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# East Midlands History and Heritage

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The People's Hospital

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# Welcome

Welcome back, finally, to East Midlands History and Heritage. What a year! We closed the magazine because all our outlets were similarly closed. Without access to our readers there was no point in publishing.

This, probably, will be our final issue. Everyone associated with the journal would like to thank our authors, those who helped distribute the magazine through library services, local history clubs, etc, those archives that have provided free access to photographs and illustrations, and the local universities, charities and history associations that have offered financial support over the last six years.

On a personal note, as an academic historian I'm used to writing for a very limited audience. It's been an absolute pleasure to bring history to many, many more readers in our region and beyond.

**Dr Nick Hayes**  
Editor East Midlands History and Heritage

**Oresta Muckute, Dr Helen Drew,**  
Assistant Editors

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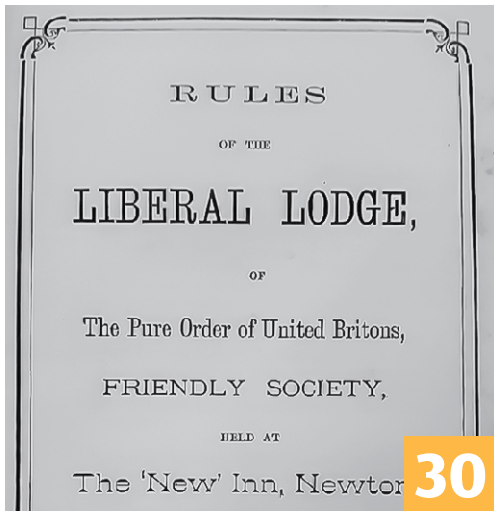
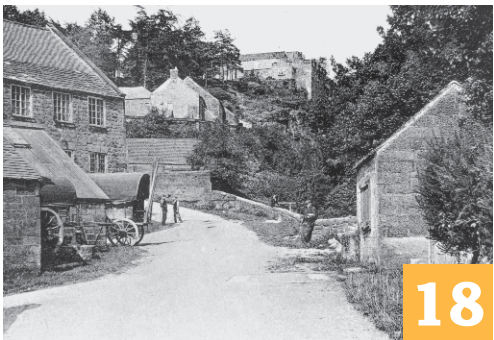
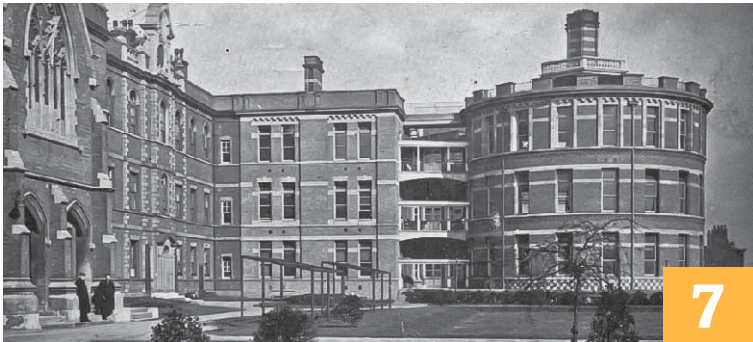
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# Nuthall's Aeronaut: The Life of Henry Truman, 1888-1963

BY LUKE DANES



Born into a Nottinghamshire farming family, Henry Truman began ballooning when it was in the throes of its early twentieth-century renaissance. For more than two decades Henry took to the skies with some of the most famous parachutists of the day, thrilling crowds across the East Midlands and beyond.

Henry Truman was born in the Nottinghamshire market town of Bulwell on 5 December 1888, the first child of Henry Truman the elder, a farm worker from Hucknall Torkard, and his wife Isabella Truman née Walters. The Truman family lived at Fitzroy Terrace on Milton Street, and Henry was baptised, together with his younger sister Mabel, at the town's St Mary the Virgin and All Saints church in January 1892. Henry's two other siblings, Marian and William, were born in 1894 and 1896 respectively.

By 1881, Henry's paternal grandparents, William and Emma Truman, were living and farming at Town Farm in the village of Nuthall, five miles west of Nottingham. Following William's death in 1903, the farm was run by Henry Truman the elder and his brother George, assisted by the younger Henry and his brother William. It was around this time that Henry junior discovered a new passion far removed from the noise, smells and muck of the farmyard: ballooning.

Despite the great advances made in heavier-than-air flight by men such as the Wright brothers, Samuel Cody and Louis Blériot during the first decade of the twentieth century, ballooning was still by far the most usual way in which people could experience the thrill of flight. The origins of ballooning can be traced back as far as 1782 when the Frenchman Joseph Montgolfier developed the world's first balloon, and it was not long before Nottingham had established a strong ballooning presence of its own. The pioneering aeronaut James Sadler made the town's first manned balloon ascent in 1813 and was followed by his son in 1823. Charles Green made balloon ascents in



HENRY TRUMAN (RIGHT) WITH CLARIBEL, ENA, PERCIVAL AND CAPTAIN HENRY SPENCER, C.1924

1821 and 1847, and further parachute descents were made by one "Professor Baldwin" in 1888 and the equally spurious "Professor Russett" in 1889.

Henry began ballooning at a time when it was noted that the British public were "so keenly interested in aerial flight that every fête and gala programme should include an aerial display." Balloon ascents and parachute descents often took centre stage at provincial flower shows and fetes which were held to raise money for local hospitals in the days before the NHS. As many as 40,000 people would flock to these shows to witness daring aerial displays, frequently performed by the prestigious north London-based company Spencer Brothers Ltd.

Spencer Brothers Ltd was "a family famous for almost 100 years as the World's Premier Balloon Manufacturers and Aeronauts." The company certainly had an impressive pedigree, having been founded in 1835 and taken over by Charles Green Spencer whose six sons and one of his daughters had all followed him into aeronautics. It is not clear how Henry became involved with Spencer Brothers Ltd, but by 1908 he was flying with one of the brothers, Sydney Spencer, at events across the East Midlands, including ascents from Ilkeston and Leicester. Part of ballooning's renewed popularity at this time was the spectacle of balloon racing, and in August 1912 the *Staffordshire Advertiser* reported that Henry had won the Shrewsbury Floral Fête's race despite colliding with his competitor's balloon at 500 feet.

The outbreak of the First World War in July 1914 did not dampen Henry's enthusiasm for ballooning, and he continued to fly and perform parachute descents. But by January 1916, with the British war effort costing the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, Herbert Asquith's Liberal government introduced the Military Service Act which made conscription compulsory for all unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one. Henry, having just turned twenty-seven, was on his way to war.

By late August 1916 Henry was "deemed as from the appointed date to have been duly enlisted in His Majesty's regular forces for general service" and joined the Free Balloon Section of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) at Richmond in

*"so keenly interested in aerial flight that every fête and gala programme should include an aerial display."*

south-west London. The war found Henry on familiar territory and he soon made "the first Parachute Descent from a K.[ite] B.[alloon] in England using a Spencer Patent Parachute" to demonstrate the apparatus to watching RFC officers. In typically haphazard fashion, the jump ended with Henry landing on the roof of a house in nearby Mortlake.

Henry was perhaps unusually lucky to have been able to combine his peacetime pastime with his wartime national duty. Between January 1917 and November 1918, he made eighty-five balloon flights in both day and night conditions, from locations across the country, including many from the Oval cricket ground in London. The night flights required Henry to test the reactions of ground-based searchlight crews, and he was often impressed by their effectiveness. On a flight from Birmingham in September 1918, Henry noted that "The searchlight work was very good [,] 7 lights holding us for just over 20 mins."

On 1 April 1918, the RFC merged with the Royal Naval Air Service to form the Royal Air Force (RAF), and Henry was mustered into this new armed service with the rank of Corporal and weekly pay of 2s 4d. Henry's final wartime flight came just six days before the Armistice, and following the end of hostilities he quickly resumed ballooning for leisure. In March 1919 Henry gained his Aeronaut Certificate from the Royal Aero Club, the body responsible



A BALLOON ASCENDS WITH A SOLO PARACHUTIST AT PEEL PARK IN BRADFORD

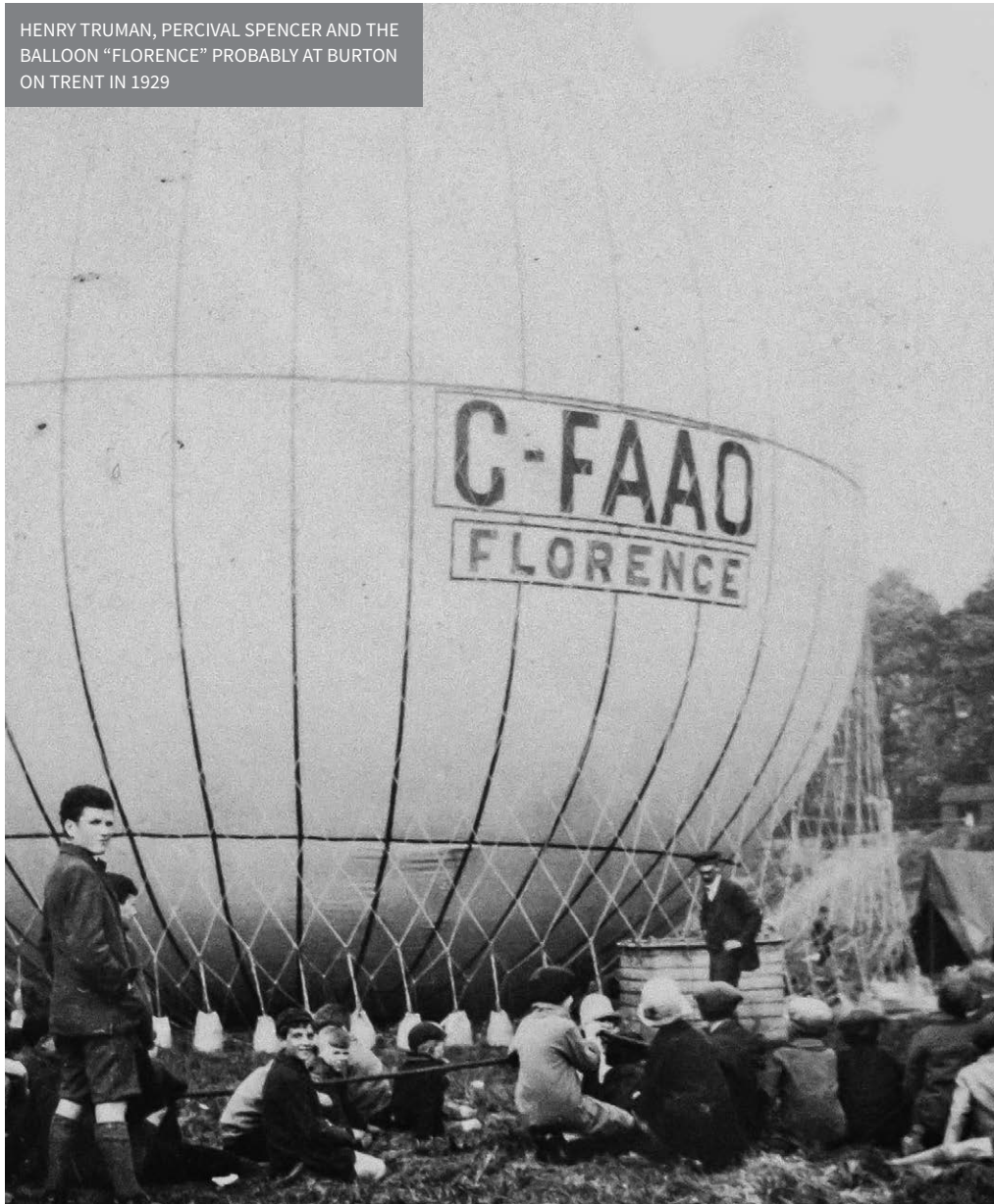
for all private and recreational flying in the United Kingdom on behalf of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale. Such certificates required the aeronaut to display competence in day and night flying and be witnessed doing so by an appropriate authority. On 3 May 1919 Henry was transferred to the RAF Reserve and was finally demobbed on 30 April 1920, having reached the rank of Corporal Mechanic.

Henry returned to his work with Spencer Brothers Ltd, the business now being in the hands of Captain Henry Spencer, and his children Ena and Percival. Having gained his Licence for Free Balloons from the Air Ministry in 1924, Henry piloted a variety of those owned by Spencer Brothers Ltd – including the 60,000 cubic feet "Victoria" and the 40,000 cubic feet "Florence" – during their busy summer display seasons. These flights carried the parachutists who were suspended precariously from the exterior of the balloon itself, until being released from an altitude of several thousand feet for "an exciting race to earth." The parachutists included Captain Henry, Ena and Percival Spencer themselves, as well as the veteran Elsa Spencer. Local amateur parachutists were also taken up in the balloons, as were passengers.

Ballooning was inherently dangerous and Henry's flights with Spencer Brothers Ltd were often dramatic affairs, not least because balloons were not dirigible – that is, able to be steered – and simply floated wherever the



HENRY TRUMAN, PERCIVAL SPENCER AND THE BALLOON "FLORENCE" PROBABLY AT BURTON ON TRENT IN 1929



wind blew them. Control was achieved by means of a valve to release gas to descend, and bags of ballast which could be dropped to achieve lift. Consequently, stories of Henry's balloon adventures often made the local newspapers. Following Bradford's Peel Park Gala in 1924, the *Leeds Mercury* reported that Henry's "balloon shot up from 1,000 to 11,000 feet like a rocket, was caught in a particularly strong air current, and was lost to sight in the cloud banks." After reaching speeds of "more than a mile a minute at times", Henry landed on York racecourse and arrived back in Bradford by train later that night. Henry had another lucky escape at the Peel Park Gala in 1930, after "The wind caught the balloon just before it was due to be released, and the 30 men holding the mooring ropes were thrown in a heap." The *Lancashire Evening Post* continued to report that Henry's balloon was "whirled away", eventually landing after forty miles, having reached a height of some 12,600 feet.

Henry meticulously recorded his many brushes with danger in his balloon logbooks. It must be

remembered that the balloons he flew were not hot air balloons, but rather gas balloons which were kept aloft by either hydrogen or coal gas. At York Gala in 1927, Henry "got rather badly gassed" whilst deflating his balloon after weather conditions had prevented him from taking off, an incident which left him hospitalised. On a flight from Leeds in August 1930, Henry noted how his balloon had "just missed some live wires by inches and touched some phone wires but did no damage". Of course, balloons were not the only craft in the skies, and after a flight at the Keighley Show in 1929, Henry recorded that he had "heard a plane coming towards us but was satisfied it was below us [,] as it got nearer it was very near but did not see it". Balloon landings were often particularly hazardous, and after a flight at Stourbridge in 1921, Henry noted that "the wind caught us in landing and forced us through a hedge then turned right over and pinned two of us to the ground."

Henry continued to work with Ena and Percival Spencer following their father's tragic death in September 1928, but before long it was announced

"that parachuting must cease, except when it is done to avert disaster in the air." Following the Peel Park Gala in May 1931, Henry solemnly recorded in his logbook that "The air ministry have made us cancel all contracts. They say it is dangerous." And with that Henry's ballooning career came to an abrupt and unceremonious end. Having flown at more than 100 events with Spencer Brothers Ltd there is no record of Henry working with them again or making any further balloon ascents or parachute descents.

Isabella Truman died in 1934 and by the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, Henry, his father, and uncle George had retired from farming and moved the short distance to a house called The Anchorage, so called as it had been built by the retired mariner Captain John Horner. Henry lived with his father and uncle until their deaths in 1942 and 1944 respectively. At some point Henry met Ethel Squires, a children's nurse some ten years his junior who was employed at nearby Nuthall House, and in June 1952 they married at St Patrick's church.

In contrast to a life filled with peril, danger and excitement, Henry passed away suddenly and peacefully at The Anchorage on 10 January 1963, aged seventy-four. His funeral took place on 14 January and he was buried in New Farm Lane Cemetery, having left the considerable sum of £13,032 5s 8d (equivalent to around £275,000 today) in his will.

As the writer of one obituary noted, many people will have seen Henry Truman's balloon flights, but few will have been able to recall his name. In Nuthall, both The Anchorage and the Town Farm farmhouse still stand, the latter as subdivided dwellings lucky to have survived the construction of the M1 which now runs right alongside it. But neither the house, nor the old farm, or indeed the village itself, display any hint of their once flamboyant and characterful forgotten resident who had done so much to entertain so many for such good causes.

Photographs and quotes from Henry Truman's logbooks are reproduced with the kind permission of Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives and the descendants of Henry Truman.

By Luke Danes

Photographs and logbook quotes are reproduced with the kind permission of Inspire Nottinghamshire Archives (collection ref. DD/1026) and the descendants of Henry Truman.

**Further Reading:** L T C Rolt, *The Aeronauts: A History of Ballooning, 1783-1903* (Gloucester, 1985), J M Bacon, *The Dominion of the Air: The Story of Aërial Navigation* (Philadelphia, 1903), Peter G Cooksley, *Royal Flying Corps Handbook, 1914-1918* (Stroud, 2007), Richard Iliffe & Wilfred Baguley, *Victorian Nottingham: A story in Pictures, Volume 10* (Nottingham, 1973), Nuthall and District Local History Society, *Bygone Nuthall* (1988)

BY DR NICK HAYES

# Nottingham General: The People's Hospital



OUTPATIENTS DEPT 1934 (COURTESY OF NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY MANUSCRIPTS DEPT)

*With the Second World War over, and a newly elected Labour government promising to nationalise health provision, the chair of Nottingham's wealthiest and most prestigious voluntary association, The General Hospital, reminded its local community of its past collective achievements. Afraid these would become obscured, he observed:*

*"The term 'Our Hospital' is not new but one that the public is inclined to overlook. The Hospital belongs to the Public ... From the earliest days to recent times there have been public-spirited benefactors from all classes who have always been anxious and willing to provide the capital ... [whatever] the outcome of the proposed National Health Service, the Public of Nottingham and District have good reason to be proud of the voluntary General Hospital and its work."*

Perhaps they ought not to have worried. Forty-five years later, local journalist David Lowe remembered interviewing one former hospital administrator who had remarked that he had always been "absolutely knocked backwards by the strength of feeling about the General Hospital. It was really quite overwhelming." Lowe was apparently less surprised: "As a Nottinghamian", he recounted, "I am well aware of the depth of feeling for what has always been regarded as the People's Hospital". Contemporary sources support this. Reporting in 1947 the social survey organisation Mass-Observation found that "there existed an emphatic consciousness of the value of the work done by all hospitals". The "greatest measure of support" for voluntary hospitals came from "working-class people in general and from working-class women in particular." Three quarters of ex-patients, mostly treated in voluntary hospitals, were largely satisfied with their hospital experience, with only nineteen per cent expressing dissatisfaction. The most common complaints centred, as they were to in ►



the future, on admission delays, waiting times in outpatient departments, the food, and haughty staff.

Voluntary associations and charities were traditionally seen as places where urban elites could – and indeed were expected – to prove their credentials as local social leaders. The giving of time or money symbiotically conferred status. Yet it is generally held that in the first half of the twentieth century the propensity of the wealthy and other leading citizens to volunteer declined significantly. Many, like William Beveridge, identified a breakdown of attachment between elites and provincial locale. Others have speculated on the diminution of traditional charitable activity being no longer central to middle-class identity. Certainly, excessive calls on time remained a strong disincentive to volunteering. On many occasions, individuals in Nottingham had to be actively persuaded by fellow board members to stay when external work commitments or even ill health intervened.

So what types of people were involved in medical charitable work and what did they do? If we take, for example, the class profile of the executive management committees of Nottingham's General Hospital 1900-1950 (Fig. 1), the disproportionate presence of an urban upper elite across the half-century remains readily apparent. These were the city's major manufacturers and leaders in commerce, or, in fewer cases, higher professionals who were also wealthy. The middling classes – those less prosperous employers or higher professionals – are less evident. Thus, in Nottingham – and in all probability elsewhere – there was no falling off in belief amongst the city's urban elite in the value of voluntarism and volunteering.

As might be expected, between 1900-50 all six chairs of the monthly board of management of the General Hospital were from this upper-middle class sector. Five were major industrialists, men like the autocratic Sir Charles Seely, who “gave lavishly of his great wealth”, but equally demanded the final say in how his money was spent. His successor Frederick Acton, a well-to-do city solicitor, turned his back on local politics to concentrate instead on hospital work, where he was thought “an outstanding figure in civic, commercial and philanthropic circles”. Acton, who bequeathed the hospital £10,000 (some 20 per cent of his estate), was followed by William Player, who with his brother ran the Player tobacco empire, one of the largest businesses in the city. Like Acton, he offered himself as a hospital enthusiast, where such work was central to his public and private persona. Speaking at the 1928 annual meeting of the Hospital Saturday Fund he recounted that:

*“No work I have ever done in my life has given me so much pleasure as this for the General Hospital. I may be criticised for not having done other things –*

*municipal work, for example – but we are able here to frame our lives according to our bent. On the job we can all work together, shoulder to shoulder, rich and poor, without any political or other differences.”*

Volunteering then was seen as a more consensual activity than entering into the public arena of local politics, with its public scrutiny, electioneering, or bellicose nature. Yet for Player it was not simply the grand gesture – for example, the £150,000 he donated for capital projects. He could also be found wandering around the hospital site checking to see if the dustbins had been emptied or the hospital chimney flues worked satisfactorily. When he stood down in 1932, he was replaced by Sir Louis Pearson, an engineering industrialist. He similarly spent “two or three afternoons a week, at least” on hospital business. His nephew, Lt. Col. Noel Gervis Pearson, took over prior to nationalisation and also made the hospital “the chief interest (one might say ‘hobby’) of his life, visiting every day.” As one local medic noted: “the reason the Nottingham General Hospital stood so high was due primarily to the fact that it had so many powerful, generous and zealous friends”. He might have added that each spent a considerable amount of time at the hospital's behest, which went well beyond any simple ‘call of duty’.

Those who volunteered and gave could be very critical of those who did not. Frederick Acton noted, as he once again appealed for funds, that “they had great wealth in the county, they had influential people who could do an immense lot for the hospital, and a great deal more than they did”. As one leading city doctor noted, “it was always the same people who gave.” Sir Thomas Shipstone, a wealthy local brewer, was similarly critical of local employers for not donating more themselves. He also attacked those businesses for not more readily supporting the work of the Hospital Saturday Fund. Such mutualist hospital funds were predominantly workplace based. Initially, they collected weekly donations on pay day (hence the term Saturday fund), but increasingly such contributions were deducted at source from wages with the collaboration of the firms concerned. Such funds proved to be immensely popular. They also became the most successful health ‘fundraisers’ of the inter-war period. For a twopence or threepence contribution per week they offered a *de facto* medical insurance to cover hospital treatment. By 1939 the funds covered some twenty million working-class members and their dependents (or roughly half the working population). Yet, as John Pickstone notes, for the Funds’ organisers such activity was also seen as a “moral campaign and a source of civic pride”. Thus, the Saturday funds and contributory schemes were both insurance organisations and “an integral part of the Voluntary Hospital Service”; a place where “many thousands of voluntary workers ... feel they are playing their part in the support of the hospital”. As local lace manufacturer and executive member Harry Weinberg remarked, whilst “local workpeople's organisations” were “so splendidly championing the cause” of local hospitals, the latter “did not seem to have received

FLEET WARD, 1907 (COURTESY OF NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY MANUSCRIPTS DEPT)



*“the reason the Nottingham General Hospital stood so high was due primarily to the fact that it had so many powerful, generous and zealous friends”*

sufficient support from those people who could well afford to come to their aid”. As a consequence of the increasing financial importance of Saturday and contributory funds, working and lower-middle class representation on local hospital boards grew. Before 1914 there was only one working-class voice on the General Hospital's management board, but by the 1920s this had risen to four, or some ten per cent of the total composition, and was set to rise still further (Fig. 1). Selection was by election, but in practice the major subscribers consistently held a certain sway. Thus, the local mining industry always had representation – men such as colliery checkweighman George James, who was also a delegate to the local trades council, the Notts Miners' Council and to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. The Boots Company, as a major employer, also had a continuing presence, so that Julia Day, who was a welfare supervisor at the firm, superseded Reginald Hallam, a clerk with the company. Robert Osbourne, a factory foreman at Players, served through the 1930s and 1940s; John Husbands, a cashier in the corporation's trams division, served from before the First World War. Other appointments were linked to sustained effort on behalf of the Fund: for example, Robert Johnson, a fishmonger and grocer, who collected contributions from the city's market Tenants' Association.

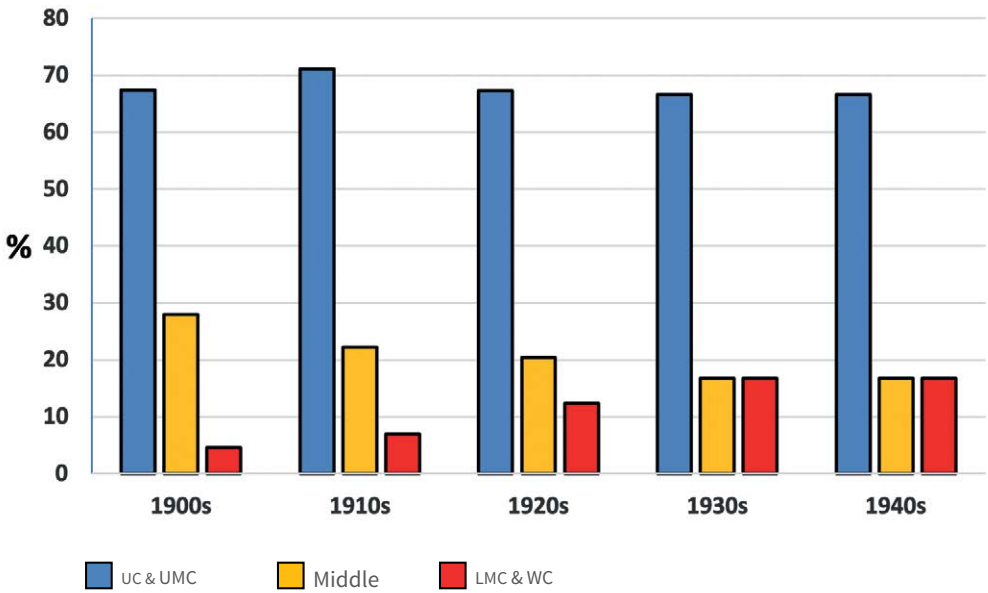
Saturday Fund representatives also acted as a voice for patients. Day, after taking two Boots' employees to the General Hospital's out-patient department, accused its medical staff of treating these and others “like blocks of wood”; they were “not told anything or expected to ask a question”. She wrote: “I must lodge a protest after actually seeing such dilatory casualness in the treatment of suffering citizens, who seem to be subjected to unnecessary pain and suffering.” Through the inter-war period workplace branches of the Saturday Fund could be vociferous in their demands, entering into prolonged correspondence with the hospitals they supported if it was thought their members were not receiving their due entitlement. Indeed, it might be argued that the power of community-based contributors – or at least their representatives – held significant sway. When the vice-chair of the local whist shield competition that generously supported the General Hospital complained about the poor

treatment afforded one local man, an internal inquiry was opened to enquire into the circumstances. The rise in importance of the Saturday Fund also offered certain conduits between the classes that went beyond the advocacy of patients' views. A certain camaraderie developed, so that when members of the Saturday Fund Executive died the local great and the good attended the funeral. John Player, for example, could be found paying for the cigars and wine for annual Saturday Fund dinners, or placing the grounds of his home at the disposal of its Executive for its annual fete and other such events. Such courtesies were appreciated.

Thus, the circle of hospital ‘activists’ broadened, rather than narrowed, during the inter-war period, stretching out into the community in ways in which it previously had not. Raising money through entertainments and so on was of course not new in Nottingham or elsewhere. But in terms of scale and continual engagement the inter-war period witnessed new levels of enterprise, through whist drives, carnivals, fetes, rag days, eggs collections, and other fundraising novelties. At a time when the city's hospitals were treating more patients and from a broader social base, raising money, in pennies or pounds, brought the classes together through common cause. As one working-class delegate remarked: “helping to maintain” the hospital buildings provided “so generously” by benefactors offered a “working testimony of their indebtedness”. If relationships were never equal, socially or numerically, then at least they were wrapped in a core of shared beliefs and objectives which spread beyond those individuals immediately concerned – the activists from all classes who gave generously of their time – out into the broader community. If contemporaries tell us that they valued such things, then who are we to disbelieve them? 📖

Dr Nick Hayes  
Editor East Midlands History and Heritage

Fig 1. Composition of Nottingham General Hospital Executive Board of Management by Social Class 1900-1950



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John Bittiner and David Lowe, *Nottingham General Hospital: Personal Reflections* (Nottingham, 1990). University of Sussex, Mass-Observation File 2507, 'The Voluntary Social Services', August 1947.  
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All hospital records are located at the Nottingham University Manuscripts Department



# Best Foot Forward: The Early Years of Women's Football

BY ELAINE JOHNSON M.A.

In December 1921 the *Lincolnshire Echo* carried the following headline: “GIRL FOOTBALLERS WARNED OFF – ALL F.A. ENCLOSURES.” The ban did not prevent teams of girls playing where they had grounds of their own, but no matches were permitted in the grounds of clubs affiliated to the Football Association. It would be fifty years before the ban was lifted in 1971. Yet women's football went from being an object of ridicule and derision in the late nineteenth-century to a popular, fund-raising entertainment during World War I, and then back again to disapproval and censure. This was captured throughout by the East Midlands regional press.



DERBY TEAM 1917



FIFA W2 EARLY FEMALE KIT

As early as May, 1881, the *Nottingham Evening Post* condemned a match in Edinburgh between teams of ladies representing England and Scotland as “a most unfeminine exhibition”. Yet not all the coverage of the match was condemnatory. According to *The Scotsman*, the young women were believed to “have formed themselves into an association for the purpose of popularising football as a feminine pastime”. The players' dress was described “as essentially similar to that worn by male football players, consisting of jersey, knickerbockers, stockings, boots, and ‘cowl,’ with a sash descending from the waist”. The teams comprised “well built, athletic-looking girls, [who] looked exceedingly picturesque in their bright and tastefully arranged costumes.” There was praise for their enthusiasm and their adherence to Association rules, but *The Scotsman* also noted that many of the 2000, mainly male, spectators criticised the play, appearance and behaviour of the women with “sarcastic, personal remarks and loud guffaws.”

Two weeks later, the *Nottingham Journal* reported a match in Blackburn where the spectators “were much amused by this novel contest” and the female footballers “did not play well in combination, each striving to kick the ball when the opportunity was afforded, but sometimes doing so without regard to the result of the kick.”

**Further Reading:** Andrew J. H. Jackson et al, ‘Provincial Newspapers, Sports Reporting and the Origins, Rise and Fall of Women's Football: Lincolnshire, 1880s-1940s’, *Midland History*, Vol. 45:2, (2020), pp.244-257.

A pitch invasion by some spectators in protest at a Good Friday match in Hull in 1887, prompted correspondence of both condemnation and support in the *Hull Daily Mail* letters' column. For some, football was “a noble, exhilarating and manly sport” but one which would “assume a ridiculous aspect ... and bring it into disrepute” if women continued to play. Others condemned “the distinctly disgraceful scene” and creation “of a dangerous hullabaloo” and saw nothing wrong with the customary serenity of the ladies' play and pointed out that as far as their dress was concerned, “the costumes were sans reproche.”

## a noble, exhilarating and manly sport

The founding of the British Ladies Football Club in February, 1895 was widely reported in the provincial papers. This prompted the *Derby Mercury* to quote the *British Medical Journal*, to express disapproval:

*“Many of the sudden jerks and twists involved in the game are exactly such as are known to cause serious internal displacements ... injury which may be produced in the inner mechanism of the female frame ... [and] injury to the breasts.”*

In December 1895, the British Ladies Football Club came to Nottingham and played a match on the Trent Bridge ground. “Eighteen girls ... ranged themselves on the field as ‘Reds’ and ‘Blues.’” The *Nottingham Evening Post* saw the game as innocent amusement for the 2000 spectators, who mingled laughter with admiration when “the play was real.” It is perhaps significant that the reporter could not remember which team won; indiscriminate praise from the spectators was held to blame.

Taunts and mockery notwithstanding, lady footballers continued playing across the region. A match was held in Loughborough in October, 1895; another match in Derby in November, costing 6d admission. A reported gate money of £30 indicates more than 1000 spectators attended. The match at Sincil Bank, Lincoln, in March, 1896, was billed as “THE GREAT SENSATIONAL EVENT OF THE SEASON” and promised “PRETTY LADIES! CHARMING COSTUMES! A MARVELLOUS ATTRACTION!” A record crowd was predicted but the subsequent match report declared that whilst four of the 16 ladies “could play football a little, the others couldn't hardly kick the ball for nuts.” The crowd got fun, not football. If they had expected a scientific game, they forgot “that ladies are not built that way”.

Nonetheless, the ladies were able to persevere, partly because such matches were perceived as novelty as much as sports events. There are several reports of ladies 'football races' at village events and matches between men and 'ladies', i.e., men in drag. The *Derbyshire Advertiser and Herald* even advertised “Ray's Football Skating Girls” who would be playing “their novel and sensational football match on skates” at the Palace Theatre, September, 1913.

As the men went to war in 1914, so the women went into the factories. There, they not only did

the men's work, but were also actively encouraged in sporting activities by government-appointed female welfare supervisors. Football became the official sport of the 'munitionettes' and almost every factory across the country involved in war work had a team. The games raised thousands of pounds for war funds across the region. In 1917, the Girls' Football Team of Derby, who had raised £170 for local war charities, issued a challenge to women in Lincoln:

*“... the Girls' Football Team of Derby [want] to come to Lincoln and play a team of Lincoln Girls. [...] All the girls are employed in munition works and it should not be impossible to find a team here to meet them. [...] What Derby can do Lincoln should be able to. Who will help? The sooner offers are made the sooner the matter can be settled.”*

An enthusiastic response saw the Lincoln team, “making their very first appearance in competitive football” beating Derby who, according to the *Lincolnshire Echo*, “ought to have won easily”. The patronising *Lincoln Chronicle* report “expected to see a travesty of the game and to witness some side-splitting episodes” but “remained to cheer” and admit that “no praise can be too great for these plucky ladies.”

Only four weeks later, the *Lincolnshire Echo* reported “a business-like air” in the girls from Ruston's Aircraft playing a team from Robey's and challenged “anybody to find anything indecorous in the exhibition of athletics which was seen on the field on Saturday.”

Although the munitions teams were disbanded after the war, women went on playing. The matches raised hundreds of pounds for local charities, but, setting this aside, female players

were still subjected to criticism for transgressing gender norms; that is, for being unwomanly. An article in the *Echo*, July, 1919, noted that “the woman who plays in a football team [...] is apt to develop a hard, determined expression in the face ...”. A Catholic priest in Nottingham “deprecated lady footballers appearing in public in knickers.”

And in December, 1921, the Football Association issued the following statement:

*“The game of football is quite unsuitable for women and ought not to be encouraged: that an extensive proportion of the receipts is absorbed in expenses and an inadequate percentage devoted to charitable objects. For these reasons the Council request clubs belonging to the Association to refuse the use of their grounds for such matches.”*

The *Leicester Chronicle* concurred: “The majority of people will agree with that verdict. ... on medical grounds alone, the robust game of football should be avoided by sensible women.” The *Nottingham Journal* headline suggested that there was “Strong Support for Action of Football Association.” It can only be concluded that women's football, at the time and despite its temporary wartime success, was viewed by the football authorities not as sport but only ever as light entertainment.

Medical opinion was divided. Dr. Mary Scharlieb, the Harley-street physician, said: “I consider it a most unsuitable game, too much for a woman's physical frame.” Conversely, Dr Mary Lowry, Medical Officer of Health for Preston, saw nothing physically harmful to girls in football. As she forcefully pointed out, there was less danger than in hockey, and certainly no more than in tennis.

Resistance to the ruling came to nothing. Press reports confirm that where independent sports' grounds were available, teams continued playing. World War II saw factory teams established once again and, after the war, the *Daily Mirror* forecast that women of Britain were all set for a significant football revival in peacetime. However, this did not happen. It was not until 1969 that the Women's Football Association was formed with 44 clubs, followed by the eventual lifting of the 1921 F.A. ban in 1971. Today, 31 teams play across three divisions in the East Midlands Women's Regional Football League. Their success is proof that ladies can indeed play football as well as men. 🏈

**Elaine Johnson M.A.**  
**Bishop Grosseteste University**

Grateful thanks to the National Football Museum, Manchester, for permission to reproduce historic illustrations from their collection.

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# Welton at War: Front Line Not Home Front

BY SIMON BROMILEY

At around 0130 hours on 4th March 1945, a German JU88 night fighter which had followed British bomber planes home from raids on Germany attacked a Lancaster bomber (NG502) which crashed near the Lincolnshire village of Langworth killing two of its crew. A short while later, a dedicated Royal Observer Core (ROC) observer, Jack Kelway, a married father of three children, was making his way to his post at Hackthorn to complete a night shift. As he drove along Hackthorn Road in the village of Welton, the same JU88 night fighter strafed his car killing him instantly. Misjudging its relative height, the night fighter itself then crashed into an adjacent field killing all on board.

This tragic event, occurring so close to the end of the war, was illustrative of the risks both civilians and military personnel faced in a locale that had been thrust into the front line of the Second World War. This experience of total war transformed the communities of Welton and Dunholme from quiet rural villages to militarised environments, challenging cosy stereotypes of the home front.



AVRO LANCASTER OF 44 SQUADRON RUNNING UP ITS ENGINES IN A DISPERSAL AT DUNHOLME LODGE BEFORE NIGHT RAID TO BERLIN JANUARY 1944 (PUBLIC DOMAIN WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

## Welton at War: A Changing Landscape

Before the Second World War, the small rural parishes of Welton and Dunholme, situated four miles north-east of Lincoln, were relatively innocuous Lincolnshire villages existing in a pre-industrial rhythm of life, much like other agricultural villages in the county. However, during wartime their location, being sandwiched between RAF Scampton and RAF Dunholme Lodge, was to transform this locale into a militarised space which increased the risk to all within their vicinity. These airbases represented two of the forty-six military airfields in the county at the peak of the war, with sixteen of these operating within a ten-mile radius of Lincoln itself, laying the foundations for its bomber county status.

From the late 1930s the rapid pace of airbase construction and adaption became an urgent priority to prosecute the strategic air offensive, with the eastern counties being key locations. Often overlooked in this regard is the amount of labour that was required to work on these sites, estimated to be over 60,000 workers nationally in 1942. RAF Dunholme Lodge was built by constructors George Wimpey while nearby RAF Bardney was constructed by Moss Brothers. Both companies relied upon large numbers of Irish workers who swelled local populations.

The requisitioning of land and the nature of the construction had a dramatic effect locally and was not always welcome. For example, to build RAF Dunholme Lodge a local farm lost half of its land, while at RAF Bardney, a farmer refused to move to an alternative area meaning that the airfield had to be built around his property. This came at a time when farmers were themselves under pressure to increase crop production, adjusting to double summertime, ploughing by night as well as day while utilising an army of land girls who further changed the rural dynamic.

By 1943 RAF Dunholme Lodge and RAF Scampton, along with the surrounding locale, were at the epicentre of events in the European theatre of war. This resulted from a confluence of factors which saw Sir Arthur Harris's vision of saturation bombing, boosted by the mandate from the 1943 Casablanca Conference, align with industrial production levels providing the heavy bombers required to execute this form of total war. To this end, factory workers and aircrew alike were all part of a civil-military continuum that coalesced to industrial rhythms in order to deliver the bomber offensive.

As a consequence, the military and civilian populations within the Welton area were thrown together in a unique relationship where they were vulnerable to both attack and accident. As with other Lincolnshire villages, they were to suffer both.

## Changing Cultures: The Militarisation of Welton & Dunholme

At around 2145 hours on 10th November 1943, a Lancaster (ED812) from the Heavy Conversion Unit at RAF Swinderby on a routine exercise suffered an in-flight fire which resulted in it crashing into the Servant Quarters of the Officers' Mess at RAF Dunholme Lodge. All of the crew were killed and three ground staff suffered severe burns. Responding to the raging fire was Robert Carter, a teenage farm labourer who had joined the Welton Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) at the start of the war. The congestion of the airspace which now characterised Lincolnshire during this period of total war resulted in over 1,000 crashes. The formation of the Welton AFS was one response to this risk and photographs of the time show Carter and the company dressed in smart military-style uniforms standing to attention behind a well-polished chrome-plated fire pump. Similarly, photos of the Welton Home Guard show local men, including Carter's father, parading in the village ready to defend and protect their territory. ▶



Photos top to bottom:

Welton auxiliary firemen with pump c.1943 (Courtesy International Bomber Command Command Digital Archive)

Welton Home Guard c.1943 (Courtesy International Bomber Command Command Digital Archive)

Jack Kelway's Grave

*This came at a time when farmers were themselves under pressure to increase crop production, adjusting to double summertime, ploughing by night as well as day while utilising an army of land girls who further changed the rural dynamic.*

**Further Reading:** Beck, Pip, *A WAAF in Bomber Command* (London: Goodall Publications, 1989). Welton (Lincoln), William Farr School, Extracts from the Operational Record Book (RAF Form 540) of RAF Dunholme Lodge, 1943-1945. Available from <<http://www.williamfarr.lincs.sch.uk/about-us/royal-air-force-heritage/operational-record-books-raf-form-540>> [accessed 01 November 2019]. Hart-Davis, Duff, *Our Land at War: A Portrait of Rural Britain 1939-45* (London: William Collins, 2015). Rose, Sonya O., *Which People's War: Citizenship and Identity in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)



The absence of women in these pseudo-military units is noticeable yet ironic given the fact that Welton and Dunholme had a sizable presence of uniformed women from the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) whose dining hall and community centre was at one stage situated in the heart of Welton on the site of the current village hall.

In this context, there developed a distinct blurring of the civil and military spaces though these cultures remained mutually focused on the core war aim. This determination facilitated local cooperation. For example, during the 'Salute the Soldier' campaign in July 1944, officers from RAF Dunholme Lodge were co-opted onto the Welton Village Fundraising Committee, while a parade was also held involving a flight of 40 WAAFs marching through Welton and Dunholme to celebrate the campaign.

### Changing Relationships

The air force occupation had other social impacts on life. On Easter Saturday in April 1944, Squadron Leader Day of the Royal Australian Air Force and Section Officer Blake of the WAAF Section at RAF Dunholme Lodge were married in Welton Parish Church, with members of the WAAF Section forming a guard of honour - a moment of joy for a couple whose personal future, like so many other service personnel, was uncertain. For some, the war compressed time forcing them to prioritise marriage in case there was no tomorrow. For others such as Vera Willis, a WAAF driver who met her future husband at RAF Dunholme Lodge, marriage was something that would have to wait until after the war.

A cultural consequence of total war was the erosion of pre-war courtship habits as men and women were thrown together in civil and military spaces. The Welton locale was no different, whether it was at a local dance in the village or huddling in a shelter to prepare for a 'red' air attack, men and women, civilian and military, native and foreigner experienced total war together.

In her memoirs, Pip Beck, a WAAF based mainly at RAF Waddington, describes a complicated personal life where she was heartbroken when discovering that her fiancé, a Rhodesian pilot from 44 Squadron, was married back home. This didn't stop Beck from making the most of her wartime opportunities to socialise, whether at dances, evening classes or with the choral society that she belonged to.

One activity Beck and many other service personnel enjoyed during their time in Lincolnshire was cycling, which became an important activity where restrictions on petrol brought out a new army of cyclists. Equally, cycling opened up the roads and surrounding countryside for men and women to socialise beyond the airbase and engage with locals. There was such a demand for cycling at RAF Dunholme Lodge that a Cycling Club was formed to facilitate Sunday outings. For Pip Beck and her friends cycling meant exploring local churches and appreciating the Lincolnshire wildlife and landscape while for Vera Willis, it meant being



THE CREW OF LANCASTER "C FOR CHARLIE" OF MEMBERS OF NO 44 SQUADRON TRYING TO WARM THEMSELVES IN THEIR NISSEN HUT QUARTERS AT DUNHOLME LODGE, AFTER RETURNING FROM A RAID ON STUTTGART, 2 MARCH 1944 (PUBLIC DOMAIN WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

*The Welton locale was no different, whether it was at a local dance in the village or huddling in a shelter to prepare for a 'red' air attack, men and women, civilian and military, native and foreigner experienced total war together.*

able to visit a nearby farm where she was allowed to exercise a horse on behalf of a time-pressed farmer. Cycling could, therefore, facilitate time alone, or time to be shared, providing privacy and community in equal measure.

### The Myth of the Home Front

On 21st March 1945, an eighteen-year old WAAF cleric named Kathleen Waters, who had been lodging with Bob Carter's family at their farmhouse in Welton, was reunited with her wartime husband, Frank Waters, a Flight Sergeant who was shot down and captured following a bombing mission operating from RAF Dunholme Lodge. A few months later their colleagues and local villagers celebrated Victory in Europe Day with a dance and whist drive at RAF Dunholme Lodge during an evening described as 'wild and woolly.' Within the shadows of these celebrations was the knowledge

that inside this locale, civilians and military personnel had flexed to meet the demands of total war. In doing so the distinction between civil and military had been blurred affecting every aspect of life including the landscape they occupied, the cultures that changed and the relationships people formed. By looking at the experience of war on the Welton area we can see that the village was less a cosy home front but rather an active component of the front line, where people shared the risks within a spatial and temporal relationship that produced diverse fortunes for those involved. Sadly, no-one knew this more than Jack Kelway's widow. 📖

**Simon Bromiley**  
Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln.

# The *Silk Road* to Success:

## The Windley Family of Nottingham

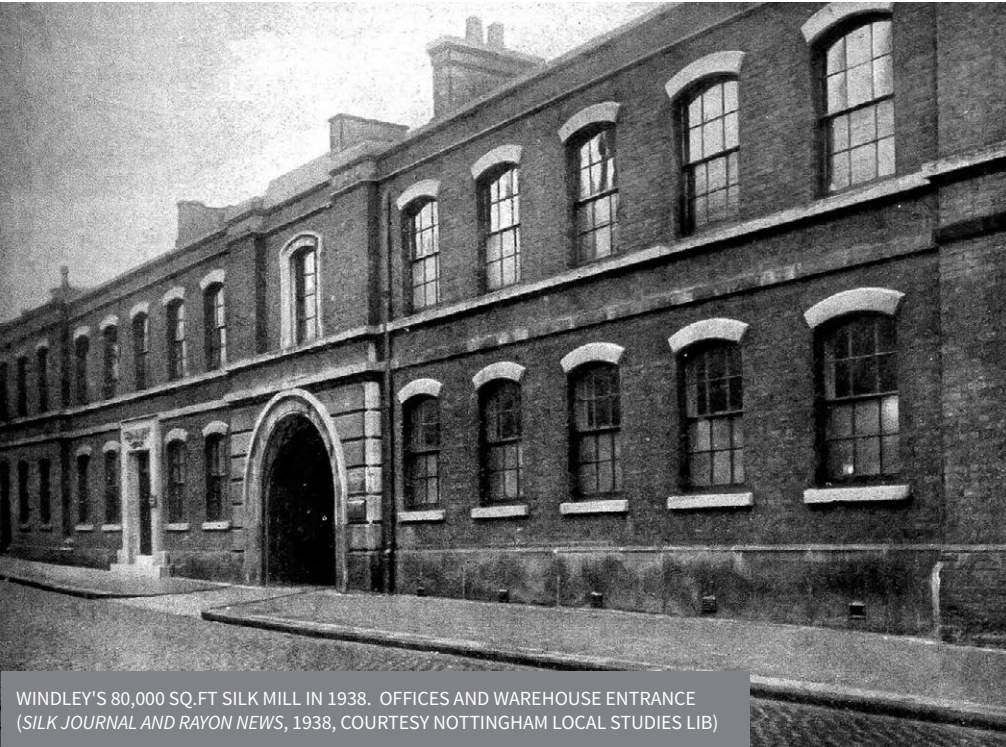
BY MARTIN GORMAN

It was not uncommon in the 19th Century for successful businessmen to take a benevolent interest in their communities. Many were philanthropic and often, like the Boots, Birkins, Players or Adams's in Nottingham, bequeathed substantial buildings which have taken on a new lease of life as old industries disappeared. The Windleys are not as well known as these other figures, but, they had distinguished careers in business, the church, the army, the Colonial Service and in medicine and made a lasting impression on the city. The key figure was William Windley (1822-1877). His business was silk manufacture and his company survived from the 1840s until the end of the 1970s.

Silk making was not central to Nottingham in its own right but, nonetheless, it had a long history and provided a vital raw material, both for hosiery and for lace, which became the town's staple industries. Deering's *History of Nottingham* (1751) states there were 2 master silk weavers in 1641 and that pure silk stockings had been made on the Reverend Lee's stocking frames, a Nottingham invention, from 1598. Interestingly, the first pair of cotton stockings manufactured in England were made in 1730 on Bellar Gate, using a 20-gauge silk frame.

The parish records of St Mary's mention the death of Samuel Fellowes in 1765, whose family had been making silk for 70 years in the Broad Marsh area. The funeral pall bearers wore silk scarves. There are records of silk gloves being made in Nottingham in the mid 18th Century. A local man, a Mr Hammond, is credited with the invention of machine-made lace in 1769 when he made net for women's caps using borrowed silk thread. In 1788, Abel Smith, the newly-elected MP for Nottingham, was paraded around the town in a chair draped with newly-invented white silk lace. By the start of the 19th Century, therefore, silk had an established position in the Nottingham textile industry. In 1853 White's Directory listed 13 silk merchants and "throwsters", as manufacturers were called.

William Windley was one of them, partnered with a Mr Walsh. They had a mill on Currant Street



WINDLEY'S 80,000 SQ.FT SILK MILL IN 1938. OFFICES AND WAREHOUSE ENTRANCE (SILK JOURNAL AND RAYON NEWS, 1938, COURTESY NOTTINGHAM LOCAL STUDIES LIB)

in the Broad Marsh in 1844. Shortly after, he moved into a purpose-built silk mill on Robin Hood Street in Sneinton. Here, he was partnered by Edwin Barwick and it was in these premises that the business lasted until their demolition in 1978.

William was so successful that he expanded his premises in 1869, sub-letting to garment manufacturers such as William Bancroft, who started by making aprons before concentrating on blouses and whose firm just outlasted the silk mill. The mill extension was purchased by Bancroft and survives as flats. Windley also diversified into property and housing development, building smart villas near the Arboretum, and investing in speculative land releases in Mapperley Park.

William was the only child of Thomas and Jane Windley. Thomas (1798-1862) was the successful owner of a dye works on Finkhill Street, now ▶



WILLIAM WINDLEY (COURTESY OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH, NOTTINGHAM)



underneath Maid Marian Way. Dyers were a vital auxiliary to Nottingham's textile trade and produced as many as seventy shades of silk for stockings. His obituary in the *Nottingham Journal* of 29 August 1862 gives us a clue as to how his son might have entered the silk business:

*"The reputation of Mr Windley's dyeing establishment was not confined to Nottingham but extended throughout the Midland counties. The deceased gentleman was also connected to the silk trade and, by sedulous attention to business and enlightened energy in all he undertook, he amassed a large fortune."*

Thomas used his wealth to climb the housing ladder, first moving from next door to his dye works to St James Terrace, near Nottingham Castle, becoming a neighbour of T C Hine, the architect. It was Hine who designed his next house, on Park Valley, on the Duke of Newcastle's Park Estate. In all probability he also helped his son set up as a silk throwster in the fast-expanding market of the 1840s and 1850s. William kept up the connection with T C Hine. A few years after marrying Elisabeth Wilson, the daughter of a vicar, in 1849, he bought land from Hine and his brother, John, in Alexandra Park. On it, Hine built him a fine house, Fernleigh, where he lived until his death in 1877.

In the 1860s, William was a JP, well established and employing 335 workers, three times the number in his father's dye works. To commemorate his father's death in 1862 he founded a large church on land released by the Nottingham Enclosure Act of 1845. Commissioning a design from T C Hine, he invested close to £3m in today's money in building All Saints, near the Arboretum, completed in 1864. In addition, the money covered the cost of an 11-bedroom vicarage, Nottingham's largest, and school rooms, all of which are still standing.

According to his obituary of 27 July 1877, William Windley was the most generous patron of the Church of England that Nottingham had ever known:

*"His public benevolence was almost unlimited. His private benevolence was greater still and will probably remain forever unknown, on account of the unostentatious way it was carried out. Closely identified with the Refuge for Fallen Women, the Church Missionary Society and the YMCA, his first great undertaking was the building and endowment of the beautiful church of All Saints, which cost him upwards of £30,000, with schools, parsonage and endowments. He also helped found St Ann's, St Luke's, St Andrew's, St Thomas's and St Philip's."*

William's family inherited his devotion to public service and religious duty. Thomas Wilson Windley (1850-1920), the eldest of six sons and one daughter, entered the church from Repton School, where all the boys went, and Cambridge. He was a missionary in Burma for 8 years, later working between 1898 and 1902 as Organising Secretary in Southwell Diocese for the Society for

**"The reputation of Mr Windley's dyeing establishment was not confined to Nottingham but extended throughout the Midland counties. The deceased gentleman was also connected to the silk trade and, by sedulous attention to business and enlightened energy in all he undertook, he amassed a large fortune."**



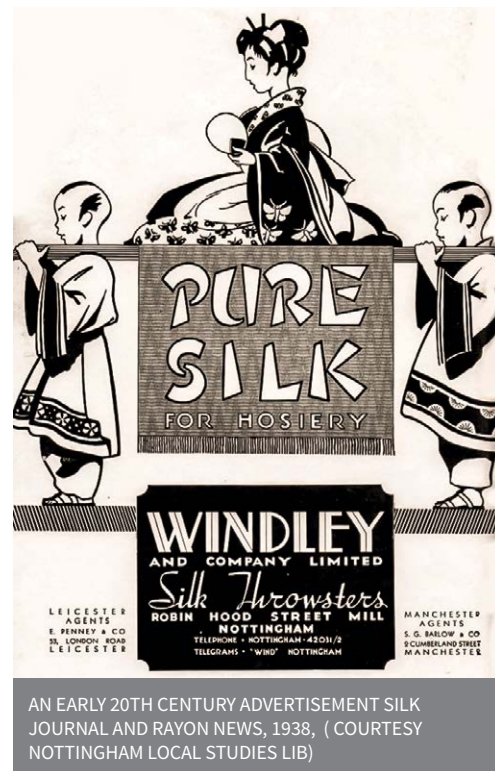
FERNLEIGH, BUILT IN 1857, AND NOW THE NOTTINGHAM HOSPICE

the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Prior to that he was vicar of St Stephen's in Sneinton and rector of Thorpe in Derbyshire, before ending his career as vicar of his father's church between 1902 and 1912.

The family business interests devolved to the second son, John William (1852-1929). One of his first priorities as executor of his father's estate was the sale of William's speculative land holdings, selling blocks in and around the Mapperley Hall Estate as middle-class housing started to spread northwards, away from the city centre.

On the retirement of Edwin Barwick in the late 1880s he renamed the business Windley and Co and guided it into the 20th Century. He re-equipped the mill and appointed as directors H B and H E Cottee, who stayed half a century. The company acquired a fine reputation, providing the silk in 1951 for socks knitted in Sutton in Ashfield for the infant Prince Charles.

In the early years raw silk from Italy was used. Later supplies were from India, China and Japan, exotic locations glamorised in the company's adverts. In 1914 their products were described as: "silk raws, trams, organzines and sewings in China,



AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY ADVERTISEMENT SILK JOURNAL AND RAYON NEWS, 1938, (COURTESY NOTTINGHAM LOCAL STUDIES LIB)

*Japan, Italian and Bengal silk for lace, hosiery and glove fabrics."* (Organzine is a fine, hard twisted silk used as a warp and trams, having less twist, were used as the weft in silk fabrics). Windley and Co were fully integrated, washing and drying the raw silk, spinning, twisting and coning the thread. Partly in response to the exigencies of the Second World War, when they lost a consignment of raw silk through U-boat action, the company turned to using artificial fibres.

John William's distinctive claim to fame is perhaps his remarkably lengthy involvement with the Nottingham Subscription Library, now the Bromley House Library, founded in 1816. He was a member for 57 years, a director for 35 and president for seven, during most of the First World War. One of his actions in this period was to adjudicate on the controversial purchase by the library of Hall Caine's, *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*, a novel which caused outrage on its release for its handling of adultery, illegitimacy and divorce. His response was to make the president the arbiter of taste for future purchases of books of a possibly "unsuitable character". The responsibility was shared with the book committee but has, no doubt, now lapsed!

He was also actively involved in the management of the city's Dispensary and the Nottingham and Notts Convalescent Homes, which had large respite houses in Castle Donington and Skegness. In 1923 he purchased surplus novels from the Subscription Library to send to the home in Skegness. His obituary of 19 June 1929 emphasised both his committee work for the

Church, including the Diocesan Board of Finance, and his services to Freemasonry, for which he was president of a number of Lodges.

The third son, William junior, (1859-1931) studied medicine in St Thomas's Hospital in London and practised in Glasgow Maternity Hospital. Returning to Nottingham in 1887 he became the captain of the Boys Brigade at St Andrew's church, one of the first outside of Glasgow, where it was started in 1883. From 1889 he was a country doctor in the Nottinghamshire village of Colston Bassett, where he stayed for 35 years. While there, convinced of the health-giving benefits of cheese, he founded the Colston Bassett dairy, organising the raising of capital. The company still acknowledges a debt to him on their website.

Edward Crosland Windley (1863-1919), the first of William's three sons with his second wife, Frances Crosland (his first wife having died in 1860) joined the army after Sandhurst. He had a distinguished career and was mentioned in dispatches in 1896 for conspicuous gallantry during the Second Matabele War. The incident which led to this honour was written up graphically by the big game hunter and member of the Bulawayo Relief Force, Frederick Courtenay Selous, whose life Edward saved while under fire and being chased. Selous was in no doubt that, but for the cool courage of Captain Windley, he would have been killed:

*"the personal gallantry he has always shown on the present campaign as a leader of our native allies has earned for him such respect and admiration that they have nicknamed him Inkunzi, the bull, the symbol of strength and courage."*

**"the personal gallantry he has always shown on the present campaign as a leader of our native allies has earned for him such respect and admiration that they have nicknamed him Inkunzi, the bull, the symbol of strength and courage."**

Edward was injured in the campaign. He later served in the Boer War as a dispatch rider, being recommended for a VC. He married Florence, Vicomtesse de Toustain and settled in Southern Rhodesia, where they had a son, Edward Henry, in 1909.

On Edward Crosland's death in 1919, his son was sent to Nottingham to live with his uncle, John William, in Mapperley. He went, of course, to Repton School and later St Catherine's College, Cambridge. He had a distinguished career in the Colonial Service, mainly in Kenya, ending up as Governor of The Gambia. While he was a Commissioner in Kenya, he was on duty in February 1952, attending Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip at the Tree Tops Lodge, where they had gone to watch wild animals at night. It fell to him to inform the Princess that her father, King George VI, had died and that she was now Queen.

Edward Henry Windley was knighted KCMG in 1958 and became KCVO three years later. He devoted part of his time to the administration of the Order of St Michael and St George and, on the centenary of the school that his grandfather had built in Nottingham, known by then as The Windley School (in a T C Hine building of 1872), he donated prizes of £6 for the best boy and girl pupils. He retired to Australia, where he tragically died in a flying accident in 1972, being piloted by his son.

William Windley's two youngest sons both became priests, Frank (1865-1938) in Derbyshire and Wiltshire and Henry (1870-1925) in Gateshead. Henry had a second string to his bow, however, and gave up the ministry to practise as an architect in Cirencester. There is less publicly available material about their lives than their brothers', which is true also of Jane (1854 – 1921). We do know, however, that she married an Anglican priest, Henry Lonsdale, who was curate of St Ann's in Nottingham between 1875 and 1881, when they lived on Woodborough Road. They later settled in Cumbria, where Henry was attached to Carlisle Cathedral, and on Tyneside, before retiring to County Durham. In a curious circle of fate, their son, William Henry McKenzie Lonsdale, became vicar of All Saints in Nottingham, between 1923 and 1928, before a stint as a missionary in India on the Mysore goldfields. Grandfather William and Uncle Thomas would have been proud. 🐂

**Martin Gorman  
Mapperly and Sherwood History Group**

Thanks are due to the staff of Bromley House Library, Angel Row, Nottingham, where the biography of Frederick Courtenay Selous by J B Millais is available. Thanks also go to the Nottingham Local Studies Library, Nottinghamshire Archives and Nottinghamshire Hospice, Woodborough Road, Nottingham. I should like to record my appreciation for help given by the late Rev. Paul Watts, who introduced me to the history of All Saints, where he was vicar between 1980 and 1985.

**Further Reading:** Sir Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom* (London, 1921)

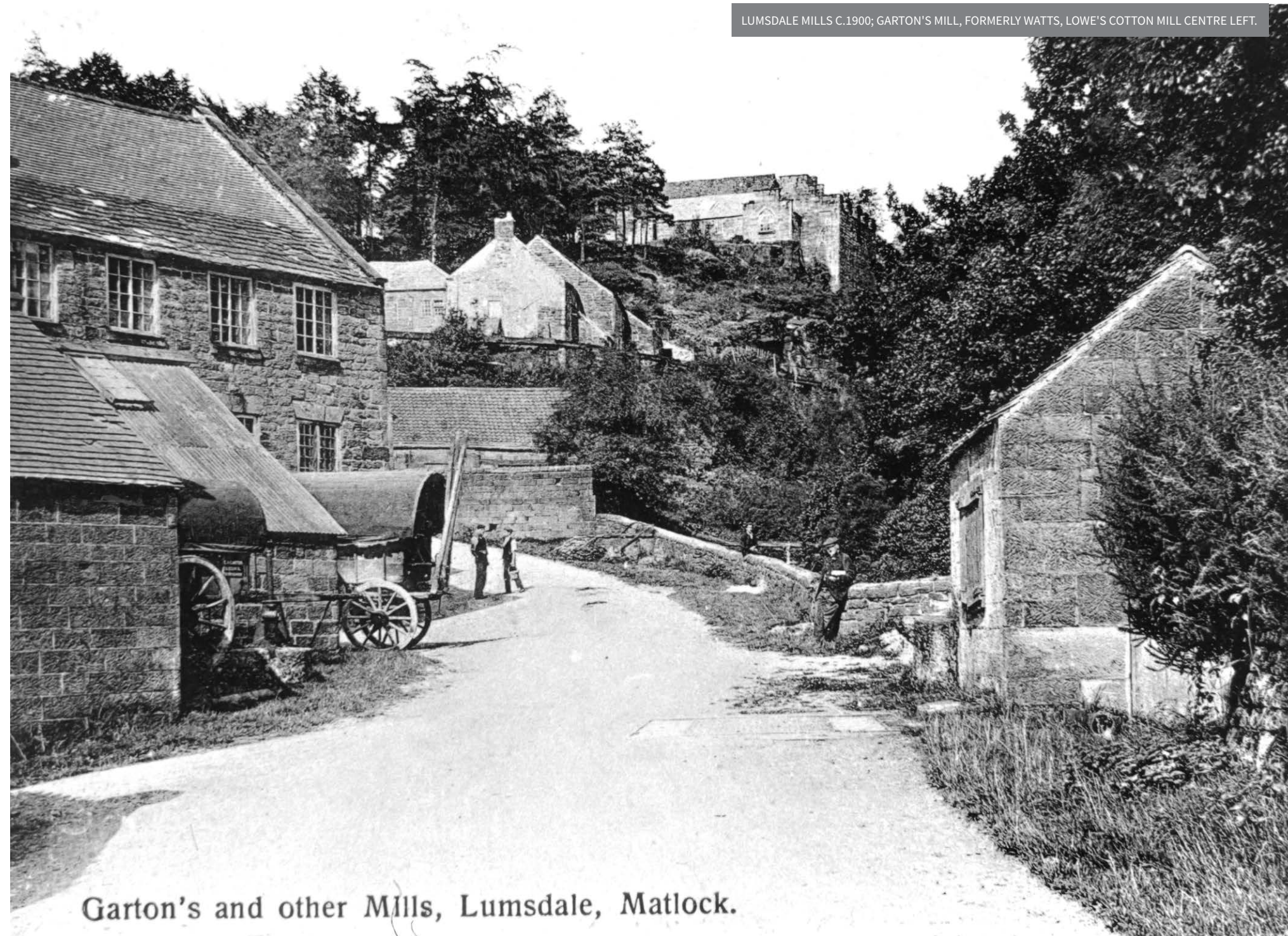


BY CHRISTINE AND ALAN PIPER

# Learning from Lumsdale

## The Industrial Revolution in a Derbyshire Valley

Lumsdale is a small valley on the outskirts of Matlock in Derbyshire. It is no longer a hidden valley – the internet, photos from mobile phones and a free publication with a feature on the “5 Hidden Gems” of Derbyshire, with the Lumsdale Valley as the first gem – put paid to that. The valley has a waterfall which, before the pandemic, could draw a thousand visitors on a sunny weekend. Yet what most visitors do not know is how important the valley once was - and still is - to historians. Not only was it a significant site during the industrial revolution but its history provides insights into the reasons why this valley and, indeed, this country were at the forefront of the industrial revolution. For that reason, the valley and its industrial mill ruins are a scheduled monument and also in a conservation area.



LUMSDALE MILLS C.1900; GARTON'S MILL, FORMERLY WATTS, LOWE'S COTTON MILL CENTRE LEFT.

Garton's and other Mills, Lumsdale, Matlock.

The valley has a long history of industrialisation from lead smelting and wool fulling in the 17th and 18th centuries, then mineral grinding, cotton spinning and bleaching until its decline in the 1920s. One important issue throughout was, of course, water power: it has always been accepted that the proximity of natural resources and water were vital to the industrialisation process. The Bentley Brook, which powered all these industries, has never been known to dry up, has a steep fall through the gorge and was able to sustain three holding ponds to conserve water and allow for continuous working.

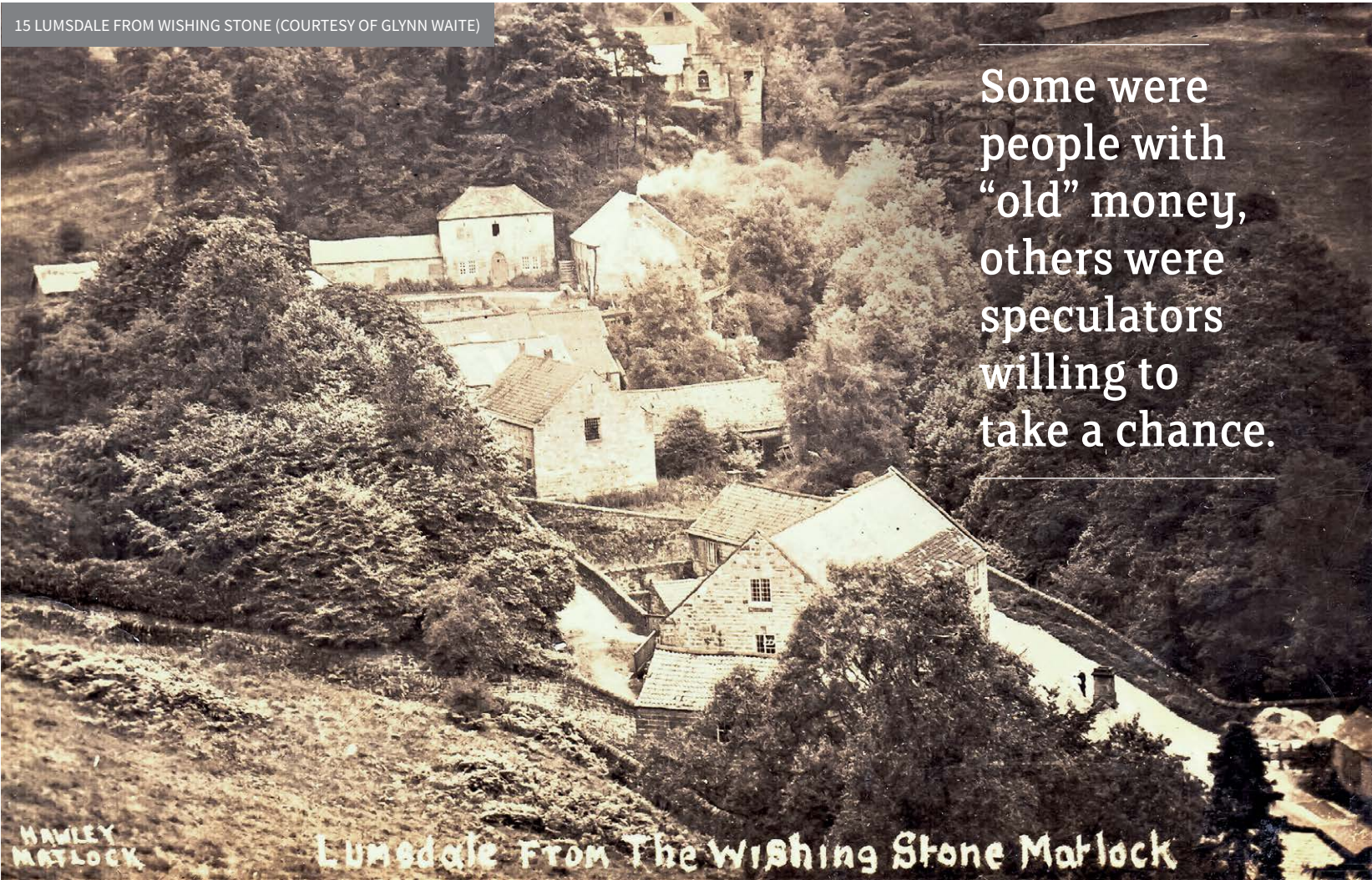
Terje Tvedt, in an article entitled “Why England and not China and India?” argues that the technology of water power was more advanced in this country because, historically, “*habits of thought were geared not towards river control and flood defence but toward mills and locks, and had been so for centuries*”. In Lumsdale the Bowns and their relatives, with their fulling and corn grinding, and the Wolleys, Whitfields and others, with their lead smelting, had been harnessing and developing the power of water over centuries. During the industrial revolution Watts, Lowe & Co., the Gartons and the Farnsworths built on that knowledge for their spinning and bleaching works.

The period 1750-1820/1830 is generally viewed as the early or first industrial revolution, although many academics have queried the ‘revolutionary’ importance of that time period and instead see industrialisation more as an evolutionary process. Certainly, the industrial development of the Lumsdale valley suggests that the earlier technical developments in water power, fulling and lead smelting were vital precursors for later developments. And in Lumsdale the lead smelters were among the first to use new methods.

Lead had been smelted using the ore hearth method on two sites since the 1580s or 1590s, ▶



15 LUMSDALE FROM WISHING STONE (COURTESY OF GLYNN WAITE)



Some were people with “old” money, others were speculators willing to take a chance.

**Further reading:** Fitton R.S and Wadsworth, A.P. *The Strutts and the Arkwrights* (Matlock, 2012), first published 1958 by Manchester University Press. Tvedt, T. ‘Why England and not China and India? Water systems and the history of the Industrial Revolution’ *Journal of Global History* vol 5(1) (2010): 29-50. Willies, L. ‘Cupola lead smelting sites in Derbyshire 1737-1900’ *Bull. PDMHS* vol 4(1) (1969) 97-115.

whilst Lynn Willies notes that the reverberatory furnace or cupola, introduced in 1749, was one of the first five in Derbyshire.

The next major stage of Lumsdale’s industrialisation was the result of a desire by entrepreneurs to cash in as soon as possible on the success of Arkwright’s cotton spinning inventions. Matlock is only a couple of miles from Cromford where, in 1771, Richard Arkwright built his first water-powered factory using a series of mechanised processes to change raw cotton into spun thread. By 1782, competitors were anticipating the expiry of his spinning patent in July 1783 and considered themselves safe from prosecution under the carding patent. As Thomas Walsham noted in a letter dated 1786 to Arkwright’s partner, Jedediah Strutt: “as from the loss of the [i.e. Arkwright’s] *Roving Patent in 1781 all the country became Spinners as soon as ever they cou’d get machinery*”. At that point a group of men got together to exploit the power of the Bentley Brook to spin cotton. They built their own mill in Lumsdale, trading under the name of Watts, Lowe & Co. Their factory was three storeys high - not as high as Arkwright’s first mill at Cromford although the same width - but still impressive for the time. It utilised well-established water systems to power Arkwright’s water frame and carding machines.

Our research into the Watts, Lowe & Co. consortium demonstrates how crucial it was that people had access to money and were prepared to finance new, and therefore speculative, ventures. Historians of the industrial revolution frequently focus on the technology: that manufacture required sophisticated water management systems, access to raw materials and new inventions to boost higher productivity. However, investment was also key, especially at a time when banking services were still developing. The Charter establishing the Bank of England had been renewed in 1708 but prohibited the issuing of notes by any group of more than six people. However, the primary

sources reveal that Lumsdale attracted a network of people who had money to invest and who knew people with relevant technical skills. Some were people with “old” money, others were speculators willing to take a chance. So how did this network emerge to establish a factory which was in practice in competition with Arkwright’s mills?

A deed dated 1 January 1783 in the Arkwright Society archive records the purchase by the Watts, Lowe consortium of a water powered corn mill, formerly a walk or fulling mill, an acre of ground and other mills and buildings, together with rights over the watercourses. This deed lists the names and a brief description of the 15 members of the consortium, including the brothers Job and William Watts, and Thomas Lowe, who gave their names to the firm. The names are reproduced below in the order they are named on the deed:

Job Watts of the City of Bristol, Hosier; Wintour Harris of the same place, Gentleman; William Watts of the same place, Hosier; William Green of the same place, Linen Draper; George Ewbank of the City of London, Silkman; Thomas Green of Newbury in the County of Berks, Plumber; Samuel Statham of Nottingham, Hosier; Thomas Martin of Nottingham, Hosier; Thomas Else of Sutton in Ashfield in the County of Nottingham, Hosier; William Milnes of Ashover in the County of Derby, Grocer; John Milnes of Ashover, Grocer; Thomas Lowe of Matlock, Cotton Manufacturer; Adam Wolley the younger of Matlock, Gentleman; Jeremiah Cooper of Matlock, Engineer; and Benjamin Latham of Matlock, Cotton Manufacturer.

On the face of it this is a disparate group and you might wonder why four of them came from Bristol. However, there is a connection between the Lowe and Watts families. Thomas Lowe had married Hannah Watts in Matlock in 1778. Lydia, their daughter, was baptised in Matlock in 1781, and Hannah’s brothers included Job and William. It seems from parish records very likely that the two Watts brothers moved to Bristol in the early 1760s. Job Watts married Mary Green in Bristol in 1763 and, according to the *Bath Chronicle*, he died there in March 1792. So William and Thomas Green were likely related to the Watts family through this marriage. Wintour Harris was a solicitor and also from Bristol, where he became Chamberlain (i.e. treasurer) of the City Corporation.

We know nothing about George Ewbank, silk dealer in the City of London, which suggests connections and wealth, and we cannot be certain about Thomas Else of Sutton in Ashfield, although he may well have been employed there by the Unwins. The Mills Index on the Derbyshire Heritage website attributes to Samuel Unwin not only the Tansley Top Mill and Spinning Mill but also Bailey’s Mill on the Bentley Brook, all very close to Lumsdale. We know, however, that eight of the consortium certainly had connections in or near Matlock. William and John Milnes of Ashover, although described as grocers on the deed, were also lead merchants who came from a wealthy family with interests in other mills. Adam Wolley, an attorney and antiquarian who was born in Matlock in 1758, came from a Derbyshire family with homes on Riber and at Allen Hill. Further Adam Wolley and the Milneses already had business

interests in Lumsdale or nearby. We do not know where Benjamin Latham manufactured cotton, but he may have been a Wirksworth man of the same name and Richard Arkwright had opened a cotton mill there (later called Haarlem Mill) in 1780.

So this consortium brought together people with money and skills – many linked by kinship but others not – who set up and ran a relatively large cotton mill. In 1807, however, the remaining members of the Watts, Lowe & Co. consortium decided that cotton spinning was no longer an attractive investment and dissolved their partnership. The economic context had changed dramatically, with economies of scale and access to raw materials becoming more important. Until recently, however, we did not know that there was another cotton mill operating in Lumsdale in 1787 on the site of what we now call the Bone Mill – and that is what it had become by 1821 when it was used for crushing bones. So Lumsdale moved on to cotton bleaching, a business developed most successfully by John Garton, the second husband of Lydia Lowe. This was operated throughout the 19th century by the Gartons, and then by the Farnsworths, until it closed down in 1929. The vastly changed transport and power requirements meant the end of industry in this part of Lumsdale.

We wrote this article before the Arkwright Society, which owns the valley, had to close part of it in May 2020 when the number of visitors crowding into the valley made it unsafe in the context of Covid-19. It partially re-opened in

GARTON'S MILL DERELICT MID-20TH CENTURY



August 2021 but some sections are structurally too unsafe to allow access. If you wish to visit this wonderful place, be aware that parking can be difficult, access is on foot only and there are no facilities, but there are good footpaths to the site from surrounding areas. 📍

**Christine and Alan Piper – Authors of *Lumsdale, The Industrial Revolution in a Derbyshire Valley*, (Chesterfield, 2019).**

**Christine Piper, Emeritus Professor, Brunel University; Alan Piper, retired solicitor.**



# The Sack of Leicester

BY ORESTA MUCKUTE

*In May 1645, King Charles I aimed to regain control of the north of England in the fight against the Parliament during the First Civil War. The Royalist capital, Oxford, was being besieged by Parliamentary forces. In this time of crisis, it was decided to abandon plans in the north of England and instead march to the Parliamentary stronghold of Leicester, in hopes of luring the New Model Army under Sir Thomas Fairfax away from Oxford.*

As well as providing a distraction, the capture of Leicester would have offered many strategic advantages for the Royalist cause: from providing direct links to Royalist towns to creating a stronghold in a largely Parliamentary region of the Midlands. It was also known that Leicester had particularly inadequate defences. Much of the town was not encompassed by fortifications. Lord Grey of Groby, the elected Member of Parliament for Leicester, had ordered repairs, but there were still too few bulwarks, most of which were too far apart to protect the town from Royalist fire. An exploitation of this weakness by a King, who had much to lose, was inevitable.

On the night of 31 May 1645, Charles' army of 10,000 was met by about 700 garrison soldiers, assisted by a small force of 900 armed civilians, aged 16 to 60. The people of Leicester reportedly suffered much robbery, rape, pillage, murder and other wanton destruction at the hands of the King's forces. Sir Edward Walker, a Royalist chronicler of the War, claimed that Royalists "*killed all they found there without distinction*" because the defenders of

To the Right wor.<sup>th</sup> the Mayor of Leicester the  
wor.<sup>th</sup> Aldermen his brethren and the rest of the  
Societie of this Corporacon

The humble petition of William Turner of the said  
Borough of West for Taylor.

Sheweth unto your worships That your petitioner havinge lived for many yeares together in this Corporation and payinge and undergoinge all taxes and impositions whiche have bene anywaies laid upon him both to church and state and poore morsober beinge a fellow sufferer with others in this Towne when it ~~was~~ was stormed by the late Kinges forces havinge ben lost the greatest part of his estate by plunder and also beinge then deprived of one of his sonnes whoe was slain in the defense of this said Towne yett beinge a great peace and comfort to your petitioner in helpeinge him to gett a great part of his livinges.

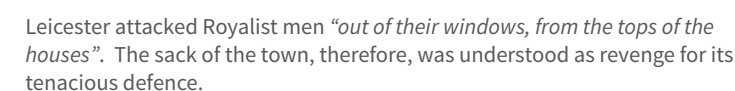
That your petitioner havinge likewise paid unto the Company of Taylors  
in thys said Corporation the Summe of Ten pounds to be admitted to  
vote in the said Trade and likewise payinge unto them his & childrens  
wages duringe your petitioner's continuance, w<sup>ch</sup> he hath bin pay<sup>ing</sup> downe yett <sup>the</sup> said  
and eight p<sup>er</sup>cent for openinge his shop windows, w<sup>ch</sup> notw<sup>th</sup>standinge  
his money soe paid, doth little advantage him, ~~because he~~ <sup>because he</sup> ~~is not~~ <sup>is not</sup>  
admitted to vote in regard he is not a s<sup>er</sup>vant incorporate  
as a freeman into the said Borough.

[illegible]

And give us in Duty bound shall  
 We pray &c.

To Mr. Frank & at your  
Common Hall.

THE PETITION OF WILLIAM SUMMER OF  
LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE, 1653 TO 1655



The scale of violence present in Leicester was unusual in England during the Civil Wars. The parliamentarian scoutmaster Leonard Watson reported that the sack of Leicester was *“(if one may compare a small thing with a great) not much unlike the sack at Magdeburg.”* Magdeburg had lost 20,000 inhabitants when it was sacked by the Army of the Catholic League only fourteen years earlier in May 1631, becoming the most notorious atrocity of the Thirty Years’ War. As Andy Hopper notes, *“whilst the violence at Leicester fell far short of Magdeburg proportions, many of the survivors were ruined by it.”* That Prince Rupert, the King’s German nephew, had directed the assault on Leicester, led credence to parliamentarian notions that foreigners were brutalising the conflict in England.



RUPERT WAS A COMMON FIGURE OF PARLIAMENTARIAN PROPAGANDA, DEPICTED HERE, WITH HIS DOG BOY, PILLAGING THE TOWN OF BIRMINGHAM (PUBLIC DOMAIN WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Ordinary people's voices expressing individual suffering often get lost in the accounts of wars and mass violence, particularly further back in time. Yet certain documentary records are available through the bureaucracies of law and governance. The petitions collected for Leicester are quite unusual because of their origin. Most commonly, petitioners presented their claims to local Justices of the Peace at their counties' quarter sessions. In Leicester, as in some other incorporated towns such as Hereford, it was instead the Mayor and Corporation that was petitioned. In the case of the sack of Leicester, petitions by individuals asking for help in its aftermath can be found within the Borough Hall Papers of Leicester, all of which have been recorded on the Civil War Petitions website, [www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk](http://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk) which contains such evidence for all counties in England and Wales.

Leicester petitioners often spoke of their injuries acquired during the sack. John Pollard claimed he was “*much wounded when [Leicester] was taken*”. John Hall, a carer for his wife for seventeen years, lost “*the use of a part of his right hand*”. Robert Holmes’ petition stated that as a member of the garrison, he “*received many dangerous wounds*”, “*utterly lost the use of one of his arms*”, and had since married a widow of his late fellow garrison soldier, Alice Orton, who needed financial support. All three men desired help in the form of being allowed to be permitted to practice their peace time trades: as tailor, cobbler and blacksmith respectively. These men, it seems, wished to work for their living for as long as they were able to do so. In an incorporated city or town, after a seven-year apprenticeship, men were allowed to become freemen of their chosen trades after paying a substantial amount of money. In most cases, the poor petitioners could not afford these entry fees, even though they had completed their seven-year apprenticeships before the War. ►



The petitioned Mayor and Corporation had the power to substantially decrease these payments to allow men to work, this way helping them to provide for their families without offering direct payments or pensions. Whilst petitions from other counties also emphasise the petitioners' inability to work, the nature of Leicester as a Corporation made requests for jobs rather than money far more common in the surviving documents.

Another man who sought permission to practise a trade was William Summer, who submitted a petition both in the late 1640s and the early 1650s. Although he does not appear to mention his own personal involvement as a garrison soldier or volunteer, he nonetheless identified himself as a "*fellow-sufferer with others in this town*". He recalled his house being pulled down, fruit trees being cut and most of his goods plundered by the enemy. Unsurprisingly, he found himself in poverty as a result of these actions. But he was also a sufferer in other ways. His wife was "*distracted*" by the "*fright*" of the attack on their home. "*Distracted*" was a term often used in the early modern period to describe mental disorder. In his later petition he also recalled the death of his unnamed son, who was "*slain in the defence*" of Leicester. It, therefore,

officials to grant them money anyway, they chose to highlight their knowledge of their entitlement: they wanted a "*weekly allowance as by Ordinance of Parliament is mentioned to be allowed*" to them as war widows.

Even when it came to widows' petitions, few were the same. Although all petitions had standardised introductions in the same way most official documents do nowadays, their main content could vary substantially. The petition of Katherine Palmer, the widow of Abraham Palmer who was taken prisoner at the time of the sack and who died from subsequent illness, did not ask for a pension. Nonetheless, she connected her husband's death to his role in the Civil War and demanded back the money he spent on the acquisition of his licence to practise his trade a couple of months before his illness and death, which put Katherine Palmer into further debt. Her petition was successful. It is quite clear that women's role in the Civil Wars and the broader political nation was recognised by the town corporation of Leicester, in common with authorities in other parts of England.

The suffering induced in Leicester's defence against Royalist forces played


# He recalled his house being pulled down, fruit trees being cut and most of his goods plundered by the enemy.

suggests that Summer's wife might have been "*distracted*" not only by the general events, but by the misfortune of losing a child. Although these tragedies were mentioned in hopes of being granted permission to work as a botcher (a mender of clothes), the psychological effect of the Civil Wars on him and his family is evident.

But there are nonetheless examples in which petitioners asked directly for monetary help. An Ordinance was passed in 1642 in which the Long Parliament acknowledged the responsibility of Ministers of Parliament for providing for maimed soldiers, widows and orphans, which included the provision of pensions for those who were unable to subsist by other means. The fact that the Long Parliament provided relief for war widows as well as ex-servicemen represents a landmark moment in state military welfare history and a shift in the gender-biased discrimination in the provision for the poor in early modern England. Some widows, as well as ex-soldiers, evidently understood their entitlement to financial help.

The joint petition of Frances Stevens and Constance Brewine came from two war widows whose husbands had served in the Leicester garrison. Frances' husband lost his life "*at the taking of Leicester by the King's forces*", and Constance's husband died during unspecified service to the Parliament. They claimed that "*by the reason of the loss of their said husbands*" they had "*fallen into great want and poverty*", having six and two small children respectively. Although their miserable state may have likely persuaded the

an important role in the way Parliamentarians remembered the Civil Wars. This is especially obvious in the trial of Charles I. For Charles I's executioners, Leicester became a useful example for justifying the accusation that the King was guilty of waging war on his own people and causing suffering even after their surrender – after all, as a prosecution witness Humphrey Browne claimed, the King was personally present in the assault's aftermath, and he had urged his soldiers to maim prisoners who had surrendered.

The story of the sack of Leicester may not be as memorable to many as some other Civil War battles. But it is nonetheless a part of the story in the King's overthrowing and execution on 30 January 1649. 

**Oresta Muckute**  
**University of Leicester**

**Further reading:** *Civil War Petitions*, <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/blog>, Glenn Foard, *Naseby: the decisive campaign* (Pryor Publications, 1995). Roy Sherwood, *The Civil War in the Midlands 1642-1651* (Sutton Publishing, 1992).

## A Place of "peace and tranquility": Welford Road Hospital in Northampton.

BY FRED O'DELL



WELFORD ROAD HOSPITAL

In 1899 the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act required all householders and general practitioners to report cases to their local sanitary board. At that time only some quarter of sanitary authorities had provided some form of hospital. The passing of the Act saw a rapid expansion of provision. Bed numbers tripled from 10,800 in 1891 to 32,000 by 1911. Yet many sanitary authorities failed to avail themselves of the powers with which they were invested, and for those that did, the quality of provision varied widely. In Northampton, an infectious diseases hospital with 22 beds was erected on Welford Road in 1899 by Kingsthorpe Urban District Council. In 1900, however, it was taken over by Northampton Corporation after Kingsthorpe was incorporated within the Borough. The hospital was situated about two and a half miles from Northampton town centre on the road to Leicester. At the time the hospital had no patients and the then Medical Officer of Health, Dr Lee Cogan, recommended that the Town Council retain the hospital in readiness for any outbreak of infectious disease. The hospital remained unoccupied for all of 1901. ▶



In 1902 there was an outbreak of typhoid fever at Nazareth House in Northampton, a home for the elderly poor, destitute or orphaned. All the sick were transferred to the Kingsthorpe Hospital for treatment because Cogan had concluded: *"satisfactory isolation being impracticable at Nazareth House."* Further outbreaks of infectious disease troubled the health of the town over the next two years. In Northampton an outbreak of smallpox occurred during 1903 starting on March 20th and concluding on 22nd May. The patients were cared for at the Smallpox Hospital on the southern outskirts of the town. After the outbreak had ended all the nursing staff who had treated the smallpox patients were sent to Welford Road for two weeks quarantine. A scarlet fever outbreak commenced in 1904, and from November 22nd to 31st December at the height, 29 cases were admitted. The last case was discharged in July 1905 and in all 61 cases had been treated.

Mortality rates remained high. In February 1906, the Medical Officer of Health, Dr James Beatty, noted in his annual report that of the 23 *"advanced cases of pulmonary consumption"* admitted to the Welford Road Hospital, *"9 died in the hospital, and 6 were under treatment at the close of the year."* The hospital continued treating this type of patient until the end of September 1907, when those remaining were transferred to Harborough Road Hospital in Northampton. Yet occupation remained the exception. Apart from the occasions mentioned above the hospital had remained closed since 1900, being kept in readiness by regular caretaker visits. This was quite common elsewhere. Indeed, quite frequently, isolation hospitals were found to be unfit for use when needed. There was also generally a difficulty of obtaining nurses at short notice.

On October 19th 1908 it was again found necessary to reopen Welford Road Hospital to accommodate a growing number of scarlatina (scarlet fever) sufferers, who were in need of convalescing facilities. But resources were tight. In his Annual Report for 1908 the Medical Officer of Health, Dr J Doig McCrindle, stated that: *"Accommodation can be found for 30 cases and the requisite staff if only convalescents are sent."* From October 19th 1908 to 2nd of January 1909, 72 cases were admitted to this hospital, of which one patient died, 51 were discharged, and 20 remained. Up to December 1909, 303 cases were admitted during 1909, with the number discharged up to the closing date being 323 (including 20 cases remaining from the previous year). The total admittance during this epidemic was 395 cases. Such was the cyclical nature of infectious diseases that, once the crisis has passed, *"Owing to the decline in the prevalence of scarlatina it has been unnecessary to make use of this institution since December 18th, 1909, and it remained unoccupied during the whole of the following year."*

The hospital remained closed throughout 1911, *"except for a fortnight between October 28th and November 16th, when it was used to accommodate the cases of pulmonary tuberculosis transferred"* from the Borough Hospital on Harborough Road *"during the cleansing, painting, and renovating of*

After the outbreak had ended all the nursing staff who had treated the smallpox patients were sent to Welford Road for two weeks quarantine.



LAUGHTON WARD VERANDAH

*the wards there."* It remained closed throughout 1912 and 1913, too. Indeed, for a variety of reasons including the provision of isolation facilities, by the early twentieth century there were noticeable declines generally in the prevalence of the childhood killer diseases of scarlet fever and diphtheria. This downwards trend continued through the interwar years.

Yet this meant that potentially valuable resources remained mothballed. As a consequence:

*"it was contemplated using this institution as part of the complete scheme of anti-tuberculosis measures in connection with the National Insurance Act. During 1913, this scheme was generally approved by the Local Government Board, and towards the end of the year the work of extending and re-arranging this institution was begun, with the sanction of the Government. It is hoped that during 1914, the Institution will be in full working order as a tuberculosis hospital."*

This proved to be the case. In 1914 the hospital was re-designated the Tuberculosis Hospital at Welford Road and re-opened on the 23rd September. During the rest of the year 26 patients were admitted: twelve to be placed in isolation because they were infectious; six for education regarding domiciliary treatment; and a further eight for observation as cases that were difficult to classify. Sixteen of these cases were insured persons under the 1911 National Insurance Act, which provided for free treatment for tuberculosis for insured workers. Indeed, the passing of the Act was partly motivated by concerns over tuberculosis. Sanitary authorities had the power to charge patients, though in the majority of cases charges were not enforced because the hospitals were underutilised and because of the community benefit of isolation. Those that did charge did so on a means tested sliding scale. Between 1915 and 1918, 292 cases were admitted, 207 of whom were covered by the 1911 Act. Of these 56 died. During 1919, 87 cases were admitted of which 63 were insured patients. Clearly, the 1911 Act

removed the cost barrier to hospital treatment, and significantly helped in isolating infection patients.

The four-acre site was pleasantly situated and, in 1930, had beds for twenty-two patients in permanent buildings and a further six in wooden huts which could only really be used during the summer months. The nursing staff consisted of four nurses, a sister, and a matron; however, it had no resident medical officer.

Following the creation of the National Health Service (NHS) on Monday 5th July 1948, this small tuberculosis hospital was empty. It was brought back into operation in November 1949 for chronic sick patients. Twenty-nine beds were available. It now came under the auspices of Northampton General Hospital and their House Committee No. 6. Its Annual Report comments that the hospital, *"has proved most useful in relieving congestion of accommodation for this type of patient, and has proved a very pleasant and suitable chronic sick annexe."* By the time of the 1954 Annual Report bed numbers had increased to thirty-two. The Group Secretary, Stanley Hill, commented: *"This hospital continues in full and useful occupation, and the high average length of stay of most patients is matched only by their longevity."* But thankfully the incidence of tuberculosis was declining rapidly. It had been falling steadily across the inter-war period, and this fall accelerated after 1945, in part because of antibiotics such as streptomycin, but also because of improving social conditions.

As such, and once again, the function of the hospital changed, and it focused instead on providing care for the elderly chronic sick. In 1960 there was a suggestion that the hospital be transferred to Northampton County Borough Council for use with their Mental Health Act responsibilities. Northampton General Hospital could not agree to this suggestion because it would be losing much needed geriatric bed capacity, saying, *"elderly sick patients [are] numerically above average in the locality...and accordingly pressure on hospital beds tends to remain heavy."*

However, in 1962 the Oxford Regional Board and then the Ministry of Health marked Welford Road Hospital for closure. The House Committee No.6 of the General Hospital voiced its disagreement with this policy of closure stating it, *"believes that accommodation of the type provided in these pleasant rural surroundings is appropriate to the needs of many elderly sick people who do not need the full range of clinical resources of a fully equipped acute hospital."* This was, however, to be but a short stay of execution.

In 1970 the Oxford Regional Board Mental Health Services Committee visited several long-stay hospitals in the region, one of which was the Welford Road Hospital. The Committee reported that it was *"less happy about the inadequacy of suitable physical facilities [at this hospital] and registered the view that the hospital should be taken out of commission without delay."*

The Northampton General Hospital Committee was also *"engaged in desperate negotiations"* with the Oxford Regional Board to *"relieve its grave financial difficulties."* The closure of the Welford Road Hospital was part of a 'package deal' of substantial financial assistance. It was with *"understandable reluctance the committee agreed to the hospital closure."* The patients were transferred to St. Edmund's Hospital in Northampton. Welford Road Hospital was taken out of commission before the end of the 1971/1972 financial year. 📷

**Fred O'Dell**  
Archive and Museum Service, Northampton  
General Hospital

The author would like to thank the Archive and Museum Service at Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust for access to the various annual reports, photographs, and other material used in the writing of this article.



The flu pandemic that ravaged Leicester during 1918 and briefly in March 1919 was the deadliest contagion since the Black Death nearly six centuries earlier. With the country still at war in 1918 unsurprisingly this influenced both the response and media coverage of the crisis in the national and local press, both of which were heavily censored. This was the reason that Spain had to unjustly bear the stigma of seeing its name applied to the pandemic. As a neutral country, its press was free to report openly on the horrendous impact of the disease, whereas those countries still involved in the conflict initially suppressed the true extent of the contagion.

The flu epidemic came in three waves. It first appeared in June and reached its peak in July of 1918. With the slaughter still going on in the trenches, and the normal high mortality of many other infectious diseases, a slight increase in the death rate from flu was hardly noticed. In this first wave, the majority of victims were the elderly and those with underlying conditions. This reinforced the notion that this was just another outbreak of seasonal influenza, even if it occurred at an untypical time of the year.

The second wave that arrived in mid-October was markedly different. The influenza virus had clearly mutated into something far more contagious and universally life-threatening. This time the consequences were so dire for the citizens of Leicester and elsewhere that they could not be censored out of existence. It was not until 15 October, when local newspapers reported on the decision to close all of Leicester’s primary schools to limit transmission, that people became aware that something was amiss, though few could have envisaged just how serious was the situation. By suppressing news of the dangers posed by this new strain, the Government had allowed the people of Leicester, and elsewhere, no time to take precautions.

The speed by which infections spread was unprecedented; within days, the local health system had broken down. “Doctors [were] overwhelmed... one doctor, summoned to 25 patients in one street, in order to get through his calls wrote one prescription and told the recipients to pass it along”. Fifty-one people died from influenza in seven days, up from five in the previous week. Yet this news still only made page four in the *Leicester Daily Post*, (Wednesday 23 October). It was not until the following Saturday that the sheer scale of the unfolding disaster forced itself

onto the front page. In the first week of November, the number of influenza deaths reached 388.

Hospitals were inundated with flu cases. Less seriously ill patients were quickly transferred out, sanatoriums for tuberculosis victims being emptied, whilst all other civil medical activities were postponed to concentrate on the pandemic. Yet emergency meetings held in the Town Hall still failed to grasp fully the magnitude of the medical tsunami about to swamp the borough. Very much as in the early days of the current Covid 19 crisis, only vague advice about avoiding large gatherings was issued, with no decisions made to cancel any events that facilitated such gatherings. For example, a visit by the King and Queen to Leicester scheduled for Friday 15 November was still expected to go ahead. It was eventually postponed, although not because of the flu, but rather the ending of the War which meant that the King had to stay in London. Nevertheless, a prearranged mass meeting on Victoria Park for presenting medals still took place.

Even though by then victory was assured, the War remained the overriding priority. Requests to transfer doctors (52% of which were at the front in France) and nurses from military related activities never materialised. Buildings across the county had been converted into temporary military hospitals, including the town’s old mental asylum, reducing further the numbers of medical staff available to treat civilian influenza patients. Even doctors and nurses involved in the medical inspection of new army recruits remained in post.

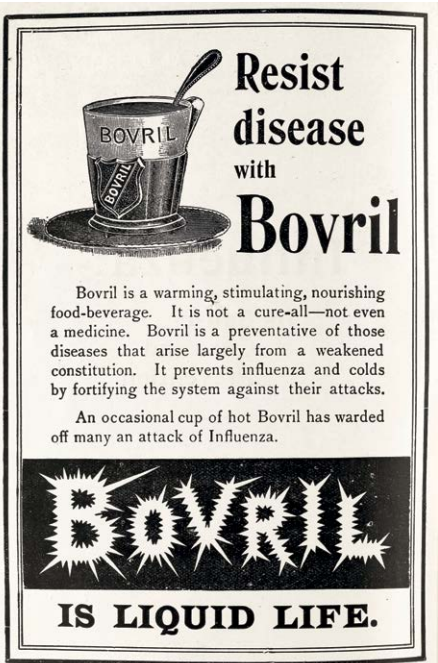
Increasing numbers of medical personnel became infected, “notably [in] the Poor Law Infirmary, where there is a large increase of admissions, ... many of the cases of illness being acute, and a long list of nurses on the sick-list. At one time, 28 members of the nursing staff were off duty”. As a result, during the worse weeks, overworked doctors found it impossible to attend all patients. Evelyn Fearn, a 19-year-old wool spinner, died at eleven o’clock in the evening after spending a day ill in bed, and before a doctor could be found. Edna Hill, “sickened and died while her daughter was out fetching a doctor”. Yet reports also tell of heroic efforts, such as that of a “well-known local doctor who has not been to bed for 16 nights.” As the town’s mayor had to admit: “the services of doctors could not be obtained, and... children had died in consequence”.

The local press recorded numerous heart-rending tragic stories. In one household a mother and her two children were ill, whilst her husband was dying. Only the grandmother was there to look after them. In another case, a husband was said to be “delirious” with the flu, his wife and lodger were also seriously ill, with only the 16 year-old daughter to attend them. A mother was totally exhausted after not sleeping for 14 nights looking after her very ill child. Her husband was serving in Egypt.

As well as being more virulent, this mutated virus in the second wave attacked those in their twenties to forties far more vigorously than previous flu outbreaks. Soldiers in the

# Leicester and the 1918 Flu Pandemic

BY STEVE MARQUIS



'BOVRIL IS LIQUID LIFE' ADVERT (PUBLIC DOMAIN WELCOME)



trenches, having constantly faced death, now died in their thousands from an unseen enemy, just as they imagined their nightmare was about to end. Pregnant women also seemed to have been at particular risk: premature labour and miscarriages often resulted from severe bouts of the flu. A total of 2,198 pregnant women were recorded as having died in England and Wales after becoming infected with influenza.

There was no effective treatment for the influenza virus in 1918: the common treatments were oxygen, fluids, aspirin, and bedrest. Vaccines were widely used for other infectious diseases at that time and although trials had produced potential influenza vaccines for the future, none had proved sufficiently effective to tackle the flu virus a century ago. In this vacuum of uncertainty, doctors were desperately recommending treatments based on little more than personal hunches.

Dr Charles Millard, Leicester’s Medical Officer of Health, put his faith in “the great ... fresh air”, as did the M.O.H. in neighbouring Nottingham, Dr Bobbyer. But not all were convinced. A sister of a flu victim accompanying him into a Nottingham hospital was aghast to see all the windows open in winter. She refused to allow her brother to remain because he’d “catch his death of cold after being in a warm room,” so she took him back home. Other treatments recommended by the medical practitioners often did more harm than good. The most common prescription was for alcohol, although wartime restrictions on the production of spirits posed a serious problem of supply. As the *Leicester Evening Mail* reported: “Owing to the great demand for whisky and brandy for which medical men have given numerous certificates to people suffering from influenza, Loughborough is said to have become a ‘dry town.’” Belief became widespread. At a meeting of the Leicester Sanitary Committee one member asked “why the committee did not take action about lives being lost through an inadequate supply of whisky? Everyone who could get whisky had been saved.” Only later did medical opinion change, accepting that alcohol significantly weakened the immune system.

Faced with desperate pleas from patients, doctors began prescribing drugs used in the treatment of other diseases, such as epinephrine

or adrenaline, calomel (mercurous chloride - an ancient purgative), bicarbonate, and strychnine, often administered intravenously. Quack medicines, ‘lifesaving’ concoctions and ‘miracle’ herbal remedies appeared and spread almost as quickly as the virus. Established brand-named products such as Bovril could now all of a sudden ‘prevent’ or ‘cure’ influenza; newspapers were suddenly inundated with adverts promising their own routes to salvation.

One hopeful preventive measure widely adopted around the world was the use of facemasks, though far less so in the UK. In his annual medical report for 1918, Dr Millard said that masks were not even worn in Leicester hospitals dealing with the outbreak, “although masks had been offered to members of staff if they wanted them, they declined on account of the doubt over their effectiveness and the inconvenience of having to wear them,” with some people going as far as describing the call for mask use “a muzzling order”.

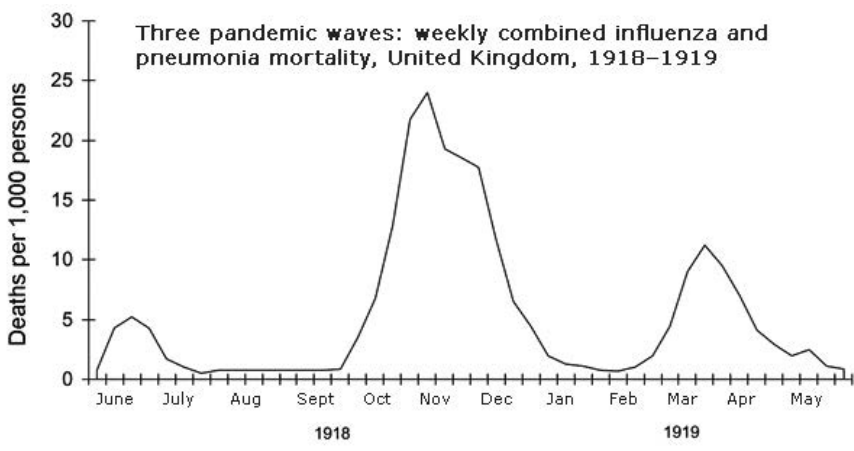
The pandemic reached its peak in the final weeks of the War’s end. It proved impossible to contain the desire for mass celebrations. It was well known that such large gatherings greatly aided the spread of the disease and calls were made to cancel such events. Yet, they fell on deaf ears. Proposals for certain cancellations and closures were partial and arbitrary. Vested interests lobbied hard to be made exempt from any restrictions. Cinemas, music halls, pubs and churches all played up to Dr Millard’s belief in the importance of clean air by promising to implement various means to increase ventilation and create cleaner atmospheres. The right-wing *Leicester Evening Mail* promised that

“[t]he air inside the famous Picture House is kept perfectly pure by the most expert and scientific method... Before the air actually reaches the Picture House it is washed, warmed and filtered, and passed through little ducts to the Theatre.”

Apart from measures like these, and a few more minor restrictions, places of entertainment were largely unaffected. Large outside gatherings were generally thought not to cause a serious health hazard.

By the end of the third wave in the last week of March 1919, 1,600 adults and children in Leicester alone had died from influenza and associated illnesses. The number of deaths quickly overwhelmed local funeral services. The figure for the whole of Britain was recorded at 228,000. Anywhere from 50 million to as many as 100 million may have succumbed worldwide by the time the pandemic finally abated in 1920, with a staggering death rate estimated at between 10 and 20 percent. 📌

Steve Marquis



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# The Pure Order of United Britons

## - a Victorian Friendly Society

BY PHIL HENSHAW

There is a strong likelihood that one or more of your ancestors was an Oddfellow, a Druid, a Forester, a Rechabite, Buffalo or even a United Briton. As Jose Harris notes: mid-Victorians tended to feel that unemployment was a “voluntary condition ... or a predicable hazard for which workers should provide out of their own wages.” As a consequence, millions of workers belonged to friendly societies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries - in 1898, the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies put total membership at just over 8 million. The societies were social insurance clubs, formed voluntarily to protect members against financial problems incurred through sickness, unemployment, old age or death. Friendly society membership, however, was essentially the self-help/mutual aid badge of the skilled worker; the semi- or unskilled either lacked the means or took out only basic commercial insurance to cover for death and burial. Unfortunately, compared with the trade union movement, for example, their histories have not been adequately recorded.

The Pure Order of United Britons (POUB) was one of the smaller, regional friendly societies, based primarily in the East Midlands, with a few branches in Yorkshire and the West Midlands. At its peak in the latter years of the nineteenth century, membership of the Order reached between 3,000 to 4,000, with a concentration of branches in Nottingham and the industrial towns surrounding it, such as Ilkeston, Ripley, Heanor, Eastwood, the Ashfields, Alfreton and Chesterfield. The POUB was an offshoot of the Oddfellows, one of the larger societies, and probably (at least initially) shared its structure and rules. Schisms and secessions were relatively common in the movement, either because of disputes or competition. The Oddfellows themselves comprised a number of different Orders, including the Grand Order of Oddfellows, Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity and the Nottingham Ancient Imperial Order of Oddfellows.

Like the majority of friendly societies, and as its name suggests, the POUB invoked a mythical past to help lend it legitimacy. Its ‘heritage’ was reinforced through rituals, regalia and secrecy, and the common rule-book gave members a shared sense of belonging. Very few records relating to the Order remain, and the only substantial document is a rule-book, that of the Liberal Lodge based in the village of Newton, Derbyshire. Through its rather stringent application process, the expected behaviour of its members, and its list of fines and forfeits, we can gain an insight into the Order’s moral code and thus its quest for respectability. Respectability for friendly societies in the Victorian era was essential, and rules were designed not solely to keep claims on the sick fund to a minimum, but also to enhance their standing as authentic associations.

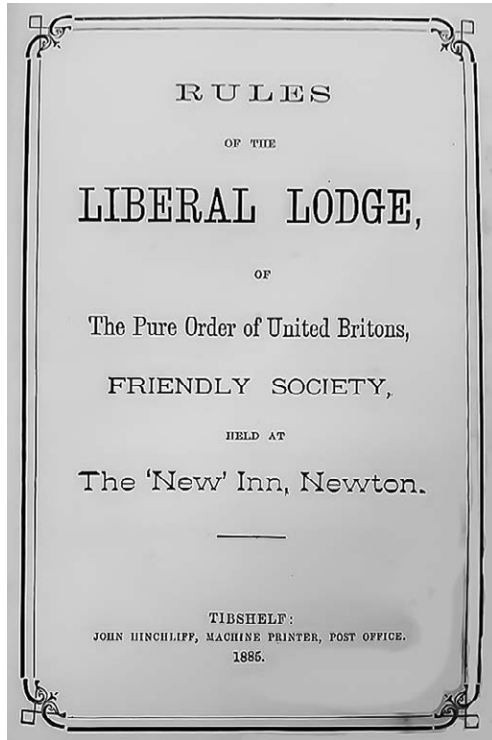
Notwithstanding its punitive set of rules, like many friendly societies the Order enjoyed conviviality in the public house, where all meetings were held. Sociability was an important part of the Victorian friendly society, and although overindulgence in ale was viewed with disdain, drinking, song and pleasurable discourse were essential to cement fraternal bonds. Feast days, gatherings and processions were all part of the Order’s annual calendar.

Formed around 1864, the earliest references to the POUB are to lodges in Sheffield and Nottingham. On 26th November 1864, the *Nottingham Journal* reported the formation of a new lodge in Attercliffe, Sheffield when “39 young men” were enrolled and a “sumptuous supper” provided. The formation of another new lodge was advertised in the *Ilkeston Pioneer* of 5th April 1866, to be based at the Thorn Tree

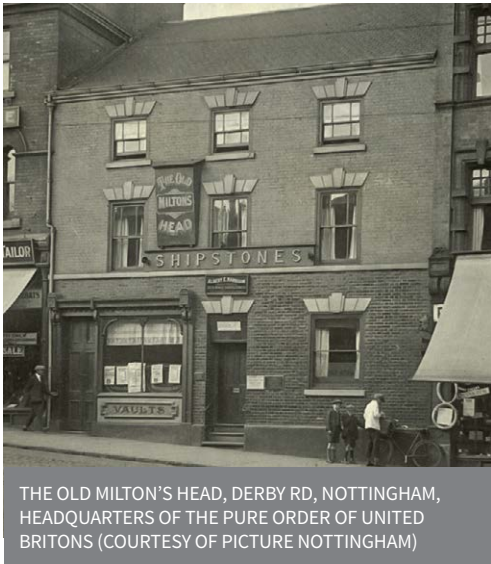
Inn, Waingroves, Derbyshire, “where persons of good bodily health between the ages of 18 and 45 years will be admitted.” Many more lodges sprang up between the mid-1860s and late 1870s in the area. The headquarters of the Order was in Nottingham. Its registered office for many years located at The Old Milton’s Head, on Derby Road.

The Liberal Lodge was based at the New Inn, Newton. Its rule book from 1885, which we can assume was representative of the Order generally, states its objectives as “relief and maintenance of members during sickness or infirmities, whether bodily or mental; half benefit after six months (membership), full benefit after twelve months; an allowance during sickness, and medical attendance with necessary medicine and a payment at death of £5 (half benefit) and £10 (full); death of full members wife £5 and half members wife £2 10s.”

The rule book featured a series of fines for both officers and members of the Lodge who committed breaches of the rules. ‘Superior Officers’ would be fined 3d for being late to meetings, and 6d for absence, whilst ‘Inferior Officers’ received penalties of 2d and 3d for the same transgressions. Absence for officers was viewed dimly: “If absent without apology for 3 successive nights, his office is declared vacant, unless caused by sickness.” Other fines were stipulated for a variety of misdemeanours. Members were fined for “swearing, blaspheming, or insulting” another member, for attending meeting drunk, and for “striking another” or causing “unnecessary agitation or trouble therein”. They could be fined, too, for “exposing or divulging the affairs or any portion of them to non-members”. Lesser fines were imposed “sleeping, laying wagers, or reading books or papers not relating to the business of the Lodge”; or for not



RULE BOOK



THOMAS LEAMAN, SECRETARY OF THE PURE ORDER OF UNITED BRITONS 1908-1922

## “Thousands of young lives had been sacrificed, of which our small Order had been called upon to bear its share”.

voting at a meeting at which they were present. There were, indeed, a plethora of infractions against codes of conduct for which members could be punished. Indeed, even if there was “a Rule to which there is no particular fine attached”, they could be fined “such an amount as they think the case deserves, and not exceeding ten shillings nor less than two shillings and sixpence.” Members were even fined for not attending meetings without proffering an “apology satisfactory to the Lodge.”

Such a propensity to proscribe begs many questions about the construction of working-class respectability, and particularly skilled-working class identity. Clearly, considerable store was placed on a codified separation between ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’, what was acceptable and what was not, but there was an overt emphasis on active participation, both in terms of sociability and governance.

Of course, there were benefits to joining too. Members claiming sickness allowance had to deliver a surgeon’s (GP’s) certificate of illness to the Secretary of the Lodge. Benefits for the first 17 weeks of sickness were 7s per week (or around twenty per cent of the average skilled wage), and 3s thereafter. But there were stringent conditions attached. Members in receipt of sickness allowance were not allowed out of the house after 8pm in summer (Mar-Sept) and 6pm in winter. Alcohol consumption for sick members was restricted: “No member to be allowed to visit Licensed Victuallers or Beer Houses, or other places where

intoxicating liquor is sold, except by permission from the Surgeon, or from the Lodge, and then not later than 6 o’clock in the evening.” Anyone found in breach of this rule was fined 5s for a first offence and 10s for a second offence. Members who were aware of others violating this rule, but not disclosing it to the President of the Lodge, were also fined 2s 6d.

Admission of new members was subject to a rigorous procedure. Proof of age was required, together with name, address and occupation. New applicants had to be proposed by an existing member, and the applicant would then be subject to an approval process by the Officers of the Lodge, to “ascertain whether the person proposed is respectable and satisfactory.” Entry was subjected to a vote of the next meeting, and the applicant only admitted if accepted by a majority. In order to protect funds from excessive claims, new members were required to declare that they and their wives were “sound and healthy” and not “subject to any disease calculated to shorten human life.”

Like those of other societies, the funds of the POUB were vulnerable to dishonest officials. The most serious case of theft from the Order took place in 1885, when it was revealed to a meeting that a previous Secretary of the Order had left the country with missing funds amounting to £578 17s 7d. Poor organisation and serious shortcomings in scrutiny of the books had enabled the embezzlement. The meeting heard that “the system under which the affairs of the society has been carried on is very imperfect, and has afforded

opportunities for wrong-doing which would have been impossible under a more intelligent and correct method of booking and publishing the accounts”. The culprit, John Kew, 58, a shoemaker from Marlpool, near Heanor in Derbyshire, was eventually caught, but escaped a custodial sentence as there was no evidence that the POUB was a registered organisation under the Friendly Societies Act.

This perhaps demonstrates one of the flaws of working-class voluntarism: that some officials were not well enough appraised of the importance of internal scrutiny and external compliance to prevent their associations from falling prey to those who would defraud their hard-earned funds. Although Kew avoided prison on this occasion, he was later sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour following his conviction for stealing £65 6s from the Marlpool Peace and Goodwill Lodge of the POUB.

The POUB continued to operate throughout the First World War, and although its numbers had declined, the town of Ripley, Derbyshire and its surrounding area remained a stronghold of the Order. Its 1917 Annual Moveable Committee, held at Ripley’s Cock Hotel, heard that membership totalled 1,318, with Ripley and Waingroves Lodges alone accounting for 390. Thomas Leaman, Secretary of the Order, read out the names of those members who had perished in the War, and confirmed that their death benefits had been honoured: “Thousands of young lives had been sacrificed, of which our small Order had been called upon to bear its share”. The Do Well Lodge at Ripley, remarkably, continued to operate until 1949, many years after the advent of national insurance and a full year after the founding of the National Health Service. By this time, however, the old emphasis on group identity and sociability had largely passed, with Friendly Society membership becoming increasingly passive in terms of not wanting anything beyond mutual social insurance.

As well as providing a safety-net before the days of the welfare state, The Pure Order of United Britons provided workers with opportunities for sociability and an escape from the mundane experience of their labouring lives. Membership helped workers to deal with the uncertainties of the industrialised world, and constituted a bastion of self-help and respectability in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Societies such as the POUB, with their rule-books, committees and formal meetings, also enabled workers to be elected to positions of responsibility and to gain experience of running democratic organisations, skills which allowed them to become active in politics or other aspects of public life. 🇬🇧

Phil Henshaw

**Further reading :** – José Harris, *Unemployment and Politics: A Study in English Social Policy 1886–1914*, (London, 1972); Philip Henshaw, *The Pure Order of United Britons : a Victorian Friendly Society* (2020); Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies 1750-1914* (Palgrave, 2003); Daniel Weinbren, *Tracing your Freemason, Friendly Society and Trade Union Ancestors* (Pen and Sword, 2019).





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