



Chesterfield & District Local History Society

NEWSLETTER April 2025

April 28th

Forgotten Women

Gay Evans

Life in Derbyshire County Asylum

May 19th

Mary Queen of Scots

David Templeman

The captive Queen in England
1568-1584

Please note that for April 2025 only the meeting is on the fourth Monday in the month as the third Monday is a bank holiday.

Meetings are held at the St Thomas Centre, Chatsworth Road commencing at 7:30pm. Members free, Visitors £3

Annual General Meeting Chesterfield and District Local History Society 2025

2024 saw a consolidation of our progress as a successful local history society, with average attendance numbers of 37 members and 21 visitors per talk over the 9 months of our 'active' year (one meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather). For this level of success I would like to thank our committee and all our members and visitors who attend news of our activities by word of mouth, or via social media.

I want to concentrate on our proposed amendments to the fees and the Constitution.

The Committee is making the following proposals: -

Raising the annual membership to £ 15 for adults and £ 20 for couples residing at the same address. At the same time we think we should offer FREE membership to anyone under the age of 22 in full time education to encourage younger members and a category of honorary membership to people who have made a significant contribution to the society or to local history over a number of years. We suggest leaving visitors fees at £ 3.00 per visit.

As regards the Constitution we are proposing the following that subscriptions be set by the Committee alone, not the AGM.

The treasurer's report by Janine Le Mire showed a small profit despite the purchase of a projector. There was a slight decline in the number of members and a decrease in the number of visitors which may be due the cancellation of one meeting due to the weather. Janine thanked John Morley for examining the accounts for us.

Whilst all the officers and the committee have indicated their willingness to continue for another 12 months, although with some changes. There are currently no willing volunteers, we really would like to get some

fresh faces on the committee for next year. We propose a vote to re-elect the officers and committee en-block.

David Mcphie as Chair, Christine Merrick Vice Chair, Janine Le Mire Treasurer, Andy Miles Secretary, Clare Wellhausen Membership Secretary, Philip Cousins I.T. Consultant, additional Committee members Janet Murphy, Hazel Linsey and Janet Austin.

There was no other business and the AGM closed.

Unfortunately the advertised speaker for March, Byron Machin, was unable to present his talk about the rare wild flowers of the Peak District. Instead we were fortunate to have a replacement speaker who spoke about the history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Walter Stanton 1845-1901

Samuel Stanton was for many years the chief clerk in the offices of John Cutts, solicitor, who was Chesterfield's Town Clerk. Samuel lived in the property at the junction of Bank Yard and Low Pavement now the right hand side of the Market Fish Restaurant. Walter, born 1845, was the third of his six sons. He attended the Grammar School but didn't enter the legal profession, unlike his younger brother Francis who became Clerk to the Chesterfield Borough Magistrates and a founding member of the partnership of Stanton Walker solicitors. Instead Walter became an apprentice surveyor with Samuel Rollinson, architect and surveyor.

Walton was a keen sportsman at a time when Chesterfield Cricket Club was holding very successful athletics competitions and starting football in order to keep members fit during the winter. He played football for Chesterfield Football Club in its early days and maintaining his interest in the club for many years. He also acted as clerk of the course for local athletics meetings.

Walter became an assistant-surveyor for the Midland Railway Co. and was the clerk of the works during the erection of the 1870 Midland Railway Station. Shortly after the completion of station he settled in Chesterfield and became an architect and surveyor on Soresby Street. In 1883 Stanton was appointed Borough Surveyor following the resignation of Wm Tuley, the previous Borough Surveyor.

A local man, at least he would be aware of the major problems facing Chesterfield. In 1841 Chesterfield's population was 6,212 in an area of 22 acres. By 1891 the population was 13,342 in the same area. The biggest increase the population came between 1851 and 1871 when it increased by 68%. In 1874 Dr Thorne, an inspector of the Local Government Board, reported on the sanitary condition of the borough where some houses had to use common taps and common privies. In the overcrowded Low Pavement area problems were made worse by air pollution from the Brampton industries, pollution of the River Hipper, the lack of an adequate sewerage system and the difficulty of access to the yards to remove refuse. In these close packed houses diseases spread rapidly.

Chesterfield Borough was handicapped by its small size of half a square mile. As the development of the engineering industries and the coal mines was happening outside the borough, Chesterfield did not benefit from the increase in the rates, relying instead on the income from the market and tolls.

In 1876 the Council sought to expand its boundaries in order to deal with the problems of sewage and an inadequate water supply, but adjoining townships were concerned that it might result in an increase in their rates and mounted a concerted opposition. The case for expansion was not well presented and the Select Committee of the House of Commons considering the bill found that the scheme was too large, although it

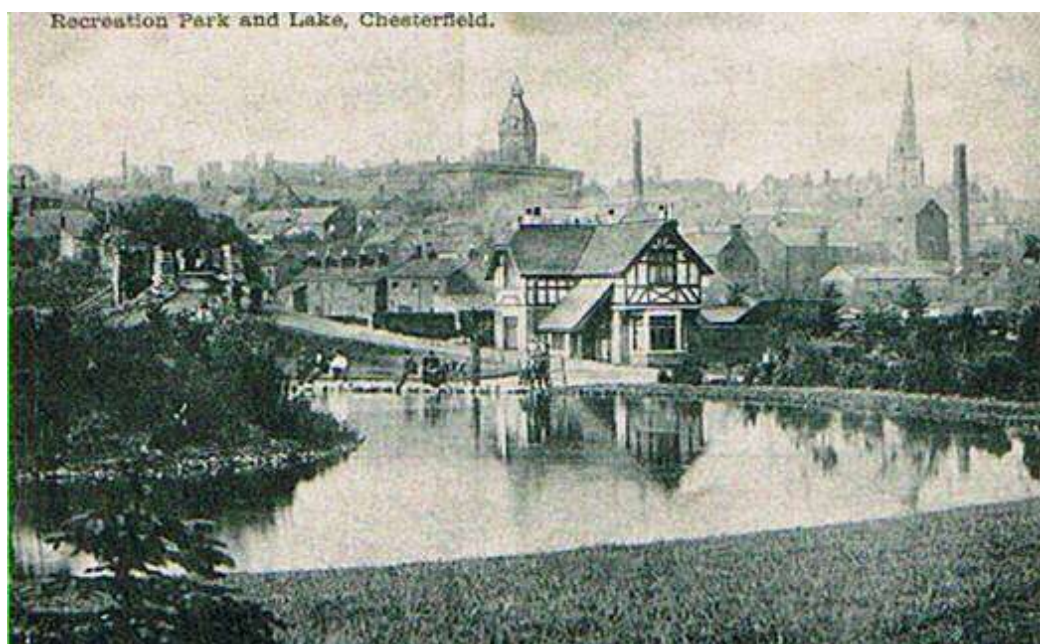
felt that the Council would be justified in a scheme which would include New Brampton, Stonegravels and part of Hasland.

In 1890 the Council once more began a move to extend the boundaries of the borough. This time the plan was to include parts of Lower Brampton and Walton, Newbold and Hasland areas which were already closely connected with Chesterfield. In February 1892 an inquiry was held by a Local Government Commissioner who reported favourably on the plan. The Act confirming the new boundaries received Royal Assent on 28 June, the new boundaries taking effect on 1 November 1892. The area of the borough increased to 1219 acres.

In 1887 money was raised to provide a recreation ground for the people of Chesterfield. The land was handed over to the Corporation for the people of Chesterfield and fund raising began for money to purchase the remaining five acres. Money for laying out the park had to be found by the Council.

A Parks Committee was formed. Councillor Rollinson, and the Borough Surveyor, i.e. Walter Stanton, were instructed to draw up a plan for the 'lay-out and ornamenting' of the park, at an estimated cost of £3,500. This was to cover the cost of swimming baths, reservoir, caretaker's house, roads and a bridge over the railway and river, an approach road from West Bars and a surrounding wall. In May 1888 the plan was presented and then the problems began.

An application was made to the Local Government Board, permission to borrow money was granted, but the council was told it could not close the park, in order to charge for events in the park thus losing hoped for income. The plan for laying out the park was abandoned. However in January 1891 the Borough Surveyor was instructed to prepare detailed plans and specifications for a caretaker's house.



It was the first of Chesterfield's black and white Tudor Revival style buildings.

The Public Health Amendment Act of 1890, allowed parks to be closed for up to twelve days a year. William Barron's plan was chosen and finally Queen's Park was opened 2 August 1893.

As the Borough Surveyor, Stanton would have been greatly involved in drawing up the plans to expand the borough and the plans for Queen's Park. He resigned as Borough Surveyor in March 1894. In November 1894 he was elected to represent South Ward on the Borough Council, and was involved in the plans to improve Chesterfield's water supply, but was not re-elected in 1897. He continued in his architectural practice.

He died in October 1901 leaving a widow and five children three sons and two daughters. He was buried in Spital Cemetery.

Anniversary of Region's Iconic Role in Railway History Set for Grand Celebration

Neil Anderson

Originally posted on Facebook Chesterfield and Area History and Genealogy

Chesterfield's pivotal role in birth of the world's railway system is set to be commemorated thanks to a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Holy Trinity Church, the final resting place of George Stephenson, has been awarded £240,600 to launch the project that will honour the legacy of the 'Father of Railways' and explore the lasting impact of railway engineering in Chesterfield.

The project comes at a time of renewed interest in railway history, with 2025 marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of the modern railway.

On 27 September 1825, George Stephenson's steam-powered Locomotion No. 1 travelled 26 miles between Shildon, Darlington, and Stockton, carrying hundreds of passengers to great fanfare.

It set in motion a train of events that changed the world forever. Holy Trinity, which is situated on Newbold Road, has long been a site of interest for railway enthusiasts and local schools, but this initiative will significantly expand its role as a visitor destination and educational hub.

With additional funding support from EMR (£5,000), Cross Country Rail (£5,000), Raymond Ross Fund (£25,000) Graysons Solicitors (£1,000) and Holy Trinity Church itself (£16,000), the project will enhance visitor facilities, create new interpretation materials, and develop engaging activities for schools, families, and the wider community.

The initiative will explore not only Stephenson's life and engineering achievements but also the wider industrial history of Chesterfield. It will shed light on the Victorian-era expansion of the town, the development of the Clay Cross Company, and the town's role in railway and coal mining history. The project will also commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Miners' Strike, reflecting on the changes in industry that shaped the region.

Plans include:

- The transformation of Holy Trinity's community rooms into a dedicated visitor facility.
- The creation of new interpretation materials highlighting Stephenson's influence on Chesterfield and railway engineering.
- A series of public events and celebrations marking the railway's 200th anniversary.
- Educational and engagement activities for schools and visitors, connecting communities with their industrial heritage.
- Volunteer and learning opportunities to equip people with heritage and research skills.
- A focus on sustainable transport and the future of railway engineering, ensuring the project connects the past with the present and future.

Reverend Jilly Hancock of Holy Trinity Church said:

"We are delighted to have received this generous support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players and our funding partners, we can now ensure that George Stephenson's story and Chesterfield's rich railway heritage are celebrated and shared with future generations."