



NEWSLETTER May 2024

May 20th

Industries of Brampton along the Hipper

Cliff Lea



N.B. Meeting in the church

June 17th

History of St Thomas Church

Beth Robson

N.B. Meeting in the church

July 15th

Zeppelins Over Sheffield

Philip Godley

The raids in 1916

Meeting in St Thomas Centre

Cestrefeld Journal 9

The issue contains articles about Chesterfield in the early 1960s; the History of Cricket in Chesterfield; Chesterfield Congregational Church; Harry Brearley 1971-1948, Woodhead's of Chesterfield and Chesterfield Central Station. The cost for members is £3 and to non-members for £6. It is available as a paper copy or in digital form. It will be available at the **Family History Fair on 18th May at the Arkwright Centre** and the next CADLHS meeting on May 20th.

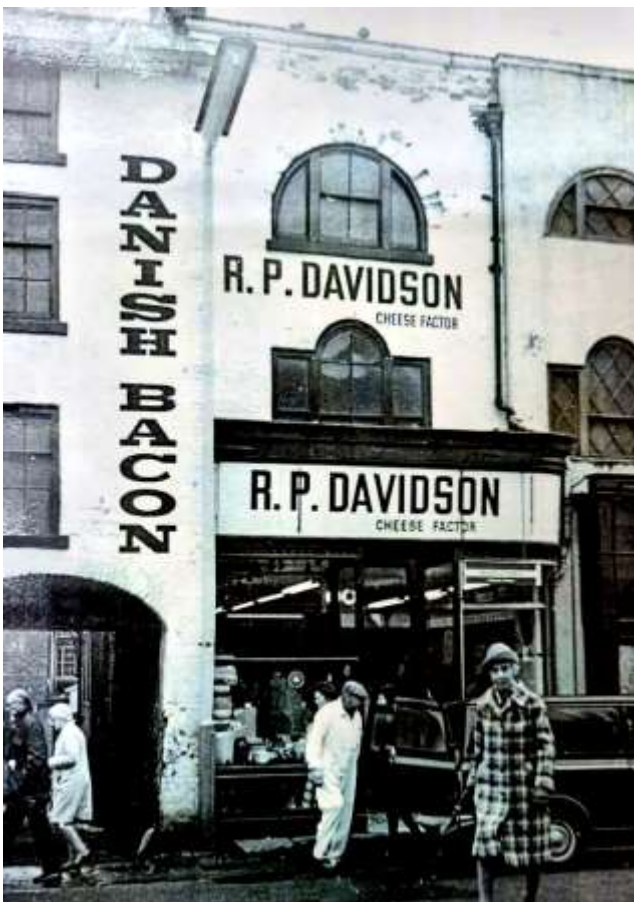
R.P. Davidson's Cheese Factor – the story of a local family business

Simon Davidson

Roy Purcell Davidson was born in 1931 at Charles Street, Brampton. He entered the Merchant Navy in 1952 and served until 1955, working in the galley and waiting on the passengers. When he left

the Merchant Navy, he bought a house on Hady Lane which was next to a poultry farm. Roy always had an entrepreneurial spirit so on Saturdays, he sold prepared chickens on the Cattle Market (later developed as the part the Ravenside Retail Park, south of the River Hipper). He also sold Hoovers from door to door to supplement his income. As the poultry farm wasn't doing too well, due to the impact of bird flu and cheaper chickens being imported from abroad, he started selling cheese from Hartington Creamery. After some time, some of the other local market traders suggested to Roy that he moved his stall to the main market, due to the refurbishment of the cattle market. This meant he could trade extra days on the market which opened on Monday and Saturday and, from 1965, on Fridays. The cheese from Hartington, was soon to be followed by produce from Salt's Bakery which was behind the Royal Oak on Chatsworth Road (now the Spotted Frog). He purchased bread, pastries and pork pies on a sale and return basis, paid for at the end of the week!! The market stall went well and after a few years he had three stalls on the main Market Place and two stalls on New Square.

At this time the Council was anxious to redevelop the town centre. This was an unsettling time for shopkeepers and market traders as the Allen Plan in 1962 would have seen the demolition of the Shambles, the Market Hall and buildings on Low Pavement, with new buildings being erected on the Market Place.



The shop on Low Pavement – note the sign R.P. Davidson Cheese Factor

In 1970 a shop on Low Pavement (now Jackson's Bakery) was empty and the Council wanted someone to fill it temporarily, because Low Pavement was going to be refurbished, so Roy was able to take it for a very low rent, this was his first 'bricks and mortar' shop and he was now trading six days a week.

Hammerson Group's plan of 1972 proposed a major shopping development covering the Market Place, Low Pavement and part of New Square. This provoked an increasing tide of opposition led by Graham Robinson. Roy was strongly against the proposed changes, which he felt would ruin the market town. A writ was served on the council by Roy Davidson (described as a cheese factor with a market stall in the Market Place and a shop on Low Pavement), Graham Robinson, and Bill Kennerley. In 1974 Hammerson withdrew from the scheme. Instead a phased development plan was adopted conserving the Market Place and the listed buildings.

By 1980 the Market Hall had been refurbished, so Roy decided to take Unit 31 on the outside, opposite the former Post Office. Although his first shop on Low Pavement had been refurbished, by 1984 there were difficulties negotiating a new lease agreement, so Roy decided not to renew the lease and to focus on his new shop on the outside of the Market Hall.

Roy's son Simon had helped on the market and the shops from an early age, but in 1984 he joined the Army until 1987, when he returned to the business.

The Davidsons sought to promote the business by attending events such as Bakewell Show and Belper Food Fair. Today advertising is more locally focused by attending events such as the Rail Ale festival at Barrow Hill and the CAMRA beer festival at the Winding Wheel.

In 2009, one of their oldest and chief suppliers, the Hartington Creamery closed down so relationships were built with new suppliers and the range of cheese on offer increased. Sadly two years later Roy died, which could have meant an end to the business, but Simon had now been in the business for over 20 years and wanted the shop to continue trading in the family name. Simon happened to know one of the chief cheese makers at the original Hartington Creamery, Alan Salt – who had told Simon that a group of investors were looking at starting a new creamery. Simon decided to invest in the venture in 2011 and a year later the new Hartington Creamery at Pikehall Farm, just outside Hartington, produced their first cheese.

Online shopping has had a dramatic effect on bricks and mortar shops, but the Cheese Factor has not joined the trend, because of the cost and hazards of dispatching a perishable product like cheese. Instead, ordering can be done online, with the customer collecting the goods. Simon says that the Cheese Factor is lucky to have such loyal, local customers. The company also has a wholesale arm to the business, providing cheese to many businesses not just in Chesterfield but also Derbyshire and South Yorkshire.

The Market Hall was refurbished in 2012 and once more the shop moved this time five doors along to 10 Market Hall, where the business is still trading after nearly 70 years of great change for retailers.

The Great Reform Acts

How many people realise that there were six reform acts which extended suffrage?

The Representation of the People Act 1832, known as the first Reform Act or Great Reform Act: 1832 brought electoral reform in England and Wales; later acts brought reform in Scotland and Ireland. It also disenfranchised women because it referred to men. It famously abolished the rotten boroughs like Old Sarum, which had only seven voters, all controlled by the local squire, yet sent sending two members to Parliament. In urban areas it gave the vote to all householders who paid a yearly rental of £10 or more and some lodgers; in the counties it extended the property qualification to include small landowners, tenant farmers, and shopkeepers. Derbyshire was divided into two divisions with Chesterfield falling in the North Division which had polling places at Alfreton, Bakewell, Chapel en le Frith, Chesterfield and Glossop. At the election held in December Lord Cavendish (3377 votes) and Mr Gisborne (2384) were elected and Sir George Sitwell (1193) defeated. Only Chesterfield would have elected George Sitwell with 828 votes.

The second Reform Act of 1867 extended the vote to all householders and lodgers in boroughs who paid rent of £10 per year or more and lowered the property threshold in county areas enabling agricultural landowners and tenants with small amounts of land to vote. The electorate doubled from one million to 2 million. Chesterfield now found itself in the Division of East Derbyshire which covered the area of the Hundred of Scarsdale with Chesterfield being the only voting place. Again it would be represented by two members.

The new constituency of East Derbyshire covered the mining areas of the county and extended from Norton in the north to Alfreton in the south, with its headquarters at Chesterfield. Although the 1868 election was held in November, the campaign to elect two representatives began as early as June. There were four candidates: for the Liberals, Captain the Hon Francis Egerton, son-in-law of the 7th Duke of Devonshire and the Hon Henry Strutt of Belper and, for the Conservatives, Gladwyn Turbutt of Ogston Hall and William Overend Q.C., who was one of the authors of the report into trade unions in Sheffield after the Sheffield Outrages.



An unusual aspect of the campaigning was the publication of a series of cartoons by the Chesterfield Crow on behalf of the Liberal cause. A set of the cartoons is held by Sheffield Local Studies Library. The artist was Mr J P Atkinson of Derby.

The result was quite close Egerton 2089 votes, Strutt 2032, Turbutt 1999 and Overend 1970. The

Derbyshire Courier thought there had been a surfeit of electioneering – a view some hold today. The East Derbyshire constituency did not last very long; in 1885 Derbyshire was divided into seven constituencies with Chesterfield being one of them and North East Derbyshire the other. By now having risen to the rank of Admiral, Egerton represented East Derbyshire for the whole period of its existence and then served as MP for North East Derbyshire for a further two years. The Irish question dogged the Liberals throughout the period.

The third Reform Act 1884 brought the franchise in the counties in line with the 1867 householder and lodger franchise for boroughs. The following year the Redistribution of Seats Act redrew the boundaries of the divisions to make them equal and most areas returned only one member to Parliament. Derbyshire was now divided into seven divisions, with East Derbyshire being divided into the North-Eastern Division and the Chesterfield Division and the remainder south of Clay Cross becoming part of Mid-Derbyshire. Alfred Barnes was elected for the Liberals, defeating Cumming Macdona (Conservative) and a Radical and Labour candidate, James Haslam, Secretary of the Derbyshire Miners' Association.

The Representation of the People Act of 1918 widened suffrage by abolishing almost all property qualifications for men and enfranchised women over 30 who met minimum property qualifications. The Equal Franchise Act of 1928 enfranchised all women and the Representation of the People Act of 1969 reduced the voting age to 18 years.