



NEWSLETTER March 2024



Lumsdale Mills

Alan and Christine Piper

Learn about the fascinating history of this 'hidden valley' in Matlock

Meeting at St Thomas's Centre

Starts at 7:30pm. Members

The Great Miners' Strike in North Derbyshire 1984–5

An exhibition commemorating is being held in the Market Hall Assembly Rooms from Monday 4th March until Wednesday 27th March (except Sundays) from 10am until 4pm

Change to April meeting

Unfortunately the talk by Rod Auton about Chesterfield Canal has had to be postponed until August. Instead Philip Riden will be delivering his talk Finding the Way: a New Look at Some Old Roads.

Please remember that the April talk will be in the church and not in St Thomas Centre

Chesterfield Police Stations

Chesterfield Borough Police Force was formed in 1836. For a fuller history of the force see *Cestrefeld Journals* numbers 6 and 7. Derbyshire County Constabulary was formed in 1857; a Chesterfield Division (one of eight divisions) was temporarily housed at Beetwell Street.

James Radford from the Borough Force and John Hunter from the County Force each had gaol keeper as one of their duties. The gaol was on South Place but the property was owned by the County and, when the Derbyshire Force was established, it was Superintendent Hunter of the County Force who was living there and Radford lost his home. A police station for the County Force was opened in 1860 with the entrance to the offices through a wall at the end of Marsden Street. The cells were behind and at right

angles to Marsden Street and behind them was boundary wall of the workhouse site. In April 1861 the County Force had one head constable, one sergeant and eight constables. In addition to his police duties the head constable was also billet master, inspector of lodging houses, inspector of workshops, sanitary inspector, inspector of weights and measures and receiving officer for vagrants. For the last three offices he received an additional £20, £25, and £10 respectively. The County Court met in the Market Hall.

Sadly Hunter died on December 26th 1863 (aged 42 years) just five days before the death of James Radford (aged 43 years) who was taken ill when attending the funeral of Hunter. Chesterfield lost its two most senior and experienced officers within a space of five days. The men were buried within a few feet of each other in Spital Cemetery and their graves are marked by identical headstones.

Following the death of Radford, Chesterfield's Councillor Shipton took the opportunity to raise with the Chesterfield Watch Committee the question as to whether or not the County and Borough Forces should amalgamate saying that it could save £250 per year. A small sub-committee sought to establish from the Chief Constable of the County Police the cost of such an amalgamation and what might be the saving. Although the cost of amalgamation was said to be £500, no estimate of the savings was given and the Chief Constable expected full control of the borough part of the force including complete control of the appointment and dismissal of the borough constables. The sub-committee recommended that the amalgamation of the Borough with the County be not entertained by the Watch Committee, and the scheme 'fell to the ground'.



Shortly afterwards the Watch Committee ordered new sets of uniform including belts which were ornamented with the borough arms surrounded by the words Chesterfield Borough Police.

In the 1890s there was a suggestion that a new uniform should be adopted by the County Force because the old one was too hot in the summer. Very few photographs of the new uniform exist, which suggests that it was not universally adopted. My grandfather joined the County Force in 1901. As a constable on probation he was issued with the new uniform.

Already by 1870 there were complaints about the accommodation for the police. The population of Chesterfield was increasing rapidly due to the opening locally of the mines and associated works. The Borough Force consisted of 14 men. Their accommodation consisted of a small office and a day room. Borough prisoners were confined in the county gaol. Fortunately plans were already afoot for an extension to the Municipal Hall which was opened in 1875. There was no room for extension for the County Force. On one hand there was a demand for more police because the population was increasing, but, on the other hand, the borough boundaries were extended in 1892 and 1910 and the areas which were now in Chesterfield were now the responsibility of the Borough Force. In October 1909 the County Force agreed to provide £1500 to purchase a new site for a police station. By the time police station was built on Brimington Road, a magistrates' court for the Chesterfield County Petty Sessional Division had been added to the scheme. Although it was thought that a site nearer the town centre might have been preferable the site, which was near the railway station, did have the advantages that prisoners brought by rail or being transferred to jail in Derby were spared the humiliation of being escorted through the streets handcuffed to the police. A new magistrate's court was needed because the accommodation at the Municipal Hall was inadequate and where witnesses, waiting to be called, could spend the time in local hostelryes. In 1909 the Workhouse

Board of Guardians resolved to offer £1000 for the County Police offices and lock-up to accommodate female vagrants.

The building was officially opened in August 1914 at a cost of around £10,000 (excluding the site). It was built of Accrington Bricks, with stonework from Darley Dale. The architects were Messrs. Hunter and Woodhouse of Belper. The main contractor was the Chesterfield builder G. F. Kirk.

The new complex included a county police station, a house designed for the Deputy Chief Constable and 'cottages' for the 'police groom and police clerk'. A lock-up and offices were included. To the rear was an



The Magistrates' Court

exercise yard for prisoners, a space for drill, a stable, coach-house and a 'motor-shed'. A new County Magistrates' was included.

There were three courtrooms – one of which was designed for children, facilities for waiting and accommodation for the magistrates' clerk and solicitors. The waiting hall had a concave ceiling, as did the two main court rooms, each with a semi-circular window



In 1861 the borough of Chesterfield occupied 322 acres and its population was 9,886. By 1921 it occupied 8468 acres and its population 61,232: clearly a new purpose-built police station was required. In 1924 began on the demolition of the cells and updating of some of the offices in the Municipal Hall extension. The police house became police offices. The cells and the court house at Brimington Road were used temporarily. The first section alongside Tontine Road was opened in 1937.

The Fire Service, which had been the responsibility of the police became part of the National Fire service. 1941. The property which originally housed the superintendents was demolished and the fire station became a garage for police motor vehicles.

The Chesterfield Borough Police Force was absorbed into the Derbyshire County Force on 1 April 1947. It was constituted as a division of the county force under a superintendent. 78 members of the force were to be transferred (including six policewomen) plus two police war reservists; one privately employed constable and 13 civilian staff. Equipment transferred included 13 police boxes, four patrol cars, three motor cycles, one Austin van and two ambulances.



A new location for the police station became necessary because of the redevelopment of the area between Low Pavement and Beetwell Street. The new station was opened further east on Beetwell Street in 1978 and the site cleared to make way for a new public library. The Brimington Road station was closed about this time.

The Magistrates' Court continued to function. In 2014 work began at the Justice Centre on Tapton Lane so that the functions carried out at the County Magistrates' Court and the Chesterfield Magistrates' Court on St Mary's Gate could be transferred there, leaving the property on Brimington Road empty until it was taken over by the Probation Service for a few years. In 2012 work started on compiling a list of Local Heritage Assets. Although Peel House (the County Magistrates' Court) was suggested it not included as it was to be demolished and redeveloped as part of the Waterside scheme. Without protection there was nothing to stop the owners demolishing it which they did in January 2024.

Chesterfield's First Motor Bus Service

Extracted from T.P.Wood's Almanac 1939

The change over from the trolley bus services in Chesterfield to the latest type of Diesel oil-engined buses, which was effected in Chesterfield on 24th 1938, recalls the fact that Chesterfield had a public motor bus service as long ago as 1905, when the late Mr Charles P. Markham operated a small fleet of buses between Chesterfield and Hasland. The driver of the first of these buses was Mr. Lawrence Green. The buses were 12h.p Wolsleys, and he took the first one out on a trial run to find out the best times for running the services. In those days motor vehicles of any sort were a rarity and quite a sensation was caused when he drew up at the Devonshire Arms at Hasland, which was the terminus.

There were three buses in all, and they were built like wagonettes, with seating capacity for ten passengers. They had no windscreens or protection for the passengers at first although later canvas covers were made for use in bad weather. There were solid tyres on the back wheels, and the engines were twin-cylinder affairs, while there were three separate gear levers which made gear changing a complicated business.

A regular daily bus service between the end of Packers Row and Hasland was inaugurated, a charge of threepence each being made. At first the public were diffident about the new form of transport, but once their prejudice was overcome the service quickly became popular. Mr Green earned many a pound from people who made the journey just to have the thrill of their first motor ride. The drivers had a regular 'war' with the horse wagonette drivers but gradually they were driven off the road.

Eventually the bus service was augmented, Mr Markham purchasing from the Duke of Portland a 24-seat motor shooting brake, which Mr Green drove between Chesterfield and Grassmoor on Saturdays to carry the heavy afternoon and evening traffic. Extra drivers were engaged, and Mr Green became the maintenance engineer in charge of all the buses. The service continued for about two years, but the roads at that time were in such a bad condition, and the repair costs so heavy that eventually the service was suspended.

Not long afterwards the Corporation started a service which has continued ever since



The source of this image is unknown. Although the caption says Chesterfield's First Bus Service, the first buses had ten seats and this one was licensed for 13 or 15 passengers. Arthur Ollerenshaw kept the Castle Hotel at Castleton so these gentlemen were having a day out.