWN
PLANNING WERE ALL SUCCESSFULLY INAUGURATED.

THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY THE MAYOR,
ALDERMAN AND BURGESSES OF CHESTERFIELD
AS A MARK OF THEIR APPROBATION AND THANKS

John Middleton was born in Chesterfield on 25th April 1854. He was educated at Bowker's School before deciding to enter the legal profession. On qualification he joined William Jones in the partnership of Jones and Middleton in offices in Glumangate. Glumangate. The firm still exists as Banner, Jones, the name Middleton having been dropped only recently. He was elected to the Council in 1888, but later resigned to serve as deputy to the Town Clerk, John Cutts, who had been in poor health for some time before his death late in 1892. Middleton was largely responsible for the difficult negotiations prior to the enlargement of the Borough in 1892, a fact recognised by his election as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough in 1894, an honour not usually given to individuals employed by the Council. He was appointed Town Clerk, following the death of Cutts, a position he held until his death on 27th November 1915.

It was a time of great change. In 1891 the Borough of Chesterfield occupied 322 acres and had a population of 13,242; in 1911 it was 2,643 acres and had a population of 37,429, having taken in parts of Brampton, Walton, Newbold and Harland. The size of the Council increased from 18 councillors and six alderman in 1892 to 24 councillors and eight aldermen; including, at different times, men of the calibre of Charles Markham, William Rhodes, George Eastwood, Joseph Clayton, Ernest Shentall, Isaac Ewe, William Bradbury Robinson, William Hawksley Edmunds, and Thomas Philpot Wood. Over the same period the rateable value of property in the town rose from £43,817 to £133,305.

Poor Law powers were transferred to the Council under the Local Government Act of 1894 which established Rural and Urban District Councils; the Education Act of 1902 replaced the old school with Local Education Authorities and the Council became briefly responsible for elementary education in the area, and a member of the Higher Education Committee which controlled secondary education. A new Central Board School was built and Chesterfield High School for Girls was opened; an extension to the Grammar School provided accommodation for the Grammar School during the day and the Municipal Schools of Science and Art in the evening.

The Chesterfield Gas and Water Board took over The Chesterfield Gas and Water Company (1895) and the Council was also responsible for sewage disposal. An electrical generating station was opened in 1901. The tramway was purchased from the Chesterfield Tramways Company in 1897 and the line extended to Whittington Moor. The first municipal bus service was inaugurated in 1914. The increase in traffic posed problems in the narrow streets and in 1914 a wide-ranging Improvement Act was passed by Parliament giving the Corporation powers to build new streets, improve others, to extend their area of supply of electricity, and to make better provision for sewers and drains within the borough. The Market Place was further improved when a new Cattle Market was opened in 1900 meant that cattle were no longer bought and sold there. The Watch Committee was responsible for Borough Police Force and Fire Brigade and there was also a Library Committee.

All this John Middleton had to oversee. His partner of many years, William Jones, died in 1910 and on top of everything else war broke out, which brought an additional burden. Inevitably his health suffered and he died in December 1915 aged 61 years.

THE CROOKED SPIRE

I suggest through your columns to the Vicar and restoration committee of the Parish Church of Chesterfield the desirability of entirely stripping all the lead off the spire and recovering with sheet copper. It is an almost impossible job to fasten lead in a perpendicular position as the constant expansion draws the nails or fastenings through the lead, the downward tendency of the lead being all the way. By covering it with copper say 16 B.W.G the difference in weight would be as 1 to 5: the large weight of areas of lead on the spire in a correct measure cover the cost of the copper. The relative value being 50 per ton to £ 11 per ton. The architectural beauty of the spire would be much enhanced by the green appearance the copper would soon take. Most people are familiar with the many beautiful examples of the copper covering the Holland churches. The future repairs on the spire would be practically nil for many years as copper would be fastened on in a manner to prevent the wind getting under the sheets and lifting them the same as it has done many times on the present lead covering. The extra stability of the spire would also be increased by one fifth owing to the corresponding decrease of weight it would have to carry.

Your obedient servant,

Charles Markham

Broad Oaks Iron Works.

23rd February 1898

This edition of the Chesterfield Journal was reformatted to enable web publication, December 2022.